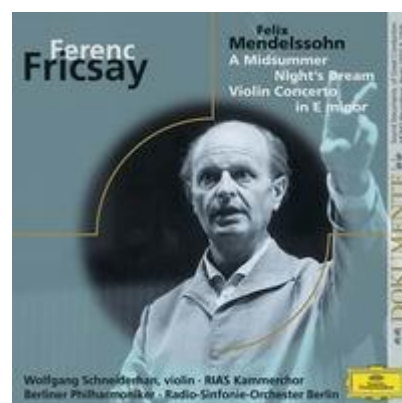


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Fricsay's Mendelssohn

The last ten years again the records of Fricsay began to appear in the catalog of the "Deutschen Grammophon" and consequently in the public consciousness of Hungary. Belatedly, we became acquainted with the last stereo recordings. The Fricsay discography is far from complete. A significant part of the 10 + 1 CD box (published ten years ago) is not available. Recently appeared, a box with all the orchestral works Fricsay conducted.

At home (in Hungary) it was not possible to buy a Symphony of Mozart and from Beethoven only the "Eroica". The "Deutsche Grammophon" has published (out of the archive) an early Mendelssohn-recording. The quality of the recording and the price are so interesting that only a fool would miss the option to buy.



The items of the background music from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" became a hit from the very start of recordings. As example the number of Scherzi and Intermezzi being published are striking. From the accompanying music, there is nearly no early recording (because Mendelssohn was not very popular, except his Violin Concerto, which was played by anyone). - 1950 was Fricsay almost a pioneer in the interpretation (after Toscanini's two recordings). But even if not, it would be worth paying attention to the feeling of expression as one does with the most famous musicians. At this recording the German text doesn't irritate, not even Rita Streich next to Maria Stader (Fricsay's favorite) or Diana Eustrati. – Remarkable that he loved those voices: voices which today would be described by "beeping".

The joy of the overture remains until the end, the chorus is easily going, the wedding-march robust (sturdy), maestoso (shows the quality of good music). The complete performance is amusing, colorful, affirming life, easy and powerful at the same time. The Violin Concerto is like Brahms Variations of Haydn: I don't know any bad performance, but excellent ones only very few (Heifetz Munch and - Toscanini, Menuhin-Furtwängler). It is not the end the last fascination, but the piece is ok as it is - and this is confirmed 1956 by Fricsay and Schneiderhahn. By my opinion Wolfgang Schneiderhahn is primarily a great chamber musician (looking at the common Kempff - Beethoven – Sonatas or/and the Trio Mainardi - Edwin Fischer - Schneiderhahn) but as soloist rather mediocre.

The recorded Violin Concerto of Beethoven, as well as the one by Mendelsohn conducted by Furtwängler is nice (but not as good as the one with Menuhin, although this has to be also attributed to Furtwängler). Fricsay is an excellent accompanist (take Bartók Piano Concertos with Geza Anda, the Violin Concerto with Tibor Varga, or the excellent Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with Menuhin). He does not need great soloists; with powerful mediocre soloists he is also capable to create masterpieces.

70 minutes of music: both master pieces match well in pitch, so that they are easy for listening without getting tired. Probably you can understand why the author of this article is thrilled discovering a new record of Fricsay.

(Mesterházi Gábor)