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MOZART The Marriage of Figaro, opera in four acts

Count Almaviva             Mathieu Ahlersmeyer
Countess Almaviva           Margaret Teschemacher
Susanna                     Maria Cebotari  
Figaro                      Paul Schoffler
Cherubino                   Angela Kolniak
Marcellina                  Elisabeth Waldenau
Basilio                     Kurt Wessely
Bartolo                     Kurt Boehme
Don Curzio                  Herbert Buchta
Antonio                     Hans Herbert Fiedler
Barbarina                   Hannerie Franck

Choir and Orchestra of Reichssenders Stuggart, Karl Bohm

Recorded in Stuggart on 25 October 1938
Preiser Records 90035 mono (2 CDs 74.44 and 78.50)

There are no sleeve notes.

This is a welcome historical recording. What a cast! Teschemacher is superb and Mathieu Ahlersmeyer's baritone is rich and clear. He lived from 1896 - 1979 and, in the 1930s and 1940s particularly, was deservedly renowned in Mozart, Verdi and Wagner. Paul Schoffler (1897 1979) was also well-known and admired. The role of Cherubino calls for additional skills as well as singing for the part must be acted successfully. One will never forgot the inimitable Edith Mathis in this role. In this performance Angela Kolniak (1898-1964) is first class.

And, of course, we have Maria Cebotari who had the purest voice and securest intonation you could wish for. She was Russian/Rumanian and only lived from 1910 to 1949. She was a magnificent singer and had she lived…

(see article on Maria Cebotari on this site)

The overture is a little muddy but thereafter the sound is acceptable and very clear. However, the chorus does not always have their sound captured successfully.

Karl Bohm conducts well. He was a fine Mozart conductor but not limited to that composer.

Dresden Premiere Performance, 1938.
Left to right: Margarete Teschmacher,
Paul Schöffler, Maria Cebotari,
Kurt Wessely, Elizabeth Waldenau,
Kurt Böhme, Mathieu Ahlersmeyer
Compare his Mozart with that of Bernard Haitink and you will see what a fine Mozartian Bohm was. Bohm was also excellent in Wagner and Richard Strauss and superb in Berg’s Wozzeck.

The spoken, semi-spoken or half-sung recitatives in Mozart operas do not suit everybody and I do not care for them. They become tedious. If I spoke German, it might be better but one feels that the continuity of the music is hindered by such recitatives. You will gather that this is not my favourite opera but it has its moments particularly the vocal ensembles such as Holla, holla, Leute, leute.

The other matter that generates thought is that the keyboard continuo is played on the piano in this recording. All my other recordings use a harpsichord. It is known that Mozart wrote concerto arias which included a piano part.

This CD has great historical interest and serves as a welcome reminder of the great singers of the past. And this recording was made eleven months before the outbreak of World War II. Four years after this recording in November 1942, Stuttgart was subject to the first of 53 bombing raids.

The singers are in good voice and it is interesting to compare opera singers of 73 years ago with those of today. Years ago, it seems that the music was the prime consideration and not the singers. The only real star was the composer, and is that how it should be?

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