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LIVE



06/10-(5)

Franz Schmidt (1874-1939)
Symphony No. 4
Intermezzo from „Notre Dame“

Beethoven Orchester Bonn
Stefan Blunier, cond.

1 Hybrid-SACD

222[®]
RECORDING

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Lavish Inauguration

This new recording by the Beethoven Orchestra of Bonn under its conductor Stefan Blunier commemorates an extraordinary musician's life spanning the years from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy to the National Socialist regime. It also inaugurates a new MDG series featuring live recordings with Franz Schmidt's Symphony No. 4 and the Intermezzo from his *Notre Dame*.

Promising Start

Franz Schmidt grew up as a musical child prodigy in Pressburg, which is today's Bratislava and the capital of Slovakia. His first piano teacher, Theodor Leschetitzky, urgently advised him not to pursue a career as a musician: "A man named Schmidt should not become an artist." The Schmidts moved to Vienna, and it was here that Franz received the training he needed at the Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde and his first job as a cellist in the Vienna Court Opera Orchestra and Vienna Philharmonic. At the age of twenty-two he composed his first symphony and was awarded the Beethoven Prize of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. His first opera, *Notre Dame*, was premiered in 1914. Hugo von Hofmannsthal was highly positive in his evaluation of the composition: "Not too long ago I heard an opera here by an unknown composer ... I cannot help myself; it made a very fine impression on me."

Painful Loss

The experience of grief led Franz Schmidt to pen his fourth and last symphony. After he had seen his first

wife gradually lose her soundness of body and mind in a sanatorium, he lost his only daughter to death in 1932. The fourth symphony was her requiem. Above all the second movement, a moving adagio, bears autobiographical traces: "It is thus that I imagine my death." In 1939 the composer died of a heart attack.

Live(ly) Performance

This live recording with the Beethoven Orchestra of Bonn in Beethoven Hall in Bonn conveys a lot of atmosphere, and Stefan Blunier brilliantly presents the great romantic idea behind this symphony. The result – not least owing to the precision multichannel SACD technique and its rich detail – is lavish and lively listening pleasure.

Arnold Schönberg

5 Orchesterstücke op. 16; Notturmo for harp, solo violin and strings; 6 Lieder op. 8; Prelude and Fugue BWV 552 (Bach/Schönberg)
Manuela Uhl, soprano
Beethoven Orchester Bonn
Stefan Blunier, cond.
MDG 937 1584-6 (Hybrid-SACD)

Franz Liszt: Christus (Oratorio)

Czech. Philharmonic Choir Brno
Beethoven Orchester Bonn
Roman Kofman, cond.
MDG 937 1366-6 (3 Hybrid-SACDs)

