

CD REVIEW 34

MOZART *The Marriage of Figaro*, opera in four acts

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| 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 Stuttgart, Karl Böhm

Recorded in Stuttgart 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 Ahlesmeyer'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 forget 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 Böhm conducts well. He was a fine Mozart conductor but not limited to that composer.

Dresden Premiere Performance, 1938.
Left to right: Margarete Teschemacher,
Paul Schöffler, Maria Cebotari,
Karl Wessely, Elisabeth 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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