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Fritz Busch

conducts Beethoven in Copenhagen

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Ever since his debut in Copenhagen in the early 1920s, Fritz Busch was a well-loved visitor to the Danish capital (he settled in Denmark in 1934). And although his frequent performances well into his year of death 1951 were broadcast, only a fairly limited number of them have survived on record. Busch's few surviving Copenhagen recordings of music by Beethoven may easily be divided into live recordings from 1948/1950, presenting complete performances of the Ninth Symphony and the overtures *Leonore* II and III, and single movements from works recorded in the years 1933-5. Yet these earlier fragments contain works otherwise not documented by Busch, i.e. the *Missa solemnis* and the Fourth Piano Concerto, the latter here heard with the soloist Rudolf Serkin, the son-in-law of Busch's brother Adolf. This performance, as some more concerts in Copenhagen conducted by Busch, took place but a few weeks before the conductor was being discharged from his Dresden post by the Nazis.

Busch's choice of vocal soloists in choral orchestral works performed in the Odd Fellow Palæets store Hall, was both linked to Copenhagen Royal Opera, and to performers Busch held in high esteem from his Dresden days. Both Koloman von Pátaky, who returned to his native Hungary in 1938, and Alexander Kipnis, who emigrated in 1935, were guest performers at Glyndebourne in 1936's *Zauberflöte* and were frequently heard in both Busch's and Erich Kleiber's seasons at Buenos Aires in the 1930s. Vienna-based soprano Erika Rokyta was a well-known concert singer on the European continent and made frequent guest appearances in Denmark and Sweden. Swedish concert soprano Kerstin Lindberg-Torlind was most successful both in Scandinavia and Germany, being appointed a Royal kammersanger in 1950, while operatic mezzo-soprano Ingeborg Steffensen, a kammersanger from 1931, and concert-singer Else Jena concentrated their careers mostly on their native Denmark. Erik Sjøberg, who premiered Britten's *Peter Grimes* in Copenhagen in 1947 and who was appointed a kammersanger in 1951, was a tenor highly esteemed by Birgit Nilsson. Holger Byrding, who had been Sjøberg's teacher and whose repertoire covered all important bass-baritone roles but who was an acknowledged *heldenbariton*, had been a kammersanger from 1934.

Jürgen Schaarwächter

BuschBrothersArchive in the Max-Reger-Institut, Karlsruhe

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busch

beethoven in copenhagen

symphony no. 9
leonore overture no. 2
leonore overture no. 3

with movements from
piano concerto no. 4
missa solemnis
symphony no. 9

rudolf serkin piano
kerstin lindberg-torlind, erika rokyta soprano
else jena, ingeborg steffensen contralto
erik sjøberg, koloman von pátsky tenor
holger byrding, alexander kipnis bass
statsradiofoniens kor
statsradiofoniens symfoniorkester
conducted by fritz busch

studio & live recordings, 1933-50

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disc one

1. **BEETHOVEN** Overture Leonore III, Op. 72a (13:08)
Skandinavisk Grammophon A.B. studio recording performance, Statsradiofonien, Koncertsalen, Copenhagen 23 October 1948

BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, 'Choral'

2. 1st mvt. - Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso (14:30)
3. 2nd mvt. - Scherzo. Molto vivace - Presto (10:48)
4. 3rd mvt. - Adagio molto e cantabile (13:54)
5. 4th mvt. - Presto - Allegro assai (23:37)

Kerstin Lindberg-Torlind, soprano; Else Jena, contralto
Erik Sjøberg, tenor; Holger Byrding, bass;
Radio-Koret (dir. Svend S. Schultz)
Live concert performance, Statsradiofonien, Koncertsalen, Copenhagen 7 September 1950

Statsradiofonien Symfoniorkester
conducted by Fritz Busch

disc two

1. **BEETHOVEN** Overture Leonore II, Op. 72 (13:36)
Live concert performance, Statsradiofonien, Koncertsalen, Copenhagen 14 September 1950

2. BEETHOVEN Missa Solemnis in D major, Op. 123

Sanctus - Benedictus (16:29)
Erika Rokyta, soprano; Ingeborg Steffensen, contralto
Koloman von Pátaky, tenor; Alexander Kipnis, bass
Statsradiofonien Kor
Live concert performance, Odd Fellow Palæets store Sal, Copenhagen 14 February 1935

3. BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58

1st mvt. - Allegro moderato (17:33)
Rudolf Serkin, piano
Live concert performance, Statsradiofonbygningen, Teatersalen, Copenhagen
23 February 1933

4. BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125

4th mvt. - Presto - Allegro assai (24:38)
Erika Rokyta, soprano; Ingeborg Steffensen, contralto
Koloman von Pátaky, tenor; Alexander Kipnis, bass
Statsradiofonien Kor
Live concert performance, Odd Fellow Palæets store Sal, Copenhagen 12 April 1934

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Fritz Busch

Special thanks to Dr. Jürgen Schaarwächter

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Total duration: 2hr 28:13 (CD1: 75:57 CD2: 72:16)

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