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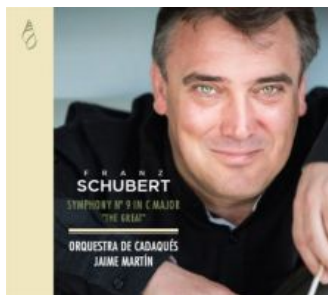
SCHUBERT Symphony No 9

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I've already sung the praises of flautist-turned-conductor Jaime Martín in his Tritó coupling devoted to Catalan composers Juli Garreta and Eduardo Toldrà (4/13), and now find much to like in his recording of Schubert's Great C major Symphony. Not only is he laudably attentive to the spirit and text of this mighty edifice (unless I'm mistaken, every repeat is observed), he draws some highly personable, beautifully blended and exquisitely turned playing from the Orquestra de Cadaqués (founded in 1988 for the eponymous music festival). Martín's pacing is spot-on, his approach admirably unmannered. He also possesses a keen ear and is judicious in matters of balance (I particularly enjoyed the trombones' tasteful contribution throughout), and the whole performance radiates a nourishing sense of proportion, dedication and grace that are very endearing (the Trio section has a gentle swing and delicious poise about it that cannot fail to lift the spirits).

Collectors weaned on old-school masters such as Toscanini (especially his blisteringly eloquent 1941 Philadelphia account), Mengelberg, Walter, Furtwängler, Konwitschny, Munch, Szell, Boult, Krips, Kubelík, Wand and Haitink may find it all a wee bit polite (I'm thinking in particular of the seismic climax of the slow movement), but I for one am happy to have made this lithe and fresh-faced newcomer's acquaintance. Glowingly engineered in the Auditorio de Zaragoza (which evidently boasts a very kind acoustic), this strikes me as well worth hunting down.

Author: Andrew Achenbach



SCHUBERT Symphony No 9

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