Audio CD

http://www.fanfarearchive.com/azImages/buy1.gif

What do I really want this year? Freedom from the computer glitches that forced me to sit out a deadline in June. But I guess I’m supposed to want CDs, so here are a few. Music & Arts has now made available a goodly number of Zino Francescatti’s hard-to-obtain treasures, such as his recordings of Vieuxtemps’s Fourth Concerto and of Maurice Ravel’s Sonata—and there are plenty of others of nearly similar interest in the set as well, along with a thorough discography dated January 2012. Irresistible! So, too, is Music & Arts’s set of live performances by Jascha Heifetz, in new transfers. Anyone for Korngold? Maxim Vengerov and Itamar Golan’s live recital at Wigmore Hall features a program nobody could beat: Bach’s Chaconne and Beethoven’s “Kreutzer” Sonata, with showpieces by Wieniawski and Brahms thrown in for good measure; and the electrifying performances would stand up to the very best of any era. And, speak of electrifying (maybe that should be ELECTRIFYING), every minute of the 80:55 of Toccata’s third volume devoted to the music of Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst could light a city for a year (so could the first two volumes: they’re better than solar panels). It’s not just a matter of the music and not just a matter of the performances and not just a matter of the recorded sound—it’s all of them. Rachel Kolly d’Alba also packs quite a punch in her program of George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, and Franz Waxman. I can’t think of anything better to say about her than my summary in the review: “d’Alba’s playing consistently affords a sort of sensuous pleasure in and of itself, both tonally and technically.” It’s true.

Robert Maxham