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**In his six series of broadcasts
Kai Luehrs-Kaiser
portrays detailed
the Hungarian conductor.**

Who was Ferenc Fricsay? From 1946 a steep success bestowed him in Salzburg, Berlin and Munich. Composers as Dvorák, Bartók and Kodály, hardly anyone ever conducted better than he did. With his aim of audio emphasis and transparency he has influenced probably the aesthetics of all radio symphony orchestras of Germany. What is the merit of Fricsay in our days?

Commemorating the 100th birthday of Ferenc Fricsay

Broadcast no. 1 (August 4th 2014):

A Bomb full of temperament: Characteristics of an unsought

To honor the 100th anniversary of the Hungarian conductor Ferenc Fricsay, Kai Luehrs-Kaiser, before giving his comments, the listeners can hear a few measures of Peter Tchaikovsky's Waltz ("Sleeping Beauty", arr Leopold Weiningner.) with the Radio-Symphony-Orchestra Berlin in 1952:

"Agile, and charged of enormous internal combustion, thereby also of strange sinister and numinous atmosphere ... the first sample of the Ferenc Fricsay - transmission which will occupy us. The occasion is the 100th birthday on Aug. 9: This birthday, Fricsay has not achieved, for he died in 1963 at the age of only 48 years.

If we consider the short period, Fricsay was given (after 1945) to form his international career on the stalls as conductor plus his fame, this exploitation appears incredible.

There is hardly a conductor, within a well-focused contoured profile, whose repertoire preferences - and dislikes - would be as clearly recognized. He succeeded mainly even in despite to the fact that Berlin was in the middle of smoldering reconstruction of the post-war period.

Who was this man? We trace this question in "Characteristics of an unsought".

Because: Ferenc Fricsay was unsought in the double sense.

After 1945, he appeared in Berlin, apparently without being asked, coming out of the vacuum. And to us, some fifty years after his death, he appears again as an almost exulted name that threatened to fade under the covers of sold out record editions gathering dust.

But, if there exist someone with the attribute "dust free", it was him.

First distinguishing feature of our small Ferenc Fricsay-summary (synopsis): Dynamism!

*Musikbeispiel: Audite ,LC 04480 95.499 Franz Liszt / Klavierkonzert Nr. 1 Es-Dur,
III. Allegretto vivace / Allegro animato
Shura Cherkassky, Klavier / RIAS-Symphonie-Orchester / Ltg. Ferenc Fricsay 1952*

And off you go! Save yourself if you can!

Tremendously dicey, spiky and emphasizing played by Shura Cherkassky, but challenged by Ferenc Fricsay with the RIAS-Symphony-Orchestra Berlin (live 1952).

To the first detailed profile of Fricsay to be specific the perilous spiritual vigor of his presentation, occurs at the same instant already a second feature, however slightly prejudiced: the Hungarian aptitude of this conductor.

In fact it seems he brings for all Hungarian depth of focus not only by his origin but also the right skills.

It is not hard to tell where this origin comes from: his Hungarian native country. – The Hungarian influence is not easy to explain. This affect is difficult to specify. - Except: pepper in the presentation. - A certain amount of paprika and puszta-spices is present in many of his interpretations.

But not always!

His pepper may be confirmed by his recordings of Liszt, Bartók and Kodály. But is it even with “Mendelssohn”?

Fricsay tended by no means to overact. - Especially not to exaggerate.

But – his second profile was almost always to set vehemently on fire.

*Musikbeispiel: DG LC 00173 474 383-2 Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy
Zwischenaktmusik zu “Ein Sommernachtstraum” op.61 / I. Scherzo: Allegro vivace
Berliner Philharmoniker / Ltg. Ferenc Fricsay 1950*

Precise but not fussy, - snappy but not old - fashioned.

A balancing act Fricsay dominated as nobody else.

Freshness and fire added together evolve to a special case of fulfil. These are his three big Fs. These three Fs we heard in today's first episode of our six-part broadcast to honor the 100th birthday of the conductor.

Saturday 9th of August, the Hungarian conductor would have been 100 years old if he would not have died over 50 years by now.

Certainly he is not forgotten, at least not by the orchestras whose sound of their instruments he characterized and they still preserve his honourable memory.

In the history of the present Deutsche Symphony Orchestra he wasn't ever just an alibi celebrity. - He had rather added a real basis of foundation for them; they can even call it “put a rock in position”, where they are enthroned up to our days being proud.

Fricsay capability is related to another of his characteristics: his thrilling analytic acuteness of his attention, this seems uncommon by anyone else in his profession.

The personal attentiveness of Fricsay to new music may have been limited. But the coolness of his view formed an essential transparency requirement for the Modern Music.

The incorruptible clarity of sound is always audible; whether he plays Verdi, Cesar Franck, Haydn or Hindemith.

*Musikbeispiel: DG LC 00173 474 383-2 Jean Francaix
Concertino für Klavier und Orchester / III. Allegretto – attacca: / IV. Rondeau: Allegretto vivo
Margrit Weber, Klavier / Radio-Symphonie-Orchester Berlin / Ltg. Ferenc Fricsay 1956*

Of importance at today's first episode about the conductor is not to forget a very significant aspect of his work: the local reference to Berlin.

Fricsay belonged to one of the last great conductors who did not act through networking, but united with only one place. He devoted himself to one or maximum two cities, no more. In his case it was Berlin and later Munich.

It might have probably changed if he would have become older. – However as his entire artistic work shows up, it communicates the slogan: - Think global, act local.

That means: to act digital worldwide - but don't grab with your ideas for the moon.

Polemical interpretation: Ferenc Fricsay is a refreshing antithesis of the presence, communicating the slogan: - Act global, think local.

Locally he was far too good not encounter recognition. Today worldwide many are on low level, as they would not betray their unsophisticated limitation.

Fricsay was not limited, not even in restricted areas.

*Musikbeispiel: Audite LC 04480 95.629 Johann Strauß
II Ouvertüre zu "Das Spizentuch der Königin" o. op.
RIAS-Symphonie-Orchester / Ltg. Ferenc Fricsay 1950*

The latter, warrant of characteristics of the conductor, his positively locally attachment in the good sense would certainly have been of little value, if Fricsay would not have had the talent to merge conclusions and join with a number of artists, with whom he was able to handle problems of importance.

The number of artists with whom Fricsay always collaborated, seems in retrospect remarkably consistent and special. These include names of artists who are today almost exclusively associated with him: the Swiss soprano Maria Stader also Ernst Haefliger, tenor of Switzerland, the Hungarian pianist Géza Anda and the Austrian violinist Wolfgang Schneiderhan.

He brought with charisma all musicians to best validity - and could still claim today a kind of exclusive right. Artists, not being constituted in a group, were united mainly by the connection to Fricsay.

By this latter aspect, Fricsay might have assured to hold the reins in his hands in consciousness of control, because the success depended of possessing the power to succeed like nearly all conductors.

However, it is certainly not the case that Fricsay's ability to fraternity - another "F" - only extended to unknown artists. In Berlin a singer of the century appears from the very beginning as a central part of the Fricsay family.

*Musikbeispiel: DG LC 0173 463 520-2 Georges Bizet
Couplet "Votre toast... je peux vous le rendre" / "Carmen", 2. Akt
Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Bariton (Escamillo)
RIAS-Kammerchor, Radio-Symphonie-Orchester Berlin / Ltg. Ferenc Fricsay*

Fire, Freshness, Fraternity: These three great Fricsay - F's can be already registered as special identification on the profile of today's first Fricsay-broadcast episode.

It has to be admitted that nothing has been heard of Fricsay's main repertoire. That has to be changed ... This main repertoire was double-size: it consisted of Mozart and Bartók. The compositions of Bartók established Fricsay almost single-handedly as an integral part in the first position of 20th-centuries music.

Bartók, just passed away in 1945, was then a composer in whose works the grade ink was still fresh. That these days Bartók - with compositions such as the "Concerto for Orchestra", the "Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta" and also the three Piano Concertos - is belonging to the first cream of music history, was never doubted subsequent to Fricsay.

An amazing fact.

Fricsay was stylistically an amazing guiding spirit for Mozart - far beyond his own time. - He took away the romanticizing image of Mozart. - He refrigerated Mozart – regardless of all raciness by conducting: just these paradoxes show the magnitude of this conductor. He focused - again - on transparency and contour clarity. Epochal - and almost shining upon everything else – But the soloist is the outstanding, legendary Clara Haskil.

*Musikbeispiel: DG LC 00173 431 872-2 Mozart / Klavierkonzert Nr. 19 F-Dur KV 459
Schlusssatz: Allegro assai.
Berliner Philharmoniker im Jahr 1955 / Ltg. Ferenc Fricsay 1955*

As the following we will contemplate the rise of Fricsay - not out of ruins, but from the imperial Austria of the period of war and the interwar period.

A mood of double-monarchy, within the musical idiom Fricsay remained palpable - and co-founded his distinctiveness.

But first, a glance to his repertoire, in which an example is still missing: namely the Italian one. Is it inspired by the Austria-Hungarian? Judge by yourself:

*Musikbeispiel: DG LC 00173 474 383-2 Gioacchino Rossini
"La Boutique fantasque" ("Der Zauberladen")
RIAS-Symphonie-Orchester / Ltg. Ferenc Fricsay 1955*