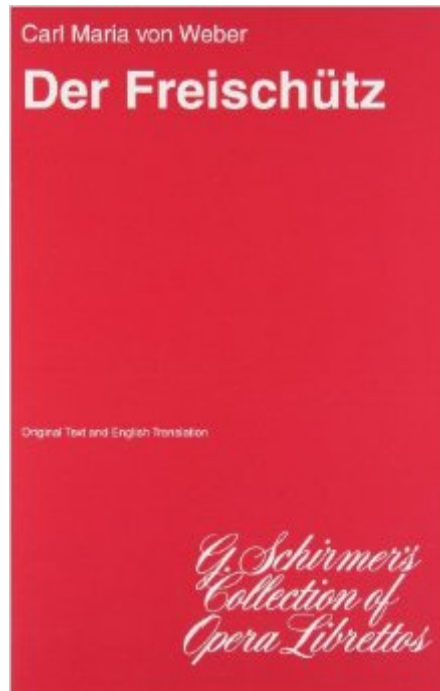


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Customer Reviews

The Gramophone magazine dismissed Colin Davis from the selection competition in the most summary manner. Having heard this, it must be admitted that Davis has a very different approach to the opera than Carlos Kleiber. Nor does Davis have as good a vocal line-up as C. Kleiber (or even Kelbeith). However, Davis makes more out of the score's drama than either Kelbeith or C. Kleiber. His tempi can be much slower (e.g. Max's aria in Act 1), and he does not emphasize of the folklore's joyous side as did Carlos Kleiber. However, the same Dresden forces play as beautifully for Davis as they did C. Kleiber some 2 decades ago. Davis is able to maximise the score's dramatic contents with such wonderful tool, and his singers, though far less eminent than Carlos Kleiber's (especially on the female side), nonetheless deliver what are required for them/as Agathe, Mattila is not as vocally polished as Janowitz or Grummer, and one must not forget that Karita was just at the start of her international career at the time of this recording. Her timbre is not fully smooth, but she does deliver the role's demands very capably. The Annchene is probably the most disappointing character, as Lind is not fully capable of depicting the varied emotions of this supporting role, robbing the plot of considerable drama by her rather bland reading. Wlaschiha and Moll excelled in the low voice categories. Wlaschiha almost equalled Theo Adam's dark Caspar, while Moll is both

powerful and serene as the hermit. Araiza's Max is not a bad reading, but would have been better under a more swifter tempo. He is however great in the Wolf Den Scene, probably the best ever conducted and performed Wolf Den Scene available on discography.

This certainly is one marvelously strong, vigorous and wholly melodramatic Freischütz grandly played by the Dresden Orchestra as led by Colin Davis. This recording shows opera at its undisguised musical and dramatic heights. If you like really stormy expressive opera this is your baby. The digital recorded sound is as excellent as I have heard and there is a lengthy booklet with English libretto. All the singers are fluent in German which helps considerably in expression of the language and the emotion. Ekkehard Wlaschiha (several times misspelled as "iBa" in the booklet) as Kaspar has an angry, malevolent, darkly handsome and muscular but smooth and absolutely perfect voice for the part. Araiza, although Mexican, has spent his entire career in Germany so sings idiomatically with his always dependable bright, sure, focused and stirring tenor and, with his outstanding acting ability, he makes a Max that is hard to beat. Mattila's singing of Agathe is a wonder of power and of masterful and resonant brilliance with precise control and intonation. This may be her finest performance brandishing a plentiful and fully round glorious soprano creating a complete and ascendant Agathe. Eva Lind, Ännchen, while not Rita Streich, nevertheless is perfectly pleasing and lovely. The Wolfschlucht is wonderfully loaded with sound effects of thunder, hounds, horses etc. greatly enhancing the spookiness and Davis allows room for Kaspar's Kugel count and Samiel's voice to be heard amid all the driving orchestral intensity and the building musical climax. The lesser roles are all handled very well and there is little indeed to complain about in this sonically overflowing feast! The final and seventh Kugel Samiel had no choice but to fire straight up in celebration.

Very pleased with the score. I performed the role of The Hermit and I was able to go through and highlight my part just fine. Very happy I could add it to my library of operas performed.

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