

## Gruss an Wien, New Years' Concert in Vienna - Peter Guth cond. - Arts

*Fattening Viennese delights with plenty of pep*



**Gruss an Wien, New Years' Concert in Vienna = SUPPE: Die schoene Galathee Overture; J. STRAUSS, JR.: Tik-Tak Polka; Csardas from Die Fledermaus; Freikugein Polka; "Schwipslied," Annen Polka; Pasman Waltzer; Eljen a Magyar Polka; Gruss an Wien Polka; J. STRAUSS, SR.: Speri-Galopp; LEHAR: Walzerintermezzo from Der Graf von Luxemburg; Meine Lippen, sie kuessen so heiss from Giuditta; E. STRAUSS: Bahn frei Polka; JOSEF STRAUSS: Delirien Walzer; ZIEHRER: Loslassen Polka; Liebe, schoene alte Donaustadt from Der Fremdenfuehrer - Ildiko Raimondi, soprano/ Strauss Festival Orchester Wien/ Peter Guth**

**Arts 47709-2, 64:04 \*\*\*\*:**

Since it's almost that time of the year--the New Year--this sprightly album plays perfectly for one hour of infectious Viennese delights. The Vienna New Year's Concerts is a tradition begun in 1939 under the guidance of conductor Clemens Krauss and extends through the leadership of Lorin Maazel, Riccardo Muti, Carlos Kleiber, Claudio Abbado, and here Peter Guth who, like Willy Boskovsky, likes to direct the orchestra with violin in hand. The collaboration of Vienna State Opera member Ildiko Raimondi in the festivities hearkens back to the days when Karajan played with Hilde Gueden and Fricsay with Peter Anders.

Most of the musical numbers are in the peppy mode, with the orchestra itself adding a spicy vocal interjection in the Tik-Tak Polka and the Hungarian pastry Eljen a Magyar! Anton Paulik's arrangement of the Annen Polka as a vocal whipped-cream bon-bon charms thoroughly. The gorgeous arias from Fledermaus and Giuditta enjoy the sultry, idiomatic flavor that is at once Vienna and a touch of the Orient and Iberia. The exquisite lilt, the accent on the second beat in the waltzes is echt Wien, a spirit I relish in my particular favorites by way of Krauss, Knappertsbusch and the two Kleibers. The eponymous Gruss an Wien, Op. 225 is a French-style polka with the three-beat hop at the end of the phrases. A hearty whistle and the Bahn frei Polka takes on a frenetic, two-minute musical train excursion of a lovely Sunday morning. The strings and snare drum in vivid DSD sound is an audiophile's dessert. The big pieces are the Ritter Pasman Waltzes and the Delirien Waltzes, the latter with flute, harp, strumming basses and shimmering strings, embraces the beating heart of Vienna. The grand finale is not, per expectation, J. Strauss, Jr.'s Blue Danube but an aria from Ziehrer, with Musician's Male Chorus and Raimondi's stratospheric high C in blazing Technicolor time. The audience from the 1/1/05 concert at the Konzerthaus--Wien goes nuts, and you'll be popping a champagne cork or two yourself.

--Gary Lemco

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