

Johann Strauss - The Blue Danube and etc (1995)

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Monday, 16 January 2012 09:51 - Last Updated Monday, 02 December 2013 22:50

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01. *The Blue Danube Waltz, Op.314* [0:10:22.00] 02. *The Emperor Waltz, Op.437* [0:11:56.00] 03. *Vienna Blood Waltz, Op.354* [0:08:16.57] 04. *Artist's Life, Op.316* [0:07:59.60] 05. *Voices Of Spring, Op.410* [0:06:38.20] New York Philharmonic Leonard Bernstein – conductor (CBS Masterworks – Great Performances 58)

Although this CD is only 45 minutes long, it is well worth your attention. Bernstein had a marvelous touch in light music (He composed such fine lighter fare.), leading to excellent recordings of Offenbach and light overtures. He once boasted that he would show the Vienna Philharmonic how to play Strauss waltzes, and based on the current CD that was no idle boast. Bernstein has a marvelous sense of how to pace these waltzes. It takes a little getting used to the N.Y. Philharmonic in this repertoire, since they play Strauss with a grainier string sound than the Vienna Philharmonic does. But there is a splendid lift to these proceedings. The Blue Danube almost glows with animation, and The Emperor Waltz has grandeur even in its softer moments. Voices of Spring virtually flies from the start, with soaring phrasing from the orchestra. Although this is an early CD remastering, the sound engineering is superb, with excellent tone color and a thrilling dynamic range. So, although it may seem an off the beaten path recommendation, Bernstein and Johann Strauss are a superb match. --- David Saemann, amazon.com

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