

AUDIOPHILE AUDITION

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We nearly have a crisis of Kreislers this month! Witness this:



KREISLER: Praeludium and Allegro; Menuett; Tambourin; Rondino; Melodie after Gluck; Allegretto; Hindu-Lied; Mazurka from Chopin's Op. 67, No. 4; La Gitana; Impromptu after Schubert; Liebesfreud; Liebeslied; Tambourin Chinois, Op. 3; Cavatina; Schoen Rosmarin; Songs My Mother Taught Me; Hungarian Dance from Brahms; Hymn to the Sun; Malaguena from Albeniz, Op. 165, No. 3 - Salvatore Accardo, violins Laura Manzini, piano - Foné Stereo-only SACD 003 69:17 **:**

Subtitled *The Violins of Cremona*, this 1993 extended tribute to the art of Fritz Kreisler has virtuoso Salvatore Accardo in the Cremona Town Hall Violin Room, plying his craft on five classic instruments, the Charles IX Amati; the Hammerle Amati; the Quarestani by Guarneri; the Cremonese of Stradivari; and the Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesu. Each violin comes complete with details of its provenance in the liner notes, so I felt like I was listening to a scene from the movie *The Deep*, except with Viennese music. For my money, the Charles IX and the Guarenri del Gesu steal the show with their rich tone and luster, which Accardo communicates with aplomb.

The selections themselves need little by way of restatement: most are stylistic reconstructions by Kreisler of ersatz composers whose contributions are more nominal than real. The Chopin A Minor Mazurka and the G-flat Impromptu of Schubert sail forth in seamless legato transcription. The Menuett after Porpora and the Cavatina are relatively infrequent works. I found the Hammerle Amati a bit nasal in tone color, but the Stradivari Cremonese on Schoen Rosmarin is no slouch. Ruggiero Ricci, as I recall, made much of the same display in a couple of old American Decca LPs, including an intriguing entry called *Violin Plus One*, where each selection paired the violin against a new solo instrument. Keep this one and get MCA to reissue the Riccis. The Accardo, though, is a striking addition to the historic catalogue in every respect.

--Gary Lemco