



HELMUT ZACHARIAS

Respect – The 68 Capitol Hit Recordings

CD / Cat No. BB 02 / released in 2005

Hamburg's small but beautiful label, bureau b, always on the search for exciting music hidden away in dusty record company archives, has, once again, unearthed an absolute gem. Their latest discovery is entitled "Zacharias plays the Hits", which was recorded in 1968 and initially released the following year. If the original title is a little hard to fathom, the reissue makes it perfectly clear what we are talking about: "RESPECT – THE 1968 HIT RECORDINGS".

Zacharias? Could that be Helmut Zacharias? The perennially perky virtuoso violinist? YES, IT IS HE! Back in the days, Helmut Zacharias was on the roster of the English EMI label, recording his own interpretations of contemporary hits in his own, inimitable style. Known in his native country more as an exponent of easy listening, on these sessions he tucks his violin under his chin and, with a wonderfully primed orchestra behind him, shows us just how effortlessly sexy, laid-back, swinging and groovy pop song arrangements can be. Zacharias leads us from Otis Redding's "Respect" via Donovan's "Hurdy Gurdy Man" all the way to The Doors' "Light My Fire" (for full tracklisting, check the back of the sleeve).

This musical delight comes – of course – in a high quality digipack, complete with a comprehensive booklet featuring previously unpublished photographs and detailed liner notes. Helmut's youngest son, the film composer Stephan Zacharias, ("Der Untergang" / "The Downfall") delved into his father's archives and his findings offer a fascinating insight into the making of the album. The sound engineer on duty in Cologne's EMI studios also casts his mind back to the sessions, whilst the original American liner notes are no less remarkable – not only for their cavalier attitude to facts, as their switching of Mozart and Beethoven's birthdays to suit their Zacharias narrative reveals. They also turn "The Magic Violin" into a "talking" violin...but no matter, the music remains intact and as impressive as it was in 1968.

High time, then to set the record straight and honour one of Germany's finest violinists, who sadly passed away on 28th February, 2002. And what better way to say it than: RESPECT!