Ferdinand Hiller was the son of a wealthy industrialist from Frankfurt. He studied with Johann Nepomuk Hummel in Weimar from the age of ten, lived for several years in Paris and finally settled in Cologne in 1850. He took over the direction of the Gürzenich Orchestra and the municipal conservatory, organised twelve instalments of the Lower Rhine Music Festival and played an outstanding role in Cologne's music scene. Nevertheless, the oeuvre of the precocious *composer* Ferdinand Hiller still requires careful review and evaluation. To this end, the two symphonies in F minor (1832) and E minor (1848) recorded here are revealing – these are two fiery, dramatic works of a vivacious temperament. He took audible pleasure in forcing his ideas into classical forms and rejoicing in the fact that they clearly embraced the boundaries.