

HISTORICAL REISSUES

THE HUGO WOLF SOCIETY, 1931-1938:

Vol. 1. Begegnung; Lied vom Winde; Auf einer Wanderung; Rat einer Alten; In dem Schatten meiner Locken; Heimweh (Mörrike); Die ihr schwebet um diese Palmen; Ach, des Knaben Augen; Nun wand're Maria; Gesang Weylas; Herr, was trägt der Boden hier; Auch kleine Dinge; Das verlassene Mädlein; Das Ständchen; Wenn du zu den Blumen gehst; Und steht ihr früh; Ihr jungen Leute; Du denkst mit einem Fädchen; Nein, junger Herr. Elena Gerhardt, mezzo-soprano; Coenraad V. Bos, piano. Vol. 2. Harfenspieler I-II-III; Anakreons Grab; Cophtisches Lied II. Herbert Janssen, baritone; Bos. Genialisch Treiben; Der Rattenfänger; Epiphania. Gerhard Hüsch, baritone; Bos. Die Spröde; Die Bekehrte; Blumengruss; Gleich und gleich; Frühling übers Jahr. Alexandra Trianti, soprano; Bos. Prometheus. Friedrich Schorr, baritone; London Symphony Orchestra; Robert Heger, conductor. Ganymed; Beherzigung. John McCormack, tenor; Edwin Schneider, piano. Vol. 3. Wohl denk' ich oft; Alles endet; Fühlt meine Seele; Um Mitternacht. Alexander Kipnis, basso; Bos. Erstes Liebeslied eines Mädchens; Nixe Binsefuss; Mögen alle bösen Zungen; Köpfchen, Köpfchen, nicht gewimmert; Klinge, klinge, mein Pandero; Bitt' ihn, o Mutter; Wer rief dich denn?; Mein Liebster hat zu Tische mich geladen; Schweig einmal still. Trianti; Bos. Benedeit die sel'ge Mutter; Der Mond hat eine schwere Klag' erhoben; Schon strecht' ich aus im Bett. Hüsch; Bos. Grenzen der Menschheit. Kipnis; Bos. Vol. 4. Was soll der Zorn; Ich esse nun mein Brot; Wie soll ich fröhlich sein; Wie lange schon war immer mein Verlangen; Du sagst mir; Ich liess mir sagen; Wohl kenn' ich Euren Stand; Man sagt mir; Wenn du, mein Liebster. Elisabeth Rethberg, soprano; Bos. O war' dein Haus; Gesegnet sei das Grün; Mir ward gesagt; Mein Liebster ist so klein; Ich hab' in Penna. Ria Ginster, soprano; Michael Rauchheisen, piano. Gesegnet sei, durch den die Welt entstand; Ihr seid die Allerschönste; Hoffärtig seid Ihr, schönes Kind; Dass doch gemalt all' deine Reize wären; Und willst du deinen Liebsten sterben sehen; Wenn du mich mit den Augen streifst; Heut' Nacht erhob ich mich; Ein Ständchen Euch zu bringen. Hüsch; Hanns Udo Müller, piano. Nun lass uns Frieden Schliessen; Wir haben beide lange Zeit geschwiegen; Gesselle, woll'n wir in Kutten hullen; Heb' auf dein blondes Haupt; Sterb' ich, so hüllt in Blumen meine Glieder; Wie viele Zeit verlor ich; Was für ein Lied. Kipnis; Ernst Victor Wolff, piano. Vol. 5. Mühevoll komm' ich und beladen. Rethberg; Bos. Auf dem grünen Balkon; Treibe nur mit Lieben Spott. Hüsch; Müller. Trau nicht der Liebe; Sie blasen zum abmarsch. Ginster; Gerald Moore, piano. Biterolf; Seufzer. Janssen; Raucheisen. Gebet; Auf ein altes Bild; An die Geliebte. Janssen; Bos. Verborgenheit; Denk' es, o Seele; Bei einer Trauung. Janssen; Raucheisen. Ein Stündlein wohl vor Tag; Elfenlied. Ginster; Raucheisen. Wie glänzt der helle Mond. Kipnis; Wolff. Cophtisches Lied I; Der Musikant; Der Soldat; Der Schreckenberger. Kipnis; Moore. Vol. 6. Der Feuerreiter; Gesellenlied. Helge Roswaenge, tenor; Moore. Mignon I - Heiss mich nicht reden; Mignon II - So lasst mich scheinen. Martha Fuchs, soprano; Moore. An den Schlaf; Lebewohl; Ach, im Maien war's; Herz, verzage nicht geschwind. Karl Erb, tenor; Moore. Neue Liebe.

Fuchs; Raucheisen. Storchenbotschaft. Fuchs; Moore. Dereinst, dereinst; Alle gingen, Herz, zur Ruh'; Tief im Herzen trag' ich Pein; Zur Ruh', zur Ruh'; Komm', o Tod. Janssen; Moore. Wiegenlied (im Sommer). Tiana Lemnitz, soprano; Raucheisen. Vol. 7. Wiegenlied (im Winter); In der Frühe; Sankt Nepomuks Verabend. Lemnitz; Raucheisen. Ritter Kurts Brautfahrt. Die Geister am Mummelsee. Ludwig Weber, basso; Moore. Fussreise; Lied eines Verliebten; Schlafendes Jesuskind. Janssen; Moore. Jägerlied; Der Gärtner; Auftrag; Nimmersatte Liebe. Erb; Moore. Geh, Geliebter. Fuchs; Moore. Der Sänger. Weber; Moore. Der Scholar; Der verzweifelte Liebhaber; Unfall. Erb; Moore. Wo wird einst; Sonne der Schlummerlosen; Keine gleicht von allen Schönen. Janssen; Moore. EMI RLS 759, 7 discs.

I wonder if any younger listeners can realize quite what the Hugo Wolf Society meant to its charter subscribers. Wolf, of course, had had his votaries; one could read claims that in some ways he was greater, even, than Schubert, and it was possible to form your own opinions by buying volumes of selected songs. But though in the twenties lieder recitals were more frequent than today, we didn't often find Wolf on the programs. For the record collector the pickings were even more slim. Victor and Columbia had a bare handful of Wolf lieder between them. Thanks to such emporia as The Gramophone Shop, The New York Band Instrument Company and H. Royer Smith in Philadelphia, there were a few more available on importation. But those of us who did our own exploring in Ditson's Musician's Library and Schirmer's Library needed a helping hand.

The thirties, on the other hand, were a veritable golden age of the song recital in New York's Town Hall. Lehmann, Schumann, Schlusnus, Ginster - these were a few of the artists who gave not annual recitals but series of recitals with generous attention to Wolf.

Some points in the story of the Hugo Wolf Society are set straight in the handsome brochure accompanying this set. The record society movement - the concept of marketing lesser known music by subscription - was not the single-handed achievement of Walter Legge, important though he was. The credit for getting the movement started belongs to HMV's legendary A & R man, Fred Gaisberg. But for a little pre-history, I am indebted to Alan Sanders, writing in The Gramophone for March 1981. The cell from which the whole thing developed did in fact originate with Legge. His enthusiasm for Wolf began with his hearing Frieda Hempel sing Ich hab' in Penna einen Liebsten wohnen in the early twenties. (I remember very well her singing of this miniature Leporello Catalog Song; with the final count of ten lovers in Castiglione she held up the fingers of her two hands.) Then, having read Earnest Newman's book on Wolf, the young Legge managed to make contact with the distinguished critic. Newman, taking up Legge's suggestion about the possibility of issuing Wolf songs on records by subscription, devoted a Sunday article to the idea, which in turn brought a response from Gaisberg. It was decided to approach Elena Gerhardt, still the reigning lieder singer though somewhat past her vocal prime, and by some subterfuge she was

engaged. But those were the days of the Depression, and for a while it seemed doubtful that 500 subscribers could be found. Compton Mackenzie then took up the cause in the columns of The Gramophone, and most remarkably, the quota was made up by Japanese subscribers.

Such was the rate of foreign exchange in those days, I remember well that as a charter subscriber I received Vol. 1 at the incredible price of \$6, and this held for Vol. 2 as well. At that point, the Victor Company woke up to the fact that it should be handling the importation, and the remaining volumes were less of a bargain.

And here we have all six of the published volumes, each fitting neatly on an LP disc, plus enough left over material to make up Vol. 7. The brochure reprints Ernest Newman's original notes and essays, with texts and English resumes, also notes and translations for Vol. 7 by William Mann, plus articles on the Society and the performing artists by Keith Hardwick and William Mann. As to the transfers to LP, they are as close to perfection as anything I have heard.

Many of the performances in the six volumes are still looked upon as standard, though of course styles in lieder singing have changed. Most of them were first recordings, and for that reason they made a special impression. In a few cases where the songs were familiar, or where a previous recording existed, I myself may still give preference to the first performances I knew, but as a totality these records are incomparable.

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When Gerhardt was engaged to record all of Vol. 1 it was by no means certain that the series could be continued. I suspect that the great singer was given the choice of songs she would like to sing. In later volumes more care was taken matching the song to the appropriate voice. Several of the selections in Vol. 1 would more properly have been assigned to a man. But Gerhardt was a special case, one of the few in whose singing gender always seemed unimportant. And though the songs were definitely masculine, I have never heard a singer eclipse my memory of her voice in that most heartbreaking of memory songs, Das Ständchen, or who could convey the contemplation of the girl going to church as she does in Und steht ihr früh or the quiet adoration of Wenn du zu den Blumen gehst. Her voice at the time of recording was far from young, yet who has ever matched the loneliness and chill she conveys in Das verlassene Mägdlein? Some of the more spirited or agitated songs are less successful, most notably Lied vom Winde.

Herbert Janssen's voice had a quiver in it which seems to account for occasionally doubtful intonation. But he applied his art to what still seems the definitive performance of the Harfenspielerlieder and such varied moods as Anakreons Grab, Denk' es, o Seele and the wry Bei einer Trauung. Occasionally, as with Biterolf, I find myself preferring the older Schlusnus record. Another baritone, Gerhard Hüsck was the

complement to Janssen; a smoother, richer, solider voice, he was at his best in some of the rhapsodic Italian lieder. Der Mond hat eine schwere Klag' erhoben, Gesegnet sei, durch den die Welt entstand, Ihr seid die Allerschönste, Und willst du deinen Liebsten sterben sehen. Again, perhaps because I not only had the Schlusnus record first but had heard his performance in Town Hall, I still find the older artist unforgettable in Dass doch gemalt and in Epiphanias. In the former, a comparison is instructive. Schlusnus is the more outgoing, the more impassioned Italian lover; Hüsck is more thoughtful, as if he were letting his mind run, weighing his words. Certainly there is room for both interpretations.

Alexandra Trianti's reputation seems to rest exclusively on her contributions to the Society. She was the first soprano engaged, a high voice trained by Ivogün, which some of us found too thin and piping for even the light songs. But at least one of them remains firmly in my memory; the sob with which she ends Wer rief dich denn? tells all we need to know about the protagonist. A somewhat similar voice was that of Ria Ginster, who first appears in Vol. 4. Ginster enjoyed a fine reputation at the time. Coming back to her interpretations now, I find her perhaps less satisfactory than Trianti, for the way she had of covering her tones did not help to make her words understood. Elisabeth Rethberg, needless to say, is another story. A voice of uniquely creamy quality, she seems even finer today than at the time when we heard her so often. I never tire of her honeyed tones at the end of Wie lange schon. And I may be in the minority with my admiration for the soul-searching Mühevoll komm' ich und beladen. Wenn du, mein Liebster, a gloriously devout secular song, suffers only from the recording balance, for surely we need a solider piano sound. Marta Fuchs is superb in nearly everything she does, especially the two Mignon Lieder and Mörike's Neue Liebe. And the crown of the sixth volume is provided by Tiana Lemnitz with the melting Wiegenlied (im Sommer).

Returning to the men, I need hardly mention the absolute rightness of Friedrich Schorr for the orchestrally accompanied, unshamedly Wagnerian Prometheus. Or of John McCormack (for all his irrepressible brogue) in the radiant Ganymed. Alexander Kipnis makes his entry in the fifth volume with his unsurpassable Michelangelo Lieder and the superbly bottomless Um Mitternacht. Favorites of my own in later volumes are Nun lass uns Frieden schliessen and Wie viele Zeit verlor ich. One questionable assignment was Wie glänzt der helle Mond, where this richest of bass voices impersonates an old woman dreaming of heaven.

Finally two tenors. Helge Roswaenge, whose voice was phenomenal, gives us a stunning version of Der Feuerreiter (but I for one have not forgotten an earlier recording by Heinrich Rehkemper). In either case, the grim ballad is a thrilling experience. Karl Erb's voice was a strange one, thin and wiry in quality but always put to the best use. None of Erb's contributions are forgettable, from the dreamy nostalgia of Ach, im Maien war's to the cynical Herz, versage nicht geschwind.

The pianist in most of the songs through volume 4 is listed as Coenraad von Bos, but according to my authorities (The New York Public Library, Library of Congress, Baker's Dictionary), the V. in his name stood for Valentin, not von or even van (he was a Dutchman). At the time he was the patriarch of accompanists, having played for most of the great lieder singers since the nineties. His sympathy with the various artists is exemplary; if one were to venture a criticism it would concern a certain "brittleness" in his touch where one expects a more solid tone. One suspects that he may have been a consulting authority as well as a performer in the early Society records. The first "guest" pianist was Edwin Schneider, McCormack's longtime collaborator. Similarly, though Hüsck sang his first songs with Bos, his regular partner was Hanns Udo Müller. For the rest, the pianists are Michael Raucheisen, Ernst Victor Wolff and Gerald Moore. The Society seems not to have concerned itself with original keys for all its care in selecting singers.

Of the material collected as Vol. 7, some has appeared independently. The first three songs by Lemnitz were included in that singer's commemorative set (SHB 47); four songs by Erb - Jägerlied, Der Gartner, Auftrag and Nimmersatte Liebe - were once available at 78 rpm on DB 6812 and 6813, and the first three were reissued on Od 83 392, an Erb recital. Marta Fuch's Geh, Geliebter was coupled at 78 with Erb's Nimmersatte Liebe. Der Scholar, Der verzweifelte Liebhaber and Unfall were also on Od 83 392, the second and third of them on DB 6812.

If Lemnitz produced a masterpiece in Wiegenlied (im Sommer) she also did beautifully by the companion piece, Wiegenlied (im Winter), which, however, is a more involved lullaby, concerned with some of the problems of life and less immediately appealing. Along with this comes In der Frühe (less inspiring, perhaps than with Lehmann or Schumann - she takes the indication Sehr getragen very seriously but does not rise so high in the climax) and a delicate performance of the mystic Sankt Nepomuks Vorabend. The black bass voice of Ludwig Weber is very right for three ballads, the finest of which is Der Sanger. Janssen is exhilarating in the favorite Fussreise, rather disappointing in Schlafendes Jesuskind, Erb delightful especially in Jägerlied, Der Scholar, Der verzweifelte Liebhaber and Unfall. Fuchs is appropriately breathless in Geh, Geliebter, perhaps too much so, due, I believe, to time limitations in recording.

THE YOUNG GIUSEPPE DI STEFANO: BIXIO: Vola, vola, vola; Canto, ma sotto voce; MASAGNI: L'Amico Fritz--E anche Beppe... O amore; DONIZETTI: L'Elisir d'Amore--Una furtiva lagrima; MASSENET: Manon--O dolce incanto... Chiudo gli occhi; THOMAS: Mignon--Addio Mignon: Fa core; ...Ah! non credevi tu; VERDI: Traviata--Lungi da lei... De' miei bollenti spiriti; MASSENET: Manon--Io son sol... Ah! dispar, vision; CILEA: L'Arlesiana--E la solita storia; PUCCINI: Tosca--E lucevan le stelle; VERDI: Forza del Destino--La vita è inferno... O tu che in seno agli angeli; DONIZETTI: Lucia--Io di memoria viva... Verrano a te (with

Maria Callas, soprano); PUCCHINI: Fanciulla del West--Una parola sola... Or son sei mesi; ...Ch'ella mi creda libero; Gianni Schicchi--Avete torto... Firenze è come un albero; Turandot--Non piangere, Liù; ...Nessun dorma; MASCAGNI: Iris--Oh, come al suo sottile corpo (with Rosanna Carteri, soprano); FAVARRA, arr.: A la Barcellunisa; Cantu a timuni; Abballati; Mutteti di lu Paliu; D'ANNIBALE: 'O paese d' 'o sole; BELLINI (attr.): Fenesta che lucive; DE CURTIS: Voce 'e notte; TAGLIAFERRI: Piscatore 'e pusileco; GAMBARDELLA: 'O Marenariello, Giuseppe di Stefano, tenor. The HMV Treasury, EMI RLS 756, 2 discs.

When di Stefano arrived at the Metropolitan in 1948 he was 27, a handsome young man with a lovely tenor voice, and looked upon as one of the white hopes of opera. Somehow or other he did not fulfill those hopes. Remaining at the Met until 1952, he pursued his career mostly abroad, returning a couple of times to something less than triumph. The present two discs will in a large measure explain the early expectations - they range in dates from 1944 to 1957.

His career began rather informally. He had just begun to study in 1939 when he was drafted into the army. After the surrender of the Italians he was interned in Switzerland for the duration. He managed to do some singing and some broadcasting from Radio Lausanne. He made his first records for HMV in 1944, and for a patroness he recorded a series of arias with piano accompaniment that same year. Three of these are included here. There is an engaging youthfulness about these performances, especially Una furtiva lagrima, which he begins softly and sings sensitively. The voice was easy and even, perhaps a little thin in quality, with a touch of Italian sunshine in it. He sang with real enthusiasm, especially the Neapolitan songs, and he had a genuine feeling for the words whatever he sang. If there are blemishes they are minor ones, a slight blattiness when he applied pressure, perhaps a little too much portamento - a tendency to hold on to sustained notes just a bit too long. Alfredo's recitative and aria from Traviata is rarely sung with such conviction, and his handling of Ah! fuyez, douce image (in Italian) is not overdone. In the Lucia duet he is better recorded than Callas, but it is a stylish performance and their unison singing is admirable. The arias on side 3 - from 1955 - represent him at his best, particularly Rinuccio's apostrophe in praise of Florence and of Gianni Schicchi. The duet from Iris may not represent a masterpiece, but it is a welcome novelty and the tenor is well partnered by Carteri. The last side, of lightweight songs, is distinguished chiefly by the Favarra arrangements despite their lush instrumentation. His singing is infectious.

WILHELM FURTWÄENGLER AS ACCOMPANIST: Broadcast recitals - previously unissued. WOLF; Im Frühling; Anakreons Grab; Bedeckt mich mit Blumen; In dem Schatten meiner Locken; Mögen alle bösen Zungen; Die Zigeunerin. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano; Wilhelm Furtwaengler, piano (12 August 1953, Salzburg Festival). MAHLER; Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Vienna Philharmonic (13 August 1951,

Salzburg Festival). STRAUSS: Waldseligkeit, Op. 49, no. 1; Liebeshymnus, Op. 32, no. 3; Verführung, Op. 33, no. 1; Winterliebe, Op. 48, no. 5. Peter Anders, tenor; Berlin Philharmonic (15/17 February 1942, Philharmonie, Berlin). I Grandi Interpreti IGI 382.

Though the featured artist here is the great conductor, the spotlight centers on three famous singers. The real novelty is hearing Furtwaengler play the piano. Some time in the late sixties tapes were discovered of an all-Wolf recital at the Salzburg Festival of 1953, when Furtwaengler payed Schwarzkopf the unusual compliment of playing her accompaniments. Twelve songs were issued on the Seraphim label. It was obviously not the kind of reverent occasion so many lieder recitals turn out to be nowadays, for enthusiastic applause burst out after each number. Now here are six more songs, apparently from the same recital, but this time with the applause cut out except at the end. It hardly needs saying that with the excitement of the live performance we must accept something less than ideal sonics. Schwarzkopf, thirty-eight at the time, was an established international star. The light lyric voice of her early years had been darkened into the tones we all remember. As for the conductor as pianist, it is difficult to form a conclusive opinion; one wonders if the audience heard just what we do in reproduction. The playing seems heavy-handed, yet not without sensitivity; his sympathy with the singer is evident enough.

According to the notes provided with this disc, the Mahler performance took place at the time Fischer-Dieskau was making his debut at the Salzburg Festival in 1951. His official debut is generally given as 1947, but the recording shows him as not yet the fully developed artist we know. I have a feeling he had not quite found himself in Mahler.

The four orchestral songs of Strauss bring back to us one of the finest German tenors in memory, whose death in an accident at 46, in 1954, may have deprived the world of the Wagnerian tenor we are always waiting for. These are all big songs, thoroughly Straussian in scope and orchestrated by the composer with all his mastery of instrumental color.

It seems superfluous to speak of Furtwaengler as a conductor of Mahler and Strauss. Whatever the deficiencies of the recording, there is no doubt he could make the orchestra sing.

Philip L. Miller