

THE ART OF LOTTE LEHMANN: MOZART: Nozze di Figaro--O säume länger nicht;
 WEBER: Freischütz--Wie nahte mir der Schlummer ... Leise, leise, fromme
Weise; WAGNER: Tannhäuser--Allmächt'ge Jungfrau, hör' mein Flehen;
Lohengrin--Du Ärmste kannst wohl nie erlassen; Gut'n Abend, Meister
(with Michael Bohnen, bass); Meistersinger--O Sachs, mein Freund; Walküre
--Du bist der Lenz; THOMAS: Mignon--Kennst du das Land; Mignon--Dort bei
ihm is sie jetzt ... Sie wird geliebt; GOUNOD: Faust--Ich gäb' was d'rum
... Es war ein König in Thule; OFFENBACH: Contes d'Hoffmann--Sie entfloh,
die Taube so minnig; GIORDANO: Andrea Chenier--Von Blut gerötet war meine
Schwelle; GODARD: Jocelyn--Am stillen Zufluchtsort; KORNGOLD: Die tote
Stadt--Der Erste, der Lieb' mich gelehrt; J. STRAUSS: Fledermaus--Mein
Herr, was dächten Sie von mir; MASSENET: Manon--'s ist für ihn ... Leb'
wohl, mein liebes kleines Tischen; Werther--Nicht kann ich's mehr verhehlen;
PUCCINI: Manon Lescaut--Ach, in den kalten Röhmen hier; Bohème--Mann nennt
mich jetzt Mimi; Tosca--Amaro sol per te (with Jan Kiepusa, tenor); Madama
Butterfly--Bald sind wir auf der Höh'; Turandot--Die ersten Tränen; R.
 STRAUSS: Rosenkavalier--Kann mich auch an ein Mädel erinnern; Rosenkavalier
--O sei er gut, Quinquin ... Die Zeit, die ist ein sonderbar Ding; Arabella
--Mein Elemer; Morgen; BRAHMS: Die Mainacht; SCHUMANN: Der Nussbaum; Die
Lotoblume; SCHUBERT: Der Tod und das Mädchen; An die Musik. Seraphim
 B-6105, 2 discs, \$7.96 (EMI-Electrola 1C 137 30-704/5M).

Few singers have passed into legend so generously documented as Lotte Lehmann. Ever since the early days of LP Lehmann anthologies have been appearing, representing her in one or the other of her careers - as opera or lieder singer. Born in 1888, she made her debut in Hamburg in 1910, moving on to Vienna and to great success in 1914. Her earliest recordings seem to have been two vertical-cut sides for Pathé made in 1914. The first in this collection must have been among her earliest needle-cut discs, dated 1916, and the latest was made in 1933. She made her American debut in Chicago in 1930, joined the Metropolitan in 1934, and in 1938 she settled permanently in this country. Thus the program pretty well covers her European career, primarily devoted to opera.

We in America remember her most affectionately as a lieder singer. The few roles she sang here included the "youthful-dramatic" heroines of Wagner - Sieglinde, Elsa, Elisabeth and Eva - Tosca, which she sang twice at the Met, and above all the Marschallin, of which she gave 26 performances in her 12 seasons. In her day the Vienna Opera, like the Metropolitan, was a real repertory house. All schools of opera were presented, and the leading singers made a point of versatility. But the language was always German.

One wonders, listening to this program, how her singing will strike future generations, or indeed the opera buffs who have come up since Lehmann's final Rosenkavalier in 1945. How much of her magic did these recordings really capture, missing the magnetic presence and the radiant personality? Of the characteristic warmth and expressive beauty of her voice there can be no doubt. But I suspect she rarely felt free in the confinement of the studio and with the timing restrictions of the 78 rpm

disc. She was a singer who reacted to her audience. Surely the voice recorded well, but certain technical limitations which might pass unnoticed in the theater - matters of breath support and phrasing - are exposed in the recordings. In this day of insistence on letter-perfect accuracy would she be forgiven some of the liberties she took? Lehmann was a law unto herself; we all loved her, and apparently her posthumous fans do too. The question is, what do these records tell them?

Of special value, aside from its rarity, is the early fragment from Lohengrin, Elsa's solo part extracted from her duet with Ortrud. Here is the voice in all its youthful glow. The Meistersinger dialogue, also dating from 1916, represents her in one of her finest roles and also does justice to her colleague, Michael Bohnen. The repartee is delightful. Again, Eva's outpouring of gratitude to Sachs, recorded in 1925, is full of ardent life. The other two Wagner recordings (made in 1930) are less satisfying. Elisabeth's prayer from Tannhäuser was originally contained on one ten-inch side. Needless to say, it is cut. More serious is the rapid tempo, which gains momentum toward the end. Du bist der Lenz suffers from the same malady. It originally occupied a half-side, preluding her Liebeshod. It is an almost breathless runthrough. One returns gratefully to her more shapely performance in the complete Act 1, conducted by Bruno Walter (Seraphim 60190).

It is no happenstance that her most memorable operatic recording remains the Rosenkavalier (Seraphim IC-6041), in which she shares honors with Schumann, Olczewska and Mayr, for that is an integrated (though abridged) performance under Robert Heger, a conductor of stature. The Marschallin's monologue presented here was conducted by Hermann Weigert in 1925. It has nearly everything except a certain mellowness, though of course the orchestra is not so satisfactory. Die Zeit, made under Manfred Gurlitt in 1927, is a step closer to the definitive version. The most recent recording on the program is the Arabella, dated 11 November 1933, exactly four months after the opera's premiere. Though Viorica Ursuleac created the part in Dresden, Lehmann was the first to sing it in Vienna.

The recording of Agathe's scena from Freischütz included here is not the familiar 1929 performance, but the acoustic version made in 1925 under Weigert. The later take is of course brighter in sound, and the singer seems more at ease. The opening recitative (including an appoggiatura missing in the earlier performance) is more effectively quiet and thoughtful. The final section (with its reprise of the overture) shows (especially in this earlier recording) the singer's way of making up in excitement what she lacked in vocal neatness. Die tote Stadt is represented not by the familiar Lautenlied, but by another effective moment (1924). It is a lovely performance aside from a not quite certain high C. The very hearty piece from Fledermaus, a souvenir of the famous Bruno Walter revival, was recorded in 1931 and has been many times reissued.

The story of Lehmann's unhappy period of study in Etelka Gerster's studio is well known. As Lehmann told it, Gerster's assistant had her tied in knots, vainly striving to master Dove sono. Yet Mozart's Countess

is one of the roles Alec Robertson has recalled with special pleasure from her Covent Garden seasons, and to him Dove sono was a high spot. She seems not to have recorded it. Here she impersonates not the Countess but Susanna. I am not convinced that Mozart was her forte. In Deh vieni, non tardar the voice is really too lush, and the requisite lift is missing. In all justice, she is handicapped by a rather awful German text. It is interesting that she sings the appoggiaturas, for they were not much in favor in 1933. Her phrasing's a little curious, with a break between the words dein and Haupt.

It must be admitted that translation is more than a matter of language. In Vienna, where everything was sung in the vernacular, the prevailing style was also Germanic. For the most part the French arias suffer from this. Worst of all is Connais-tu le pays? (1930) into which the Germans insist on shoehorning Goethe's original Kennst du das Land? Given Lehmann's sensitivity to words and her clear diction, the effect is particularly unhappy. The second Mignon selection, a more dramatic piece, recorded a year later, comes off considerably better. Le roi de Thulé similarly becomes Es war ein König in Thule (1930), only a slightly less awkward fit than the Mignon song. (One wonders about Lehmann's Marguerite - or Gretchen - how did she fare with the brilliant Jewel song?) Nor do the Manon (1924), the Jocelyn (1927) and the Contes d'Hoffmann (1933) overcome the language barrier. The Werther (1924) very nearly does so, for here the singer is at her most dramatic, and the voice quality is gorgeous. Indeed, if one listens only to the voice quality there is much to enjoy in the French arias.

The Tosca duet with Jan Kiepura is exceptional in that it is sung in the original Italian (1927). I have long had a soft spot for this recording, a meeting of two outstanding voices and two quite disparate temperaments. One has heard the unisons more neatly together, but both are obviously convinced of what they are singing. One misses the Italian in the Manon Lescaut (1924), but aside from a rather shrill high B-flat the voice is very appealing. The Bohème (1929) finds the singer rushed and ill-at-ease, and in the Madama Butterfly (1932), complete with women's chorus, the tessitura is bothersome. I have wondered about Turandot (in which she alternated with Maria Nemeth) and its high flights. Understandably Lehmann has confessed that she was never happy in the role. Nevertheless, this 1927 recording comes off rather well. Even better is the Andrea Chenier from the same year; it is dramatic enough to make the language somehow convincing.

Lehmann's great career as a lieder singer was mostly in America. When she came here, with her opera performances tapering off, she found an adoring public for her recitals. Many of the lieder records she made abroad are defaced by various instrumental combinations embroidering the piano part, for that was considered essential in those days. This is particularly sad, as the voice was fresher than in the musically superior American discs. Morgen (1928) here has the familiar violin obbligato, routinely played. Comparing it with the 1941 recording, accompanied only by Paul Ulanowsky, I find the whole conception less mature and less fervent.

And I am glad to note that some questionable phrasing has been corrected in the later performance. Der Nussbaum (1928) is vocally beautiful, and for once the anonymous pianist is on his own, but here again the 1941 version is artistically superior. The Kammerorchester in Tod und das Mädchen (1927) is a specially pathetic affair, nor does it help in Lehmann's quite hearty Lotosblume (1932). Here too, the portamento effects on the repeated word Liebe are surely excessive. Die Mainacht (1931) is the most unsatisfactory of the lieder, what with its souped-up accompaniment, the broken phrases and the erratic speeding up in the middle section. There is a far superior later recording of this song. An die Musik is done rather haltingly, more slowly than she sang it in later years, and with an unfortunate break between the words Lebens and wilder. Beyond question, at her best Lehmann the lieder singer later made up in artistry for what she lost in voice.

A number of the recordings have been on LP before, most notably on Angel COLO 112 (Werther, Fledermaus) and Seraphim 60060 (Madama Butterfly, Andrea Chenier, Contes d'Hoffmann, Jocelyn, Arabella). The new dubbings are very good, if perhaps a little less smooth. The program listed on the back of the album gives details as to conductors and dates. The imported edition provides even original catalog and matrix numbers. Both editions contain a warm and affectionate tribute by John Coveney, generously illustrated.

TIANA LEMNITZ: FLIES: Wiegenlied; BRAHMS: Wiegenlied; Feldeinsamkeit (Herta Klust, piano); WOLF: Wiegenlied im Sommer; Wiegenlied im Winter; In der Frühe; Schlafendes Jesuskind; Sankt Nepomuks Vorabend (Michael Raucheisen, piano); GLUCK: Orfeo--Komm und vertrau meiner Treue; Welch' grausame Wandlung (with Margarete Klose, contralto; Berlin State Opera Orchestra; Leopold Ludwig, conductor); MOZART: Zauberflöte--Bei Männern (with Gerhard Husch, baritone); Ach, ich fühl's (Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; Sir Thomas Beecham, conductor); Nozze di Figaro--Porgi amor; Dove sono (Berlin State Opera Orchestra; Bruno Seidler-Winkler, conductor); WEBER: Freischütz--Wie nahte mir der Schulmer...Leise, leise; Und ob die Wolke (Berlin State Opera Orchestra; Leopold Ludwig, conductor); TCHAIKOVSKI: The Enchantress--Mein Los ist seltsam (with Helge Roswaenge, tenor; Berlin State Opera Orchestra; Erwin Baltzer, conductor); WAGNER: Lohengrin--Euch Lüften, die mein Klage (with Margarete Klose, contralto; Berlin State Opera Orchestra; Johannes Schüler, conductor); Das süsse Lied verhallt (with Torsten Ralf, tenor; Berlin State Opera Orchestra; Bruno Seidler-Winkler, conductor); Tannhäuser--Allmächt'ge Jungfrau; VERDI: Aida--Ritorna Vincitor; O patria mia (Berlin State Opera Orchestra; Leopold Ludwig, conductor); Otello--Nun in der nacht'ge Stille (with Torsten Ralf, tenor); Sie sass voll Liede auf öder Weide; Sei mir gegrüsst Jungfrau Maria; STRAUSS: Arabella--Ich möchte meinen fremden Mann; So wie sie sind (with Gerhard Hüsch) (Berlin State Opera Orchestra; Bruno Seidler-Winkler, conductor). Tiana Lemnitz, soprano. World Records SHB 47, 3 discs, \$20.94. Imported by Peters International, 619 West 54th Street, New York City 10019.