

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 Schüller, 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.

I first heard the Lemnitz voice in her 1935 Freischütz recording. With that she set a standard she was never to surpass. Wie nahte mir der Schlummer was not the complete scene, but concluded with the end of the prayer; it was Und ob die Wolke that made the deep impression. Was there ever a creamier voice, or one under more perfect control? This eightieth birthday tribute comprises somewhat later performances made after she joined HMV-Electrola in 1937. The program is not arranged chronologically but grouped by composers. A single sheet insert lists the program with full information as to catalog and matrix numbers, and wherever possible exact dates and recording locations. On the reverse is an appreciation by Alan Blyth, but no texts or translations, "for copyright reasons."

Tiana Lemnitz was a late starter. Born 26 October 1897 in Metz, Alsace-Lorraine, she was the daughter of a band master, and there was music in her home. But although her voice showed promise she did not begin serious study until she was 15. The time, of course, was not propitious for launching careers, and her official debut was delayed until 1922. Beginning with small parts in a minor company, she reached the Berlin State Opera only in 1933. But she came as a thoroughly seasoned artist, and she quickly became a favorite. She remained 23 years. Her earliest recordings were made for Polydor in 1934, by which time she was 37. She sang at Covent Garden in 1936 and 1938, and in Buenos Aires in 1936. A contract with the Metropolitan was cancelled because of growing world tension. Undoubtedly she would have enjoyed a big international career had times been better. She was actively recording until 1941. In 1948 Walter Legge brought her back into the studio (the vestry of the 12 Apostles Church in Berlin was then being used). In 1951 she took part in selections from Rosenkavalier for Deutsche Grammophon, and she sang a couple of Ave Marias for Telefunken in 1953. The date of her various Urania performances seems uncertain. A recital at the end of her career in 1957 was taped and has been issued on a disc as Rococo 5320.

The first side is devoted to lieder, recorded in 1937 and 1948. I am not sure it was wise to lead off with the later performances, which are hardly up to her best. The so-called Mozart Wiegenlied (here properly attributed to Bernhard Flies) is sung rather stolidly, without the expected lift. The Brahms is also on the slow side; the singer is perhaps overly concerned with the not too important text. This is indeed a serious-minded mother! Feldeinsamkeit, on the other hand, is hurried. The singer is unaccountably restless lying in the tall grass. But for me the five Wolf songs are the high point of the whole recital. The summer Wiegenlied has long been prized as Lemnitz's contribution to the sixth volume of the Hugo Wolf Society. The voice is hauntingly beautiful, so much so that one hardly realizes this cradle song, too, is a trifle slow. The other songs, made at the same session, would presumably have been published had there been a Volume 7, but they appear now for the first time. The winter cradle song is little known because it is less immediately appealing. It is a less reposeful piece, and Lemnitz sings it with unwonted spirit. In der Frühe is measured and thoughtful, with a good climax, and as one might expect, her voice is at its loveliest in Schlafendes Jesuskind.

Sankt Nepomuks Vorabend is a very difficult song, and I am not sure that any of the singers who have recorded it - Fischer-Dieskau, Schwarzkopf and Annemarie Simon - quite catches the atmosphere. In Lemnitz's case I would blame the recording, for she floats her voice in a way altogether her own.

I find the Orfeo scenes with Margarete Klose vocally attractive but lacking in spirit. The first is definitely slow; in the second the tempo seems right, but it still drags. Two selections from the Beecham Zauberflöte and the two arias from Figaro must be well-known to everyone who reads this. Because they are so generally admired I hesitate to offer a mild dissension. I am bothered by the flutter that has crept into the soprano's voice.

Coming back to Freischütz in 1948 Lemnitz makes amends for the completeness of her First Leise, leise, and otherwise she pretty well matches the early Polydor version. Contrasting her performance in the second part of the scene with that of Lotte Lehmann, I find her controlled where Lehmann is exciting. Und ob die Wolke, nine years after the Polydor recording, is a shade or two slower, having been issued on two ten-inch sides. There is certainly a better cellist in the orchestra (Walter Lutz) but the singer herself does not reach quite the same perfection. I find a hint of unsteadiness in both Freischütz numbers.

The big scene from Tchaikovski's Enchantress is very rare in the original. Made in Berlin in 1941, it is a souvenir of the Berlin production in which both singers took part. There is real life in the singing, but the teamwork is not of the smoothest. The first Lohengrin band begins as labeled with Elsa's apostrophe to the breezes, continues through Ortrud's invocation of the heathen gods, and proceeds to the end of the duet. Lemnitz slides up to the first note, and her voice is tremulous; certainly Ortrud is too close with her interjections (Telramund is not heard from). The high spot is Klose's Entweihte Götter; for once it is dramatic but not shrieked. Of the bridal chamber scene we have only two sides' worth; to the end, that is, of Lohengrin's passage that begins Atmest du nicht... Ralf's is a curious voice, light in texture for a Heldentenor, but on the whole rather strong than tender. The tempo at first strikes me as a little fast. Lemnitz made a more nearly complete recording of the duet with Franz Volker (Urania URLP 7019) when that admirable tenor was past his prime.

There is some uncertainty at the beginning of Elisabeth's prayer, but the singer is effectively concerned with the meaning of the text; the scene is rounded off with an extended orchestral postlude. There are beautiful spots in both of the Aida arias, sung in Italian, but one gets the impression this was not her best role. In Ritorna vincitor the voice is under pressure; O patria mia has an uncertain high C, but she ends with a meltingly floated A.

The Otello scenes send me back to The American Record Guide for January 1942, when I reviewed the Victor pressings. "The first reaction,"

I wrote, "on hearing this pair of discs is apt to be regret that the music should have come to us in German translation. The duet doesn't sound too natural under the circumstances, and a few such lines as Du liebtest mich um meinen Abenteuer, and O küsse mich have a way of sticking out with almost a touch of humor..." But I proceeded to talk myself around to accepting so lovely a Desdemona in any language. I was less pleased with the Otello, whose voice "is a serviceable rather than a particularly beautiful one. He does not have to work at his singing with the strain that is almost traditional with German tenors, yet neither does he give an impression of the strength that was Otello." (Ralf, of course, was not German but Swedish.) Lemnitz is ravishingly beautiful in the Ave Maria, lingering on a superbly floated final high A-flat, then dropping down to a heartbreaking Amen.

According to Alan Blyth, Lemnitz was Strauss' first choice to create Arabella, and though she had to forgo this honor she remained his favorite. Certainly the voice is gorgeous in the music. Hüscher, too, is just right, though he never sang Mandryka on the stage. The duet is a little brisker than the classic version of Marta Fuchs and Paul Schoeffler, and it lacks something of the "mystical" quality they brought to it, but on its own merits there is little fault to find.

As I look (or listen) back over this program the singer's strong and weak points are easy to categorize. The voice at its best is beyond description lovely, especially in sustained high passages. She knows how to arch her phrases; she has legato and infinite poise. Nor is she one of those ladies so gifted with beautiful tone that they do not concern themselves with the text. If anything Lemnitz seems at times to be articulating with too obvious care. On the debit side, there is about her singing a great placidity, due, I think, to a lack of strong rhythmic sense. I have already alluded to her occasional unsteadiness, her sometimes excessive vibrato, even flutter. It seems odd to speak of a lack of support, but the voice at times lacks a hard core; the pitch becomes uncertain. She has a way, from time to time, of attacking a note from under. And she can be quite careless about note values. Perhaps the explanation of these shortcomings may be in the timing of her career. Coming into her own as a mature singer in the nineteen-thirties, she was to endure the hardships of the war years. But when all is said and done, her position in the history of singing is secure, for her best was incomparable.

P. L. M.