



## J. Lang: Lieder

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Hardly less impressive is the second of the CDs entitled Fee'n-reigen (Fairy-dance). It features Lieder by Josephine Lang (1815-1890) performed by Heike Hallaschka, soprano, and Heidi Kommerell, piano.

Felix Mendelssohn, who had been Lang's piano teacher when she was sixteen, was hugely enthusiastic about her as a pianist, composer, and singer of her own songs - and that alone should be reason enough to rescue the composer Josephine Lang from oblivion. Whoever experiences the sound of her Lieder on this world premiere recording asks all the more why the musical world has ignored this treasure for so long.

The twenty songs included on this CD were written over most of Lang's lifetime - from childhood to late maturity by a simply brilliant song composer - and feature the words of three of the 19th century's most famous poets - Heine, Goethe, and Byron - as well as six written to the words of her husband, C. R. Köstlin, a professor of law at the University of Tübingen.

Heike Hallaschka and Heidi Kommerell are able to move their listener with energy, pathos, expressiveness, soaring excitement, and they even put in the exclamation points in Goethe's "ja, sie liebt mich!" (yes, she loves me!)

The program notes by Holger Schneider in a translation by David Babcock are extensive and present to the listener a narrative of her life, with all of the difficulties faced by the grown up recipient of so much teenage wonder, as wife, and mother of six children.

For those readers who might want to teach other German composers besides Clara Schumann and Fanny Hensel in their Women in Music or Women's Studies classes, Josephine Lang and Alma Mahler Werfel would make excellent examples of 19th and 20th century composers with real talent who managed to fill their lives in music-making at the same time were confronted with all of the societal barriers facing creative women, each with arduous family responsibilities, and in the case of Alma Mahler Werfel, the perils of two world wars. Many thanks to Heidi Kommerell, Heike Hallaschka, Sabine Ritterbusch, and the producers and editors of these fine CDs for making such options possible.