Edith Mathis sings Mozart, Bartók, Brahms, Schumann and Strauss: Selected Lieder

aud 95.647

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Fanfare (01.03.2020)

Swiss-born Edith Mathis enjoyed a long and distinguished career singing lyric operatic roles, and there are a few recordings of Mozart and Haydn operas to prove her excellence. Her greatest successes however were in the world of oratorio. One understands why conductors loved her, as throughout her career, one finds unwavering perfection of pitch, tone, and rhythm, whether in the recording studio, or on stage. She is reliable.

As the dramatic scope of the art song is wider and more varied than the oratorio, and as there is no conductor to be the temperamental catalyst, Edith Mathis's artistic power fades somewhat when matters are left in her own hands, and the hands of her accompanist, in this case, the Swiss born Karl Engel. Pitch, tone, and rhythm all dutifully appear in their proper places, in their proper roles, but they seem to have fulfilled their duties at this point without delivering a compelling attitude or atmosphere to enchant the listener. This is a particularly significant drawback as the repertoire, aside from Bartók's jangling set of folksongs, is common fare, and one recalls too easily a host of great artists who have sung Das Veilchen, or Widmung, and made deeper impressions on the mind and heart than these pristine and proper readings given at Lucerne in 1975.

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