

WINNER OF THE INAUGURAL CITY OF MELBOURNE SONG RECITAL AWARD



Louise Page

sings **Richard Strauss**



move
digital

Accompanied by Phillipa Candy

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)

- 1** Die Nacht (Night) 2'55"
- 2** Befreit (Released) 5'07"
- 3** Cäcilie! (Cecilia) 2'22"
- 4** Morgen (Tomorrow) 3'57"
- 5** Einkehr (Visit to an inn) 3'08"
- 6** Du meines Herzens Krönelein (My heart's little crown) 2'00"
- 7** Zueignung (Dedication) 1'46"
- 8** Heimliche Aufforderung (Secret pledge) 3'23"
- 9** Ständchen (Serenade) 2'41"
- 10** Muttertänderlei (Mother's crooning) 2'38"
- 11** Allerseelen (All Souls Day) 3'00"

LIEDER OP 48

- 12** Freundliche Vision (Enchanting vision) 1'57"
- 13** Ich Schwebel (I float) 2'09"
- 14** Kling! (Resound) 1'35"
- 15** Winterweihe (Consecration of winter) 2'31"
- 16** Winterliebe (Winter's love) 1'40"

DREI OPHELIA LIEDER OP 67 (THREE SONGS OF OPHELIA)

- 17** I. Wie erkenn ich mein Treulieb 2'39"
- 18** II. Guten Morgen 1'25"
- 19** III. Sie trugen ihn auf der Bahre bloss 3'26"

FÜNF KLEINE LIEDER OP 69

- 20** Der Stern (The star) 1'48"
- 21** Der Pokal (The goblet) 1'14"
- 22** Einerlei (Sweet sameness) 3'02"
- 23** Waldesfahrt (Woodland journey) 3'36"
- 24** Schlechtes Wetter (Bad weather) 2'11"



The romantic Richard Strauss

Richard Strauss was born in 1864, and grew up as the Romantic movement in music was maturing. He survived both world wars to witness an explosion of musical developments including the twelve-tone music of Schönberg and the neoclassicism of Stravinsky before his death in 1949. For the most part, Strauss' later music continued to develop the style he had perfected in youth and middle age. He wrote about 200 songs, many for his wife Pauline de Ahna to sing.

His earliest songs are from the op. 10 group (tracks 1, 7 and 11), and were written in 1882-3 when Strauss was about 18. Their idiom is conservative and sounds quite classical, as he apparently found the music of Schumann and Brahms too modern. For example, *Zueignung* (Track 7) is reminiscent of Schubert, which may be why it is one of Strauss' most frequently performed songs. His 'conversion' to Romantic music occurred under the influence of his friend Alexander Ritter, who urged him on to "the development of the poetic, the expressive in music, as exemplified in the works of Liszt, Wagner and Berlioz" (Strauss' words). Through the mid 1880s, he developed his musical style to fulfil these ideals. The songs of op. 17, including *Ständchen* (track 9), were written in 1885-6, and begin to realise Strauss' Romantic ideals. By 1887-8 at the age of 24 his fully mature style can be seen in *Du*

meines Herzens Krönelein (op. 21 no. 2, track 6).

During the 1890s Strauss became famous as a conductor, touring throughout Europe and conducting the first performance of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* at Bayreuth in 1891. Until the First World War he spent most of his energy conducting and composing operas and orchestral tone poems. The many songs he wrote during this period were almost a hobby, giving him a break from the rigours of pieces on a larger scale. About his songwriting he wrote to Franz Hausegger in 1903:

"For some time I will have no impulse to compose at all. Then one evening I will be turning the leaves of a volume of poetry; a poem will strike my eye. I read it through; it agrees with the mood I am in; and at once the appropriate music is instinctively fitted to it. I am in a musical frame of mind, and all I want is the right poetic vessel into which to pour my ideas. If good luck throws this in my way a satisfactory song results."

His insightful and lyrical style is best illustrated by the songs of op. 27 (1893-4) and the song cycle op. 48 (1900). *Muttertändelei* (1899, Track 10) is charming and guileless, and *Befreit* (1898, Track 2) shows a command of long soaring melodies. This style developed in parallel with the extreme expressionist style that is a hallmark of the notorious operas *Salome* and *Elektra*, and other lesser known songs. It was useful for Strauss to keep up the art of lyricism in his songs during the 1900s as his best-loved opera *Der Rosenkavalier* returned to a lyrical style.

The decline in music on a large-scale brought on by the First World War saw Strauss returning to writing songs with piano accompaniment. He wrote a cycle of twelve satirical songs in 1913-1918,

and then in 1919 during a flourish of activity he brought out three song cycles comprising 17 songs in all. The *Ophelia* songs, op. 67, nos 1-3 (Tracks 17-19), use German translations of Ophelia's three songs from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, drawing on the considerable resources Strauss had developed for the portrayal of madness and extreme emotions. The music is sometimes childlike but sounds slightly weird, which accurately portrays Ophelia singing her popular rhymes as she descends into madness. The *Fünf kleine Lieder* (Five Little Songs, Tracks 20-24) are almost his last songs for piano and voice.

The first three are composed to poems of von Arnim on positive humanist and metaphysical subjects, which Strauss illustrates beautifully with his mature command of line and texture. *Waldesfahrt* (Forest Journey) is a poem by Heine about shadowy figures seen on a journey through a beautiful forest in a half-dreaming state. The music alternates between slow lyricism describing the forest slowly passing by, and quicker, stranger music describing the shadowy figures. This alternation between calmness and frenetic activity is characteristic of music describing madness, but in this case it is tongue-in-cheek and the figures are not really threatening. *Schlechtes Wetter* (Bad Weather), also by Heine, has the poet sitting inside watching a mother walking through wind and rain to buy cake ingredients for her spoiled daughter. The flourishes at the beginning describing the thunder and rain appear throughout the song, providing a background to the image of the daughter lazily lying at home in an armchair. These last two pieces stretch somewhat the definition of 'small songs'!



Louise Page graduated with a distinction in 1988 from the Canberra School of Music, where she studied with Ronald Maconaghie. The following year she was the vocal finalist in the 'ABC Young Performer of the Year' and won the Robert Stolz scholarship to study in Vienna.

As a member of the Vienna State Opera Studio she performed roles in a number of State Opera productions and has participated in concerts and operas in Austria, Germany and Belgium.

She has worked with teachers such as Waldemar Kmentt, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Sena Jurinac and Geoffrey Parsons.

Since returning to Australia, Louise has given numerous recitals with accompanist Phillipa Candy as well as appearing in oratorios, concerts and operas in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra.

In June 1995 Louise won the Mietta's Inaugural Song Recital Competition (now the City of Melbourne Recital Award) and has since appeared in recitals for Musica Viva, The Port Fairy Spring Festival and the Collins Street Promenade with accompanist Len Vorster.

Phillipa Candy is a graduate of the Canberra School of Music (studying with Joan Chia) and has a Masters degree from the Hobart Conservatorium (studying with Beryl Sedivka) and from Temple University (with Charles Abramovic). She has also studied with celebrated accompanist Geoffrey Parsons.

She has worked as an accompanist and repetiteur for the Philadelphia Singers and for the studio of the renowned operatic baritone Robert MacFarland. She was a founding member of the group Austral Skies which specialised in performing Australian music and which toured for Musica Viva in 1988.

She was contracted to be Musical Director and Conductor for Canberra City Opera's 1996 season (including The Marriage of Figaro, Trial by Jury and Some Enchanted Evening) and has been the Director of the Canberra Harmonie Germany Choir since 1994.

In partnership with soprano Louise Page she has given many lieder recitals to high critical acclaim.

Art Song is distinguished from other forms of singing by the close attention paid to the mood of the lyrics and the importance of the accompanying piano. It is an intimate and powerful art form bringing together poet, composer, pianist, singer and audience member. But the performance of art song is all too rare today. A concern to reverse the diminishing numbers of practitioners and audiences led to the creation of the Song Recital Award in 1995 by Mietta O'Donnell and Tony Knox under the patronage of the distinguished contralto, Lauris Elms. A committee was set up, chaired by Professor John Poynter with members - Michael Bertram, Carl Carthy, Sonja Chalmers, Margaret Haggart, Linnhe Robertson, Michael Shmith, Joan Spiller, Maria Vandamme and Jeremy Vincent. In 1997 this Award also attracted the patronage of acclaimed pianist, Geoffrey Tozer.

This disc records the beautiful voice of Louise Page, winner of the inaugural Song Recital Award in 1995. Judges for the 1995 Award were Stella Axarlis, David Barmby, Lauris Elms, Hartley Newnham, Linnhe Robertson, Maria Vandamme and Chair, Eda Ritchie.



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