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06/18-(3)

Hanns Eisler (1898-1962)
Lieder Vol. 3
Songs in American Exile
1938-1948

Holger Falk, baritone
Steffen Schleiermacher, piano

1 CD

MDG 613 2084-2

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American Exile

The program of Vol. 3 of the Hanns Eisler project by Holger Falk and Steffen Schleiermacher – a meritorious endeavor that has already earned them various prizes – features songs from this composer's American exile. The *Hollywood Songbook* is a major work, even if measured solely by its length and total of thirty-two pieces. Moreover, the concentration and intensification of the content attained by Eisler while he was residing on the Pacific Coast make this rather loosely organized collection of occasional pieces what is certainly the most important song cycle of the twentieth century.

Entertainment Industry

Unlike many other exiles, Eisler was extremely successful in California, both artistically and financially. In the expanding entertainment industry there was an increasing demand for new film music, which Eisler supplied both willingly and reliably. His songs reveal the other side of his life in exile: yearning for home, reluctance to come to terms with his fate, and the insecurity of his life in exile. Once again Bertolt Brecht authored a great many of these impressive texts.

European Input

Curiosities are also represented here. Eisler set the two songs to texts by Blaise Pascal in an English translation he happened to come across in his

domicile, a version of Goethe's "Schatzgräber" of genuinely balladic character, and some fragments based on Anacreon, whose original texts he rather unscrupulously revised, even to the point of reversing their meaning. It was also during his exile that he set the six famous *Hölderlin Fragments* as well as the seven *Elegies* today numbering among his most famous songs.

Authentic Extent

The precise length of the *Hollywood Songbook* and the order of its titles are not entirely clear. The usual order of the thirty-two songs was not presented in full until 1982, forty years after Eisler's death. Holger Falk and Steffen Schleiermacher complement this extensive cycle with some pieces from their temporal and topical context. The result is a most deeply moving, stellar song performance, presented with profound sympathy but without any obvious pathos or edifying kitsch.

Hanns Eisler

Lieder Vol. 1
Songs and Ballads 1929-1937
MDG 613 2001-2

Hanns Eisler

Lieder Vol. 2
Songs and Ballads 1948-1962
MDG 613 2040-2

