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04/17-(6)

Hanns Eisler (1898-1962)
Songs Vol. 1
Lieder und Balladen 1929-1937

Holger Falk, baritone
Steffen Schleiermacher, piano

1 CD

MDG 613 2001-2

UPC-Code:



LC06768

Class Struggle

“Change the world; it needs it!” Hanns Eisler always remained true to this challenge. Between the Great Depression and the Third Reich the committed communist endeavored to exercise influence with his music as his medium. On the first volume of our edition of Hanns Eisler’s songs, Holger Falk and Steffen Schleiermacher present pieces from the years between 1929 and 1937 for which Bertolt Brecht supplied almost all the texts. A long-overdue rehabilitation of a composer who for many years was known above all as the German Democratic Republic’s artistic spokesman!

Courageous Heart

The tightrope over which the artists moved was very narrow. Today their honest and unconditional admiration for communism may seem rather strange – so that it is all the more remarkable how Holger Falk maintains a balance between genuine emotion and grand pathos! The spectrum is broad, and the repertoire ranges from the brazen “Lied vom Anstreicher Hitler” through the oppressive “O Falladah, wie du da hangest” to cabaret pieces like the “Stempellied” thematizing with original Berlin “heart and fist” the poverty experienced by many people during the Great Depression.

Clenched Fist

Eisler’s fight songs dedicated to the working class continue to be remembered today – especially the “Solidaritätslied” and the “Einheitsfrontlied,” which later became popular tradition both in East Germany

and among the Left in West Germany. Marching may have fallen somewhat out of fashion, but this does not at all diminish the impact of these songs. We enjoy the intensive presentation of the performers even more while they find precisely the right middle position between ambitious and unassuming artistry.

Contemporary Satire

Now and then we also have a *déjà-vu* experience. Given today’s financial crisis, the “Bankenlied” could hardly be more topical, and even in the “Lied vom SA-Mann” similarities to the current world order are unsettlingly evident. Without assuming the affected pose of media pundits or the aggressive stance of moral policemen, Fink and Schleiermacher capture the essence of these pieces – as genuine works of art offering knife-sharp satiric glimpses of the first half of the twentieth century and leaving nobody unmoved.

Josef Matthias Hauer

Music with Hölderlin
Holger Falk, baritone
Steffen Schleiermacher, piano
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Erik Satie

Lieder und Chansons
Holger Falk, baritone
Steffen Schleiermacher, piano
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