

“Waldeinsamkeit”

Robert Schumann: Liedkreis op. 39
Johannes Brahms: Liedersammlung

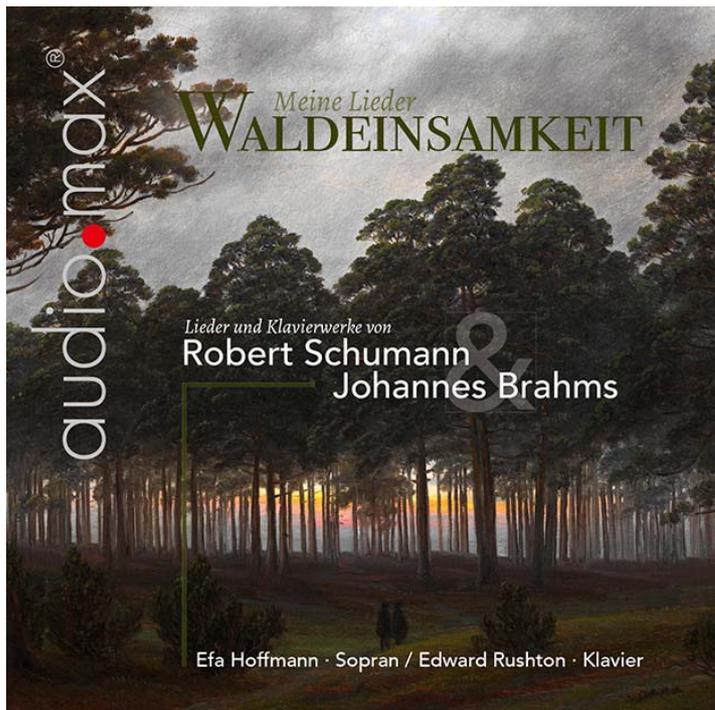
Efa Hoffmann, soprano
Edward Rushton, piano

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Robert Schumann's *Liederkreis* is among the most romantic creations ever produced by romantic music. Here Joseph von Eichendorff's wonderful poems also play a significant role: profound seeking, longing, and yearning could certainly hardly be captured in more impressive words. Many a firmly held belief has to be thrown overboard – but who cares? On her CD debut Efa Hoffmann brings together the *Liederkreis* and a selection of folk songs by Johannes Brahms in a multifaceted exploration of the program's unifying theme of *Waldeinsamkeit*: the solitude of the woods. When she presents this theme to her concert audiences in song recitals, she even incorporates special optical effects.

It was a mistake that occasioned Efa Hoffmann's first occupation with the *Liederkreis*; she actually wanted to buy an entirely different score. But this too is typically romantic: abandoning what one intended and absorbing what comes one's way. And so it began: a love story reaching its current high point on this recording of the *Liederkreis* with Edward Rushton.

“Hüte dich, sei wach und munter!” Eichendorff calls for caution, watchfulness, and alertness at the end of “Zwielicht.” Schumann's quotation of this text in the epigraph to “Der Vogel als Prophet” (The Prophet Bird) from the *Waldszenen* (Forest Scenes) demonstrates his close ties to the romantic poet's world of ideas. Here uncertainty, uncontrollability, and twilight can be heard everywhere. A generation later Johannes Brahms followed another path. His “folk songs” capture the folk tone with gripping simplicity. Since nothing is too much and nothing too little, significant hints are avoided. And yet – or precisely for this reason? – the songs go straight to the heart in music that is simply enthralling and indescribably beautiful!