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MDG
SCENE



Auf jenen Höh'n

Gustav Mahler (1860 - 1911)
Kindertotenlieder

Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897)
Vier ernste Gesänge op. 121

Frank Martin (1890 - 1974)
Sechs Monologe aus Jedermann

Hanno Müller-Brachmann,
Bass-Baritone
Hendrik Heilmann, Piano

MDG 908 2231-6



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RECORDING

Serious

Like hardly any other musical genre, the art song is created to express extreme human states of mind. The preoccupation with dying and death, with the loss of loved ones and with one's own transience is therefore always at the centre. Baritone Hanno Müller-Brachmann and pianist Hendrik Heilmann have chosen Mahler's "Kindertotenlieder", Frank Martin's "Jedermann-Monologe" and "Vier ernste Gesänge" by Johannes Brahms from among the rare cyclical works that deal with this theme in different and yet always deeply moving ways.

Mourning

The "Kindertotenlieder" are certainly among the most moving works of music and poetry ever produced. In these more than 400 poems, Friedrich Rückert deals with the loss of his only daughter and one of his sons, who died of scarlet fever in infancy. Gustav Mahler's selection from this enormous collection unites all extremes of human emotion: from grief and despair to repression in dreams and hope for redemption and reunion in the hereafter.

Consolation

Brachmann and Heilmann explore these extremes, for example in "In diesem Wetter, in diesem Braus", in which the voice has to virtually scream against the storm, only to find comfort shortly afterwards in an almost heavenly lullaby. Martin's "Everyman Monologues" begin where Hoffmannsthal's famous "Everyman", already abandoned by all earthly friends, looks towards his end. The former philanderer, at first plagued by mortal fear, finds his way back to his creator in the end: it is fascinating how Martin knows how to set this transformation to music with Hoffmannsthal's doggerel verses!

Love

Brahms, on the other hand, takes texts from the Bible as a model for his "Four Serious Songs", from the litanies of transience in Ecclesiastes to the "Song of Songs" from the First Letter to the Corinthians. Whether the losses Brahms had to mourn at the time of writing, or even a premonition of his own death only a short time later, left their mark on the composition must remain open. In any case, Brachmann and Heilmann find a personal approach to the works that brings their own consternation deeply home.