

The art of Max Lichteegg

I was delighted to encounter from Archipel/Andromeda a four-CD celebration of the Swiss-Jewish tenor **Max Lichteegg** (1910-92) whose post-war 78s for Decca are prized by the few present-day voice aficionados who know about them, but who has, up to now and as far as I know, received only a single (excellent) local silver-disc reissue, and that from Dutton. Lichteegg's style is immediately engaging, his voice at times animated in the manner

of Peter Anders, while on other occasions more approximating the bold heroics of Wolfgang Windgassen: a featured 1947 Los Angeles broadcast recording of *Die Walküre* Act I scene 3, with Rose Bampton as Sieglinde and Alfred Wallenstein conducting, confirms the latter conclusion. Duets with Erna Sack, Lisa Della Casa, Janine Micheau, Dagmar Koller, Lela Bukovic and others are good to have, and there are tracks conducted by Franz Lehár and Otto Ackermann. We're offered Schubert songs sensitively accompanied by Georg Solti, as well as Schubert orchestrated by Felix Weingartner and Max Reger. What most impresses me is how Lichteegg retained the youthfulness of his voice well into maturity: OK, a Schubert sequence from 1980 with his son Theodor Lichtmann at the piano finds him 'belting it out' (as they say), but elsewhere you'd be hard-pressed to distinguish between recordings made in the 1940s and those from the 1970s. Perhaps the most affecting selection occupies the last CD, 'Religiosa/Judaica', with Verdi's 'Ingemisco', Niedermeyer's 'Pietà, Signore' and various Jewish songs, including a Yiddish sequence set down in 1973, again with Theodor at the piano. The folk song 'Di maschke' was recorded in Zürich in 1943 just a little less than a year after another fine Jewish tenor, Josef Schmidt, had died in the same city under tragic circumstances. He was only 38 years old whereas Lichteegg had the good fortune to make relatively old bones and, thanks to Archipel/Andromeda, we can now enjoy his recorded legacy. The transfers, from commercial discs and broadcast sources, are mostly excellent and we're provided with some useful annotation.

THE RECORDING



Max Lichteegg:
A Voice for Generations
Andromeda ④ ⑧
ANDRCD 9127