

insouciance of the last verse. Crucially, too, the two final songs have a sense of cathartic release, with Holzmair floating an unearthly *pianissimo* in the closing verse of 'Des Baches Wiegenlied'.

While this isn't the most scrupulously sung *Schöne Müllerin* on offer (the studio recording with Cooper is better in this respect), Holzmair's sympathetic, tenorish baritone and quicksilver response to mood and verbal nuance are never less than compelling. It joins the handful of favourite baritone versions listed below, its claims enhanced by Holzmair's wonderfully *innig* performances of Schubert's two 'Wandlers Nachtlieder' as encores.

Richard Wigmore

Selected comparisons:

Fischer-Dieskau, Moore (11/62⁸) (EMI) 085209-2

Holzmair, Cooper (7/99) (PHIL) 456 581-2PH

Goerne, Schneider (A/02) (DECC) 470 025-2DH

Gerhober, Huber (2/04) (ARTN) 82876 53172-2

Quasthoff, Zeyen (2/06) (DG) 474 218-2GH

Valls

Missa Scala Aretina. Lauda Ierusalem. Sancta et immaculata. En el misterioso circo. De lamentatione Ieremiae prophetae. Surrexit pastor bonus. Domine vim patior. Plorans ploravit. Ave Maria. Sombras cobardes

La Grande Chapelle / Albert Recasens

Lauda © LAU014 (75' • DDD)



Francesc Valls (c1671-1747) was an adoptive Catalan who spent most of his career as

the chapel-master of Barcelona Cathedral. Today he is best known for theoretical works and his *Missa Scala Aretina* (1702), one of the last pieces to make overt reference to Guido of Arezzo's famous hexachord. An exceptionally informative booklet details the controversy surrounding it, ostensibly a matter of music theory but actually one of political allegiances. It's a beguiling mixture of old and new, full of incidence, with choir, soloists and parts for strings and trumpet (the latter perhaps added for a subsequent performances a few years later). It would be worth hearing on its own but one's appreciation is enhanced by Valls's other works on the disc, which are extremely varied. There's a wonderful concertato *Lauda Jerusalem* with daredevil clarino parts; a couple of chromatic pieces, entertaining if a touch overdone; a pair of penitential motets and an *Ave Maria*, all genuinely affecting; and a brace of villancicos, one of which prefigures the Mass's subject in its opening bars and is programmed just before it.

The surface of the music is immediately engaging but it grows in interest with repeated listening. The performances are on a level with the programming and the music (and, incidentally, the handsome presentation): as in their fine Piazza Navona disc a few years back, the sense of occasion is palpable. La Grande Chapelle's championing of Iberian polyphony has been winning them many admirers, and they've hit another bull's-eye here.

Fabrice Fitch

Wolf

'The Complete Songs, Vol 8 - Eichendorff Lieder' Gedichte von Joseph von Eichendorff.

In der Fremde - I; II (second setting); VI.

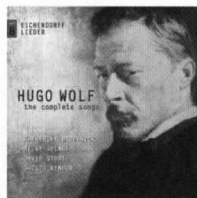
Die Kleine. Nachruf. Rückkehr

Katherine Broderick *sop* Nicky Spence *ten*

David Stout *bar* Sholto Kynoch *pf*

Stone Records © 5060192 780420 (62' • DDD • T/T)

Recorded live at St John the Evangelist, Iffley Road, Oxford, May 11, 2013



The latest volume in Stone Records' complete survey of Wolf's songs follows

the same pattern as previous releases: young singers are brought together with the excellent pianist Sholto Kynoch, founder of Oxford Lieder, under the auspices of which this live recording was made. The sound is clear and alive, the presentation exactly what one would want, with full texts and translations, plus a detailed essay from Richard Stokes that explores the composer's relationship with Eichendorff. The tracks are in sensible order, too, with Wolf's six 'unofficial' settings of the poet coming ahead of the 20 that featured in the published sets.

Kynoch's accompaniments are beautifully sensitive, flexible and transparent throughout, and all three singers engage intelligently with the texts. Katherine Broderick's performances, for example, often have an infectious twinkle in their eye – her 'Die Zigeunerin' has a wonderful, slightly unhinged quality to it – which largely makes up for the slightly acidic edge in her powerful soprano, and the fact that it can't manage a great deal of purity and steadiness high up. Pure, clean tenor tone doesn't feature much in Nicky Spence's singing but his vivid way with the poetry offers similar recompense. I have few complaints, by contrast, about David Stout's robust, resonant baritone, a pleasingly rich and chewy voice used with style; his contributions are the highlight of the disc.