

Lotte Lehmann Workshop with Jeannine Altmeyer

Graciously sponsored by Gary Hickling & Dennis Moore

Friday, July 12th, 2014

Christine Ebeling, soprano

Sonntag.....Johannes Brahms

Eric Schlossberg, countertenor

Erkönig.....Franz Schubert

Erin Winker Fasone, soprano

Das Veilchen.....Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Tyler Mortensen, tenor

Die Mainacht.....Johannes Brahms

Mia Bonnewell, soprano

Standchen.....Richard Strauss

Danielle Davis, soprano

Elsa's Dream (Lohengrin).....Richard Strauss

Accompaniment by Aurelien Eulert and Paul Floyd



Jeannine Altmeyer won the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions in 1970 and made her Metropolitan debut as the Celestial Voice in Don Carlo on September 25, 1971. Her Chicago debut took place less than two months later, when she sang the role of Freia in *Das Rheingold*. Freia was the role for her European debut at the 1973 Salzburg Festival, and again for Zurich Opera in 1975. Beginning in 1975, Altmeyer was engaged in Stuttgart. During her half decade there, she was assigned the role of Sieglinde for the legendary Boulez-Chereau Ring cycle which celebrated the 1976 Bayreuth Festival Centenary. Afterward she performed the role of Brünnhilde worldwide and recorded all three incarnations for Marek Janowski's integral Ring recording for Eurodisc. Her list of Wagner heroines came to include Eva, Elisabeth, and Elsa, as well as Wotan's daughter and Isolde. Other roles include Leonore in *Fidelio* and *Turandot*, Weber's *Agathe* and Strauss' *Chrysothemis* and *Salome*, and many others which she performed in the world's major opera houses. At the Metropolitan Opera, she has sung Sieglinde, the Walküre and *Götterdämmerung*, Brünnhilde, Leonore and Venus in *Tannhäuser*. Her recordings include *Leonore/Fidelio*, the three Brünnhildes, Sieglinde, and Gutrune. Describing herself as a California girl, she studied with Betty Olssen and later with Martial Singher and is considered a protégé of the legendary Lotte Lehmann.



Lotte Lehmann's significance in recent (20th century) vocal history, is not to be found just in her vocal technical abilities. Sometimes she used (consciously) her deficiencies to her advantage. For instance, the resulting "Lehmann Catch Breath" could heighten the emotional impact of a word that would bring the audience's attention.

On the stages of the Vienna, Paris, Metropolitan etc. Lehmann's believable opera characters came alive in a way that thrilled audiences already used to more sophisticated acting in movies. They expected that same degree of authenticity. Lehmann provided it.

Her voice also recorded well. Even before the microphone was invented, her "acoustic" recordings sounded like her and not like some dim echo. Beginning in 1927 Lehmann's "electric" recordings of opera, religious songs and Lieder (the last damaged by poor sounding salon orchestra arrangements) sold well throughout the world. Her recording of *Die Walküre* with Bruno Walter conducting and Lauritz Melchior as her Siegmund became standard-setting and has remained so, down to our own time. If Lehmann had a single role for which she was best known, it was certainly the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier*. She'd already sung Sophie and Oktavian, so she knew the opera intimately when she added this role in 1924. Lehmann's recording of excerpts from that opera (with Elisabeth Schumann as Sophie) has remained one of the great recordings of the 20th century.

Though Lehmann had sung Lieder recitals throughout Europe with piano accompaniment, she first began recording them in that original format when she moved to the US. Her *Winterreise* and *Dichterliebe* were historic because women didn't sing these cycles. She sang and recorded many standard Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms and Strauss Lieder, which have become classics. You can hear examples of these on the recently released 4 CD box (+ CD rom of translations and notes) from the Music & Arts label.