

COLUMBIA RECORDS



(Twenty-Four Songs)

LIEDER

ROBERT FRANZ



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MASTERWORKS

COLUMBIA

Masterworks Set No. 253 *

ROBERT FRANZ: LIEDER

(Twenty-Four Songs)

By ERNST WOLFF, Baritone

Accompanying himself at the Piano

ON TWO 10-INCH AND THREE 12-INCH RECORDS



THREE GERMAN FOLKSONGS XV-XVI Centuries
harmonized by Franz — (1) *Es taget vor dem Walde*
(2) *Ach Elstein, liebes Elstein mein*
(3) *Dich meiden*

17054-D {
(1) *Bitte*, op. 9, no. 3 (Lenau); (2) *Umsonst*, op. 10, no. 6 (W. Osterwald); (3) *Gleich und Gleich*, op. 22, no. 1 (Goethe)
(1) *Lieber Schatz, sei wieder gut mir*, op. 26, no. 2 (Osterwald)
(2) *Die helle Sonne leuchtet*, op. 42, no. 2 (from the Persian of Mirza-Schaffy)

68501-D {
(1) *Aus meinen grossen Schmerzen*, op. 5, no. 1 (Heine);
(2) *Gute Nacht*, op. 5, no. 7 (Eichendorff); (3) *Es hat die Rose sich beklagt*, op. 42, no. 5 (Mirza-Schaffy)
(1) *Mädchen mit dem rothen Mündchen*, op. 5, no. 5 (Heine);
(2) *Stille Sicherheit*, op. 10, no. 2 (Lenau); (3) *Du liebes Auge*, op. 16, no. 1 (O. Roquette)

68502-D {
(1) *Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome*, op. 18, no. 2 (Heine);
(2) *Wie des Mondes Abbild*, op. 6, no. 2 (Heine); (3) *Ständchen*, op. 17, no. 2 (Osterwald)
(1) *Auf dem Meere*, op. 25, no. 6 (Heine); (2) *Für Musik*, op. 10, no. 1 (Geibel); (3) *Vergessen*, op. 5, no. 10 (Osterwald)

68503-D {
(1) *Abschied*, op. 11, no. 1 (from the Bohemian); (2) *Wand' ich in dem Wald*, op. 39, no. 4 (Heine)
(1) *Marie*, op. 18, no. 1 (R. Gottschall); (2) *Widmung*, op. 14, no. 1 (W. Müller)

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THE SONGS OF ROBERT FRANZ

Notes by PHILIP L. MILLER

ROBERT FRANZ is one of the great paradoxes of music. Personally among the most lovable of men, he lived forgotten and neglected; one of the clearest and most direct of composers, he has never been fully appreciated; with all the qualities which should endear him to the layman as well as the musician, he has been staunchly championed by the few, and consistently overlooked by the many.

No composer has combined more strikingly than he great technical mastery and noble simplicity. Though his works may be called the finest flower of German folksong, he has never been taken to the hearts of his countrymen.

Born at Halle, June 28, 1815, Franz lived fourteen years before giving evidence of his musical talent. It was then that he discovered a spinet at the house of a relative, and forthwith gave his father no peace until he had bought the instrument for him. It followed that he must have instruction, and the teachers in Halle were none of the best. Finally, at the age of twenty, he prevailed upon his parents to send him to Dessau for serious study. From that time on his life was made up of hard work: hours spent over the works of his idols — Bach, Handel and Schubert — composition, editing and choral conducting. Gradually, however, his hearing became impaired, and by 1868 he was completely deaf. Added to this, paralysis forced him to give up all his activities. A pension earned by his editing of Bach and Handel was unaccountably withdrawn just when he needed it most, and it was only through the generosity of such friends as Liszt and Joachim (who gave concerts for his benefit) that he and his wife were able to live in modest comfort. He died in 1892.

Franz was not a fast workman. Unlike Schubert he did not write songs on the backs of menu cards, nor did his settings spring full-blown into being like those of Hugo Wolf. It was not uncommon for him to keep a song in his portfolio for twenty years before finishing it to his own satisfaction. His works, therefore, do not fall into periods. There is no gulf between his Opus 1 and his Opus 50. His songs, as he said, "are all good." Less spontaneous than Schubert, and less openly romantic than Schumann, he is better balanced than either of these masters. Like Wolf (since he dedicated his life to the Lied) he understood that the purpose of song-writing is to heighten the meaning of a poem with music, and that the melodic line in vocal music should follow the inflection of the words. He knew, too, how to bring out hidden meanings with unexpected and pungent harmonies, and how to put the essence of his song into the final line. From Schumann he learned the value of the postlude in driving home his point. So true is his sympathy with his poets (particularly Heine and Osterwald) that it is quite possible to pick out his best songs simply by reading the words.

Franz has often been charged with lack of variety. It is true that most of his nearly three hundred songs are very short, and that in his choice of poems he inclines to nature painting and homely and poetic sentiments. His most familiar aspects are, therefore, the influences of the folksong and the chorale. But to touch so evident in every measure of melody, and the contrapuntal mastery of the piano parts gives each of these little songs a distinct individuality. But there are other aspects. For the dramatic element we point to *Vergessen* and *Auf dem Meere*, and for evidence that he could handle a broad and magnificent melody, only turn to his treatment of the fifteenth century *Dich meiden*. However, as Schumann wrote, "were I to dwell on all the exquisite details, I should never come to an end."

1. Es taget vor dem Walde.

Es taget vor dem Walde;
Stand auf, Käthelein!
Die Hasen laufen balde,
Stand auf, Käthelein, holder Bul!
Das Hei-a-hol Du bist mein,
Und ich bin dein, ja, ich bin dein.
Die Lerche singt mit Schalle;
Stand auf, Käthelein!
Die Blumen erwachen alle,
Stand auf, Käthelein, holder Bul!
Das Hei-a-hol Du bist mein
Und ich bin dein, ja, ich bin dein.

The day is breaking over
the woods; get up, Katy! The
rabbits will soon be running;
get up, Katy, sweet love!
Hei-a-hol! Thou art mine, and
I am thine! The lark is sing-
ing lustily, the flowers are all
waking; get up, Katy, sweet
love!

2. Ach Elsiein, liebes Elsielein mein.

Ach Elsiein, liebes Elsielein mein,
Wie gern wär' ich bei dir!
So sein zwei tiefe Wasser
Wohl zwischen dir und mir.
Hoff' Zeit wird es wohl enden,
Hoff' Glück wird kommen drein,
Sich in all's Gut verwenden,
Herzliebste Elsiein.

Ah, little Elsie, how I wish
I were with you! Two deep
waters lie between us. I hope
that time will end this, and
that luck will come to change
everything to good, dear
Elsie.

3. Dich meiden.

Dich meiden, nein, ach nein!
Die Pein trägt meine Seele nicht,
Wenn du nicht mein kannst sein,
Mein armes Herze bricht,
Dich sehn is Morgenroth,
Dich meiden Nacht und Tod.
Du süßes Lieb, du süßes Lieb,
O gieb mir wieder neuen Muth;
Was fort dich trieb, vergieb,
Und sei, o sei mir wieder gut.
Nur du, du bist ob nah, ob fern,
Ja doch mein einz' ger Stern.

Forsake you? No, ah no!
My soul shall not bear that
agony. If you cannot be mine,
my poor heart will break.
To see you is the light of
morning—to leave you night
and death. O sweet love, give
me back my spirit! Whatever
has driven you away, forgive,
and come back to me. You
alone, whether near or far,
are my only star.

The melodies of these three songs are taken from the works of Ludwig Senfl, and were published in the early sixteenth century, in a collection made by Johannes Ott. The verses were touched up for Franz by Osterwald. *Dich meiden* in its earlier form is a madrigal with the melody interchanged between the four parts. *Es taget vor dem Walde* and *Ach Elsiein* appear in the Ott collection in the form of a quodlibet, or combination song. The melodies are sung simultaneously by the soprano and tenor, while the alto and bass fill in. The tunes were not, of course, original with Senfl, but are genuine folksongs. Franz has caught just the right spirit in his accompaniments. *Es taget vor dem Walde* breathes the air of morning as perhaps no other song ever written, and *Dich meiden* is one of the grandest hymns of a lover's faith. *Elsiein* is a Burnish little lyric, as unpretentious as it is short.

Bitte.

Op. 9, no. 3.

Look upon me with your
dark eyes, let me feel their
full power: serious, kind,
dreamy, unfathomable as
night. With this magic dark-
ness take this world away
from me, that you alone may
hover over my life.

Weil' auf mir, du dunkles Auge,
Übe deine ganze Macht,
Ernste, milde, träumerische,
Unergründlich süsse Nacht.
Nimm mit deinem Zauberdunkel
Diese Welt von hinnen mir,
Dass du über meinem Leben
Einsam schwebest für und für.
(Lenau)

Umsonst.

Op. 10, no. 6.

The birds sing in the
woods, and the red roses
bloom; the brook ripples and
gushes. It is the old joyful
song of the blessed May, but
it does not make me happy
with its merry melody.

Des Waldes Säng' er singen,
Die rothe Rose blüht,
Die Quellen rauschen und springen,
Es ist das alte Lied.
Das klingt und singt so selig
Vom seligen, lieblichen Mai,
Und machet mich doch nicht fröhlich
Die lustige Melodei.
(Osterwald)

Here the use of the persistently repeated note gives the feeling of monotony implied in the poem.

Gleich und gleich.

Op. 22, no. 1.

A little flower-bell had
early sprung into bloom;
there came a little bee and
slyly nibbled. Certainly they
must have been meant for
each other.

Ein Blumenglöckchen
Vom Boden hervor
War früh gesprossset
In lieblichem Flor;
Da kam ein Bietchen
Und naschte fein:
Die müssen wohl beide
Für einander sein.

(Goethe)

Lieber Schatz, sei wieder gut mir.

Op. 26, no. 2.

A rose blossoms among the
thorns, it is a joy to see! I
would like to pick it and wear
it, were it not for the thorns.
A little bird sings sweetly
above me: "If you pick it, it
will prick you; there is no
rose without a thorn." Dearest
love, come back to me, forget
your anger. Always pouting,
always sulking — why should
a rose have so many thorns?

In dem Dornbusch blüht ein Röslein,
Ist ein' Lust es anzuseh'n!
Wollt' es pflücken, mich zu schmücken,
Doch der Dorn lässt's nicht gescheh'n.
Sang ein Vöglein in den Lüften,
Klang der Sang süß in's Gemüt:
"Willst du brechen, lass dich stechen,
Ohne Dorn kein Röslein blüht."
Lieber Schatz, sei wieder gut mir,
Immer Schmolten, immer Grollen,
Für ein Ros' wär's zu viel Dorn!

(Osterwald)

Die helle Sonne leuchtet.

Op. 42, no. 2.

The sun shines brightly
upon the sea, and all the
waves tremble in his splendor.
So are you reflected in the
ocean of my songs; they all
glow and tremble in your
radiance.

Die helle Sonne leuchtet
Auf's weite Meer hernieder,
Und alle Wellen zittern
Von ihrem Glanze wieder.
Du spiegelst dich, wie die Sonne,
Im Meere meiner Lieder!
Sie alle glüh'n und zittern
Von deinem Glanze wieder!
(from the Persian of Mirza Schaffy)

Aus meinen grossen Schmerzen.

Op. 5, no. 1.

Out of my great afflictions
I make little songs, which lift
their sounding wings and fly
to her heart. They have found
the way to the beloved, yet
they come back and com-
plain; but they will not tell me
what they have seen in her
heart.

Aus meinen grossen Schmerzen
Mach' ich die kleinen Lieder,
Die heben ihr klingend Gefieder
Und flattern nach ihrem Herzen.
Sie fanden den Weg zur Trauten,
Doch kommen sie wieder und klagen,
Und klagen, und wollen nicht sagen,
Was sie im Herzen schauen.
(Heine)

This is one of the best known of the Franz songs, and a fine example of melodic declamation. One has only to read the poem aloud to realize how perfectly it has been set. A happy touch is given to the word "flattern" at which point the poet's hopes and the melody reach their highest pitch.

Gute Nacht.

Op. 5, no. 7.

The hills and woods grow
darker in the evening gold.
A bird in the branches asks
if he should greet my love.
O little bird, you have made
a mistake—she no longer
lives in the valley. Fly up to
the arch of heaven—greet
her there for the last time.

Die Höh'n und Wälder schon steigen
Immer tiefer in's Abendgold,
Ein Vöglein fragt in den Zweigen:
Ob es Liebchen grüssen sollt'
O Vöglein, du hast dich betrogen,
Sie wohnet nicht mehr im Thal,
Schwing' auf dich zum Himmelsbogen,
Grüss' sie droben zum letztenmal.
(Eichendorff)

Es hat die Rose sich beklagt.

Op. 42, no. 5.

The rose complained that
all too soon must she lose the
fragrance which the spring
had given her. I comforted
her by saying that her scent
would have eternal life in my
songs.

Es hat die Rose sich beklagt,
Das gar zu schnell der Duft vergehe
Den ihr der Lenz gegeben habe.
Da hab' ich ihr zum Trost gesagt,
Dass er durch meine Lieder wehe,
Und dort ein ew'ges Leben habe.
(from the Persian of Mirza Schaffy,
by Friedrich von Bodenstedt)

For all its brevity, this song is in strophic form. What is particularly rare in Franz is that the repetition is exact. Usually the words make certain changes necessary. The note of appeal implied in the little prelude is soothingly answered at the ending.

Mädchen mit dem rothen Mündchen.

Op. 5, no. 5.

Maiden with the rosy lips
I am always thinking of you,
The evenings are long in
the winter-time, and I wish I
were with you, sitting and
chatting in your cozy little
room. I wish I could press
your hands to my lips, and
bathe them with my tears.

Mädchen mit dem rothen Mündchen,
Du mein liebes, süßes Mädchen,
Mit den Äuglein süß und klar,
Deiner denk' ich immerdar.
Lang' ist heut' der Winterabend,
Und ich möchte bei dir sein,
Bei dir sitzen, mit dir schwatzen
Im vertrauten Kämmerlein.
An die Lippen wollt' ich pressen
Deine kleine weisse Hand,
Und mit Thränen sie benetzen,
Deine kleine weisse Hand.
(Heine)

Stille Sicherheit.
Op. 10, no. 2.

Hark! how quiet it is in
the grove. Dearest, we are
safe and alone. The sound of
the evening bells has already
died away. The last breeze
sinks to sleep on the bowing
flowers. Now I may tell you
—we are alone—that my
heart is yours forever!

Horch, wie still es wird im dunkeln Hain,
Mädchen, wir sind sicher und allein.
Still versäuselt hier am Wiesenhang
Schon der Abendglocken müder Klang.
Auf den Blumen die sich dir verneigt,
Schlief das letzte Lüftchen ein und schweigt.
Sagen darf ich dir, wir sind allein,
Das mein Herz ist ewig, ewig dein.
(Lenau)

Though Franz's piano parts are often effective taken by themselves, in this case the union is so complete that neither the voice nor the piano is conceivable without the other. The composition is a steady development leading inevitably to its climax in the final line.

Du liebes Auge.
Op. 16, no. 1.

O dearest eyes, dip into
the depths of mine, to find
where, hidden at the bottom,
lies a pearl. Dip in again, and
penetrate to the clear deep,
and smile when you see that
the most beautiful pearl is
your own reflection.

Du liebes Auge willst du dich tauchen
In meines Aug's geheimste Tiefe,
Zu späh'n, wo in blauen Gründen
Verborg'n eine Perle schlief?
Du liebes Auge! tauche nieder,
Und in die klare Tiefe dringe
Und lächle, wenn ich dir dein Bildnis
Als schönste Perle wieder bringe.
(O. Roquette)

Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome.
Op. 18, no. 2.

The great city of Cologne
and its cathedral are reflected
in the sacred waves of the
Rhine. In the cathedral is a
painting with a gold back-
ground, which has often
cheered me in the confusion
of my life. Our Lady is there,

Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome,
Da spiegelt sich in den Well'n
Mit seinem grossen Dome
Das grosse, heilige Cöln.
Im Dome, da steht ein Bildniss,
Auf goldenem Grunde gemalt;
In meines Lebens Wildniss,
Hat's freundlich hinein gestrahlt.

Es schweben Blumen und Englein
Um uns're liebe Frau;
Die Augen, die Lippen, die Wanglein,
Die gleichen der Liebsten genau.
(Heine)

This song makes an interesting contrast to Schumann's setting of the same poem in the Dichterliebe cycle. Whereas Schumann has concerned himself with the architecture of the cathedral and the majestic sound of the organ, Franz paints the picture of the Rhine flowing peacefully by. This is a song of memory, while Schumann's tells of a present experience. An unexpected touch is the harmonic progression under the words "die Augen, die Lippen, die Wanglein."

Wie des Mondes Abbild.

Op. 6, no. 2.

Wie des Mondes Abbild zittert
In den wilden Meereswogen,
Und er selber still und sicher
Wandelt an dem Himmelsbogen.
Also wandelst du, Geliebte,
Still und sicher, und es zittert
Nur dein Abbild mir im Herzen,
Weil mein eignes Herz erschüttert.
(Heine)

This is one of the greatest of all song-miniatures. If a human being ever achieved perfection, Franz has done it here. As is so often the case in these songs, the great effect comes at the end — in the wonderful underscoring of the word "erschüttert," and in the tiny postlude.

Ständchen.

Op. 17, no. 2.

The moon has gone to
sleep, and the stars are blink-
ing as though they were
And at my window a spring
breeze gently rustles. I wish
him godspeed. Do you hear
him knocking: "Good night,
my child?" It is the spring
wind greeting you — he
promised me he would.

Der Mond ist schlafen gegan,
Die Sterne blinzeln blind,
Als ob sie müde sind
Von allen Funkeln und Frangen.
Und vor dem Fenster leise
Säuselt so lieb und lind
Ein frischer Frühlingswind:
Ich wünsch' ihm gute Reise.
Und hörst du's sachte pochen:
"Gute Nacht, gute Nacht, mein Kind!"
Dich grüsst der Frühlingswind;
Er hat es mir versprochen.
(Osterwald)

Auf dem Meere. Op. 25, no. 6.

An die bretteerne Schiffswand, wo mein
träumendes Haupt liegt,
Branden die Wellen, die wilden Wellen.
Sie rauschen und murmeln mir heimlich
in's Ohr:
Bethörter Geselle! Dein Arm ist kurz,
Und der Himmel so weit, und die Sterne
da droben

By the side of the vessel,
where I lie dreaming, the
waves surge furiously, mur-
muring to me: "Foolish com-
radel your arm is short and
the heaven is far off; and
the stars are fixed above with

Sind fest geschmiedet mit goldenen Nägeln;
 Vergebliches Sehnen, vergebliches Seufzen,
 Das Beste wäre, du schliefest ein.
 (Heine)

Here we have, within twenty-four measures, all the restlessness of the sea and of a disillusioned man. The quiet ending is a stroke of sheer genius.

Für Musik. Op. 10, no. 1.

Now the shadows darken;
 one by one the stars come
 out. What a breath of longing
 fills the night. My soul un-
 ceasingly steers its course to
 your soul. To you it has
 surrendered itself; O take it!
 you know that it can never
 be my own.

Nun die Schatten dunkeln,
 Stern an Stern erwacht:
 Welch ein Hauch der Sehnsucht
 flutet durch die Nacht!
 Durch das Meer der Träume
 steuert ohne Ruh,
 steuert meine Seele
 deiner Seele zu.
 Die sich dir ergeben,
 Nimm sie ganz dahin!
 Ach, du weißt dass nimmer
 Ich mein eigen bin.

(Geibel)

Vergessen. Op. 5, no. 10.

O banger Traum, was flatterst du
 Mit schwarzem Flügel um mein Haupt?
 Du hast mir, du, die ganze Ruh'
 Aus meinem Herzen wild geraubt.
 Ich träum ich steh' an Baches Rand,
 Die Trauerweide hängt herein,
 Die Quelle schwand, verdorrt im Sand
 Sind all' die blauen Vergissmichthein.
 Vergessen, ach! vergessen sein
 Vom liebsten Herzen in der Welt,
 Das ist allein die schwerste Pein
 Die auf ein Menschenherze fällt.
 (Osterwald)

Abschied.

Op. 11, no. 1.
 Wie schienen die Sternlein so hell, so hell
 Herab von des Himmels Höh'!
 Zwei Liebende standen auf der Schwell',
 Ach, Hand in Hand: "Adel!"
 Die Blümlein weinten auf Flur und Steg,
 Sie fühlten der Liebenden Weh,
 Die standen traurig am Scheideweg,
 Ach, Herz an Herz, Ade.

Die Lüfte durchrauschen die Waldestruh';
 Aus dem Thal und aus der Höh',
 Da weh'n weisse Tücher einander zu:
 "Adel Adel Adel!"
 (from the Bohemian)

The stars shone brightly
 in the heavens above. The
 lovers stood hand in hand on
 the threshold, saying goodbye.
 The flowers seemed to weep
 in the meadows and along the
 path, as though they felt the
 pain of the lovers who,
 clasped in an embrace, were
 saying goodbye. The breezes
 blew through the quiet woods,
 from the valley and from
 the hills. Two handkerchiefs
 were waving to each other,
 farewell, farewell!

Wandl' ich in dem Wald.

Op. 39, no. 4.

In the evening I wander
through the dreamy woods.
You always go beside me.
Isn't it your veil? Isn't it
your placid face? Or is it only
the moonlight shining through
the evergreens? Do I hear
my own tears falling, or is
it you who are weeping at
my side?

Wandl' ich in dem Wald des Abends,
In dem träumerischen Wald,
Immer wandelt mir zur Seite
deine zärtliche Gestalt.

Ist es nicht dein weisser Schleier?
Nicht dein sanftes Angesicht?
Oder ist es nur der Mondschein,
Der durch Tannendunkel bricht?

Sind es meine eignen Thränen,
Die ich leise rinnen hör?
Oder gehst du, Liebste, wirklich
Weinend neben mir einher?

(Heine)

Marie.

Op. 18, no. 1.

Marie sits in her window,
watching the play of the
breeze on the flowers be-
low. The passer-by raises his
hat as if in prayer, so pure,
so beautiful, and so good is
she. The flowers look up
into her eyes, for the most
beautiful flower is the face
at the window. The evening
bells greet her with sweet
melody. May no storm ever
break the flowers, nor thy
heart, Marie!

Marie, am Fenster sitztest du,
Du liebes, süßes Kind,
Und siehst dem Spiel der Blüten zu,
Verweht im Abendwind.
Der Wanderer der vorüber geht,
Er lüftet fromm den Hut;
Du bist ja selbst wie ein Gebet,
So fromm, so schön, so gut.
Die Blumenaugen seh'n empor
Zu deiner Augenlicht!
Die schönste Blum' im Fensterflor
Ist doch dein Angesicht.
Ihr Abendglocken grüßet sie
Mit süßer Melodie!
O brech' der Sturm die Blumen nie
Und nie dein Herz, Marie!

(Rudolf Gottschall)

This is pure folksong touched with art. There is a very real fervor in the melody, so perfectly does it fit the words. A pictorial touch is the suggestion of the breeze playing upon the flowers, at the words "verweht im Abendwind." In the second stanza the same little figure comes on the words "ist doch dein Angesicht," emphasizing the parallel. The postlude is of the purest loveliness.

Widmung.

Op. 14, no. 1.

Do not thank me for these
songs. It is I who should be
grateful to you. You gave
them to me—I give back
what is now, and always will
be yours. Yes, they have
always been yours, for I have
faithfully read them in your
eyes. Do you not know your
own songs?

(Wolfgang Müller)

O danke nicht für diese Lieder,
Mir ziemt es dankbar dir zu sein;
Du gabst sie mir, ich gebe wieder
Was jetzt und einst und ewig dein.
Dein sind sie alle ja gewesen.
Aus deiner lieben Augenlicht
Hab' ich sie treulich abgelesen,
Kennst du die eignen Lieder nicht?

This famous little Lied is truly a hymn of love. It is surely not inappropriate that a profound and sincere affection should express itself in terms like those which one addresses to the creator.