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North American reviews

A high level of artistry from an impeccable soprano

Berenice Bramson

'Let the Florid Music Praise!'

S Bramson Dream Rushes^{bc} **Britten** On This Island^a **Gerhard** Seven Spanish Folk Songs^b **Rachmaninov** Sorrow in Springtime, Op 21 No 12^a. The Harvest of Sorrow, Op 4 No 5^a. Before my window, Op 26 No 10^a. Lilacs, Op 21 No 5^a. Spring Waters, Op 14 No 11^a **R Strauss** Befreit, Op 39 No 4^a. Schlechtes Wetter, Op 69 No 5^a. Ich Schwebte, Op 48 No 2^a. Heimliche Aufforderung, Op 27 No 3^a. Zu eignung, Op 10 No 1^a **Wolf** Goethe Lieder – Mignon^a. Italian Songbook^a – Auch kleine Dinge; Du denkst mit einem Fadchen; Ich hab in Penna. Eichendorff Lieder – Nachtzauber^a

Berenice Bramson *sop* ^aNancy Revzen *pf* ^bMark Delpriora *gr* ^cLouis Lowenstein *vc* ^cKristin Shiner *mari*
 ABCD © SP9007 (76' • ADD • T)
 Recorded live 1984-86

This is very fine. Berenice Bramson was completely unknown to me before the arrival of this memorial issue, mostly recorded in recital in 1984 with additions, presumably made in the studio from 1985 and 1986. She was born in 1929 so she



Berenice Bramson: fully the equal of Auger, Studer, Söderström, Rodgers, Brewer or Te Kanawa

would have been in her middle-fifties here, but you would never know it from the voice alone. Her voice is a lyric soprano of considerable body, even throughout its range, and her diction is impeccable. In the many famous songs here her interpretations can stand comparison with the very best – Arleen



Auger in Wolf's 'Mignon', Elisabeth Söderström and Joan Rodgers in the Rachmaninov, Cheryl Studer, Christine Brewer and Kiri Te Kanawa in the Strauss.

She brings the same high level of artistry to Britten's early song-cycle *On This Island*, in which her diction is so clear that every word can be understood, and her performance of Roberto Gerhard's *Seven Spanish Folk Songs* makes its absence from recital programmes a complete mystery. The work by her son, Steve Bramson, who went on to a considerable career as a film composer, was written while he was a student at Eastman. Obviously talent ran in the family, since this does not sound like student work.

The audience make their presence known during the Britten but otherwise the recordings sound fine. Nancy Revzen hits a bad patch in the treacherous ending to Wolf's 'Ich hab in Penna' but it in no way seriously detracts from what is an enchanting hour and a quarter in the presence of someone who, whatever the vagaries of fame and career, was obviously a major artist. Presumably there is more to come in this series and, if they are of this quality, then we can only regret that the singer herself is not around to receive the accolades they will undoubtedly deserve. **John Story**

AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE, September/October, 2005:

Wow!...Berenice Bramson clearly a major talent...a woman of tremendous ability and skill. Her "Zueignung" (Strauss) is lovely, as good as many of the very best singers. Rachmaninoff's "Harvest of Sorrow" is dispatched with a passionate flair that characterizes all these performances. The opportunity to acquaint oneself with such an artist is a welcome and happy one.