

## Loewe · Schumann

**Loewe** Herr Oluf, Op 2 No 2. Wandrers  
Nachtlied, Op 9 Book 1 No 3*b*. Der Pilgrim vor  
Sankt Just, Op 99 No 3. Die Uhr, Op 123 No 3.  
Hinkende Jamben, Op 62 Book 1 No 5.  
Der selt'ne Beter, Op 141. Süßes Begräbnis,  
Op 62 No 4. Tom der Reimer, Op 135.  
Odins Meeresritt, Op 118  
**Schumann** Liederkreis, Op 39

Henk Neven *bar* Hans Eijsackers *pf*

Onyx © ONYX4052 (60' • DDD • T/t)

### An enjoyable recital exploring songs by the 'north-German Schubert' Carl Loewe



Young Dutch baritone  
Henk Neven has an  
exceptional voice –  
perfectly controlled,  
ideal for German  
Lieder. It is hardly an  
exaggeration to think of

him on the evidence of this fine disc as  
a successor to Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau.  
The title, “Auf einer Burg” (“On a Castle”),  
is taken from one of Schumann’s Op 39  
Eichendorff cycle, but he is equally revealing  
in Loewe’s Ballads as in Schumann’s Lieder.

Neven’s nine chosen Loewe songs include  
several also set by Schubert but, thanks to his  
imagination and detailed treatment of the  
words, one never feels that these are in any  
way lesser works. His gift of bringing out  
word-meaning is enhanced by the clearest  
possible diction and by the beautifully  
balanced recording. His shading of dynamics  
and phrasing then crowns each interpretation.  
It is a consistent joy to hear a Lieder singer  
whose tone is pure over the widest range  
without a trace of roughness, even under  
pressure, but who refuses ever to roughen the  
voice, slide into notes or sit under the note.

Though Neven is still young, his voice is  
fully mature, and in such an extended song as  
“Herr Oluf” he sustains tension with his  
consistently imaginative treatment of words.  
In the Rückert setting “Hinkende Jamben”,  
he not only points the rhythm beautifully but  
also uses a lovely head-voice. In “Der selt’ne  
Beter” he builds up to a most dramatic close,  
while another Rückert song, “Süßes  
Begräbnis”, inspires him to sing with a  
seamless *legato*. In all this Hans Eijsackers is  
the most sympathetic accompanist, as he is  
also in the Schumann cycle.

The jewelled beauty of the sequence of  
miniature love songs in the Op 39 *Liederkreis*  
comes over at full intensity, so that the climax  
of “Waldesgespräch” on the words “Du bist  
die Hexe Lorelei” comes over at full force yet  
without any roughness. “Mondnacht” brings  
more lovely *legato* and fine control of *crescendo*,  
while the concluding “Frühlingsnacht” brings  
an exuberant close. It is a long time since  
I enjoyed a disc of Lieder from a young singer  
quite as much as this, and I long to hear more  
from him. **Edward Greenfield**

