



Claudia Huckle

Contralto

Champs Hill Records / Mahler *Das Lied von der Erde* for piano

Editor's Choice – April 2023

Huckle has a rich, dark contralto voice and a rare way with the text. Accordingly, she's deeply inside these songs, capturing their combination of valedictory wistfulness and youthful enthusiasm, while clearly identifying with the composer's deep inner connection to the natural world. With only piano to support her, she can focus on the storytelling, but she never lets the words overpower the lyrical importance of the vocal line.

...this is an outstanding performance by any standards.

Clive Paget, Limelight

<https://limelightmagazine.com.au/reviews/mahler-das-lied-von-der-erde-claudia-huckle-nicky-spence-justin-brown/>

Here, perfect technique, deep expression and unique vocal personalities combine in the singing of Scottish tenor Nicky Spence and Anglo-German contralto Claudia Huckle, who's done so many distinguished things around the world yet not enough in the UK – and who writes such a lovely foreword in the booklet to complement conductor and pianist Justin Brown's eloquent words on the edition chosen and Richard Stokes's insights into the music.

David Nice, BBC Music Magazine, February 2023

<https://www.classical-music.com/reviews/choral-song/mahler-das-lied-von-der-erde-piano-version/>

Certainly, there's plenty to admire in the performance, beginning with Nicky Spence's ardent and sturdy performances of the tenor songs, distinguished by his usual highly engaged and engaging delivery. The project, though, originated with contralto Claudia Huckle - a response to lockdown and the chance it gave her to contemplate nature anew and finally take the score for *Das Lied* off the shelf. Her voice is a superbly rich and seductive instrument with true contralto colour. Her 'Der Abschied' is, as it should be, a moving culmination of the album ... this is a welcome recording that will, one hopes, bring a new audience to this rewarding version of this wonderful work.

Hugo Shirley, Gramophone, March 2023

<https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/mahler-das-lied-von-der-erde-autograph-piano-version>

Huckle's intense and moving performance brings us far deeper into the emotional world of these songs, however. As she writes in her liner notes, "One thing I realized during that beautiful spring of 2020 was that if I never performed again, my greatest regret would be never having sung *Das Lied von der Erde*." Her deep commitment shines through in every bar.

Daniel Foley, The Whole Note Magazine, February 2023

<https://www.thewholenote.com>

Claudia Huckle, Nicky Spence and Justin Brown's minimalist Mahler wants for nothing. In a new recording of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (Champs Hill), usually for huge orchestra and two soloists but here in the piano autograph version, the contralto Claudia Huckle and tenor Nicky Spence, with pianist Justin Brown, capture all the vitality and intensity of this orchestral song cycle, completed in 1909: from the first entry of the tenor, who hurtles in on high with his Drinking Song of the Earth's Sorrow, to the infinite tenderness of the contralto's *Der Abschied*....Huckle had the idea to do the piano version during lockdown, feeling that post-pandemic life might never allow her to sing the work in concert. Let's hope she does. She is perfectly suited.

Fiona Maddocks, The Guardian, January 2023

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2023/jan/14/mahler-das-lied-von-der-erde-piano-version-claudia-huckle-nicky-spence-justin-brown-review-gothic-voices-the-splendour-of-florence-with-a-burgundian-resonance-joanna-and-the-maestro-podcast-lumley-barlow>

BREGENZ FESTIVAL, Madame Butterfly

Claudia Huckle as the maid Suzuki received well-deserved final applause.

Frankfurt-Live, Karl-Heinz Stier und Ingeborg Fischer

<https://www.frankfurt-live.com/zerkn-uumlItt-und-weggeworfen-145564.html>

Claudia Huckle in the role of Suzuki was very natural and moving, and in possession of a great voice for volume and beauty.

Irina Sorokina, L'Ape Musicale, July 2022

<https://www.apemusical.it/joomla/it/recensioni/70-opera/opera-2022/13407-bregenz-madama-butterfly-23-07-2022>

Next to her, Claudia Huckle as her servant Suzuki perseveres, supports and suffers, with her beautiful contralto voice

IOCO Kultur im Netz, Daniela Zimmermann, July 2022

<https://ioco.de/2022/07/31/bregenz-bregenzert-festspiele-madame-butterfly-giacomo-puccini-ioco-kritik-28-07-2022/>

Claudia Huckle as the maid Suzuki received well-deserved final applause...

Karl-Heinz Steier & Ingeborg Fischer, Frankfurt Live, July 2022

<https://www.frankfurt-live.com/zerkn-uumlItt-und-weggeworfen-145564.html>

WAGNER Parsifal, Opéra national de Paris

Claudia Huckle, whose deep contralto voice makes her an imposing Voice from Heaven ...

José Pons, Olyrix, May 2022

BACH St Matthew Passion, Dunedin Consort, St Mary's Cathedral Edinburgh

Claudia Huckle's sensational, dark-burgundy alto was a standout among the women, her spellbinding 'Erbarne Dich' seeming to float around Matthew Truscott's dusky violin line.

Simon Thompson, The Times, April 2022

HANDEL Messiah, The English Concert, Pisa Cathedral

... contralto Claudia Huckle, gifted with a dark and fascinating voice ...

Luca Fialdini, L'Ape musicale, September 2021

WAGNER Das Rheingold, Bregenzer Festspiele

The dark glow of Claudia Huckle's Flosshilde was already noticed, and then the wonderful 'alto-gold' streams of her Erda filled the entire auditorium from the far end of the stalls.

Wolf-Dieter Peter, NMZ Online, August 2021

The three Rhine daughters (wonderfully harmonious: Liv Redpath, Svetlina Stoyanova and Claudia Huckle) ... The fateful curse of the Ring has already claimed its first victim, as the great mother Erda (the great alto: Claudia Huckle) warned in advance from the rank: 'Weiche, Wotan, Weiche!'

Fritz Jurmann, Kultur Zeitschrift, August 2021

MAHLER Symphony No. 2, Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino

The two soloists (soprano Christine Karg and contralto Claudia Huckle) contributed with great commitment to Myung-Whun Chung's engrossing interpretation

Fabio Bardelli, Opera Click, May 2021

... the delicate tracing of 'Urlicht', well supported by the voice of Claudia Huckle

Elisabetta Torselli, Giornale della Musica, May 2021

Song recital with Simon Lepper, Djanogly Hall Nottingham

Claudia sang the best-known song 'Where Corals Lie' with a haunting, yearning quality whilst reserving maximum vocal power and her remarkable vocal range for the final song 'The Swimmer' ... Claudia Huckle and Simon Lepper [also] performed Wagner's Wesendonck Lieder, the duo inhabiting the world of the poems with rich, vibrant colouring of the words. This was especially true in their sensitive (rather than sentimental) performance of the opening song 'Der Engel' ... There was one short encore, Benjamin Britten's folk song arrangement 'O Waly Waly', which gave us in a nutshell the qualities of the Huckle/Lepper partnership: a deep richness of sound, insight into meaning and sensitivity to tonal colour.

William Ruff, Nottingham Post, February 2020

MENDELSSOHN Elijah, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Barbican Centre

No less impressive was the contralto voice of Claudia Huckle, with its sensuous range of dark-chocolate and vanilla tones. Her recitatives as an Angel were delivered with absolute assurance, and in the moments of exposed writing in her arioso 'Woe unto them who forsake Him!' she moved effortlessly through all her registers. An additional highlight was the gentle vibrancy she brought to her aria 'O rest in the Lord'.

Alexander Hall, Classical Source, February 2020

Contralto Claudia Huckle (Angel/Queen) has the most beautiful velvety voice and uses it to perfection. Her aria 'O rest in the Lord' - with BBCSO principal flautist Daniel Pailthorpe accompanying her with utmost musicality on his wooden flute – did indeed feel comforting in many dimensions.

Agnes Cory, Seen and Heard International, February 2020

MAHLER *Kindertotenlieder*, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, City Halls Glasgow
[Claudia's] was a performance of elegance and poise ...

Keith Bruce, Herald Scotland, January 2020

HANDEL *Messiah*, Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, on tour

Contralto Claudia Huckle has a bewitching tone in amber colours.

Julian Sykes, Le Temps, December 2019

Claudia Huckle's contralto was in a dark bloom, with characteristically wounding low notes (her 'grief' in 'He was Despised' was heart-stopping).

Benjamin Poore, Music OMH, December 2019

STRAUSS *Die Aegyptische Helena (Die allwissende Muschel)*, Teatro alla Scala Milan

The prophetic mussel, which lives inside the radio but often comes out on stage, is [sung by] Claudia Huckle, wrapped in gold and with an angelic voice.

Giornale della Musica, November 2019

Claudia Huckle is an enchanting Omniscient Mussel, with a dark contralto voice of shapely velvet.

Connessi all'Opera, November 2019

On the whole, the complementary roles are particularly well done. Claudia Huckle, the omniscient seashell, asserts a beautiful contralto voice with a velvety tone.

Wanderer, November 2019

WAGNER *Götterdämmerung (Flosshilde)*, Edinburgh International Festival

Danae Kontora, Catriona Morison and Claudia Huckle added a delicious efferverscence as Rhinemaidens.

Ken Walton, The Scotsman, August 2019

MAHLER Symphony No. 2, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Festival de Saint-Denis

As the last notes of the thrilling third movement explode, Claudia Huckle comes to the proscenium to open with remarkable serenity the brief fourth movement, "Urlicht". The dense and airy timbre of her contralto is ideally matched with the solemn chorale of brass, whose even and consistent sound, similar to the colours of an organ, accompany with gravity the declamation of the metaphysical text.

Arthur Macé, Bachtrack, June 2019

HVERGAL BRIAN *The Vision of Cleopatra*, Chorus and Orchestra of English National Opera, Martyn Brabbins. CD

... Claudia Huckle as Cleopatra, whose final soliloquy is exquisite.

Guy Rickards, Gramophone, December 2018

Claudia Huckle sings the contralto role of Cleopatra with total conviction and impressive engagement.

Nick Barnard, Music Web International, November 2018

WAGNER *Die Walküre* (Schwertleite) & *Götterdämmerung* (First Norn), Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

The Norns, led by Claudia Huckle, and the Rhinemaidens, featuring a striking Lauren Fagan, were superb.

Neil Fisher, The Times, October 2018

The opera's two trios, Norns and Rhinemaidens, were pretty much flawless. Contralto Claudia Huckle sang magically as the First Norn...

Mark Valencia, WhatsonStage, October 2018

MAHLER *Symphony No. 8*, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Proms 2018

Yet this was also a performance in which the soloists were beautifully cast and contrasted, from the stratospheric purity of Joëlle Harvey's *Mater Gloriosa* to Claudia Huckle's earthy *Maria Aegyptiaca*...

Anna Picard, The Times, July 2018

WAGNER *Das Rheingold* (Erda), Leipzig Opera

Claudia Huckle's smooth-toned Erda was expressive in her bewilderment.

John Allison, Opera, July 2018

BACH *St Matthew Passion*, OAE, on tour

London, Royal Festival Hall:

Claudia Huckle's alto solos shone darkly, treading a line between redemptive warmth and gentle sorrow. "Erbarme dich" was delivered with breathtaking lyrical control, gently imploring, her voice woven seamlessly with the fiercely expressive violin solo of Matthew Truscott, both floating on the ethereal strings of the OAE. Transporting stuff. Her duet with soprano Louise Kemény was another highlight ...

Benjamin Poore, BachTrack, March 2018

... the lustrously youthful Claudia Huckle, whose sublime *Erbarme dich* with Matthew Truscott's eloquent violin obbligato was the emotional climax of the piece.

Hugh Canning, The Sunday Times, April 2018

ELGAR *Dream of Gerontius*, Hallé Orchestra, Sir Mark Elder, York Minster

Claudia Huckle made her debut as the Angel with a mezzo of luminous, consoling empathy ...

Hugh Canning, The Times, November 2017

MAHLER *Symphony No.2*, Boston Philharmonic, Zander.

It was the best live Mahler Second I've heard over the past 38 years... Contralto Claudia Huckle drifted on stage unobtrusively as the third movement closed, without a book, and looked the audience in the eye as she sang of the child who won't let an angel block her way to heaven.

Jeffrey Gantz, The Boston Globe, 16 April 2017

