

# American Record guide

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### **BORDEWIJK-ROEPMAN:** *Chamber Pieces;* *Songs*

Irene Maessen, s; Jose Scholte, a; Ursula Schoch, v; Marcel Worms, p

Zefir 9648—70 minutes

One of the pleasures of writing for American Record Guide is hearing some music for the first time. Such is the case here. I knew of Johanna Bordewijk-Roepman, but this is the first disc devoted to her music I've heard. We are treated to several of her solo piano pieces, a sonata for violin and piano, and a number of her songs in three languages (German, Dutch, and English). The notes are very informative and explain the context of the selections.

Johanna Bordewijk-Roepman (Rotterdam, 1892—The Hague, 1971) composed music for piano, small ensembles, full orchestra, choir, and carillon. She was not only versatile and talented, but also self-willed and original. She largely taught herself to compose and, by the end of the 1930s, began to make a name for herself. Until the 1950s her compositions were performed both nationally and internationally.

The first track is one of her later compositions, 'Debout, eveille-toi!' (1953). It is a moody piece, full of color and contrasts, that should be heard more often. Another piano piece, *Impromptu* (1960), was the result of a commission from the Government Office of Education, Arts, and Sciences. In contrast to the earlier work, this "improvisation" is dramatic and takes the listener through a variety of emotions. The *Violin Sonata* (1923) is the earliest piece here. In preparation for its composition, she consulted music theory treatises and dedicated it to the violinist Jan Deggeler who, as it turns out, did not give the first performance.

Bordewijk-Roepman's settings of some of AA Milne's poems (1948) are charming and picturesque, yet there is a wistful undertone that seems to yearn for happier times. Her settings of some German poems by Otto Bierbaum display her versatility. The poetry itself is shaded with religious subtexts. She later reworked these pieces for soprano and orchestra (one would like to hear those some time).

The performers here are all more than adequate. In particular, I enjoyed Marcel Worms's musicality and the colors he brings to

Bordewijk-Roepman's piano writing. It would be wonderful if this recital inspired other singers and instrumentalists to investigate this composer's work. She has been neglected for far too long. Excellent sound. Original language texts are supplied, but no translations.

REYNOLDS