



Franz Lachner: König Ödipus

aud 97.425

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American Record Guide (Carl Bauman - 01.01.2002)

Franz Lachner (1803-90) was the son of an organist and composer and brother of two other professional musicians. He began studies with his father, but in 1822 he moved to Vienna where he became organist of the Lutheran Church. He completed his studies with Simon Sechter and Abbe Stadler. He became friendly with Schubert, Beethoven, and others. He moved up in Viennese musical circles until he moved briefly to Berlin. In 1836 he returned to Munich and became a fixture of the city's musical life.

In 1852 he wrote a setting of Sophocles's tragedy Oedipus for theatrical performance with a narrator, cast of speakers, chorus, and orchestra. It is an impressive work. Unfortunately this recording is aimed strictly at the German-speaking marketplace, for the notes and full text are supplied only in German. The music is dramatically written, in the mid-19th Century style. The chorus sings very well, and the narrator is superb. So are most of the members of the speaking cast, with the sole exception of Oedipus, who speaks harshly and with emotions that bring to mind a Nazi party leader. Fortunately his role is minor. I should emphasize that the chorus and narrator have the major roles and are both splendid.

The recording is excellent in range and spatial positioning. I would strongly recommend its purchase to those who have wide ranging collections and who either speak German or don't mind their inability to read German. The recording is so clear that following the German text is easy.