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"Destiny Fortune" or, better, "Fortune the Joker". Its challenges and vicissitudes are an eternal theme for poets and musicians. Here we are given eight examples of settings by four different German Baroque composers of texts reflecting on this theme, with its opposing forces of hope and happiness.

The least-known of the four is Johann Ulich (1677–1741), a North-German composer most of whose output was lost in World War II. But a fortunate (pun?) survival is his cantata Ihr Hellen Sterne des Glucks (You Bright Stars of Happiness), the longest item in the program.

The best-known composer, on the other hand, is Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1761), who is represented by no less than three early cantatas, which survive under his early penname, Melante—a scrambling of the letters of his surname. The title of one becomes the album's title. Another is titled Hoffnung (Hope), and a third is called Amor Heisst mich Freudig Lachen (Love has me laughing joyfully).

Johann Philipp Krieger (1629–1727), the earliest of the gang, contributes a brief song, 'An die Einsamkeit' (To Loneliness).

Much of Philipp Heinrich Erlebach's (1657–1714) output, like Ulich's, was destroyed by disaster. From a surviving collection of secular songs we are given three, short strophic pieces whose melodic charm particularly pleased me.

But there is a lot of tuneful and expressive music in all the items here. They are given thoughtful performances by Siedlaczek. She has a light, flexible voice and cares about what she sings. My only reservation is that her piping, almost soubrette-like sound can become a little wearing if you listen without interruption to the entire program.

Still, a very interesting exploration of previously unrecorded by ways of Baroque German vocal music, modest in scale and intimate in expression. The three members of the crack ensemble give predictably sensitive support. Good notes; full German texts but no translations.

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