

# Joy and sorrow in moving moods



**Mother and Child. A Recital by Louise Page (soprano) and Phillipa Candy (piano).**

Art Song Canberra. Wesley Music Centre.  
June 22.

**O**ver the years this Canberra duo has presented many fine vocal recitals notable for innovative programs presented in immaculate performances, and once again this was so at this Art Song Canberra recital soprano Louise Page and pianist Phillipa Candy presented last Sunday afternoon.

It was a recital that expressed in song both the joy and the sorrow of motherhood, drawn from a wide variety of musical styles and a broad range of composers.

The program began with a work titled *The Mystery (Five Songs of Motherhood)* by contemporary composer Carlisle Floyd, a setting of poems in which the mother reminisces of firstly her anticipation and then the birth of her child, this realised in a performance that was beautifully expressive. And it led naturally to a group of five contrasting cradle songs by German, English and American composers, including the well-known *Wiegenlied* of Brahms and the lullaby *Summertime* from Gershwin's opera *Porgy and Bess*, and including a very beautiful *Cradle Song* that I had not heard before by English composer Arnold Bax.

However, the peak of the program was reached with a mov-



Soprano Louise Page.

ing interpretative realisation of the song-cycle *Kindertotenlieder (Songs on the Death of Children)* by Gustav Mahler. Originally an orchestral song-cycle, some of the warmth of the glowing orchestral sound supporting the voice is lost in its reduction to a piano accompaniment. However, so committed and beautifully shaped was the performance from both singer and pianist that the music still achieved its feeling of intimate expressiveness.

After this moving performance, the mood lightened for the remainder of the program, with three children's songs starting with the humorous *I don't like beeties* by Australian composer Roy Agnew.

Page has a voice of notable beauty which is underlined by the expressive understanding she brings to everything she sings, even in a program as diverse as this. The long partnership she has had with Candy as her accompanist makes every program they present together a sheer musical delight.