

07. Amen, Amen

1881

Maria Arndts
(1823-1882)
arr. William Melton

Arndts, Maria

(born Munich, April 5, 1823; died Munich, May 23, 1882)

She was born Maria Vespermann in Munich to the singer Klara Metzger-Vespermann and the actor Wilhelm Vespermann. The child began taking instruction on the piano at the age of four, augmented by studies in voice and composition with the Bavarian royal kapellmeisters Franz Xaver Hauser and Franz Xaver Pentenrieder. Maria made her performing debut at the age of nine, soon afterwards debuted as a composer, and received encouragement from the likes of Franz Lachner, Wilhelm Taubert, and Franz Liszt. This public phase ended in 1844, when she married the poet Guido von Görres and gave up performing. Widowed in 1852, she married the professor and court councilor Carl Ludwig Arndts von Arensberg eight years later and the couple relocated to Vienna. After her second husband's death in 1878, Maria Arndts, by now well known as a writer (of novellas and plays like *Mozart as Matchmaker*), spent her last years in the Bavarian countryside and died in Munich.

While Arndts' literary reputation had grown, her musical compositions remained confined to more private circles. Even so she published songs and piano pieces across the decades, first as Maria Görres and then Maria Arndts. Her largest project appeared late in life, when she provided 24 songs for Friedrich Wilhelm Weber's *Dreizehnlinden* (*Thirteen Linden Trees*). This epic poetic treatment of the struggle between Christian Franks and Pagan Saxons a millennium previously was hugely popular – a staged melodrama of the piece was performed across Germany and even in the United States. Weber's uplifting message of nonviolence and tolerance was conveyed in Arndt's gentle setting of the final chorus "Amen, Amen, auf die Knie sanken alle" ("Amen, Amen, All Sank to their Knees"), which was published by J. Esser of Paderborn in 1881 (Plate No. 14).

Text by William Melton