William Grant Still (1895-1978) from Little Rock was a pioneer in many ways. He was the first African American to successfully depart from the generally acceptable genres of jazz and pop. He lived to see a symphonic work and an opera of his performed, he conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic and directed an important Southern orchestra. The respect that he acquired is reflected in two Guggenheim fellowships and five honorary doctorates, as well as a growing number of top-quality recordings of his works. This album is dedicated to the composer's impressive art songs. Two dozen works, including simple spirituals, expansive, declamatory and captivating scenes, touching miniatures and provocative challenges paint a portrait of a self-assured man asserting his musical authority.