

Prokofiev – The Fiery Angel (1991)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 01 March 2012 10:01 - Last Updated Friday, 21 March 2014 10:13

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CD1 1. *Hier, Herr Ritter* 2. *Ja, Es Hat Sich Aufgelöst* 3. *Bei Ihnen Ist Die Ganze Zeit So Ein Lärm* 4. *Ist Es Nun Nicht Genug* 5. *Sista...Sista...Sista* 6. *..Von Drei Magischen Kreisen* 7. *Ah, Jakob Glock* 8. *Da Ist Niemand* 9. *Entr` Acte* 10. *Hörst Du Das Klopfen?* 11. *Entr` Acte* 12. *Magister Doctissime* CD2 1. *Heinrich, Komm Zurück, Komm, Komm Zurück!* 2. *Renata, Höre Doch Auf Zu Weinen!* 3. *Töte Ihn, Ruprecht!* 4. *Entr` Acte* 5. *Verzeih Mir, Madiel! Verzeih Mir* 6. *Gnädige Dame, Er Ist Schwer Verwundet* 7. *Entr` Acte* 8. *Gnädige Dame, Er Ist Schwer Verwundet* 9. *Verzeih Mir, Madiel! Verzeih Mir!* 10. *Renata, Ich Flehe Dich An...* 11. *Hammelfleisch! Wein Und Hammelfleisch!* 12. *Ach, Der Halunke!* 13. *Doktor, Ja!* 14. *Schwester Renata* 15. *Geliebte Brüder Und Schwestern* 16. *Hinterlistiger Geist* 17. *Hinterlistiger Geist* 18. *Hinterlistiger Geist* 19. *Schwestern! Schwestern! Schwestern! Ah!* 20. *Oh, Unglück!* 21. *Hammelfleisch! Wein Und Hammelfleisch!* 22. *Ach, Der Halunke!* 23. *Oh, Unglück!*
Ruprecht – Siegfried Lorenz Renata – Nadine Secunde Landlady – Rosemarie Lang Fortune-Teller – Ruthild Engert-Ely Agrippa von Nettesheim – Heinz Zednik Johann Faust – Petteri Salomaa Inquisitor – Kurt Moll Jacob Glock – Gosta Zachrisson Mathias Wissmann – Bryn Terfel Innkeeper – Karl-Gustav Holmgren Gosta Ohlin Vocal Ensemble Pro Musica Chamber Choir Göteborgs Symfoniker Neeme Järvi - conductor

The Fiery Angel (Op 37) is an opera in five acts by Sergei Prokofiev to a Russian libretto by the composer, based on the novel The Fiery Angel (1908) by Valery Bryusov. Prokofiev encountered Bryusov's novel during his first visit to the United States, (which was around 1918) and he soon (1919) began sketches for an opera. In 1921, the work was well under way. In March 1922, Prokofiev moved to the town of Ettal in Bavaria, Germany, where he worked on the opera. A piano score was completed a couple of years later, but no orchestration had been worked on. In 1926 Bruno Walter accepted the work for the Städtische Oper. The opera was completed in August 1927, too late for the season. Walter cancelled the production. That year Sergei Koussevitzky conducted part of the second act, but the reception was poor.

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In 1930, during Prokofiev's new tour of America Giulio Gatti-Casazza of the Metropolitan Opera suggested staging Fiery Angel, but this did not go ahead.

In all, Prokofiev had great trouble staging this opera. Numerous attempts to do so failed. Various reasons have been suggested for each different case, such as Prokofiev allegedly failing to meet deadlines, because the work's peculiar nature estranged people, poor visual action.

Synopsis

The full title of Bryusov's novel gives a good idea of the substance of the opera:

The Fiery Angel; or, a True Story in which is related of the Devil, not once but often appearing in the Image of a Spirit of Light to a Maiden and seducing her to Various and Many Sinful Deeds, of Ungodly Practices of Magic, Alchymy, Astrology, the Cabalistical Sciences and Necromancy, of the Trial of the Said Maiden under the Presidency of His Eminence the Archbishop of Trier, as well as of Encounters and Discourses with the Knight and thrice Doctor Agrippa of Nettesheim, and with Doctor Faustus, composed by an Eyewitness.

Set in sixteenth-century Germany, the story concerns a young woman named Renata who has fallen in love with a "fiery angel" whom she believes appeared to her during her childhood. She later identifies the "angel" with one Count Heinrich, who takes her as his mistress but then abandons her. She enlists the knight-errant Ruprecht in her efforts to track down her "angel". Though she believes her motives are holy, the presence of Faust, Mephistopheles and assorted demons in the story suggests otherwise. Her obsessive quest leads her and the loyal, lovestruck Ruprecht deep into the realms of the occult. After many bizarre adventures, Ruprecht emerges unscathed, but Renata is condemned by the Inquisition to a fiery death at the stake.

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