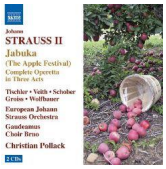
Johann Strauss II - Jabuka (Das Apfelfest) [2007]



Disc 1 *1. Act I: Prelude - Introduction: Jabuka wird gefeiert heut'! (Staklo, Chorus) 00:04:42 2. Act I: Trio with Chorus: Ihr Burschen und Diener (Mirko, Vasil, Staklo, Chorus) 00:02:26 3. Act I: Entree - Couplet: Im ganzen Land bin ich bekannt (Joschko) 00:02:15 4. Act I: Sextet: Zivio! Zivio! Lasst die Glaser erklingen! (Mirko, Joschko, Franjo, Anitta, Vasil, Bambora) 00:03:37 5. Act I: Ensemble: Zu Hilfe, zu Hilfe, Ihr Leute, herbei! (Jelka, Petrija, Mischa, Staklo) 00:02:13 6. Act I: Ensemble: Was seh' ich (Jelka, Petrija, Mirko, Mischa, Joschko, Staklo) 00:05:02 7. Act I: Duet: Vergebens, dass ich spahe, verlassen liegt der Ort (Jelka, Mirko) 00:04:30 8. Act I: Finale: Heraus da! Heraus! Naher, Weib und Mann! (Jelka, Petrija, Mirko, Joschko, Mischa, Staklo, Chorus) 00:14:11 9. Act II: Introduction - Draussen gibt es weit und breit Jubel Tanz (Sava, Mirko, Chorus) 00:02:21 10. Act II: Duet: Es war einmal, es war einmal im Marchen nur (Annita, Vasil) 00:05:29 11. Act II: Quintet: So, ich bitte, nur herein! (Joschko, Jelka, Sava, Petrija, Mirko) 00:03:14 12. Act II: Couplet: Wie die Chroniken vermelden (Joschko, Annita, Mirko, Vasil, Bambora) 00:03:42 13. Act II: Finale: Naher, naher, nur herbei! (Jelka, Annita, Petrija, Mirko, Vasil, Joschko, Bambora, Mischa, Chorus) 00:17:50*

Disc 2

1. Act III: Entr'acte 00:03:17 2. Act III: Ensemble and Ariette: So frech uns zu storen unser Plaisir! (Bambora, Mischa, Chorus) 00:03:13 3. Act III: Couplet: Mit den schlechten Zeiten ist es jetzt vorbei (Joschko) 00:03:33 4. Act III: Mocking - Chorus: Sag' doch (Jelka, Ladies Chorus) 00:02:06 5. Act III: Quartet: Siehe die Sonne vergluh'n in Pracht (Jelka, Mirko, Annita, Vasil) 00:04:56 6. Act III: Finale: Ob auch das Gluck uns warten lasst (Jelka, Annita, Mirko, Sava, Joschko) 00:01:09 7. Ich bin dir gut!, Walzer, Op. 455 00:10:15 8. Zivio!, Marsch, Op. 456 (orch. G. Fischer) 00:03:29 9. Das Comitat geht in die Hoh'! Polka schnell, Op. 457 (arr. L. Roth, orch. C. Pollack) 00:02:32 10. Tanze mit dem Besenstiel!, Polka francaise, Op. 458 (arr. L. Roth, orch. C. Pollack) 00:04:49 11. Sonnenblume, Polka mazur, Op. 459 (arr. L. Roth, orch. C. Pollack) 00:05:47 12. Jabuka - Quadrille, Op. 460 (orch. C. Pollack) 00:05:41 13. Jabuka (Das Apfelfest), Potpourri (arr. anon., orch C. Pollack) 00:13:37

Mirko von Gradinaz (ein Adeliger) – Thomas Tischler Vasil von Gradinaz (ein Adeliger) – Wolfgang Veith Mischa (ein reicher Bauer) – Michael Schober Jelka (dessen Tochter)– Veronika Groiss Petrija (deren Tante) – Elisabeth Wolfbauer Bambora (ein Fabrikant) – Helmut Josef Ettl Annita (dessen Tochter) – Elisabeth Wolfbauer Joschko (ein Gerichtsexekutor) – Franz Födinger Franjo (sein Helfer) – Alexander Eschig Staklo (ein Wirt) & Sava (ein Diener des Mirko) – Max Sahliger Gaudeamus Choir Brno European Johann Strauss Orchestra Conductor – Christian Pollack

An operetta with musical elements of true opera, Jabuka (Das Apfelfest), is Johann Strauss the Younger’s fourteenth stage work. An annual Apple Festival in the Serbian town of Ravica is an opportunity for local young people to choose a partner. The girl bites an apple, gives it to her chosen boy, and if he also takes a bite, the match is made. It is against this backdrop that the impoverished noblemen, Mirko and Vasil, find a way out of their difficulties by finding rich brides at the Apple Festival of the title. With its strikingly fresh and original melodies, great ensembles and some of the finest choruses Strauss ever wrote, Jabuka was a huge success at its première in Vienna in October 1894. --- naxos.com

Even those who are moderately familiar with Johann Strauss' stage works apart from Die Fledermaus are unlikely to have heard of Jabuka (The Apple Festival), a merry effort from 1894 that Strauss introduced during a time when Vienna was celebrating the 50th anniversary of his first concert there; he would live only five years more. Before this Naxos effort, recorded between 2005 and 2007 and guided by the knowledgeable hand of Christian Pollack, this work has certainly never been recorded outside of the potpourris and quadrilles derived from it; it is unlikely to have been seen on-stage between its 1894 premiere and the 2003 revival on which this recording is based. Pop in the disc and you'll immediately be struck by a weird feeling; did Naxos get the right composer on this thing? Isn't this Smetana or someone like that? Indeed, the resemblance is very close, and it is no ironic coincidence that librettist Max Kalbeck translated the Czech text of "The Bartered Bride" into German for its first Vienna-based performances. However, by the middle of the first act you'll realize this is unquestionably Strauss, only working, very successfully, outside of his usual idiom.

The story of Jabuka is a slight one, a tale of countryside matchmaking set with a Serbian apple festival as a backdrop; the style of the music is primarily Slavic with some touches of Viennese lilt. Both Naxos' recording and the operetta itself move along quickly and hardly give the listener a moment's pause; the music is bright, rhythmic, colorful, and pulsing with excitement. The principals, all drawn from the Viennese operetta stage, all sing with enthusiasm and in an easy, unaffected manner miles away from Grand Opera, which is where they should be given the lightness of this property. The most amazing aspect of the score is the chorus writing, on which Strauss lavished great care; here they are sung by the Brno-based Gaudeamus Choir, which is thrilling and fabulous, as is the sprightly and energetic playing of the European Johann Strauss Orchestra, made up of players from the Brno Symphony. Naxos' recording is wonderfully vivid, alive, and well balanced.

The booklet does not come with a libretto, and it is not present on the Naxos site, but the summary is sufficiently detailed and at least some interested listeners may feel they do not need a full libretto. This music is certainly never boring and it is not as though the story is so involved that you'll feel out of the loop even with just the summary. All in all, Naxos' Johann Strauss II: Jabuka (The Apple Festival) is a superb recording of an operetta so subterranean that no one saw it coming and it really is one of Strauss' most immediate and appealing works for the theater. As the second disc would run short with just the operetta alone, Naxos adds the various shorter pieces arranged from it as filler, and these are all equally splendid and engaging -- true "Apple fun," as Dr. Seuss might have termed it. ---Uncle Dave Lewis, AllMusic Review

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