

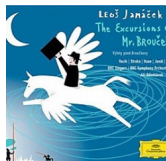
Janacek - The Excursions of Mr. Brouček to the Moon and the 15th Century (2008)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 11 January 2011 10:34 - Last Updated Tuesday, 14 January 2014 10:23

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Czech:: Výlety páně Broučkovy



CD1

1. Introduction 03:23
2. Pak verit muzum 03:20
3. Hubo nevymahana 04:48
4. Malinko 04:38
5. Racte nas zas brzo navstivit 07:08
6. Etherea Etherea 03:06 [play](#)
7. Des vane od tebe jak od Meduzy 05:38
8. Tuto melodii ale do bombardonu 05:23
9. Tanec Tatrmene 05:27
10. Pros veleducha 05:41
11. Pojd sem 07:24
12. Boure silenstvi mnou smyka 02:08
13. Mezihra Cupriny tve stale vence 06:50

CD2

1. Introduction 01:54
2. Byly podzemni chodby 05:05
3. O slunce velkeho dne 05:08
4. Jsi-li dobry stuoj 02:33
5. Zacina se den Pane 04:45
6. Kdybych zde nesedel 05:17
7. Vezmi skorne 02:25
8. Aj kazani Rokyacanovo 10:28
9. Vzhuru Vzhuru 05:18
10. Promena Hejsasa Hejsasa 02:05
11. Ditky v hromadu se sendeme 02:33
12. Hle tu skrcen jeden 03:58 [play](#)
13. Sel v nasem siku Promena Ach Ach Ach 06:24

Jan Vacík Matěj Brouček Peter Straka - Mazal/Blankytný/Petřík Maria Haan -

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Málinka/Etherea/Kunka Roman Janál - Svatopluk Čech/Sakristán/Lunobar/Domšík od Zvonu
Zdeněk Plech - Würfl/Čaroskvoucí/Konšel Lenka Šmídová - Hospodyně/Kedruta Martina
Bauerová - Číšníček/Zázračné/Žák Aleš Briscein - Malíř/Duhoslav/Vojta od Pávů Václav
Sibera - Básník/Oblačný/Vacek Bradatý BBC Singers
BBC Symphony Orchestra
Jiří Bělohlávek - conductor

When it comes to recordings, this is the least-favoured of Leos Janacek's operas: The Excursions Of Mr Broucek. It's effectively two dramas, and two Excursions: one to the moon, one to 15th century Prague...Janacek's operatic reactions to the satirical stories of Svatopluk Cech, which due to various disagreements with librettists, took the composer nine years to complete. So where does it fit? Between Jenufa, and the finale great operatic flowering that began with Katya Kabanova - but Broucek's Excursions are unlike anything that came before or since; comic, yes, but also serious, patriotic, and often wonderfully scored.

Broucek doesn't seem to get out much, either onstage or on disc. It's missing from the Decca cycle of Janacek operas conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras, and this new one is a first for two reasons: it's the first digital recording, and also the first account on disc of a new edition of the opera made by Janacek authority Jiri Zahradka...both of which probably make this a compulsory purchase for committed Janacek-ians. But there's another reason to take it seriously; the recording was made live at the Barbican in February 2007, and if you read the reviews at the time, or heard the broadcast on BBC Radio 3, you'll have gathered that something special happened. It comes across on the CDs as well: Jiri Belohlavek conducting the BBC Singers and BBC Symphony Orchestra, and an almost entirely Czech cast who throw themselves into their roles with vitality, and understanding. Broucek is sung by Jan Vacik, and after his drunken proposal to his tenant's girlfriend, and beer-fuelled flight of fantasy, Vacik is a delicious foil to the lunar luvvies, horrifying them with his enthusiasm for sausage, beer and dumplings rather than high art and flower-sniffing. Belohlavek's handling of Janacek's gorgeous Interlude as Broucek returns to earth is as magical as it ought to be.

In the second part, to his horror, an earthbound Broucek is transported to the past, caught up in the battle for 15th century Prague: Hussite hymns and heroism, plus bagpipes and an organ adding an edge to the orchestration. Here's heartfelt patriotism, and a celebratory setting of real grandeur from Janacek, and it's greatly to everyone's credit that it doesn't feel like a concert performance.

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This may not be the last recorded word on Broucek, but right now it sounds like a major improvement on what we've had before: the strength and depth of the cast, and most of all the sound quality, and Belohlavek's feel for the tenderness, humour and romance of one of Janacek's least appreciated, yet most original dramas.

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