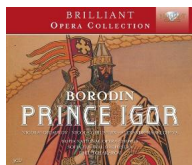


Borodin - Prince Igor (1987)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 08 December 2019 16:06 -

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1.1 Overture 10:17 1.2 Prologue 21:20 Act 1 1.3 Scene 1: At Vladimir Galitsky's Court 18:35 1.4 Scene 2: Arioso Of Yaroslavna 9:53 1.5 Yaroslavna With The Girls 4:59 1.6 Yaroslavna And Galitsky 8:05 2.1 Finale Of Act 1 Act 2 2.2 Choir Of The Polovtsian Maidens 6:07 2.3 Dance Of The Polovtsian Maidens 2:16 2.4 Cavatina Of Konchakovna 6:39 2.5 Scene With Choir 3:40 2.6 Recitative And Cavatina Of Vladimir Igoryevich 5:25 2.7 Duet Of Igoryevich And Konchakovna 6:40 2.8 Aria Of Prince Igor 7:03 2.9 Prince Igor And Ovlur 4:01 2.10 Aria Of Konchak 6:30 2.11 Recitative of Prince Igor 3:26 2.12 Polovtsian Dance With Choir 11:53 Act 3 3.1 Polovtsian March 5:52 3.2 Song Of Konchak 3:11 3.3 Recitative Of Konchak And Choir Of The Khans 4:50 3.4 Choir And Dance Of The Guards 3:46 3.5 Recitative Of Ovlur And Prince Igor 1:59 3.6 Trio (Konchaknova, Igoryevich And Prince Igor) 4:13 3.7 Finale Boris Martinovich (bass-baritone) - Igor Svyatoslavich, Prince of Seversk Stefka Evstatieva (soprano) - Yaroslavna, his wife Kaludi Kaludov (tenor) - Vladimir Igorevich, Igor's son Nicola Ghiuselev (bass) - Vladimir Yaroslavich, Prince Galitsky, Yaroslavna's brother Nicolai Ghiurov (bass) - Konchak, Polovtsian Khan Alexandrina Milcheva (mezzo) - Konchakovna Mincho Popov (tenor) - Ovlur, baptized Polovtsian Stoil Georgiev (tenor) - Skula, buffoon Angel Petkov (baritone) - Yeroshka, buffoon Elena Stoyanova (mezzo) - Yaroslavna's nurse Boris Martinovich - Igor Svyatoslavich (baritone) Sofia Festival Orchestra & Sofia National Opera Chorus Emil Tchakarov - conductor

At Brilliant's prices it would be crazy to complain even if this performance were only adequate, but as it is, it is in fact in many ways very good. That's especially true in terms of the sound and brilliance of the Sofia forces under Tchakarov's energised direction. Both chorus and orchestra are really impressive, singing and playing with huge verve and enthusiasm. The Polovtsian set pieces are very idiomatic: lilting and invigorating by turns.

By and large we have here a number of star voices, some of whom are, to put it kindly, in their later flowering but they are still artists of note. Amongst these are veteran Bulgarian basses Ghiuselev and Ghiurov, both a bit rough, rusty and unsteady of tone but also powerful and

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characterful as Galitsky and Khan Konchak respectively. Rather more elegant singing is provided by the smoothly authoritative bass-baritone Boris Martinovich, who also collaborated with Tchakarov in an excellent "Life for the Tsar" and as Rangoni in "Boris Godunov". It is possible to carp about some of the throatier comprimario tenor roles here and even lead tenor Kaludi Kaludov is at times a bit breathy and hoarse but he sings in very committed, convincing manner. The power of Stefka Evstatieva's soprano is occasionally compromised by the typical "Slavonic steam-whistle" effect she produces at forte but she is a compelling vocal actress. Alexandrina Milcheva is perfectly acceptable as Konchakovna and she has a serviceable lower register. That said, her voice does not have the velvety, sensual power of such as Obratzsova in what is, in my estimation, an unjustly neglected recording conducted by Mark Ermler. Some of the best singing may be heard in the stirring Third Act Trio for Konchakovna, Igorevich and Prince Igor and also the touching aria for Yaroslavna which follows that, feelingly sung by Evstatieva with some pointed use of smoothly controlled dynamics.

This does not shake my preference for the Ermler recording but I readily concede that this one is both subtler and much more affordable than that red-blooded version. It has no libretto, only an excessively condensed synopsis. ---Ralph Moore, musicweb-international.com

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