

LEOŠ JANÁČEK: THE MAKROPULOS CASE

CHANDOS

JANÁČEK

THE MAKROPULOS CASE

Cheryl Barker

English National Opera Orchestra

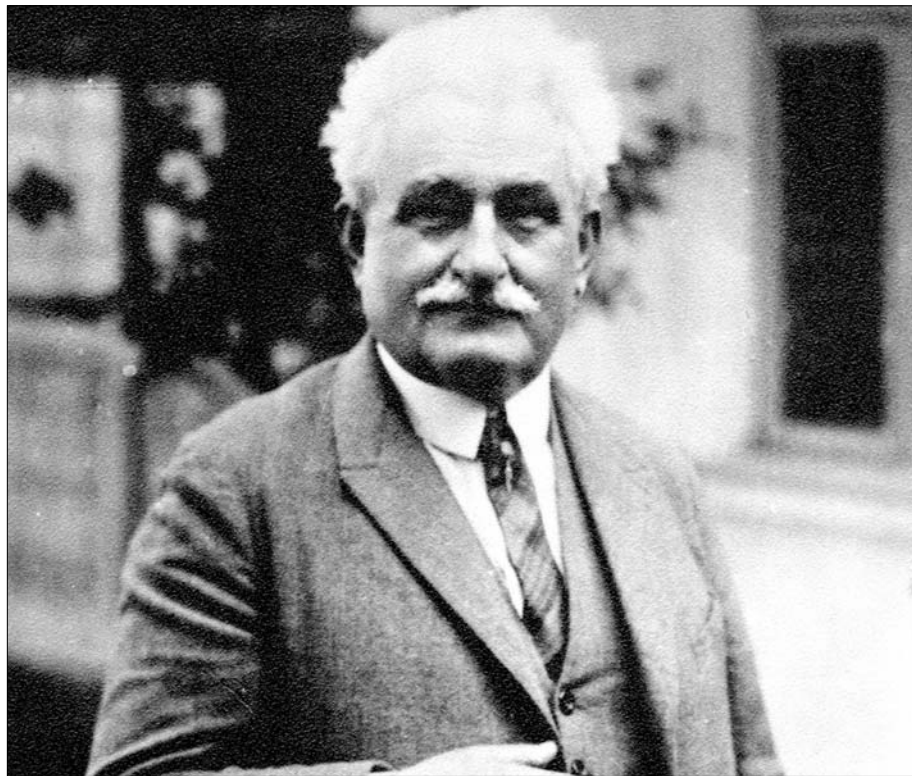
Sir Charles Mackerras

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

CHANDOS
OPERA IN
ENGLISH
LIVE RECORDING

SOLOISTS/ENO/SIR CHARLES MACKERRAS

CHAN 3138(2)



Leoš Janáček

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Leoš Janáček (1854–1928)

The Makropulos Case

Opera in three acts

Libretto by the composer after Karel Čapek's
comedy *Věk Makropulos*

English translation by Norman Tucker

Emilia Marty (E.M.), a famous diva	Cheryl Barker <i>soprano</i>
Dr Kolenatý, a lawyer	Neal Davies <i>bass-baritone</i>
Vítek, his head clerk	John Graham-Hall <i>tenor</i>
Kristina, Vítek's daughter	Elena Xanthoudakis <i>soprano</i>
Albert Gregor, a litigant	Robert Brubaker <i>tenor</i>
Baron Jaroslav Prus, his opposing litigant	John Wegner <i>baritone</i>
Janek Prus, Baron Prus's son	Thomas Walker <i>tenor</i>
Count Hauk-Šendorf, one of E.M.'s former beaux	Graham Clark <i>tenor</i>
Stage Hand	Graeme Danby <i>bass</i>
Cleaner	Kathleen Wilkinson <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Chambermaid	Susanna Tudor-Thomas <i>mezzo-soprano</i>

English National Opera Chorus
English National Opera Orchestra

Martin Merry chorus master
Gonzalo Acosta leader
Alexander Briger assistant conductor
Sir Charles Mackerras



COMPACT DISC ONE

Time Page

Act I (35:45)

[1]	Prelude	5:22	[p. 76]
[2]	'Oh dear, my goodness!' <i>Vitek, Gregor</i>	4:14	[p. 76]
[3]	'Daddy, she really is wonderful' <i>Kristina, Gregor, Vitek</i>	1:55	[p. 77]
[4]	'Come this way please' <i>Kolenatý, Kristina, Marty, Gregor</i>	11:23	[p. 78]
[5]	'Gone at last!	5:53	[p. 84]
[6]	'Emilia' <i>Gregor, Marty</i>	4:10	[p. 87]
[7]	'Found it! We've found it' <i>Kolenatý, Marty, Gregor, Prus</i>	2:45	[p. 89]

Act II (30:25)

[8]	'Did you ever see such flowers?' <i>Cleaner, Stage Hand, Prus</i>	2:14	[p. 90]
[9]	'Janek, come on. No one here will see us' <i>Kristina, Janek, Prus, Marty, Gregor, Vitek</i>	6:35	[p. 91]
[10]	'Excuse me. Excuse me, may I...' <i>Hauk, Marty, Prus</i>	4:15	[p. 95]
[11]	'And the next! Is that the lot?' <i>Marty, Vitek, Kristina, Janek, Prus, Gregor</i>	1:34	[p. 96]

Time Page

[12]	'Allow me to ask you this question' <i>Prus, Marty</i>	6:29	[p. 97]
[13]	'Is that you, Bertie?' <i>Marty, Gregor, Cleaner, Janek, Prus</i>	9:17	[p. 99]

TT 66:24

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act III (29:34)

[1]	'Well? D'you hear me?' <i>Marty, Prus, Chambermaid</i>	5:30	[p.103]
[2]	'Buenos dias Maxi! Why so early?' <i>Marty, Hauk, Chambermaid, Kolenatý, Gregor</i>	3:29	[p.105]
[3]	'The seal and th'initials E.M.' <i>Gregor, Vitek, Kolenatý, Prus, Marty, Kristina</i>	12:20	[p.107]
[4]	'Fetch the doctor!' <i>Kolenatý, Marty, Gregor, Vitek, Prus, Kristina, Chorus</i>	8:14	[p.112]

[5] - [10]	Interview with Sir Charles Mackerras Sir Charles Mackerras talks with Rodney Milnes about how he came to love Janáček, the man and the musician.	29:27	
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TT 59:19



Cheryl Barker as Emilia Marty

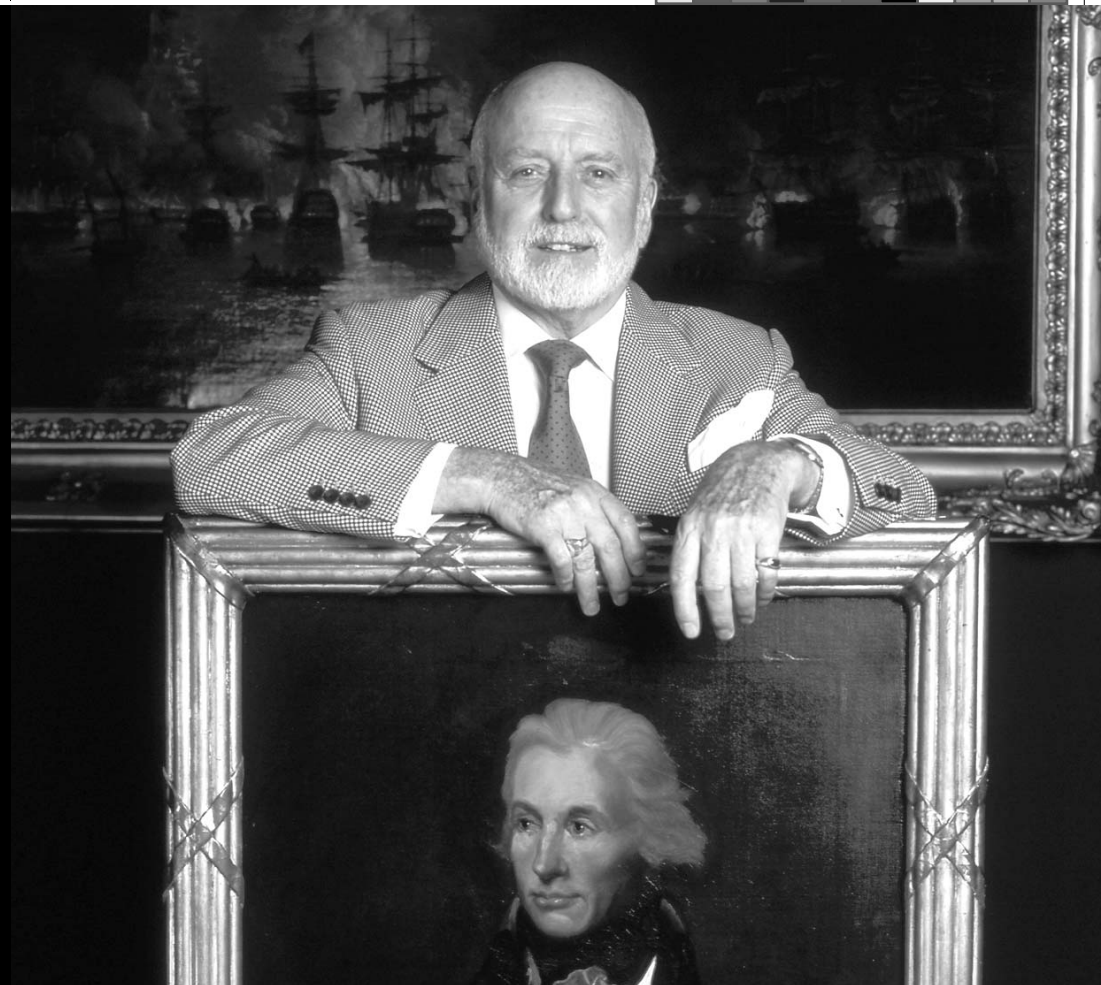


We were thrilled to be able to record *The Makropulos Case* 'live' at the London Coliseum in May 2006 with Sir Charles Mackerras conducting a great cast. Sir Charles conducted the UK première of Janáček's gripping opera at Sadler's Wells in 1964. As a bonus you can also hear him talking about his lifetime's experience of Janáček's music in conversation with Rodney Milnes.

Peter Moores

Sir Peter Moores, CBE, DL
February 2007

Sir Peter Moores with a portrait of Admiral Lord Nelson
by Lemuel Francis Abbott, acquired for Compton Verney
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Janáček: The Makropulos Case

‘Why should not old men be mad?’ This is what the great Irish poet W.B. Yeats wrote in one of his final lyrics. Like his near contemporary, Leoš Janáček, he was a late developer, coming to creative maturity in his fifties, and driven by similar demons – a fierce nationalism, a passionate obsession with a younger woman and a preoccupation with what he described as ‘the fascination of what’s difficult’. Yet even Yeats never undertook artistic risks on the scale of Janáček in the ten remarkable years which witnessed the birth of almost all of his musical masterpieces. In particular, in his three last operas – *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *The Makropulos Case* and *From the House of the Dead* – he set himself challenges which were not merely difficult but well-nigh insane – and surmounted them triumphantly. Inspired respectively by a strip cartoon, a philosophical satire and a fictionalised account of a Tsarist labour-camp, these three music dramas are among the most humane and moving musical documents of the twentieth century. None of them is stranger or more affecting than the opera which is

known in the English-speaking world as *The Makropulos Case*.

The title itself is a paradox. The Czech words ‘Věc Makropulos’ occur only in the final act. The first time we hear them, they refer to an ancient formula which promises eternal life. The second time, they are used in a more general sense to mean ‘the Makropulos stuff’ – much as in Mussorgsky’s opera, the title *Khovanshchina* is best translated as ‘The Khovansky Business’. There is indeed a ‘Case’ in the opera, but it is not the Makropulos Case. It is a lawsuit which has been conducted over many generations between two branches of a family – one legitimate and the other not. This dispute will only be resolved when an authentic will is produced. So the opera’s plot is wound on a spring of mystery – who is the real heir and how will we discover his identity? The person who can answer these questions is the central character of the piece, the diva Emilia Marty, and what drives her is not this mystery but another greater and more terrible one. What she is seeking is not the will, but the ancient formula secreted along with it. When she locates this piece of paper – the real

Věc Makropulos – she will solve her problem. Yet when she finds the answer, she rejects it. A mystery indeed, wrapped in a riddle, enclosed in an enigma. All intriguing stuff, to be sure, but scarcely the raw material of lyric theatre.

So why did Janáček choose to transform this unlikely drama into his penultimate opera? He had seen Karel Čapek’s play *The Makropulos Affair* performed in Prague late in 1922 and immediately applied to the author for permission to fashion a libretto from it and Janáček were strange bedfellows. Čapek was an urbane and sceptical Prague dramatist, best known for his collaboration with his brother on the allegorical *Insect Play* and for introducing the word ‘robot’ into general coinage in his satire *RUR*. Like George Bernard Shaw, whom he knew, his Prague contemporary Franz Kafka and another contemporary H.G. Wells, he was a speculative writer, concerned with questions of human progress. In the same year as Shaw’s *Back to Methuselah*, Čapek tackled the same issue of human mortality. The Makropulos Affair asks a similar question – what would it mean if we could live forever? Shaw’s answer was optimistic, promising infinite spiritual development. Čapek was ambivalent and left the question open. When Janáček seized on

this material, his response was profoundly tragic. He focused on the predicament of a woman who had been granted the gift of eternal life and as a result had become a bitter, destructive human shell, beautiful and fascinating on the outside and made of dust and ashes within. He set himself the task not merely of embodying this creature in music but of engaging our sympathy and love for her.

A primary motive, as in so many of his late works, was his infatuation with a married woman less than half his age. Janáček had met Kamila Stösslová in 1917, when he was sixty-three and she was twenty-five, and instantly fallen in love with her. He conducted an epic and largely one-sided correspondence with her for the rest of his life. She inspired each of his last four operas, the *Glagolitic Mass*, the *Sinfonietta*, a song cycle and two string quartets. She may have been a reluctant muse, but the artistic results of his obsession are breathtaking. In 1922, when Janáček first came across Čapek’s play, Kamila was doing her best to keep the celebrated but troublesome composer at arm’s length. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that in his letters to her shortly after beginning work on the opera, Janáček stresses the coldness and harsh behaviour of his heroine:



A three-hundred-year-old beauty – and eternally young – but only burnt-out feeling. Brrr! Cold as ice! About such a woman I shall write an opera.

And shortly after its completion:

At the end she was so unhappy! After that I want everyone to like her. Without love it won't work for me.

The most remarkable feature of his approach to this unyielding subject is how few hostages he takes. Čapek's play is sardonic and prosaic and for the first two acts, Janáček's music is equally terse and abrasive. Marty is given hardly any extended music of her own. Instead, she is presented in a series of dialogues – with the lawyer Kolenatý, the main opponents in the lawsuit, Ferdinand Gregor and Baron Prus and the crazy old former suitor Hauk-Šendorf who recognises Emilia to be the gypsy singer he loved half a century earlier. It would be excessive to describe these conversational interchanges as duets. They contain not an ounce of lyricism and moreover, it is the male interlocutors who have the lion's share of the words and notes. Yet Janáček involves us in his heroine's drama with consummate skill. His means are disorientating, provocative and wholly original.

To begin with, in addition to the lawyers, the litigants, their families and Marty herself,

there is an extra unseen character, who is constantly present in the music. We hear him first in the prelude, in the offstage trumpets and drums. He returns again as a fragmentary fanfare when the clerk Vitek describes the titled family engaged in the lawsuit. He is present in the insistent stretto at the end of the first act, after Emilia promises evidence to authenticate the will whose location she has mysteriously revealed. He makes a further eerie appearance in Act II, when Prus first realises that a certain Elena Makropulos may be at the heart of the mystery. His music dominates the last act, when Marty's true story is revealed. He is Rudolf II, Habsburg Emperor, connoisseur and collector of mysterious scholars and artefacts, whose court in Prague at the turn of the seventeenth century attracted scientists, astrologers, necromancers and quacks. In Čapek's play, he has commanded one of them, the Cretan physician Hieronymus Makropulos, to produce an elixir of eternal life. It was on his daughter Elina that he tested the potion and her endless life through the following three centuries provokes the action of the drama. In Janáček's operatic recreation, we are given continual aural glimpses into Rudolf's court and the past which dominates Emilia's eternal

present, as if a psychic trapdoor has opened in the stage.

There is another sonic string which draws us through the web of the story. It is a series of glassy violin harmonics, accompanied by a child's drum or possibly a renaissance tabor. We first encounter it when Marty reveals that Gregor's ancestor was the illegitimate son of Baron Prus' own forbear (and of course of Emilia herself in her previous identity as the Scottish singer Ellian MacGregor). A few moments later these sounds recur in one of the few moments of tenderness in this act, where Emilia reflects that this child never knew his own mother. They reappear in the Second Act, first when Emilia tells the young singer Kristina that sex is a game not worth the candle (as indeed are none of life's pleasures) and then when she flirtatiously asks her great great great great great grandson if he likes the name Makropulos. It is not exactly a *leitmotiv* – more a pinhole in Marty's psyche through which we perceive the lover and mother she has been to so many men throughout the centuries. These echoes of another world are reinforced by a third recurrent theme, on the viola d'amore, the instrument which Janáček associated with Kamila and which he wished to be included in his second string quartet, itself named *Intimate*

Letters after his own correspondence with his muse. The instrument and the theme associated with it work in human juxtaposition to the string harmonics, reminding us of the sixteen-year-old girl whose capacity for love has been crushed out of her by eternal reincarnation. It is through these subtle and elusive devices that Janáček holds us captive through two severe and concentrated acts in preparation for the heart-rending third.

Where Emilia has been presented so far largely through her effect on others, in Act III she becomes increasingly the dominant vocal presence in the opera. As we witness the effects of the potion gradually wearing off, the score's harmony and instrumentation develop new colours absent from the first two Acts. Meanwhile, Rudolf's trumpet calls, and the motif associated with him, puncture the texture with growing insistence. As she recalls giving the Makropulos formula to the one man she genuinely loved, old Pepi Prus, Janáček weaves a yearning string theme into the musical fabric in preparation for a new figure which will dominate the opera's closing moments. It accompanies Marty as she asks Gregor to feel her hands, which are now turning to ice. Yet as she grows colder, the music acquires new warmth. The theme persists as she slips



back into her native Greek and in quoting the Lord's Prayer – '*Pater hemon*' – merges 'Our Father in Heaven' with her own father the physician Hieronymus. It is a demonstration of Janáček's mastery that his restraint over the first two acts enables the opera's final ten minutes to deliver their message with almost unbearable emotional intensity. The death theme first heard in her short interchange with Gregor is transformed in the final bars into a passionate chorale that is first cousin to the peroration which concludes his previous opera *The Cunning Little Vixen*. The same humanistic vision is present in both works – that only death gives meaning to life.

When Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* was given its premiere, one critic remarked that it was 'touching to observe the faith of the old man and true believer'. Janáček responded with a characteristically terse postcard: 'No old man, and no true believer till I see for myself.' He was seventy-one when he completed *The Makropulos Case* and in the words of Dylan Thomas, raging against the dying of the light. Indeed he wrote to Kamila when he was completing *From the House of the Dead*, that there was still so much music waiting to pour out of him. In all these late creations, despite the solipsism of his letters to Kamila, there is

not a gram of sentimentality. At the very end of the original play, when all on stage refuse the formula and Kristina burns it, Čapek leaves us uncertain whether Marty dies or not. In the English National Opera production on which this recording is based, the director took a hint from Čapek and Marty was left neither dead nor alive with the formula clinging to her fingers like flypaper. Audiences must make up their own minds, but in Janáček's score there is no room for uncertainty. Emilia's death is final, and the music which accompanies it is some of the most transcendent in all of twentieth-century opera.

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Synopsis

The action of the opera takes place in Prague in 1924.

In 1585 a daughter, Elina, was born to Hieronymus Makropulos, the Cretan court physician to the Habsburg Emperor Rudolf II. The Emperor, obsessed with alchemy and magic potions, commissioned Makropulos to find him an elixir of eternal life. Fearing poison, the Emperor forced the physician first

to try it on his own daughter Elina. For a week she lay in a coma but, although she recovered, the efficacy of the potion was naturally impossible to prove. The physician was put in prison and his daughter fled Prague for abroad, to start a series of new lives as a singer. Every generation she changed her name, but throughout her extended life she has retained the same initials, E.M. (Eugenia Montez, Elsa Müller, Ellian MacGregor, Ekaterina Myskina, Emilia Marty). The prelude to the opera evoked the tragic existence of the alchemist's daughter, and its distant fanfares suggest the fantastic court of Rudolf II surrounded by his astrologers.

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

The offices of Dr Kolenatý

[1] Prelude. [2] – [3] The outcome is expected today of the century-old case of Gregor versus Prus. Baron 'Pepi' Prus died intestate in 1817, and his valuable estate passed to a cousin. Soon afterwards it was claimed by one Ferdinand Gregor, and it has been contested by descendants of each family ever since. It now seems that Albert Gregor's inability to supply convincing written proof of his claim will

finally give the estate to his adversary, Jaroslav Prus.

[4] – [7] All this is changed by the appearance in Prague of the famous opera singer, Emilia Marty. Her uncanny knowledge of past events concerning Elian MacGregor, the mistress of 'Pepi' Prus, reopens the case. At the same time she begins to exercise a strange fascination over the two rivals.

Act II

Backstage at the opera house in Prague, after a matinée

[8] – [9] Following her triumphant performance at the opera Marty continues to use her spell-binding power to destroy the other characters. She fascinates not only Gregor but the young singer Kristina and Prus's son Janek, her tongue-tied boyfriend, and even Kolenatý's clerk, the prosaic Vítek. [10] In a strange interlude the dotty old count Hauk-Šendorf recalls passionate memories from her misty past. [11] – [12] But it gradually appears that her real object is not to help Gregor win his case, but the recovery of a Greek document which contains the formula of the potion which grants three hundred years of existence. For the first time in her life she is experiencing



the onset of age. She attempts to use her power first over Gregor, ^[9] and then Janek. A tense conversation reveals that Baron Prus holds the answer, and she makes him a proposition.

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act III

Emilia Marty's hotel room

^[1] – ^[4] Prus has spent the night with Marty. Bitterly disillusioned by her coldness, he hands over the document. But although the prize is in her grasp, her control of events is on the wane. Prus is overwhelmed by news of his son's suicide, caused by Marty's callousness. The others arrive to call her to account for her actions and to explain her past. As they begin to discover elements of the truth, she decides the time has come to reveal her identity and the secret of her tormented existence.

^[5] – ^[10] Interview with Sir Charles Mackerras

Australian-born **Cheryl Barker** (Emilia Marty) studied in Melbourne with Dame Joan Hammond and in London with David Harper. In Australia, she appears regularly with Opera Australia, where her roles have included Nedda (*Pagliacci*), the Countess (*The Marriage of*

Gregg Barrett



Figaro), Mimì (*La Bohème*), Violetta (*La traviata*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*) and the title roles in both *Madama Butterfly* and *Tosca*.

She has also sung the roles of Mimì, Antonia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) and Tatyana for the Victoria State Opera; Tatyana and Violetta for Opera Queensland; and *Madama Butterfly* and Violetta for New Zealand Opera.

Internationally, Cheryl Barker is particularly noted for her performances of *Madama Butterfly*, singing this role for English National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, De Vlaamse Opera, Hamburg State Opera, Deutsche Oper, Berlin and most recently for The Netherlands Opera. Other international appearances include Jenifer (*A Midsummer Marriage*) for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Tatyana and Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*) for Scottish Opera; Oksana (Rimsky Korsakov's *Christmas Eve*), The Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*), Musetta (*La Bohème*), and Donna Elvira for English National Opera; the title role in *Maria Stuarda* for ReisOper; Violetta for Hamburg

State Opera and the Deutsche Oper; the title role in *Katya Kabanova* in Geneva and for Welsh National Opera; and the title roles in *Suor Angelica* and *The Merry Widow*, Mimì, Desdemona (*Otello*) and Liù (*Turandot*) for De Vlaamse Opera.

She appears regularly on the recital and concert platform and her many recordings include *Madama Butterfly* and Dyson's *Quo Vadis* for Chandos, and a solo CD featuring Puccini Arias.



Neal Davies (Dr Kolenatý) was born in Newport, Gwent and studied at King's College, London, and the Royal Academy of Music, of which he was made a Fellow in 2003. He continued his studies at the

International Opera Studio, Zurich, under the patronage of Dame Gwyneth Jones.

Operatic appearances have included Rameau's *Platée* (in London and at the Edinburgh Festival), Handel's *Giulio Cesare* under Ivor Bolton, and Figaro (*The Marriage of Figaro*) for the Royal Opera,

Covent Garden; Ariodates (*Xerxes*), Handel's *L'Allegro*, Publio (*La clemenza di Tito*) and Zebul (*Jephtha*) for English National Opera; Handel's *Radamisto* for the Opéra de Marseille; Handel's *Theodora* with Les Arts Florissants and William Christie (Paris and Salzburg); Handel's *Orlando* with the Gabrieli Consort; Leporello (*Don Giovanni*) for Scottish Opera; Britten's *Curlew River* at the Edinburgh Festival; and Zebul, Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Leporello and Dulcamara (*L'elisir d'amore*) for Welsh National Opera. He made his debut with Chicago Lyric Opera as Major General Stanley (*The Pirates of Penzance*) under Sir Andrew Davis.

Neal Davies' concert engagements have included appearances with the Cleveland and Philharmonia Orchestras, the Gabrieli Consort, the Oslo Philharmonic, the BBC Symphony, The Kings Consort with Robert King, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

His recordings include Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* under Sir Colin Davis; *Messiah*, *Theodora* and *Saul* under Paul McCreesh; Handel's *L'Allegro* under Robert King; and Dutilleux songs for Chandos.



John Graham-Hall (Vitek) studied at King's College, Cambridge and the Royal College of Music. He was a member of English National Opera where roles have included Alwa (*Lulu*), Mime

(the *Ring* cycle), Herod (*Salome*), Lysander (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), and Sylvester (*The Silver Tassie*). Other roles in the UK include Albert Herring, Basilio, Tanzmeister (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) and Monostatos (*The Magic Flute*) at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Mayor (*Albert Herring*) for Opera North; Vanya Kudrjas (*Katya Kabanova*), Flute (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and Bob Boles (*Peter Grimes*) for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Cassio (*Otello*) for Welsh National Opera; Eisenstein, Schoolmaster (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) for Scottish Opera; and Dada in the premiere of Nyman's *Man and Boy* with Almeida Opera.

Operatic engagements abroad have included Michel (*Juliette*) and the title role in Pascal Dusapin's new opera *Perela, l'homme de fumée* at the Opéra de Paris-Bastille; Cassio and

Basilio at La Monnaie in Brussels; Shapkin (*From the House of the Dead*) for Nice Opera; Lysander in Paris, Lyon, Caen, Montpellier, Rome, and at the Ravenna Festival; Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*) in Lyon and Toronto; Ferrando in Vancouver; and Basilio and Spoletta (*Tosca*) for Netherlands Opera.

For Chandos' Opera in English series John Graham-Hall has recorded Alwa (*Lulu*), Monostatos (*The Magic Flute*), Isacco (*The Thieving Magpie*), the Idiot (*Wozzeck*), and Basilio (*The Marriage of Figaro*).



Elena Xanthoudakis (Kristina), of joint Greek/Australian nationality, completed her Bachelor of Music Performance (Voice) with Honours at the Victorian College of Arts, Australia. She also completed her Master

of Music Performance at the University of Melbourne in 2003. After winning first prize in the Australian Singing Competition at the Sydney Opera House, she was awarded a year's scholarship at the Guildhall School of Music, London, where she was awarded the MMus.

From April to July 2004, she undertook a Young Artists position at Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, where she sang the role of Contessa di Folleville (*Il viaggio a Rheims*). She won the first prize in the 2006 Salzburg International Mozart Competition.

Operatic repertoire includes Leila (*The Pearl Fishers*), Pamina and Papageno (*The Magic Flute*), Olympia (*The Tales of Hoffmann*), Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*), Constance (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), and Kristina (*The Makropulos Case*), and she has sung with Melbourne Opera, Victorian College of Arts, Oz Opera, Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and English National Opera.

Concerts engagements include Melbourne Town Hall, the Hermitage in St Petersburg and Hong Kong (with the St Petersburg Camerata) in a repertoire including Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Rossini's *Petite Messe solennelle*, Bach's *St John* and *St Matthew Passions*, Fauré's Requiem, Handel's *Messiah* and *Jephtha*, Mozart's *Exsultate Jubilate* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and she has given recitals at the Hessisches Staatstheater, Wiesbaden, in Hong Kong and in Salt-Lake City, Utah.

American tenor **Robert Brubaker** (Albert Gregor) has established himself as a leading



tenor in opera companies throughout the United States and Europe. Born in Pennsylvania, he received his degree from the Hartt College of Music in Hartford, where he studied with David Ray Smith.

He has become a regular guest of the leading opera houses in the past seasons where he has performed at the Metropolitan Opera (Mephistopheles in *Doktor Faustus*), the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*), the Hamburg Staatsoper (Gherman in *Pique Dame*), the Teatro alla Scala (Guido Bardi in Zemlinsky's *Florentine Tragedy* and Golitsin in *Khovanshchina*), the Glyndebourne Festival (Laça in *Jenůfa*), the Salzburg Festival (the title role in Zemlinsky's *Der König*), the Liceu in Barcelona (Golitsin, and Erik in *The Flying Dutchman*) and the Opéra de Paris-Bastille (Count Pierre Bezukhov in *War and Peace*, Dimitri in *Boris Godunov*, Golitsin, and the title role in *Der Zwerg*). He has also performed with Houston Grand Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Montpellier Opera, Dallas Opera, and the Deutsche Oper Berlin.



John Wegner (Baron Prus) was born in Germany and grew up in Australia where he was a member of Opera Australia from 1981 until 1992. He is currently a resident member of the Deutsche Oper am

Rhein. He has a wide repertoire and performs regularly as a guest throughout the world, including La Scala, Milan, Australia, Toulouse, Brussels, Sao Paulo, Prague, Copenhagen, Oslo, Dublin and many leading companies in Germany.

At Bayreuth he has sung Telramund (*Lohengrin*), Donner (*Das Rheingold*), Biterolf (*Tannhäuser*) and Klingsor (*Parsifal*). Further repertoire includes Wotan/Wanderer and Alberich (*Der Ring der Nibelungen*), Jochanaan (*Salome*), the title roles in *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Boris Godunov*, Scarpia, Iago, Pizarro and Escamillo. He received the 2005 Australian Entertainment Industry Helpmann award as Best Male Performer in Opera.

Born in Glasgow, **Thomas Walker** (Janek Prus) studied in the brass department of the Royal



Scottish Academy of Music and Drama before studying singing with Ryland Davies at the Royal College of Music.

Concert engagements include *Elijah* at the Royal Albert Hall with Kurt Masur and

the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the BBC Proms, where he has also performed in Janáček's *Otcenás* and Bach's *Magnificat*. He appears regularly with orchestras in the UK, including the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra and the Academy of Ancient Music singing repertoire such as Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* and *St Nicolas*, and Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*.

Roles include Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) for Opera North and Tamino for British Youth Opera while still a student at the Benjamin Britten International Opera School, where appearances included Chevalier (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), and Peter Quint (*The Turn of the Screw*). He has sung Fenton (*Falstaff*) for English National Opera, and

Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) with Holland Park Opera.



Graham Clark (Count Hauk-Šendorf) was born in Littleborough, Lancashire and began his singing career at Scottish Opera before joining English National Opera as a Company Principal (1978–85). He has

appeared at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Opera North and Welsh National Opera. His extensive international career has taken him to the Bayreuth Festival for sixteen seasons (Loge, Mime, Steuermann, Melot), the Metropolitan Opera for fourteen seasons (Loge, Mime, Vere (*Billy Budd*), Števa (*Jenůfa*), Herodes (*Salome*), Prince/Marquis (*Lulu*)). He has also appeared at international festivals, including Edinburgh and the BBC Proms.

He has recorded for all the major companies and several of his key roles (including those in the *Ring*) have been recorded on DVD. He received the 1986 Olivier Award for Mephistopheles in Busoni's *Doktor Faust*.



Graeme Danby (Stage Hand) is widely recognised as one of Britain's finest *bassi profondi*, and performs regularly with the Royal Opera Covent Garden. He sang the major role of Charrington

in Loren Maazel's new Covent Garden commission 1984, a part written especially for him.

Roles for English National Opera include Lorenzo (*The Montagues and the Capulets*), Don Basilio (*The Barber of Seville*), Dulcamara (*The Elixir of Love*), Somnus (*Semele*), Quince (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Collatinus (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Poo-Bah (*The Mikado*), Sarastro (*The Magic Flute*), Pistol (*Falstaff*) and Ribbing (*A Masked Ball*). Other appearances include Antonio (*The Marriage of Figaro*) at Glyndebourne; Brag (*The Fairy Queen*) at the Gran Teatro del Liceu, Barcelona; Xuthus (Param Vir's *Ion*) at the Opéra National du Rhin, Strasbourg; and roles with Opera North, Scottish Opera, and at the Buxton and Garsington Festivals.



Kathleen Wilkinson (Cleaner) was born in Lancashire and studied with Barbara Robotham at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she was supported by the Peter Moores Foundation

and won several awards.

She has sung with Scottish Opera, Opera Ireland, Holland Park, Grange Park and at the Glyndebourne Festival, in roles including Madame de la Haltière (*Cendrillon*), Britten's Lucretia, Mercedes and the title role in *Carmen*, Filipyevna (*Eugene Onegin*), Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*), Martha (*Faust*), Azucena (*Il trovatore*), and Madam By-Ends in the RNCM singing and recording of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

For Scottish Opera she created the roles of Margaret Muir (David Home's *Friend of the People*), and Mary Lamb (Sally Beamish's *Monster!*). For the same company, she has also sung the roles of Nurse/Old Woman in James MacMillan's *Ines di Castro*, and Schwertleite/Erda in the company's Edinburgh Festival *Ring* cycle.



Susanna Tudor-Thomas (Chambermaid) studied at the Guildhall and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. She made her operatic debut aged seventeen

singing Barbarina (*The Marriage of Figaro*) with Welsh National Opera. She joined the English National Opera Chorus in 1994 and created the role of Mrs Van Tricasse in Gavin Bryars's *Doctor Ox's Experiment* and sang Flora (*La traviata*), Pitti-Sing (*The Mikado*), and Mercedes (*Carmen*). Other roles include Orlovsky (Kentish Opera) and L'enfant (*L'Enfant et les sortilèges* for Opera Zuid).

The Chorus of English National Opera is one of the Company's finest assets. In countless English National Opera productions they have thrilled audiences with the power of their singing and the intensity of their acting. The wide range of skills and experience members bring to performances distinguish any production in which they appear. Particular triumphs

for the Chorus have been Prokofiev's *War and Peace*, Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, Britten's *Billy Budd* and *Peter Grimes*, Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, Bizet's *Carmen* and Verdi's *Otello*. Their recording of the last, in Jonathan Miller's production conducted by Mark Elder, appeared on Chandos under the sponsorship of the Peter Moores Foundation, as did their recording of the celebrated 'Ring Cycle' conducted by Sir Reginald Goodall. Other Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation recordings featuring the ENO Chorus are *The Carmelites*, *Falstaff*, *Mary Stuart*, *Julius Caesar*, *Rigoletto* and *La traviata*.

Critically and publicly acclaimed, the **English National Opera Orchestra** has in recent years received several prestigious awards, including the Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award and an Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera. The Orchestra is at the heart of English National Opera's artistic life, and as well as opera performances at the London Coliseum it has also been seen on the concert platform, at the Aldeburgh Festival (*Peter Grimes* and *The Rape of Lucretia*), and at Glastonbury in 2004 (Act III of Wagner's *The Valkyrie*). Many of the players participate in the work of ENO Baylis, the company's

education and outreach department. The ENO Orchestra appears in many recordings as part of Chandos' Opera in English series: *The Carmelites*, *Lulu*, *Falstaff*, *Otello*, *Ernani*, *Mary Stuart*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Rigoletto*, *La traviata*, *Werther*, and a recording of the complete *Ring Cycle* conducted by Sir Reginald Goodall.



Sir Charles Mackerras studied at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and came to England in 1947. He gained a British Council Scholarship to study further at the Academy of

Music in Prague. His great interest and love for Janáček commenced in 1947 on hearing *Katya Kabanova* conducted by the great Václav Talich.

As an assistant conductor at Sadler's Wells in 1951 he gave the first performance of *Katya Kabanova* in the English-speaking world. Later he introduced *The Makropulos Case* and *From the House of the Dead* at Sadler's Wells and continued conducting

highly successful productions of Janáček's operas as well as more standard repertoire when he became Musical Director of English National Opera (1970–77) and for Welsh National Opera when he became their Musical Director (1987–1992). He has been a pioneer in the dissemination of the music of Janáček throughout the capitals of Europe and in the USA and Australia. *Jenůfa* has been a particular favourite.

He has had a long association with the Czech Philharmonic and recorded most of Janáček's orchestral works with them as well as *Katya Kabanova* and Dvořák's *Rusalka*. Included in his vast discography is an award-winning cycle of the Janáček operas with the Vienna Philharmonic in the early 1980s. For Chandos he has recorded Janáček *Glagolitic Mass* in the original version, Kodály's *Psalmus Hungaricus* and Dvořák's Cello Concerto. As part of the Opera in English series he has recorded *Osud*, *La traviata*, *Werther*, *Julius Caesar*, *Mary Stuart*, *Eugene*

Onegin, *Jenůfa*, *The Magic Flute* and *The Bartered Bride*.

Sir Charles has also undertaken much research into the music of the eighteenth century, particularly Handel and Mozart. He has recorded a series of Mozart and Gilbert and Sullivan operas as well as a complete series of Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms Symphonies, several oratorios by Handel and symphonies by Mahler and Elgar. He is at present Principal Guest Conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra, Conductor Laureate of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Conductor Emeritus of Welsh National Opera and the San Francisco Opera.

Sir Charles received a CBE in 1974, was knighted in 1979, honoured with the Medal of Merit from the Czech Republic in 1996 and made a Companion of the Order of Australia in 1997. In 2003 he became a Companion of Honour in the Queen's Birthday Honours.



Cheryl Barker as Emilia Marty and John Wegner as Baron Prus

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

British philanthropist Sir Peter Moores established the Peter Moores Foundation in 1964 to realise his charitable aims and, to fulfill one of these, the Compton Verney House Trust in 1993 to create a new art gallery in the country. Through his charities he has disbursed more than £104 million to a wide variety of arts, environmental and social causes 'to get things done and open doors for people'.

Sir Peter's philanthropic work began with his passion for opera: in his twenties he helped a number of young artists in the crucial, early stages of their careers, several of whom – Dame Joan Sutherland, Sir Colin Davis and the late Sir Geraint Evans amongst them – became world-famous.

Today, the Peter Moores Foundation supports talented young singers with annual scholarships awarded through the Royal Northern College of Music, has made it possible for Chandos Records to issue the world's largest catalogue of operas recorded in English translation, and enabled Opera Rara to record rare bel canto repertoire which would otherwise remain inaccessible to the general public.

In live performance, the Foundation has encouraged the creation of new work and schemes to attract new audiences, financed the publication of scores, especially for world premieres of modern operas, and enabled rarely heard works to be staged by British opera companies and festivals.

Projects supported by the Foundation to help the young have ranged from a scheme to encourage young Afro-Caribbeans 'stay at school' for further education, to the endowment

of a Faculty Directorship and Chair of Management Studies at Oxford University (providing the lead donation which paved the way for the development of the Said Business School).

In 1993 the Foundation bought Compton Verney, a Grade I Georgian mansion in Warwickshire, designed by Robert Adam, with grounds by Capability Brown. Compton Verney House Trust was set up by Sir Peter to transform the derelict mansion into a world-class art gallery that would provide an especially welcoming environment for the 'first-time' gallery visitor. The gallery, which houses six permanent collections, a Learning Centre for all ages, and facilities for major visiting exhibitions, was opened in March 2004 by HRH the Prince of Wales. The Compton Verney website can be found at: www.comptonverney.org.uk

Sir Peter Moores was born in Lancashire and educated at Eton College and Christ Church, Oxford. He was a student at the Vienna Academy of Music, where he produced the Austrian premiere of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, and at the same time was an assistant producer with the Vienna State Opera, working with Viennese artists in Naples, Geneva and Rome, before returning to England in 1957 to join his father's business, Littlewoods. He was Vice-Chairman of Littlewoods in 1976, Chairman from 1977 to 1980 and remained a director until 1993.

He received the Gold Medal of the Italian Republic in 1974, an Honorary MA from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1975, and was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Northern College of Music in 1985. In 1992 he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire by HM the Queen. He was appointed CBE in 1991 and received a Knighthood in 2003 for his charitable services to the arts.



Die Sache Makropulos

“Warum sollten alte Männer nicht verrückt sein?” So schrieb der große irische Dichter W. B. Yeats in einem seiner letzten Gedichte. Wie sein annähernder Zeitgenosse Leoš Janáček war auch er ein Spätentwickler, der seine schöpferische Reife in seinen Fünfzigern erreichte; auch wurde er von ähnlichen Dämonen heimgesucht wie dieser – einem ungestümen Nationalismus, der intensiven Leidenschaft für eine jüngere Frau und der ständigen Beschäftigung mit dem, was er als “die Faszination des Schwierigen” bezeichnete. Doch selbst Yeats setzte sich nie solch künstlerischen Risiken aus wie Janáček es in den zehn bemerkenswerten Jahren tat, die die Entstehung fast aller seiner musikalischen Meisterwerke sahen. Vor allem in seinen drei letzten Opern (*Das schlaue Füchsllein*, *Die Sache Makropulos* und *Aus einem Totenhaus*) stellte er sich Herausforderungen, die nicht nur einfach schwierig, sondern geradezu irrsinnig waren – und überwandt sie mit Bravour. Inspiriert von einem Comic Strip, einer philosophischen Satire und der fiktionalen Schilderung eines zaristischen Arbeitslagers, gehören diese drei Musikdramen zu den humansten und

bewegendsten musikalischen Dokumenten des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts. Doch keines von ihnen ist seltsamer oder anrührender als die Oper, die in der deutschsprachigen Welt als *Die Sache Makropulos* bekannt ist.

Schon der Titel ist ein Paradox. Die tschechischen Worte “Věc Makropulos” tauchen erst im letzten Akt auf. Als wir sie zum ersten Mal hören, beziehen sie sich auf eine alte Formel, die ewiges Leben verspricht. Das zweite Mal werden sie in einem allgemeineren Sinn verwendet, der in etwa “der Makropulos-Kram” bedeutet, ähnlich wie in Mussorgskys Oper der Titel *Khovanshchina* sich am besten als “Die Khovansky-Affäre” übersetzen läßt. In der Oper gibt es tatsächlich einen “Fall”, aber das ist nicht der Fall Makropulos. Vielmehr ist es ein Rechtsfall, der sich über viele Generationen zwischen den zwei Zweigen einer Familie hingezogen hat, von denen der eine legitim ist und der andere nicht. Dieser Disput wird sich nur schlichten lassen, wenn ein authentisches Testament vorgelegt werden kann. Die Handlung der Oper ist also von der Feder dieses Geheimnisses gespannt – wer ist der wahre Erbe, und wie werden

wir seine Identität herausfinden? Die Person, die diese Fragen beantworten kann, ist die zentrale Figur dieses Stücks, die Diva Emilia Marty; sie allerdings ist nicht von diesem Geheimnis angetrieben, sondern von einem anderen, viel größeren und schrecklicheren. Was sie sucht, ist nicht das Testament, sondern die gemeinsam mit diesem versteckte uralte Formel. Wenn sie dieses Stück Papier findet – die eigentliche Věc Makropulos –, wird sie auch ihr eigenes Problem lösen. Doch als sie die Lösung schließlich findet, lehnt sie sie ab. In der Tat ein Geheimnis, das in einem Rätsel versteckt ist, welches wiederum verschlüsselt ist. Alles sicherlich sehr spannend, doch wohl kaum geeignetes Rohmaterial für lyrisches Theater.

Warum also beschloß Janáček, dieses ungewöhnliche Drama zum Thema seiner vorletzten Oper zu machen? Er hatte gegen Ende des Jahres 1922 in Prag eine Inszenierung von Karel Čapek Schauspiel *Die Makropulos-Affäre* gesehen und holte sofort die Genehmigung des Autors ein, das Stück zu einem Libretto umzuarbeiten. Čapek und Janáček waren seltsame Bettgenossen. Čapek, ein urbaner, skeptischer Prager Dramatiker, war vor allem bekannt für sein gemeinsam mit seinem Bruder verfaßtes allegorisches Werk

Insekten-Spiel, wie auch dafür, daß er mit seiner Satire *RUR* den Begriff des Roboters in den allgemeinen Sprachgebrauch einführte. Wie George Bernard Shaw, mit dem er persönlich bekannt war, wie sein Prager Zeitgenosse Franz Kafka und wie ein weiterer Zeitgenosse, H. G. Wells, war er ein spekulativer Autor, der sich mit Fragen des menschlichen Fortschritts beschäftigte. Im selben Jahr wie Shaws *Back to Methuselah* beschäftigte auch Čapek sich mit dem Thema der menschlichen Sterblichkeit. *Die Makropulos-Affäre* stellt eine ähnliche Frage – was würde es bedeuten, wenn wir ewig leben könnten? Shaws Antwort war optimistisch und versprach grenzenlose geistige Entwicklung. Čapek war ambivalent und ließ die Frage offen. Als Janáček sich des Stoffes annahm, war seine Reaktion zutiefst tragisch. Er konzentrierte sich auf das Schicksal einer Frau, die das Geschenk ewigen Lebens erhalten hatte und als Konsequenz zu einer verbitterten, zerstörerischen menschlichen Hülle geworden war, äußerlich schön und attraktiv, innen aber nur noch Staub und Asche. Janáček stellte sich die Aufgabe, diese Kreatur nicht nur musikalisch umzusetzen, sondern unsere Sympathie und sogar Liebe für sie zu wecken.

Wie in so vielen seiner späteren Werke war ein primäres Motiv Janáčeks seine



leidenschaftliche Liebe für eine verheiratete Frau, die weniger als halb so alt war wie er. Janáček hatte Kamila Stösslová 1917 kennengelernt, als er 63 und sie 25 Jahre alt war, und sich sofort in sie verliebt. Für den Rest seines Lebens führte er mit ihr eine epische, meist allerdings einseitige Korrespondenz. Sie inspirierte seine letzten vier Opern, die *Glagolitische Messe*, die Sinfonietta, einen Liederzyklus und zwei Streichquartette. Sie mag zwar eine zögerliche Muse gewesen sein, aber die künstlerischen Resultate dieser Besessenheit sind atemberaubend. 1922, als Janáček zum ersten Mal auf Čapeks Stück aufmerksam wurde, setzte Kamila alles daran, den gefeierten doch beunruhigenden Komponisten auf Armeslänge zu halten. Es überrascht daher kaum, daß Janáček in den Briefen, die er ihr kurze Zeit nach Beginn seiner Arbeit an der Oper schrieb, die Kälte und das schroffe Benehmen seiner Heldin betonte:

Eine dreihundert Jahre alte Schönheit – und ewig jung – doch nur ausgebrannte Gefühle. Brrr! Kalt wie Eis! Über eine solche Frau werde ich eine Oper schreiben.

Und kurz nach Vollendung des Werks schrieb er: Am Ende war sie so unglücklich! Danach möchte ich, daß alle sie mögen. Ohne Liebe funktioniert es für mich nicht.

Der erstaunlichste Aspekt seiner Annäherung an dieses spröde Thema ist, wie wenige Geiseln er nimmt. Čapeks Stück ist höhnisch und prosaisch, und in den beiden ersten Akten ist auch Janáčeks Musik von ähnlicher Schärfe und Rauheit. Marty erhält kaum eine eigene ausgedehntere musikalische Passage. Stattdessen wird sie in einer Reihe von Dialogen vorgestellt – mit dem Anwalt Kolenatý, den Hauptgegnern in dem Rechtsfall, Ferdinand Gregor und Baron Prus und dem verrückten alten vormaligen Galan Hauk-Sendorf, der Emilia für die Zigeuner-Sängerin hält, die er ein halbes Jahrhundert zuvor geliebt hat. Es ginge zu weit, diesen Konversationsaustausch als Duette zu bezeichnen. Sie enthalten nicht einen Hauch von Lyrik, außerdem haben vor allem die männlichen Gesprächspartner den Löwenanteil an den Worten und Noten. Doch Janáček bindet uns mit großem Geschick in das Drama seiner Heldin ein. Seine Mittel zu diesem Zweck sind verwirrend, provokant und durch und durch einzigartig.

Zunächst ist zu erwähnen, daß es neben den Anwälten, den prozessierenden Parteien, deren Familien und Marty selbst noch einen weiteren, unsichtbaren Mitwirkenden gibt, der in der Musik ständig präsent ist. Zuerst

hören wir ihn im Vorspiel, in den hinter der Bühne ertönenden Trompeten und Pauken. Sodann kehrt er als fragmentarische Fanfare wieder, während der Sekretär Vitek die an dem Prozeß beteiligten adligen Familienzweige beschreibt. Er ist auch zugegen in dem insistierenden *stretto* am Ende des Ersten Akts, nachdem Emilia verspricht, Zeugnisse zur Bestätigung des Testaments beizubringen, dessen Verbleib sie rätselhafterweise aufgedeckt hat. Ein erneutes unheimliches Auftauchen findet sich im Zweiten Akt, als Prus zum ersten Mal begreift, daß sich am Grunde des Geheimnisses eine gewisse Elena Makropulos verbergen könnte. Und seine Musik dominiert den letzten Akt, in dem Marty's wahre Geschichte enthüllt wird. Diese Figur ist Rudolf II., der habsburgische Kaiser, Kenner und Sammler von mysteriösen Gelehrten und Kunstgegenständen, dessen Hof in Prag an der Schwelle zum 17. Jahrhundert Wissenschaftler, Astrologen, Meister der schwarzen Magie und Quacksalber anzog. In Čapeks Schauspiel hat er einen von ihnen, den griechischen Arzt Heironymos Makropulos, beauftragt, ein Elixir zu erfinden, das ewiges Leben verspricht. Dieser erprobte den Zaubersantel an seiner Tochter, und ihr endloses Leben führte im Verlauf der nachfolgenden drei Jahrhunderte

zur Handlung des vorliegenden Dramas. In Janáčeks opernhafter Nachschöpfung gewinnen wir immer wieder hörbare Einblicke in Rudolfs Hofleben und die Vergangenheit, die Emilias ewige Gegenwart beherrscht, wie wenn sich auf der Bühne eine spiritistische Falltür geöffnet hätte.

Es gibt noch einen weiteren roten Faden aus Klängen, der uns durch das Gewebe der Geschichte zieht. Dies ist eine Reihe von glasklaren Flageolet-Tönen auf der Violine, begleitet von einer Kindertrommel oder möglicherweise einem Renaissance-Tambourin. Wir begegnen diesen Klängen zum ersten Mal, als Marty verrät, daß Gregors Ahne der illegitime Sohn des Vorfahren von Baron Prus war (wie natürlich auch von Emilia selbst in ihrer letzten Identität als schottische Sängerin namens Ellian MacGregor). Kurze Zeit später kehren diese Klänge wieder in einem der wenigen zärtlichen Augenblicke in diesem Akt, als Emilia darüber reflektiert, daß dieses Kind niemals seine eigene Mutter gekannt hat. Ein weiteres Mal tauchen sie im Zweiten Akt auf, zunächst als Emilia der jungen Sängerin Kristina erklärt, daß Sex – wie überhaupt die Annehmlichkeiten des Lebens – nicht einmal das Kerzenlicht wert sei, und erneut, als sie kokett ihren Urururururenkel fragt, wie



ihm der Name Makropulos gefalle. Es handelt sich hier nicht gerade um ein Leitmotiv, eher um ein winziges Loch in Martys Psyche, durch das wir die Geliebte und Mutter erkennen, die sie im Laufe der Jahrhunderte so vielen Männern gewesen ist. Diese Echos einer anderen Welt werden noch verstärkt durch ein drittes wiederkehrendes Thema auf der Viola d'amore, dem Instrument, das Janáček mit Kamila assoziierte und das er in seinem zweiten Streichquartett einsetzen wollte, welches er nach seiner Korrespondenz mit seiner Muse *Intime Briefe* nannte. Das Instrument und das mit ihm verbundene Thema bilden einen menschlichen Kontrast zu den Flageolett-Tönen in den Streichern und erinnern uns an das sechzehnjährige Mädchen, dessen Liebesfähigkeit durch seine ewige Reinkarnation erdrückt wurde. Mit diesen subtilen und flüchtigen Mitteln hält Janáček uns während zweier ernster und dichter Akte gespannt in Erwartung auf den herzbewegenden dritten.

Während Emilia bisher vor allem durch ihre Wirkung auf andere dargestellt wurde, entwickelt sie sich im Dritten Akt zunehmend zur dominanten vokalen Präsenz in der Oper. Indem wir mit ansehen, wie die Wirkung des Zaubers allmählich nachläßt, entwickeln

die Harmonien und Instrumentierung der Musik neue Klangfarben, die in den beiden ersten Akten noch nicht zugegen waren. Gleichzeitig punktieren Rudolfs Trompetenrufe und das mit ihm assoziierte Motiv das Klanggewebe mit wachsender Beharrlichkeit. Indem Emilia sich daran erinnert, die Makropulos-Formel dem einzigen Mann gegeben zu haben, den sie wirklich liebte, dem alten Pepi Prus, arbeitet Janáček in Vorbereitung einer neuen Figur, die die Schlußmomente der Oper beherrschen wird, in das musikalische Gewebe ein sehnsuchtsvolles Streicherthema ein. Dieses Thema begleitet Marty, als sie Gregor bittet, ihre Hände zu berühren, die nun eiskalt werden. Doch indem sie immer kälter wird, entwickelt die Musik neue Wärme. Das Thema wird weiter ausgeführt, als sie in ihre griechische Muttersprache zurückfällt und, indem sie das Vaterunser zitiert – “Pater hemon” – “unseren Vater im Himmel” mit ihrem eigenen Vater, dem Arzt Hieronymus, in Einklang bringt. Und hierin liegt Janáčeks Meisterschaft – die in den beiden ersten Akten geübte Zurückhaltung macht es ihm nun möglich, in den abschließenden zehn Minuten der Oper deren Botschaft mit nahezu unerträglicher Intensität zu vermitteln. Das zuerst in ihrer

kurzen Unterredung mit Gregor gehörte Todesthema wandelt sich in den letzten Takten in einen leidenschaftsvollen Choral, der mit der Schlußrede seiner vorhergehenden Oper *Das schlaue Füchlein* seelenverwandt ist. In beiden Werken zeigt sich dieselbe humanistische Vision – daß nur der Tod dem Leben einen Sinn geben kann.

Als Janáčeks *Glagolitische Messe* uraufgeführt wurde, bemerkte einer der Kritiker, es sei “anrührend, das Gottvertrauen des tiefgläubigen alten Mannes zu beobachten”. Janáček reagierte mit einer seiner typischen knapp gehaltenen Postkarten: “Weder alter Mann, noch tiefgläubig, bis ich es selbst herausfinde.” Als er *Die Sache Makropulos* vollendete, war er einundsiebzig und, in den Worten von Dylan Thomas, “wütete gegen das Ersterben des Lichts”. Tatsächlich schrieb er in der Zeit, als er *Aus einem Totenhaus* vollendete, an Kamila, daß es noch so viel Musik gebe, die nur darauf warte, aus ihm herauszuströmen. In all diesen späten Werken findet sich – trotz des Solipsismus seiner Briefe an Kamila – kein bißchen Sentimentalität. Ganz am Ende des ursprünglichen Schauspiels, als alle auf der Bühne Versammelten die Zauberformel zurückweisen und Kristina sie verbrennt, läßt Čapek offen, ob Marty stirbt oder nicht. In

der Inszenierung der English National Opera, auf der die vorliegende Einspielung basiert, nahm der Regisseur einen Hinweis Čapeks auf und Marty blieb weder tot noch lebendig zurück, wobei das Blatt mit der Zauberformel wie Fliegenpapier an ihren Fingern klebte. Die Zuhörer müssen hier letztlich selbst entscheiden, in Janáčeks Musik allerdings findet sich kein Raum für Zweifel. Emilias Tod ist endgültig, und die begleitende Musik gehört zu den transzendentalsten Klängen im gesamten Opernrepertoire des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts.

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Synopse

Die Handlung der Oper spielt 1924 in Prag.

Im Jahr 1585 wurde dem kretischen Hofarzt Kaiser Rudolfs II. von Habsburg, Hieronymus Makropulos, eine Tochter geboren, die er Elina nannte. Der Kaiser, der von alchimistischen Theorien und Zaubertränken besessen war, beauftragte Makropulos, ein Elixir zu finden, das ewiges Leben verspräche. Da er befürchtete, vergiftet zu werden, zwang er den Arzt, den Trank zunächst an dessen eigener





Tochter Elina auszuprobieren. Diese lag eine Woche lang im Koma, doch auch als sie wieder erwachte, war die Wirkung des Zaubertranks natürlich nicht zu beweisen. Der Arzt wurde ins Gefängnis geworfen und seine Tochter floh ins Ausland, wo sie das erste einer Reihe von Leben als Sängerin begann. In jeder neuen Generation änderte sie ihren Namen, doch sie behielt während ihres gesamten ausgedehnten Lebens dieselben Initialen bei – E. M. (Eugenia Montez, Elsa Müller, Ellian MacGregor, Ekaterina Myskina, Emilia Marty). Das Vorspiel der Oper beschwört die tragische Existenz der Tochter des Alchemisten, wobei die Klänge ferner Fanfaren an den fantastischen Hof Rudolfs II. inmitten seiner Astrologen erinnern.

COMPACT DISC ONE

Erster Akt

Das Büro von Dr. Kolenatý

[1] Vorspiel [2] – [3] Heute wird das Ergebnis des mehr als ein Jahrhundert währenden Prozesses von Gregor gegen Prus erwartet. Baron “Pepi” Prus starb 1817, ohne ein Testament zu hinterlassen, und sein kostbarer Besitz ging an einen Cousin. Wenig später meldete ein gewisser Ferdinand Gregor

Ansprüche an, und die Nachfahren beider Familien haben seither das Erbe angefochten. Nun scheint es, als würde Albert Gregors Unfähigkeit, seine Ansprüche mit den notwendigen Beweismitteln zu untermauern, dazu führen, daß der Besitz endgültig an seinen Kontrahenten Jaroslav Prus gehen wird.

[4] – [7] All dies ändert sich, als die berühmte Opernsängerin Emilia Marty in Prag auftaucht. Ihre geradezu unheimliche Kenntnis vergangener Ereignisse um Ellian MacGregor, die Geliebte von “Pepi” Prus, führt dazu, daß der Fall noch einmal aufgerollt wird. Zugleich beginnt die Sängerin, auf die beiden Rivalen eine seltsame Faszination auszuüben.

Zweiter Akt

Hinter der Bühne der Prager Oper, nach einer Matinée

[8] – [9] Nach ihrem triumphalen Auftritt an der Oper benutzt Marty ihre hypnotisierenden Kräfte, um die anderen Figuren zu zerstören. Sie fasziniert nicht nur Gregor, sondern auch die junge Sängerin Kristina und Prus’ Sohn Janek, ihren wortkargen Freund, und selbst Kolenatýs Sekretär, den prosaischen Vitek.

[10] In einem seltsamen Zwischenspiel erinnert der einfältige alte Graf Hauk-Šendorf an

leidenschaftliche Episoden aus ihrer obskuren Vergangenheit. [11] – [12] Allmählich stellt sich jedoch heraus, daß ihr eigentliches Ziel nicht darin liegt, Gregor seinen Prozeß gewinnen zu helfen, sondern daß sie ein griechisches Dokument mit der Formel sucht, die ein dreihundert Jahre währendes Leben verspricht. Zum ersten Mal in ihrem Leben beginnt sie, das herannahende Alter zu spüren. Sie versucht zunächst auf Gregor Einfluß zu nehmen, [13] dann auf Janek. Ein intensives Gespräch führt zu der Erkenntnis, daß Baron Prus die Lösung kennt, und sie macht ihm ein Angebot.

COMPACT DISC TWO

Dritter Akt

Emilia Marty’s Hotelzimmer

[1] – [4] Prus hat die Nacht bei Marty verbracht. Von ihrer Gefühlskälte bitter enttäuscht, überreicht er ihr das Dokument. Doch obwohl das Ziel damit für sie in greifbare Nähe rückt, ist ihre Kontrolle über die Dinge bereits im Schwinden begriffen. Prus wird von der Nachricht überwältigt, daß sein Sohn wegen Marty’s Gefühlskälte Selbstmord begangen habe. Die übrigen Figuren finden sich ein, um sie für ihre Handlungen zur Verantwortung zu ziehen und sie ihre Vergangenheit erklären

zu lassen. Indem sie beginnen, Einzelheiten der Wahrheit herauszufinden, beschließt Marty, daß es an der Zeit sei, ihre Identität preiszugeben und das Geheimnis ihrer geplagten Existenz zu enthüllen.

Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

[5] – [10] Interview mit Sir Charles Mackerras

Die aus Australien gebürtige **Cheryl Barker** (Emilia Marty) studierte in Melbourne bei Dame Joan Hammond und in London bei David Harper. In Australien arbeitet sie regelmäßig mit der Opera Australia zusammen; zu ihren bisherigen Rollen dort gehören Nedda (*Pagliacci*), die Gräfin (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Mimì (*La Bohème*), Violetta (*La traviata*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*) sowie die Titelrollen von *Madama Butterfly* und *Tosca*. An der Victoria State Opera hat sie zudem die Mimì, Antonia (*Hoffmanns Erzählungen*) und Tatyana gesungen, an der Opera Queensland Tatyana und Violetta sowie an der New Zealand Opera *Madama Butterfly* und Violetta.

International ist Cheryl Barker vor allem für ihre Interpretation der *Madama Butterfly* bekannt; sie hat diese Rolle bisher an der



English National Opera, der Houston Grand Opera, der Vlaamse Opera, der Hamburger Staatsoper, der Deutschen Oper Berlin und jüngst an der Niederländischen Oper gesungen. Zu ihren weiteren internationalen Verpflichtungen zählen Jenifer (*A Midsummer Marriage*) an der Royal Opera in Covent Garden, Tatyana und Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*) an der Scottish Opera, Oksana (Rimsky-Korsakovs *Die Nacht vor Weihnachten*), die Gouvernante (*The Turn of the Screw*), Musetta (*La Bohème*) und Donna Elvira an der English National Opera, die Titelrolle in *Maria Stuarda* an der ReisOper, Violetta an der Hamburger Staatsoper und der Deutschen Oper Berlin, die Titelrolle in *Katya Kabanova* in Genf und an der Welsh National Opera und schließlich die Titelrollen in *Suor Angelica* und *Die lustige Witwe* sowie ferner Mimi, Desdemona (*Otello*) und Liù (*Turandot*) an der Vlaamse Opera.

Cheryl Barker ist zudem regelmäßig auf dem Recital- und Konzertpodium anzutreffen. Zu ihren zahlreichen CD-Einspielungen zählen die *Madama Butterfly* und Dysons *Quo Vadis* für Chandos sowie eine Solo-CD mit Arien von Puccini.

Neal Davies (Dr. Kolenatý) wurde in Newport in der walisischen Grafschaft Gwent geboren

und studierte am King's College in London sowie an der Royal Academy of Music, wo er 2003 zum Fellow ernannt wurde. Er vertiefte seine Studien am Internationalen Opernstudio in Zürich unter der Leitung von Dame Gwyneth Jones.

Zu seinen bisherigen Opernauftritten zählen Rameaus *Platée* (in London und auf dem Edinburgh Festival), Händels *Giulio Cesare* unter Ivor Bolton sowie Figaro (*Die Hochzeit des Figaro*) an der Royal Opera in Covent Garden, Ariodates (*Xerxes*), Händels *L'Allegro*, Publio (*La Clemenza di Tito*) und Zebul (*Jephtha*) an der English National Opera, Händels *Radamisto* an der Opéra de Marseille, Händels *Theodora* mit Les Arts Florissants unter William Christie in Paris und Salzburg, Händels *Orlando* mit dem Gabrieli Consort, Leporello (*Don Giovanni*) an der Scottish Opera, Britten's *Curlew River* auf dem Edinburgh Festival sowie Zebul, Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Leporello und Dulcamara (*L'elisir d'amore*) an der Welsh National Opera. Sein Debüt an der Chicago Lyric Opera feierte er in der Rolle des Major General Stanley (*The Pirates of Penzance*) unter Sir Andrew Davis.

Zu Neal Davies' Konzertengagements zählen Auftritte mit dem Cleveland und dem Philharmonia Orchester, dem Gabrieli

Consort, den Osloer Philharmonikern, dem BBC Symphony Orchestra, dem Kings Consort mit Robert King, der Academy of St Martin in the Fields, dem Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment und dem Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

Zu seinen Einspielungen zählen Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* unter Sir Colin Davis, der *Messias*, *Theodora* und *Saul* unter Paul McCreeh, Händels *L'Allegro* unter Robert King und Lieder von Dutilleux für Chandos.

John Graham-Hall (Vítek) studierte am King's College, Cambridge und am Royal College of Music. Er war Mitglied der English National Opera, wo Alwa (*Lulu*), Mime (Wagners *Ring*), Herodes (*Salome*), Lysander (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) und Sylvester (*The Silver Tassie*) zu seinen Rollen zählten. Weitere Opernengagements in Großbritannien umfassen Albert Herring, Basilio, den Tanzmeister (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) und Monostatos (*Die Zauberflöte*) am Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, Mayor (*Albert Herring*) an der Opera North, Vanya Kudrjas (*Katya Kabanova*), Flute (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) und Bob Boles (*Peter Grimes*) an der Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Cassio an der Welsh National Opera, Eisenstein und den

Schulmeister (*Das schlaue Fuchslein*) an der Scottish Opera, und Dada in der Premiere von Nymans *Man and Boy* an der Almeida Opera.

Zu seinen Opernengagements im Ausland zählten Michel (*Juliette*) und die Titelrolle in Pascal Dusapins neuer Oper *Perela, l'homme de fumée* an der Opéra de Paris-Bastille, Cassio und Basilio an La Monnaie in Brüssel, Shapkin (*Aus einem Totenhaus*) für die Oper in Nizza, Lysander in Paris, Lyon, Caen, Montpellier und Rom sowie auf dem Festival von Ravenna, Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*) in Lyon und Toronto, Ferrando in Vancouver, sowie Basilio und Spoletta (*Tosca*) an der Niederländischen Oper.

Für die bei Chandos erschienene Serie "Opera in English" hat John Graham-Hall Alwa (*Lulu*), Monostatos (*The Magic Flute*), Isacco (*The Thieving Magpie*), den Idiot (*Wozzeck*) und Basilio (*The Marriage of Figaro*) aufgenommen.

Elena Xanthoudakis (Kristina) ist griechisch-australischer Abstammung und schloß ihren Bachelor of Music Performance im Fach Gesang am Victorian College of Arts (Australien) mit Auszeichnung ab. 2003 absolvierte sie zudem an der University of Melbourne ihren Master of Music Performance. Nachdem sie am Opernhaus von



Sidney in der Australian Singing Competition mit dem ersten Preis ausgezeichnet wurde, gewann sie ein Stipendium für ein Studienjahr an der Guildhall School of Music in London, das sie mit dem Master of Music abschloß. Von April bis Juli 2004 war sie Young Artist am Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, wo sie die Rolle der Contessa di Folleville (*Il viaggio a Rheims*) sang. Auf dem Internationalen Mozart-Wettbewerb in Salzburg 2006 wurde sie mit dem ersten Preis ausgezeichnet.

Ihr Opernrepertoire umfaßt Leila (*Les Pêcheurs de perles*), Pamina und Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte*), Olympia (*Hoffmanns Erzählungen*), Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*), Constance (*Dialogues des Carmélites*) und Kristina (*Die Sache Makropulos*); bisherige Verpflichtungen führten sie an die Melbourne Opera, das Victoria College of Arts, die Oz Opera, das Royal Opera House in Covent Garden und die English National Opera.

Konzertengagements führten sie bisher an die Melbourne Town Hall, die Eremitage in St. Petersburg sowie nach Hong Kong (mit der St. Petersburger Camerata) mit einem Repertoire, das Beethovens Neunte Sinfonie, Rossinis *Petite Messe solennelle*, Bachs *Johannes- und Matthäus-Passion*, Faurés Requiem, Handels *Messias* und *Jephtha*, Mozarts *Exsultate*

Jubilate und Vivaldis *Gloria* umfaßt. Außerdem hatte sie Recitals am Hessischen Staatstheater in Wiesbaden, in Hong Kong und in Salt-Lake City (Utah).

Der amerikanische Tenor **Robert Brubaker** (Albert Gregor) hat sich an zahlreichen Opernhäusern in den USA und Europa als herausragender Tenor einen Namen gemacht. Er wurde in Pennsylvania geboren und studierte bei David Ray Smith am Hartt College of Music in Hartford.

In den letzten Spielzeiten war er regelmäßig bei den führenden Opernhäusern zu Gast, so etwa an der Metropolitan Opera (als Mephistopheles in *Doktor Faustus*), dem Royal Opera House in Covent Garden (als Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*), an der Hamburger Staatsoper (Gherman in *Pique Dame*), am Teatro alla Scala (Guido Bardi in Zemlinskys *Eine florentinische Tragödie* und Golitsin in *Khovanshchina*), auf dem Glyndebourne Festival (Lača in *Jenůfa*), auf dem Salzburger Festival (in der Titelrolle in Zemlinskys *Der König*), am Liceu in Barcelona (Golitsin sowie Erik im *Fliegenden Holländer*) und an der Opéra de Paris-Bastille (Graf Pierre Bezukhov in *Krieg und Frieden*, Dimitri in *Boris Godunov*, Golitsin und die Titelrolle in *Der Zwerg*).

Weitere Engagements haben ihn an die Houston Grand Opera, die Canadian Opera Company, die Oper von Montpellier, die Dallas Opera und die Deutsche Oper Berlin geführt.

John Wegner (Baron Prus) wurde in Deutschland geboren und wuchs in Australien auf, wo er von 1981 bis 1992 Mitglied der Opera Australia war. Derzeit ist er Ensemblemitglied der Deutschen Oper an Rhein. Er verfügt über ein ausgedehntes Repertoire und hat weltweit regelmäßige Gastengagements, so an der Mailänder Scala und in Australien, Toulouse, Brüssel, Sao Paulo, Prag, Kopenhagen, Oslo, Dublin sowie an zahlreichen erstrangigen deutschen Opernhäusern.

In Bayreuth hat er Telramund (*Lohengrin*), Donner (*Das Rheingold*), Biterolf (*Tannhäuser*) und Klingsor (*Parsifal*) gesungen. Ferner umfaßt sein Repertoire Wotan/Wanderer und Alberich (*Der Ring der Nibelungen*), Jochanaan (*Salome*), die Titelrollen in *Der fliegende Holländer* und *Boris Godunov*, Scarpia, Iago, Pizarro und Escamillo. 2005 wurde er als "Best Male Performer in Opera" mit dem Helpmann Award der Australian Entertainment Industry ausgezeichnet.

Thomas Walker (Janek Prus) wurde in Glasgow geboren und studierte zunächst in der Abteilung für Blechbläser an der Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, bevor er bei Ryland Davies am Royal College of Music ein Gesangsstudium aufnahm.

Zu seinen Konzertverpflichtungen zählt der *Elias* in der Royal Albert Hall mit Kurt Masur und dem London Philharmonic Orchestra im Rahmen der BBC Proms, wo er auch in Janáček *Otcenás* und Bachs *Magnificat* sang. Mit verschiedenen britischen Orchestern verbinden ihn regelmäßige Auftritte, darunter das BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, das English Chamber Orchestra und die Academy of Ancient Music, wo zu seinem Repertoire Werke wie Brittens *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* und *St Nicolas* sowie Tippetts *A Child of Our Time* gehören.

Zu seinen Opernrollen zählten Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) an der Opera North und Tamino an der British Youth Opera in der Zeit, als er noch an der Benjamin Britten International Opera School studierte; dort umfaßten seine Auftritte den Chevalier (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) und Peter Quint (*The Turn of the Screw*). An der English National Opera hat



er den Fenton (*Falstaff*) und an der Holland Park Opera den Ferrando gesungen.

Graham Clark (Graf Hauk-Šendorf) wurde in Littleborough in Lancashire geboren und begann seine Gesangslaufbahn an der Scottish Opera, bevor er an der English National Opera als Company Principal verpflichtet wurde (1978–1985). Er hat am Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, an der Opera North und an der Welsh National Opera gesungen. In seiner ausgedehnten internationalen Karriere war er für sechzehn Spielzeiten mit dem Bayreuther Festival (Loge, Mime, Steuermann, Melot) und für vierzehn Spielzeiten mit der Metropolitan Opera (Loge, Mime, Vere in *Billy Budd*, Števa in *Jenůfa*, Herodes in *Salome*, Prinz/Marquis in *Lulu*) verbunden. Er ist zudem auf internationalen Festivals wie dem Edinburgh Festival und den BBC Proms aufgetreten.

Graham Clark hat für alle großen Verlage CD-Aufnahmen eingespielt und eine Reihe seiner großen Rollen (darunter auch die im *Ring*) wurden auf DVD aufgenommen. 1986 wurde er für seine Rolle des Mephistopheles in Busonis *Doktor Faust* mit dem Olivier Award ausgezeichnet.

Graeme Danby (Bühnenarbeiter) ist weithin bekannt als einer der herausragendsten britischen *bassi profondi* und tritt regelmäßig an der Royal Opera in Covent Garden auf. In Loren Maazels neuem Auftragswerk für Covent Garden, 1984, hat er die zentrale Rolle des Charrington gesungen, die eigens für ihn konzipiert wurde.

Seine Rollen an der English National Opera umfassen Lorenzo (*I Capuletti e I Montecchi*), Don Basilio (*Der Barbier von Sevilla*), Dulcamara (*The Elixir of Love*), Somnus (*Semele*), Quince (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Collatinus (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Poo-Bah (*The Mikado*); Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*), Pistol (*Falstaff*) und Ribbing (*Ein Maskenball*). Zu seinen weiteren Engagements zählen Antonio (*Die Hochzeit des Figaro*) in Glyndebourne, Brag (*The Fairy Queen*) am Gran Teatro del Liceu in Barcelona, Xuthus (*Param Vrs Ion*) an der Opéra National du Rhin in Strasbourg sowie Verpflichtungen an der Opera North, der Scottish Opera und auf den Festivals in Buxton und Garsington.

Kathleen Wilkinson (Putzfrau) wurde in Lancashire geboren und studierte bei Barbara Robotham am Royal Northern College

of Music, wo sie von der Peter Moores Foundation gefördert wurde und mehrere Auszeichnungen gewann.

Sie hat an der Scottish Opera, der Opera Ireland, in Holland Park, Grange Park und auf dem Glyndebourne Festival gesungen, wobei zu ihren Rollen die Madame de la Haltière (*Cendrillon*), Britzens Lucretia, Mercedes und die Titelrolle in *Carmen*, Filipyevna (*Eugene Onegin*), Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*), Martha (*Faust*), Azucena (*Il trovatore*) und Madam By-Ends in der Inszenierung und Einspielung von *The Pilgrim's Progress* am Royal Northern College of Music zählten.

Für die Scottish Opera hat sie erstmals die Rollen der Margaret Muir (in David Homes *Friend of the People*) und der Mary Lamb (in Sally Beamishs *Monster!*) auf der Bühne verkörpert. Außerdem hat sie dort die Rollen der Nurse/Old Woman in James MacMillans *Ines di Castro* gesungen sowie auf dem Edinburgh Festival in der *Ring*-Inszenierung der Scottish Opera die Schwertleite/Erda.

Susanna Tudor-Thomas (Dienstmädchen) studierte an der Guildhall und der Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Bereits mit siebzehn Jahren feierte sie an der Welsh National Opera ihr Operndebüt in der

Rolle der Barbarina (*Die Hochzeit des Figaro*). 1994 wurde sie in den English National Opera Chorus aufgenommen. Sie verkörperte erstmals die Rolle der Mrs. Van Tricasse in Gavin Bryars' *Doctor Ox's Experiment* und sang die Flora (*La traviata*), Pitti-Sing (*The Mikado*) und Mercedes (*Carmen*). Weitere Rollen umfassen Orlovsky an der Kentish Opera und L'enfant (*L'Enfant et les sortilèges*) an der Opera Zuid.

Der Chor der English National Opera ist eine Stütze der gesamten Truppe. In zahllosen Produktionen der English National Opera hat er das Publikum mit der Kraft seines Gesangs und der Intensität seiner Darstellung entzückt. Die weit gefächerten Talente und Erfahrungen, die die Sängern in ihre Darbietungen einbringen, kennzeichnen jede Inszenierung, an der sie mitwirken. Besondere Triumphe für den Chor waren Prokofjews *Krieg und Frieden*, Schostakowitschs *Lady Macbeth von Mzensk*, Britzens *Billy Budd* und *Peter Grimes*, Mussorgskis *Boris Godunow*, Bizets *Carmen* und Verdis *Otello*. Seine Aufnahme der letztgenannten Oper in der von Mark Elder geleiteten Inszenierung von Jonathan Miller wird unter der Schirmherrschaft der Peter



Moore's Foundation demnächst bei Chandos erscheinen, ebenso seine Aufzeichnung des gefeierten *Ring*-Zyklus unter der Leitung von Sir Reginald Goodall. Andere Aufnahmen des Chors für Chandos und die Peter Moore's Foundation sind *The Carmelites*, *Falstaff*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Rigoletto* (Regie: Jonathan Miller) und *La traviata*.

Das von Kritikern und Zuhörern gleichermaßen gefeierte **English National Opera Orchestra** hat in den vergangenen Jahren mehrere begehrte Auszeichnungen erhalten, darunter den Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award und den Olivier Award für herausragende Leistungen auf dem Gebiet der Oper. Das Orchester ist das künstlerische Herzstück der English National Opera und ist neben den regelmäßigen Opernaufführungen im Londoner Coliseum auch auf dem Konzertpodium aktiv; Auftritte in jüngerer Zeit führten das Orchester unter anderem zum Aldeburgh-Festival (*Peter Grimes* und *The Rape of Lucretia*) sowie 2004 nach Glastonbury (Dritter Akt von Wagners *Walküre*). Viele Musiker des Orchesters engagieren sich für die Arbeit von ENO Baylis, der Abteilung für Bildung und Kommunikation. Das ENO Orchestra hat an zahlreichen Aufnahmen

im Rahmen der Chandos-Reihe "Opera in English" mitgewirkt – *Lulu*, *Falstaff*, *Otello*, *Ernani*, *Mary Stuart*, *Julius Caesar*, *Der Barbier von Sevilla*, *Rigoletto*, *La traviata*, *Werther* sowie eine Einspielung des vollständigen *Ring*-Zyklus unter der Leitung von Sir Reginald Goodall.

Sir Charles Mackerras studierte am Konservatorium in Sydney und kam 1947 nach England. Von der Kulturorgansisation British Council erhielt er ein Stipendium zur Erweiterung seines Studiums an der Musikakademie Prag. In jenem Jahr begann seine Leidenschaft für die Musik Janáčeks, als er *Katja Kabanowa* unter der Leitung des großen Václav Talich hörte.

Als Assistant Conductor am Londoner Opernhaus Sadler's Wells dirigierte er 1951 die erste Aufführung von *Katja Kabanowa* in der englischsprachigen Welt und brachte später auch *Die Sache Makropulos* und *Aus einem Totenhaus* nach Sadler's Wells. Hoherfolgreiche Inszenierungen von Janáčeks Opern sowie vertraute Werke aus dem Standardrepertoire leitete er auch während seiner Zeit als Musikdirektor der English National Opera (1970–77) und der Welsh National Opera (1987–1992). In ganz Europa, den USA und Australien gilt er als

Wegbereiter der Musik Janáčeks. *Jenůfa* ist ihm besonders ans Herz gewachsen.

Name verbindet sich seit langem mit der Tschechischen Philharmonie, mit der er die meisten Orchesterwerke Janáčeks, *Katja Kabanowa* und Dvořáks *Rusalka* aufgenommen hat. Seine umfangreiche Diskographie enthält einen preisgekrönten Zyklus von Janáček-Opern mit den Wiener Philharmonikern aus den frühen achtziger Jahren. Für Chandos hat er Janáčeks *Glagolitische Messe* in der Originalfassung, Kodály's *Psalmus Hungaricus* und Dvořáks Cellokonzert eingespielt. Für die Chandos-Serie "Opera in English" hat er *Osud*, *La traviata*, *Werther*, *Julius Caesar*, *Mary Stuart*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Jenůfa* und *The Magic Flute* und *The Bartered Bride* aufgenommen.

Sir Charles hat auch die Musik des 18. Jahrhunderts erforscht, insbesondere

Händel und Mozart. Er hat eine Reihe von Mozart-Opern und Gilbert-und-Sullivan-Operetten sowie Gesamtaufnahmen der Sinfonien von Mozart, Beethoven und Brahms, mehrere Oratorien von Händel sowie Sinfonien von Mahler und Elgar vorgelegt. Derzeit ist er Hauptgastdirigent des Philharmonia Orchestra, Conductor Laureate des Scottish Chamber Orchestra sowie Conductor Emeritus der Welsh National Opera und der San Francisco Opera.

Sir Charles wurde 1974 mit dem britischen Verdienstorden CBE ausgezeichnet, 1979 zum Ritter geschlagen, 1996 mit der Ehrenmedaille der Tschechischen Republik gewürdigt und 1997 zum Companion of the Order of Australia ernannt. 2003 erhob ihn Königin Elizabeth II. zum Companion of Honour.



L’Affaire Makropoulos

“Pourquoi les vieillards ne pourraient-ils pas être fous?” Telle est la question posée par le grand poète irlandais W.B. Yeats dans l’un de ses derniers poèmes. À l’instar de son contemporain presque exact, Leoš Janáček, Yeats fut un artiste au développement tardif, parvenant à la maturité créatrice à plus de cinquante ans, et poussé par les mêmes démons – un nationalisme farouche, une obsession passionnée pour une femme plus jeune que lui, et une préoccupation pour ce qu’il décrivit comme étant “la fascination de ce qui est difficile”. Et pourtant, même Yeats ne prit jamais des risques artistiques de l’ampleur de ceux de Janáček au cours des dix années remarquables qui virent la naissance de presque tous ses chefs-d’œuvre musicaux. En particulier, dans ses trois derniers opéras – *Le Petit Renard rusé*, *L’Affaire Makropoulos* et *La Maison des morts* – il s’imposa des défis non seulement difficiles, mais quasi démentiels – et les surmonta triomphalement. S’inspirant respectivement d’une bande dessinée, d’une satire philosophique et de la description romancée d’un camp de travaux forcés tsariste, ces trois drames lyriques sont parmi les

documents musicaux les plus humains et les plus bouleversants du vingtième siècle. Parmi eux, nul n’est plus étrange ou plus émouvant que *L’Affaire Makropoulos*?

Le titre lui-même est un paradoxe. Les mots tchèques “Věc Makropulos” n’apparaissent que dans le dernier acte. La première fois, ils se réfèrent à une très vieille formule promettant la vie éternelle. La seconde fois, ils sont utilisés dans un sens plus général signifiant “l’affaire Makropoulos” – tout comme dans l’opéra de Moussorgski, le titre *Khovantchina* est mieux traduit par “L’Affaire Khovansky”. Il y a en effet une “affaire” dans l’opéra, mais ce n’est pas l’affaire Makropoulos. C’est un procès poursuivi depuis de nombreuses générations entre deux branches d’une famille – l’une étant légitime, l’autre ne l’étant pas. Cette dispute ne sera résolue que lorsqu’un testament authentique sera produit. Ainsi, l’argument de l’opéra est enveloppé de mystère – qui est le véritable héritier et comment découvrirons-nous son identité? La personne qui peut répondre à ces questions est le personnage central de la pièce, la diva Emilia Marty, et ce qui la pousse n’est pas ce mystère, mais un

autre plus grand et plus terrible. Ce qu’elle recherche n’est pas le testament, mais la vieille formule cachée avec lui. Quand elle découvrira ce morceau de papier – le véritable Věc Makropulos – elle pourra résoudre son problème. Cependant, quand elle trouve la réponse, elle la rejette. Un mystère en effet, enveloppé dans un rébus, enfermé dans une énigme. Tout ceci est certes bien fascinant, mais à peine le matériau brut d’un ouvrage lyrique.

Pourquoi Janáček a-t-il donc choisi de transformer ce drame peu vraisemblable pour en faire son avant-dernier opéra? Il avait vu la pièce de Karel Čapek *L’Affaire Makropoulos* à Prague vers la fin de 1922 et demanda immédiatement à l’auteur la permission d’en tirer un libretto. Čapek et Janáček formaient une drôle de paire. Čapek était un dramaturge pragois urbain et sceptique, mieux connu pour avoir écrit avec son frère une pièce allégorique intitulée *De la Vie des insectes*, et pour avoir introduit le mot “robot” dans l’usage courant avec sa satire *R.U.R.* Comme George Bernard Shaw qu’il connaissait, son contemporain pragois Franz Kafka et un autre contemporain H.G. Wells, Čapek était un écrivain spéculatif, préoccupé par les questions touchant le progrès humain. La même année

que la pièce *Back to Methuselah* de Shaw, il traita du même problème de la condition mortelle de l’Homme. *L’Affaire Makropoulos* pose en effet une question semblable – que signifierait la possibilité de vivre éternellement? La réponse de Shaw est optimiste, promettant un développement spirituel infini. Čapek est ambivalent et laisse la question ouverte. Quand Janáček s’empara de ce matériau, sa réponse fut profondément tragique. Il se concentra sur la situation difficile d’une femme qui a reçu le don de la vie éternelle, et qui devient en conséquence une carapace humaine amère et destructive, belle et fascinante à l’extérieur, mais faite de poussière et de cendres à l’intérieur. Il se donna pour but non seulement d’incarner musicalement cette créature, mais également d’éveiller notre compassion et notre amour envers elle.

Une raison principale, comme pour tant de ses œuvres tardives, fut sa passion pour une femme mariée beaucoup plus jeune que lui. Janáček rencontra Kamila Stösslová en 1917 alors qu’il avait soixante-trois ans et elle vingt-cinq, et tomba immédiatement amoureux d’elle. Il entretenait une correspondance épique et en grande partie non réciproque avec elle pour le reste de son existence. Elle lui inspira ses quatre derniers opéras, la *Messe glagolitique*,



la Sinfonietta, un cycle de mélodies et deux quatuors à cordes. Elle fut peut-être une muse peu enthousiaste, mais les résultats artistiques de cette obsession sont extraordinaires. En 1922, quand Janáček découvrit la pièce de Čapek, Kamila s'efforçait de son mieux de tenir à distance le compositeur célèbre mais importun. Il est donc peu surprenant que dans les lettres qu'il lui écrivit peu de temps après le début de la composition de l'opéra, Janáček souligne la froideur et le comportement dur de son héroïne:

Une beauté de trois cents ans – et éternellement jeune – mais ayant perdu tout sentiment. Brrr!

Froide comme de la glace! Je vais écrire un opéra à propos d'une telle femme.

Et peu après avoir terminé l'ouvrage:

À la fin elle était si malheureuse! Après ça je veux que tout le monde l'aime. Sans amour, ça ne marche pas pour moi.

L'aspect le plus remarquable de sa manière d'aborder ce sujet inflexible est combien peu d'otages il prend. La pièce de Čapek est sardonique et prosaïque, et pendant les deux premiers actes, la musique de Janáček est également laconique et mordante. Marty n'a presque aucune musique développée. Au lieu de cela, elle est présentée en une suite de dialogues – avec l'avocat Kolenat, les

principaux opposants du procès Ferdinand Gregor/Baron Prus, et le vieux prétendant fou Hauksendorf qui connaît Emilia comme étant la gitane qu'il a aimée un demi-siècle plus tôt. Il serait excessif de décrire ces échanges comme étant des duos. Ils ne contiennent pas un gramme de lyrisme, et qui plus est, ce sont les personnages masculins qui ont la part du lion pour les paroles et la musique. Et pourtant, Janáček nous implique dans le drame de son héroïne avec un art consommé. Ses moyens sont déconcertants, provocants et totalement originaux.

Pour commencer, outre les avocats, les plaideurs, leurs familles et Marty elle-même, il y a un personnage supplémentaire caché, constamment présent dans la musique. Nous l'entendons d'abord au cours du prélude avec les trompettes et les tambours joués en coulisses. Il revient sous la forme d'une fanfare fragmentaire quand le clerc de notaire Vitek décrit la famille titrée engagée dans le procès. Il est présent dans le *stretto* insistant à la fin du premier acte, après qu'Emilia a promis la preuve authentifiant le testament qui se trouve dans un lieu qu'elle a révélé d'une manière mystérieuse. Il effectue une nouvelle apparition inquiétante au deuxième acte quand Prus prend conscience qu'une certaine

Elena Makropoulos pourrait bien être au cœur du mystère. Sa musique domine le dernier acte quand la véritable histoire de Marty est révélée. Il s'agit de l'empereur Rodolphe II de Habsbourg, un connaisseur et collectionneur d'érudits et d'objets mystérieux dont la cour à Prague au tournant du dix-septième siècle attirait les hommes de science, les astrologues, les nécromanciens et les charlatans. Dans la pièce de Čapek, il a ordonné à l'un d'eux, le médecin crétois Hieronymus Makropoulos, de produire un élixir procurant la vie éternelle. Hieronymus testa la potion sur sa fille Elena, et son existence sans fin pendant les trois siècles suivants provoque l'action du drame. La recreation musicale de Janáček nous fait entendre de continuels aperçus sonores de la cour de Rodolphe et du passé qui domine le présent éternel d'Emilia, comme si une trappe-médium s'était ouverte au milieu de la scène.

Un autre fil sonore nous conduit à travers la trame de l'histoire. Il s'agit d'une série de sons harmoniques glaciaux jouée au violon qu'accompagne un tambour d'enfant ou peut-être d'un tabourin de la Renaissance. Cette série apparaît la première fois quand Marty révèle que l'ancêtre de Gregor était le fils illégitime de l'aïeul du Baron Prus (et bien entendu d'Emilia elle-même sous une identité

précédente, celle de la chanteuse écossaise Ellian MacGregor). Quelques instants plus tard, ces sonorités reviennent au cours de l'un des rares moments de tendresse de cet acte, quand Emilia songe au fait que cet enfant ne connut jamais sa mère. Elles réapparaissent à l'Acte II, d'abord quand Emilia déclare à la jeune chanteuse Kristina que le sexe est un jeu qui n'en vaut pas la peine (comme d'ailleurs aucun des plaisirs de l'existence), puis quand elle demande de manière charmante à son arrière-arrière-arrière-arrière-arrière-petit-fils s'il aime le nom Makropoulos. Ce n'est pas exactement un *leitmotiv* – mais plutôt une fissure dans le psychisme de Marty par lequel nous pouvons entrevoir l'amante et la mère qu'elle a été pour tant d'hommes à travers les siècles. Ces échos d'un autre monde sont renforcés par un troisième thème récurrent, confié à la viole d'amour. Janáček associait cet instrument avec Kamila, et souhaitait l'inclure dans son second Quatuor à cordes intitulé *Lettres intimes* d'après sa propre correspondance avec sa muse. La viole d'amour et son thème sont comme l'aspect humain juxtaposé aux sons harmoniques du violon, nous rappelant la jeune fille de seize ans dont la capacité d'aimer a été détruite par son éternelle réincarnation. Grâce à ces moyens subtils et insaisissables,



Janáček nous retient captifs pendant deux actes graves et concentrés en préparation au déchirant troisième acte.

Emilia nous est présentée jusqu'ici en grande partie à travers l'effet qu'elle produit sur les autres, mais dans l'Acte III elle devient peu à peu la présence vocale dominante de l'opéra. Tandis que nous assistons aux effets peu à peu déclinant de la potion, l'harmonie et l'orchestration de la partition développent de nouvelles couleurs absentes dans les deux premiers actes. Entre temps, les appels de trompette de Rodolphe et le motif qui lui est associé percent la texture avec une insistance grandissante. Quand Emilia se souvient d'avoir donné la formule Makropoulos au seul homme qu'elle ait vraiment aimé, le vieux Pepi Prus, Janáček mêle à la trame musicale un thème aux cordes plein d'ardeur en préparation du nouveau motif qui dominera les derniers moments de l'opéra. Il accompagne Emilia quand elle demande à Gregor de lui palper les mains, qui deviennent glacées. Cependant, alors qu'elle se refroidit, la musique acquiert une nouvelle chaleur. Le motif persiste quand elle se met à parler dans sa langue grecque natale, et en citant le Notre Père – “Pater hemon” – mêle “Notre Père qui est aux cieux” avec son propre père, le médecin Hieronymus.

C'est là une démonstration de la maîtrise de Janáček qui grâce à la retenue dont il fait preuve au cours des deux premiers actes permet aux dix dernières minutes de l'opéra de délivrer leur message avec une intensité émotionnelle presque insoutenable. Le thème de la mort d'abord entendu dans les brefs échanges entre Emila et Gregor se transforme dans les mesures finales en un choral passionné qui est un cousin proche de la péroraison de son opéra précédent, *Le Petit Renard rusé*. La même vision humaniste est présente dans les deux ouvrages: seule la mort donne un sens à la vie.

À l'occasion de la création de la *Messe glagolitique* de Janáček, un critique remarqua qu'il était “touchant d'observer la foi d'un vieil homme et d'un vrai croyant”. Janáček répondit par une carte postale d'un laconisme typique: “Pas vieux, et pas vrai croyant jusqu'à ce que je voie moi-même”. Il était âgé de soixante et onze ans lorsqu'il termina *L'affaire Makropoulos*, et pour reprendre les mots de Dylan Thomas, il tempêtait contre la lumière qui s'éteint. En effet, il écrivit à Kamila au moment où il achevait *La Maison des morts* qu'il avait encore tant de musique prête à jaillir de sa plume. Dans toutes ces œuvres tardives, malgré l'égoïsme de ses lettres à Kamila, il n'y a pas un gramme de sentimentalité. À la

toute fin de la pièce originale, quand tous les personnages sur scène refusent la formule et que Kristina la brûle, Čapek nous laisse dans l'incertitude quant au sort de Marty: meurt-elle ou non? Dans la production de l'English National Opera dont le présent enregistrement est issu, le metteur en scène saisit une allusion de Čapek, et Marty demeure ni morte ni vivante avec la formule colée aux doigts tel du papier tue-mouche. Si le public doit décider pour lui-même, la partition de Janáček ne laisse aucune place pour le doute. La mort d'Emilia est finale, et la musique qui l'accompagne est l'une des plus transcendantes de tout l'opéra du vingtième siècle.

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Argument

L'action de l'opéra se situe à Prague en 1924.

En 1585 une fille, Elina, naît de Hieronymus Makropoulos, le médecin crétois de la cour de l'empereur Rodolphe II de Habsbourg. Obsédé par l'alchimie et les potions magiques, l'empereur demande à Makropoulos de lui fournir un élixir donnant la vie éternelle. Craignant le poison, il contraint le médecin

de tester la potion d'abord sur sa fille Elina. Elle reste dans le coma pendant une semaine, mais bien qu'elle en sorte en bonne santé, il est impossible de prouver l'efficacité de la potion. Le médecin est jeté en prison, et sa fille s'enfuit de Prague pour l'étranger où elle commence une série de nouvelles vies comme chanteuse. À chaque génération, elle change de nom, mais tout au long de sa longue existence, elle retient les mêmes initiales, E.M. (Eugenia Montez, Elsa Müller, Ellian MacGregor, Ekaterina Myskina, Emilia Marty). Le prélude de l'opéra évoque l'existence tragique de la fille de l'alchimiste, et ses fanfares distantes suggèrent la cour fabuleuse de Rodolphe II entouré de ses astrologues.

COMPACT DISC ONE

Acte I

L'étude du Dr Kolenat

❶ Prélude ❷ – ❸ On s'attend aujourd'hui au résultat du procès vieux d'un siècle entre Gregor et Prus. Le baron “Pepi” Prus mourut intestat en 1817, et sa fortune passa alors à un cousin. Peu après, elle fut revendiquée par un certain Ferdinand Gregor, et depuis elle est un objet de contestation entre les descendants des deux familles. Il semble maintenant que



l'incapacité d'Albert Gregor de fournir une preuve écrite qui lui permettrait de gagner son procès va avoir pour conséquence de transmettre la fortune à son adversaire, Jaroslav Prus.

[4] – [7] Tout ceci est changé par la venue à Prague de la célèbre chanteuse d'opéra Emilia Marty. Sa connaissance troublante de certains événements passés concernant Ellian MacGregor, la maîtresse de “Pepi” Prus, rouvre l'affaire. En même temps, elle commence à exercer une étrange fascination sur les deux rivaux.

Acte II

Dans les coulisses d'un théâtre d'opéra à Prague, après une matinée

[8] – [9] À la suite de sa prestation triomphale à l'opéra, Marty continue d'user de son pouvoir envoutant pour détruire les autres personnages. Elle fascine non seulement Gregor mais aussi la jeune chanteuse Kristina et son amant silencieux Janek, le fils de Prus, et même le clerc de Kolenat, le prosaïque Vitek. [10] Au cours d'un étrange interlude, le vieux comte Hauksendorf un peu fou évoque des souvenirs passionnés du passé flou de Marty. [11] – [12] Mais peu à peu, il apparaît que son véritable but

n'est pas d'aider Gregor à gagner son procès, mais de récupérer le document écrit en grec contenant la formule de la potion qui garantit trois cents ans de vie. Pour la première fois de son existence, Marty ressent les premiers signes de la vieillesse. Elle tente d'utiliser son pouvoir d'abord sur Gregor, [13] puis sur Janek. Une conversation tendue révèle que le Baron Prus possède la réponse, et elle lui fait une proposition.

COMPACT DISC TWO

Acte III

La chambre d'hôtel d'Emilia Marty

[1] – [4] Prus a passé la nuit avec Marty.

Amèrement déçu par sa froideur, il lui remet le document. Bien qu'elle ait le résultat précieux à portée de la main, son contrôle des événements est sur le déclin. Prus est bouleversé par la nouvelle du suicide de son fils, provoqué par la dureté de cœur de Marty. Les autres arrivent pour lui demander de rendre compte de sa conduite et d'expliquer son passé. Pendant qu'ils découvrent des éléments de la vérité, elle décide que le temps est venu de révéler son identité et le secret de son existence tourmentée.

Traduction: Francis Marchal

[5] – [10] Interview avec Sir Charles Mackerras

Née en Australie, **Cheryl Barker** (Emilia Marty) a étudié à Melbourne avec Dame Joan Hammond et à Londres avec David Harper. Elle se produit régulièrement dans son pays natal à l'Opéra d'Australie où elle a chanté des rôles tels que Nedda (*Pagliacci*), la Comtesse (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Mimì (*La Bohème*), Violetta (*La traviata*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Tatiana (*Eugène Onéguine*) et les rôles titres dans *Madama Butterfly* et *Tosca*. Elle a également incarné les rôles de Mimì, Antonia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) et Tatiana à l'Opéra d'État de Victoria; Tatiana et Violetta à l'Opéra de Queensland; *Madama Butterfly* et Violetta à l'Opéra de Nouvelle-Zélande.

Cheryl Barker est particulièrement réputée dans le monde entier pour ses interprétations de *Madama Butterfly*, un rôle qu'elle a chanté à l'English National Opera de Londres, au Grand Opéra de Houston, à l'Opéra De Vlaamse, au Staatsoper de Hambourg, au Deutsche Oper de Berlin, et plus récemment à l'Opéra de Hollande. Elle a également interprété Jenifer (*A Midsummer Marriage*) au Royal Opera de Covent Garden à Londres; Tatiana et Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*) au Scottish Opera; Oksana (*La Veillée de Noël* de Rimski-

Korsakov), la Gouvernante (*The Turn of the Screw*), Musetta (*La Bohème*), et Donna Elvira à l'English National Opera; le rôle titre dans *Maria Stuarda* au ReisOper; Violetta au Staatsoper de Hambourg et au Deutsche Oper de Berlin; le rôle titre dans *Katya Kabanova* à Genève et au Welsh National Opera; et les rôles titres dans *Suor Angelica* et *Die lustige Witwe*, Mimì, Desdemona (*Otello*) et Liù (*Turandot*) à l'Opera De Vlaamse.

Cheryl Barker se produit régulièrement en récital et en concert, et sa vaste discographie inclut *Madama Butterfly* et *Quo Vadis* de Dyson pour Chandos, et un album solo consacré à des arias de Puccini.

Né à Newport en Pays de Galles, **Neal Davies** (Dr Kolenat), a étudié au King's College de Londres et à la Royal Academy of Music, dont il est devenu “Fellow” en 2003. Il a ensuite poursuivi sa formation au Studio International d'Opéra de Zurich sous le patronage de Dame Gwyneth Jones.

Il s'est produit dans *Platée* de Rameau (à Londres et au Festival d'Édimbourg), *Giulio Cesare* de Haendel sous la direction de Ivor Bolton, et Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*) au Royal Opera de Covent Garden; Ariodates (*Xerxes*), *L'Allegro* de Haendel, Publio (*La clemenza di*



Tito) et Zebul (*Jephtha*) à l'English National Opera; *Radamisto* de Haendel à l'Opéra de Marseille; *Theodora* de Haendel avec l'ensemble Les Arts Florissants et William Christie (à Paris et à Salzbourg); *Orlando* de Haendel avec le Gabrieli Consort; Leporello (*Don Giovanni*) au Scottish Opera; *Curlew River* de Britten au Festival d'Édimbourg; Zebul, Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Leporello et Dulcamara (*L'elisir d'amore*) au Welsh National Opera. Il a fait ses débuts au Chicago Lyric Opera dans le rôle du Major Général Stanley (*The Pirates of Penzance*) sous la direction de Sir Andrew Davis.

En concert, Neal Davies s'est produit avec l'Orchestre de Cleveland et le Philharmonia Orchestra, le Gabrieli Consort, la Philharmonie d'Oslo, le BBC Symphony, le Kings Consort avec Robert King, l'Academy of St Martin in the Fields, l'Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment et l'Orchestre de chambre d'Europe.

Ses enregistrements incluent *A Midsummer Night's Dream* de Britten sous la direction de Sir Colin Davis; le *Messie*, *Theodora* et *Saul* sous la direction de Paul McCreech; *L'Allegro* de Haendel sous la direction de Robert King; et des mélodies de Dutilleux pour Chandos.

John Graham-Hall (Vítek) a étudié au King's College de Cambridge et au Royal College of Music de Londres. Il a été membre de l'English National Opera où il a chanté des rôles tels que Alwa (*Lulu*), Mime (dans le cycle du *Ring*), Hérode (*Salomé*), Lysander (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), et Sylvester (*The Silver Tassie*). Il a également chanté au Royaume-Uni les rôles d'Albert Herring, Basilio, le Maître de ballet (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) et Monostatos (*Die Zauberflöte*) au Royal Opera de Covent Garden; le Maire (*Albert Herring*) à l'Opera North; Vanya Kudrjas (*Katya Kabanova*), Flute (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) et Bob Boles (*Peter Grimes*) au Festival de Glyndebourne; Cassio (*Otello*) au Welsh National Opera; Eisenstein, l'Instituteur (*Le Petit Renard rusé*) au Scottish Opera; et Dada dans la création mondiale de *Man and Boy* de Michael Nyman avec l'Almeida Opera.

À l'étranger, John Graham-Hall a interprété le rôle de Michel (*Juliette*) et le rôle titre du nouvel opéra de Pascal Dusapin, *Perela, l'homme de fumée* à l'Opéra de Paris-Bastille; Cassio et Basilio au Théâtre de La Monnaie de Bruxelles; Shapkin (*La Maison des morts*) à l'Opéra de Nice; Lysander à Paris, Lyon, Caen, Montpellier, Rome, et au Festival de Ravenne; Lenski (*Eugène Onéguine*) à Lyon et Toronto;

Ferrando à Vancouver; Basilio et Spoletta (*Tosca*) à l'Opéra de Hollande.

Pour la série "Opera in English" de Chandos, John Graham-Hall a enregistré Alwa (*Lulu*), Monostatos (*The Magic Flute*), Isacco (*The Thieving Magpie*), l'Idiot (*Wozzeck*), et Basilio (*The Marriage of Figaro*).

De nationalité grecque et australienne, **Elena Xanthoudakis** (Kristina) est titulaire d'une licence en musique (chant) du Victorian College of Arts en Australie. Elle a également obtenu une maîtrise en musique à l'Université de Melbourne en 2003. Après avoir remporté le premier prix du Concours de chant d'Australie à l'Opéra de Sydney, elle a reçu une bourse d'un an pour parfaire sa formation à la Guildhall School of Music and Drama de Londres où elle a obtenu une maîtrise en musique (MMus). D'avril à juillet 2004, elle a suivi un stage au Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino où elle a chanté le rôle de la Comtesse de Folleville (*Il viaggio a Rheims*). Elle a remporté en 2006 le premier prix du Concours international Mozart de Salzbourg.

Son répertoire lyrique inclut Leïla (*Les Pêcheurs de perles*), Pamina et Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte*), Olympia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*), Constance

(*Dialogues des Carmélites*), et Kristina (*The Makropulos Case*); elle a chanté à l'opéra de Melbourne, au Victorian College of Arts, à l'Oz Opera, au Royal Opera de Covent Garden et à l'English National Opera.

Elena Xanthoudakis s'est produite en concert au Town Hall de Melbourne, à l'Hermitage de Saint-Petersbourg et à Hong Kong (avec la Camerata de Saint-Petersbourg) dans un répertoire comprenant la Neuvième Symphonie de Beethoven, la *Petite Messe solennelle* de Rossini, la *Passion selon saint Jean* et la *Passion selon saint Matthieu* de Bach, le Requiem de Fauré, le *Messie* et *Jephtha* de Haendel, l'*Exsultate Jubilate* de Mozart et le *Gloria* de Vivaldi. Elle a donné des récitals au Hessisches Staatstheater de Wiesbaden, à Hong Kong et à Salt-Lake City aux États-Unis.

Le chanteur américain **Robert Brubaker** (Albert Gregor) s'est imposé comme l'un des meilleurs ténors dans les salles d'opéra aux États-Unis et en Europe. Né en Pennsylvanie, il est diplômé du Hartt College of Music de Hartford où il a étudié avec David Ray Smith.

Il est régulièrement invité par les grands théâtres lyriques, et s'est récemment produit au Metropolitan Opera de New York (*Méphistophélès* dans *Doktor Faustus*), au



Royal Opera de Covent Garden de Londres (Bacchus dans *Ariadne auf Naxos*), au Staatsoper de Hambourg (Hermann dans *La Dame de Pique*), au Teatro alla Scala de Milan (Guido Bardi dans *Eine florentinische Tragödie* de Zemlinsky et Galitzine dans *La Khovantchina*), au Festival de Glyndebourne (Laça Klemen dans *Jenůfa*), au Festival de Salzbourg (dans le rôle titre dans *Der König* de Zemlinsky), au Liceu de Barcelone (Galitzine, et Erik dans *Der fliegende Holländer*) et à l'Opéra de Paris-Bastille (le Comte Pierre Bezukhov dans *Guerre et paix*, Dimitri dans *Boris Goudonov*, Galitzine, et le rôle titre dans *Der Zwerg*). Il a également chanté au Grand Opera de Houston, à l'Opéra du Canada, l'Opéra de Montpellier, l'Opéra de Dallas, et au Deutsche Oper de Berlin.

Né en Allemagne, **John Wegner** (Baron Prus) a grandi en Australie où il a été membre de l'Opéra d'Australie de 1981 à 1992. Il est actuellement membre résident du Deutsche Oper am Rhein. Il maîtrise un vaste répertoire et se produit régulièrement dans le monde entier, notamment à La Scala de Milan, en Australie, à Toulouse, Bruxelles, Sao Paulo, Prague, Copenhague, Oslo, Dublin, et dans de nombreux grands théâtres lyriques en Allemagne.

John Wegner a incarné à Bayreuth les rôles de Telramund (*Lohengrin*), Donner (*Das Rheingold*), Biterolf (*Tannhäuser*) et Klingsor (*Parsifal*). Il a également chanté les rôles de Wotan/le Voyageur et Alberich (*Der Ring der Nibelungen*), Jokanaan (*Salome*), les rôles titres dans *Der fliegende Holländer* et *Boris Godounov*, Scarpia, Iago, Pizarro et Escamillo. En 2005, il a remporté l'Australian Entertainment Industry Helpmann Award dans la catégorie "Meilleur Chanteur d'Opéra".

Né à Glasgow, **Thomas Walker** (Janek Prus) a d'abord étudié à la Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (Département des cuivres) puis a étudié le chant avec Ryland Davies au Royal College of Music de Londres.

Il s'est produit en concert dans *Elijah* au Royal Albert Hall de Londres avec le London Philharmonic Orchestra sous la direction de Kurt Masur dans le cadre des BBC Proms, où il a également chanté dans *Otcenás* de Janáček et dans le *Magnificat* de Bach. Il se produit régulièrement avec des orchestres en Grande-Bretagne parmi lesquels le BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, l'English Chamber Orchestra et l'Academy of Ancient Music dans un répertoire comportant des œuvres telles que la *Sérénade pour ténor, cor et cordes* et *St Nicolas*

de Britten, et *A Child of Our Time* de Tippett.

Thomas Walker a chanté le rôle de Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) à l'Opera North et Tamino avec le British Youth Opera pendant qu'il était encore étudiant à la Benjamin Britten International Opera School, où il s'est produit dans le Chevalier (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), et Peter Quint (*The Turn of the Screw*). Il a incarné Fenton (*Falstaff*) à l'English National Opera, et Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) avec le Holland Park Opera.

Né à Littleborough dans le Lancashire, **Graham Clark** (le Comte Hauksendorf) a commencé sa carrière au Scottish Opera avant de devenir membre de l'English National Opera (1978–1985). Il s'est produit au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, à l'Opera North et au Welsh National Opera. Son importante carrière internationale l'a conduit au Festival de Bayreuth pendant seize ans (Loge, Mime, le Pilote, Melot), au Metropolitan Opera de New York pendant quatorze ans (Loge, Mime, Vere (*Billy Budd*), Števa (*Jenůfa*), Hérode (*Salome*), le Prince/Marquis (*Lulu*)). Il s'est également produit dans des festivals internationaux, notamment au Festival d'Édimbourg et aux BBC Proms de Londres.

Graham Clark a enregistré pour toutes les grandes maisons de disques, et plusieurs de ses rôles majeurs (incluant ceux du *Ring*) ont été enregistrés sur DVD. Il a reçu le *Olivier Award 1986* pour son interprétation de Méphistophélès dans *Doktor Faust* de Busoni.

Considéré comme l'une des meilleures basses (*basso profondo*) d'Angleterre, **Graeme Danby** (un Machiniste) se produit régulièrement au Royal Opera de Covent Garden. Il a chanté le rôle important de Charrington, spécialement écrit pour lui, dans *1984* de Loren Maazel, commandé par Covent Garden.

À l'English National Opera il a chanté Lorenzo (*I Capuletti e I Montecchi*), Don Basilio (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Dulcamara (*Elisir d'amore*), Somnus (*Semele*), Quince (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Collatinus (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Poo-Bah (*The Mikado*), Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*), Pistol (*Falstaff*) et Ribbing (*Un ballo in maschera*). Il s'est également produit dans Antonio (*Le nozze di Figaro*) à Glyndebourne; Brag (*The Fairy Queen*) au Gran Teatro del Liceu de Barcelone; Xuthus (*Ion* de Param Vir) à l'Opéra National du Rhin de Strasbourg, et divers rôles à l'Opera North, au Scottish Opera, et aux festivals de Buxton et de Garsington.



Kathleen Wilkinson (une Habilleuse) est née dans le Lancashire. Elle a étudié avec Barbara Robotham au Royal Northern College of Music de Manchester grâce à une bourse de la Peter Moores Foundation, et a obtenu plusieurs récompenses.

Elle a chanté avec des compagnies telles que le Scottish Opera, l'Opera Ireland, Holland Park, Grange Park, et au Festival de Glyndebourne, dans un répertoire incluant Madame de la Haultière (*Cendrillon*), Lucretia de Britten, Mercedes et le rôle titre dans *Carmen*, Filipievna (*Eugène Onéguine*), Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*), Martha (*Faust*), Azucena (*Il trovatore*), et Madam By-Ends dans la production et l'enregistrement du Royal Northern College of Music de Manchester de *The Pilgrim's Progress* de Vaughan Williams.

Au Scottish Opera Kathleen Wilkinson a créé les rôles de Margaret Muir (dans *Friend of the People* de David Home) et Mary Lamb (dans *Monster!* de Sally Beamish). Également au Scottish Opera, elle a interprété les rôles de Nourrice/la Vieille Femme dans *Ines di Castro* de James MacMillan, et Schwertleite/Erda dans le cycle du *Ring* donné par la compagnie au Festival d'Édimbourg.

Susanna Tudor-Thomas (la Femme de chambre) a étudié à la Guildhall School of Music and Drama de Londres et à la Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Elle a fait ses débuts à l'opéra à l'âge de dix-sept ans dans le rôle de Barbarina (*Le nozze di Figaro*) au Welsh National Opera. Elle est devenue membre de l'English National Opera Chorus en 1994 et a créé le rôle de Mrs Van Tricasse dans *Doctor Ox's Experiment* de Gavin Bryars, et a chanté Flora (*La traviata*), Pitti-Sing (*The Mikado*), et Mercedes (*Carmen*). Elle a également interprété le personnage d'Orlovsky (Kentish Opera) et celui de l'Enfant (*L'Enfant et les sortilèges*, Opera Zuid).

Le Chœur de l'English National Opera est l'un des plus beaux atouts de cette compagnie lyrique. Remarquable autant pour la puissance de son chant que l'intensité de son jeu, cet ensemble a enthousiasmé le public dans d'innombrables productions de l'English National Opera. Ces choristes, riches d'une vaste expérience et d'une multitude de talents, marquent de leur sceau toutes les représentations auxquelles ils participent. Le Chœur a triomphé entre autres dans *Guerre et paix* de Prokofiev, *Lady Macbeth de Mtsensk* de Chostakovitch, *Billy Budd* et

Peter Grimes de Britten, *Boris Godounov* de Moussorgsky, *Carmen* de Bizet et *Otello* de Verdi. Leur enregistrement de ce dernier opéra, dans une mise en scène de Jonathan Miller et sous la direction de Mark Elder, est sorti chez Chandos grâce au financement de la Peter Moores Foundation, tout comme leur enregistrement combien célèbre du cycle du *Ring* dirigé par Sir Reginald Goodall. Il sont aussi enregistré pour Chandos, en collaboration avec la Peter Moores Foundation, *The Carmelites*, *Falstaff*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Rigoletto* (dans la mise en scène de Jonathan Miller) et *La traviata*.

d'Acclamé par la critique comme par le public, l'Orchestre de l'English National Opera a reçu plusieurs prix prestigieux au cours de ces dernières années, notamment le Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award et un Olivier Award pour sa contribution remarquable dans le domaine de l'opéra. Cet orchestre est au cœur de la vie artistique de l'English National Opera et, outre des représentations lyriques au Coliseum de Londres, il s'est produit en concert, au Festival d'Aldeburgh (*Peter Grimes* et *Le Viol de Lucrèce*) et à Glastonbury en 2004 (Acte III de *La Walkyrie* de Wagner). Un grand nombre

d'instrumentistes participent au travail de l'ENO Baylis, département de pédagogie et d'assistance de la troupe. L'Orchestre de l'ENO apparaît dans beaucoup d'enregistrements réalisés dans le cadre de la série de Chandos "Opera in English": *The Carmelites*, *Lulu*, *Falstaff*, *Otello*, *Ernani*, *Mary Stuart*, *Jules César*, *Le Barbier de Séville*, *Rigoletto*, *La traviata*, *Werther* et un cycle complet de la *Tétralogie* sous la direction de Sir Reginald Goodall.

Sir Charles Mackerras étudia au Conservatoire de Musique de Sydney et vint en Angleterre en 1947. Il obtint une bourse du British Council pour continuer ses études à l'Académie de Musique de Prague. Son vif intérêt et sa passion pour la musique de Janáček commença en 1947 après avoir entendu l'opéra *Kat'a Kabanová* dirigé par le grand Václav Talich.

C'est en qualité de chef assistant au Sadler's Wells qu'il donna la première de *Kat'a Kabanová* dans un pays de langue anglaise en 1951. Plus tard, il présenta *L'Affaire Makropoulos* et *La Maison des morts* au Sadler's Wells. Il continua à diriger des productions très acclamées d'opéras de Janáček ainsi que des ouvrages du répertoire habituel quand il devint directeur musical de l'English National Opera (1970–1977), et au Welsh National Opera



dont il fut directeur musical de 1987 à 1992. Il a été un défenseur de la musique de Janáček dans les capitales européennes, aux USA et en Australie. *Jenůfa* est l'une de ses œuvres préférées.

Il a entretenu une longue collaboration avec la Philharmonie tchèque et a enregistré à la tête de cette formation la plupart des œuvres pour orchestre de Janáček, ainsi que *Kat'a Kabanová* et *Rusalka* de Dvořák. Sa vaste discographie inclut le cycle primé des opéras de Janáček réalisé avec le Wiener Philharmoniker au début des années 1980. Pour Chandos, il a enregistré la version originale de la *Messe Glagolitique* de Janáček, le *Psalmus Hungaricus* de Kodály et le Concerto pour violoncelle de Dvořák. Dans la série Opera in English, il a enregistré *Osud*, *La traviata*, *Werther*, *Julius Caesar*, *Mary Stuart*, *Eugène Oneguine*, *Jenůfa*, *The Magic Flute* et *The Bartered Bride*.

Charles Mackerras a également fait d'importantes recherches dans le domaine de la musique du dix-huitième siècle, en particulier Haendel et Mozart. Il a enregistré une série consacrée aux opéras de Mozart et à ceux de Gilbert et Sullivan, ainsi que les cycles complets des symphonies de Mozart, Beethoven et Brahms, plusieurs oratorios de Haendel et des symphonies de Mahler et Elgar. Il est actuellement chef principal invité du Philharmonia Orchestra, chef lauréat du Scottish Chamber Orchestra et chef émérite du Welsh National Opera et du San Francisco Opera.

Charles Mackerras fut nommé commandeur de l'empire britannique (CBE) en 1974 et anobli en 1979. Il a reçu la Médaille du Mérite de la République tchèque en 1996 et fait Companion of the Order of Australia en 1997. En 2003, la reine Elizabeth II l'a nommé Companion of Honour.



John Graham-Hall as Vítek



Elena Xanthoudakis as Kristina and
Thomas Walker as Janek Prus



L'Affare Makropulos

“Perché i vecchi non dovrebbero esser pazzi?” Così scriveva il grande poeta irlandese W.B. Yeats in una delle sue ultime liriche. Come Leoš Janáček, quasi suo contemporaneo, anche il poeta era maturato tardi dal punto di vista creativo, intorno ai cinquant'anni, ed era animato da sentimenti simili: un fiero nazionalismo, la passione ossessiva per una donna più giovane e la preoccupazione per quanto definiva il “fascino delle cose difficili”. Eppure Yeats non si confrontò con gli stessi rischi artistici di Janáček nel decennio che fu testimone della nascita di quasi tutti i suoi capolavori musicali. In particolare, nelle sue ultime tre opere – *La volpe astuta*, *L'affare Makropulos* e *Da una casa di morti* – il compositore si impose delle sfide quasi impossibili, superandole trionfalmente. Ispirati rispettivamente a un fumetto, a una satira filosofica e a un racconto romanzato di un campo di prigionia zarista, questi tre drammi sono alcuni dei documenti musicali più umani e commoventi del Ventesimo secolo, ma nessuno è più originale o tragico dell'*Affare Makropulos*.

Il titolo in sé è un paradosso. L'espressione “Věc Makropulos” ricorre solo nell'ultimo atto. La prima volta che vengono utilizzate, le parole in ceco sono riferite a un'antica formula che promette la vita eterna. La seconda volta, hanno un senso più generale e indicano un “affare Makropulos” – come nell'opera di Mussorgsky *Khovanshchina*, (la miglior traduzione sarebbe “L'affare Khovansky”). Ciò di cui si parla prevalentemente nell'opera non è l'Affare Makropulos, ma un'annosa causa che coinvolge da molte generazioni due rami di una famiglia, uno legittimo e l'altro no. La controversia sarà risolta solo quando verrà alla luce un testamento autentico. Quindi la trama dell'opera è avvolta in una spirale di mistero: chi è il vero erede e come sarà identificato? L'unica in grado di rispondere a queste domande è la protagonista, la diva Emilia Marty, ma dietro la sua persona si nasconde un altro mistero ancora, ben più grande e più terribile. La donna non va in cerca del testamento, ma desidera l'antica formula conservata insieme ad esso, l'autentico Věc Makropulos, l'unico che risolverà il suo problema. Eppure quando finalmente lo trova,

lo rifiuta. Un vero mistero, avvolto in un indovinello, incluso in un enigma. Tutte cose avvincenti, senz'altro, ma non esattamente ideali per la trama di un melodramma.

Come mai Janáček scelse di trasformare questa vicenda improbabile nella sua penultima opera? Avendo assistito al dramma teatrale di Karel Čapek, *L'affare Makropulos*, in un teatro di Praga alla fine del 1922, si rivolse immediatamente all'autore per chiedergli il permesso di realizzarne un libretto. Ma il drammaturgo e il compositore erano una coppia veramente strana. Čapek era un drammaturgo praghese urbano e scettico, meglio noto per la sua collaborazione con il fratello all'allegorica *Dalla vita degli insetti* e per avere introdotto la parola “robot” nel linguaggio universale con la sua satira *RUR*. Come George Bernard Shaw, che conosceva, il suo contemporaneo di Praga Franz Kafka e un altro contemporaneo, H.G. Wells, era uno scrittore speculativo, preoccupato delle problematiche del progresso umano. Nello stesso anno in cui Shaw scriveva *Back to Methuselah*, Čapek affrontò lo stesso problema della mortalità umana. *L'affare Makropulos* formula una domanda analoga: cosa significherebbe per noi poter vivere in eterno? Shaw aveva risposto con un'ottimistica

promessa di infinito sviluppo spirituale. Čapek lasciò ambigualmente aperta la questione. Di fronte a questo materiale, Janáček ebbe una reazione profondamente tragica. Incentrò l'attenzione sulla situazione di una donna a cui era stato concesso il dono della vita eterna, ma che per questo era diventata esternamente dura, distruttiva, bellissima e affascinante, ma completamente spenta dentro. Il compositore si prefisse il compito non solo di personificare questa creatura in musica, ma di suscitare nel pubblico solidarietà e amore per lei.

La spinta originaria a creare questa, come tante delle sue ultime opere, fu l'infatuazione del compositore per una donna sposata che aveva meno della metà dei suoi anni. Nel 1917 il sessantatreenne Janáček aveva conosciuto la venticinquenne Kamila Stösslová e se ne era immediatamente innamorato. Con lei instaurò una fitta corrispondenza, per lo più unilaterale, per il resto della sua vita. La donna gli ispirò le ultime quattro opere: la *Messa glagolitica*, la Sinfonietta, un ciclo di lieder e due quartetti per archi. Nonostante la palese riluttanza della sua musa, l'ossessione del compositore ebbe esiti veramente mozzafiato. Nel 1922, quando Janáček si accostò al dramma di Čapek, Kamila faceva del suo meglio per tenerlo a debita distanza. Non sorprende molto, quindi,



che nelle lettere indirizzate a lei poco dopo aver iniziato a lavorare all'opera, Janáček sottolinea la freddezza e il comportamento duro della sua eroina:

Una bellezza di trecento anni – ed eternamente giovane – ma con i sentimenti in cenere. Brrr! Fredda come il ghiaccio! Comporrò un'opera su una donna così.

E poco dopo averla terminata...

È stata talmente infelice fino alla fine! Per questo tutti devono volerle bene, dopo. Le cose non hanno senso, per me, senz'amore.

La caratteristica più notevole di questo approccio a un argomento che lascia pochi spiragli è la quasi assenza di cedimenti. Il dramma di Čapek è sardonico e prosaico e per i primi due atti la musica di Janáček è ugualmente essenziale e abrasiva. Emilia Marty quasi non ha musica estesa propria, ma viene presentata attraverso una serie di dialoghi – con l'avvocato Kolenoš, le principali parti in causa, Ferdinand Gregor e il barone Prus, e il suo vecchio ex spasimante Hauk-Šendorf, ormai demente, che rivede in Emilia la cantante zingara da lui amata mezzo secolo prima. Sarebbe eccessivo definire duetti questi scambi di battute, privi del benché minimo spirito lirico. Per di più sono gli interlocutori maschili ad avere la parte del leone in fatto di parole e

note. Eppure Janáček coinvolge gli ascoltatori nel dramma della sua eroina con consumata abilità, servendosi di mezzi sconcertanti, provocatori e totalmente originali.

Per iniziare, oltre agli avvocati, le parti in causa, le famiglie e la stessa Emilia, è incluso anche un personaggio non visto, ma costantemente presente nella musica. Lo ascoltiamo per la prima volta nel preludio, nelle trombe e nei tamburi fuori scena. Ritorna poi nei frammenti di fanfara quando l'impiegato Vítek descrive la famiglia nobiliare impegnata nella causa. È presente nell'insistente stretto alla fine del primo atto, quando Emilia promette di dimostrare l'autenticità del testamento di cui ha misteriosamente rivelato la collocazione. Fa un'ulteriore, strana apparizione nell'Atto II, quando Prus si rende conto per la prima volta che al centro del mistero potrebbe essere una certa Elina Makropulos. La sua musica domina l'ultimo atto, quando viene rivelata la vera storia di Emilia Marty. Si tratta dell'imperatore Rodolfo II d'Asburgo, conoscitore e collezionista di misteriosi sapienti e manufatti, la cui corte a Praga al volgere del diciassettesimo secolo richiama scienziati, astrologi, negromanti e ciarlatani. Nel dramma di Čapek proprio l'imperatore aveva ordinato

a uno di loro, il medico cretese Hieronymus Makropulos, di creare un elisir di vita eterna. L'uomo aveva sperimentato la pozione sulla propria figlia Elina, e il dramma finale è il risultato degli eventi della sua lunghissima vita nell'arco dei successivi tre secoli. La ricostruzione operistica di Janáček contiene continui riferimenti orali alla corte di Rodolfo e al passato che domina l'eterno presente di Emilia, come se sul palcoscenico si fosse aperta una botola extrasensoriale.

C'è un altro flusso sonoro che ci attira attraverso le intricate fasi della storia. Si tratta di una serie di armonici cristallini del violino, accompagnati da un tamburo giocattolo o possibilmente un tamburino rinascimentale. Si sentono per la prima volta quando Emilia rivela che l'antenato di Gregor era figlio illegittimo dell'antenato del barone Prus (e naturalmente della stessa Emilia, che all'epoca aveva assunto l'identità di Ellian MacGregor, cantante scozzese). Poco dopo questi suoni ricorrono in uno dei due momenti di tenerezza di questo atto, mentre Emilia riflette che questo bambino non ha mai conosciuto sua madre. Ricompaiono quindi nel Secondo atto, quando Emilia dice alla giovane cantante Kristina che il sesso (come tutti i piaceri della vita) è un gioco che non vale la candela

e poi quando chiede in maniera civettuola al suo pronipote di quinta generazione se gli piace il nome Makropulos. Non si tratta esattamente di un *leitmotiv*, ma piuttosto un impercettibile squarcio nella psiche di Emilia, attraverso cui si può intuire che tipo di amante e madre è stata per tanti uomini nell'arco dei secoli. Questi echi di un altro mondo sono rafforzati da un terzo tema ricorrente, sulla viola d'amore, lo strumento associato da Janáček a Kamila e incluso nel suo secondo quartetto di archi, detto *Lettere intime* in nome della corrispondenza del compositore con la sua musa. Lo strumento e il tema ad esso associato fungono da giustapposizione umana agli armonici degli archi, ricordandoci la ragazza sedicenne la cui capacità di amare è stata schiacciata e distrutta dall'eterna reincarnazione. È attraverso questi espedienti sottili ed elusivi che Janáček tiene prigionieri gli ascoltatori durante due atti severi e concentrati, in preparazione allo strazio del terzo.

Emilia, finora presentata per lo più attraverso il suo effetto sugli altri, diventa sempre più la presenza vocale dominante dell'opera nel Terzo atto. Mentre gli effetti della pozione scompaiono gradualmente, l'armonia e la strumentazione della partitura



sviluppano nuovi colori, assenti dai primi due atti. Nel frattempo il richiamo della tromba di Rodolfo e il motivo a lui associato punteggiano la tessitura con crescente insistenza. Mentre la donna ricorda di aver dato la formula Makropulos all'unico uomo da lei veramente amato, il vecchio Pepi Prus, Janáček inserisce uno struggente tema degli archi nel tessuto musicale, in preparazione di una nuova figura che dominerà i momenti conclusivi dell'opera. Il tema accompagna Emilia quando chiede a Gregor di toccarle le mani, che si stanno facendo fredde come il ghiaccio. Ma con il sopraggiungere del gelo mortale, la musica acquista nuovo calore. Il tema persiste mentre lei scivola nella sua lingua d'origine, il greco, e cita il Padre Nostro – “*Pater hemon*” – accomunando il Padre celeste e quello vero, l'alchimista Hieronymos. Con la sua tecnica magistrale, Janáček ribalta l'atmosfera contenuta dei primi due atti in maniera tale da consentire agli ultimi dieci minuti dell'opera di comunicare il loro messaggio con un'intensità emotiva quasi insopportabile. Il tema della morte, prima emerso nel breve colloquio di Emilia con Gregor, nelle ultime battute si trasforma in una corale appassionata, molto vicina alla perorazione che conclude l'opera

precedente, *La volpe astuta*. Lo stesso ideale umanistico è presente in entrambe le opere: solo la morte dà significato alla vita.

Alla prima della *Messa glagolitica*, un critico definì “toccante osservare la fede di un vecchio e vero credente”. Janáček rispose con una cartolina concisa, alla sua maniera: “Né vecchio né vero credente finché non toccherò con mano.” Aveva settantun anni quando completò *L'affare Makropulos* e, per dirla con Dylan Thomas, “inveiva contro l'affievolirsi della luce”. Anzi, quando stava completando *Da una casa di morti*, scrisse a Kamila che aveva dentro ancora tanta musica. In tutte queste tarde creazioni, nonostante il solipsismo delle lettere a Kamila, non c'è nemmeno un grammo di sentimentalismo. Alla fine del dramma originario, quando tutti sulla scena rifiutano la formula e Kristina la brucia, Čapek stende un velo di incertezza sulla morte di Emilia. Nell'allestimento della English National Opera da cui questa registrazione è tratta, il regista si ispirò alla visione di Čapek ed Emilia non rimane né morta né viva, mentre la formula le rimane attaccata alle dita come carta moschicida. Il pubblico può decidere indipendentemente, ma la partitura di Janáček non lascia spazio all'incertezza. La morte di Emilia è certa, e

la musica che l'accompagna è una delle più trascendenti della lirica del Ventesimo secolo.

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Argomento

La vicenda si svolge a Praga nel 1924.

Nel 1585 Hieronymus Makropulos, fisico e alchimista cretese alla corte dell'imperatore Rodolfo II d'Asburgo, era diventato padre di una bambina, Elina. Ossessionato dall'alchimia e dalle pozioni magiche, l'imperatore aveva ordinato all'alchimista di creare un elisir di vita eterna ma, nel timore di essere avvelenato, lo aveva obbligato a sperimentarlo prima sulla figlia. Elina era rimasta in coma per una settimana, prima di riprendersi ma, naturalmente, l'efficacia della pozione era rimasta impossibile da dimostrare. Il medico veniva imprigionato e la figlia fuggiva da Praga per rifugiarsi all'estero. Qui iniziava una carriera di cantante che sarebbe durata trecento anni, cambiando nome al passaggio di ogni generazione, ma sempre conservando le stesse iniziali: E.M. (Eugenia Montez, Elsa Müller, Ellian MacGregor, Ekaterina Myskina, Emilia Marty). Il preludio dell'opera evoca la tragica

esistenza della figlia dell'alchimista e le fanfare in lontananza ricordano la splendida corte di Rodolfo II, circondato dai suoi astrologhi

COMPACT DISC ONE

Atto I

L'ufficio dell'avvocato Kolenatý

[1] Preludio [2] – [3] Si attende l'esito di una causa che da cento anni contrappone le famiglie Gregor e Prus. Dopo la morte del barone “Pepi” Prus, nel 1817, i suoi beni erano passati a un cugino. Successivamente l'eredità era stata rivendicata da un certo Ferdinand Gregor e da allora il fatto era stato contestato dai discendenti delle due famiglie. L'ultimo erede, Albert Gregor, non sembra in grado di fornire un documento convincente come prova della sua rivendicazione e quindi finalmente la proprietà ritornerà al suo avversario, Jaroslav Prus.

[4] – [7] Le cose cambiano radicalmente con l'arrivo a Praga della famosa cantante lirica Emilia Marty. La sua misteriosa conoscenza degli eventi passati riguardanti Elian MacGregor, amante di “Pepi” Prus, fa riaprire il caso. Allo stesso tempo la donna comincia a esercitare uno strano fascino sui due rivali.



Atto II

Dietro le quinte nel teatro lirico di Praga dopo una matinée

[8] – [9] Dopo aver trionfato sulle scene, Emilia continua a esercitare il proprio fascino per distruggere gli altri personaggi. Oltre a conquistare Gregor, riesce a fare innamorare di sé anche Janek, giovane figlio di Prus e timido fidanzato della cantante Kristina, e persino l'impiegato di Kolenatý, il prosaico Vitek. [10] In uno strano interludio il vecchio e ormai demente conte Hauk-Šendorf rievoca con passione il suo nebuloso passato. [11] – [13] Gradualmente si capisce che il vero obiettivo della donna non è quello di aiutare Gregor a vincere la causa, bensì quello di recuperare l'antico documento contenente la formula della pozione che allunga la vita di trecento anni. Per la prima volta Emilia comincia a invecchiare. La conversazione rivela che il barone Prus è in possesso del documento e lei gli promette una notte d'amore pur di averlo.

COMPACT DISC TWO

Atto III

La camera d'albergo di Emilia Marty

[1] – [2] Prus ha trascorso la notte con Emilia. Amaramente deluso dalla sua freddezza,

le consegna il documento. Ma nonostante l'obiettivo sia ormai a portata di mano, la donna non riesce più a controllare gli eventi. Prus è sopraffatto dalla notizia del suicidio di suo figlio, annientato dal rifiuto di Emilia. Arrivano gli altri per chiederle conto delle sue azioni e rivelare il suo passato. Mentre la verità comincia lentamente a farsi luce, la donna decide che è arrivato il momento di rivelare la sua identità e il segreto della sua tormentata esistenza, prima di morire.

Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

[5] – [10] Intervista con sir Charles Mackerras

Nata in Australia, **Cheryl Barker** (Emilia Marty) ha studiato a Melbourne con dame Joan Hammond e a Londra con David Harper. Nel suo Paese si esibisce regolarmente con Opera Australia, interpretando ruoli tra cui Nedda (*Pagliacci*), la contessa (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Mimì (*La Bohème*), Violetta (*La traviata*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Tatiana (*Eugenio Onieghin*) e i ruoli di protagonista in *Madama Butterfly* e *Tosca*. È stata Mimì, Antonia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) e Tatiana per la Victoria State Opera, Tatiana e Violetta per Opera Queensland e Madama

Butterfly e Violetta per la New Zealand Opera.

A livello internazionale, Cheryl Barker è particolarmente apprezzata per le sue interpretazioni di Madama Butterfly con numerose compagnie tra cui English National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Opera De Vlaamse, Opera di Amburgo, Deutsche Oper, Berlino e più di recente per la Netherlands Opera. Altre apparizioni internazionali comprendono Jenifer (*A Midsummer Marriage*) per la Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Tatiana e Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*) per Scottish Opera; Oksana (*Christmas Eve* di Rimskij Korsakov), la Governante (*The Turn of the Screw*), Musetta (*La Bohème*), e Donna Elvira per English National Opera; il ruolo di protagonista nella *Maria Stuarda* per la ReisOper; Violetta per l'Opera di Amburgo e la Deutsche Oper; il ruolo di protagonista in *Katá Kabánova* a Ginevra e per la Welsh National Opera; e i ruoli di protagonista in *Suor Angelica* e *La vedova allegra*, Mimì, Desdemona (*Otello*) e Liù (*Turandot*) per l'Opera De Vlaamse.

Cheryl Barker è regolarmente impegnata in recital e concerti e la sua ricca discografia comprende *Madama Butterfly* e *Quo Vadis* di Dyson per Chandos, oltre a un CD di arie pucciniane.

Neal Davies (Dr Kolenatý) è nato a Newport, Gwent, nel Galles, e ha studiato presso il King's College di Londra e la Royal Academy of Music, di cui è stato nominato Fellow nel 2003. Si perfeziona presso l'International Opera Studio di Zurigo, con l'appoggio di dame Gwyneth Jones.

In teatro è apparso nelle vesti di *Platée* di Rameau (a Londra e al Festival di Edimburgo), *Giulio Cesare* di Handel per la direzione di Ivor Bolton, e Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*) per la Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Ariodate (*Serse*), *L'Allegro* di Handel, Publio (*La clemenza di Tito*) e Zebul (*Jephtha*) per English National Opera; *Radamisto* di Handel per l'Opéra de Marseille; *Theodora* di Handel con Les Arts Florissants e William Christie (Parigi e Salisburgo); *Orlando* di Handel con il Gabrieli Consort; Leporello (*Don Giovanni*) per Scottish Opera; *Curlew River* di Britten al Festival di Edimburgo; Zebul, Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Leporello e Dulcamara (*L'elisir d'amore*) per Welsh National Opera. Ha esordito con la Chicago Lyric Opera nelle vesti del Major General Stanley (*The Pirates of Penzance*) con sir Andrew Davis.

Gli impegni concertistici di Neal Davies lo hanno visto collaborare con la Cleveland Orchestra e la Philharmonia Orchestra, il



Gabrieli Consort, la Oslo Philharmonic, la BBC Symphony, il Kings Consort con Robert King, l'Academy of St Martin in the Fields, l'Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment e l'Orchestra da Camera Europea.

La discografia comprende *A Midsummer Night's Dream* di Britten con sir Colin Davis; *Messiah*, *Theodora* e *Saul* diretti da Paul McCreesh; *L'Allegro* di Handel diretto da Robert King; brani di Dutilleux per Chandos.

John Graham-Hall (Vítek) ha studiato presso il King's College, Cambridge e presso il Royal College of Music. È stato membro della English National Opera, dove ha interpretato tra l'altro Alwa (*Lulu*), Mime (il ciclo del *Ring*), Herodes (*Salome*), Lysander (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Sylvester (*The Silver Tassie*). Altri ruoli nel Regno Unito comprendono Albert Herring, Basilio, Tanzmeister (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) e Monostatos (*Il flauto magico*) alla Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Mayor (*Albert Herring*) per Opera North; Vanya Kudrjas (*Katá Kabanova*), Flute (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) e Bob Boles (*Peter Grimes*) per la Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Cassio (*Otello*) per Welsh National Opera; Eisenstein, il maestro (*La volpe astuta*) per la Scottish Opera; Dada nella prima di *Man and Boy* di

Nyman con la Almeida Opera.

Gli impegni teatrali all'estero hanno compreso Michel (*Juliette*) e il ruolo di protagonista in *Perela, l'homme de fumée*, nuova opera di Pascal Dusapin all'Opéra de Paris-Bastille; Cassio e Basilio al teatro La Monnaie di Bruxelles; Shapkin (*Da una casa di morti*) per l'Opera di Nizza; Lysander a Parigi, Lione, Caen, Montpellier, Roma e al Festival di Ravenna; Lenski (*Eugenio Onieghin*) a Lione e Toronto; Ferrando a Vancouver; Basilio e Spoletta (*Tosca*) per la Netherlands Opera.

Per la serie Opera in English di Chandos, John Graham-Hall ha registrato Alwa (*Lulu*), Monostatos (*The Magic Flute*), Isacco (*The Thieving Magpie*), l'Idiota (*Wozzeck*), e Basilio (*The Marriage of Figaro*).

Elena Xanthoudakis (Kristina), di nazionalità greco/australiana, si è diplomata in canto per il teatro con il massimo dei voti presso il Victorian College of Arts, in Australia. Ha anche completato un Master in interpretazione musicale presso l'università di Melbourne nel 2003. Dopo aver vinto il primo premio dell'Australian Singing Competition presso la Sydney Opera House, ha ottenuto una borsa di studio di un anno presso la Guildhall School of Music di Londra, dove ha conseguito un

Master in musica. Da aprile a luglio 2004 ha lavorato come Giovane Artista al Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, dove ha cantato il ruolo della Contessa di Folleville (*Il viaggio a Reims*). Ha vinto il primo premio al Concorso Internazionale Mozart di Salisburgo nel 2006.

Il repertorio operistico comprende Leila (*Les Pêcheurs de perles*), Pamina e Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte*), Olympia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*), Constance (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), e Kristina (*L'affare Makropulos*). Ha collaborato con Melbourne Opera, Victorian College of Arts, Oz Opera, Royal Opera, Covent Garden, ed English National Opera.

I suoi impegni concertistici l'hanno vista esibirsi a Melbourne (Town Hall), San Pietroburgo (Hermitage) e Hong Kong (con la Camerata di San Pietroburgo) in un repertorio che include la nona Sinfonia di Beethoven, la *Petite Messe solennelle* di Rossini, *La passione secondo San Giovanni* e *La passione secondo san Matteo* di Bach, il Requiem di Fauré, il *Messiah* e *Jephtha* di Handel, *Exsultate jubilate* di Mozart e il *Gloria* di Vivaldi. Ha svolto recital presso l'Hessisches Staatstheater di Wiesbaden, a Hong Kong e a Salt-Lake City, Utah.

Il tenore americano **Robert Brubaker** (Albert Gregor) si è affermato come primo tenore nei teatri lirici degli Stati Uniti e dell'Europa. Nato in Pennsylvania, si è diplomato presso l'Hartt College of Music di Hartford, dove ha studiato con David Ray Smith.

È regolarmente ospite dei principali teatri lirici e si è esibito alla Metropolitan Opera (Mephistopheles nel *Doktor Faustus*), alla Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*), alla Staatsoper di Amburgo (Gherman nella *Dama di Picche*), al Teatro alla Scala (Guido Bardi in *Eine florentinische Tragödie* di Zemlinsky e Golitsin nella *Khovanshchina*), Glyndebourne Festival (Lača in *Jenůfa*), Festival di Salisburgo (ruolo di protagonista in *Der König* di Zemlinsky), al Liceu di Barcelona (Golitsin ed Erik ne *L'Olandese volante*) e all'Opéra de Paris-Bastille (il conte Pierre Bezukhov in *Guerra e pace*, Dimitri in *Boris Godunov*, Golitsin, e il protagonista in *Der Zwerg*). Ha inoltre collaborato con la Houston Grand Opera, la Canadian Opera Company, l'Opéra di Montpellier, la Dallas Opera e la Deutsche Oper Berlin.

John Wegner (Barone Prus) è nato in Germania ed è cresciuto in Australia, dove



ha collaborato con Opera Australia dal 1981 al 1992. Attualmente è membro residente della Deutsche Oper am Rhein. Ha un vasto repertorio ed è regolarmente ospite dei teatri di tutto il mondo, per esempio Milano (La Scala), Australia, Toulouse, Bruxelles, Sao Paulo, Praga, Copenaghen, Oslo, Dublino e di molte importanti compagnie in Germania.

A Bayreuth ha cantato Telramund (*Lohengrin*), Donner (*Das Rheingold*), Biterolf (*Tannhäuser*) e Klingsor (*Parsifal*). Il repertorio comprende Wotan/Wanderer e Alberich (*Der Ring der Nibelungen*), Jochanaan (*Salome*), i ruoli di protagonista in *Der fliegende Holländer* e *Boris Godunov*, oltre a Scarpia, Iago, Pizarro ed Escamillo. Ha ricevuto nel 2005 il premio Helpmann della Australian Entertainment Industry come miglior interprete lirico maschile nel teatro.

Nato a Glasgow, **Thomas Walker** (Janek Prus) ha frequentato il dipartimento ottoni della Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama prima di studiare canto con Ryland Davies al Royal College of Music.

Gli impegni concertistici comprendono *Elijah* alla Royal Albert Hall con Kurt Masur e la London Philharmonic Orchestra ai BBC Proms, dove si è esibito anche in *Otcenás* di

Janáček e nel *Magnificat* di Bach. L'artista compare regolarmente con le orchestre del Regno Unito, tra cui BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra e Academy of Ancient Music, interpretando un repertorio che comprende *Serenade for Tenor*, *Horn and Strings* e *St Nicolas* di Britten, e *A Child of Our Time* di Tippett.

I ruoli teatrali includono Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) per Opera North e Tamino per la British Youth Opera quando ancora frequentava la Benjamin Britten International Opera School, per cui ha interpretato anche il ruolo del Cavaliere (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), e Peter Quint (*The Turn of the Screw*). Ha cantato Fenton (*Falstaff*) per English National Opera e Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) con la Holland Park Opera.

Graham Clark (Conte Hauk-Šendorf) è nato a Littleborough, nel Lancashire e ha iniziato la sua carriera di cantante alla Scottish Opera prima di entrare alla English National Opera come solista della compagnia (1978–85). È apparso alla Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Opera North e Welsh National Opera. La sua vasta carriera internazionale lo ha portato al Festival di Bayreuth per sedici stagioni (Loge, Mime, Steuermann, Melot),

alla Metropolitan Opera per quattordici stagioni (Loge, Mime, Vere (*Billy Budd*), Števa (*Jenůfa*), Herodes (*Salome*), Principe/Marchese (*Lulu*)). Ha inoltre partecipato a festival internazionali tra cui quello di Edimburgo e i Proms BBC.

Ha registrato per tutte le principali case e molti dei suoi ruoli principali (tra cui quelli del *Ring*) sono disponibili su DVD. Ha ricevuto un Olivier Award nel 1986 per il ruolo di Mephistopheles nel *Doktor Faust* di Busoni.

Graeme Danby (Stage Hand) è considerato uno dei migliori bassi profondi della Gran Bretagna e si esibisce regolarmente con la Royal Opera Covent Garden. Ha interpretato l'importante ruolo di Charrington composto appositamente per lui in *1984*, opera commissionata a Lorin Maazel per il Covent Garden.

Per English National Opera ha cantato Lorenzo (*I Capuletti e i Montecchi*), Don Basilio (*The Barber of Seville*), Dulcamara (*The Elixir of Love*), Somnus (*Semele*), Quince (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Collatinus (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Poo-Bah (*The Mikado*), Sarastro (*The Magic Flute*), Pistol (*Falstaff*) e Ribbing (*A Masked Ball*). Altre apparizioni comprendono Antonio (*Le nozze di Figaro*) a

Glyndebourne, Brag (*The Fairy Queen*) al Gran Teatro del Liceu di Barcellona, Xuthus (*Ion* di Param Vir) all'Opéra National du Rhin di Strasburgo, oltre a collaborazioni con Opera North, Scottish Opera e interpretazioni ai festival di Buxton e Garsington.

Kathleen Wilkinson (Cleaner) è nata nel Lancashire; ha studiato con Barbara Robotham presso il Royal Northern College of Music, con l'appoggio della Peter Moores Foundation, e ha vinto numerosi premi.

Ha collaborato con Scottish Opera, Opera Ireland, Holland Park, Grange Park e Festival di Glyndebourne e i suoi ruoli comprendono Madame de la Haltière (*Cendrillon*), Lucretia di Britten, Mercedes e il ruolo di protagonista in *Carmen*, Filipyevna (*Eugenio Onieghin*), Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*), Martha (*Faust*), Azucena (*Il trovatore*), e Madam By-Ends nell'allestimento e registrazione di *The Pilgrim's Progress* del Royal Northern College of Music.

Per la Scottish Opera ha creato i ruoli di Margaret Muir (*Friend of the People* di David Home), e Mary Lamb (*Monster!* di Sally Beamish). Per la stessa compagnia ha anche cantato i ruoli di Nurse/Old Woman nella *Ines di Castro* di James MacMillan e



Schwertleite/Erda nel ciclo del *Ring* allestito dalla compagnia per il Festival di Edimburgo.

Susanna Tudor-Thomas (Chambermaid) ha studiato presso la Guildhall e la Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Ha esordito in teatro a diciassette anni nel ruolo di Barbarina (*Le nozze di Figaro*) con la Welsh National Opera. È entrata nel coro della English National Opera nel 1994, ha creato il ruolo di Mrs Van Tricasse in *Doctor Ox's Experiment* di Gavin Bryars e ha cantato Flora (*La traviata*), Pitti-Sing (*The Mikado*), e Mercedes (*Carmen*). Altri ruoli comprendono Orlovsky (Kentish Opera) e L'enfant (*L'Enfant et les sortilèges*, per Opera Zuid).

Il **Coro di English National Opera** è una delle migliori risorse dell'Opera. In innumerevoli produzioni della English National Opera ha entusiasmato le platee con il potere del canto e l'intensità della recitazione. L'ampia gamma di capacità ed esperienza che portano i coristi nelle esibizioni costituiscono il tratto distintivo di ogni produzione in cui appaiono. Particolari trionfi per il Coro sono stati *Guerra e pace* di Prokofiev, *Lady Macbeth dei macelli* di Shostakovich, *Billy Budd* e *Peter Grimes* di Britten, *Boris Godunov* di Mussorgsky, la

Carmen di Bizet e l'*Otello* di Verdi. La loro ultima registrazione, nella produzione di Jonathan Miller diretta da Mark Elder, è uscito per Chandos con il patrocinio della Peter Moores Foundation, come la loro registrazione del amoso "Ciclo del *Ring*" diretti da Sir Reginald Goodall. Altre registrazioni Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation sono *The Carmelites*, *Falstaff*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Rigoletto* (produzione di Jonathan Miller) e *La traviata*.

Apprezzata dalla critica e dal pubblico, l'**Orchestra della English National Opera** ha ricevuto numerosi riconoscimenti prestigiosi, tra cui il Music Award della Royal Philharmonic Society e un premio Olivier per il suo contributo all'opera. L'Orchestra è il fulcro della vita artistica della English National Opera e, oltre al lavoro in teatro presso il London Coliseum, si esibisce anche in concerto; è stata presente al festival di Aldeburgh (*Peter Grimes* e *The Rape of Lucretia*) e a Glastonbury nel 2004 (Atto III della *Valchiria* di Wagner). Molti dei suoi componenti collaborano con il dipartimento di istruzione esterno della compagnia, ENO Baylis. L'Orchestra della ENO compare in numerose registrazioni per la serie Opera in English di Chandos: *The Carmelites*, *Lulu*,

Falstaff, *Otello*, *Ernani*, *Mary Stuart*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Rigoletto*, *La traviata*, *Werther*, e nella registrazione completa del *Ring Cycle* diretta da sir Reginald Goodall.

Sir Charles Mackerras ha studiato presso il Conservatorio di Sydney e si è trasferito in Inghilterra nel 1947. Ha ottenuto una borsa di studio del British Council per proseguire gli studi presso l'Accademia Musicale di Praga. Nel 1947 nasceva il suo appassionato interesse per Janáček, dopo aver ascoltato la *Katá Kabánova* diretta dal grande Václav Talich.

In qualità di vicedirettore d'orchestra a Sadler's Wells nel 1951 Mackerras proponeva la prima esecuzione di *Katá Kabánova* nel mondo anglofono. Il seguito avrebbe presentato *L'affare Makropoulos* e *Da una casa di morti* a Sadler's Wells; avrebbe poi continuato a dirigere le opere di Janáček in allestimenti di grande successo, oltre a un repertorio più tradizionale alla sua nomina a Direttore musicale della English National Opera (1970–77) e in seguito della Welsh National Opera (1987–1992). È stato un pioniere della diffusione della musica di Janáček nelle capitali europee, negli USA e in Australia. Una delle sue opere predilette è *Jenůfa*.

Sir Charles Mackerras ha al suo attivo una lunga collaborazione con la Filarmonica ceca, con cui ha registrato la maggior parte delle opere orchestrali di Janáček oltre a *Katá Kabánova* e *Rusalka* di Dvořák. La sua vasta discografia comprende un premiato ciclo di opere di Janáček con i Wiener Philharmoniker all'inizio degli anni Ottanta. Le registrazioni per Chandos comprendono la versione originale della *Messa glagolitica* di Janáček, *Psalmus Hungaricus* di Kodály e il Concerto per violoncello di Dvořák. Per la serie Opera in English ha registrato *Osud*, *La traviata*, *Werther*, *Julius Caesar*, *Mary Stuart*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Jenůfa*, *The Magic Flute* e *The Bartered Bride*.

Sir Charles Mackerras ha svolto inoltre ricerche approfondite sulla musica del XVIII secolo, soprattutto quella di Handel and Mozart. Ha registrato opere di Mozart e Gilbert e Sullivan oltre a una serie completa delle sinfonie di Mozart, Beethoven e Brahms, numerosi oratori di Handel e sinfonie di Mahler ed Elgar. Attualmente è Principal Guest Conductor della Philharmonia Orchestra, Conductor Laureate della Scottish Chamber Orchestra e Conductor Emeritus della Welsh National Opera e della San Francisco Opera.

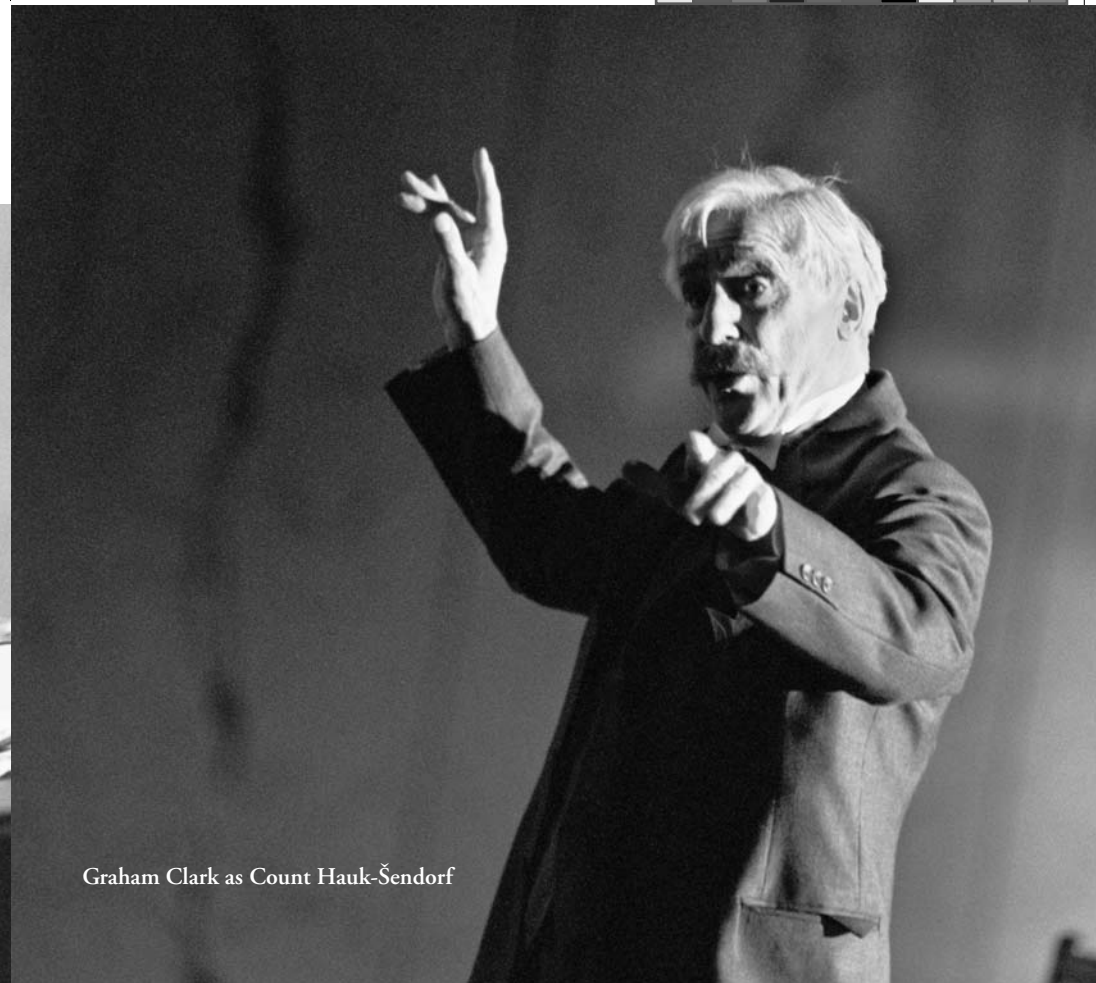


Sir Charles Mackerras ha ricevuto diverse onorificenze, tra cui il CBE nel 1974, seguito dalla nomina a baronetto nel 1979, la Medaglia di Merito della Repubblica Ceca nel

1996 e il titolo di Companion of the Order of Australia nel 1997. Nel 2003 all'elenco delle onorificenze reali britanniche si è aggiunto il Companion of Honour.



Neal Davies as Dr Kolenatý



Graham Clark as Count Hauk-Šendorf



COMPACT DISC ONE

The Makropulos Case

Act I

The Clerk's room at Dr Kolenatý's. A high filing cabinet with numerous pigeon holed arranged alphabetically. Left, the Clerk's table: centre, a double writing table; right, a few armchairs for waiting clients. On the walls various tariffs, notices, a calendar, a telephone. Everywhere documents, law books etc.

¹ Prelude

Vítek

- ² Oh dear, my goodness! Just gone one o'clock. Where can the boss be? Gregor versus Prus. G-G-R... That's it. *(climbs up the ladder)* Gregor versus... Thank God! This is the last of you. Oh dear, my goodness! *(rummages in the file)* Eighteen hundred and twenty-seven, eighteen thirty-two, forty, eighteen forty-seven, only a few years now to its hundredth anniversary. Gregor versus Prus. Pity! Nothing lasts for ever. Vanitas... ashes and dust! *(sits reflectively on the top rung of the ladder)* But of course! It's the gentry. What d'you expect from a baron. A hundred years of lawsuits! Plutocrats! Citizens! Mark my words. You are far too tolerant *(Gregor stands in the doorway unobserved, and listens for a moment.)* of the ancient gentry, men who owe their privileges to kings and tyrants.

Gregor

Bravo citizen Marat!

Vítek

No no! That wasn't Marat.
(climbs down the ladder)
That was Danton. Speech of October the twenty-third, 1792. Please excuse me, sir, if I correct you.

Gregor

Where's our friend the lawyer?

Vítek

He's not returned yet, sir.

Gregor

And the verdict? Have I lost it? Am I ruined?

Vítek

I couldn't tell you. You see, the boss has been in court all morning.

Gregor

Please telephone him at once.

Vítek

Right away.
(speaking into the phone)
Hullo. Doctor Kolenatý. He's left? I'm much obliged. *(hangs up the receiver)*
He's left.

Gregor

And the verdict?

Vítek

I couldn't tell you. When you think back on it, it's thirty years, thirty years we've kept this action going. Then hey presto, you take it to the High Court! Fancy killing off such a fine lawsuit.

Gregor

Nonsense Vítek. I want to end it and win it.

Vítek

Yes, or lose it.

Gregor

Well, if I should lose, then...

Vítek

Then you'd shoot yourself. That's exactly how your father talked.

Gregor

But he did shoot himself.

Vítek

That was because he went bankrupt.

Gregor

Shut up, for God's sake!
(Kristina enters.)

Kristina

- ³ Daddy, she really is wonderful. Daddy, she is so wonderful.

Gregor

Who is?

Vítek

Who is?

Kristina

You must know Marty.

Gregor

Who is she?

Kristina

Emilia Marty! Emilia Marty.

Vítek

My daughter's on the stage you know.

Kristina

O father, father, I'm going to leave the stage. There is no greater singer in all the world. I'm going to leave the stage. I will never go back. I've no talent, none at all. Father. This Marty! She is really, she is really lovely!

Gregor

And what might be her age?

Kristina

Nobody knows it, nobody's found it out.

Vítek

Well, is she thirty?

Kristina

Maybe. And lovely.

Gregor

I shall be at the theatre tonight. I'll look at you there, not at Marty!

Kristina

Then you will be stupid! Where will your eyes be?

Vítek

Oh dear. Oh dear!

Kristina

Not to be seeing Marty!

Vítek

What a chatterbox.

Kristina

If he hasn't seen Marty he shouldn't talk!

(Dr Kolenatý enters.)

Kolenatý

4 Come this way please, if you don't mind.

(Marty appears in the doorway.)

Kristina

Good heavens, it's her. It is Marty. Father, look.

Kolenatý

What can I do for you?

(Vítek goes out on tip toe. Kristina follows.)

Marty

Doctor Kolenatý? I've seen that girl somewhere else before. I want advice about something.

Kolenatý

With pleasure. Please sit down.

Marty

It's a matter concerning the Gregor case.

Gregor

What did you say madam?

Marty

Introduce me.

Kolenatý

Yes, of course Miss Marty, my client, Mr Gregor.

Marty

Really? Really? Then he might just as well stay!
(Kolenatý sits opposite her.)

And so you're the solicitor representing this man Gregor over the legacy of old man Prus.

Kolenatý

You mean Baron Josef Ferdinand Prus, deceased in the year 1827.

Marty

So he's dead then?

Kolenatý

Dead! It's almost a hundred years ago.

Marty

Poor fellow. No one ever told me.

Kolenatý

Indeed, indeed! Is there anything else that I can do for you?

Marty *(stands up)*

Oh don't let me keep you.

Kolenatý *(stands up)*

Pray forgive me! I presumed you'd a reason for calling on me.

Marty *(sits down again and opens a paper)*

Yes. This. Verdict today in the case Gregor versus Prus. Quite a coincidence.

Kolenatý

I wouldn't say so. All the papers have it.

Marty

Briefly, could I trouble you to tell me something about the case?

Kolenatý

Where shall I begin?

Marty

From the beginning.

Kolenatý *(settles down in his armchair and speaks rapidly)*

Well then, about the year 1820 the Prus estates belonged to the half-witted Baron Josef Ferdinand Prus.

Marty

Pepi? What, old Pepi half-witted?

Kolenatý

Well, eccentric perhaps!

Marty

No, unhappy.

Kolenatý

You can't possibly know that.

Marty

And nor can you!

Kolenatý

God knows best. Anyway, Josef Ferdinand Prus who died without issue and intestate in 1827.

Marty

What did he die of?

Kolenatý

Meningitis or something. The property was taken over by his cousin Baron Emmerich Prus Zabrzinski. It consists of several estates of which the largest and the richest was Loukov. And Loukov was claimed by one Ferdinand Gregor, great grandfather of my client in the very same year 1827.

Marty

One moment, why, Ferdinand must have been still quite a boy then.

Kolenatý

Yes, precisely. Student at the Academy in Vienna. His claim to the Loukov estate was based on these facts: firstly, the deceased, a year before he died, had gone to see the director of the Academy, 'hoch persönlich'. And clearly stated that he was handing over the whole estate of Loukov to be held in trust for the aforementioned Gregor. Who, if and when he came of age, should get full ownership *item prosecundo*: during the lifetime of the deceased, the aforementioned Gregor used to receive the

revenues from the estate together with the title:

Besitzer, und Eigentümer.

Marty

For ev'rything was all in order then.

Kolenatý

Not so fast please. Against this Baron Emmerich Prus raised the objection that there was no written statement or will to prove the endowment, that in point of fact, the deceased while on his deathbed made a verbal arrangement in favour of some other person.

Marty

That is quite untrue.

Kolenatý

That's just the problem.

Marty

That is quite impossible.

Kolenatý

That's just the problem.
(*climbs up the ladder, takes out the Gregor file, sits down on the last rung and rapidly turns over papers*)
Just let me read you this: 'While dying, in a high fever, the Baron several times declared that the estate of Loukov should belong to one Gregor Mach'. (*closes and returns file*) Please to note Mach is a surname. (*remains sitting on the ladder*)

Marty

All of this is utter nonsense, utter nonsense! Pepi must have been meaning Gregor, Ferdinand Gregor!

Kolenatý

Littera scripta valet. What's written is written. Meanwhile another cousin came forward. He'd managed to find someone who was actually called Gregor Mach.

Marty

Wait a bit. Wait a bit, he was his son of course. Ferdi of course was Pepi's son! Ferdi of course was Pepi's son.

Kolenatý

Who? Whose son? Pepi's son?

Gregor

Pepi's son?

Kolenatý

And who was the boy's mother?

Marty

Mother? His mother's name was Ellian MacGregor, she was a singer at the opera.

Gregor

What d'you say her name was?

Marty

It's a Scottish name, MacGregor.

Gregor

There you are, doctor! MacGregor. Not Gregor Mach.

Kolenatý

Ah, but why then wasn't her son also called MacGregor?

Gregor

Can't you see? Out of respect for his mother. Ferdi, you see, never knew his mother.

Kolenatý

I see. Have you any proof of this?

Marty

I don't know. Go on.

Kolenatý

I'll go on. Ever since then this case has continued thro' several generations. Pruses, Gregors, on and on, assisted by the doctors Kolenatý. And thanks to the present one this Gregor will lose his case once for all, and as it so happens, this very day. (*Kolenatý scribbles excitedly on the document.*) That's the whole story. Have you any more questions?

Marty

Yes. Just what do you require if you're to win the case.

Kolenatý

One thing. A valid will.

Marty

And can't you find one anywhere?

Kolenatý

Nowhere: there isn't one.

Marty

That is awkward.

Kolenatý

Very awkward.

(*stands up*)

Have you any more questions?

Marty

Who owns the house where old man Pepi lived?

Kolenatý

My client's opponent Jaroslav Prus.

Marty

Now listen to me. (*mysteriously*) In Pepi's house there used to be a cupboard like that. Every drawer had the number of a year marked on it.

Gregor

Archives.

Kolenatý

Filing cabinet.

Marty

One of the drawers was marked with the year eighteen hundred and sixteen. Well now, that was the year that Pepi got to know Ellian MacGregor. And in that drawer he kept the love letters sent to him by Ellian .

Kolenatý (*sits*)

How d'you know that?

Marty

Never mind about that. There are letters from his agents, in fact piles of old documents. Couldn't you go and look through them?

Kolenatý

Certainly. Of course, if the owner permits.

Marty

And suppose he doesn't?

Kolenatý

That's that then!

Marty

You must get that drawer, no matter how you do it.

Kolenatý

Yes, of course, we'll go at midnight with false keys and rope ladders. Can't you see us, can't you see us! Miss Marty, you have the strangest ideas about lawyers.

Marty (*anxiously*)

But you simply must get hold of it. There are those letters there and you will find among them a yellow envelope, in it Pepi's last will and testament duly signed and sealed.

Kolenatý (*stands up*)

In heaven's name, how d'you know that? Please.

Gregor (*jumps up*)

Can you be certain?

Kolenatý

What's in it, what's it like?

Marty

In it Pepi leaves the whole estate of Loukov to his illegitimate son, Ferdi.

Kolenatý

Literally?

Marty

That's right.

Kolenatý

And is the envelope sealed?

Marty

Of course.

Kolenatý

With Josef Prus's own deal?

Marty

Oh yes.

Kolenatý

I'm much obliged. (*sits*) You must think we are just children!

Marty

So you don't believe me?

Gregor

Yes, I do.

Kolenatý

Stuff and nonsense.

Gregor

You sit there are you dare to tell me.

Kolenatý

Come to your senses, man! There's an envelope duly closed and sealed. How could anyone know what's inside?

Gregor
I trust her.

Kolenatý
Childish nonsense! Miss Marty, you have a genius for making up fairy tales.

Gregor
I trust her. Let me tell you, doctor. I believe her, ev'ry syllable. So you'll please go at once to Pepi's house.

Kolenatý
You know I couldn't do that.

Gregor
Or I shall get another lawyer, the first one I find in the directory. (*goes to the telephone and looks through the directory. Kolenatý goes up to him.*)

Kolenatý
As you please.

Gregor
Doctor Abrahams.

Kolenatý
Surely not that man.

Gregor (*at the telephone*)
This is Gregor!

Kolenatý (*drags the telephone away from him*)
Wait a moment. We're friends, aren't we? I'll go.

Gregor
To Pepi's house?

Kolenatý
To the Devil. (*hurries off*)

Gregor
5 Gone at last!

Marty
Good for you Gregor!

Gregor
Gone at last.

Marty
Is he really then so stupid?

Gregor
Practical. Not used to reckoning with miracles! I've always looked for miracles and then you appeared. You must permit me to thank you for it.

Marty
Pray don't mention it.

Gregor
Strange but I'm positive that he will find the will

there! Strange this wonderful feeling you give me. Is it because you're so wondrously lovely, lovely?

Marty
How old are you?

Gregor
Thirty-four. Ever since I was a child, I determined I would get those millions. I was crazy for them. I simply couldn't help it, and this very day if you'd not appeared I would have killed myself.

Marty
Debts then?

Gregor
Yes. I won't try to hide the fact... that my future was desperate. And then suddenly you appeared. God knows where from, famous, wonderful, breathing mystery. Why d'you laugh at me?

Marty
No. Silly boy.

Gregor
Speak to me I beg you, tell me! Tell me ev'rything. Can't you tell me?

Marty
Don't want to.

Gregor
You knew about those letters? You knew about the old man's will. Where from? Since when? Who told you all about it? Who could know about it? Understand that, that I must know what's behind it.

Marty
A miracle.

Gregor
Yes, a miracle. But ev'ry miracle must have an explanation. Otherwise we cannot bear it. Why did you come here? What is your reason for helping me? Why especially me? What can possibly concern you?

Marty
That is my affair.

Gregor
Mine also. Oh Miss Marty tell me, if it's to you I owe my future, my fortune, even my life. What can I offer you?

Marty
What d'you mean by that?

Gregor
What can I offer you?



Marty (*bursting with indignation*)
I see. Well upon my word! This little fellow's
off'ring me money!

Gregor (*taken aback*)
Forgive me!

Marty
He'd give it all away, this little fellow.
(*goes to the window and looks out*)

Gregor
Am I a child to be talked to like this?

Marty
Well?

Gregor
It's quite intolerable, you make me feel like I'm
a little boy.

Marty (*turns from the window*)
What is your name?

Gregor
Pardon?

Marty
What do they call you?

Gregor
Gregor.

Marty
What?

Gregor
MacGregor.

Marty
Christian name, stupid!

Gregor
Albert.

Marty
I suppose your mama calls you Bertie, eh?

Gregor
That's right. But my mother's been dead for some
time now.

Marty
Bah! Bah! All of them go the same way.

Gregor
Now tell me about Ellian MacGregor.

Marty
At last! About time you thought of asking.

Gregor
Can you tell me anything? Who was she?

Marty
A famous prima donna.

Gregor
And was she beautiful?

Marty
Gorgeous.

Gregor
Was she in love with my great grandfather?

Marty
Yes perhaps. But in her own way.

Gregor
When did she die?

Marty
I don't know. (*tired*) That's enough Bertie. Some
other time please.

Gregor (*goes nearer to her*)
[6] Emilia.

Marty
I am not Emilia to you.

Gregor
What am I to you then? Please don't humiliate
me so! Please don't torment me so! Just suppose
that I owed you nothing, nothing at all. Suppose
you were just a lovely woman and you had
dazzled someone. Listen then, one thing I'd like

to tell you. I never saw you before. (*pleadingly*)
No, No, please don't laugh at me.

Marty
I am not laughing, don't be crazy.

Gregor
I am crazy. Never before have I been so crazy.
When you speak it excites me, like a summons
to battle. Have you ever seen flowing blood? It
drives men mad, so they can't account for their
actions. And you at the first glance I knew for
certain. In you there's something terrible. Have
you lived a full life. Tell me.

Marty
Stop this nonsense.

Gregor
Why is it no one's ever killed you yet?

Marty
Stop this nonsense!

Gregor
I've so much to say to you. You treated me so
harshly, that sends a man off his balance. I feel
a hot wind searing, scorching. What is it? Men
sense it and turn at bay, just like wild beasts. You
arouse something, something terrible. Were you
never told that? (*goes nearer to her*) Emilia, you
surely know that you are lovely!

Marty (*wearily*)
Look! Lovely!

(*A light shines.*)

Gregor
This is wonderful. You're lovely.

Marty (*In the light she appears old.*)
Leave me! Please go Bertie.

Gregor
Terribly lovely!

Marty
D'you know, Bertie, (*The light goes out.*) there's something you could give me.

Gregor (*lifts his hood*)
What?

Marty
You yourself offered it. D'you know what I'd like?

Gregor
You can have anything.

Marty
Listen, Bertie. D'you know Greek?

Gregor
No!

Marty
Well then, this can be no use to you. Give me the Greek document.

Gregor
Which one?

Marty
The one that Ferdi had – you know, your great grandfather. Can I have it?

Gregor
I've never heard of it.

Marty
Nonsense, surely you know! In heav'n's name, Bertie. Surely you must know.

Gregor (*stands up*)
I don't. I don't.

Marty (*stands up abruptly*)
Liar! You must know! Idiot. I must get it back. D'you hear me? Find it!

Gregor
Tell me where it is.

Marty
Look for it. Bring it here! I came here to get it. I came here to get it.

Gregor
Emilia!

Marty
Is it with Prus? Get it from him. Call me a taxi.

[7] Kolenatý (*enters quickly followed by Prus*)
Found it. We've found it. (*kneels before Emilia*) Please forgive me! A thousand apologies! I'm just a silly old fool!

Marty
So it was there?

Kolenatý
You know ev'rything! It was there.

Gregor
What was?

Kolenatý
The will was there, the letters too. And something else – a document.

Prus (*offering Gregor his hand*)
Congratulations.

Kolenatý
In Greek.

Prus
We've found the missing will.

(*Kolenatý gets up.*)

Prus (*to Kolenatý*)
Introduce me!

Kolenatý
Our case is established.

Prus
Introduce me! Where are the documents? The documents.

Kolenatý
Gregor wins it. Which ones?

Marty
Those from Ellian.

Prus
They're with me still, but Mister Gregor need have no fear.

Kolenatý
Miss Marty, Baron Prus. Our archenemy.

Marty (*vehemently*)
Gregor's giving them to me.

Prus
But there's just one little thing that is missing still.

Marty
What can be missing?

Prus
We shall need some proof that this son Ferdinand was really the son of Baron Prus.

Marty
Some proof in writing.

Prus
Nothing less.

Marty
All right doctor. I'll give you something in the morning.

Kolenatý
Really? D'you carry these things around with you?

Marty (*sharply*)
Does that surprise you, why?

Kolenatý
Gregor, get me a number, two, O, double seven, one.

Gregor (*at the telephone*)
That's Doctor Abrahams, why?

Kolenatý
It seems you need him.

Act II

The stage of a large theatre, empty, in some disorder from the previous night's performance. A few props, rolled up scenery, lighting equipment. The whole bare and forlorn backstage appearance. In the foreground, a stage throne on a platform.

Cleaner
[8] Did you ever see such flowers?

Stage Hand
Never did.

Cleaner
Never in my life have I heard anything like it. Shouting, stamping! It's a wonder that the roof didn't collapse. Really mad they were. Nothing would stop them. Fifty curtains, yes, at least fifty... all for Marty.

Stage Hand
Listen here now. listen here now. Women like her must have lots of money.

Cleaner
Good gracious! I should say so!

Stage Hand
Funny thing, but when she starts to sing I go shiv'ry all over.

Cleaner
I don't mind admitting it. I cried like a baby.

Prus (*entering*)
Where can I find Miss Marty?

Cleaner
She'll be with the manager, sir. But she's bound to come this way; she's left some things in her dressing room.

Prus
Very well. I'll wait. (*steps to the side*)

Cleaner
That's the fifth one. Just like a bloody doctor's surgery.

Stage Hand
One thing I would like to know. Does a woman of her sort have many lovers?

Cleaner
Oh yes, oh yes, oh I should say so indeed.

Stage Hand
Cor blimey! She's not quite my line of business.

Cleaner
Why get so worked up about it? She ain't exactly your type.

(*The Cleaner goes off the other side. Kristina enters.*)

Kristina
[9] Janek, come on. No one here will see us.

Janek (*follows her*)
No one who will throw me out here?

Kristina
Oh dear, Janek. I'm so unhappy.

Janek (*tries to kiss her*)
Why?

Kristina
No, no kissing! No more of that. I've other things to think about.

Janek
Oh, but Krista!

Kristina
I say... isn't Marty wonderful? D'you think I'll make a singer? I must give up all my life to it, understand? And only think of the theatre. Oh Janek, (*sits on the throne*) it's so dreadful. All I do is think of you all day long, all day long! (*Janek tries to kiss her.*) Oh dear, what a wretch you are!

Janek
Oh, if you only knew, Krista, I spend all my time thinking of you alone.

Kristina

That's all right, you're not a singer. I've got to think of my voice. I must study hard, and I'm not supposed to talk much. So darling, this is my decision. Janek! Everything is over now, over between us! We shall see each other only once a day.

Janek

But...

Kristina

In between whiles, we must be like perfect strangers the whole day long. Come here, silly. Plenty of room for you too. D'you think there is anyone she is in love with?

Janek (*sits by her on the throne*)

Who?

Kristina

I mean Marty.

Janek

Yes, it's always her.

Kristina

All the men rave about Marty. One look and they lose their heads.

Janek

Don't talk such nonsense!

Kristina

Truly! Truly! I'm afraid of her – she frightens me.

Janek

Kristina! (*steals a kiss*)

Kristina

Oh Janek.

Prus (*coming forward a little*)

I'm not looking.

Janek (*jumps up*)

Father!

(*Janek hurries Kristina off into the wings.*)

Prus

No need to run away! (*comes nearer*)

Marty (*behind the scenes*)

What, another? (*entering*) And another? (*speaking in the wings*) No more today gentlemen. (*sees Prus*) What, still another?

Prus

No, of course not, Miss Marty. Quite other business.

Marty (*sits on the throne and looks at Janek*)

Is that your son?

Prus

It is. Come here, Janek.

Marty

Come closer, Janek, let me see you. Were you here tonight?

Janek

Yes, ma'am.

Marty

Did you like my performance?

Janek

Yes, ma'am.

Marty

Don't you ever say anything but just yes ma'am?

Janek

Yes, ma'am.

Marty

Your son is stupid.

Prus

I am ashamed of him.

(*Gregor enters with a bouquet, followed by Vitek.*)

Marty

Ah Bertie!

Gregor

These are for you.

Marty

Give it me. (*takes the bouquet*) Look at this. (*removes a small box from it*) You can take it back! How can you afford presents for ladies? (*gives him back the box. Smells the flowers and throws them on the ground*) What did it cost, you idiot? You've been borrowing again. Money lenders, eh? (*rummages in her handbag and takes out a handful of money*) Here! I'd like to shake some sense into you.

Gregor (*flaring up*)

Money!

Prus (*to Gregor*)

For God's sake stop this fooling.

Marty

You behave in the strangest way.

Gregor (*snatches the money away from her and gives it to Vitek*)

Put that down to Miss Marty's account.

Marty (*to Vitek*)

No, his account.

Vitek

Very good ma'am.

Marty (*to Vitek*)

Were you here tonight? Did you like my performance?

Vitek

My goodness, oh yes! Finer than Strada!

Marty (*violently*)

So you heard la Strada? She'd no voice at all. Thin and shrill as a whistle, nearly always out of tune too!

Vitek

Oh excuse me, she's been dead at least a hundred years now.

Marty

Of course, I should know that!

Kristina

Janek, let's get out of here.

Gregor

Shall I collect some more people so you can be rude to them as well.

Marty

No, don't bother!

Kristina

Janek, let's get out of here!

Marty

They'll come anyway.
(*She looks at Janek and Kristina who are holding hands. She bursts into laughter.*)

Ha, ha, ha, look at those two, what a pair! Have they been in paradise yet?

Vitek

What d'you mean please?

Marty

Have they been to bed yet?

Vitek

Good heavens Krista, surely there's no truth in it.

Kristina

Father, how can you...

Marty

That's enough girl. If you haven't then you will. And really I assure you it's not worth it.

Prus

Then what do you think is worth it?

Marty (*coldly*)

Nothing! Nothing at all!

(*Hauk enters with a bouquet.*)

Hauk

¹⁰ Excuse me. Excuse me, may I... (*falls on his knees sobbing*) O. Pardon me. May I? (*kneels down in front of the throne*) Oh, if you only knew. (*sobbing*) Oh, you are so like... you're so like her! It's her voice, her eyes, her face. Oh, you're the image of her! Th' image of her! (*sobbing*) Oh, oh, oh, oh.

Marty

Who's this old idiot?

Hauk (*standing up*)

I'm a little mad you see.

Prus

Soft'ning of the brain.

Hauk

Yes, yes, Hauk, idiot.

Marty

Oh! Oh!

Hauk

You see we were lovers, she and I, it must must be fifty years ago, eighteen hundred and seventy.

Marty

That's right.

Hauk

She was a gipsy woman, 'chula negra' so they called her, down there faraway in Andalusia. How the men all raved about her! Vaya Gitana! Oh I was so happy there. Oh so happy there. Ever since then I've lived in a sort of daze, do you understand? Since then my life seems like a never-ending dream. But what do you care, she died so long ago?

Marty

Died? But what nonsense! Maxi! (*bends down*) Kiss me!

Hauk

Eugenia! (*begins to cry*)

Marty

Kiss me love!

Hauk

What's that?

Marty

Besa me, besa, besa me!

Hauk

Jesús milveces.

Marty

Animal un besito!



Hauk (*kisses her*)

Eugenia, moza negra querida carisima!

Marty

Chite tonto! Quita! Fuera!

Hauk

Es ella, es ella, Gitana en diablada! Ella es ella, Gitana en diablada! (*Hauk bows low to Prus and turns to go.*) Adios Eugenia! (*sobbing*) O, O! (*He goes.*)

Marty (*harshly*)

¹¹ And the next! Is that the lot?

Vitek

No, please! Would you oblige me by signing this photograph? For my daughter Kristina.

Marty

How absurd.

Kristina

Janek, come!...

Marty

Why are you two quarrelling?

Kristina

Come!

(*Marty sighs.*)

Janek

It was just... (*He looks fixedly at Marty.*)

Marty

But I'll do it for Kristina.

Vitek (*bows*)

A thousand thanks ma'am. (*goes off with Kristina*)

Marty

Good day to you! Now leave me, all of you leave me! No more today gentlemen,

Prus (*bows*)

Your most unwilling servant!

Marty (*to Prus*)

Not you! So it seems this Janek has lost his tongue! He'd better go!

(*Janek goes.*)

Marty (*to Gregor*)

Well and what for you?

Gregor

Let me stay a moment!

Marty

I've got no time for you now. Leave me now Bertie, I beg you! Go dearest. Go now! You can come back later!

Gregor (*very formally*)

Very well.

(*Gregor bows to Prus and goes.*)

Marty

Gone at last.

Prus

¹² Allow me to ask you this question.

(*Marty nods silently. They bow, sit down.*)

Have you taken some special int'rest in the person of Mister Gregor?

Marty

No.

Prus

Does it mean so much to you that he should win this case?

Marty

No.

Prus

Thank you, Madam. I won't ask you how you knew what things there were locked in the cupboards in my own house. That is evidently your secret.

Marty

Yes, surely.

Prus

You knew that those particular letters were there. And you knew that Pepi's will was there too, even though it's sealed up! Did you know that there is something else there?

Marty (*stands up, agitated*)

What's that? Did you find something else there? Tell me, please, what is it?

Prus

I don't know. It is only an old document. What d'you know about her, about the woman you call Ellian MacGregor?

Marty

You have got her letters.

Prus

Maybe you know something more still about that harlot.

Marty (*starting up*)

How dare you. How dare you say that? By what right do you dare say that?

Prus

But my dear lady, what is this? What interests you in this thoroughly immoral woman who lived so long ago?

Marty

Nothing. Nothing at all! (*sits*) So she was just a harlot.

Prus

You know last night I read those letters through. Shockingly passionate type, that woman.

Marty (*sadly*)

You shouldn't have read them.

Prus

They contain allusions to strange practices, intimate things. I am no novice Miss Marty, but I have to admit that the most accomplished rake hasn't got as much experience in certain matters as this lady.

Marty

What you mean is, as this harlot?

Prus

Now what do you think was the real name of this Ellian?

Marty

Ellian MacGregor as you see from the letters.

Prus

Not so, not so! There it's only E.M. No more.

Marty

That obviously stands for Ellian MacGregor.

Prus

It could stand just as well for Emilia Marty, Eugenia Montez, or thousands of others.

Marty

But it is Ellian MacGregor.

Prus

Or rather, Elina Makropulos, nationality Greek.

Marty (*raising her head*)

Damn you for that.

Prus

So then you knew it?

Marty (*furious*)

In the devil's name, how d'you know that?

Prus

Very simple. Pepi's will refers to a certain Ferdinand born at Loukov on November the twentieth 1816, so I looked up the parish register. (*takes out a notebook and reads*) *Nomen infantis* Ferdinand Makropulos male child illegitimate, father's name not given, mother, Elina Makropulos.

Marty

Nothing else?

Prus

That's plenty, that's plenty.

Marty

O, my poor Bertie! So the Loukov estate remains yours, eh?

Prus

Just as long as no Mister Makropulos comes to claim it.

Marty

And if no Mister Makropulos comes to claim it?

Prus

Then I'll keep that envelope closed and sealed, and no one will ever get it.

Marty

Then he'll come along, you will see!

Prus

Where d'you keep him? In your trunk? What a shame that it isn't true.

Marty (*stands up*)

So you think I'm lying? (*He kisses her hand. Prus turns to go.*) One moment. What is your price for that envelope?

(*Prus turns back.*)

Prus

Price indeed! (*bows and goes*)

(*Marty sits motionless with eyes closed. Gregor enters and remains standing in silence.*)

Marty

¹³ Is that you Bertie?

Gregor

Why do you lie there eyes tight shut? You look like a woman who is suffering. What's the matter?

Marty

I'm just tired. Speak softly.

Gregor (*gets closer to her*)

Softly. Then I warn you, you won't like what I speak softly! Do you hear Emilia, you won't like what I speak softly! I'm in love with you. Why are you laughing? Yes, I'm in love with you.

Marty

I'm cold. Bertie.

Gregor

Are you sleeping?

Marty

Freezing.

Gregor

Emilia I warn you! You treat me harshly, even so, even so that can make me happy. You horrify me, even so that can make me happy. I'd like to strangle you when you humiliate me. I'd like... Emilia, don't make me kill you! In you there's something that repels me. You're base, evil, terrible. A beast without feeling.

Marty

Not so, Bertie, not so!

Gregor

Yes. Nothing seems to move you. You are cold as steel. As if you'd risen from the grave. It's perversity loving you. And yet I love you so, I'd tear the flesh from my body.

Marty

How do you like the name Makropulos?

Gregor

Don't provoke me! I love you although you destroy me Emilia!

Marty

Then go at once, run to doctor Kolenatý, tell him I must have that letter back. The one I sent him.

Gregor

It's a forgery then?

Marty

No, it's not, I swear it. Bertie, I swear it. But we must have another one in the name Makropulos.

Gregor

Then will you make love to me?

Marty

Never, understand, never!

Gregor (*sits*)

Then I'll kill you Emilia!

Marty

Stupid fool. See that, that scar on my throat? He was another who said he'd kill me, and if I stripped myself naked in front of you then you could see all my other souvenirs! Why is it men feel that they must kill me?

Gregor

I'm in love with you!

Marty

Then kill yourself! If only you knew that I am past all caring. (*sadly*) If only you knew.

Gregor

What is it?

Marty (*wrings her hands*)

Unhappy, unhappy Elina!

Gregor

Come, Emilia, let's go away. No one has ever loved you as much as I. D'you hear me? (*Marty snores regularly and audibly*) Emilia? (*excitedly*) What is this? Sleeping like a drunkard. Why do you make me feel so foolish? Emilia, it is I! (*gets closer to her*) There's no one else here.

Cleaner (*standing a little distance away, coughs warmly and severely*)

Hm, hm, hm, hm, hm.

Gregor (*starting up*)

What's that? Oh, it's you! Madam's gone to sleep. Don't wake her up! (*kisses Emilia's hand and runs off*)

(*The Cleaner approaches Emilia and gazes at her silently.*)

Cleaner

Can't help feeling sorry for her. (*goes off*)

(*Janek enters from behind the scenes, stops about ten paces from Emilia and gazes at her as if thunderstruck.*)

Marty (*waking up*)

Is that you, Bertie?

Janek

No, only me, only Janek.

Marty

Janek? Come here, Janek! Would you do something to help me?

Janek

Oh yes, oh yes.

Marty

Something big, Janek, something heroic? And what would you ask for in return, eh?

Janek

Oh, nothing!

Marty

Come closer! D'you know you're being very nice to me? Listen. In your father's house there's an old document, and on it this is written! 'To be handed to my son Ferdinand.' It's with Ellian's letters in that drawer. Compris?

Janek

Oh yes, yes indeed ma'am.

Marty

Bring it to me here.

Janek

Will father give me it?

Marty

Oh no. You will have to take it!

Janek

I couldn't!

Marty

Little boy's afraid of daddy.

Janek

I'm not afraid, but ma'am, ma'am.

Marty

Janek, on my word of honour it's just a keepsake of no value. I'd like so much to have it.

Janek

I will try and get it.

Prus (*enters from the shadow*)

I wouldn't bother, Janek.

Janek

Father, you here again.

Prus

Get out! Get out!

(*Janek goes off, ashamed.*)

Well Miss Marty. I thought he was prowling round the theatre for Kristina.

Marty

And what were you prowling round the theatre for?

Prus

Waiting for you.

Marty (*goes up close to him*)

Well then give me that document.

Prus

It's not mine to give.

Marty

Please give it to me.

Prus

But when? But when?

Marty

Well, come on.

Prus

Agreed.

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act III

A room in a hotel. Left, a window; right, a door to the passage; centre, the entrance to Emilia's bedroom which is separated by transparent hangings. Through the hangings are seen movements of people dressing.

(*Marty enters from the bedroom in a peignoir.*

Behind her Prus in a dinner jacket without a collar.

Prus sits silently on the right. Emilia goes to the window, draws the blind.)

Marty (*turns from the window*)

1 Well? D'you hear me? Give me the document.

(*Prus silently draws a pocket book from his breast pocket and takes a paper out. He throws it, without a word, on the table. Marty takes the envelope and carries it to the dressing table. She sits and lights a small lamp and examines the seal on the envelope. She hesitates then quickly tears the envelope open with a hairpin, and takes out a yellow faded manuscript.*)

That's it. (*folds the paper and hides it in her bosom*)

Prus

You have defrauded me.

Marty

You've had what you wanted.

Prus

You have defrauded me. Frigid as ice. Like embracing a dead thing. (*shudders*) That's what I get for stealing documents. Fine reward that was.

Marty

Do you regret you gave me the document?

Prus

Yes, I should have kept it. I feel like a thief.

Ugh! Ugh!

Marty (*stands up*)

Do you want to spit in my face then?

Prus

No, in my own!

Marty

Well, please yourself then.

(*a knock at the door. A Chambermaid enters in night dress and petticoat, out of breath.*)

Marty

Who's that?

(*Prus turns round.*)

Chambermaid

If you please, madam, have you seen a Mister Prus?

Prus

What's that?

Chambermaid

Mister Prus's servant's waiting outside, says he's got to see him, says he's something for him.



Prus

How on earth did he know? He must wait.
No, stay here. (*goes into the bedroom*)

Chambermaid

My goodness!
(*Marty sits at the dressing table.*)

I was that scared! There was the servant, all of
a heap like, couldn't get a word out. Something
surely must be wrong, madam.

Marty

Stop, you're pulling.

Chambermaid

And pale too as a sheet, the poor chap.

Prus (*enters hurriedly from the bedroom with collar
and tie*)

Excuse me. (*goes off*)

Chambermaid (*brushing her hair*)

He's a real swell gent, eh? You should have seen
him, the poor chap, all of a tremble.

Marty

Tell them to send up an omelette. (*yawns*)
What is the time now?

Chambermaid

He'd a letter he was holding or something.
Seven o'clock.

Marty

Turn out the light and be quiet.

Chambermaid

His lips too, blue and swollen, the poor chap.
I thought to myself, he's poorly. And crying too,
just like a little baby.

Marty

You stupid girl, you're tearing my hair out.
Give me the comb!

Chambermaid

It's because my hands are shaking.

Marty

Just look there, see how you've torn my hair out.

Chambermaid

Something quite awful has happened.

(*Prus returns from the passage with an opened letter
which he handles mechanically.*)

Prus (*hoarsely*)

Send the girl away. (*gropes for a chair and sits*)

Marty

Go, get out. (*chambermaid goes out*)

Prus

Oh, so that's why he did it. (*sobbing*)
Poor wretched Janek!

(*Marty takes the comb and does her hair.*)

My only son! 'Father, be happy, as for me...' (*stands up*) What are you doing there?

Marty (*has hairpins in her hair*)

Doing my hair.

Prus

Perhaps you haven't understood. Janek was in
love with you! Killed himself for your sake!

Marty

Pooh, lots of people kill themselves.

Prus

And you're just doing your hair?

Marty

Would you like my hair untidy?

Prus

Dead and it's your fault!

Marty

Well, how can I help it?

Prus

You killed him.

Marty

Your fault also. So I must tear my hair out?

Prus

Quiet, or I'll...
(*a knock at the door*)
(*collides with Hauk at the door*) Idiot!

Marty

^[2] Buenos dias Maxi! Why so early?

Hauk

Pst, pst. Pst, pst. Get dressed quickly Eugenia,
we're going.

Marty

Where?

Hauk

Hi, hi, hi. Back to Spain.

Marty

Are you mad?

Hauk

I've not told my wife about it. I'm not going back
to her. D'you see what I've brought with me? All
Matilda's jewellery. Understand please, she's my
wife, my poor Matilda, she's old.

Marty

Si, si, señor.

Hauk

It's dreadful to be old! But you have not grown

older. Did you know that madmen live to a ripe old age. I shall live a long time too! As long as any man can make love still life is worth living. Gipsy will you come with me?

Marty
Yes, I'll come. (*begins to pack*)

(*a knock at the door*)

Chambermaid
Excuse me madam, (*thrusting her head in*) you're wanted.

Marty (*astonished*)
Visitors at this hour.
(*enter Gregor, Dr Kolenatý, Vítek, Kristina, Prus and a doctor*)
Allow me to inform you gentlemen, I'm just leaving, just leaving.

Hauk
Now they've got me.

Kolenatý
Leaving! Really! I shouldn't do that.

(*The doctor leads Hauk off.*)

Hauk
Chi, chi, chi!

Kolenatý
If you cooperate then we won't have to call in the...

Marty
The police?
(*Kolenatý offers her a chair.*) Do you want to question me?

Kolenatý
No, Miss Marty, just have a nice friendly chat with you! Did you sign this photograph for Mister Vítek's daughter? Is that your signature?

Marty
Yes.

Kolenatý
Excellent! May I ask you now, did you send me yesterday this missing document? Dated eighteen hundred and thirty-six? You admit that?

Marty
Yes.

Kolenatý
But the ink in which it's written is fresh and smears still. Don't you know what that must mean? Eh?

Marty
And how should I know?

Kolenatý
It's a forgery!

Marty
I swear it, that was written by Ellian MacGregor!

Kolenatý
When?

Marty
Oh, that doesn't matter.

Kolenatý
It does matter, does matter. Now when did Ellian MacGregor die?

Marty
Get out and leave me! I won't answer another question.

Gregor
Then we shall have to look through all your belongings.

Marty
Stop that! Keep your hands off. (*opens the drawer of the dressing table*)

Gregor (*jumps towards her and wrenches a revolver*)
A pistol!
(*pushing Kristina in front of Emilia*)

Before you try that, look at poor Krista, look at her straight in the eye. Do you know what's happened?

Marty
Janek!

Gregor
And d'you know why? That young man is on your conscience!

Marty
Pah! So that's why you came here? One thing at a time, please. First I'll get dressed and then I'll have my breakfast. (*runs into the bedroom*)

(*They all start going through her trunk. Gregor pulls out a seal.*)

Gregor
[3] The seal and th'initials E.M. as in the letters from Ellian MacGregor.

Vítek
Look, a medallion.

Kolenatý
What's that?

Vítek
With the mad man's crest on it.

Kolenatý

Eugenia Montez, Elsa Müller, eighteen ninety-nine. Ellian MacGregor, Ekaterina Myskina.

Vítek

Always E.M.

Kolenatý

Here we are: 'Meine Liebste Ellian.'

Prus

Not Elina.

Kolenatý

Plain enough Ellian MacGregor, Vienna. Vítek, run and fetch my gown.

Vítek

Yes, at once, sir. (*Vítek goes out.*)

(*Kristina bursts out crying.*)

Kolenatý

Stop this silly childish wailing.

Prus

Let me see that document! This document is genuine, written by a Greek woman, Elina Makropulos.

Kolenatý

Oh, but you know it was written by...

Prus

No doubt, by Elina Makropulos.

Kolenatý

This is crazy!

(*Vítek returns with the lawyer's gown.*)

Prus

It's the self-same handwriting as in those love letters.

Kolenatý (*to Vítek who goes into the bedroom*)

Vítek, call her in now!

(*Vítek brings in Emilia, elaborately dressed, with a bottle and a glass in her hand, from which she drinks.*)

Vítek

She's been drinking whisky.

Marty (*enters tipsy, leans against the wall*)

Let me be; this is my medicine.

Kolenatý (*folds his gown*)

She's drunk. Let me have the bottle!

Marty

No! Hands off! (*clasps the bottle to her bosom*)
Or I'll tell you nothing! (*to Kolenatý*) You look like the undertaker.

Kolenatý

What's your name, madam?

Marty

Name? Elina Makropulos.

Kolenatý

Where were you born?

Marty

In Crete.

Kolenatý

And your age, ma'am?

Marty

How old do you think?

Kristina

Over forty.

Marty (*puts her tongue out at her*)

Bitch!

Kolenatý

Your date of birth?

Marty

Fifteen hundred and eighty-five.

Kolenatý

Really. Stop this silly fooling!

Marty

That makes me three hundred and thirty-five.

Kolenatý

Who was your father?

Marty

Hieronymus Makropulos, private physician to Emperor Rudolf the Second.

Kolenatý

No more, I've had quite enough!

Prus

Will you tell us your real name?

Marty

Elina Makropulos.

Prus

Are you related to that Elina Makropulos, who was the mistress of Josef Prus?

Marty

She and I are one!

Prus

How so?

Marty

I lived for many years as Pepi Prus's mistress. And the child that we had, that was Gregor.



Gregor
And Ellian MacGregor?

Marty
She and I are one.

Gregor
Are you mad?

Marty
I am your great great great great great great grandmother. Ferdi, he was my son.

Gregor
Which Ferdi?

Marty
Why of course, Ferdinand Gregor. But in the register I'd no option but to give his real name.

Kolenatý
Oh dear! Oh dear!

Marty
Ferdinand Makropulos.

Kolenatý
And when were you born.

Marty
O Christos Soter, God give me patience! Fifteen hundred and eighty-five. I was also Ekaterina

Myskina and Elsa Müller. How could you live for three hundred years and never change your name? Three hundred years?

Prus
And how on earth did you know the will was in that envelope?

Marty
Before he sealed it Pepi showed it me, asked me to tell that young fool of a Ferdi that the will was inside it.

Prus
And why didn't you tell him then?

Marty
What the hell do I care, h-hi-hi-hi. All those bastards.

Kolenatý
That's not ladylike.

Marty
Ladylike, ladylike! For a long time past now I've not been a lady. Nobody drinking? Mother of God, my mouth's so dry, my head burns!

Prus
You wrote these letters then yourself?

Marty
I did. Yes, I used to tell Pepi everything. Then you see I loved him. Why yes, I really loved him. So I sent him the formula of Makropulos.

Prus
What was that?

Kolenatý
What was that?

Gregor
What was that you lent him?

Vítek
What was that?

Marty
Of Makropulos. He begged so hard for it. (*to Prus*) The paper you've just returned me, the one addressed to his son, Ferdinand. Pepi thought of trying it, promised that he'd return it. And then he went and put it with that will of his! Thinking that he'd make me come back and... and... and I came back at last. I had to get that paper that gives a man three hundred years! Of life and youth!

Gregor
Just for that you came here?

Marty
Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha. I don't give a damn now you're mine. Who knows how many thousand bastards I have got roaming round the world, how many bastards roaming round the world? (*pressing the manuscript to her heart*) At last you're mine, now at last, at last you're mine. Father had written it for Emperor Rudolf.

Vítek
Emperor Rudolf.

Marty
Oh children, children! What a swine he was. And as he got older he kept searching for the secret of eternal life, eternal youthfulness. One day my father went up to see him and wrote down on this paper, the potion, three hundred years of life and of youth. But the Emperor Rudolf took fright and he said: let your daughter try it, First let your daughter try it. I was the girl he meant, I was the girl he meant. And I was only sixteen then. But my father made me try it. For a week or longer I lay ill with a fever and then I got better.

Vítek
And the Emperor?

Marty
No. How could he really know that I would live to three hundred? That I would live to three

hundred? He said my father was a charlatan, had him put in prison. And I escaped with all his papers abroad somewhere, I've forgotten where.

Prus
Did you show anyone the Makropulos document?

Marty
Only to Pepi as he wanted it so badly, but now I'm the person who needs it.

Kolenatý
How old are you now?

Marty
I'm growing older. Don't fuss me! (*shrilly*) Three hundred and twenty-seven. Because I'm at the end of things. Feel my hands Bertie, how cold they are. Feel them, they're colder than ice!

Kolenatý
Tell me why you forged the handwriting of Ellian MacGregor?

Marty
Pater hemon!

Kolenatý
Don't lie! You are Emilia Marty.

Marty
Pater hemon!

Kolenatý
That medallion belonging to Eugenia Montez, you stole it!

Marty
Pater hemon, hos eis enuranois!

Kolenatý
Yes, now we've got her. What's your real name?

Marty (*falling*)
Elina Makropulos.

Kolenatý (*lets her fall to the ground*)
Damn it, she's not lying!

Prus
It's true!

Gregor
It's true!

Vítek
It's true!

Kolenatý (*takes off his gown*)
4 Fetch the doctor!

(*They take Marty into the bedroom. The doctor goes into the bedroom. Marty re-enters like a ghost or shadow. The doctor supports her. All get up.*)

Marty
Now I am sure (*a pale green light overflows the stage and auditorium*) that death laid his hand on me. Why was I afraid of it?

Gregor, Vítek, Prus and Kolenatý
Oh, Miss Makropulos, we've misjudged you harshly!

Kristina
I am so dreadfully sorry!

Marty
You are all here now, and it's as if you were not here, you're mere shadows and dead things!

Chorus
Mere shadows and dead things!

Marty
Dying or living it's all one, it's the same thing!

Chorus
Dying or living, it's all one, it's the same thing!

Marty (*wrings her hands*)
It's a great mistake to live so long! Oh, if you could only know how easy life is for you! You are so close to life! You see in life some meaning! Life has for you some value! Fools, how happy you all are.

Chorus
We're happy! Fools, how happy we all are!

Marty
And it's due to the paltry chance that you will all die soon.

Chorus
We're happy! Fools, how happy we all are!

Marty
You believe in mankind, love, virtue, progress. There's nothing more that you can want.

Chorus
Nothing more we can want.

Marty
But in me life has come to a standstill, O Jesù Christe, I cannot go on. How dreadful this loneliness! In the end it's the same, Kristina, singing and silence. There's no joy in goodness, there is no joy in evil. Joyless the earth, joyless the sky! When you know that then your soul dies within you.

Gregor, Vítek, Kolenatý and Prus
Why did you come here, for that piece of paper?

Marty
Here it is in writing. *Ego Hieronymus Makropulos, istros kaisaros Rodolfu.* I don't want it now! Well,

take it someone. Nobody wants it? You here
Kristina? I robbed you of your lover, you're
beautiful. You take it. You'll be famous and you'll
sing like Emilia Marty! Take it, girl, take it, girl!

Gregor, Vitek, Prus and Kolenatý
Stop her!

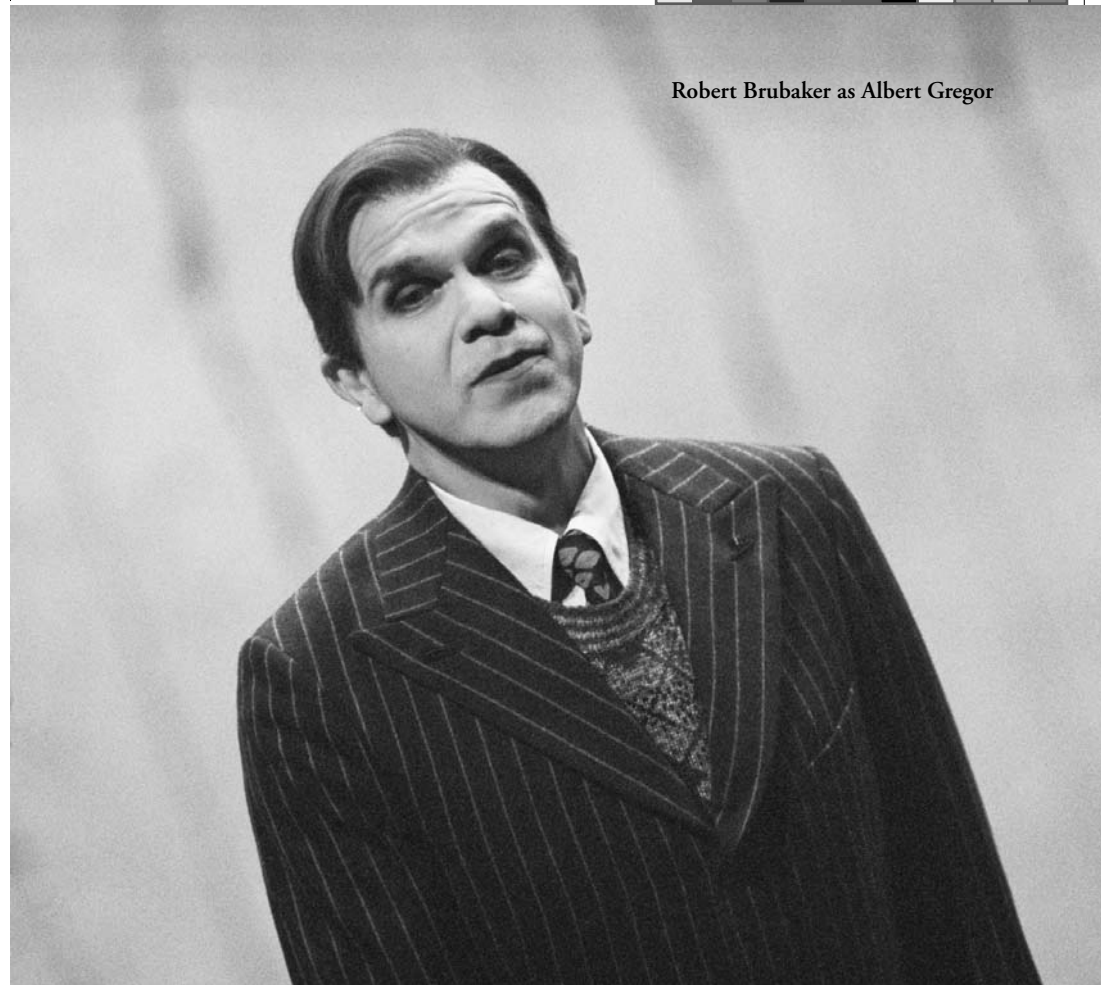
*(Kristina takes the document and holds it over the
flame until it is all burnt.)*

Marty
Pater hemon. (breaks down)

(The document is completely burnt.)

Libretto by the composer
English translation by Norman Tucker
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Robert Brubaker as Albert Gregor





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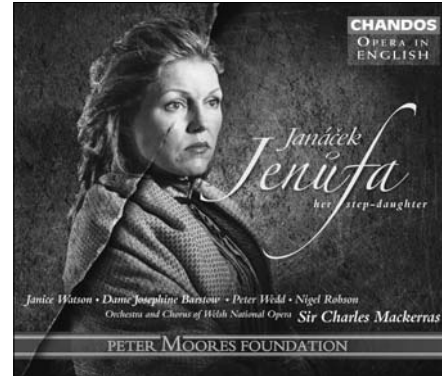
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118

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Recording venue London Coliseum; 18, 20, 24 & 26 May 2006
Front cover Photo of Cheryl Barker by Tristram Kenton
Back cover Photo of Sir Charles Mackerras
Design and typesetting Cassidy Rayne Creative
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119

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Leoš Janáček (1854–1928)

The Makropulos Case

Opera in three acts

Libretto by the composer after Karel Čapek's
comedy *Věk Makropulos*

English translation by Norman Tucker

Emilia Marty (E.M.), a famous diva

Dr Kolenatý, a lawyer

Vítek, his head clerk

Kristina, Vítek's daughter

Albert Gregor, a litigant

Baron Jaroslav Prus, his opposing litigant

Janek Prus, Baron Prus's son

Count Hauk-Šendorf, one of E.M.'s former beaux

Stage Hand

Cleaner

Chambermaid

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