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Katya Kabanova

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Leoš Janáček

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Leoš Janáček (1854–1928)

Katya Kabanova

Opera in 3 acts

Libretto by the composer after Ostrovsky's play
The Storm in the Czech translation by Červinka,
 English translation by Norman Tucker, with revisions
 by Rodney Blumer and Henrietta Bredin

Marfa Kabanova (Kabanicha), a rich merchant's widow

Tichon Kabanov, her son

Katerina (Katya), Tichon's wife

Dikoi, a merchant

Boris Grigoryevich, Dikoi's nephew

Varvara, a foster child in the Kabanov household

Vanya Kudryash, teacher, chemist and engineer, employed by Dikoi

Glasha, a servant in the Kababov household

Kuligin, a friend of Kudryash

Feklusha, a servant

Zena

Passer-by

Jane Henschel *mezzo-soprano*

Peter Hoare *tenor*

Cheryl Barker *soprano*

Gwynne Howell *bass*

Robert Brubaker *tenor*

Victoria Simmonds *mezzo-soprano*

Peter Wedd *tenor*

Kathleen Wilkinson *mezzo-soprano*

Owen Webb *baritone*

Claire Hampton *soprano*

Sian Meinir *mezzo-soprano*

Philip Lloyd-Holtam *tenor*

Chorus of Welsh National Opera
Orchestra of Welsh National Opera

Simon Phillippo chorus master

Gareth Jones assistant conductor

Carlo Rizzi



COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

Scene 1

[1]	[Introduction]	4:19	[p. 80]
[2]	'Marvellous! Really, just admit it' <i>Kudryash, Glasha</i>	1:35	[p. 80]
[3]	'What d'you think you're hanging around for?' <i>Dikoi, Boris</i>	0:57	[p. 80]
[4]	'Is your mistress at home?' <i>Dikoi, Glasha, Kudryash, Boris, Feklusha</i>	3:23	[p. 81]
[5]	'All of them so good and pious' <i>Feklusha, Boris, Kudryash</i>	2:03	[p. 82]
[6]	'If you want to obey your mother' <i>Kabanicha, Tichon, Katya, Varvara</i>	4:31	[p. 83]
[7]	Intermezzo I	1:04	[p. 85]

Scene 2

[8]	'I'm always wondering'	5:46	[p. 85]
[9]	'Madness? Oh, how I wish I really knew' <i>Katya, Varvara</i>	2:57	[p. 86]
[10]	'Ah, but you, what can you know of this?' <i>Katya, Varvara, Feklusha, Glasha, Tichon</i>	1:56	[p. 87]
[11]	'Do you not love me any more?' <i>Katya, Tichon</i>	2:52	[p. 87]
[12]	'It's time, Tichon' <i>Kabanicha, Tichon, Katya</i>	3:50	[p. 89]

Act II

Scene 1

[13]	'There now, you're always boasting' <i>Kabanicha, Katya</i>	2:05	[p. 91]
[14]	'It's so warm indoors' <i>Varvara, Katya, Dikoi, Kabanicha</i>	3:23	[p. 91]
[15]	'No, no, no one, yet my heart was beating' <i>Katya</i>	2:13	[p. 92]
[16]	'It's nothing much' <i>Dikoi, Kabanicha</i>	2:38	[p. 92]
[17]	Intermezzo II	0:56	[p. 93]

Scene 2

[18]	[Introduction]	1:05	[p. 93]
[19]	'Nobody here yet!' <i>Kudyrash, Boris</i>	3:37	[p. 93]
[20]	'Far away my love is gone across the water' <i>Varvara, Kudyrash, Boris</i>	1:46	[p. 95]
[21]	'Is that you, Katerina Petrovna?' <i>Boris, Katya</i>	5:26	[p. 95]
[22]	'So you've found each other' <i>Varvara, Boris, Kudyrash, Katya</i>	5:45	[p. 97]

TT 64:33

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act III

Scene 1

[1]	'Raining!' 'There's a storm coming' <i>Kuligin, Kudryash, Dikoi</i>	4:05	[p. 98]
[2]	'Psst! Psst! Boris, listen to me!' <i>Varvara, Boris</i>	1:06	[p.101]
[3]	'Oh, Varvara! I shall die!' <i>Katya, Zena, Varvara, Chorus, Kudryash, Dikoi, Kabanicha, Tichon</i>	2:44	[p.102]

Scene 2

[4]	'Ah, Glasha! It's awful to think of it' <i>Tichon, Glasha, Varvara, Kudryash</i>	2:01	[p.103]
[5]	'No! Nobody here' <i>Katya, Kuligin</i>	5:20	[p.104]
[6]	'And yet death won't come to me' <i>Katya, Boris</i>	4:27	[p.104]
[7]	'Thanks be to God!' <i>Boris, Katya</i>	1:50	[p.105]
[8]	'No, not that!' <i>Katya, Boris</i>	2:42	[p.105]
[9]	'Birds will sing as they fly above me' <i>Katya</i>	0:49	[p.106]
[10]	'Hey there, a woman has jumped in the river!' <i>Kuligin, Passer-by, Dikoi, Glasha, Tichon, Kabanicha</i>	1:57	[p.106]

TT 27:05





On session: Cheryl Barker and Jane Henschel



On session: Robert Brubaker and Cheryl Barker



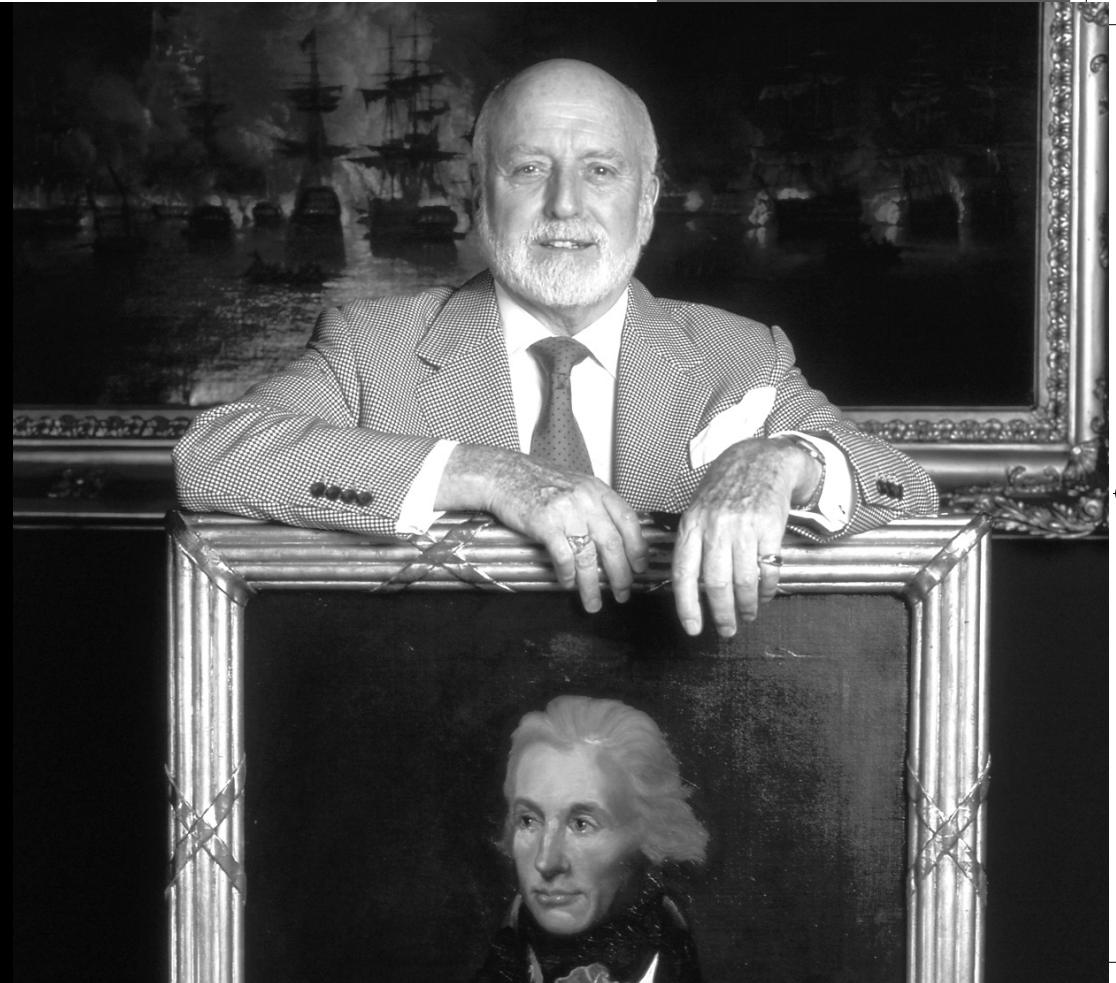
This is the fifth Janáček opera to join our Opera in English catalogue. Following her gripping Emilia Marty in *The Makropulos Case*, Cheryl Barker here joins forces with Welsh National Opera's Chorus and Orchestra, and a wonderful cast under Music Director Carlo Rizzi, to bring you the tragic story of Katya, told through a score of immense power and tenderness.

Music to engulf the senses, indeed! Enjoy.

Peter Moores

Sir Peter Moores, CBE, DL
October 2007

Sir Peter Moores with a portrait of Admiral Lord Nelson
by Lemuel Francis Abbott, acquired for Compton Verney
© Lyndon Parker





Janáček: *Katya Kabanova*

It contains much that is touching, soft (in the Slav manner); what depth of feeling! If only I can find the right expression, just as deep!

Janáček to Vincenc Červinka
December 1919

Janáček's sixth opera is a testament to the two great loves of his remarkable final decade. The first love has become legendary – his long and unrequited infatuation with Kamila Stösslová, the young married woman he met at the Czech spa town of Luhačovice in 1917. The second is almost as important – his lifelong passion for all things Russian. At a time when the Czech lands were under Austrian rule he was a stubborn, almost wilful Slavophile. He studied Russian literature in great depth and founded a Russian circle in his native Brno. He visited Moscow and was overwhelmed by the experience, describing the Kremlin as a fairy tale. At times his Slavic obsession bordered on the self-destructive. He refused to speak German to his in-laws, causing frequent domestic rows. Yet his preoccupation with Russian culture lies behind some of his greatest work. His First String Quartet shares a

name and a concealed narrative with Tolstoy's violent short story *The Kreutzer Sonata*. He wrote an equally savage symphonic suite based on Gogol's *Taras Bulba*. His final opera, *From the House of the Dead*, draws its inspiration from Dostoyevsky's semi-autobiographical novel. Most of all, for his first theatrical work since the birth of the new Czech nation, he turned to a masterpiece by one of Russia's greatest dramatists, Alexander Ostrovsky.

Katya Kabanova is based on Ostrovsky's *The Storm*, which had its premiere at the Maly Theatre in Moscow in the mid 1860s. Like much Russian literature of the period, the play was a harsh critique of contemporary society. After the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, the country was waking up to the extensive social problems which lay under the surface of the Tsarist Empire. In particular, the coarse and repressive values of the provincial middle classes provoked fierce criticism in both literature and journalism. Janáček had already dealt memorably with such a subject in his first great opera *Jenůfa*, based on a play by the contemporary Moravian author Gabriela Preissová. In the years following that

work's premiere, he searched within Russian literature for something similar, toying with Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and *The Living Corpse*. It was only when *Jenůfa* was finally presented in Prague and Janáček had become one of the artistic icons of newly independent Czechoslovakia that the composer finally alighted on the perfect subject. In 1918 he read a Czech translation of Ostrovsky's play and he immediately approached the publishers for the rights to set the play to music. He was so taken with the work that the opera was completed in full score in only thirteen months.

The reason for this urgency lies of course with that first great love. He had launched into composing *The Diary of One who Disappeared*, the first masterpiece inspired by Kamila, only a fortnight after meeting her. In his mind, the vivacious brunette merged with the gypsy temptress of the song cycle. He made an equally impetuous connection between the heroine of *The Storm* and his new friend. Indeed, he wrote to her that the opera was infused with his perception of Kamila's own love for her husband:

When I became acquainted with you in
Luhačovice...and saw for the first time how a

woman can love her husband... that was the
reason why I turned to *Katya Kabanova*.

This was an odd way to express the dawning of a great passion, but even stranger was the musical end result. *Katya* is Janáček's only truly tragic opera. *Jenůfa* ends in stoical resignation, despite the murder of the heroine's illegitimate child. When the central character is killed in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Janáček ends the work with an epic hymn to nature's powers of eternal renewal. *The Makropulos Case* concludes with its 350-year-old heroine released from the torments of eternal reincarnation. Even the bleak prison chronicle *From the House of the Dead* sees its central character released and a captive eagle set free in the final bars. Only *Katya* is without redemption. She is crushed by the repressive weight of the provincial society she inhabits and her own self-lacerating guilt.

Yet the opera is by no means uniformly dark. It contains the only human love scene in all of Janáček's mature operas (the scene between the Fox and the Vixen is more carnal than emotional) and for added value, he gives us a contrapuntal coupling between two pairs of lovers. Although *Katya*'s passion is presented as doomed from the opening bars, her personality



casts a radiant light over every scene in which she appears, even the desperate moments which precede her suicide. Janáček achieves this through some of his most transparent orchestration, a new melodic fluency and most of all the skill with which he juxtaposes Katya's themes with the terse and brutal music of her tormentors. Without imitating either Wagner or Strauss, he weaves and transposes his musical material in a way which brings the harsh contrast between the two worlds of Ostrovsky's drama into brilliant focus. And there is something more. During the eight years which had separated the composition of the first two acts of *Jenůfa*, his operatic style had developed from bucolic folk opera in the style of Smetana and Dvořák to a striking musico-dramatic naturalism. Now, seventeen years after its completion, Janáček took an even more radical journey – from the fluid speech-song in which the first two acts of *Katya* are composed to the hypnotic surrealism with which the opera ends. His following three stage works – the strip-cartoon inspired *Vixen*, the expressionist *Makropulos Case* and the jagged sketch-like *House of the Dead* – abandon naturalism altogether. *Katya* is the first staging post on that journey.

Janáček lays out the musical and dramatic argument of the piece with fierce clarity from the very beginning. Four brooding string chords, eight quiet strokes on the timpani and an anguished melisma on the strings drag us into the harsh and oppressive world of the Kabanov family. As the music gathers pace, the timpani repeat their rhythm *fortissimo* until it transforms into a deceptively jaunty imitation Russian folk tune accompanied by jingling sleigh-bells. This little theme will recur at two crucial moments in the drama. It accompanies the climax of the first act when the mother-dominated young merchant Tichon departs on a business trip, leaving his sensitive young wife Katya at home, a prey to her passion for Boris Grigoryevich. It returns at the very end of the opera, after the affair between Katya and Boris has blossomed and then been poisoned by Katya's suicidal guilt. Janáček uses this theme as a touchstone for the society in which his heroine lives. Its conventional Slavic tunefulness depicts the surface of Russian middle-class life. Pulled apart and twisted into other shapes, it reveals the hypocrisy and cruelty beneath that surface.

Janáček gives his characters musical life in an equally striking way. They are not identified by Wagnerian *leitmotifs* but by tiny melodic

or rhythmic gestures which are then amplified over the course of the opera. Boris' uncle, the brutal drunken merchant Dikoi has a nervous, edgy dotted rhythm which accompanies his first appearance on stopped horns. When it returns in the final act as he shelters from the storm which provides the work's climax, it has grown into a theme as arrogant and hectoring as Dikoi himself. The depiction of Kabanicha, Katya's mother-in-law, is even more subtle. She has no musical material of her own but disrupts the musical stability of those around her. On her first appearance, her insensitive interjections disturb the tender flowing melody on flute, strings and harps which has introduced Katya herself. By contrasting this with the jagged asymmetry of Dikoi and Kabanicha's music, Janáček places Katya as a still presence at the centre of a dysfunctional world. When she returns with her foster sister Varvara (Varya) in the following scene, Janáček expands this musical characterisation. The flutes and strings now flutter in imitation of her desire to fly like a bird, as if to escape the emotional prison of her household. With prodigious fluency, he unites Katya and Varya's music without losing each character's individuality. In the climax of their scene together, the suspended cadence which

accompanies her words 'and then at night' is echoed in Varya's 'what do you dream about?' before being resolved in her reply 'Varya, I cannot sleep.' Then, after the erotic yearning of the music which depicts her fantasies, the suspension returns on the words 'I go, I go' and this time, as in the drama itself, there is no resolution.

What follows in the succeeding scenes is a series of masterstrokes. When Varya suggests that perhaps Katya will meet Boris by chance, another little folk tune emerges in the orchestra, only to be rudely tossed aside by Tichon's Russian theme with its niggling sleigh-bells. During the humiliating final scene of the act, when Kabanicha forces Katya to make a promise of fidelity to her husband, Varya's theme is forgotten. Yet in the following act, when the two young women prepare for their joint tryst in the nocturnal garden, it dominates the musical material. Varya and her lover Kudryash exchange folksongs in a kind of melodic foreplay. By contrast, the music for Katya and her longed-for lover Boris is all chromatic irresolution. This is not simply a harmonic device for depicting character. It binds together the personal and the social – the immediacy of Katya's unfulfilled emotions and the presentation of the unforgiving society



which precipitates her tragedy. There are a dozen examples of the music underpinning the protagonists' emotional state throughout this act – the pre-echo of the storm as the two girls go out into the garden, the passionate climax when Katya and Boris sing 'my life', promising a love duet but failing to deliver one and the desperate cello solo which precedes the post-coital tenderness of Kudryash and Varya and concludes the act not with consummation but despair.

In this way Janáček prepares us for the opera's hallucinatory final scenes. The music which accompanies the thunderstorm at the beginning is mainly derived from Dikoi's fidgety triple time theme. It has the effect of fragmenting the aural texture, as if we were experiencing the action from Katya's increasingly disturbed viewpoint. Shards of melody appear and disappear. The calls of 'Katerina' from the other characters searching for her are echoed by horns and strings and there is a vestigial return of Varya's folksong in the darkness. Distorted versions of the musical material of the first two acts, like the fluttering flutes which depict the birds in the first scene of Act Two, haunt Katya's two monologues. These reminiscences even penetrate the final encounter between the lovers, which begins

with yet another failed attempt at a love duet and ends with a harrowing farewell. Once again Boris has no music of his own, as if to imply that he has no will or strength of character. Musically and dramatically, Katya is isolated on the banks of the Volga and the wordless choir which calls to her is the embodiment of her yearning for watery oblivion. In this last act, Janáček has parted company with naturalism. We are in psychic space. As the opera hurtles to its conclusion accompanied by savage and plaintive transformations of Tichon's tune, we follow the composer into a new landscape.

Katya Kabanova is a very strange love gift from a composer to his reluctant muse. Its immediate predecessor, *The Diary of One who Disappeared*, has a central piano interlude with the title *Intermezzo Erotico* – a remarkable piece of musical wish fulfilment – and it ends with the hero striding off into the woods to join his gypsy mistress. *Katya*, like the rejected subject of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, treats adulterous love with empathy tempered with harsh honesty. Yet in some ways it was indeed a gift, although perhaps not quite as Janáček intended. In this instance, Kamila was the giver and Janáček the receiver. When he fused the depiction of

Ostrovsky's grim social world with his own desire to mirror his beloved Kamila in the fragile vulnerable Katya, Janáček made an exponential leap as a composer. In progressing from the naturalistic vernacular first act through the intimate expressionism of the second to the surreal desperation of the third, *Katya Kabanova* joins its near contemporary, Berg's *Wozzek*, as the first great modern music drama.

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Argument

Kabanicha, widow of the merchant Kabanov, dominates the lives of her son, Tichon, and his wife, Katya. On her orders he leaves home on a business trip, despite Katya's fears of what might happen in his absence. His departure does indeed prompt his foster sister to persuade Katya to meet her lover. A terrible storm and Tichon's unexpected return unnerve Katya, and she publicly confesses her adultery. She drowns herself, and Kabanicha presides over Tichon's remorseful despair.

Synopsis

The opera is set in a little town on the banks of the Volga, around 1860

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

Scene 1

Outside the Kabanov house. Afternoon

[1] – [2] Kudryash, a young teacher, admires the beauty of the river. The servant Glasha is unimpressed. [3] – [4] They are soon distracted by Dikoi, who arrives, rebuking his nephew Boris for his laziness. On learning that Katya is still at church, Dikoi goes off to find her. Left alone with Kudryash, Boris explains that he only stays with his uncle because of the conditions of his grandmother's will: that he and his sister will be able to claim their inheritance at the age of twenty-one, and only if they do what their uncle tells them. [5] Boris then reveals that he has fallen in love with a married woman – Katya Kabanova.

[6] The Kabanov family returns from church. Kabanicha orders her son, Tichon, to leave at once for the market at Kazan. She complains bitterly that he neglects her for his wife, rebuking Katya when she dares to answer.

[7] Intermezzo.

Scene 2

Inside the Kabanov house, afternoon



^[8] Katya tells Varvara, a foster child in the Kabanov household, of her happy childhood, and Varvara questions Katya about her dreams: ^[9] – ^[10] Katya says she hears a man's voice whispering in her ear, urging her to go off with him, which she does. Tichon appears, about to leave for market as his mother has ordered, and Katya begs him not to leave her. But he has to go, and cannot take her with him. ^[11] Katya asks him to make her swear that she will not to look at or speak to another man. ^[12] Kabinicha enters and insists that Tichon gives his instructions to Katya before he leaves: she must respect and obey Kabinicha, keep busy, and 'keep her eyes off other men'. Katya embraces her husband before he leaves.

Act II

Scene 1

Inside the Kabanov house, late afternoon

^[13] Kabanicha reproaches Katya for not displaying grief at Tichon's departure. Kabanicha leaves, asking not to be disturbed. ^[14] Varvara arrives and reveals that she has managed to get hold of the key to the garden gate; she says that if she sees Boris she will ask him to come to the gate to meet Katya. Katya takes the key, and hurriedly hides it when she hears Kabanicha talking to Dikoi. ^[15] Katya

goes out, longing for the evening. ^[16] Kabanicha and a slightly drunk Dikoi enter. He does not want to go home, and sidles up to Kabanicha. She pushes him away. ^[17] Intermezzo II.

Scene 2

Outside the Kabanov's garden gate

^[18] [Introduction] ^[19] Kudryash arrives at the gate, waiting for Varvara, and sings a song. Boris arrives and explains that he is waiting for someone: Katya, a married woman. Kudryash warns him of the risks involved. ^[20] Varvara arrives, telling Boris that Katya is on her way. Then Kudryash and Varvara go off to the river. ^[21] – ^[22] Katya soon arrives and holds back from holding Boris' hand. He declares his passion, but Katya is more guarded in her admission of love for him. They embrace. Kudryash and Varvara are heard declaring their love. Katya goes back through the gate, leaving Boris behind.

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act III

Scene 1

Two days later, a ruined building overlooking the Volga; towards evening

^[1] Kudryash and his friend Kuligin shelter from

the rain, and are soon joined by others. They notice the old frescoes of hell and the damned still visible under the ruined apse. Dikoi also arrives to shelter there. Kudryash talks about the storm being 'just electricity', while Dikoi considers the storms a punishment from God.

The rain stops and Dikoi goes outside, followed by the others. ^[2] Varvara arrives and attracts Boris' attention. She tells him that Tichon has returned unexpectedly and that Katya has become hysterical – even threatening to confess everything. ^[3] When Katya enters, Borish and Kudryash hide, leaving Varvara to calm Katya. As Dikoi, Tichon and Kabanicha arrive Katya falls on her knees and publicly confesses her infidelity. She collapses into her husband's arms, but immediately tears herself away, and rushes out into the storm.

Scene 2

On the banks of the Volga, dusk turning to night

^[4] Tichon and Glasha are searching for the missing Katya. Varvara and Kudryash determine to run away together to Moscow. ^[5] – ^[7] Katya enters alone. She regrets her confession, but loves Boris and and longs for death. Suddenly he enters and they fall into each other's arms. ^[8] Boris tells her that his

uncle is sending him away. Katya remains at the mercy of her mother-in-law and drunken husband.

Boris leaves and Katya imagines her grave.

^[9] Crossing her arms, she throws herself into the river. ^[10] A search party enters, and Dikoi arrives with Katya's corpse. Tichon blames his mother for Katya's death, but Kabanicha simply thanks her neighbours for their kindness.

Keith Saunders



Australian-born **Cheryl Barker** (Katarina Kabanova (Katya)) 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 Figaro*), Mimi (*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 Mimi, 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 the Nationale Reisoper in the Netherlands; Violetta for Hamburg State Opera and the Deutsche Oper; the title role in *Katya Kabanova* in Geneva and for Welsh National Opera; and for De Vlaamse Opera the title roles in *Suor Angelica* and *The Merry Widow*, Mimì, Desdemona (*Otello*) and Liù (*Turandot*).

She appears regularly on the recital and concert platform and her many recordings include Emilia Marty (*The Makropulos Case*)

and *Madam Butterfly* as part of Chandos' Opera in English Series, Dyson's *Quo Vadis* for Chandos, and a solo CD featuring Puccini Arias.



Jane Henschel (Marfa Kabanova (Kabanicha)) was born in Wisconsin, studied at the University of Southern California and subsequently moved to Germany. Roles include Baba the Turk (*The Rake's*

Progress) at Glyndebourne, Saito Kinen and Salzburg Festivals; Brangäne (*Tristan and Isolde*) for the Los Angeles Opera and the Paris Opéra; Klytemnestra (*Elektra*) for the San Francisco Opera; the Principessa (*Suor Angelica*) with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra under Chailly; *Dialogues des Carmélites* in Amsterdam; the Kostelnička (*Jenůfa*) under Ozawa in Japan, and Kabanicha (*Katya Kabanova*) for the Salzburg Festival.

For The Royal Opera, Covent Garden she has sung Fricka and Waltraute, Ulrica (*Un ballo in maschera*), Klytemnestra, Mrs Grose (*The Turn of the Screw*); at La Scala, Milan she

has sung Herodias (*Salome*), and Cassandre (*Les Troyens*). Her roles at the Bavarian State Opera, Munich include Herodias, Klytemnestra, Ulrica, Mistress Quickly (*Falstaff*) and Ortrud (*Lohengrin*); at the Deutsche Oper, Berlin Klytemnestra, Herodias and Ortrud, and at the Vienna State Opera Klytemnestra, Fricka and Mistress Quickly. It is the Amme (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*) which has become her signature role, which she has sung in Amsterdam, London, Los Angeles, Munich, Paris, Vienna, Berlin and at the Metropolitan Opera.

Jane Henschel's recordings include *Hansel and Gretel* as part of Chandos' Opera in English series, Krása's *Verlobung im Traum*, *The Rake's Progress*, Albéniz' *Merlin*, Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, and Mahler's Eighth Symphony.

American tenor **Robert Brubaker** (Boris Grigoryevich) 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 (Laca 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 Zueger*). He has also performed with Houston Grand Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Montpellier Opera, Dallas Opera, and the Deutsche Oper Berlin. Recordings include Albert Gregor (*The Makropulos Case*) as part of Chandos' Opera in English series.

Peter Hoare (Tichon Kabanov) was born in Bradford and studied percussion at



the Huddersfield School of Music. Following several years as a freelance percussionist, he embarked on a professional singing career. Operatic roles for Welsh National Opera include Bacchus

(*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Captain (*Wozzeck*), Vaudemont (*Iolanta*), Titus (*La clemenza di Tito*), Narraboth (*Salome*), Simpleton (*Boris Godunov*), Witch (*Hansel and Gretel*), Tichon (*Katya Kabanova*); Bardolfo (*Falstaff*), Valzacchi (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Goro (*Madama Butterfly*) for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Mr Upfold (*Albert Herring*), Idomeneo and Arbace in *Idomeneo*, and Brother Elusaf (*A Betrothal in the Monastery*) for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; as well as performances with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Simon Rattle in Berlin, Lucerne, and at the Salzburg Festival. He has also performed for Opera North, Scottish Opera, the Grand Théâtre de Genève, Opéra de Lausanne, and at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées.

Brian Tarr



Peter Wedd (Vanya Kudryash) studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with William McAlpine and subsequently at the National Opera Studio where he was supported by the Peter Moores Foundation.

He was a Company Principal at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden from 1999 to 2001 and is a regular guest artist for Welsh National Opera. At Welsh National Opera his roles have included Don José (*Carmen*), Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) Alfredo (*La traviata*), Števa (*Jenůfka*), and Steersman (*The Flying Dutchman*).

Other appearances in the UK and Ireland have included Boris (*Katya Kabanova*) and Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) for Opera North, Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*), Federico (*L'Arlesiana*) and Pluto (*Orphée aux enfers*) for Opera Holland Park, Kyska (*Šarlatán*) and Julius (*I cavalieri di Ekebu*) at the Wexford Festival, Rodolfo (*La Bohème*) at London's Royal Albert Hall, Tamino for Glyndebourne On Tour, Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*) for Opera Holland Park and,

Chevalier de la Force (*The Carmelites*) with English National Opera.

Outside the UK Peter Wedd has sung for European Chamber Opera, Singapore Lyric Theatre, Opera Australia, and Limoges Opera, and has made appearances at the Maribor Festival, Slovenia and the Cernier Festival in Switzerland.



Victoria Simmonds (Varvara) studied with David Pollard at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She is a recipient of the Countess of Munster Prize. In 2000 she appeared at the Royal Opera House in the

English Bach Festival's production of Handel's *Oreste* and made her English National Opera debut as Nancy T'ang, First Secretary to Mao in John Adams' *Nixon in China*. She was a company principal at English National Opera from 2000 to 2005 where her roles included Cherubino (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Mercedes (*Carmen*), Zaida (*The Turk in Italy*), Pitti-Sing (*The Mikado*), Rosina (*The Barber of Seville*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Hermia

(*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*).

Festival engagements include Wellgunde (*Das Rheingold*) under Sir Simon Rattle at the Aix Festival, Handel's *La Lucrezia* at the Batignano festival, the title role in *La Perichole* and Ines (*Maria Padilla*) at the Buxton Festival, the title role of Carmen for Raymond Gubbay at the Royal Albert Hall, Isolier (*Le Comte Ory*) for Garsington Opera and Olga (*Eugene Onegin*) for Opera Holland Park. She made her debut at the Netherlands Opera singing Lucienne (Korngold's *Die tote Stadt*).

Guy Gravett



The Welsh bass **Gwynne Howell** (Dikoi) studied at the Royal Northern College of Music. He became a member of the Royal Opera in 1972, and has sung most of the major bass roles with

the company. He has also enjoyed a long association with English National Opera, where his many successes have included Hans Sachs, Gurnemann, King Philip, and Bluebeard. His international career has

included appearances in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Santa Fe, Paris, Geneva, Hamburg, Munich, and Cologne. In concert he has worked throughout the world with conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Carlo Maria Giulini, Riccardo Muti, Leonard Bernstein, Pierre Boulez, Daniel Barenboim, James Levine, Bernard Haitink, Zubin Mehta and Seiji Ozawa. His many recordings include Mahler's Eighth Symphony with Seiji Ozawa, Messiah with Sir Georg Solti, *Tristan und Isolde* under Sir Reginald Goodall, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Kurt Masur.

Recent engagements include for English National Opera Schigolch (*Lulu*) (also recorded as part of Chandos' Opera in English series) and Dansker (*Billy Budd*); for Glyndebourne, productions of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Don Giovanni*, *Figaro* and *Otello*; for Covent Garden Old Convict in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and the world première of *The Tempest* by Thomas Adès, which he also sang in Santa Fe in 2006. Gwynne Howell was awarded the CBE in 1998.

Kathleen Wilkinson (Glasha) was born in Lancashire and studied with Barbara Robotham at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she was a Peter Moores Scholar



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 staging and recording of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Brian Tarr



Brought up in Pontlliw, South Wales, **Owen Webb** (Kuligin) studied at the Royal College of Music and Drama with Beatrice Unsworth where he won numerous awards. He currently studies with Stephen Roberts. He is a WNO Associate Artist and the recipient of the Welsh National Opera Schäfer and Chris Ball Bursaries

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

Roles include Schaunard (*La Bohème*), Masetto (*Don Giovanni*), Marullo (*Rigoletto*), Papageno (*The Magic Flute*), Zurga (*The Pearlfishers*), Escamillo (*Carmen*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), and Dr. Falke (*Die Fledermaus*).

The **Chorus of Welsh National Opera** began as a professional body in 1968, working alongside the company's celebrated Voluntary Chorus until 1973, when the latter was disbanded. The Voluntary Chorus had been made up of amateur singers who gathered together in 1943 to form the nucleus of what became Welsh National Opera, and it was the success of the Chorus in early productions which put WNO firmly on the operatic map.

In the late 1960s, WNO moved to become fully professional, and the Voluntary Chorus was replaced by the Chorus of Welsh National Opera. The Chorus has performed in concert tours around South Wales in recent years. The Orchestra and Chorus have made many recordings (under many distinguished conductors including Sir Reginald Goodall, Sir Charles Mackerras, Carlo Rizzi, Richard Bonyngne, Pierre Boulez), in repertoire ranging from Bellini to Maxwell Davies, by way of Verdi, Wagner and Gilbert and Sullivan.

The Orchestra of Welsh National Opera has

won the Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award, in the Large Ensemble category, and WNO as a company has won four further major awards from the Royal Philharmonic Society, as well as an Evening Standard Award for Best Opera Production, a Laurence Olivier Award for the Best New Opera Production, and the Barclays Theatre Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera.

The **Orchestra of Welsh National Opera** was founded in 1970. Since then it has established itself as an extremely fine and versatile orchestra, highly praised as much for its distinction in a wide-ranging operatic repertoire as for its concert work and extensive portfolio of recordings for many different recording companies.

Former Music Directors include Richard Armstrong (1973–86), Sir Charles Mackerras (1987–92) and Tugan Sokhiev (2002–2004). Carlo Rizzi, who was Musical Director from 1992 to 2001 returned to Welsh National Opera as Music Director in 2004 and has conducted performances of *La traviata* and *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* in Welsh National Opera's opening season at Wales Millennium Centre. More recently he has conducted the critically acclaimed *Don Carlos*,



The Flying Dutchman with Bryn Terfel in the title role in Cardiff, London and Birmingham and the Autumn 2006 revival of WNO's classic *La Bohème*.

In addition to their main theatrical remit, the Orchestra of WNO gives many concerts in venues, both large and small, throughout England and Wales, including appearances at major festivals including the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in London.



Carlo Rizzi was born in Milan and studied piano, composition and conducting at the Milan Conservatoire. He was re-appointed Music Director of Welsh National Opera for the second time in August 2004 having

held the position between 1992 and 2001. He has appeared in an extensive repertoire (from Gluck to Berio) with many orchestras in Europe, North America, the far East and Australia including the London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los

Angeles Philharmonic and St Louis, Dallas and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras, as well as the Orchestre National de France and the Orchestra of La Scala, Milan.

His repertoire at Welsh National Opera has included *Fidelio*, *Boris Godunov*, *Peter Grimes*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Katya Kabanova*, *Salome*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Don Carlo* and *The Flying Dutchman*. In the 100th season of the BBC Proms he conducted the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera in their first symphonic Promenade concert. During his conductorship the Orchestra also won many awards including that of the Royal Philharmonic Society. Since 1996, he has been a regular guest in concerts at the Edinburgh International Festival.

In other opera houses, he has conducted at La Scala (*Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*), Covent Garden (*La traviata*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Così fan tutte*, *Otello*, *Aroldo*, *Il trovatore*); Opéra Bastille (*Rigoletto*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *La Cenerentola*); Deutsche Oper Berlin (*L'italiana in Algeri*, *Macbeth*), Munich (*La Bohème*, *La traviata*) and Zurich (*Tosca* and *I vespri Siciliani*); and for the Metropolitan Opera, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Il trovatore*, *Norma*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *La traviata*,

Cavalleria rusticana, *Pagliacci*, *Aida*, *Turandot* and *Nabucco*). He opened the new opera house in Cardiff (Wales Millennium Centre) with *La traviata*.

In September 2004 he was appointed Chief Guest Conductor of the Teatro Comunale, Bologna with whom he conducted *Il trovatore* and *Andrea Chénier*. Most recently he has

conducted *La traviata* and *La Bohème* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Don Carlos* in Zurich, and *Aida* in Houston.

Recordings include Respighi's Tone Poems and Bizet's *L'Arlesienne* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and operas including *La traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Faust*, *La Cenerentola* and *Un ballo in maschera*.

Orchestra of Welsh National Opera



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 many millions 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 scholarships, 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.



Janáček: Katja Kabanowa

Sie enthält viel Ergreifendes, Sanftes (nach slawischer Art); welche Gefühlstiefe! Wenn ich nur die rechte Ausdrucksform finden kann, die ebenso tief geht!

Janáček an Vincenc Červinka
Dezember 1919

Janáčeks sechste Oper zeugt von den zwei großen Lieben seines bemerkenswerten letzten Lebensjahrzehnts. Seine größte Liebe ist zur Legende geworden – seine lang währende, unerwiderte Vernarrtheit in Kamila Stösslová, die junge verheiratete Frau, die er 1917 im mährischen Heilbad Luhačovice kennen lernte. Die zweite Liebe ist fast genauso wichtig – seine lebenslange Leidenschaft für alles Russische. Zu einer Zeit, als die tschechischen Lande unter österreichischer Herrschaft standen, war er ein hartnäckiger, fast starrsinniger Slawophile. Er studierte eingehend die russische Literatur und gründete im heimatlichen Brunn einen russischen Zirkel. Er besuchte Moskau und ließ sich von dem Erlebnis überwältigen – den Kreml beschrieb er als märchenhaft. Zeitweise grenzte

seine Besessenheit mit allem Slawischen ans Selbstzerstörerische. Er weigerte sich, mit seinen Schwiegereltern Deutsch zu reden, was oft zu Familienkrach führte. Doch seine Beschäftigung mit russischer Kultur liegt einigen seiner besten Werke zugrunde. Sein Erstes Streichquartett verdankt seinen Titel und die untergründige Fabel Tolstois gewaltsamer Novelle *Die Kreutzersonate*. Er schrieb eine ebenso schonungslose sinfonische Suite auf der Grundlage von Gogols *Taras Bulba*. Seine letzte Oper *Aus einem Totenhaus* bezieht ihre Inspiration aus Dostojewskis auf eigenen Erfahrungen beruhendem Roman. Und vor allem wandte er sich für sein erstes Bühnenwerk nach der Gründung der neuen tschechischen Nation einem Meisterwerk von Alexander Ostrowski zu, der als einer der bedeutendsten Dramatiker Russlands gilt.

Katja Kabanowa beruht auf Ostrowskis *Gewitter*, dessen Uraufführung um die Mitte der 1860er-Jahre am Moskauer Maly-Theater stattfand. Wie ein erheblicher Teil der russischen Literatur jener Zeit war das Stück eine harsche Kritik der damaligen gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse. Nach der

Aufhebung der Leibeigenschaft im Jahre 1861 nahm das Land allmählich Kenntnis von den erheblichen sozialen Problemen, die im Zarenreich unter der Oberfläche schwelten. Insbesondere die rohen und repressiven Werte der provinziellen Mittelschicht wurden in Literatur und Journalismus heftig kritisiert. Janáček hatte in seiner ersten großen Oper *Jenůfa* bereits ein verwandtes Thema auf bemerkenswerte Weise behandelt – das Werk beruhte auf einem Schauspiel der zeitgenössischen mährischen Schriftstellerin Gabriela Preissová. In den Jahren nach der Uraufführung dieser Oper suchte er nach einer Entsprechung in der russischen Literatur, wobei er mit dem Gedanken an Werke wie *Anna Karenina* und *Der lebende Leichnam* von Tolstoi spielte. Erst als *Jenůfa* schließlich in Prag aufgeführt wurde und Janáček zu einem der künstlerischen Vorbilder der neuerdings unabhängigen Tschechoslowakei geworden war, fand der Komponist endlich den idealen Stoff. 1918 las er eine tschechische Übersetzung von Ostrowskis Drama und trat sofort an den Verlag heran, um sich die Rechte für eine Vertonung zu sichern. Er war von dem Werk so angetan, dass die Oper in nur dreizehn Monaten vollständig orchestriert vorlag.

Der Grund für diese Eile ist natürlich in jener ersten großen Liebe begründet. Er hatte sich kaum vierzehn Tage nach dem ersten Zusammentreffen mit Kamila daran gemacht, sein *Tagebuch eines Verschollenen* zu schreiben, sein erstes von ihr inspiriertes Meisterwerk. In seinen Gedanken verschmolz die muntere Brünnete mit der verführerischen Zigeunerin des Liederzyklus. Eine ebenso impulsive Verbindung stellte er zwischen der Protagonistin des *Gewitters* und seiner neuen Freundin her. In der Tat schrieb er ihr, die Oper sei erfüllt von seiner Wahrnehmung der Liebe Kamilas zu ihrem Gatten:

Als ich Sie in Luhačovice kennen lernte...und erstmals sah, wie eine Frau ihren Mann lieben kann,...das war der Grund, warum ich mich *Katja Kabanowa* zuwandte.

Es war eine seltsame Art, das Erwachen einer großen Leidenschaft zum Ausdruck zu bringen, aber noch seltsamer war das musikalische Endergebnis. *Katja* ist Janáčeks einzige wahrhaft tragische Oper. *Jenůfa* endet in stoischer Resignation, trotz des Mordes am unehelichen Kind der Heldin. Nachdem die zentrale Gestalt im *Schlauen Fuchselein* umkommt, beschließt Janáček



das Werk mit einem epischen Hymnus auf die ewigen Erneuerungskräfte der Natur. *Die Sache Makropulos* endet damit, dass die dreihundertfünfzig Jahre alte Protagonistin von den Qualen ewiger Reinkarnation befreit wird. Selbst in der düsteren Gefängnischronik *Aus einem Totenhaus* wird mit den letzten Takten die Hauptfigur entlassen und ein gefangener Adler befreit. Nur bei *Katja* kommt es zu keiner Erlösung. Sie wird von der provinziellen Gesellschaft, in der sie lebt, und ihrer eigenen zutiefst empfundenen Schuld erdrückt.

Doch ist die Oper keineswegs durchweg düster. Sie enthält die einzige Liebesszene zwischen Menschen in Janáček's reifem Opernschaffen (die Szene zwischen dem Fuchs und der Füchsin ist eher fleischlich als emotional), und als wäre das nicht genug, liefert er uns gleich ein kontrapunktisches Zusammenkommen zweier Liebespaare. Obwohl Katjas Leidenschaft von den ersten Takten an als zum Scheitern verurteilt dargestellt wird, wirft ihre Persönlichkeit doch ein strahlendes Licht auf jede Szene, in der sie auftritt, selbst in den Augenblicken der Verzweiflung vor ihrem Freitod. Janáček erreicht das mittels seiner transparentesten Orchestrierung, einer neu erworbenen melodischen Gewandtheit und vor allem

durch die geschickte Gegenüberstellung von Katjas Themen mit der kurz angebundenen und brutalen Musik ihrer Peiniger. Ohne Wagner oder Strauss zu imitieren, verwebt und transponiert er sein musikalisches Material auf eine Weise, die den schroffen Kontrast zwischen den beiden Welten in Ostrowskis Drama brillant auf den Punkt bringt. Und da ist noch etwas. Im Verlauf der acht Jahre, die zwischen der Entstehung der ersten beiden Akte von *Jenůfa* lagen, hatte sich sein Opernstil von der bukolischen Volksoper im Stil von Smetana und Dvořák zu einem bemerkenswerten musikalisch-dramatischen Naturalismus hin entwickelt. Jetzt, siebzehn Jahre nach der Vollendung jener Oper, unternahm Janáček eine noch kühnere Reise – vom flüssigen Sprechgesang der ersten beiden *Katja*-Akte hin zum hypnotischen Surrealismus, in dem die Oper endet. Seine folgenden drei Bühnenwerke – das vom Comicstrip inspirierte *Füchslin*, die expressionistische *Sache Makropulos* und das *Totenhaus* im Stile einer krassen Skizze – geben jeglichen Naturalismus auf. *Katja* ist die erste Zwischenstation auf dieser Reise.

Janáček legt die musikalische und dramaturgische Argumentation des Werks von Anfang an in aller Klarheit dar. Vier lastende

Streicherakkorde, acht leise Paukenschläge und ein qualvolles Melisma der Streicher führen uns in die raue und bedrückende Welt der Familie Kabanow ein. Wenn das Tempo der Musik zunimmt, wiederholen die Pauken ihren Rhythmus *fortissimo*, bis er sich in die vordergründig kecke Imitation einer russischen Volksweise verwandelt, begleitet von bimmelnden Schlittenglocken. Dieses kleine Thema wird an zwei wesentlichen Stellen des Dramas wiederkehren. Es begleitet den Höhepunkt des ersten Akts, wenn der von seiner Mutter beherrschte junge Kaufmann Tichon zu seiner Geschäftsreise aufbricht und seine empfindsame junge Frau Katja zu Hause zurücklässt, wo sie ihrer Leidenschaft für Boris Gregorjewitsch ausgeliefert ist. Es kehrt ganz am Schluss der Oper zurück, nachdem das Verhältnis zwischen Katja und Boris erst erblüht ist und dann durch Katjas selbstmörderische Schuldgefühle ruiniert wurde. Janáček benutzt dieses Thema als Prüfstein der Gesellschaft, in der seine Heldin lebt. Seine konventionell slawische Melodik stellt die Oberfläche des bürgerlichen Lebens in Russland dar. Auseinander genommen und in neue Formen verbogen enthüllt es die Heuchelei und Grausamkeit, die unter dieser Oberfläche liegen.

Janáček verleiht seinen Figuren auf ebenso bemerkenswerte Weise ihr musikalisches Leben. Sie werden nicht durch Leitmotive im Sinne Wagners identifiziert, sondern durch winzige melodische oder rhythmische Gesten, die dann im Laufe der Oper verstärkt werden. Boris' Onkel, der brutale, betrunkene Kaufmann Dikoj, weist einen nervösen punktierten Rhythmus auf, der auf gedämpften Trompeten seinen ersten Auftritt begleitet. Wenn das Motiv im letzten Akt wiederkehrt, als er Schutz vor dem Gewitter sucht, das den Höhepunkt der Oper bildet, ist es zu einem Thema angeschwollen, das so arrogant und überheblich ist wie Dikoj selbst. Die Darstellung der Kabanicha, Katjas Schwiegermutter, ist noch subtiler. Sie verfügt nicht über eigenes musikalisches Material, sondern beeinträchtigt vielmehr die musikalische Stabilität der Personen in ihrem Umfeld. Bei ihrem ersten Auftritt stören ihre gefühllosen Einwürfe die zart fließende Melodie der Flöten, Streicher und Harfen, die Katja selbst eingeführt hat. Indem er sie der kantigen Asymmetrie der Musik von Dikoj und der Kabanicha entgegenstellt, platziert Janáček Katja als stille Präsenz im Zentrum einer gestörten Welt. Als sie in der folgenden Szene mit ihrer Pflegegeschwester Barbara



(Warja) zurückkehrt, erweitert Janáček diese musikalische Charakterisierung noch. Die Flöten und Streicher flattern nun als Imitation ihres Verlangens, wie ein Vogel fliegen zu können, als wolle sie dem emotionalen Kerker ihres Haushalts entfliehen. Ausgesprochen gewandt verbindet er die Musik von Katja und Warja, ohne die Individualität der Figuren aufzuheben. Auf dem Höhepunkt ihrer gemeinsamen Szene spiegelt sich der Halbschluss bei ihren Worten “und dann bei Nacht” in Warjas “wovon träumst du?” wider, ehe er mit ihrer Antwort “Warja, ich kann nicht schlafen” aufgelöst wird. Dann nach dem erotischen Sehnen der Musik, die ihre Phantasien darstellt, kehrt der Vorhalt bei den Worten “ich gehe, ich gehe” zurück, und wie das Drama selbst findet die Musik hier keine Auflösung.

In den anschließenden Szenen kommt es zu einer Reihe von meisterhaften Wendungen. Wenn Warja andeutet, Katja werde Boris vielleicht ganz zufällig treffen, erklingt im Orchester eine weitere kleine Volksweise, nur um von Tichons russischem Thema mit den irritierenden Schlittenglocken rüde unterbrochen zu werden. Im Laufe der demütigenden Szene, mit der der Akt schließt, wird Warjas Thema vergessen, als die Kabanicha Katja zwingt, ihrem Gatten Treue

zu geloben. Doch als die beiden jungen Frauen sich im folgenden Akt auf ihr gemeinsames Stelldichein im nächtlichen Garten vorbereiten, bestimmt es das musikalische Material. Warja und ihr Liebhaber Kudrjasch tauschen in einer Art musikalischen Vorspiels miteinander Volkslieder. Im Gegensatz dazu besteht die Musik für Katja und ihren ersehnten Geliebten Boris ganz aus chromatischer Unentschlossenheit. Dies ist nicht bloß ein harmonisches Mittel zur Charakterdarstellung, sondern verbindet das Persönliche mit dem Sozialen – die Unmittelbarkeit von Katjas unerfüllten Emotionen mit der Darstellung der unversöhnlichen Gesellschaft, die ihre Tragödie auslöst. Es gibt in diesem Akt ein dutzend Beispiele dafür, wie die Musik die Gemütslage der Protagonisten untermauert – die Andeutung des kommenden Unwetters, als die beiden Mädchen in den Garten hinaustreten, der leidenschaftliche Höhepunkt, wenn Katja und Boris “mein Leben” singen (er verspricht ein Liebesduett, das jedoch vorenthalten wird), und das verzweifelte Cellosolo, das den postkoitalen Zärtlichkeiten von Kudrjasch und Warja vorangeht und den Akt nicht in Erfüllung, sondern mit Verzweiflung beendet.

Auf diese Weise bereitet uns Janáček auf die halluzinatorischen Schluss-Szenen

der Oper vor. Die Musik, die anfangs das Gewitter begleitet, ist im Wesentlichen aus Dikojs nervösem Thema im Dreiertakt abgeleitet. Sie hat den Effekt, die akustische Textur zu fragmentieren, als erlebten wir das Geschehen aus Katjas zunehmend verwirrter Sicht. Melodiebruchteile tauchen auf und verschwinden wieder. Die “Katarina”-Rufe der Anderen, die nach ihr suchen, hallen in den Hörnern und Streichern nach, und in der Dunkelheit kehrt ein Bruchteil von Warjas Volkslied wieder. Verzerrte Versionen des musikalischen Materials der ersten beiden Akte, z.B. die flatternden Flöten, die in der ersten Szene des zweiten Akts die Vögel darstellen, durchziehen Katjas beide Monologe. Diese Reminiszenzen dringen sogar in das letzte Zusammentreffen der beiden Liebenden ein, das mit einem weiteren gescheiterten Versuch eines Liebesduetts beginnt und mit einem grausigen Abschied endet. Wiederum verfügt Boris über keine eigene Musik, wie um darauf hinzuweisen, dass er keine Willenskraft oder Charakterstärke aufbieten kann. Musikalisch wie dramaturgisch ist Katja am Wolga-Ufer isoliert, und der wortlose Chor, der sie ruft, ist die Verkörperung ihres Sehns nach Vergessen in den Wassern. In diesem letzten Akt hat sich Janáček vom Naturalismus verabschiedet. Wir

finden uns im Reich der Psyche. Wenn die Oper ihrem Schluss entgegen eilt, begleitet von wilden und klagenden Abwandlungen von Tichons Melodie, folgen wir dem Komponisten auf dem Weg in eine neue Landschaft.

Katja Kabanowa ist ein ausgesprochen seltsames Liebesgeschenk eines Komponisten an seine widerstrebende Muse. Sein unmittelbarer Vorgänger, *Das Tagebuch eines Verschollenen*, hat ein zentrales Klavierzwischenspiel mit dem Titel *Intermezzo Erotico* – ein außerordentlicher Akt musikalischer Wunscherfüllung – und endet damit, das der Held in die Wälder davon schreitet, um sich zu seiner Zigeunergeliebten zu gesellen. *Katja* behandelt, wie das zurückgewiesene Subjekt von Tolstois *Anna Karenina*, die ehebrecherische Liebe mit erheblichem Einfühlungsvermögen, versetzt mit schroffer Ehrlichkeit. Doch in mancherlei Beziehung handelte es sich wahrhaftig um ein Geschenk, wenn auch womöglich nicht ganz so, wie Janáček es sich vorgestellt hatte. In diesem Fall war Kamila die Gebende und Janáček der Empfänger. Als er Ostrowskis Darstellung einer trostlosen Gesellschaft mit seinem eigenen Bestreben verschmolz, seine geliebte Kamila in der zerbrechlichen, verwundbaren Katja widergespiegelt zu sehen, vollzog Janáček als Komponist einen exponentiellen Sprung. In der



Progression vom naturalistisch volkstümlichen ersten Akt über den intimen Expressionismus des zweiten bis hin zu surrealen Verzweiflung des dritten gesellt sich *Katja Kabanowa* zu Bergs fast zeitgleich entstandenem *Wozzek* als eines der ersten großen modernen Musikdramen.

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Aussage

Marfa Kabanicha, die Witwe des Kaufmanns Kabanow, beherrscht das Dasein ihres Sohnes Tichon und dessen Frau Katja. Auf ihre Anweisung hin begibt er sich auf eine Geschäftsreise, obwohl Katja befürchtet, in seiner Abwesenheit könne etwas Schreckliches passieren. In der Tat veranlasst Tichons Abreise seine Pflegeschwester, Katja zu einem Stelldichein mit ihrem Liebhaber zu überreden. Ein furchtbares Unwetter und Tichons unerwartete Rückkehr entnerven Katja, und sie bekennt sich öffentlich zu ihrem Ehebruch. Sie ertränkt sich, und die Kabanicha überwacht Tichons reuige Verzweiflung.

Inhaltsangabe

Die Oper spielt um 1860 in einer kleinen Stadt an der Wolga.

COMPACT DISC ONE

Erster Akt

Szene 1

Vor dem Kabanowschen Haus, Nachmittag

[1] – [2] Kudrjasch, ein junger Lehrer, bewundert die Schönheit des Flusses. [3] – [4] Die Dienerin Glascha ist nicht beeindruckt. Bald werden sie von Dikoj abgelenkt, der im Herankommen seinen Neffen Boris ob dessen Faulheit beschimpft. Als er erfährt, dass Katja noch in der Kirche ist, macht sich Dikoj auf die Suche nach ihr. Boris bleibt mit Kudrjasch allein zurück und erklärt, dass er nur wegen der Bestimmungen im Testament seiner Großmutter bei seinem Onkel bleibe: Seine Schwester und er werden ihr Erbe mit einundzwanzig Jahren antreten, aber nur, wenn sie bis dahin ihrem Onkel gehorchen. [5] Dann verrät Boris, dass er sich in eine verheiratete Frau verliebt hat, nämlich in Katja Kabanowa.

[6] Die Familie Kabanow kehrt aus der Kirche zurück. Die Kabanicha befiehlt ihrem Sohn Tichon, sich sofort zum Markt in Kasan aufzumachen. Sie beschwert sich bitterlich darüber, dass er sie zugunsten seiner Frau vernachlässigt, und weist Katja zurecht, als sie zu widersprechen wagt. [7] Intermezzo I.

Szene 2

Im Kabanowschen Haus, Nachmittag

[8] Katja erzählt Barbara, einer Pflgegetochter im Hause Kabanow, von ihrer glücklichen Kindheit, und Barbara fragt Katja nach ihren Träumen: [9] – [10] Katja sagt, sie höre die Stimme eines Mannes, die ihr ins Ohr flüstert, sie möge mit ihm davongehen, und sie folge ihm. Tichon tritt auf – er ist im Begriff, zum Markt aufzubrechen, wie es ihm seine Mutter befohlen hat. Katja fleht ihn an, sie nicht zu verlassen, aber er muss gehen und kann sie nicht mitnehmen. [11] Katja bittet ihn, sie schwören zu lassen, dass sie keinen anderen Mann ansehen oder ansprechen werde. [12] Die Kabanicha kommt und besteht darauf, dass ihr Sohn vor der Abreise Katja seine Anweisungen gibt: Sie muss die Kabanicha achten und ihr gehorchen, fleißig sein und “und ihre Blicke von anderen Männern fern halten”. Katja umarmt ihren Mann, ehe er geht.

Zweiter Akt

Szene 1

Im Kabanowschen Haus, Spätnachmittag

[13] Die Kabanicha rügt Katja, weil sie Tichons Abreise nicht ausreichend betrauert. Die Kabanicha geht und verlangt, nicht gestört zu werden. [14] Barbara kommt und verrät, dass es

ihr gelungen ist, den Schlüssel zum Gartentor zu ergattern; falls sie Boris treffe, werde sie ihn bitten, sich mit Katja am Tor zu treffen, sagt sie. Katja nimmt den Schlüssel und verbirgt ihn hastig, als sie die Kabanicha mit Dikoj reden hört. [15] Katja tritt hinaus – sie sehnt sich nach dem Abend. [16] Die Kabanicha und der beschwipste Dikoj treten auf. Er will nicht heimgehen und macht sich an die Kabanicha heran. Sie weist ihn von sich. [17] Intermezzo II.

Szene 2

Vor dem Gartentor der Kabanows

[18] [Einleitung]. [19] Kudrjasch kommt auf der Suche nach Barbara ans Tor und singt ein Lied. Boris tritt auf und erklärt, er warte auf jemanden, nämlich auf Katja, eine verheiratete Frau. Kudrjasch warnt ihn wegen der damit verbundenen Risiken. [20] Barbara kommt und teilt Boris mit, dass Katja unterwegs sei. Kudrjasch und Barbara begeben sich ans Flussufer. [21] – [22] Bald darauf erscheint Katja; sie weigert sich, Boris’ Hand zu halten. Er tut seine Leidenschaft kund, aber Katja ist zurückhaltender im Eingeständnis ihrer Liebe zu ihm. Sie umarmen sich. Man hört, wie Kudrjasch und Barbara ihre Liebe zueinander bekunden. Katja tritt wieder durchs Gartentor und lässt Boris draußen zurück.



COMPACT DISC TWO

Dritter Akt

Szene 1

Zwei Tage später; eine Ruine am Wolga-Ufer, gegen Abend

[1] Kudrjasch und sein Freund Kuligin suchen Schutz vor dem Regen, und bald kommen andere hinzu. Sie bemerken die alten Fresken mit Darstellungen der Hölle und der Verdammten, die noch unter der eingefallenen Apsis zu erkennen sind. Auch Dikoj kommt, um sich unterzustellen. Kudrjasch erklärt, das Unwetter sei “nichts als Elektrizität”, während Dikoj es als Strafe Gottes ansieht.

Es hört auf zu regnen, und Dikoj tritt hinaus, gefolgt von den anderen. [2] Barbara kommt und macht Boris auf sich aufmerksam. Sie teilt ihm mit, dass Tichon unerwartet zurückgekehrt ist und Katja hysterisch reagiert hat – sie droht sogar, alles zu gestehen. [3] Als Katja kommt, verstecken sich Boris und Kudrjasch, während Barbara Katja zu beruhigen versucht. Als Dikoj, Tichon und die Kabanicha auftreten, fällt Katja auf die Knie und beichtet in aller Öffentlichkeit ihre Untreue. Sie bricht in den Armen ihres Mannes zusammen, reißt sich aber sofort wieder los und eilt in das Unwetter hinaus.

Szene 2

Am Ufer der Wolga, bei Einbruch der Nacht

[4] Tichon und Glascha suchen nach der verschwundenen Katja. Barbara und Kudrjasch beschließen, zusammen nach Moskau zu entfliehen. [5] – [7] Katja tritt alleine auf. Sie bereut ihr Geständnis, doch sie liebt Boris und sehnt sich nach dem Tod. Plötzlich kommt ihr Geliebter herbei, und sie sinken sich in die Arme. [8] Boris teilt ihr mit, dass sein Onkel ihn fortschicken will. Katja bleibt ihrer Schwiegermutter und dem betrunkenen Ehemann ausgeliefert.

Boris geht, und Katja stellt sich ihr Grab vor. [9] Sie verschränkt die Arme und wirft sich in den Fluss. [10] Ein Suchtrupp kommt, und Dikoj tritt mit Katjas Leiche auf. Tichon gibt seiner Mutter die Schuld für Katjas Tod, aber die Kabanicha dankt nur den Nachbarn für ihre Hilfe.

Übersetzung: Bernd Müller

Die aus Australien stammende **Cheryl Barker** (Katarina Kabanowa (Katja)) studierte in Melbourne bei Dame Joan Hammond und in London bei David Harper. In Australien tritt sie regelmäßig an der Opera Australia auf,

wo sie unter anderem die Rollen der Nedda (*Pagliacci*), der Gräfin (*Die Hochzeit des Figaro*), Mimì (*La Bohème*), Violetta (*La traviata*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Tatjana (*Eugen Onegin*) und die Titelrollen in *Madama Butterfly* und *Tosca* sang. Sie hat außerdem die Partien der Mimì, Antonia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) und Tatjana an der Victoria State Opera gegeben, Tatjana und Violetta an der Opera Queensland sowie *Madama Butterfly* und Violetta an der New Zealand Opera.

International ist Cheryl Barker insbesondere für ihre Darbietungen der *Madama Butterfly* bekannt – sie hat die Rolle an der English National Opera, der Houston Grand Opera, der Vlaamse Opera, der Hamburger Staatsoper, der Deutschen Oper Berlin und jüngst an der Nederlands Opera gesungen. Zu ihren Darbietungen in aller Welt zählen daneben Jennifer (*A Midsummer Marriage*) am Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Tatjana und Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*) an der Scottish Opera, Oksana (in Rimski-Korsakows *Weihnacht*), die Gouvernante (*The Turn of the Screw*), Musetta (*La Bohème*), und Donna Elvira an der English National Opera, die Titelrolle in *Maria Stuarda* für die Nationale Reisoper der Niederlande, Violetta an der Hamburger Staatsoper und

der Deutschen Oper, die Titelrolle der *Katja Kabanowa* in Genf und an der Welsh National Opera, sowie an der Vlaamse Opera die Titelrollen in *Suor Angelica* und der *Lustigen Witwe*, außerdem Mimì, Desdemona (*Otello*) und Liù (*Turandot*).

Cheryl Barker tritt regelmäßig in Recitals und Konzerten auf, und ihre zahlreichen Aufnahmen auf Tonträger umfassen Emilia Marty (*Die Sache Makropulos*) und *Madama Butterfly* im Rahmen der Chandos-Reihe “Opera in English“, Dysons *Quo Vadis* für Chandos und eine Solo-CD mit Puccini-Arien.

Jane Henschel (Marfa Kabanowa (Kabanicha)) wurde im US-Staat Wisconsin geboren, studierte an der University of Southern California und ließ sich dann in Deutschland nieder. Ihre Rollen umfassen Baba the Turk (*The Rake's Progress*) bei den Festspielen von Glyndebourne, Saito Kinen und Salzburg, Brangäne (*Tristan und Isolde*) an der Los Angeles Opera und der Pariser Opéra, Klytemnestra (*Elektra*) an der San Francisco Opera, die Principessa (*Suor Angelica*) mit dem Concertgebouw-Orchester unter Riccardo Chailly, *Dialogues des Carmélites* in Amsterdam, die Küsterin (*Jenůfa*) unter Seiji Ozawa in Japan und die Kabanicha bei den Salzburger Festspielen.



Am Royal Opera House Covent Garden hat sie Fricka und Waltraute, Ulrica (*Un ballo in maschera*), Klytemnestra sowie Mrs. Grose (*The Turn of the Screw*) gesungen, an der Mailänder Scala die Herodias (*Salome*) und Cassandre (*Les Troyens*). Zu ihren Rollen an der Bayerischen Staatsoper in München gehören Herodias, Klytemnestra, Ulrica, Mistress Quickly (*Falstaff*) und Ortrud (*Lohengrin*), an der Deutschen Oper Berlin sang sie Klytemnestra, Herodias und Ortrud, an der Wiener Staatsoper Klytemnestra, Fricka und Mistress Quickly. Die Amme (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*) ist zu ihrer Paraderolle geworden, die sie in Amsterdam, London, Los Angeles, München, Paris, Wien, Berlin und an der Metropolitan Opera in New York gegeben hat.

Jane Henschels Aufnahmen auf Tonträger umfassen *Hänsel und Gretel* im Rahmen der Chandos-Reihe "Opera in English", Krassas *Verlobung im Traum*, *The Rake's Progress*, Albéniz' *Merlin*, Brittens *The Turn of the Screw* und Mahler's Achte Sinfonie.

Der amerikanische Tenor **Robert Brubaker** (Boris Grigorjewitsch) hat sich als führender Tenor an Opernhäusern in den USA und in ganz Europa etabliert. Im US-Staat Pennsylvania geboren, erwarb er seinen Hochschulabschluss

am Hartt College of Music in Hartford, wo er bei David Ray Smith studierte.

In den vergangenen Spielzeiten hat er regelmäßig an der Metropolitan Opera (Mephistopheles in *Doktor Faustus*) gastiert, am Royal Opera House Covent Garden (Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*), an der Hamburger Staatsoper (Hermann in *Pique Dame*), am Teatro alla Scala (Guido Bardi in Zemlinskys *Florentinischer Tragödie* und Golizyn in *Chowanschtschina*), bei den Festspielen von Glyndebourne (Laça in *Jenůfa*) und Salzburg (mit der Titelrolle in Zemlinskys *Der König Kandaules*), am Liceu in Barcelona (Golizyn, außerdem Erik im *Fliegenden Holländer*) und an der Opéra de Paris-Bastille (Graf Pierre Besuchow in *Krieg und Frieden*, Dimitri in *Boris Godunow*, Golizyn, sowie die Titelrolle in *Der Zwerg*). Er ist außerdem an der Houston Grand Opera, der Canadian Opera Company, der Montpeller Opera, Dallas Opera und an der Deutschen Oper Berlin aufgetreten. Zu seinen Partien auf Tonträger gehört auch Albert Gregor (*Die Sache Makropulos*) im Rahmen der Chandos-Reihe "Opera in English".

Peter Hoare (Tichon Kabanow) wurde im englischen Bradford geboren und studierte

Schlagzeug an der Musikschule von Huddersfield. Er war mehrere Jahre lang als freischaffender Schlagzeuger tätig, ehe er die berufliche Laufbahn eines Sängers einschlug.

Zu seinen Opernpartien an der Welsh National Opera gehören Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), der Hauptmann (Wozzeck), Vaudemont (*Iolanta*), Titus (*La clemenza di Tito*), Narraboth (*Salome*), der Gottesnarr (*Boris Godunow*), die Knusperhexe (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Tichon (*Katja Kabanowa*), Bardolfo (*Falstaff*), Valzacchi (*Der Rosenkavalier*) und Goro (*Madama Butterfly*) am Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Mr. Upfold (*Albert Herring*), Idomeneo und Arbace in *Idomeneo* sowie Vater Eustaph (*Die Verlobung im Kloster*) für die Glyndebourne Festival Opera; hinzu kommen Darbietungen mit den Berliner Philharmonikern unter der Leitung von Sir Simon Rattle in Berlin, Luzern, und bei den Salzburger Festspielen. Er ist außerdem an der Opera North, der Scottish Opera, am Grand Théâtre de Genève, an der Opéra de Lausanne und am Théâtre des Champs Elysées aufgetreten.

Peter Wedd (Wanja Kudrjasch) studierte in London an der Guildhall School of Music and Drama bei William McAlpine und

anschließend am National Opera Studio, wo er von der Peter Moores Foundation gefördert wurde. Er war von 1999 bis 2001 als Solist im Ensemble der Royal Opera Covent Garden engagiert und gastierte regelmäßig an der Welsh National Opera. Seine dortigen Rollen umfassen Don José (*Carmen*), Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Alfredo (*La traviata*) und Štewa (*Jenůfa*) sowie den Steuermann (*Der fliegende Holländer*).

Des weiteren ist er in Großbritannien und Irland in den Rollen des Boris (*Katja Kabanowa*) und Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) für Opera North aufgetreten, als Lenski (*Eugen Onegin*), Federico (*L'Arlesiana*) und Pluto (*Orphée aux enfers*) an der Opera Holland Park, Kyska (*Sarlatán*) und Julius (*I Cavalieri di Ekebu*) bei den Festspielen von Wexford, als Rodolfo (*La Bohème*) in der Londoner Royal Albert Hall, Tamino für Glyndebourne On Tour, Lenski (*Eugen Onegin*) an der Opera Holland Park und als Chevalier de la Force (*Gespräche der Karmeliterinnen*) an der English National Opera.

Außerhalb Großbritanniens hat Peter Wedd an der European Chamber Opera, am Lyric Theatre in Singapur, mit der Opera Australia und am Opéra-Théâtre de Limoges gesungen, außerdem ist er bei den Festspielen von



Maribor in Slowenien und von Cernier in der Schweiz aufgetreten.

Victoria Simmonds (Barbara) studierte bei David Pollard an der Londoner Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Sie wurde mit dem Countess of Munster Prize ausgezeichnet. Im Jahre 2000 trat sie am Royal Opera House im Rahmen des English Bach Festival in Händels *Oreste* auf und gab ihr Debüt an der English National Opera als Maos Erste Sekretärin Nancy T'ang in John Adams' *Nixon in China*. Sie war von 2000 bis 2005 Solistin im Ensemble der English National Opera und sang dort Cherubino (*Die Hochzeit des Figaro*), Mercedes (*Carmen*), Zaida (*Der Türke in Italien*), Pitti-Sing (*The Mikado*), Rosina (*Der Barbier von Sevilla*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Hermia (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) und Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*).

Zu ihren Festspielengagements gehören die Rollen der Wellgunde (*Das Rheingold*) unter Sir Simon Rattle in Aix, Händels *La Lucrezia* beim Festival von Batignano, die Titelrolle in *La Perichole* und Ines (*Maria Padilla*) in Buxton, die Titelrolle der Carmen für Raymond Gubbay in der Londoner Royal Albert Hall, Isolier (*Le Comte Ory*) an der Garsington Opera und Olga (*Eugen Onegin*)

an der Opera Holland Park. Sie gab ihr Debüt an der Nederlandse Opera als Lucienne (in Korngolds *Die tote Stadt*).

Der walisische Bass **Gwynne Howell** (Dikoj) studierte am Royal Northern College of Music. Er trat 1972 dem Ensemble des Royal Opera House Covent Garden bei und hat dort die meisten bedeutenden Basspartien gesungen. Daneben pflegte er eine langjährige Verbindung zur English National Opera, wo Hans Sachs, Gurnemanz, König Philipp II. und Blaubart zu seinen zahlreichen Erfolgspartien gehörten. Seine internationale Karriere umfasst Auftritte in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Santa Fe, Paris, Genf, Hamburg, München und Köln. Auf dem Konzertpodium hat er weltweit mit Dirigenten wie Claudio Abbado, Carlo Maria Giulini, Riccardo Muti, Leonard Bernstein, Pierre Boulez, Daniel Barenboim, James Levine, Bernard Haitink, Zubin Mehta und Seiji Ozawa gearbeitet. Zu seinen vielfältigen Aufnahmen auf Tonträger zählen Mahlers Achte Sinfonie mit Seiji Ozawa, der *Messias* mit Sir Georg Solti, *Tristan und Isolde* unter Sir Reginald Goodall sowie Beethovens Neunte Sinfonie mit Kurt Masur.

Seine jüngsten Engagements umfassen Schigolch (*Lulu*) (auch eingespielt im Rahmen

der Chandos-Reihe "Opera in English") und Dansker (*Billy Budd*) an der English National Opera, in Glyndebourne Inszenierungen von *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Don Giovanni*, *Figaro* und *Otello*, am Royal Opera House Covent Garden der Alte Zwangsarbeiter in *Lady Macbeth von Mzensk* und die Uraufführung von *The Tempest* von Thomas Adès – die gleiche Rolle sang er auch 2006 in Santa Fe. Gwynne Howell wurde 1998 mit dem Orden Commander of the British Empire (CBE) ausgezeichnet.

Kathleen Wilkinson (Glascha) wurde in der nordenglischen Grafschaft Lancashire geboren und studierte bei Barbara Robotham am Royal Northern College of Music, wo sie ein Peter-Moores-Stipendium und mehrere Auszeichnungen erhielt.

She hat an der Scottish Opera, der Opera Ireland, bei den Opernfestivals von Holland Park und Grange Park sowie bei den Festspielen von Glyndebourne gesungen, wo ihre Rollen die Madame de la Haltière (*Cendrillon*), Britzens Lucretia, Mercedes und die Titelrolle in *Carmen* umfassten, dazu Filipjewna (*Eugen Onegin*), Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*), Martha (*Faust*), Azucena (*Il trovatore*) und Madam By-Ends in der

Aufführung und Einspielung von *The Pilgrim's Progress* des Royal Northern College of Music.

Owen Webb (Kuligin) wuchs in Pontllw im Süden von Wales auf und studierte bei Beatrice Unsworth am Royal College of Music and Drama, wo er mit mehreren Auszeichnungen bedacht wurde. Gegenwärtig nimmt er Unterricht bei Stephen Roberts. Er ist assoziierter Künstler der Welsh National Opera und erhielt dort die Schäfer- und Chris-Ball-Stipendien zugesprochen.

Seine Rollen umfassen Schauard (*La Bohème*), Masetto (*Don Giovanni*), Marullo (*Rigoletto*), Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Zurga (*Die Perlenfischer*), Escamillo (*Carmen*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), und Dr. Falke (*Die Fledermaus*).

Der **Chor der Welsh National Opera** begann seine Tätigkeit als professionelles Ensemble im Jahre 1968 und sang solange zusammen mit dem gefeierten Freiwilligenchor (Voluntary Chorus) des Hauses, bis der 1973 aufgelöst wurde. Der Freiwilligenchor hatte aus Amateuren bestanden, die sich 1943 zusammaten, um den Kern der späteren Welsh National Opera zu bilden, und es war der Erfolg dieses Chors, der die WNO in der Opernwelt etablierte.



Gegen Ende der 1960er-Jahre ging die WNO insgesamt in ein Berufsensemble über, und der Freiwilligenchor wurde durch den Chor der Welsh National Opera ersetzt. Dieser Chor hat in den letzten Jahren Konzertreisen durch Südwesten unternommen. Orchester und Chor haben (unter renommierten Dirigenten wie Sir Reginald Goodall, Sir Charles Mackerras, Carlo Rizzi, Richard Bonyngue und Pierre Boulez) zahlreiche Einspielungen vorgenommen, wobei das Repertoire von Bellini über Verdi, Wagner, Gilbert und Sullivan bis Maxwell Davies reicht.

Das Orchester der Welsh National Opera hat den Musikpreis der Royal Philharmonic Society in der Kategorie Großensemble gewonnen, und die WNO hat insgesamt vier weitere bedeutende Auszeichnungen der Philharmonic Society erhalten, außerdem den Preis für die Beste Operninszenierung der Zeitung *The Evening Standard*, einen Laurence-Olivier-Preis für die beste neue Operninszenierung sowie den Barclays Theaterpreis für hervorragende Leistungen im Opernbereich.

Das **Orchester der Welsh National Opera** wurde 1970 gegründet. Seither hat es sich als ausgesprochen gutes und vielseitiges

Ensemble etabliert, das ebenso hohes Lob für seine Leistungen im breit gefächerten Opernrepertoire wie für seine Konzerte und die zahlreichen Aufnahmen für viele verschiedene Plattenfirmen geerntet hat.

Zu seinen ehemaligen Musikdirektoren gehören Richard Armstrong (1973–1986), Sir Charles Mackerras (1987–1992) und Tugan Sokhiev (2002–2004). Carlo Rizzi, der von 1992 bis 2001 Musikdirektor des Orchesters war, kehrte 2004 in gleicher Funktion an die Welsh National Opera zurück und hat in deren erster Saison im neuen Wales Millennium Centre Aufführungen von *La traviata*, *Cavalleria rusticana* und *Pagliacci* dirigiert. Jüngst leitete er die von der Kritik gelobte Inszenierung von *Don Carlos*, den *Fliegenden Holländer* mit Bryn Terfel in der Titelrolle in Cardiff, London und Birmingham sowie im Herbst 2006 die Wiederaufnahme der viel geliebten WNO-Inszenierung von *La Bohème*.

Zusätzlich zu seiner Hauptaufgabe im Bühnenbereich gibt das Orchester der WNO Konzerte in zahlreichen kleinen und großen Sälen in ganz England und Wales, darunter auch Auftritte bei bedeutenden Festivals wie den BBC-Promenadenkonzerten in der Londoner Royal Albert Hall.

Carlo Rizzi wurde in Mailand geboren und studierte am dortigen Konservatorium Klavier, Komposition und Orchesterleitung. Er wurde im August 2004 erneut zum Musikdirektor der Welsh National Opera ernannt, nachdem er diese Position schon einmal von 1992 bis 2001 innegehabt hatte. Er hat sein umfangreiches Repertoire (von Gluck bis Berio) bei zahlreichen Orchestern in Europa, Nordamerika, dem Fernen Osten und Australien dirigiert, darunter das London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia und Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, das Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, das Los Angeles Philharmonic sowie die Sinfonieorchester von St. Louis, Dallas und Atlanta, außerdem das Orchestre National de France und das Orchester der Mailänder Scala.

Sein Repertoire an der Welsh National Opera umfasst *Fidelio*, *Boris Godunow*, *Peter Grimes*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Katja Kabanowa*, *Salome*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Don Carlos* und *Der fliegende Holländer*. Im Zuge der 100sten Saison der BBC-Promenadenkonzerte dirigierte er das Orchester der Welsh National Opera in seinem ersten Sinfoniekonzert der Festspiele. Unter

seiner Leitung hat das Orchester außerdem zahlreiche Preise gewonnen, darunter den der Royal Philharmonic Society. Seit 1996 hat Carlo Ricci regelmäßig bei Konzerten des Edinburgh International Festival gastiert.

Neben seiner Tätigkeit an der Welsh National Opera hat er als Operndirigent an der Mailänder Scala (*Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*), dem Royal Opera House Covent Garden (*La traviata*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Così fan tutte*, *Otello*, *Aroldo*, *Il trovatore*), an der Opéra Bastille (*Rigoletto*, *Simone Boccanegra*, *La Cenerentola*), an der Deutschen Oper Berlin (*Litaliana in Algeri*, *Macbeth*), in München (*La Bohème*, *La traviata*) und Zürich (*Tosca* und *I vespri Siciliani*) gewirkt; an der New Yorker Metropolitan Opera hat er *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Il trovatore*, *Norma*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *La traviata*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Aida*, *Turandot* und *Nabucco* gegeben. In der vergangenen Saison eröffnete er das neue Opernhaus in Cardiff (im Wales Millennium Centre) mit *La traviata*.

Im September 2004 wurde er zum Ersten Gastdirigenten des Teatro Comunale von Bologna bestellt und hat dort *Il trovatore* und *Andrea Chénier* aufgeführt. Jüngst dirigierte er *La traviata* und *La Bohème* an der Metropolitan

Opera, *Don Carlos* in Zürich und *Aida* in Houston.

Zu seinen Aufnahmen auf Tonträger zählen Respighis Tondichtungen und Bizets

L'Arlesienne mit dem London Philharmonic Orchestra, außerdem Opern wie *La traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Faust*, *La Cenerentola* und *Un ballo in maschera*.



Chorus of Welsh National Opera



On session: Robert Brubaker and Peter Hoare



Janáček: Kátya Kabanová

Il renferme tant d'éléments touchants et doux (dans le style slave); quelle profondeur d'émotion! Pourvu que je trouve l'expression juste, la même profondeur!

Janáček à Vincenc Červinka
décembre 1919

Le sixième opéra de Janáček rend témoignage des deux grands amours des dix dernières années si remarquables de la vie du compositeur. Le premier de ces amours est aujourd'hui légendaire – sa longue passion sans retour pour Kamila Stösslová, la jeune femme mariée qu'il rencontre dans la station thermale tchèque de Luhačovice en 1917. Le second est presque aussi important – sa passion de toute une vie pour tout ce qui est russe. A une époque où les terres tchèques sont sous contrôle autrichien, il reste un slavophile invétéré, voire obstiné. Il étudie la littérature russe en profondeur et fonde un cercle russe dans sa ville natale de Brno. Il visite Moscou et en revient bouleversé, décrivant le Kremlin comme un conte de fées. Par moments son obsession pour toute chose slave l'entraîne aux bords de l'autodestruction. Il refuse de

parler allemand à sa belle-famille, ce qui cause de fréquentes disputes de ménage. Et pourtant cette obsession pour la culture russe est à la base de certaines de ses plus grandes œuvres. Son Premier Quatuor à cordes emprunte son nom et son histoire tacite à une nouvelle très violente de Tolstoï, *La Sonate à Kreutzer*. Il compose une suite symphonique tout aussi féroce sur *Taras Boulba* de Gogol. Son ultime opéra, *De la Maison des morts*, puise son inspiration dans le roman semi-autobiographique de Dostoïevski. Mais le plus significatif, c'est que pour sa première œuvre pour la scène depuis la naissance de la nouvelle nation tchèque, il choisit un chef d'œuvre de l'un des plus grands dramaturges russes, Alexander Ostrovski.

Kátya Kabanová est basé sur *L'Orage* d'Ostrovski, pièce créée au Théâtre Maly à Moscou au milieu des années 1860. Comme tant d'œuvres littéraires russes de l'époque, la pièce est une critique sévère de la société de son temps. Après l'émancipation des serfs en 1861, le pays s'éveille aux immenses problèmes sociaux prêts à émerger dans l'Empire des Tsars. L'attitude vulgaire et répressive de la

bourgeoisie provinciale soulève en particulier de vives critiques chez les écrivains et les journalistes. Janáček a déjà abordé ce sujet de façon mémorable dans son premier grand opéra, *Jenůfa*, basé sur une pièce d'un auteur morave contemporain, Gabriela Preissová. Durant les années qui suivent la création de cet opéra, il recherche un sujet similaire dans la littérature russe et envisage un temps *Anna Karénine* et *Le Cadavre vivant* de Tolstoï. Ce n'est que lorsque *Jenůfa* est enfin monté à Prague et qu'il devient l'une des figures de proue artistiques de la nouvelle Tchécoslovaquie indépendante que Janáček trouve enfin le sujet parfait. En 1918 il lit dans une traduction tchèque la pièce d'Ostrovski et contacte immédiatement les éditeurs pour obtenir le droit de mettre la pièce en musique. Il est tellement inspiré par cette œuvre que l'opéra est achevé et orchestré en l'espace de treize mois.

Cette urgence, il la doit bien entendu à son premier grand amour. Il s'est lancé dans la composition du *Journal d'un disparu*, premier chef d'œuvre inspiré par Kamila, seulement quinze jours après avoir rencontré la jeune femme. Dans son esprit, la vive brunette se mêle à la gitane tentatrice du cycle de mélodies. Il rapproche avec la même fougue l'héroïne

de *L'Orage* et sa nouvelle amie. En effet, il lui confie dans une lettre que l'opéra est inspiré par sa perception de l'amour de Kamila pour son mari:

Lorsque j'ai fait ta connaissance à Luhačovice... et que j'ai vu pour la première fois combien une femme peut aimer son mari... c'est alors que j'ai décidé d'aborder *Kátya Kabanová*.

Etrange façon d'exprimer la naissance d'une grande passion... encore plus étrange l'œuvre musicale qui en résulte. *Kátya* est le seul opéra vraiment tragique de Janáček. *Jenůfa* s'achève sur un ton de résignation stoïque, malgré le meurtre de l'enfant illégitime de l'héroïne. Lorsque le personnage principal est tué dans *La Petite Renarde rusée*, Janáček conclut l'œuvre avec un immense hymne à la nature et à ses pouvoirs de renouveau éternel. *L'Affaire Makropoulos* s'achève sur la libération de notre héroïne de plus de trois cent-cinquante ans du joug de la réincarnation éternelle. Même dans la lugubre chronique basée dans un pénitencier qu'est *De la Maison des morts*, le personnage principal et un aigle prisonnier retrouvent la liberté dans les dernières mesures. Seule Kátya ne peut être sauvée. Elle est écrasée par le poids répressif de la société provinciale dont elle fait



partie et par le sentiment de culpabilité qui la déchire.

Mais l'opéra n'est certainement pas noir de bout en bout. Il renferme l'unique scène d'amour humain des opéras de la maturité de Janáček (la scène entre le renard et la renarde est plus charnelle qu'émotionnelle) et de plus il associe en contrepoint deux couples d'amants. Si la passion de Kátya nous apparaît condamnée dès les premières mesures, sa personnalité illumine chacune des scènes dans lesquelles elle intervient, même ces moments de désespoir qui précèdent son suicide. Luminosité que Janáček obtient grâce à une orchestration des plus transparentes, à une nouvelle éloquence mélodique mais aussi grâce au talent avec lequel il juxtapose les thèmes de Kátya et la musique laconique et brutale de ceux qui la persécutent. Sans imiter Wagner ou Strauss, il tisse et transpose son matériau musical de façon à faire ressortir le plus vivement possible le contraste brutal entre les deux mondes du drame d'Ostrovski. Mais ce n'est pas tout. Durant les huit années qui séparent la composition des deux premiers actes de *Jenůfa*, son style lyrique a évolué de l'opéra bucolique et populaire à la manière de Smetana et Dvořák au drame musical naturaliste. Et dix-sept ans après avoir achevé

Jenůfa, Janáček fait un voyage encore plus radical – depuis le chant parlé fluide des deux premiers actes de *Kátya* jusqu'au surréalisme envoûtant dans lequel s'achève l'opéra. Les trois œuvres pour la scène qui suivront – *La Renarde rusée*, inspiré de la bande dessinée, *L'Affaire Makropoulos* au ton expressionniste et *De la Maison des morts*, esquisse irrégulière – renonceront carrément au naturalisme. *Kátya* est la première étape de ce voyage.

Dès les premières mesures Janáček expose l'argument musical et dramatique de l'œuvre avec une clarté implacable. Quatre accords menaçants aux cordes, huit coups discrets aux timbales et un mélisme angoissé des cordes nous entraînent dans le monde dur et oppressant de la famille Kabanov. Comme la musique accélère, les timbales répètent leur rythme *fortissimo* jusqu'à ce qu'il se transforme en une copie en apparence fort enjouée d'un air populaire russe sur fond de clochettes de traîneau. Ce petit thème reviendra à deux moments forts du drame. Il accompagne l'apogée du premier acte lorsque le jeune commerçant Tikhon, dominé par sa mère, part en voyage d'affaires, laissant chez eux Kátya, sa jeune épouse si impressionnable, en proie à sa passion pour Boris Grigoryevich. Ce thème reviendra tout à la fin de l'opéra,

lorsque l'amour qui a fleuri entre Kátya et Boris est finalement empoisonné par la culpabilité suicidaire de Kátya. Pour Janáček ce thème est la pierre de touche de la société dans laquelle son héroïne évolue. Sa grâce mélodique typiquement slave dépeint la surface de la bourgeoisie russe. Ecartelé et réformé, il révèle l'hypocrisie et la cruauté qui se cachent sous cette surface.

Par la musique, Janáček donne vie à ses personnages de façon tout aussi remarquable. Ils ne sont pas associés à des *leitmotifs* wagnériens mais à de brefs gestes mélodiques ou rythmiques qui sont amplifiés au fur et à mesure du déroulement de l'opéra. L'oncle de Boris, le commerçant Dikoy, ivrogne brutal, est accompagné pour sa première entrée en scène par un rythme pointé nerveux aux cors bouchés. Ce motif revient au dernier acte quand Dikoy vient s'abriter de cet orage qui fournit l'apogée de l'œuvre, mais il s'est développé en un thème aussi arrogant et tyrannique que Dikoy lui-même. La représentation de Kabanicha, la belle-mère de Kátya, est encore plus subtile. Aucun thème musical ne lui est associé mais elle perturbe la stabilité musicale de ceux qu'elle côtoie. A sa première entrée, ses interjections cruelles troublent la mélodie tendre et gracieuse confiée

à la flûte, aux cordes et aux harpes, mélodie qui introduit Kátya elle-même. En opposant son thème à l'asymétrie de la musique de Kabanicha et Dikoy, Janáček établit Kátya comme une présence calme au centre d'un monde disfonctionnel. Lorsqu'elle revient sur scène avec sa sœur adoptive Barbara dans la scène suivante, Janáček développe ce portrait musical. Les flûtes et les cordes palpitent pour imiter son désir de voler comme un oiseau, comme pour échapper à la prison émotionnelle qu'est son foyer. Avec une éloquence prodigieuse, il unit la musique de Kátya et celle de Barbara sans pour autant faire perdre à chacune son individualité. Dans l'apogée de cette scène, la cadence suspendue qui accompagne les mots de Kátya "et puis la nuit" a son écho dans "à quoi rêves-tu?" de Barbara avant de trouver sa résolution dans la réponse de Kátya: "Barbara, je ne peux pas dormir". Puis, après l'ardeur érotique de la musique qui accompagne ses fantasmes, la suspension revient sur les mots "j'y vais, j'y vais" et cette fois-ci, comme dans le drame, il n'y a pas de résolution.

Les scènes suivantes enchaînent coup de maître sur coup de maître. Lorsque Barbara laisse entendre que Kátya rencontrera peut-être Boris par hasard, un autre air populaire émerge à l'orchestre avant d'être grossièrement



balayé par le thème russe de Tikhon avec ses clochettes insinuantes. Durant la dernière scène humiliante de l'acte, lorsque Kabanicha force Kátya à promettre de rester fidèle à son mari, le thème de Barbara est oublié. Mais dans l'acte suivant, lorsque les deux jeunes femmes se préparent pour leur double rendez-vous nocturne au jardin, ce thème domine la musique. Barbara et son amant Kudrjáš échangent des airs populaires dans une sorte de prélude musical à l'amour. Par contraste, la musique pour Kátya et Boris, l'amant tant désiré, n'est qu'incertitude chromatique. Il ne s'agit pas là simplement d'un effet harmonique pour dépeindre un personnage. C'est une façon de lier vie personnelle et vie sociale – l'urgence des émotions inassouvies de Kátya et l'illustration d'une société impitoyable qui hâte la tragédie. Cet acte contient des dizaines d'exemples de la musique étayant les émotions des protagonistes – l'avant-goût de l'orage quand les deux femmes sortent dans le jardin, l'apogée passionnée lorsque Kátya et Boris chantent "ma vie", annonçant un duo d'amour qu'ils n'arrivent pas à formuler et le solo désespéré au violoncelle qui précède la tendresse de Kudriash et Varya après l'amour et conclut l'acte non pas avec un amour consommé mais avec le désespoir.

Janáček nous prépare ainsi pour les dernières scènes hallucinantes de l'opéra. La musique qui accompagne l'orage au début s'inspire principalement du thème ternaire fiévreux de Dikoy. Il en résulte une fragmentation de la texture orale, comme si nous suivions l'action du point de vue de Kátya et de sa folie grandissante. Des éclats de mélodie apparaissent et disparaissent. Les "Katérina" lancés par ceux partis à sa recherche sont repris aux cors et aux cordes et l'air populaire de Barbara revient, atrophié, dans la nuit. Des versions déformées du matériau musical des deux premiers actes, telles les flûtes palpitantes symbolisant les oiseaux dans la première scène de l'Acte Deux, hantent les deux monologues de Kátya. Ces réminiscences s'immiscent même dans la dernière rencontre des amants, qui commence par un autre essai manqué de duo d'amour et s'achève par un adieu déchirant. Une fois encore aucun thème particulier n'est associé à Boris, suggérant qu'il n'a aucune volonté, aucune force de caractère. Sur le plan musical comme sur le plan dramatique, Kátya se retrouve seule aux bords de la Volga et le chœur sans paroles qui l'appelle est l'incarnation de son désir d'oubli par la noyade. Dans ce dernier acte, Janáček a abandonné le naturalisme pour un espace psychique. Tandis que l'opéra se



précipite vers sa conclusion accompagné par des transformations violentes et plaintives de l'air de Tikhon, nous pénétrons avec le compositeur dans un nouveau paysage.

Kátya Kabanová est un cadeau d'amour certes fort étrange d'un compositeur à sa muse hésitante. L'œuvre qui l'avait tout juste précédé, *Le Journal d'un disparu*, renferme en son centre un interlude au piano intitulé *Intermezzo Erotico* – remarquable exemple de vœu exaucé par la musique – et le cycle s'achève sur le héros s'éloignant dans la forêt pour rejoindre sa maîtresse gitane. *Kátya*, comme *Anna Karénine* de Tolstoï, sujet qu'il avait décidé de rejeter, traite de l'amour adultère avec une empathie tempérée par une cruelle honnêteté. Et pourtant par certains côtés il s'agit bel et bien d'un cadeau, mais peut-être pas celui envisagé au départ par Janáček. Dans le cas présent, c'est Kamila qui donne et Janáček qui reçoit. Lorsqu'il mêle la peinture de cette société sinistre évoquée par Ostrovski à son désir personnel de refléter sa chère Kamila dans la fragile et vulnérable Kátya, Janáček fait un saut important en tant que compositeur. En progressant de l'idiome naturaliste du premier acte à l'expressionnisme intime du second jusqu'au désespoir surréaliste du troisième, *Kátya Kabanová* devient avec *Wozzeck* de Berg,

œuvre quasi-contemporaine, le premier grand drame musical moderne.

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Argument

Kabanicha, veuve du commerçant Kabanov, domine la vie de son fils, Tikhon et de son épouse, Kátya. Sur les ordres de sa mère Tikhon part en voyage d'affaires, malgré une Kátya inquiète de ce qui risque de se passer en son absence. En effet, dès qu'il est parti, la sœur adoptive de Tikhon persuade Kátya de rencontrer son amant. Un orage terrible et le retour inattendu de Tikhon font perdre la tête à Kátya qui avoue à tous son adultère. Elle se jette dans le fleuve et Kabanicha préside au remords et au désespoir de Tikhon.

L'action

L'opéra se déroule dans une petite ville sur la Volga, vers 1860.

COMPACT DISC ONE

Acte Premier

Scène 1

Devant la maison des Kabanov, l'après-midi

① – ② Kudrjás, un jeune professeur, admire la



beauté du fleuve. La servante Glaša quant à elle y reste indifférente. [3] – [4] Ils sont dérangés par l'arrivée de Dikoy et de son neveu Boris dont il déplore la paresse. Lorsqu'il apprend que Katýá est toujours à l'église, Dikoy part à sa rencontre. Seul avec Kudrjáš, Boris explique que la seule raison qui le pousse à rester avec son oncle est le testament de sa grand-mère: son argent doit lui revenir, ainsi qu'à sa sœur, à l'âge de vingt et un ans, à condition qu'ils fassent ce que veut leur oncle. [5] Boris avoue alors qu'il est tombé amoureux d'une femme mariée – Katýá Kabanová.

[6] La famille Kabanov revient de l'église. Kabanicha ordonne à son fils, Tikhon, d'aller sur le champ au marché à Kazan. Elle se plaint âprement qu'il la néglige au profit de son épouse Katýá et injurie cette dernière lorsqu'elle ose lui répondre. [7] Intermezzo I.

Scène 2

A l'intérieur de la maison des Kabanov, l'après-midi

[8] Katýá confie à Barbara, enfant adoptif des Kabanov, combien son enfance a été heureuse, et Barbara l'encourage à raconter ses rêves: [9] – [10] Katýá explique qu'elle entend une voix d'homme lui chuchoter à l'oreille de partir avec

lui et qu'elle finit par céder. Tikhon apparaît, sur le point de se rendre au marché sur les ordres de sa mère, et Katýá le supplie de ne pas la quitter. Mais il doit y aller et ne peut pas l'emmener. [11] Katýá lui demande alors de lui faire prêter serment: elle ne devra ni regarder ni parler à un autre homme. [12] Kabanicha entre et insiste pour que Tikhon donne ses instructions à Katýá avant de partir: elle doit respecter Kabanicha et lui obéir, s'occuper, et "ne pas regarder les autres hommes". Katýá étreint son mari avant son départ.

Acte Deux

Scène 1

A l'intérieur de la maison des Kabanov, plus tard dans l'après-midi

[13] Kabanicha reproche à Katýá de ne pas afficher son chagrin après le départ de Tikhon. Kabanicha sort, ordonnant qu'on ne la dérange pas. [14] Barbara arrive et révèle qu'elle a réussi à obtenir la clef de la grille du jardin; si elle voit Boris, elle lui demandera de se rendre à la grille pour y rencontrer Katýá. Katýá prend la clef et s'empresse de la cacher lorsqu'elle entend Kabanicha parler avec Dikoy. [15] Katýá sort, impatiente de voir le soir tomber. [16] Kabanicha entre avec un Dikoy un peu ivre. Il ne veut pas rentrer chez lui et se

glisse vers Kabanicha qui le repousse.

[17] Intermezzo II.

Scène 2

Devant la grille du jardin des Kabanov

[18] Introduction. [19] Kudrjáš arrive à la grille et attend Barbara en chantant une chanson. Boris arrive à son tour et explique qu'il attend quelqu'un: Katýá, une femme mariée. Kudrjáš essaie de la mettre en garde. [20] Barbara arrive et dit à Boris que Katýá ne tardera pas. Kudrjáš et Barbara s'éloignent alors vers le fleuve. [21] – [22] Katýá arrive et se retient de prendre la main de Boris. Ce dernier déclare sa passion mais Katýá est plus retenue dans sa déclaration d'amour. Ils s'étreignent. On entend Kudrjáš et Barbara se déclarer leur amour. Katýá rentre par la grille du jardin, laissant Boris seul.

COMPACT DISC TWO

Acte Trois

Scène 1

Deux jours plus tard, dans un bâtiment en ruines dominant la Volga; le soir

[1] Kudrjáš et Kuligin, son ami, s'abritent de la pluie et sont bientôt rejoints par d'autres. Ils regardent les fresques dépeignant l'enfer et les damnés encore visibles sous l'abside en

ruine. Dikoy entre lui aussi pour s'abriter. Kudrjáš explique qu'un orage, ce n'est "que de l'électricité" tandis que Dikoy y voit pour sa part le châtiment divin.

La pluie cesse et Dikoy sort, suivi des autres. [2] Barbara arrive et attire l'attention de Boris. Elle lui révèle que depuis le retour imprévu de Tikhon Katýá a perdu la tête – et menace même de tout avouer. [3] Lorsque Katýá entre, Boris et Kudrjáš se cachent, laissant à Barbara le soin de la calmer. Lorsque Dikoy, Tikhon et Kabanicha entrent, Katýá tombe à genoux et avoue devant tous son infidélité. Elle s'effondre dans les bras de son mari mais immédiatement s'échappe de son emprise et se précipite sous l'orage.

Scène 2

Sur les bords de la Volga, le crépuscule tourne à la nuit

[4] Tikhon et Gláša sont à la recherche de Katýá qui a disparu. Barbara et Kudrjáš décident de s'enfuir ensemble à Moscou. [5] – [7] Katýá entre, seule. Elle regrette son aveu mais aime Boris et ne désire que la mort. Soudain Boris entre et ils tombent dans les bras l'un de l'autre. [8] Boris lui dit que son oncle l'envoie loin d'ici. Katýá reste donc à la merci de sa



belle-mère et de son ivrogne de mari. Boris part et Katyá imagine sa tombe. [9] Les bras croisés, elle se jette dans le fleuve. Ceux qui la recherchaient entrent, et Dikoy s'avance portant le corps de Katyá. Tikhon reproche à sa mère la mort de Katyá, mais Kabanicha se contente de remercier ses voisins de leur gentillesse.

Traduction: Nicole Valencia

Née en Australie, **Cheryl Barker** (Katarina Kabanova (Katyá)) étudie à Melbourne avec Dame Joan Hammond et à Londres avec David Harper. En Australie, elle se produit régulièrement avec Opera Australia, pour qui elle chante entre autres Nedda (*Pagliacci*), la comtesse (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Mimi (*La bohème*), Violetta (*La traviata*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Tatiana (*Eugène Onéguine*) et le rôle-titre de *Madama Butterfly* et *Tosca*. Elle est également Mimi, Antonia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) et Tatiana pour le Victoria State Opera; Tatiana et Violetta pour Opera Queensland; Madama Butterfly et Violetta pour New Zealand Opera.

Sur la scène internationale, Cheryl Barker se fait remarquer dans le rôle de Madama Butterfly qu'elle chante pour l'English National

Opera, le Houston Grand Opera, De Vlaamse Opera, l'Opéra de Hambourg, le Deutsche Oper, Berlin et plus récemment pour l'Opéra Néerlandais. Elle tient aussi le rôle de Jenifer (*A Midsummer Marriage*) pour le Royal Opera, Covent Garden; ceux de Tatiana et Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*) pour Scottish Opera; d'Oksana (*La Nuit de Noël* de Rimski-Korsakov), de la gouvernante (*The Turn of the Screw*), de Musetta (*La Bohème*) et Donna Elvira pour l'English National Opera; le rôle-titre de *Maria Stuarda* pour le Nationale Reisoper aux Pays-Bas; Violetta pour l'Opéra de Hambourg et le Deutsche Oper; le rôle-titre de *Katya Kabanova* à Genève et pour le Welsh National Opera; et pour De Vlaamse Opera le rôle-titre dans *Suor Angelica* et *La Veuve joyeuse*, Mimi, Desdémone (*Otello*) et Liù (*Turandot*).

Elle se produit régulièrement en récital et dans la salle de concert. Parmi ses nombreux enregistrements notons Emilia Marty (*L'Affaire Makropoulos*) et Madama Butterfly dans le cadre de la série de Chandos "Opera in English", *Quo Vadis* de Dyson pour Chandos et un CD en soliste d'arias de Puccini.

Née dans le Wisconsin, **Jane Henschel** (Marfa Kabanova (Kabanicha)) fait ses

études à l'Université de Californie du sud avant de s'installer en Allemagne. Elle est entre autres Baba la Turque (*Le libertin*) aux festivals de Glyndebourne, Saito Kinen et Salzbourg; Brangäne (*Tristan and Isolde*) pour le Los Angeles Opera et l'Opéra de Paris; Clytemnestre (*Elektra*) pour le San Francisco Opera; la princesse (*Suor Angelica*) avec l'Orchestre Royal du Concertgebouw sous Chailly; elle interprète *Les Dialogues des Carmélites* à Amsterdam; Kostelnička (*Jenůfa*) sous Ozawa au Japon et Kabanicha (*Katya Kabanova*) au festival de Salzbourg.

Pour le Royal Opera, Covent Garden, elle est Fricka et Waltraute, Ulrica (*Un ballo in maschera*), Clytemnestre, Mrs Grose (*The Turn of the Screw*); à La Scala de Milan, elle est Hérodiade (*Salome*) et Cassandre (*Les Troyens*). A l'Opéra de Munich elle chante entre autres Hérodiade, Clytemnestre, Ulrica, Mistress Quickly (*Falstaff*) et Ortrud (*Lohengrin*); au Deutsche Oper, Berlin elle incarne Clytemnestre, Hérodiade et Ortrud, et pour l'Opéra de Vienne, Clytemnestre, Fricka et Mistress Quickly. Elle a fait sien le rôle de la Nourrice (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*) qu'elle interprète à Amsterdam, Londres, Los Angeles, Munich, Paris, Vienne, Berlin ainsi qu'au Metropolitan Opera.

Parmi les enregistrements de Jane Henschel, notons entre autres *Hansel and Gretel* dans le cadre de la série de Chandos "Opera in English", *Verlobung im Traum* de Krasa, *Le Libertin*, *Merlin* d'Albeniz, *The Turn of the Screw* de Britten et la Huitième Symphonie de Mahler.

Le ténor américain **Robert Brubaker** (Boris Grigorievitch) s'affirme comme un artiste de premier plan aux Etats-Unis et dans l'Europe entière. Né en Pennsylvanie, il fait ses classes musicales au Hartt College of Music à Hartford où il étudie avec David Ray Smith.

Depuis quelques saisons il est régulièrement invité à chanter dans les plus grands théâtres lyriques: au Metropolitan Opera (Méphistophélès dans *Doktor Faustus*), au Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (Bacchus dans *Ariadne auf Naxos*), à l'Opéra de Hambourg (Hermann dans *Pique Dame*), à la Scala (Guido Bardi dans *La Tragédie florentine* de Zemlinski et Golitsine dans *La Khovanchtchina*), au festival de Glyndebourne (Laca dans *Jenůfa*), au festival de Salzbourg (le rôle-titre de *Der König* de Zemlinski), au Liceu à Barcelone (Golitsine ainsi que Erik dans *Le Vaisseau fantôme*) et à l'Opéra de Paris-Bastille (le comte Pierre



Bezoukhov dans *Guerre et paix*, Dimitri dans *Boris Godounov*, Golitsine et le rôle-titre du *Nain*. Il chante également avec le Houston Grand Opera, la Canadian Opera Company, l'Opéra de Montpellier, le Dallas Opera et le Deutsche Oper, Berlin. Il a enregistré entre autres Albert Gregor (*L'Affaire Makropoulos*) pour Chandos dans le cadre de la série "Opera in English".

Né à Bradford, **Peter Hoare** (Tikhon Kabanov) étudie la percussion au conservatoire de Huddersfield. Il travaille plusieurs années comme percussionniste avant de se lancer dans une carrière de chanteur professionnel.

Parmi ses rôles lyriques pour le Welsh National Opera, notons Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), le Capitaine (*Wozzeck*), Vaudemont (*Iolanta*), Titus (*La clemenza di Tito*), Narraboth (*Salome*), l'Innocent (*Boris Godounov*), la Sorcière (*Hansel and Gretel*), Tikhon (*Katya Kabanova*); il chante Bardolfo (*Falstaff*), Valzacchi (*Der Rosenkavalier*) et Goro (*Madama Butterfly*) pour le Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Mr Upfold (*Albert Herring*), Idoménée et Arbace dans *Idomeneo*, ainsi que frère Elustaphe (*Les Fiançailles au couvent*) pour Glyndebourne Festival Opera. Il chante également avec la Philharmonie de

Berlin sous la direction de Sir Simon Rattle à Berlin, Lucerne et au festival de Salzbourg. Il se produit avec Opera North, Scottish Opera, le Grand Théâtre de Genève, l'Opéra de Lausanne et au Théâtre des Champs Élysées.

Peter Wedd (Vanya Kudrjáš) fait ses études à la Guildhall School of Music and Drama avec William McAlpine puis au National Opera Studio où il bénéficie d'une bourse de la Peter Moores Foundation. Il est l'une des têtes d'affiche de la compagnie du Royal Opera, Covent Garden de 1999 à 2001 et chante régulièrement avec le Welsh National Opera. Au Welsh National Opera il est entre autres Don José (*Carmen*), Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Alfredo (*La traviata*), Števa (*Jenůfka*) et le Timonier (*Le Vaisseau fantôme*).

Au Royaume-Uni et en Irlande il chante également Boris (*Katya Kabanova*) et Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) pour Opera North, Lensky (*Eugène Onéguine*), Federico (*L'Arlesiana*) et Pluton (*Orphée aux Enfers*) pour Opera Holland Park, Kyska (*Sarlatán*) et Julius (*I cavalieri di Ekebu*) au festival de Wexford, Rodolfo (*La Bohème*) au Royal Albert Hall à Londres, Tamino pour Glyndebourne On Tour, Lensky (*Eugène Onéguine*) pour Opera

Holland Park et le Chevalier de la Force (*Les Dialogues des Carmélites*) avec l'English National Opera.

Hors du Royaume-Uni, Peter Wedd chante pour le European Chamber Opera, le Singapore Lyric Theatre, Opera Australia et l'Opéra de Limoges; il se produit également au festival de Maribor, en Slovénie et au Festival de Cernier en Suisse.

Victoria Simmonds (Barbara) étudie avec David Pollard à la Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Elle reçoit le Prix de la comtesse de Munster. En 2000 elle se produit au Royal Opera House dans le cadre de l'English Bach Festival dans *Oreste* de Handel et fait ses débuts à l'English National Opera dans le rôle de Nancy T'ang, première secrétaire de Mao dans *Nixon in China* de John Adams. Elle est membre de la troupe de l'English National Opera de 2000 à 2005 et y tient les rôles de Chérubin (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Mercedes (*Carmen*), Zaida (*The Turk in Italy*), Pitti-Sing (*The Mikado*), Rosina (*The Barber of Seville*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Hermia (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) et Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*).

Elle se produit souvent dans le cadre de festivals, chantant entre autres Wellgunde

(*Das Rheingold*) sous Sir Simon Rattle au festival d'Aix-en-Provence, *La Lucrezia* de Handel au festival de Batignano, le rôle-titre de *La Périochole* et Ines (*Maria Padilla*) au festival de Buxton, le rôle-titre de *Carmen* pour Raymond Gubbay au Royal Albert Hall, Isolier (*Le Comte Ory*) pour Garsington Opera et Olga (*Eugène Onéguine*) pour Opera Holland Park. Elle fait ses débuts à l'Opéra Néerlandais dans le rôle de Lucienne (*Die tote Stadt* de Korngold).

La basse galloise **Gwynne Howell** (Dikoy) fait ses études au Royal Northern College of Music. Il devient membre du Royal Opera en 1992 et chante les principaux rôles de basse avec la compagnie. Il travaille aussi régulièrement avec l'English National Opera où il triomphe en tant que Hans Sachs, Gurnemanz, le roi Philip et Barbe-Bleue. Sa carrière internationale l'entraîne à New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Santa Fe, Paris, Genève, Hambourg, Munich et Cologne. En concert il se produit dans le monde entier avec des chefs comme Claudio Abbado, Carlo Maria Giulini, Riccardo Muti, Leonard Bernstein, Pierre Boulez, Daniel Barenboim, James Levine, Bernard Haitink, Zubin Mehta et Seiji Ozawa. Parmi ses nombreux enregistrements notons la Huitième Symphonie de Mahler avec Seiji Ozawa, le



Messie avec Sir Georg Solti, *Tristan und Isolde* sous Sir Reginald Goodall et la Neuvième Symphonie de Beethoven avec Kurt Masur.

Récemment il est Schigolch (*Lulu*) (également enregistré par Chandos dans le cadre de la série "Opera in English") et Dansker (*Billy Budd*) pour l'English National Opera; pour Glyndebourne, il chante dans *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Don Giovanni*, *Figaro* et *Otello*; pour Covent Garden il tient le rôle du Vieux Déporté dans *Lady Macbeth de Mzensk* et participe à la création mondiale de *The Tempest* par Thomas Adès, qu'il chante aussi à Santa Fe en 2006. Gwynne Howell reçoit le titre de Compagnon de l'Empire Britannique en 1998.

Native du Lancashire, **Kathleen Wilkinson** (Glasgow) étudie avec Barbara Robotham au Royal Northern College of Music où elle bénéficie d'une bourse de la Peter Moores Foundation et remporte plusieurs prix.

Elle chante avec Scottish Opera, Opera Ireland, dans le cadre des festivals de Holland Park, Grange Park et de Glyndebourne et ses rôles comprennent Madame de la Haltière (*Cendrillon*), la Lucrèce de Britten, Mercedes, le rôle-titre de *Carmen*, Filipievna (*Eugène Onéguine*), Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*), Martha (*Faust*), Azucena (*Il trovatore*) ainsi

que Madam By-Ends dans la mise en scène et l'enregistrement du *Pilgrim's Progress* par le Royal Northern College of Music.

Elevé à Pontlliw au Pays de Galles, **Owen Webb** (Kuligin) étudie avec Beatrice Unsworth au Royal College of Music and Drama où il remporte de nombreux prix. Il étudie à présent avec Stephen Roberts. Il est artiste associé du Welsh National Opera et titulaire de bourses, les Welsh National Opera Schäfer et Chris Ball Bursaries.

Parmi ses rôles notons Schaunard (*La Bohème*), Masetto (*Don Giovanni*), Marullo (*Rigoletto*), Papageno (*The Magic Flute*), Zurga (*Les Pêcheurs de perles*), Escamillo (*Carmen*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) et Dr. Falke (*Die Fledermaus*).

Le **Chœur du Welsh National Opera** commence sa vie d'ensemble professionnel en 1968, travaillant aux côtés du fameux Voluntary Chorus jusqu'en 1973, date à laquelle ce dernier est dispersé. Le Voluntary Chorus est formé de chanteurs amateurs qui se réunissent en 1943 pour former le noyau de ce qui deviendra le Welsh National Opera, et c'est le succès du Chœur dans les toutes premières mises en scène qui assurera au

Welsh National Opera sa place sur la scène lyrique mondiale.

Vers la fin des années 1960 le Welsh National Opera se dirige vers un statut professionnel et le Voluntary Chorus fait place au Chœur du Welsh National Opera. Le Chœur fait des tournées de concerts dans le sud du Pays de Galles depuis plusieurs années. L'Orchestre et le Chœur font de nombreux enregistrements (sous des chefs réputés tels Sir Reginald Goodall, Sir Charles Mackerras, Carlo Rizzi, Richard Bonyngne, Pierre Boulez), dans un répertoire allant de Bellini à Maxwell Davies en passant par Verdi, Wagner et Gilbert and Sullivan.

L'Orchestre du Welsh National Opera a remporté le Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award, dans la catégorie 'Grand ensemble', et le Welsh National Opera en tant que compagnie lyrique a remporté quatre autres prix importants de la Royal Philharmonic Society, ainsi qu'un Evening Standard Award pour la meilleure mise en scène à l'opéra, un Laurence Olivier Award pour la meilleure nouvelle mise en scène à l'opéra, ainsi que le Barclays Theatre Award pour sa contribution exceptionnelle au monde de l'opéra.

L'**Orchestre du Welsh National Opera** est fondé en 1970. Il est aujourd'hui considéré comme un ensemble de grande qualité dans les domaines les plus variés, reconnu pour son excellence dans un vaste répertoire lyrique, dans la salle de concert et au disque, ayant enregistré pour de nombreuses maisons différentes.

Parmi ses directeurs musicaux, notons Richard Armstrong (1973–86), Sir Charles Mackerras (1987–92) et Tugan Sokhiev (2002–04). Carlo Rizzi, directeur musical de 1992 à 2001, retrouve le Welsh National Opera en tant que directeur musical en 2004 et dirige *La traviata*, *Cavalleria rusticana* et *Pagliacci* durant la toute première saison du Welsh National Opera au Wales Millennium Centre. Plus récemment il dirige une mise en scène fort prisée de *Don Carlos*, *Le Vaisseau fantôme* avec Bryn Terfel dans le rôle du Hollandais à Cardiff, Londres et Birmingham et se charge de la reprise de la célèbre mise en scène du Welsh National Opera de *La bohème* à l'automne 2006.

Outre son travail à la scène, l'Orchestre du National Welsh Opera donne de nombreux concerts dans des salles de toutes tailles, à travers l'Angleterre et le Pays de Galles, se produisant entre autres dans le cadre des

grands festivals comme les BBC Promenade Concerts au Royal Albert Hall à Londres.

Le Milanais **Carlo Rizzi** étudie le piano, la composition et la direction d'orchestre au Conservatoire de Milan. En août 2004, il est nommé pour la seconde fois directeur musical du Welsh National Opera, un poste qu'il a déjà tenu de 1992 à 2001. Il se produit dans un vaste répertoire (de Gluck à Berio) avec de nombreux orchestres en Europe, en Amérique du Nord, en Extrême-Orient et en Australie, entre autres le London Symphony Orchestra, le London Philharmonic Orchestra, le Philharmonia et le Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, le Chicago Symphony Orchestra, le Philadelphia Orchestra, le Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra et les Orchestres Symphoniques de St Louis, Dallas et Atlanta, ainsi que l'Orchestre National de France et l'Orchestre de La Scala à Milan.

A son répertoire avec le Welsh National Opera, il inscrit *Fidelio*, *Boris Godounov*, *Peter Grimes*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Katya Kabanova*, *Salome*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Don Carlos* et *Le Vaisseau fantôme*. Pour la centième saison des Promenade Concerts de la BBC, il dirige l'Orchestre du Welsh

National Opera dans leur première incursion symphonique aux Proms. Sous sa direction, l'Orchestre remporte de nombreux prix dont celui de la Royal Philharmonic Society. Depuis 1996 il est régulièrement invité à diriger en concert dans le cadre du Festival International d'Edimbourg.

Il dirige également à La Scala (*Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*), à Covent Garden (*La traviata*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Così fan tutte*, *Otello*, *Aroldo*, *Il trovatore*); à l'Opéra Bastille (*Rigoletto*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *La Cenerentola*); au Deutsche Oper, Berlin (*L'italiana in Algeri*, *Macbeth*), à Munich (*La Bohème*, *La traviata*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Aida*, *Turandot* et *Nabucco*). La saison dernière il inaugure le nouveau théâtre lyrique à Cardiff (Wales Millennium Centre) avec *La traviata*.

En septembre 2004 il est nommé chef invité principal du Teatro Comunale à Bologne et dirige cet orchestre dans *Il trovatore* et *Andrea Chenier*. Plus récemment il dirige *La traviata* et *La Bohème* au Metropolitan Opera, *Don Carlos* à Zurich et *Aida* à Houston.

Parmi ses enregistrements, notons les Poèmes symphoniques de Respighi et *L'Arlésienne* de Bizet avec le London Philharmonic Orchestra, et plusieurs opéras dont *La traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Faust*, *La Cenerentola* et *Un ballo in maschera*.

On session: Victoria Simmonds and Peter Wedd





Janáček: Kát'a Kabanová

Ha un contenuto molto toccante, delicato (alla maniera slava); che profondità di sentimento! Se solo potessi trovare la giusta espressione, altrettanto profonda!

Janáček a Vincenc Červinka
dicembre 1919

La sesta opera di Janáček testimonia i due grandi amori dell'ultimo importante decennio della sua vita. Il primo è ormai leggendario: la lunga e non ricambiata infatuazione per Kamila Stösslová, la giovane donna sposata che il compositore aveva conosciuto nella cittadina termale ceca di Luhaňovice nel 1917. Il secondo è quasi altrettanto importante: la sua inveterata passione per la cultura russa. In un'epoca in cui la terra ceca si trovava sotto la dominazione austriaca, il compositore fu un ostinato e intransigente amante dello spirito slavo. Aveva studiato a fondo la letteratura russa e fondò un circolo russo nella sua città natale, Brno. Visitò Mosca e, conquistato dall'esperienza, descrisse il Cremlino con accenni fiabeschi. In alcuni momenti questa ossessione confinò con l'autodistruzione. Janáček si rifiutò di parlare in tedesco con la famiglia della moglie, suscitando

frequenti dissapori domestici. Eppure la sua preoccupazione per la cultura russa è la pietra angolare delle opere più grandi. Il primo Quartetto per archi ha in comune il nome e una vicenda segreta con la *Sonata a Kreutzer*, il breve e violento racconto di Tolstoj. Una suite sinfonica altrettanto selvaggia fu creata per il *Taras Bul'ba* di Gogol'. L'ultima opera, *Da una casa di morti*, si ispira a un romanzo semi autobiografico di Dostoevskij. Soprattutto, per la prima opera teatrale creata dopo la nascita della nuova nazione ceca, il compositore si rivolse al capolavoro di uno dei più grandi drammaturghi russi: Alexander Ostrovskij.

Kát'a Kabanová è ispirata a *Uragano* di Ostrovskij, un dramma che fu allestito per la prima volta al teatro Maly di Mosca nella metà del decennio del 1860. Come gran parte della letteratura russa dell'epoca, il dramma rivolge una dura critica alla società contemporanea. Dopo l'abolizione della servitù della gleba nel 1861, il Paese scopriva i grandi problemi sociali che erano rimasti occultati sotto la superficie dell'impero zarista. In particolare, i valori rozzi e repressivi delle classi medie provinciali suscitarono serie critiche nella letteratura e nel

giornalismo. Janáček aveva già affrontato in maniera memorabile un soggetto del genere nella sua prima grande opera, *Jenůfa*, basata su un lavoro teatrale di Gabriela Preissová, una drammaturga morava contemporanea. Negli anni successivi alla prima rappresentazione di quest'opera il compositore cercò nella letteratura russa un tema analogo e prese in considerazione *Anna Karenina* e *Il cadavere vivente* di Tolstoj. Solo quando *Jenůfa* fu presentata a Praga, decretando la trasformazione di Janáček in icona artistica della nuova Cecoslovacchia indipendente, il compositore finalmente trovò l'argomento ideale. Nel 1918 lesse una traduzione in ceco del dramma di Ostrovskij e si rivolse immediatamente all'editore per ottenere il diritto di musicarlo. Fu talmente conquistato dal lavoro che la partitura completa dell'opera fu pronta in soli tredici mesi.

Il motivo di questa urgenza sta naturalmente in quel primo, grande amore. Il compositore si era lanciato a comporre *Diario di uno scomparso*, il primo capolavoro ispirato da Kamila, solo quindici giorni dopo il suo primo incontro con lei. Nella sua mente, la vivace brunetta si fondeva con la tentatrice zingara del ciclo di liriche. Il collegamento tra l'eroina dell'*Uragano* e la sua nuova amica fu

altrettanto trascinante. Il compositore arrivò a scriverle che l'opera era permeata dalla propria percezione dell'amore di Kamila per il marito:

Quando vi conobbi a Luhaňovice... vidi per la prima volta come una donna può amare il marito... fu per quella ragione che mi rivolsi a *Kát'a Kabanová*.

Era un modo inconsueto di descrivere il germe di una grande passione, ma il risultato musicale finale fu ancora più strano. *Kát'a* è l'unica vera opera tragica di Janáček. *Jenůfa* termina con stoica rassegnazione, nonostante l'infanticidio del figlio illegittimo dell'eroina. Quando il carattere principale viene ucciso nella *Volpe astuta*, Janáček termina il lavoro con un epico inno ai poteri di eterno rinnovamento della natura. *L'affare Makropulos* si conclude con la liberazione dell'eroina, dopo 350 anni, dal tormento di un'eterna reincarnazione. Persino la cronaca desolata della prigionia in *Da una casa di morti* vede la liberazione del protagonista e il rilascio di un'aquila prigioniera nelle battute finali. Solo in *Kát'a* non esiste redenzione e la donna rimane schiacciata dalla pesante repressione di una società provinciale e da un senso di colpa che la spinge all'estremo.



Eppure l'opera non è sempre cupa. Contiene l'unica scena di amore umano di tutte le opere mature di Janáček (quella tra le due volpi è più carnale che emotiva) a cui il compositore aggiunge una scena di convegno amoroso contrappuntistico tra due coppie. Sebbene la passione di Kát'a venga condannata fin dalle battute di apertura, la sua personalità ammantata di luce radiosa ogni scena in cui la donna compare, persino i momenti disperati che precedono il suicidio. Janáček riesce a realizzare tutto questo attraverso un'orchestrazione estremamente trasparente, un nuovo flusso melodico e soprattutto l'abilità con cui effettua la giustapposizione tra i temi di Kát'a e la musica essenziale e brutale dei suoi persecutori. Senza imitare né Wagner né Strauss, il compositore tesse e traspone il suo materiale musicale in maniera tale da mettere brillantemente a fuoco il duro contrasto tra i due mondi del dramma di Ostrovskij. E non è tutto. Durante gli otto anni intercorsi tra la composizione dei primi due atti di *Jenůfa*, il suo stile operistico si era sviluppato, passando dall'opera popolare bucolica alla maniera di Smetana e Dvořák a un suggestivo naturalismo drammatico-musicale. A diciassette anni dal suo completamento, Janáček si incamminò verso un viaggio ancora più radicale: dalla

fluidità dello *sprech-gesang* dei primi due atti di *Kát'a Kabanová* all'ipnotico surrealismo dell'epilogo. Le tre successive opere teatrali – la fumettistica *Volpe astuta*, l'espressionista *Affare Makropulo* e gli schizzi irregolari di *Da una casa di morti* – abbandonano completamente il naturalismo. *Kát'a* è il primo segnale teatrale di questo distacco.

Janáček espone l'argomento musicale e drammatico dell'opera con spietata chiarezza fin dall'inizio. Cinque tristi accordi d'archi, otto colpi silenziosi di timpani e un melisma angoscioso degli archi ci trascinano nel mondo duro e opprimente della famiglia Kabanov. Mentre la musica si anima, i timpani ripetono il loro ritmo con un fortissimo che lo trasforma nell'imitazione ingannevolmente disinvolta di un motivo popolare russo, accompagnato dal suono delle campane di una troika. Questo piccolo tema ricorre in due momenti cruciali del dramma: uno è la scena culminante del primo atto, quando il giovane mercante Tichon, succube della madre, parte per un viaggio d'affari, lasciando la sensibile giovane moglie Kát'a in casa, preda della sua passione per Boris Grigorevic. Il secondo è alla fine dell'opera, quando il fiorire della relazione tra Kát'a e Boris è ormai avvelenato dal senso di colpa di Kát'a, che la porterà al suicidio.

Janáček utilizza questo tema come termine di paragone della società in cui vive la sua eroina. La sua convenzionale armoniosità slava dipinge la vita esteriore della classe media russa. La sua lacerazione e distorsione in altre forme rivela l'ipocrisia e la crudeltà che si celano sotto quella superficie.

Janáček anima di vita musicale in maniera altrettanto manifesta i suoi personaggi, che non vengono identificati da *leitmotif* di stile wagneriano, ma da minuscoli gesti melodici o ritmici, poi amplificati nel corso dell'opera. Lo zio di Boris, il brutale mercante ubriaccone Dikoj è descritto con un ritmo puntato nervoso, teso, che accompagna la sua prima apparizione sui corni con sordina. Ritournerà nell'ultimo atto, quando l'uomo si ripara dalla tempesta del momento culminante dell'opera, ma ampliato e trasformato in un tema arrogante e tirannico quanto il personaggio. La descrizione della suocera di Kát'a, è ancora più sottile. La Kabanicha non ha materiale musicale proprio, ma scombussola la stabilità musicale di coloro che la circondano. Alla sua prima apparizione, le sue interiezioni insensibili disturbano la tenera melodia scorrevole del flauto, degli archi e delle arpe che ha presentato Kát'a. Il contrasto che nasce da questo accostamento

con l'asimmetria irregolare della musica di Dikoj e della Kabanicha trasforma Kát'a in una presenza immobile, al centro di un mondo disfunzionale. Quando ritorna con la cognata Varvara (Varja, sorellastra del marito) nella scena seguente, Janáček amplia questa caratterizzazione musicale. Adesso i flauti e gli archi palpitano, mimando il suo desiderio di poter volare come un uccello, quasi per sfuggire da una casa in cui i sentimenti vengono imprigionati. La musica di Kát'a e di Varja si unisce con straordinaria fluidità, senza perdere l'individualità di ciascun personaggio. Al culmine del dialogo, la cadenza sospesa che accompagna le parole di Kát'a "Di notte..." trova eco in quella di Varya's "anche di notte?" prima di risolversi nella sua risposta "Varja, non posso dormire". Poi, dopo il desiderio erotico della musica che illustra le sue fantasie, ritorna la sospensione sulle parole "E io, la seguo" e questa volta, come nel dramma, non c'è risoluzione.

Quanto segue nei quadri successivi è una serie di colpi magistrali. Quando Varja suggerisce a Kát'a di incontrare Boris per caso, nell'orchestra emerge un altro piccolo motivo popolare, solo per essere accantonato senza tanti complimenti dal tema russo di Tichon e delle campane della sua troika. Durante



l'ultimo quadro umiliante dell'atto, quando Kabanicha obbliga Kát'a a promettere fedeltà al marito, il tema di Varja viene dimenticato. Ma nell'atto successivo, quando le due giovani donne si preparano per il convegno amoroso notturno nel giardino, la musica trionfa. Varja e il suo amante Kudrjásch si scambiano motivi popolari in una sorta di foreplay melodico. Per contro, la musica di Kát'a e dell'atteso amante Boris è tutta esitazione cromatica. Non si tratta semplicemente di un espediente armonico per descrivere un personaggio. Unisce insieme il personale e il sociale – l'immediatezza delle emozioni inappagate di Kát'a e la presentazione della società spietata che farà precipitare la sua tragedia. Gli esempi di musica che sorregge lo stato emotivo dei protagonisti nel corso di questo atto sono decine: l'eco anticipato della tempesta mentre le due ragazze escono in giardino, il culmine appassionato quando Kát'a e Boris cantano "Oh, vita mia!", che promette un duetto d'amore, ma non lo concretizza, e il disperato assolo di violoncello che precede la tenerezza di Kudrjásch e Varja dopo l'accoppiamento e conclude l'atto non con la consumazione del rapporto, ma con disperazione.

In questo modo Janáček ci prepara per le allucinatorie scene finali dell'opera. La musica che accompagna la tempesta all'inizio deriva

prevalentemente dal tema irrequieto in ritmo ternario, che riesce a frammentare la tessitura per l'orecchio, come se sperimentassimo l'azione dal punto di vista sempre più inquieto di Kát'a. Schegge di melodie compagno e compaiono. Il richiamo "Katerina" da parte dei personaggi che vanno in cerca di lei è echeggiato dai corni e dagli archi e c'è un rudimentale ritorno del motivo popolare di Varja nell'oscurità. Versioni distorte del materiale musicale dei primi due atti, come il palpito dei flauti che imitano gli uccelli nel primo quadro dell'Atto secondo, ritornano nei due monologhi di Kát'a. Queste reminiscenze penetrano persino nell'incontro finale tra i due amanti, che inizia con un altro tentativo fallito di duetto d'amore e finisce con un devastante addio. Ancora una volta Boris non ha musica propria, come per rivelare la sua mancanza di volontà o di carattere. Kát'a è isolata sulle rive del Volga sia dal punto di vista musicale sia da quello drammatico, e il coro senza parole che la chiama rispecchia il suo desiderio di oblio tra le acque. In quest'ultimo atto Janáček si allontana dal naturalismo. Siamo in uno spazio psichico. Mentre l'opera viene lanciata verso la conclusione, accompagnata da trasformazioni selvagge e lamentose del motivo di Tichon, seguiamo il compositore in un nuovo paesaggio.

Kát'a Kabanová è lo stranissimo dono d'amore di un compositore a una musa riluttante. Il suo immediato predecessore, *Diario di uno scomparso*, ha un interludio centrale di pianoforte dal titolo *Intermezzo Erotico* – un suggestivo brano di soddisfazione musicale del desiderio – e termina quando l'eroe si allontana nei boschi per raggiungere la sua amante zingara. *Kát'a*, come *Anna Karenina* di Tolstoj, parla dell'adulterio con una partecipazione misurata da severa onestà. Eppure per certi versi si trattò proprio di un dono, anche se forse non proprio come Janáček avrebbe desiderato. In questo caso, la donatrice è Kamila e Janáček è il destinatario. Fondendo la descrizione del cupo mondo sociale di Ostrovskij con il proprio desiderio di rispecchiare la persona dell'amata Kamila nella fragile e vulnerabile Kát'a, il compositore Janáček compie un balzo artistico esponenziale. Procedendo dal primo atto popolare e naturalistico attraverso l'espressionismo intimo del secondo per raggiungere la disperazione surreale del terzo, *Kát'a Kabanová* si affianca a un altro dei primi grandi melodrammi moderni: *Wozzek* di Alban Berg.

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Argomento

Kabanicha, la vedova del mercante Kabanov, domina la vita di suo figlio Tichon e di sua moglie Kát'a. Tichon è costretto da lei a partire per il mercato, nonostante le preoccupazioni manifestate da Kát'a su quello che potrebbe accadere durante la sua assenza. Dopo la sua partenza, la sorellastra dell'uomo convince Kát'a a incontrare il proprio amante. Un terribile temporale e l'improvviso ritorno di Tichon spaventano Kát'a che confessa pubblicamente il proprio adulterio e poi si suicida, gettandosi nel fiume, e lasciando la Kabanicha a osservare la disperazione e il rimorso di Tichon.

La trama

L'azione si svolge in un paesino sulle rive del Volga, negli anni Sessanta dell'Ottocento.

COMPACT DISC ONE

Atto I

Quadro primo

Davanti alla casa di Kabanov, di pomeriggio

[1] – [2] Kudrjásch, un giovane insegnante, ammira la bellezza del fiume, mentre il suo servitore Glascha rimane indifferente. [3] – [4] Ben presto vengono distratti da Diko, che



arriva rimbrottando il nipote Boris per la sua pigrizia. Quando viene a sapere che Kát'a è ancora in chiesa, Dikoj si allontana per andare a cercarla. Rimasto solo con Kudrjásch, Boris racconta che vive ancora con suo zio solo perché così gli viene imposto dalle condizioni del testamento di sua nonna: lui e la sorella avranno diritto all'eredità a ventun anni e solo se obbediscono agli ordini dello zio. ^[5] Boris quindi rivela di essersi innamorato di una donna sposata: Kát'a Kabanová.

^[6] I Kabanov rientrano dalla chiesa. La Kabanicha ordina al figlio Tichon di andare immediatamente al mercato di Kazan, lamentandosi amaramente di essere trascurata a favore della moglie, e rimprovera Kát'a che ha l'ardire di replicare. ^[7] Intermezzo I.

Quadro secondo

In casa dei Kabanov, di pomeriggio

^[8] Kát'a parla con Varvara, figlia adottiva dei Kabanov, descrivendole la sua infanzia felice, e Varvara le fa domande sui suoi sogni: ^[9] – ^[10] Kát'a dice di sentire la voce di un uomo che le sussurra all'orecchio e la convince ad andare con lui. Entra Tichon, pronto ad andare al mercato come aveva ordinato sua madre, e Kát'a lo supplica di non lasciarla. Ma l'uomo

deve andare e rifiuta di portarla con sé.

^[11] Kát'a gli chiede di obbligarla a giurare di non guardare o parlare con un altro uomo.

^[12] Entra la Kabanicha e insiste che Tichon dia le sue istruzioni a Kát'a prima di partire: la donna deve rispettare e obbedire la Kabanicha, lavorare e “non guardare altri uomini”. Kát'a abbraccia suo marito prima che parta.

Atto II

Quadro primo

In casa dei Kabanov, nel tardo pomeriggio

^[13] La Kabanicha rimprovera Kát'a di non manifestare sufficiente dolore per la partenza di Tichon e poi esce, chiedendo di non essere disturbata. ^[14] Arriva Varvara, rivela di essere riuscita a procurarsi la chiave del cancello del giardino e aggiunge che se vedrà Boris gli chiederà di venire a incontrare qui la cognata. Kát'a prende la chiave e la nasconde precipitosamente quando sente le voci della Kabanicha e di Dikoj, ^[15] quindi esce, pregustando la serata. ^[16] Entrano la Kabanicha e Dikoj; l'uomo è leggermente ubriaco, non vorrebbe andare a casa e si aggrappa alla donna, ma lei lo respinge. ^[17] Intermezzo II.

Quadro secondo

Davanti al cancello del giardino dei Kabanov

^[18] [Introduzione]. ^[19] Kudrjásch attende Varvara, cantando una canzone. Arriva Boris e spiega che aspetta qualcuno: Kát'a, una donna sposata. Kudrjásch lo ammonisce del rischio che questo comporta. ^[20] Entra Varvara e comunica a Boris che Kát'a sta per venire, poi si dirige verso il fiume insieme con Kudrjásch. ^[21] – ^[22] Poco dopo arriva Kát'a, che cerca di dominarsi e non tenere la mano di Boris. Il giovane le dichiara la sua passione, ma Kát'a è più cauta nell'ammettere di amarlo. Si abbracciano. Si sentono Kudrjásch e Varvara che si dichiarano amore reciproco. Kát'a rientra dal cancello, lasciando Boris.

COMPACT DISC TWO

Atto III

Quadro primo

Due giorni dopo, un edificio in rovina sul Volga, verso sera

^[1] Kudrjásch e il suo amico Kuligin si riparano dalla pioggia e ben presto vengono raggiunti da altre persone. Guardano gli antichi affreschi dell'inferno e dei dannati ancora visibili sotto le rovine. Arriva anche Dikoj per ripararsi. Kudrjásch parla del temporale e dice che si tratta solo di “elettricità”, mentre Dikoj lo considera un castigo di Dio.

La pioggia si interrompe e Dikoj esce, seguito dagli altri. ^[2] Arriva Varvara e richiama l'attenzione di Boris. Gli racconta che Tichon è ritornato all'improvviso, che Kát'a è diventata isterica e minaccia di confessare tutto. ^[3] All'arrivo di Kát'a, Boris e Kudrjásch si nascondono, lasciando che Varvara provi a calmarla. Mentre sopraggiungono Dikoj, Tichon e la Kabanicha, Kát'a cade in ginocchio e confessa pubblicamente la propria infedeltà, poi cade tra le braccia del marito, ma se ne allontana immediatamente e corre via sotto la tempesta. .

Quadro secondo

Sulle rive del Volga, mentre si fa sera

^[4] Tichon e Glascha cercano Kát'a. Varvara e Kudrjásch decidono di fuggire insieme a Mosca. ^[5] – ^[7] Kát'a entra, da sola. Si è pentita della confessione, ma ama Boris e desidera la morte. L'uomo entra all'improvviso e i due cadono l'uno tra le braccia dell'altra. ^[8] Boris annuncia che suo zio lo manda via. Kát'a dovrà rimanere in balia della suocera e del marito ubriaco.

Boris si allontana e Kát'a immagina la propria tomba. ^[9] Incrocia le braccia e si getta nel fiume. ^[10] Entra un gruppo di persone che la



cerca e Dikoj arriva con il cadavere della donna. Tichon addossa alla madre la colpa della morte di sua moglie, ma la Kabanicha si limita a ringraziare i vicini della loro bontà.

Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

L'australiana **Cheryl Barker** (Katarina Kabanová (Kát'a)) ha studiato a Melbourne con dame Joan Hammond e a Londra con David Harper. In Australia collabora regolarmente con Opera Australia, in 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*. Ha cantato inoltre 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 nota soprattutto per le interpretazioni di Madama Butterfly con English National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, De Vlaamse Opera, Opera di Amburgo, Deutsche Oper di Berlino e più di recente con la Netherlands Opera. A livello internazionale è inoltre comparsa nelle vesti di Jenifer (*A Midsummer Marriage*) per la

Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Tatiana e Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*) per la Scottish Opera, Oksana (*La vigilia di Natale* di Rimskij-Korsakov), la Governante (*The Turn of the Screw*), Musetta (*La Bohème*), e Donna Elvira per English National Opera; è stata protagonista di *Maria Stuarda* per la Nationale Reisoper nei Paesi Bassi, Violetta per l'Opera di Amburgo e la Deutsche Oper; ha cantato il ruolo di protagonista in *Kat'a Kabanová* a Ginevra e con la Welsh National Opera; con la De Vlaamse Opera è stata protagonista di *Suor Angelica* e *La vedova allegra*, oltre a vestire i panni di Mimì, Desdemona (*Otello*) e Liù (*Turandot*).

Cheryl Baker compare regolarmente nelle sale da concerto e in recital e la sua ricca discografia comprende Emilia Marty (*The Makropulos Case*) e Madama Butterfly nell'ambito della serie Opera in English di Chandos, *Quo Vadis* di Dyson per Chandos, e un CD solistico di arie pucciniane.

Jane Henschel (Marfa Kabanova (Kabanicha)) è nata nel Wisconsin e ha studiato presso la University of Southern California prima di trasferirsi in Germania. I suoi ruoli comprendono Baba la turca (*The Rake's Progress*) ai festival di Glyndebourne, Saito Kinen e Salisburgo; Brangäne (*Tristan und*

Isolde) per la Los Angeles Opera e l'Opéra di Parigi; Klytemnestra (*Elektra*) per la San Francisco Opera; la Principessa (*Suor Angelica*) con l'Orchestra del Concertgebouw diretta da Chailly; ha interpretato *Dialogues des Carmélites* ad Amsterdam; ha vestito i panni della Kostelnička (*Jenůfa*) con Ozawa in Giappone e di Kabanicha (*Kát'a Kabanová*) al Festival di Salisburgo.

Per la Royal Opera, Covent Garden ha cantato Fricka e Waltraute, Ulrica (*Un ballo in maschera*), Klytemnestra, Mrs Grose (*The Turn of the Screw*); alla Scala di Milano è stata Herodias (*Salome*) e Cassandre (*Les Troyens*). I suoi ruoli per l'Opera nazionale bavarese di Monaco comprendono Herodias, Klytemnestra, Ulrica, Mistress Quickly (*Falstaff*) e Ortrud (*Lohengrin*); alla Deutsche Oper di Berlino ha cantato Klytemnestra, Herodias e Ortrud e all'Opera di Vienna Klytemnestra, Fricka e Mistress Quickly. Il suo nome è indissolubilmente legato al ruolo di Amme (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*), da lei interpretato ad Amsterdam, Londra, Los Angeles, Monaco, Parigi, Vienna, Berlino e alla Metropolitan Opera.

La discografia di Jane Henschel comprende *Hansel and Gretel* per la serie Opera in English di Chandos, *Verlobung im Traum* di Krasa,

The Rake's Progress, *Merlin* di Albéniz, *The Turn of the Screw* di Britten e l'Ottava sinfonia di Mahler.

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

È diventato ospite regolare dei principali teatri lirici nelle ultime stagioni, comparando alla Metropolitan Opera (Mephistopheles in *Doktor Faustus*), Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*), Opera di Amburgo (Gherman nella *Dama di picche*), Teatro alla Scala (Guido Bardi in *Eine florentinische Tragödie* di Zemlinsky e Golitzin nella *Kovàncina* di Musorgskij), Festival di Glyndebourne (Laca in *Jenůfa*), Festival di Salisburgo (il ruolo di protagonista in *Der König* di Zemlinsky), Liceu di Barcellona (Golitzin ed Erik in *Der fliegende Holländer*) e Opéra de Paris-Bastille (Conte Pierre Bezukhov in *Guerra e pace*, Dimitri in *Boris Godunov*, Golitzin, e il protagonista di *Der Zwerger*). Si è inoltre esibito con la Houston Grand Opera, la Canadian Opera Company, l'Opéra di Montpellier, la Dallas Opera e



la Deutsche Oper di Berlino. La discografia comprende Albert Gregor (*The Makropulos Case*) nell'ambito della serie Opera in English di Chandos.

Peter Hoare (Tichon Kabanov) è nato a Bradford e ha studiato percussioni presso la Huddersfield School of Music. Dopo diversi anni come percussionista freelance ha iniziato una carriera di cantante professionista.

I suoi ruoli lirici per la Welsh National Opera comprendono Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), il Capitano (*Wozzeck*), Vaudemont (*Iolanta*), Tito (*La clemenza di Tito*), Narraboth (*Salome*), l'Innocente (*Boris Godunov*), la strega (*Hansel and Gretel*), Tichon (*Katya Kabanova*); Bardolfo (*Falstaff*), Valzacchi (*Der Rosenkavalier*) e Goro (*Madama Butterfly*) per la Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Mr Upfold (*Albert Herring*), Idomeneo e Arbace in *Idomeneo*, e Frate Elixir (*Matrimonio in convento*) per la Glyndebourne Festival Opera. Ha collaborato con i Berliner Philharmoniker diretti da sir Simon Rattle a Berlino, Lucerna e al festival di Salisburgo. Si è esibito inoltre per Opera North, Scottish Opera, il Grand Théâtre de Genève, l'Opéra de Lausanne e il Théâtre des Champs Elysées.

Peter Wedd (Vána Kudrjásch) ha studiato presso la Guildhall School of Music and Drama con William McAlpine e successivamente presso il National Opera Studio con l'appoggio della Peter Moores Foundation. È stato solista della Royal Opera, Covent Garden dal 1999 al 2001 ed è regolarmente ospite della Welsh National Opera, per cui ha interpretato, tra l'altro, i ruoli di Don José (*Carmen*), Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) Alfredo (*La traviata*), Števa (*Jenůfa*), e Pilota (*Der fliegende Holländer*).

Altre apparizioni nel Regno Unito e in Irlanda lo hanno visto indossare i panni di Boris (*Kat'a Kabanová*) e Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) per Opera North, Lenskij (*Eugenio Onieghin*), Federico (*L'Arlesiana*) e Pluto (*Orphée aux enfers*) per Opera Holland Park, Kyska (*Šarlatán*) e Giosa (*I Cavalieri di Ekebiù*) al Wexford Festival, Rodolfo (*La Bohème*) alla Royal Albert Hall di Londra, Tamino per Glyndebourne On Tour, Lenskij (*Eugenio Onieghin*) per Opera Holland Park e Chevalier de la Force (*The Carmelites*) con la English National Opera.

Al di fuori del Regno Unito Peter Wedd ha cantato con la European Chamber Opera, il Singapore Lyric Theatre, Opera Australia e l'Opera di Limoges e ha partecipato al Festival

di Maribor, in Slovenia, e il Festival di Cernier in Svizzera.

Victoria Simmonds (Varvara) ha studiato con David Pollard presso la Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Ha ricevuto il premio Countess of Munster. Nel 2000 è comparsa alla Royal Opera House nell'*Oreste* di Handel allestito dall'English Bach Festival e ha debuttato alla English National Opera nel ruolo di Nancy T'ang, prima segretaria di Mao nell'opera *Nixon in China* di John Adams. Dal 2000 al 2005 è stata solista della English National Opera per cui ha interpretato, tra l'altro, Cherubino (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Mercedes (*Carmen*), Zaida (*The Turk in Italy*), Pitti-Sing (*The Mikado*), Rosina (*The Barber of Seville*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Hermia (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) e Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*).

Gli impegni ai festival comprendono Wellgunde (*Das Rheingold*) per la direzione di sir Simon Rattle al Festival di Aix, *La Lucrezia* di Handel al festival di Batignano, il ruolo di protagonista ne *La Périochole* e Ines (*Maria Padilla*) al Buxton Festival, il ruolo di protagonista nella *Carmen* per Raymond Gubbay alla Royal Albert Hall, Isolier (*Le Comte Ory*) per la Garsington Opera e

Olga (*Eugenio Onieghin*) per Opera Holland Park. Ha debuttato alla Netherlands Opera nelle vesti di Lucienne (*Die tote Stadt* di Korngold).

Il basso gallese **Gwynne Howell** (Dikoj) ha studiato presso il Royal Northern College of Music. Nel 1972 entrava alla Royal Opera, per cui ha interpretato moltissimi dei principali ruoli per basso. Ha al suo attivo inoltre una lunga collaborazione di successo con la English National Opera, per cui ha cantato Hans Sachs, Gurnemanz, re Filippo e Barbablù. La sua carriera internazionale lo ha portato a New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Santa Fe, Parigi, Ginevra, Amburgo, Monaco e Colonia. In concerto ha lavorato in tutto il mondo con direttori quali Claudio Abbado, Carlo Maria Giulini, Riccardo Muti, Leonard Bernstein, Pierre Boulez, Daniel Barenboim, James Levine, Bernard Haitink, Zubin Mehta e Seiji Ozawa. La sua ricca discografia comprende l'Ottava Sinfonia di Mahler con Seiji Ozawa, il *Messiah* con sir Georg Solti, *Tristan und Isolde* diretto da sir Reginald Goodall e la Nona sinfonia di Beethoven con Kurt Masur.

I suoi ultimi impegni comprendono Schigolch (*Lulu*) (registrato anche per la serie Opera in English di Chandos) e Dansker (*Billy Budd*) per English National Opera; allestimenti



di *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Don Giovanni*, *Figaro* e *Otello* per Glyndebourne; Old Convict in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* e la prima mondiale di *The Tempest* di Thomas Adès per il Covent Garden; in quest'ultimo ruolo l'artista si è esibito anche a Santa Fe nel 2006. Gwynne Howell ha ricevuto l'onorificenza di Commander of the British Empire nel 1998.

Kathleen Wilkinson (Glascha) è nata nel Lancashire e ha studiato con Barbara Robotham presso il Royal Northern College of Music, dove ha ottenuto una borsa di studio della Peter Moores Foundation e ha vinto numerosi riconoscimenti.

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

Owen Webb (Kuligin) è cresciuto a Pontlliw, nel Galles meridionale, ha studiato presso

il Royal College of Music and Drama con Beatrice Unsworth, vincendo numerosi riconoscimenti. Oggi studia con Stephen Roberts. È un Artista associato della Welsh National Opera che gli ha assegnato le borse di studio Schäfer e Chris Ball.

I suoi ruoli comprendono Schaunard (*La Bohème*), Masetto (*Don Giovanni*), Marullo (*Rigoletto*), Papageno (*Il flauto magico*), Zurga (*I pescatori di perle*), Escamillo (*Carmen*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), e il Dr. Falke (*Die Fledermaus*).

Il **Coro della Welsh National Opera** si è formato come ente professionale nel 1968, accanto al famoso Voluntary Chorus fino all'anno dello scioglimento di quest'ultimo, il 1973. Il Voluntary Chorus era stato costituito nel 1943 da cantanti dilettanti che avevano creato il nucleo della futura Welsh National Opera. Il successo del Coro nei primi allestimenti contribuì ad assegnare un posto alla WNO tra i teatri lirici.

Alla fine degli anni Sessanta, la WNO passò completamente allo stadio professionistico e il Coro Volontario fu sostituito dal Coro della Welsh National Opera che, negli ultimi anni, ha svolto diverse tournée di concerti nel Galles meridionale. L'Orchestra e il Coro hanno al

loro attivo numerose incisioni (con direttori illustri, tra cui sir Reginald Goodall, sir Charles Mackerras, Carlo Rizzi, Richard Bonyngne, Pierre Boulez), in un repertorio che va da Bellini a Maxwell Davies passando per Verdi, Wagner e Gilbert e Sullivan.

L'Orchestra della Welsh National Opera ha vinto il Premio musicale della Royal Philharmonic Society nella categoria Large Ensemble. La Welsh National Opera ha conquistato altri quattro importanti riconoscimenti della Royal Philharmonic Society, oltre a un premio dell'Evening Standard per il migliore allestimento operistico, un Laurence Olivier Award per il migliore allestimento di una nuova opera e il Barclays Theatre Award per il suo contributo alla lirica.

L'**Orchestra della Welsh National Opera**, fondata nel 1970, si è affermata per il suo valore e la sua versatilità, distinguendosi non solo per l'articolato repertorio operistico ma anche per le esecuzioni concertistiche e per la vasta e approfondita collaborazione con numerose case discografiche.

I Direttori musicali del passato comprendono Richard Armstrong (1973–86), sir Charles Mackerras (1987–92) e Tugan

Sokhiev (2002–2004). Carlo Rizzi, Direttore Musicale dal 1992 al 2001, ha fatto ritorno alla Welsh National Opera nel 2004, dirigendo allestimenti de *La traviata*, *Cavalleria rusticana* e *Pagliacci* durante la stagione inaugurale del Wales Millennium Centre, seguiti da due opere che hanno riscosso un notevole successo di critica: *Don Carlos* e *Lolandese volante* con Bryn Terfel nel ruolo di protagonista a Cardiff, Londra e Birmingham, e il revival di un classico della WNO, *La Bohème*, nell'autunno del 2006.

Oltre alla sua attività teatrale di base, l'Orchestra si esibisce spesso in concerto in sale grandi e piccole di tutta l'Inghilterra e il Galles e partecipa a importanti festival, per esempio i BBC Proms alla Royal Albert Hall di Londra.

Carlo Rizzi è nato a Milano e ha studiato pianoforte, composizione e direzione d'orchestra presso il Conservatorio della sua città. Nell'agosto del 2004 è stato nominato Direttore Musicale della Welsh National Opera per la seconda volta, dopo un primo periodo in carica dal 1992 al 2001. Ha diretto un vasto repertorio di opere (da Gluck a Berio) con numerose orchestre in Europa, America del Nord, Estremo Oriente e Australia, tra cui la London Symphony Orchestra, la London

Philharmonic Orchestra, la Philharmonia e la Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, la Chicago Symphony Orchestra, la Philadelphia Orchestra, la Filarmonica di Los Angeles e le Orchestre sinfoniche di St Louis, Dallas e Atlanta, oltre all'Orchestre National de France e l'Orchestra della Scala di Milano.

Il suo repertorio alla Welsh National Opera include *Fidelio*, *Boris Godunov*, *Peter Grimes*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Kát'a Kabanová*, *Salome*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Don Carlo* e *Der fliegende Holländer*. In occasione della centesima stagione dei BBC Proms ha diretto l'Orchestra della Welsh National Opera nel primo concerto sinfonico in quella sede. Durante il suo periodo in carica, l'Orchestra ha inoltre vinto numerosi riconoscimenti, compreso quello assegnato dalla Royal Philharmonic Society. Dal 1996 è ospite regolare dei concerti del Festival Internazionale di Edimburgo.

Carlo Rizzi ha collaborato con La Scala (*Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*), il Covent Garden (*La traviata*, *Madama Butterfly*,

Così fan tutte, *Otello*, *Aroldo*, *Il trovatore*); l'Opéra Bastille (*Rigoletto*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *La Cenerentola*); la Deutsche Oper di Berlino (*L'italiana in Algeri*, *Macbeth*), l'Opera di Monaco (*La Bohème*, *La traviata*) e di Zurigo (*Tosca* e *I vespri siciliani*); per la Metropolitan Opera ha diretto *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Il trovatore*, *Norma*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *La traviata*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Aida*, *Turandot* e *Nabucco*. Durante la scorsa stagione ha inaugurato il nuovo teatro lirico di Cardiff (Wales Millennium Centre) con *La traviata*.

Nel settembre 2004 Carlo Rizzi è stato nominato Direttore Ospite Principale del Teatro Comunale di Bologna dove ha diretto *Il trovatore* e *Andrea Chénier*. Ultimamente ha diretto *La traviata* e *La bohème* alla Metropolitan Opera, *Don Carlos* a Zurigo e *Aida* a Houston.

La discografia comprende un CD di poemi sinfonici di Respighi e *L'Arlésienne* di Bizet con la London Philharmonic Orchestra, oltre a varie opere tra cui *La traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Faust*, *La Cenerentola* e *Un ballo in maschera*.

On session: Gwynne Howell and Kathleen Wilkinson



COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I
Scene 1

[1] [Introduction]

A park above the steep Volga bank with a distant view of the countryside. To the right the Kabanovs' house. Seats beside the path, shrubbery. Afternoon sun.

- [2] **Kudryash** (*seated, gazing at the river*)
Marvellous! Really, just admit it, it's marvellous! Glasha, just think of it, day after day I sit here and gaze at the river, and still I never weary of it.

Glasha
What's so special?

Kudryash
Loveliest of rivers! It's lovely, fills me with happiness.

Glasha
Stuff and nonsense!

Kudryash
Lovely! And you say: stuff and nonsense! Take a good look at it. See what beauty's hidden in nature.

Glasha
Why argue? You are always right.
You're the clever one: chemist, scientist.

Kudryash
Tell me, Glasha, who is it that's waving his arms about?

Glasha
It's Dikoi, bullying his nephew again.

Kudryash
Here, where it's so peaceful.

Glasha
You know what he's like, always finding fault with poor Boris Grigoryevich.

Kudryash
What a savage brute he is!
Roaring like a beast in the forest.
Don't let him see us or he'll turn on us as well.

- Dikoi** (*to Boris*)
Lazy devil!
[3] What d'you think you're hanging around for?
Get off back home with you!

Boris
What would I do at home on Sunday?

Dikoi
You'd find some work there if you tried!
You have heard me say,
not once, not twice, ten times,
'Just keep away from me, keep away from me.'
But you never listen.
Have you nowhere to go?
Every second here at my elbow.
Pah! Damn you! Don't just stand there!
Can you hear me or not?

Boris
I'm listening! What do you want then?

- Dikoi**
Why don't you go to hell? Look at him,
lounging about here all day!
[4] Is your mistress at home?

Glasha
She's at church still.

(Dikoi spits and walks off.)

Kudryash (*taking a step towards Boris*)
You and your uncle never get on.
None of us can understand why you should choose to live with him and put up with his bullying.

Boris
Not because I choose to – I must!

Kudryash
Yes, but why must you, if I may ask?

Boris
There's no secret about it.
Do you remember my grandmother?

Kudryash
Anfisa Michailovna?

Boris
Father married well above his station.
That offended my grandmother,
and that's why my parents went to Moscow.
Mother used to say to me:
on no account would she ever live with those provincials!

Kudryash
Who could blame her?

Boris
She thought of them as philistines.

Kudryash
They'd take some getting used to, I can see that.

Boris
Our parents were not rich but they spent all they had on us, stinting themselves so that we'd want for nothing.
I was sent to a business college; my sister went away to boarding school.

And then suddenly they both died of cholera.
We two were left alone in the world, my
little sister and I. And then I heard that my
grandmother too had died here and left us both
some money.
We were to inherit it when we had come of age,
on one condition.

Kudryash
What was that?

Boris
That we did what Uncle Dikoi said.

Kudryash
Oh, then I'm afraid you won't see much of your
legacy.

Boris
If it were just me, I would have left here long
ago, but I'm thinking of my sister. He wants her
here.
But till now my mother's family have stopped her
coming.
What a life for a girl like my sister!

Kudryash
What a life!

Boris
I can hardly even bear to think of it.

Kudryash
With that bullying monster!
(*Glasha goes up to Feklusha as she enters.*)
What is it? Oh, it must be the people
coming back from evening service.
Goodbye then. I must go.

Boris
Wait a bit. Stay for a moment.
How my youth is passing,
oh how quickly it is passing!

Feklusha (*to Glasha*)
Lovely, isn't it? Yes, Glasha.
Lovely! Wonderful!

Boris
Year in, year out, no happiness, no happiness.
Has life no joy in it?

Feklusha
That's all I can say!

Boris
Grasp it and suddenly it vanishes!

Feklusha
That's all I can say!
[5] All of them so good and pious, most of all
Kabanicha!

Boris
Kabanicha!

(*Feklusha goes off into the house with Glasha.*)

Kudryash
She's a hypocrite, generous with her charities,
but at home she rules with a rod of iron.

Boris
Is it a dream that I'm living?
Am I crazy? Why must I fall in love?

Kudryash
But who with?

Boris
She's married. Look, she'll be here shortly,
complete with husband.
Oh, I must be crazy, I must be crazy.

Kudryash
You had better forget her, if you don't want to
ruin her.

Boris
Come on, let us take just one look at her.
(*Boris and Kudryash step back to the side of yhe
house. Enter from the other direction Katya,
Varvana, Kabanicha and Tichon.*)
And then go back home. Ha! Ha! Ha!

(*Boris and Kudryash disappear behind the house.*)

Kabanicha (*to Tichon*)
[6] If you want to obey your mother,
then you will go as your father used to,
to Kazan, to the market there, and today.

Tichon
Of course! I'll do as you ask.

Kabanicha
I would believe you, but I see quite the opposite
every day, see it and hear it every day.
You can't deny it, you put your wife above your
own mother.
It's very plain you do not care for me
as you used to, before you were married.

Tichon
What gives you that idea?

Kabanicha
Everything! In my heart I know at once
when you keep things from me.

Tichon
Oh but mother dear, that's no way to talk.

Katya
I respect and honour you just like my own
mother.
Why do you say such things? And Tichon loves
you just as I do.

Kabanicha

You can keep your mouth shut, keep your mouth shut.

Nobody has asked you.

Why should you defend him?

Varvara

Oh, what a place to choose for a sermon.

Kabanicha

Nothing will happen to him. He is my son, after all.

Interfering like that! Making yourself conspicuous, so that all may see how much you love your husband!

Katya

Words like these were best unspoken.

Why do you insult me?

For no reason at all, in front of others, or on my own, I am the same still.

(exit into the house)

Kabanicha

Always self-important! She takes offence so quickly.

(to Tichon)

Once perhaps you loved me, before you were married, ah but now, you've a wife.

Tichon

Mother, I have not changed towards you, I love you both.

Kabanicha

So you would treat your wife as my equal?

A wife should know her place!

If you're soft with her, how can she ever respect you?

You'd give in to her? What if she takes a lover?

Tichon

Oh, but Maminka, Katya loves me.

Kabanicha

Would you just accept it? Would you say nothing?

Tichon

Oh, but Maminka!

Kabanicha

And I, I too, I say nothing!

Tichon

This is really too much!

Kabanicha

Stupid boy! You watch her. I'm going in.

(exit into the house)

Tichon *(to Varvara)*

You see now! Always on at her!

Varvara

Well, is that your wife's fault?

Mother just nags at her always, just as you do.

Then you come and tell me how much you love her.

Why stand there doing nothing?

I can see so clearly, what's on your mind – drinking!

(Tichon lounges off in silence.)

She is unhappy, she is so unhappy.

(She hesitates at the door.)

How I love her. Oh, how could anyone not love her?

7 Intermezzo I

Scene 2

A room in the Kabanovs' house

Katya *(laying her embroidery aside)*

8 I'm always wondering.

Varvara

What?

Katya

Why can't we fly away?

Varvara

I don't know what you mean.

Katya

Tell me this, why can't we fly away, just spread our wings and fly as birds do?

So often I imagine I'm a bird, and can spread my wings and fly.

Shall I show you?

(She makes gestures.)

Varvara

What are you saying?

Katya

I used to be so free and happy, but since I came here to live that's all changed.

Varvara

Katya, d'you think I did not know?

Katya

Ah, then it was all so different.

Life seemed so easy and carefree then.

Freely as a bird I wandered;

Mother knew nothing of my inmost longings.

I was just her baby daughter.

D'you know how I spent my days at home before I married?

I would get up early, and if it were summer,

run to the spring nearby and wash myself.

Then I would bring water and water all the flowers, every single one of them.

Varvara

Just as you do here, Katya.

Katya

Then it would be time for church.

I always felt so happy when I was in church.
It was as if I were entering paradise.
Then I would see no one, hear no one, and I
never knew when the service was really over.
Afterwards, Mother told me how all the people
stared at me, seeing me act so strangely.
And then, on a fine summer day, when columns
of golden light would stream from the dome,
And the incense in clouds, floating heavenwards,
I used to imagine I could see angels flying aloft
in the golden haze, to heaven!
I would fall down on my knees and cry so.
But I never knew what used to make me cry so.
That's how they'd find me.
And all the dreams I used to have, what dreams!
Lofty golden cathedrals, high in the heavens, and
mountains and forests.
I felt as if I were flying, soaring and flying!
And all around me the sound of heavenly voices.

Varvara
Katya, oh, what is this?

Katya
The scent of the cypress!

Varvara
Oh, what is this?

Katya
A dreadful sin threatens me,
I like an abyss that yawns before me, and I am...

Varvara
Katya, this is madness!

Katya
...slipping, falling, pushed by unseen hands to
destruction!

Varvara
This is madness!

Katya
[9] Madness? Oh, how I wish I really knew.
Deep in my inmost heart such strange desires are
stirring!
My will is powerless against them all.
When I try to think my mind is confused and
bewildered.
When my tongue mutters a prayer, all the time
my mind's on something very different.
It's as if the devil came to tempt me, so softly
whispering horrible things.
It is too shameful even to think of it!
At night time...

Varvara
What do you dream about?

Katya
Varya, I cannot sleep!
There it is, all the time, someone near, someone
whispering, someone speaking so lovingly to me,
words so soft and tender, someone embracing me

so warmly, so warmly, calling me to go away with
him and –

Varvara
And you?

Katya
I, and I go, I go with him!
[10] Ah, but you, what can you know of this?
A child still.

Varvara
Oh tell me, please. I'm far worse than you!
Far worse than you! Tell me.

Katya
I am too ashamed. Don't ask me.

Varvara
What need you be ashamed of?
Who am I to be your judge?
I have my sins too.

Katya
It is a terrible sin, to love another man.
Who can help me? What will become of me?

Varvara
Who can tell – perhaps one day you'll see him?

Katya
No, no, no, no, no, never! God help me!

Varvara
And why?
(*Enter Tichon. Katya embraces him.*)
Oh, she must be mad!

Katya
Tichon, Tichon! Never leave me!

(*enter Glasha and Feklusha, carrying his luggage*)

Feklusha (*to Glasha*)
Will he be gone for long?

Glasha
No, not long.
(*exit with Feklusha*)

Katya
Tichon, do not leave me!
Don't go, my darling! Never leave me!

Tichon
How can I, Katya?
How can I not go when Maminka told me to?

Katya
Then take me with you, Tichon! Take me too!

Tichon
I cannot do that!

Katya
[11] Oh, but why on earth can't you?
Do you not love me any more?

Tichon

Love? Yes of course!
But in this kind of slave existence even a man
with the loveliest wife in the world cannot bear it.
So when a man has lived all his life as I have
done, he runs away and leaves his wife!

Katya

If you say such cruel things to me,
oh, how am I still to love you?

Tichon

Only words, only talk.
What am I to make of you?

Katya (*in tears*)

What will become of me when you've gone?
Who will protect me?

Tichon

Stop it!

Katya

(*She goes up to her husband and nestles against him.*)

Tichon, darling, won't you stay here with me
or let me go with you?
This is how I'd love and hold you, love you so
tenderly.

Tichon

I don't understand you, Katya.

Katya

Tichon, don't leave me here without you!

Tichon

I have never seen you act so strangely before, and
now?

Katya

Tichon, do not abandon me!

Tichon

You know I cannot help it.
It's no use complaining.

Katya

If you go, something dreadful will happen,
something will happen.
You know what you must do?
Make me swear an oath to you, a terrible oath.

Tichon

What kind of oath?

Katya

Yes, make me swear that while you are gone
on your journey I will never for any reason
either speak to a stranger or even look at one.
That I will never dare to think of another man
but only you, Tichon.

Tichon

But why should I? Why should I?

Katya

Do just this one thing for me, set my soul at rest!

Tichon

How could anyone keep such promises?

Katya

May I never see my mother or see my father
again, may no priest absolve me when I die,
if I should...

Tichon

Don't say that. How can you? It is a terrible sin.

Kabanicha

¹² It's time, Tichon. It's time.
The carriage is at the gate. Everything's ready
now.

Tichon

I know, Mamma, now it is time to go.

Kabanicha

Well then, don't just stand there.

Tichon

What are your wishes?

Kabanicha

Don't you know what's proper?
Tell your wife how she must behave herself while
you're away.

Tichon

I have no need to tell her that.

Kabanicha

I want no excuses!
Give your orders clearly
so I too can hear just what you tell her.
And then, when you're home again
you can find out how well she's obeyed them.

Tichon

Do just what mother says.

Kabanicha

Make it clear she must always respect me.

Tichon

And respect her.

Kabanicha

And must honour me as she would her own
mother.

Tichon

Katya, honour Mamma as you would your own
mother.

Kabanicha

And not sit around all the time with her hands
in her lap.

Tichon

And be sure to help Mamma while I am away.

Kabanicha

And don't stare out of the window.

Tichon

Oh, but Maminka!

Kabanicha

Make it clear.

Tichon

Don't look out of the window.

Kabanicha

And keep her eyes off other men.

Tichon

Oh, but Maminka, how could I?

Kabanicha

What's all the fuss about?

It's just as well to say everything.

Tichon

Keep your eyes off other men.

(*Katya breaks down.*)

Kabanicha

And now have a word together.

(*exit*)

Tichon

Are you cross with me?

Katya

No. Goodbye!

Kabanicha (*returning with Varvara and Glasha*)

Now, Tichon, it is time. God be with you.

(*She rises, the others likewise. Tichon approaches her.*)

Sit down, all of you. God be with you.

(*She points to the ground. Tichon bows down to his knees, then kisses his mother.*)

Tichon

Mamma, God be with you.

Kabanicha

Kneel down, say your goodbyes to her.

Shameless girl.

Tichon

Goodbye, Varvara.

Kabanicha

He's not your lover!

Tichon

Goodbye, Glasha.

(*He hurries off.*)

Act II

Scene 1

Working alcove set back from a room at the Kabanovs'. Late afternoon. Kabanicha, Katya and Varvara sit at their embroidery.

Kabanicha

[13] There now, you're always boasting how you love your husband.

Most wives, if they are good wives, when they see their husbands off, stay in their room for the rest of the day, sobbing their poor hearts out.

Ah, but you don't seem to care.

Katya

Well I am what I am. I am not that kind of woman.

Why should I weep just for others to see me?

Kabanicha

If you really loved your husband then you would have learnt to weep for him. And if you cannot do it, you might at least pretend a little.

It would look much better.

But you don't want to be like the others.

I'm going. See that I'm not disturbed.

(*exit*)

Varvara (*adjusting her headscarf*)

[14] It's so warm indoors.

Glasha will make up our beds in the garden.

You know the gate by the summerhouse?

Mother has locked it and taken the key away, and she's hidden it, hidden it, so she imagines. I've put another one where I found it so that she would not see it's gone. If I should see him, I'll tell him: come to the garden gate and wait there. (*She offers Katya the key.*)

Katya

But why?

(*She refuses to take it.*)

I don't want it – keep it.

Varvara

You say you don't want it... I find it handy.

Take it, it won't bite you.

Katya

Why are you tempting me? Have you no shame?

You know that I could not. You must be crazy!

Varvara

I can't stay here all night talking.

Katya

Really, you're crazy!

Varvara

I've other things to do.

(*She runs off.*)

Katya (*her eyes fixed on the key she is holding*)

Here's the key!

Sin and shame! How can I escape from it?

(rushing to the window)

Throw it away. Throw it away in the river.
Then I would never see it again.
It burns my hand, burns me like fire.
Someone's coming here.
(She hurriedly hides the key.)

Kabanicha *(to Dikoi, off-stage)*

If you want something, you just ask me.
Don't shout.

Katya

¹⁵ No, no, no one, yet my heart was beating so fast.
No, no one! Why should it frighten me so?
Why did I hide the key? I know now, fate has decided.
And where is the sin in taking a look at him from a distance?
We could just talk a little –
there surely could not be much harm in that.
What am I saying?
I am lying to myself. Even if it kills me
I long to see him. I will see him!
Live or die, I will see Boris!
Oh, how I wish it were night.
*(exit, throwing a shawl over her shoulders.
Kabanicha comes into the main room with a lamp;
Dikoi follows. The room is now light, the alcove in darkness.)*

Dikoi

¹⁶ It's nothing much. You see I'm just a little drunk.

Kabanicha

Then go to bed.

Dikoi

Where shall I go?

Kabanicha

Go home. Where else?

Dikoi

But I don't want to go home.

Kabanicha

Well, what do you want then? Out with it.

Dikoi

Listen! I'll tell you. Speak to me harshly.
It is good for my soul when you treat me like that.
You, only you understand me.
You know how to handle me.

Kabanicha

I suppose they've asked you for money?

Dikoi

Money, money, always money!
If you say that word it's as if, as if my belly were set on fire.

Kabanicha

You have no one to cross you,
That's why you're a bully.

Dikoi

Oh be quiet! Listen!
One day during Lent I had done my penance,
after my confession, a peasant came up and spoke to me,
must have been the devil that had sent him,
said he'd come for money that I owed him.
Satan must have sent him there to tempt me.
Then I sinned, swore at him and nearly killed him.
And you know I've a soft heart.
(sidling closer to Kabanicha)
So after that I begged his forgiveness.
I went down on my knees to him.
Now you see what my soft heart leads me to.
(falling at Kabanicha's feet)
On my knees in the mud before a peasant!
Kneeling! Oh!
(whining)

Kabanicha *(pushing Dikoi away)*

That's enough. Calm yourself!
You should learn better manners! Better manners!

¹⁷ Intermezzo II

Scene 2

Night. A steep bank, overgrown; above, the Kabanovs' garden fence and gate. A path leads down the slope.

¹⁸ [Introduction]

Kudryash *(with guitar)*

¹⁹ Nobody here yet! Then I'll sing a song while I'm waiting.

'One day early by the river walked a lovely maiden.

Came a young and handsome suitor, with rich presents laden:

Fur-lined shoes and silken kerchiefs for a maiden's pleasure,

Rings of gold and blood-red rubies worth a rich man's treasure.

"Take the gifts your true love brings you", vainly he besought her.

She gazed only at her image mirrored in the water.'

She's not here yet. What's keeping her?

(He sits down.)

'Take your rings and take your rubies; riches cannot buy me.

I will rise tomorrow early, to the fields will hie me.

I will pick sweet scented violets, thyme and purple clover,

I will make a posy with them for my own true lover.

Though all day beneath my window, though all night you tarry,

You will never be my true love; you I'll never marry.'

(enter Boris. Kudryash sees him.)
What's this? Someone out for a walk as well?

Boris
Is that you, Kudryash?

Kudryash
Yes, it's me, Boris Grigoryevich.

Boris
And why are you here?

Kudryash
I've reasons of my own. If I hadn't I'd be home
in bed.
And what have you come here for?

Boris
Look, Kudryash, it's like this.
(*He looks around furtively.*)
I have just been told to be here.
Somebody told me or I should never have dreamt
of coming.

Kudryash
But who was it sent you here?

Boris
It was a girl who told me. I didn't know her.
Yes, this is the place – by the garden of Kabanov's
house,
where the pathway leads.

Kudryash
Listen, I'm warning you, falling in love can be so
dangerous.

Boris
I know, but I can't help loving her.

Kudryash
Although she's married.

Boris
Yes.

Kudryash
Do you really want to ruin her?

Boris
Don't try to scare me off.

Kudryash
Do you know if she loves you?

Boris
No. I only met her once, at my uncle's house.
But I've watched her every day in church.
Oh, Kudryash! If you could see her when's
praying...
Then she smiles and it's just as if an angel smiled,
and shed all around a radiant light!

Kudryash
Yes, that must be Kabanov's wife.

Boris
Yes.

Kudryash
Be careful, watch out.

Varvara (*coming through the gate, singing*)
[20] Far away my love is gone across the water.

Kudryash (*walking towards Varvara*)
Buying presents for a maid of high degree.

Varvara
I am not a lady, not a rich man's daughter.

Kudryash
Rich or poor man's daughter, I love none but
thee,
Rich or poor man's daughter, I love none but
thee.

Varvara (*She walks down the path, her face hidden
in her scarf. She goes up to Boris.*)
Friend, don't get impatient, she's coming.
(*to Kudryash*)
Come to the river!
(*She slips off with Kudryash.*)

Boris
This night! Singing! And lovers meeting!
And there they go so happily.
While I wait here, and don't know what I wait
for,

and I dare not even think about it.
Oh, how my heart beats. What am I to say to
her?
She's here.
(*Katya approaches down the path.*)
[21] Is that you, Katerina Petrovna?
I cannot find the words to thank you.
Oh, if you knew, Katerina Petrovna, oh if you
only knew,
(*He tries to take her hand.*)
how much I love you!

Katya (*without raising her eyes*)
Stay away from me, oh, stay away from me.
Leave me here alone.

Boris
How much I love you!

Katya
You know for such a sin there's no forgiveness.
No, there's no forgiveness.
Like a stone, it lies upon my heavy heart, lies so
heavy.

Boris
Don't send me away, don't send me away so
heartlessly.

Katya
Why did you come here?
You know I am married, and until I die

I must honour and love my husband.
So what is it you want then? You must want my ruin.

Boris

How could I want your ruin?
When to me you are more than all the world itself!
Yes, to me you are more than all the world itself.

Katya

Ah, you'll destroy yourself, yes, both of us!

Boris

But how could I?

Katya

When I left my home to come here in the night and secretly,
I denied my own free will.
If my will were free any longer,
I would not have come to meet you here.
You must see that.
(raising her eyes and gazing at Boris)
It is your will conquering my will!
You must surely see!
(She throws her arms around Boris' neck.)
Light of my life!

Boris

Light of my life!
(They remain in an embrace.)

Katya

It would be perfect to die now...

Boris

Why talk of dying when it is sweet to live?

Katya

No, no, no, I cannot live.

Boris

Never say such terrible words.
Can't you see how much I suffer with you?

Katya

Do not pity me. No one's guilty but I, yes,
I alone have brought you here.
Kill me, but don't pity me,
so that all may see me, all may know me, the guilty one!

Boris

You make too much of it!

Katya

It is I who have sinned by loving you!

Boris

You make too much of it.

Katya

And must suffer.
(They embrace impetuously.)

Varvara *(returning with Kudryash)*

[22] So you've found each other.

Boris

Yes.

Varvara

Then go for a walk. Vanya will call when it's time to go back.

(exeunt Katya and Boris)

Kudryash *(to Varvara)*

This way, it's ever so much easier.
Out by the gate in the garden.
(He sits down on a rock with Varvara.)

Varvara

Yes, thanks to me.

Kudryash

So, I imagined. But suppose that your mother should find you out.

Varvara

Oh, mother will never get round to it. She's a very heavy sleeper.

Kudryash

But suppose the devil should wake her just once?

Varvara

Even so the gate that leads from here to the garden is always locked at night-time.
She will knock and go away.
Next day I'll tell her that we both slept soundly.
And old Dikoi had come to call on her.

Katya and Boris *(in the distance)*

For ever I am yours!

Varvara

They are such brutes, they suit each other well.
Anyway, Glasha is on the look-out, and if there's any danger she'll call us.

Boris *(in the distance)*

Until the end of time my love will be with you!

Varvara

Anyway, where is the fun without danger?
If you don't take care then you're in for trouble.
How are we going to know what the time is?

Kudryash

One o'clock.

Varvara

How d'you know?

Kudryash

Heard the night-watchman,



Katya (*in the distance*)

Light of my life!
Until the world's end I will be with you!

Boris (*in the distance*)

Light of my life!

Varvara

It's time. You'd better call them.

Boris (*in the distance*)

For ever, light of my life!

Kudryash

Homeward all good people,
Homeward all good people, but myself, I will
not go.

Boris (*off-stage*)

Coming!

Kudryash (*He and Varvara climb up the path to
the gate.*)

It is night and far from home
maidens should no longer roam,
Ei leli, leli, leli, maidens should no longer roam.

Varvara

I am young and I am fair,
stay with me till day is here.
Ei leli, leli, leli, stay with me till day is here.

Kudryash

So we stayed, my love and I,
till the dawn was in the sky,
Ei leli, leli, leli, till the dawn was in the sky.

(*Katya and Boris hurry up the path.*)

Varvara (*calling to them*)

Time to say goodbye to each other.

(*Katya goes up the path alone; Boris stays behind.*)

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act III

Scene 1

*A ruined building with colonnades and vaulted
ceilings; around it grass and bushes. Through the
arches a view of the Volga and its banks. Late
afternoon on a dull day with rain clouds. Kuligin
and Kudryash come into the ruin for shelter.*

Kuligin

1 Raining!

Kudryash

There's a storm coming.

Kuligin

Look, there's a place to shelter.

Kudryash

What a crowd there on the promenade.

Kuligin

You'll see, they will all come rushing in here.

(*Passers-by come running in from the rain.*)

Kudryash

The merchants' wives all dressed in their finery.

Kuligin

Hey, Vanya, this was all covered with paintings!
Here and there you can see.
(*inspecting the walls*)

Kudryash

A fire destroyed them.

Kuligin

That's a picture of hell and the damned!

Kudryash

Afterwards they never restored it.

Kuligin

Every kind of sinner burning away in there.

Kudryash

Yes, that's the way it is!

Kuligin

All sorts of people!

Kudryash

Yes, and that's how they say it is.

Kuligin

There are black men as well there.

Kudryash

Yes. There are black men as well there.

(*Dikoi enters. All the others bow.*)

Dikoi

Out of my way, I'm soaked to the skin.

Kudryash

Savol Prokefeyevich.

Dikoi

Get away from me, get away! Cheeky young
upstart.
I suppose you are after me for something.
Running round me and poking your nose in my
business.

Kudryash

We get so many storms here.

Dikoi

Nonsense!

Kudryash

We need lightning conductors.



Dikoi

Nonsense! Well, and what are they like,
your lightning conductors?

Kudryash

Rods made of steel.

Dikoi

What else?

Kudryash

All made of steel, long rods.

Dikoi

I heard you, long rods.

Kudryash (*explaining with gestures*)

Fixed to the roof.

Dikoi

What else? What else?

Kudryash

That's all.

Dikoi (*rolling his sleeves up menacingly*)

What is a storm by your way of reckoning?

Kudryash

Just electricity.

Dikoi (*stamping his foot*)

Just electricity? Just electricity!
Look at him! He's a common charlatan.
Storms are sent as a warning, so that we
mortals know God is all-powerful. You with your
rods of steel!
You'd defy the fury of the thunder and the
lightning!
Do you think we're heathens? Heathens are we?
Heathens?

Kudryash

Savol Prokofyevich, surely you must know the
words of the poet:
'My flesh will crumble into dust, but the thunder
bends to my will.'

Dikoi

Listen to him! What a thing to say!
Lock him up then! He's just a commonplace
charlatan!
(*turning to bystanders*)
As for all of you, you good-for-nothings, you just
make trouble.
(*to Kudryash*)
Has it stopped raining?

Kudryash

Seems so.

Dikoi

Seems so. I just asked him a question.
And all he says is 'Seems so'!

(*Dikoi walks out of the building, the rest following.*
Varvara appears under one of the arches, looking
out into the open.)

Kudryash (*still outside*)

The rain has stopped.

(*In the background, Kudryash accosts Boris.*)

Varvara (*making a sign to Boris*)

² Psst! Psst! Boris, listen to me!
(*He approaches her.*)
What are we to do with Katya?

Boris

Why, what is it?

Varvara

Oh, it really is terrible,
terrible! Tichon's come back now, surely you
knew!

Boris

No!

Varvara

Poor Katerina's out of her senses.

Boris

Oh, how can I bear it?

Varvara

Oh, you! Listen to me now! Katya is ill and
shaking as if she'd a fever. She wanders through the
house not hearing or seeing me, just like a mad
woman!
Then suddenly she's sobbing and moaning:
'Oh, tell me please,
what am I to do?' She is doing such crazy things.

Boris

Oh my God, what will happen?

Varvara

And then she says she'll tell him, tell her husband,
confessing everything.

Boris

Would she do that?

Varvara

I cannot answer for her, Maminka's starting to
notice,
watches her like a serpent, watches like a serpent.
That makes her all the worse!
Here she comes. Maminka is with her. Hide
yourself!

(*Boris and Kudryash hide. Distant thunder*)



Katya (*Rushing in, taking Varvara's hand and gripping it frenziedly.*)

3 Oh, Varvara! I shall die!

Zena (*from the crowd*)

Look at that woman! Something has frightened her.

Varvara (*to Katya*)

Watch what you're saying!

Chorus

Look there! What a beauty!

No one can run away from the wrath of God!

Varvara

Calm yourself!

Katya

How can I?

Varvara

Don't be frightened.

Katya

My heart is bursting!

Kudryash (*to Boris, who is just behind him*)

Don't be afraid, you are safe with us.

Chorus

Oh, what a beauty!

Kudryash

Every blade of grass rejoices. Don't be so sad about it.

Katya (*seeing Boris*)

Ah! Why has he come here?

(*She leans towards Varvara and sobs.*)

Oh, can he really care so little about how much I suffer?

Varvara

Calm yourself, kneel down and say a prayer.

(*Enter Dikoi with Kabanicha and Tichon.*)

Dikoi (*to Kabanicha, pointing at Katya*)

Something is troubling that woman's conscience.

Kabanicha

In her soul there's something dark.

Katya (*suddenly falling to her knees*)

Maminka! Tichon!

Look at this sinner and pity her. Look at me!

Ah, did I not swear an oath to you?

(*distant thunder*)

That I'd speak to no man,
that I'd look at no man while my husband was absent?

Would you know then all my wickedness,
what I did when you left me, that very night?

Tichon

No, I won't listen.

Varvara

She doesn't mean it.

Katya

I left the house that night.

Kabanicha

Go on then, say what you have to say.

Katya

That night and every night I've spent with him.

Kabanicha

Who?

Dikoi

Who?

Kabanicha

Who?

Varvara

No, she is lying, she doesn't mean it!

Katya

Boris Grigoryevich!

(*Thunder. She falls senseless into her husband's arms.*)

Kabanicha

Son, your mother warned you!

Tichon

Katerina!

(*Thunder. Katya tears herself away and rushes off into the storm. The rest run in all directions.*)

Scene 2

A lonely spot on the bank of the Volga. Dusk, turning to night

Tichon (*followed by Glasha, running with a lamp and looking everywhere*)

4 Ah, Glasha! It's awful to think of it.

Beating her would be too easy.

You heard what mother said:

'Women like her should be buried alive.

That is the way to punish them.'

But I love her the same.

Oh, how could I then do anything to harm her?

Glasha (*running after Tichon*)

Katerina!

(*She rushes off. Enter Kudryash in haste, followed by Varvara.*)

Varvara

Mother tried to lock me up, cursed me!

So I told her 'Something bad will happen,

something bad, something bad, something bad!
Vanya, what shall I do?

Kudryash
Come with me! Yes, come with me!

Varvara
Come with you?

Kudryash
We'll go to Moscow!

Varvara
Moscow! Away to a new life!
(*They run off together.*)

Tichon (*from a distance*)
Katerina!

Glasha (*from a distance*)
Katerina!

(*Katya enters slowly from the other side.*)

[5] **Katya**
No! Nobody here. Oh, where can he be now?
If I saw him just once more I would die happy.
It was no help to tell my secret for now I've made
him suffer with me.
I have brought this shame on him too.
Yes, shame and ruin on myself and him too.

Kuligin (*just off-stage, back*)
La la la la.
(*He crosses the stage, peering at Katya.*)
La la la!

Katya (*shrinking*)
I've forgotten, what he would say to me,
how he'd look at me, all forgotten.
And the nights, oh how I dread them,
when all the world lies sleeping, the whole world.
But I shall not sleep again in this life.
I dread the darkness. I hear this noise.
(*chorus in the distance, wordless*)
And there's singing too.
Voices that haunt me like funeral chanting!
Oh, I am so glad when daylight comes again!
Why do they stare at me?
Long ago for sins like mine they would kill a
woman.

They would take her down to the Volga and
throw her in.
But I must live, live! Live, live!
And let my sins torment me! Why must I suffer so?
How long shall I have to suffer?
What more can I live for now? What?
What more? No, I want nothing more.
Nothing can make me happy.
Even the warmth of sunshine seems cold and
cheerless.

[6] And yet death won't come to me.
Death won't take me, death won't come and
take me.

All I see around me, all I hear around me,
only hurts here, hurts me here so badly.
(*her hand to her heart*)
Ah, if I could be with him,
perhaps I'd find a little happiness.
Oh, how I long to see him,
but if I cannot see him,
let him hear me calling from far away.
Oh mighty stormwind,
bear my grief and longing to my love!
Oh, how I still long to see him.
(*She approaches the steep bank.*)
Light of my life, joy of my soul,
dearest heart, oh how I love you!
(*Enter Boris. At first he does not see her.*)
Answer me! Oh, answer me!

Boris
That is her calling me!

Katya
Answer me! Oh, answer me!
(*She runs up to Boris.*)

Boris
Katya!
(*They fall into each other's arms.*)

Katya and Boris
Now once again I see you!

(*Katya weeps on his breast; they remain locked
together in an embrace. Then awareness returns.*)

Boris
[7] Thanks be to God!

Katya
You did not forget me?

Boris
How could I forget you? How could I?

Katya
No, no! It was something else I wanted to ask
you. Have I made you angry?

Boris
How could I be angry?

Katya
I never meant any harm.
I had simply lost my senses when I told them
everything.
[8] No, not that! No, not that!
It was something else I wanted to ask you.
(*coming suddenly back to the present*)
But what of you now? Tell me that.

Boris
My uncle has told me I must go away, leave this
town for ever.

Katya
Then take me with you. Ah, no!
Go and forget all about me.

Boris

Life's easier for a man.
I shall be free to do as I wish, but you...
What of Kabanicha? What will she do?

Katya

Mother will torture me and the people will stare
at me
when I walk through the streets, pointing and
laughing at me.

Boris

And your husband?

Katya

Sometimes he is gentle,
but then he gets angry, drinks, and beats me.
No, not that! I keep forgetting what I meant to say.
It was something else I wanted to tell you.
I was so sick with longing for you.
And now, now at last I see you once again.
Listen, listen, something I had to tell you...
everything is confused.

Boris

I must go.

Katya

I can no longer remember it.
Wait a moment and I'll tell you.
When you have left me, give money to anyone
begging.

Never refuse them.

*(The chorus intones a vowel sound, like to Volga
sighing. Complete darkness)*
Look in my eyes, as this is the last time I'll ever
see you.
What's that song they sing? So go now.
Goodbye. God be with you.

Boris

Oh, if they only knew how cruel parting is.
(as he walks away)
Cruel!

Katya

And still I hear that song,
*(crawling on hands and knees to the edge of the
bank)*
[9] Birds will sing as they fly above me when
I am buried,
and flowers will blossom there, purple flowers,
blue flowers, yellow flowers,
so peaceful, so lovely,
so lovely, and I must die!
(She crosses her arms and leaps into the river.)

Kuligin *(on the far bank)*

[10] Hey there, a woman has jumped in the river!

Passer-by *(on the far bank)*

Hey, get a boat!

Dikoi *(running past with a lantern)*

Who's that calling?

Glasha

Hey, get a boat!

Tichon

Quickly, come quickly.
(People rush up with lanterns from all sides.)
It surely must be her!
*(Kabanicha enters, following Dikoi. She grabs hold
of Tichon.)*
Let me go!

Kabanicha

No, my son. Let her alone, she isn't worth it.

Tichon

You are the one who killed her!
You, you, and you alone!

Kabanicha

What's this? Have you lost your mind?
Don't speak to me like that!

*(Dikoi enters carrying Katya's corpse. He lays it on
the ground.)*

Dikoi

Here's your Katerina for you.

Tichon

Katya! Katya!

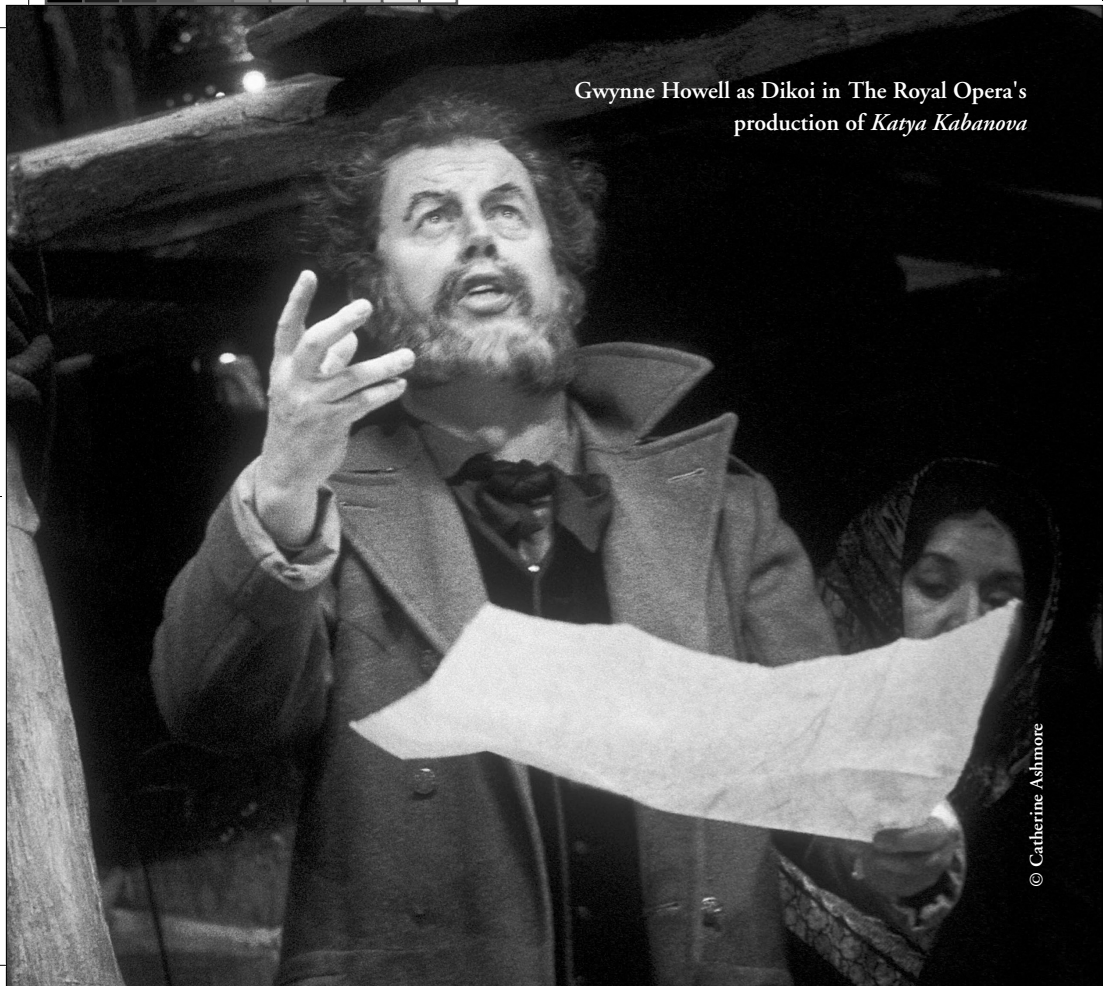
Kabanicha

I must thank you, I must thank you, friends and
neighbours, for your kindness.
*(She bows to this side and that. The chorus intones
wordlessly as before.)*

*Janáček after Ostrovsky. English translation
by Norman Tucker, © Universal Edition
(London) Ltd. Revisions by Rodney Blumer and
Henrietta Bredin*

It is a strange fact of life that translations tend
to date more quickly than original librettos.
Norman Tucker's classic version of *Katya* was
made for the first UK performances at Sadler's
Wells in 1951. More than half a century later,
one or two lines in the more conversational
exchanges have been adjusted to make them
sound more natural to twenty-first-century
ears; the purely lyrical passages, rendered by
Tucker with quite extraordinary sensitivity,
are left virtually untouched.

Rodney Blumer and Henrietta Bredin

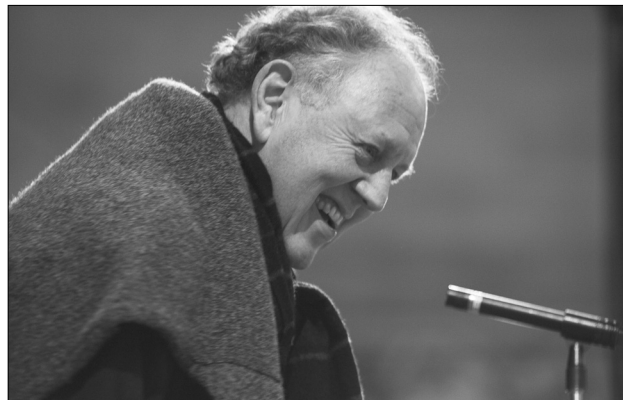


Front cover of the score of *Katya Kabanova*, illustrated by Vladimir Hrska, designer of the first production of the opera



On session

Clockwise from top left: Philip Lloyd-Holtam and Claire Hampton, Cheryl Barker, Gwynne Howell, Jane Henschel, Peter Wedd, Victoria Simmonds, Owen Webb, Carlo Rizzi, Robert Brubaker





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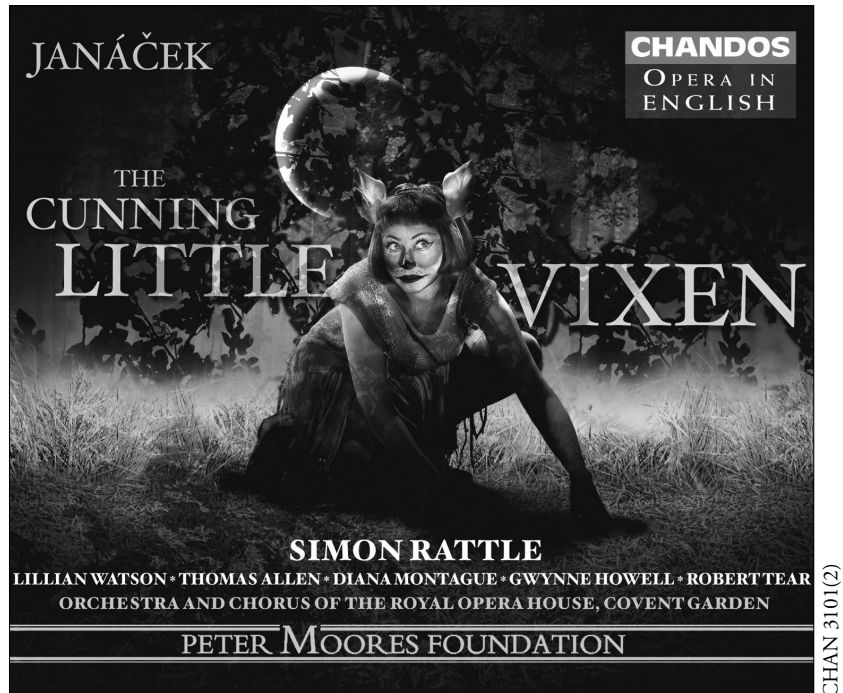


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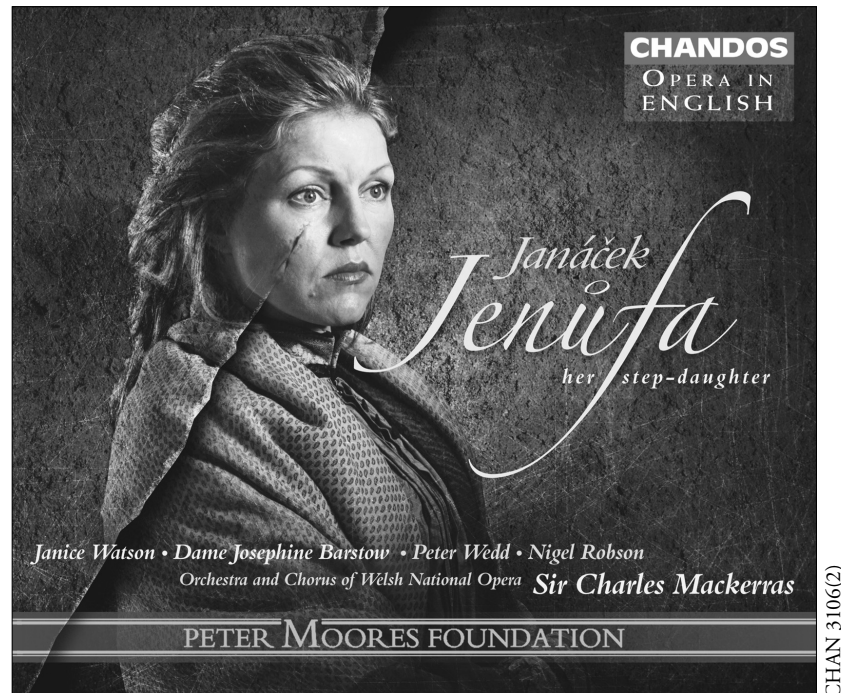
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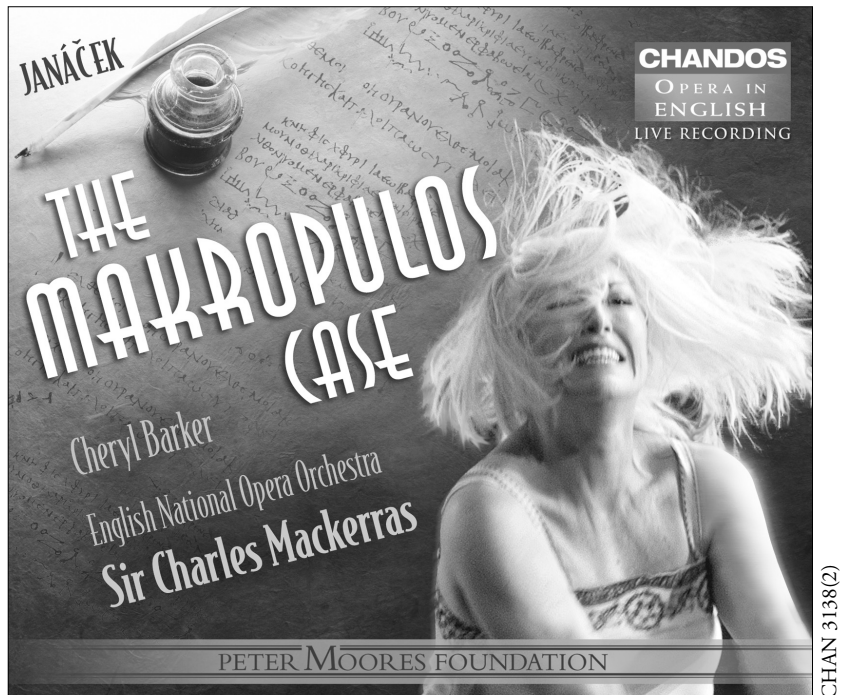


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Front cover Photo of Cheryl Barker in Welsh National Opera's production of *Katya Kabanova* by Clive Barda

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2-disc set CHAN 3145(2)

Leoš Janáček (1854–1928)

Katya Kabanova

Opera in 3 acts

Libretto by the composer after Ostrovsky's play
The Storm in the Czech translation by Červinka,
 English translation by Norman Tucker, with revisions
 by Rodney Blumer and Henrietta Bredin

Marfa Kabanova (Kabanicha), a rich merchant's widow
 Tichon Kabanov, her son
 Katerina (Katya), Tichon's wife
 Dikoi, a merchant
 Boris Grigoryevich, Dikoi's nephew
 Varvara, a foster child in the Kabanov household
 Vanya Kudryash, employed by Dikoi
 Glasha, a servant in the Kababov household
 Kuligin, a friend of Kudryash

Chorus of Welsh National Opera
 Orchestra of Welsh National Opera

Jane Henschel *mezzo-soprano*
 Peter Hoare *tenor*
 Cheryl Barker *soprano*
 Gwynne Howell *bass*
 Robert Brubaker *tenor*
 Victoria Simmonds *mezzo-soprano*
 Peter Wedd *tenor*
 Kathleen Wilkinson *mezzo-soprano*
 Owen Webb *baritone*

Carlo Rizzi

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TT 91:38

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COMPACT DISC ONE

TT 64:33

COMPACT DISC TWO

TT 27:05