

# STRAVINSKY

## The Rake's Progress



Hilde Gueden • Eugene Conley • Blanche Thebom  
Mack Harrell • Martha Lipton • Norman Scott  
Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra  
Igor Stravinsky



# Great Opera Recordings

Igor  
**STRAVINSKY**  
(1882-1971)

## The Rake's Progress

Opera in Three Acts and an Epilogue

Libretto by Wystan Hugh Auden and Chester Kallman

Anne Trulove ..... Hilde Gueden (soprano)  
Baba the Turk ..... Blanche Thebom (mezzo-soprano)  
Tom Rakewell ..... Eugene Conley (tenor)  
Nick Shadow ..... Mack Harrell (baritone)  
Mother Goose ..... Martha Lipton (mezzo-soprano)  
Trulove ..... Norman Scott (bass)  
Sellem ..... Paul Franke (tenor)  
Keeper of the Madhouse ..... Lawrence Davidson (baritone)

Metropolitan Opera Chorus  
(Kurt Adler, chorus master)  
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra  
Igor Stravinsky

Recorded 1st, 8th & 10th March 1953 in the Columbia 30th Street Studio, New York City  
First issued as Columbia SL-125

Reissue Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn  
Special thanks to Maynard F. Bertolet for providing source material

<b>CD 1</b>	<b>73:25</b>	<b>16</b> <i>How sad a song</i> (Whores, Mother Goose)	0:59
<b>Act I</b>	<b>43:33</b>	<b>17</b> <i>The sun is bright, the grass is green</i> (Whores, Roaring Boys, Shadow)	2:36
<b>Scene 1</b>		<b>Scene 3</b>	
<b>1</b> <i>The woods are green</i> (Anne, Rakewell, Trulove)	4:14	<b>18</b> <i>No word from Tom ... Quietly, night</i> (Anne)	4:23
<b>2</b> <i>Anne, my dear</i> (Trulove, Anne, Rakewell)	1:04	<b>19</b> <i>My father! Can I desert him ...</i> <i>I go, I go to him</i> (Anne)	3:50
<b>3</b> <i>Here I stand ... Since it is not by merit</i> (Rakewell)	2:45	<b>Act II (Beginning)</b>	<b>29:52</b>
<b>4</b> <i>Tom Rakewell?</i> (Shadow, Rakewell)	1:28	<b>Scene 1</b>	
<b>5</b> <i>Fair lady, gracious gentlemen</i> (Shadow)	2:08	<b>20</b> <i>Vary the song, O London</i> (Rakewell)	3:08
<b>6</b> <i>I wished but once</i> (Rakewell, Shadow, Anne, Trulove)	1:42	<b>21</b> <i>O Nature, green unnatural mother</i> (Rakewell)	3:06
<b>7</b> <i>My Anne, behold</i> (Rakewell, Anne, Trulove, Shadow)	2:13	<b>22</b> <i>Always the quarry that I stalk</i> (Rakewell)	1:46
<b>8</b> <i>Farewell for now</i> (Anne, Rakewell)	1:12	<b>23</b> <i>Master, are you alone?</i> (Shadow, Rakewell)	1:17
<b>9</b> <i>All is ready, sir</i> (Shadow, Rakewell)	0:48	<b>24</b> <i>Come, master, observe the host of mankind</i> (Shadow)	1:21
<b>10</b> <i>Dear father Trulove</i> (Rakewell)	1:21	<b>25</b> <i>In youth the panting slave pursues</i> (Shadow)	2:16
<b>11</b> <i>Laughter and light</i> (Rakewell, Anne, Trulove, Shadow)	1:48	<b>26</b> <i>My tale shall be told</i> (Rakewell, Shadow)	2:24
<b>Scene 2</b>		<b>Scene 2</b>	
<b>12</b> <i>With air commanding and weapon handy</i> (Roaring Boys, Whores)	2:38	<b>27</b> <i>Introduction</i> (Orchestra)	1:32
<b>13</b> <i>Come, Tom</i> (Shadow, Rakewell, Mother Goose)	3:59	<b>28</b> <i>How strange! ... O heart, be stronger</i> (Anne)	2:39
<b>14</b> <i>Soon dawn will glitter ...</i> <i>Sisters of Venus, Brothers of Mars</i> (Whores, Roaring Boys, Shadow)	1:37	<b>29</b> <i>What can this mean?</i> (Anne, Rakewell)	3:18
<b>15</b> <i>Love, too frequently betrayed</i> (Rakewell)	2:41	<b>30</b> <i>My love, am I to remain in here for ever?</i> (Baba, Anne, Rakewell)	0:59

<b>31</b>	<i>Could it then have been known</i> (Anne, Rakewell, Baba)	3:06	<b>13</b>	<i>Very well then, my dear and good Tom</i> (Shadow, Rakewell)	1:29
<b>32</b>	<i>I have not run away</i> (Baba, Rakewell, Voices, Town People)	3:05	<b>14</b>	<i>Well, then ... My heart is wild with fear</i> (Shadow, Rakewell)	4:19
<b>CD 2</b>		<b>72:25</b>	<b>15</b>	<i>The simpler the trick</i> (Shadow, Rakewell, Anne)	3:05
<b>Act II (Conclusion)</b>		<b>11:51</b>	<b>16</b>	<i>I burn, I burn! I freeze!</i> (Shadow)	2:16
<b>Scene 3</b>			<b>17</b>	<i>With roses crowned</i> (Rakewell)	1:25
<b>1</b>	<i>As I was saying ... Come, sweet, come ...</i> <i>Scorned! Abused!</i> (Baba, Rakewell)	4:24	<b>Scene 3</b>		
<b>2</b>	<i>Fa la la</i> (Shadow)	3:14	<b>18</b>	<i>Prepare yourselves, heroic shades</i> (Rakewell, Madmen)	4:05
<b>3</b>	<i>Thanks to this excellent device</i> (Rakewell, Shadow)	1:48	<b>19</b>	<i>There he is. Have no fear</i> (Keeper, Anne, Rakewell)	2:23
<b>4</b>	<i>Forgive me, master, for intruding</i> (Shadow, Rakewell)	2:19	<b>20</b>	<i>I have waited ... In a foolish dream</i> (Rakewell, Anne)	2:52
<b>Act III</b>		<b>60:34</b>	<b>21</b>	<i>I am exceeding weary</i> (Rakewell)	1:05
<b>Scene 1</b>			<b>22</b>	<i>Gently, little boat</i> (Anne, Madmen)	3:04
<b>5</b>	<i>Ruin. Disaster. Shame.</i> (Crowd, Anne, Sellem)	3:24	<b>23</b>	<i>Anne, my dear</i> (Trulove, Anne)	0:58
<b>6</b>	<i>Ladies both fair and gracious</i> (Sellem)	1:40	<b>24</b>	<i>Every wearied body</i> (Anne, Trulove)	1:48
<b>7</b>	<i>Who hears me, knows me</i> (Sellem, Crowd)	3:40	<b>25</b>	<i>Where art thou, Venus?</i> (Rakewell, Madmen)	3:41
<b>8</b>	<i>Sold! Annoyed!</i> (Baba, Crowd, Rakewell, Shadow)	2:19	<b>26</b>	<i>Mourn for Adonis</i> (Chorus)	1:33
<b>9</b>	<i>You love him, seek to set him right</i> (Baba, Anne, Crowd, Sellem, Rakewell, Shadow)	4:24	<b>Epilogue</b>		
<b>10</b>	<i>I go to him</i> (Anne, Rakewell, Shadow, Baba, Crowd)	2:04	<b>27</b>	<i>Good people, just a moment</i> (Anne, Baba, Rakewell, Shadow, Trulove)	2:45
<b>Scene 2</b>					
<b>11</b>	<i>Prelude</i> (String Quartet)	2:05			
<b>12</b>	<i>How dark and dreadful is this place</i> (Rakewell, Shadow)	4:15			

## Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

### The Rake's Progress

Ever since his arrival in the United States of America in 1939, Stravinsky had wanted to write an opera in English. At first his output was focused, as it had been previously in France, on orchestral works, notably the *Symphony in Three Movements* (1942-45), and ballet scores, which extended from the brief *Circus Polka* (1942) to *Orpheus* (1947). It was while he was working on *Orpheus* that he found the subject for his opera. On 2nd May 1947 he visited an exhibition of work by the English artist William Hogarth at the Chicago Art Institute that included the series of canvases entitled *The Rake's Progress*, painted between 1732 and 1733 and normally housed in Sir John Soane's Museum in London. Popularised through the medium of inexpensive engravings, these pictures portrayed the decline and fall of Tom Rakewell, and had already been used as the basis of a ballet created by Ninette de Valois for the Vic-Wells Company in 1935, with a Handelian pastiche score by Gavin Gordon.

Stravinsky decided that in the pictures lay the germ of an operatic libretto, and next sought out a collaborator to write it. He asked the advice of his Californian friend and neighbour Aldous Huxley, who recommended the English poet W. H. Auden, then living in the United States. Auden, in addition to his virtuosity as a poet, had written plays with Christopher Isherwood, and had collaborated on several musico-dramatic projects with Benjamin Britten, including the 'choral operetta' *Paul Bunyan* of 1941. Through Stravinsky's publisher the two were in touch by letter during October 1947, Stravinsky already making it clear that he intended to compose a 'number' opera. During a week together in November they prepared a draft scenario that was close to the final outline of the opera's narrative, as well as the placing and nature of the musical numbers. The completed libretto, partly written by Auden's partner Chester Kallman, was delivered to the composer during the spring of 1948. Stravinsky found Auden to be a sympathetic collaborator and was particularly impressed by his extraordinary technical

pro prowess with words. For instance at the first play-through of Act One in February 1949 Auden suggested that the heroine's aria should end on a high C and immediately wrote a new line to allow for this.

Unusually Stravinsky had embarked on the composition of *The Rake's Progress* without an external incentive: most of his major works were commissioned or written with the definite prospect of performance. This was not the case in this instance. And so, unused to the problems of placing a work, it was not until quite late that the circumstances of the première were settled. Assisted by a handsome commissioning fee from the Italian government, Stravinsky eventually decided upon the Teatro La Fenice, Venice, with the opera as the star attraction of the fourteenth Venice Biennale of contemporary music. The contract was signed in February 1951, allowing little time for practical arrangements for the first set of performances, scheduled for September of the same year. His friend Carl Ebert was engaged as producer, but it was only in July that La Scala, Milan, assumed responsibility for the production. The first performance, given on 11th September 1951, was an extremely glamorous occasion, although reactions to the production were mixed. Nonetheless the opera now began a triumphant progress around the world's major opera houses. It was seen in Edinburgh, Geneva, Paris, Strasbourg, Vienna and across Germany during 1952 and reached the Metropolitan Opera in New York in February 1953, where it was prepared and conducted by Fritz Reiner, and directed by George Balanchine in sets by Horace Armistead. During March the Metropolitan cast moved into the Columbia studios and recorded the opera under the baton of the composer. Here he had orchestral forces more to his liking than in the grand old Metropolitan Opera House, where the work had been performed with quintuple wind and a piano instead of a harpsichord for the recitatives. A few months later, in May 1953, Stravinsky conducted the opera again, at the Boston University Opera Workshop, where it was directed by

Sarah Caldwell, with Robert Craft as assistant producer. This production was significant in that it demonstrated that the work could be performed successfully by students.

The Metropolitan Opera cast of 1953 was extremely strong, containing the cream of the company's English-speaking singers, as well as the Austrian-born soprano, Hilde Gueden, who took the part of Anne Trulove. The rôle of Tom Rakewell was sung by the American tenor **Eugene Conley** (1908-1981) who established his reputation as a singer in Europe, appearing at the Opéra-Comique in Paris and at the Royal Opera, Stockholm (1947) and at La Scala, Milan, and Covent Garden, London (1949) before making his Metropolitan opera début as Gounod's Faust in 1950. He quickly became an audience favourite, competing successfully with such European stars as Jussi Björling, Giuseppe di Stefano and Ferruccio Tagliavini, as well as with established favourites Richard Tucker and Jan Peerce. He often sang with the Cincinnati Opera and from 1960 to 1978 was artist-in-residence at the University of North Texas. Opposite him as Nick Shadow was **Mack Harrell** (1909-1960). Following study at the Juilliard School, New York, Harrell made his début at New York's Town Hall in 1938. He went on to win the Metropolitan Opera auditions of the same year and made his début with the company in New York in December 1939 as Biterolf in *Tannhäuser*. He remained on the Metropolitan Opera roster until 1948, and returned for the 1949-1950, 1952-1954, and 1957-1958 seasons. At the Met he sang a wide repertory, appearing in 156 performances and 23 different rôles. In May 1944 he made his first appearance at the New York City Opera as Germont in *La Traviata*, and returned there in 1948, 1951-1952, and

1959. He also sang in Chicago and San Francisco, and pursued a notably successful concert career. Like Conley, he possessed a voice of remarkable lyrical beauty. Nick Shadow was probably the rôle for which he was best known.

**Hilde Gueden** (1917-87) studied piano, voice and dance at the Vienna Music Academy. She made her stage début in 1937 at the Vienna Volksoper in Benatzky's operetta *Herzen im Schnee*. Her operatic début took place in 1939, when she sang Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Zurich Opera. In 1941 Clemens Krauss invited her to join the Munich Opera, where she sang with much success, before having to flee Germany because of her Jewish origins. She made her Salzburg début in 1946 and from 1947 until 1973 was a favourite member of the Vienna State Opera, excelling in the soprano rôles of Mozart and Richard Strauss, as well as being a most distinguished star of operetta. She made her Metropolitan Opera début in 1951 as Gilda in *Rigoletto*, returning frequently as a welcome guest. **Blanche Thebom** (Baba the Turk) was born in 1918. She studied singing with Margaret Matzenauer and Edyth Walker in New York, and made her concert début with the Metropolitan Opera as Fricka in 1941. She made her stage début with the company in 1944 at the Philadelphia Academy of Music as Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*. She was the leading dramatic mezzo-soprano of the Metropolitan Opera for 22 seasons (1944-1959, 1960-1967) appearing in 356 performances across 28 rôles. She also sang in Europe, and was the first American to sing at the Bolshoy Opera in Moscow. In 1968 she was appointed director of the opera workshop of San Francisco State University. She lives and teaches in San Francisco.

**David Patmore**

## Synopsis

The time and place of the action are eighteenth century England.

### CD 1

**Act I: Prelude. Scene 1:** *Duet and trio:* In the garden of Trulove's house Anne Trulove and Tom Rakewell sing of love and spring, while Trulove, witnessing the scene, sings of a 'father's prudent fears' **[1]**. *Recitative:* Trulove offers Tom a position in a counting house which Tom refuses **[2]**. *Recitative and aria:* Alone, Tom considers his refusal to work and entrusts himself to Fortune before swiftly pronouncing his need for money **[3]**. *Recitative:* Instantly Nick Shadow appears **[4]**. *Aria:* Shadow tells Tom, Anne and Trulove that a forgotten uncle has remembered Tom with a rich legacy **[5]**. *Quartet:* Tom hopes that his wishes might come true while Shadow is thanked **[6]**. Tom and Anne take joy in their new prospects. Shadow advises Tom to go to London to settle his estate and Tom is persuaded to go by Trulove. *Recitative:* Trulove and Shadow exit **[7]**. *Duetтино:* Anne and Tom exchange farewells **[8]**. *Recitative:* Tom hires Shadow and agrees to settle accounts with him 'a year and a day hence' **[9]**. *Arioso and terzettino:* The leave-taking: Tom says farewell to Anne and Trulove, promising to send for them as soon as his affairs are settled **[10]**. When the Truloves have gone out together, Shadow tells the audience 'the Progress of a Rake begins' **[11]**.

**Scene 2:** *Chorus:* Whores and roaring boys at night in Mother Goose's London brothel sing of their activities and toast Venus and Mars **[12]**. *Recitative and Scene:* Shadow asks Tom, for the benefit of Mother Goose, to demonstrate the knowledge he has acquired under his new tutelage. Tom defines Beauty and Pleasure but he cannot define Love. Tom wishes to leave the brothel, saying it is late, but Shadow puts the clock back an hour to allow time for Tom's revels **[13]**. *Chorus:* The whores and roaring boys continue their song. *Recitative:* Shadow presents Tom to the assembled company **[14]**. *Cavatina:* Tom remembers his vows of love **[15]**. *Chorus:*

The whores commiserate with Tom. Mother Goose takes him from them and claims him for her own **[16]**. *Chorus:* As she goes off with Tom the company serenades them, though Shadow warns that when he wakes from his dreams he must die **[17]**.

**Scene 3:** In the garden of Trulove's country house, in the autumn night. *Recitative and aria:* Anne, alone, thinks sadly of the departed Tom **[18]**. *Recitative and aria:* She prays for him and decides to go to him in London **[19]**.

**Act II, Scene 1:** *Aria:* Alone in his London house Tom sings of his weariness with the city **[20]**. *Recitative:* He decries the attractions of London in favour of nature **[21]**. *Aria:* Sensing the emptiness of his predicament, he pronounces his second wish, for happiness **[22]**. *Recitative:* Nick Shadow instantly appears and induces Tom to marry Baba the Turk **[23]** to free himself from conscience and appetite **[24]** and *Aria:* to demonstrate his freedom of will **[25]**. *Duet-Finale:* Shadow helps Tom dress to go out for the wooing of Baba the Turk **[26]**.

**Scene 2: Introduction:** The street in front of Tom's London house, autumn, dusk **[27]**. *Recitative and Arioso:* Anne tries to renew her courage and resolve **[28]**. Suddenly a procession of servants crosses the stage. Then a sedan chair swings into view from which Tom alights; he is recognized by Anne. *Duet:* While Tom pleads with Anne to return to the country, saying he is unworthy of her, she reminds him of her love for him **[29]**. *Recitative:* Baba asks Tom to help her out of her sedan. Anne is shocked to hear from Tom that Baba is his wife **[30]**. *Trio:* Baba's impatience goes unheeded as Anne and Tom mourn the breaking of their vows made in the country **[31]**. *Finale:* Anne departs and Tom joins Baba, who reveals her beard to the crowd before entering the house **[32]**.

### CD 2

**Scene 3:** *Aria:* In Tom's London house Baba at breakfast enumerates her collection of oddities. Trying to get close to Tom, who is ignoring her, she sings

*Baba's Song.* When he pushes her away she sings her *Aria* of rage and recrimination. Tom finally silences her by thrusting a wig over her face and in a *Recitative* he falls asleep **1**. *Pantomime:* While Tom sleeps Shadow comes in wheeling a fake machine which manufactures bread from stones. *Recitative - Arioso - Recitative:* Tom awakes, wishing that his dream might come true. He sees Shadow, to whom he explains his dream of a miraculous bread machine. Shadow then shows his machine to the amazed Tom, who 'makes' bread with it, tastes it, and regains some hope for Anne's love **2**. *Duet:* Tom hopes that the machine may redeem him by doing away with hunger and poverty. Shadow sees Tom as a fool from whom money may be made **3**. *Recitative:* They decide to go into business with the machine. They desert Baba as they leave for their new venture **4**.

**Act III, Scene 1:** The same room in Tom's London house, the following spring. Anne looks for Tom in the crowd which has come for the auction of his possessions **5**. *Recitative:* Sellem welcomes the public **6**. *Aria-Bidding Scene-Aria-Bidding Scene-Recitative-Aria-Final Bidding Scene:* Sellem auctions off an auk, a pike, a bust, and a palm, and finally Baba herself as 'an unknown object' **7**. *Aria:* Brushing away the cobwebs which have cocooned her, Baba arises from the chair, where apparently she has resided ever since Tom squelched her with his wig the previous autumn. She sings a variant of her last aria of the second act, until interrupted by the voices of Tom and Shadow offstage. *Recitative and Duet:* Anne enters and goes to Baba **8**. *Duet:* Baba admits to Anne that Tom still loves her, urges her to go to him, while she herself decides to return to the stage. The auction ends. *Ballad Tune:* Tom and Shadow are heard once again off-stage **9**. *Stretto-*

*Finale:* Anne resolves to go to Tom. Once more the *Ballad Tune* is heard off-stage and Baba makes her grand exit **10**.

**Scene 2:** *Prelude* for string quartet **11**. *Duet:* In a church graveyard just before midnight Shadow offers Tom a choice of means with which to end his life, reminding him that his year and a day are up **12**. *Recitative:* Shadow grants Tom a stay to decide his fate by a game of cards **13**. *Duet:* Tom wins the first two guesses, and almost despairs of final success **14**. Shadow senses success but, hearing the voice of Anne off-stage, Tom places his faith once again in love, the Queen of Hearts, and wins **15**. Shadow sinks into the grave he had chosen for Tom, casting a spell of insanity upon Tom as he does so **16**. The dawn comes up on Tom, mad, lying on the grave. He sings the ballad tune **17**.

**Scene 3:** *Arioso:* Tom in Bedlam begs Venus to come to him, her Adonis. *Dialogue:* Tom's fellow madmen deny that Anne will come to Tom. *Chorus - Minuet:* They sing of the misery of the hell of madness **18**. *Recitative:* the Bedlam keeper ushers Anne into the presence of Tom. Anne goes to Tom and addresses him as 'Adonis', while in her he recognizes his 'Venus' **19**. *Arioso and Duet:* Tom seeks Anne's forgiveness, which she willingly gives **20**. *Recitative:* Exhausted, Tom lays his head on Anne's breast **21**. *Lullaby:* Anne sings Tom to sleep **22**. *Recitative:* Father Trulove comes to take Anne home **23**. *Duetto:* Trulove and Anne bid Tom goodbye **24**. *Finale:* Tom wakes, calls for his Venus and dies **25**. *Mourning Chorus:* the Chorus weeps for Adonis **26**. *Epilogue:* Anne, Baba, Tom, Trulove and Shadow point the moral of their story: 'For idle hands and hearts and minds, the Devil finds a work to do' **27**.



Playing  
Time  
2:25:50

8.111266-67

ADD

CD I 73:25

1-19 Act I 43:33  
20-32 Act II - Beginning 29:52

CD 2 72:25

1-4 Act II - Conclusion 11:51  
5-26 Act III 57:49  
27 Epilogue 2:45

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# The Rake's Progress

Anne Trulove ..... Hilde Gueden  
Baba the Turk ..... Blanche Thebom  
Tom Rakewell ..... Eugene Conley  
Nick Shadow ..... Mack Harrell  
Mother Goose ..... Martha Lipton  
Trulove ..... Norman Scott

Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra

Igor Stravinsky

Recorded 1st, 8th & 10th March 1953

in the Columbia 30th Street Studio, New York City

This 1953 recording was the first of the two complete recordings of Stravinsky's operatic masterpiece *The Rake's Progress* to be conducted by the composer. All the musical forces were drawn from the Metropolitan Opera's historic first production, first seen on St. Valentine's Day 1953, conducted by Fritz Reiner, who also took charge of all the musical preparation. The cast was drawn from the cream of the Met's English speaking singers, notably tenor Eugene Conley as Tom Rakewell, Mack Harrell as Nick Shadow and Blanche Thebom as Baba the Turk. Joining them as Anne Trulove was the immensely popular Austrian soprano Hilde Gueden who, from 1947 to 1973, was one of the most distinguished singers of the Vienna State Opera.

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Special thanks to Maynard F. Bertolet for providing source material  
Cover photo: Igor Stravinsky, circa 1940 (Private Collection)



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