

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

in association with the

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

presents

SCENES FROM

BORIS GODOUNOV

(MOUSSORGSKY)

E.U.M.S. CHOIR

REID ORCHESTRA

Leader—Dr. JOHN FAIRBAIRN

Conductor—SIDNEY NEWMAN

USHER HALL

WEDNESDAY, 1st DECEMBER, 1954

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME ONE SHILLING

INTRODUCTION

Moussorgsky's first version of his "national music drama," the greatest masterpiece of Russian opera, was composed between 1868-70. It was at first refused by the opera management, and criticised by Moussorgsky's friends for various reasons, one being the absence of feminine interest. Moussorgsky accordingly added several scenes and rewrote others—the two chief additions being the whole of Act III (the scenes in Poland) and the great revolutionary scene in Act IV. The Nursery scene and the scene in the Inn on the Polish frontier were both enlarged. The only weakness in this second version lies in the Polish scenes where Moussorgsky has relied upon a facile Polonaise style almost exclusively.

For a great many years, however, the opera was only to be heard in one of the two revised versions made by Rimsky Korsakoff, whose re-orchestration certainly added something to the scenes of splendour, but whose rewriting of many of Moussorgsky's prophetically modern harmonies did the work a great disservice. Only within the last thirty years or so has the opera been given again in the original versions of Moussorgsky. The first production in English translation using Moussorgsky's score was at Sadlers Wells in 1935-36.

Boris Godounov consists of a series of historical illustrations. It does not develop its story as a continuous drama. But therein lies its greatness. The method employed in its design is that of the great novelists who develop several independent scenes and portray widely different types of people and conditions of life. This opera is concerned as much with the Russian people as it is with the figure of Boris. It is based upon the dramatic poem of Puskin, some of the libretto being derived direct from that poem, the remainder being written by Moussorgsky himself.

The period is the 17th century. Boris has risen to power, first as confidant of Ivan the Terrible and then as Lord Protector to his half-witted son Feodor, Boris' brother-in-law. After Feodor died, the young child Dimitri his half-brother, the heir to the throne, was found murdered. Boris was suspected, and for the purposes of his drama Puskin has assumed that Boris was guilty.

BORIS GODOUNOV

Opera in Four Acts with a Prologue

by

MODEST PETROVITCH MOUSSORGSKY

PROLOGUE *Scene 1.*—THE COURTYARD OF THE MONASTERY OF NOVODIEVICKY.

A police officer	- - - -	IAIN ROBERTSON
Mitiukha (A peasant—one of the crowd)		ROBERT SHAND
Andrei Shchelkalof (Secretary to the Council)		NICOLL EASTON
The People	} - - - - -	The Chorus
A Band of Pilgrims		

Boris, though desirous of assuming the supreme power, does not wish to appear so and has retired into this monastery. The Council of Boyars have ordered the populace into the courtyard where they are forced by a police officer to make a demonstration and call for Boris to become Tsar. The people wrangle and grumble, hardly understanding anything of the situation. Shchelkalof comes from the monastery and tells them that Boris still refuses, and they must pray for a change of mind. A band of pilgrims approaches and distributes amulets amongst the people telling them to pray for Boris. The people are ordered to assemble next day at the Kremlin. They disperse bewildered.

PROLOGUE *Scene 2.*—THE KREMLIN SQUARE.

Prince Vassili Ivanovitch Shuisky	- -	PARRY JONES
Boris Godounov	- -	MARIAN NOWAKOWSKI
The People	- - - - -	The Chorus

The Coronation scene. The people are gathered outside the Cathedral of the Assumption awaiting the ceremony. Shuisky appears in the porch and proclaims Boris, to which the people respond in a magnificent paean of jubilant song. At length Boris, preceded by a religious procession, appears at the Cathedral porch. He pauses for a while, filled with some misgiving as to the future. Then the procession moves on and enters the Cathedral of the Archangels.

(In the first scene of Act I, a young novice Grigory learns from Pimen, an aged monk and chronicler, something of the story of the young Dimitri. Learning that if the child were still alive he would be of the same age as himself Grigory resolves to set himself up as Pretender to the throne. In the second scene, having fallen in with two vagabond friars, Varlaam and Missail, he escapes across the border to Poland).

ACT II.—AN APARTMENT IN THE TSAR'S PALACE.

Xenia (daughter of Boris)	-	BARBARA DELANO LAING
Feodor (son of Boris)	-	ROBERTA McEWAN
Xenia's Nurse	-	MONA BENSON
Boris Godounov	-	MARIAN NOWAKOWSKI
Shuisky	-	PARRY JONES

Xenia, still only a girl, laments the death of her lover, a Danish prince. Feodor is busy making a map. The Nurse tries to put an end to Xenia's lamentations and sings her a ridiculous song about a gnat. Feodor thinks it a bad song and he can do better.—so he starts a song and hand-clapping game with the Nurse, which breaks off suddenly as they notice Boris who has come in quietly unobserved. After a few words with each of the children, he dismisses them. Xenia and the Nurse leave the room. Feodor returns to his map. Boris falls into a reverie. He is oppressed with the misfortunes which have beset his reign and thwarted his ambitions, and once more his sense of guilt returns. Shuisky, whom Boris distrusts, craves an audience and brings news that a certain Dimitri is raising rebellion and invading from Poland. Boris, to satisfy himself that this is a false pretender, has the story of the murder recounted to him on oath, which works him up into a fit of madness, heightened by the macabre chiming of an elaborate clock with mechanical figures that run in and out as it strikes.

INTERVAL

(ACT III shows the fortunes of Grigory in Poland. The Polish Jesuits see an opportunity for the extension of Roman Catholic power in orthodox Russia and compel the Princess to ally herself with the Pretender).

ACT IV.—Scene 1.—THE COUNCIL CHAMBER OF THE PALACE.

Shuisky	-	PARRY JONES
Boris Godounov	-	MARIAN NOWAKOWSKI
Pimen (an aged monk)	-	NICOLL EASTON
Feodor	-	ROBERTA McEWAN
Boyars	}	- The Chorus
Choir of Monks		

(A Council of Boyars has been held to decide how to act against the Pretender). Shuisky comes to the Council bringing news of the Csar's strange behaviour and hallucinations. Before his tale is told, Boris enters backwards, retreating aghast from the spectre that haunts him. He pulls himself together to address the Council. Shuisky announces that an aged monk (Pimen) has a weighty secret to impart. Boris orders his admittance. Pimen recounts how an old shepherd blind from his boyhood had miraculously regained his sight when, in response to a vision, he made a pilgrimage to the tomb of the murdered child Dimitri. This story leads to Boris' complete collapse. He sends for his son and gives him careful advice as to how he shall reign. The bells begin to toll, and a choir of monks is heard chanting. Springing to his feet in one last defiant gesture Boris collapses and dies.

ACT IV.—*Scene 2.*—A CLEARING IN THE FOREST NEAR KROMY.
NIGHT.

Crowd of vagabonds	}	- - - The Chorus
Crowd of urchins		
Crowds following the Pretender		
The Simpleton - - - - -		JAMES MILLER
Varlaam } vagabond Monks	{	WILLIAM TIPLADY CHRISTIE DUNCAN
Missail		
Two Polish Jesuits - - -	{	GEORGE BEAGRIE IAIN ROBERTSON
The Pretender (Dimitri) - -		WILLIAM MITCHELL

THE REVOLUTIONARY SCENE.—In such a crowd of vagabonds with an old Boyar they have caught. They sit him on a stump, gag him and make sport of him, pretending to pay him homage.

Suddenly a poor barefooted Simpleton rushes into the clearing pursued by a crowd of urchins who have found him and driven him out of a thicket. Some of the crowd drive the urchins off, and the Simpleton sits on a stone and begins to sing. The urchins return, making fun of his hat, and steal the bright coin he shows them.

In the distance are heard the vagabond monks, Varlaam and Missail, singing as they march, and calling upon the people to revolt against Boris. The spirit of rebellion quickly spreads through the crowd who surge about them shouting "death to Boris" and "slay the murderer."

In the distance are heard two Polish Jesuits chanting in Latin as they march, and championing the cause of Dimitri. Varlaam and Missail incite the crowd to set upon them, and they are dragged away to be hung. At that point, the sound of the Pretender's army is heard marching through the forest. Trumpet calls ring out. The first horsemen of the procession appear. Varlaam and Missail acclaim the Pretender. The crowd and the Jesuits return and throng about him as he enters triumphantly on a white horse. After proclaiming himself, he moves on with the crowd surging after him leaving the Simpleton alone in the clearing. He sits there, a pitiable object singing his half-prophetic song of the tragedy and doom of Russia.

The National Federation of Music Societies, to which the Edinburgh University Musical Society is affiliated, supports this concert with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

WEDNESDAY, 15th DECEMBER, 1954

at 7.30 p.m.

in the

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Conductor—SIDNEY NEWMAN

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(J. S. Bach)

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY CHOIR

REID CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Evangelist—ANDREW DOWNIE

Christus—JAMES ROSS

THE SALTIRE SINGERS

MARGARET FRASER

DUNCAN ROBERTSON

CONSTANCE MULLAY

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