

## Prokofiev - Ivan the Terrible (1989)

Written by bluesever

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1 Prologue 2 No.1. Overture and Chorus (Moderato - Allegro) 3 No.2. March of Young Ivan (Moderato) 4 No.3. Ocean - Sea (Andante) 5 No.4. I will be Tsar! (Moderato) 6 No.5. God is wondrous! (Allegro) 7 No.6. Long Life! (Allegro moderato) 8 No.7. Ocean - Sea (Andante) 9 No.8. Long Life! (Allegro moderato) 10 No.9. The Holy Fool (Allegro tempestoso) 11 No.10. The Swan (Allegro fastoso) 12 No.11. Celebration Song (Andante) 13 No.12. The Swan (Allegro fastoso) 14 No.13. On the Bones of the Enemy (Andante mosso) 15 No.14. The Tartars (Allegro moderato) 16 No.15. The Gunners (Moderato energico) 17 No.16. The Storming of Kazan (Moderato pesante - Andante - Allegro) 18 No.17. Ivan's Appeal to the Boyars (Adagio - Andante sostenuto) 19 No.18. Yesfrosinia and Anastasia (Moderato) 20 No.19. Song about the Beaver (Andante assai) 21 No.20. Ivan at Anastasia's Bier (Andante) 22 No.21. Chorus of the Oprichniki (Andante risoluto) 23 No.22. The Oprichniki Oath of Loyalty (Moderato energico) 24 No.23: Feodor Basmanov's Song (Allegro moderato) 25 No.24. Dance of the Oprichniki (Allegro ben ritmato) 26 No.25. Finale (Moderato - Moderato fastoso)  
Irina Arkhipova, Mezzo-Soprano Anatoly Mokrenko, Baritone Boris Morgunov, Speaker The Ambrosian Chorus Philharmonia Orchestra Riccardo Muti - conductor

The music to Ivan the Terrible is not well-known, probably because the project for which it was conceived was never completed. A film in three parts by Sergei Einstein (with whom Prokofiev had collaborated with on Alexander Nevsky) was cut short, only two thirds finished, after Einstein's heart attack. What is presented in this CD is "an arrangement by Abram Stasevich, who conducted the score for the original film, described as an 'oratorio for narrator, soloists, chorus and full symphony orchestra.'" I assume that the 25 movements and prologue are taken directly from the film's score; they are all quite brief movements--only one is 8 minutes, a few 5, most 3 minutes or less--as is characteristic of film music. Given the nature of the beast, so to speak, there are no great developments of material. Instead, there is much dramatic Russian narration, often over the music, in the style of a melodrama. There is much picturesque music, with chants and church bells and even the chorale with which Tchiakovsky begins the 1812 Overture. And moments of great drama, which Prokofiev does so well, with exciting brass and percussion, trombone glissandos and dissonant chords which remind me of Bartok's Miraculous Mandarin. I think it's a fascinating work, although surely not for everyone. Riccardo

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Muti and the Philharmonia Orchestra do the piece justice, and singers Irina Arkhipova and Anatoly Mokrenko, although not used often, are superb. Boris Morgunov dives into the narration with great style--even though I have no idea what he is saying (no translation is provided)--he's very exciting to listen to. Highly recommended for anyone who doesn't think music died after 1880. --- Dr. Christopher Coleman, amazon.com

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