

Prokofiev – Guerre & Paix (Rostropovich) [1988]

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Disc: 1 1. Scene One: Ov - Orch Nat De France/Mstislav Rostropovitch 2. Scene One: Ciel Clair Et Printannier - Lajos Miller 3. Scene One: Je Ne Veux Pas Dormir, Je Ne Peux Pas Dormir - Galina Vichnievskaia/Katherine Ciesinski 4. Scene One: Peu Lelur Importe Wue J'Existe - Lajos Miller 5. Scene Two: Un Val Chez Un Vieux Gentilhomme - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 6. Scene Two: Scene Et Arrivee De L'Empereir - Kimiter Perkov/Galina Vichnievskaia/Katherine Ciesinski 7. Scene Two: Que Les Astres Poursuivent Leur Ronde - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 8. Scene Two: Par Un Soir De Printemps - Lajos Miller/Galina Vichnievskaia/pali Marinov/Magdalena Cononovici 9. Scene Three: Un Salon Dans L'Hotel Particulier Du Prince Bolkonski - Lajos Miller 10. Scene Three: Le Prince Nikolai Andreivitch Et La Princesse Sont-Ils Chez Eux? - Dinitier Petkov/Galina Vichnievskaia/Mira Zakai 11. Scene Three: Ah, Mademoiselle La Comtesse - Anon Diakov 12. Scene Three: De Quel Droit Me Refusent-Ils? - Galina Vichnievskaia

Disc: 2 1. Scene Four: Enfin Vous Etes Venue Chez Moi - Galina Vichnievskaia/Dinitier Petkov 2. Scene Four: Comme Elle Est Belle - Galina Vichnievskaia/Katherine Ciesinski/Stefania Toczyska/Nicolai Gedda 3. Scene Four: Mon Sort Est Entre Vos Mains - Galina Vichnievskaia/Katherine Ciesinski 4. Scene Five: Je La Retrouverai - Nicolai Gedda/Vladimir de Kanel 5. Scene Five: Entree Du Cher Balaga - Romuald Tesarowicz 6. Scene Five: Joseph, De Loutre! - Vladimir De Kanel/Nathalie Stutzmann 7. Scene Six: Un Salon De La Maison - Galina Vichnievskaia/Vladimir De Kanel/Catherine Dubosc/Nicoai Gedda 8. Scene Six: C'Est Du Propre! - Pali Marinov/Galina Vichnievskaia 9. Scene Six: Bezoukhov...Fais Entrer - Pali Marinov/Wieslaw Ochman/Galina Vichnievskaia 10. Scene Six: J'Ai Une Confiance Aveugle En Vous - Lajos Miller/Katherine Ciesinski/Pali Marinov/Wieslaw Ochman/Galina Vichnievskaia 11. Scene Seven: Le Cabinet De Pierre Bezoukhov - Stefania Toczyska/Nicolai Gedda/Daniel Ittenvaere 12. Scene Seven: J'Ai A Vous Parler - Wieslaw Ochman/Nicolai Gedda/Malcolm Smith

Disc: 3

1. Epigraphe - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 2. Scene Eight: Borodino Avnat La Bataille - Orch Nat De France/Mstislav Rostropovitch 3. Scene Eight: Allons-Yles Enfants - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant/Malcolm Smith/Lajos Miller/Constantin Dumitru 4. Scene Eight: Bous Etes Le Prince Bolkonski - Malcolm Smith/Lajos Miller 5. Scene Eight: Un Groupe De Paysans. - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant/Kalin topalov-Behar/Petra Malakova 6. Scene Eight: Moscou - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 7. Scene Eight: Denissov, Son Premier Fiance! - Lajos Miller 8. Scene Eight: Apparition De Pierre, In Frac Vert Et Chapeau Blanc - Nathalie Stutzmann 9. Scene Eight: Dans L'Espace - Lajos Miller/Wieslaw

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Ochman 10. Scene Eight: Chor Des Soldats, Chor Des Partisans - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 11. Scene Eight: Travailler Sans Relache - Wieslaw Ochman 12. Scene Eight: Peuple Incomparable, Peuple Merveilleux - Entree de Koutouzov et k'un groupe d'officiers 13. Scene Eight: Des Grenadiers Defilent Au Loin. Passage Du Regiment Izmailovski - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 14. Scene Eight: Passage Au Loin Du Regiment Des Cosaques - Nicola Ghiuselev 15. Scene Eight: Dommage, Mais Tu N'As Pas Tort - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant/Henri Bougerolle 16. Scene Nine: Le Vin Est Tire - Mario Castagnetti/Consuelo Caroli/Philippe Gaudin 17. Scene Nine: Freres, Courons Au Combat - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 18. Scene Ten: Conseil De Guerre Dans Une Isba A Fili. Benigsen - Conseil de guerre dans une isba a Fili. Benigsen 19. Scene Ten: L'Antique Et Sainte Capitale - Jean Loupien/James Anderson/Frederic Plantak 20. Scene Ten: Si Vous Decidez De Vous Battre. - Ivan Konsulov/Jean Loupien 21. Scene Ten: L'Ennemi Nous Apport La Mort - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant/Ivan Konsulov/Jean Loupien 22. Scene Ten: Comment Est Arrivee Cette Chose Terrible - James Anderson/ 23. Scene Ten: Des Soldats Passent Sur La Route - Chorus Of Soldiers/The Choir/James Anderson
Disc: 4

1. Scene Eleven: Une Rue De Moscou, Occupee Par Les Francais. - Orchestra 2. Scene Eleven: Un Groupe De Soldats Avec Jacquot A Leur Tete. - Ionel Pantea/Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 3. Scene Eleven: Un Autre Groupe De Soldats Conduits Par Gerard. - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant/James Anderson 4. Scene Eleven: Un Groupe De Moscovites, Une Femme Ouvrier... - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant/Wieslaw Ochman 5. Scene Eleven: Passage Des Soldats Maraudeurs. - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 6. Scene Eleven: Foule De Moscovites. - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant/Wieslaw Ochman/Catherine Dubosc/Ludmilla Kovatcheva 7. Scene Eleven: C'Est L'Geure De Mourir Ou De Triompher - Wieslaw Ochman 8. Scene Eleven: Vous En Avez Des Tetes - James Anderson 9. Scene Eleven: Les Fracais Sortent - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant/Georgi Tcholakov 10. Scene Eleven: Entree Du Marechal Davoust - Kalin Topalov-Behar/Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant/Misha Raitzin 11. Scene Eleven: Voyez, Voyez Ces Flammes! - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 12. Scene Eleven: Trois Fois Ils M'Ont Tue - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 13. Scene Eleven: Arrivee Des Comediens Et Comediennes - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 14. Scene Eleven: Quel Affreux Spectacle - Eduard Tumagian 15. Scene Eleven: Par Une Sombre Nuit Sans Lune - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 16. Scene Twelve: Une Isbl - Lajos Miller 17. Scene Twelve: Tout S'Allonge, S'Etire - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant/Lajos Miller 18. Scene Twelve: Qu 'Est-Ce La? - Lajos Miller/Galina Vichnievskaia 19. Scene Twelve: Pourquoi Trop? - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 20. Scene Thirteen: Une Route De Smolensk Sous Une Tepete De Neige. - Constantin Zaharia 21. Scene Thirteen: Notre Russie Est Sauvee - Misha Raitzin/Wieslaw Ochman 22. Scene Thirteen: Freres, Vous Nous Avez Sauves - Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant 23. Scene Thirteen: Piotr Kirillovitch, Est-Ce Vous? - Wieslaw Ochman 24. Scene Thirteen: Un Notre Fedor Voulut Faire Prisonnier Un Francais Tout Vif - Malcom Smith/Wieslaw Ochman/Constantin Dumitru/Wieslaw Ochman/Georgi Tcholakov... 25. Scene Thirteen: Le Serenissime - Marioi Castagnetti/James Anderson 26. Scene Thirteen: Notre Russie Est Sauvee - James Anderson/Chor De Radio France/Michael Tranchant
Natasha Rostova - Galina Vishnevskaya (Галина Вишневская), soprano Prince Andre Bolkonski - Lajos Miller, baritone Pierre Bezoukhov - Wieslaw Ochman, tenor Anatole

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Kouraguine - Nicolai Gedda, tenor Marshal Koutouzov - Nicola Ghiuselev, bass Napoleon - Eduard Tumagian, baritone Count Rostov - Dimiter Petkov, bass-baritone Sonya - Katherine Ciesinski, mezzo-soprano Helena Bezoukhov - Stefania Toczyska, mezzo-soprano Maria Dmitrievna Akhrossimova - Mariana Paunova, mezzo-soprano Denissov - Malcom Smith, bass-baritone Princess Maria Bolkonski - Mira Zakai, contralto Madame Peronskaya - Magdalena Cononovici, soprano Dolokhov - Vladimir de Kanel, bass-baritone Platon Karataiev - Misha Raitzin, tenor Vassilissa - Petra Malakova, mezzo-soprano Matveiev - Kalin Topalov-Behar, baritone Tikhon Chtcherbaty - Constantin Dumitru, bass Monsieur De Boesset - Michel Senechal, tenor 1st German general / Jacquot - Ionel Pantea, bass The coachman Balaga / Captain Rambal / 2nd German general - Romuald Tesarowicz, bass Bolkonski's chamber-maid / The Rostov's serving-woman - Ludmilla Kovatcheva, alto Douniascha, the chamber-maid - Catherine Dubosc, soprano Master of Ceremonies / Fedor / Ivanov - Georgi Tcholakov, tenor The gipsy-girl Matriocha / Trishka - Nathalie Stutzmann, contralto Old Prince Nicolai Bolkonski / General Ermolov - Anton Diakov, bass Bolkonski's valet / General Rajevski - Ivan Konsulov, baritone Bolkonski's old footman / General Benigsen - Gerard Serkoyan, bass A French abbe / General Barclay du Tolly / Young workman - Frederic Plantak, tenor A footman (ball-scene) / Koutouzov's aide-de-camp / Gerard - James Anderson, tenor Akhrossimova's footman / General Beliard - Pali Marinov, bass-baritone Prince Andre Bolkonski's batman / Lieutenant Bonnet - Constantin Zaharia, tenor A French doctor / A French officer - Daniel Ottevaere, bass-baritone General Compans' aide-de-camp / 1st madman - Ivan Matiakh, tenor Marshal Berthier / 2nd madman - Michel Marsetti, bass-baritone First staff officer - Robert Cardona, tenor Second staff officer - Henri Bougerolle, bass-baritone Murat's aide-de-camp - Consuelo Caroli, alto Prince Eugene's aide-de-camp - Philippe Gaudin, tenor Napoleon's aide-de-camp / A voice back-stage - Mario Castagnetti, bass A voice off-stage - Gilles Vitale, tenor Konovnitsyne - Jean Loupien, tenor First French actress - Claude Delaunay, soprano A woman shopkeeper / Second French actress - Colleen Gaetano, soprano First singer in the Chorus - Jean-Philippe Doubrere, baritone ORTF National Orchestra, ORTF Chorus Mstislav Rostropovich – conductor

In the summer of 1941 Prokofiev and his wife were living amidst the pine forests of Kratovo near Moscow. The news of the invasion of Russia by Germany came on 22 June and Prokofiev rushed over to the nearby house of Sergei Eisenstein to share and confirm the news. Rather like Vaughan Williams in England, Prokofiev wished to do his composerly duty for his country. He wrote some patriotic songs and a march but soon the circumstances brought to fruition an idea on which he had been brooding for some years - a massive operatic setting of Tolstoi's 'War and Peace'.

He and various other composers and artists were transported to a colony at Nalchik in the Caucasus foothills. There he wrote his symphonic suite 1941 which was to form the basis for his film music for Partisans in the Ukrainian Steppes. He also completed the first six scenes of the

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opera. The remaining seven were completed in Tbilisi, the Armenian capital. Tbilisi was therefore the backdrop for the composition of the scenes most directly reflecting war and nations in conflict. The Nalchik scenes capture the more idyllic moments in the opera.

Prokofiev's flair for stagework and human drama still goes largely unrecognised. As a composer he occupies a strange hinterland between the modern greats such as Britten and Shostakovich and the deeper background occupied by Miaskovsky, Bax and Klami to take a few names at random. Although his popular successes of the Classical Symphony and Peter and the Wolf have guaranteed him a profile much of his music is little known.

His operas have been recorded and broadcast but they have made little headway in the popular repertoire or the CD catalogue. In this sense he is perhaps like Janacek whose operas enjoy occasional performances but who has not yet been accepted in the sense that Puccini has been embraced by the majority of the listening public.

War and Peace is a vast canvas across which to spread an evening's opera. In fact the work is longer than this recording suggests. The main competition for the present set comes from the Rostropovich-conducted Erato set of the complete opera. This complete version plays for over four hours but let it be said immediately that the performance, while accomplished and occasionally emotionally impressive, is not in the same league as this Melodiya set. The Erato is, of course, in better sound and with a more refined orchestra.

You have to be an ambitious composer to attempt a setting of War and Peace. Prokofiev tempered ambition with practicality concentrating on two storylines and the counterpoint between them. There is the story of Natasha and Andrei - a love story without a happy ending but with ecstatic contentment along the way. There is also the wide vista of history: two nations in conflict; the aggressor France; the invaded Russia; Napoleon against Kutuzov. The Russian Winter against the Gallic Summer. The triumph of nature over Napoleon contrasts with the denial of happiness for the attractive but too easily swayed Natasha. --- Rob Barnett, musicweb-international.com

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