

Karol Szymanowski - King Roger (Stryja) [1998]

Written by bluesever

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CD1

1. Act I - In the Church: Hagios! Hagios! (Holy! Holy!) 00:02:34
2. Act I: Entry of the King and Court: Boze, poblogoslaw! (Lord, Be Gracious to Him!) 00:02:36
3. Act I: Czyns styszal (What Do You Say) 00:04:00
4. Act I: The Shepherd Appears: Oto bluznierca! (Wretched Blasphemer!) 00:01:59
5. Act I: Moj Bog jest piekny (My God is Young and Handsome) 00:03:58
6. Act I: W jego usmiechu! (His Smiling Face!) 00:02:08
7. Act I: Twoj Bog! (Your God!) 00:01:40
8. Act I: Niech odejdzie Pasterz (He Must Go, the Shepherd) 00:05:26
9. Act II - The Inner Courtyard of the Palace - Introduction: Niepokoj bladych gwiazd (How Pale the Stars Shine) 00:04:12
10. Act II: Czy widziales jej oczu blask (Did You Not See the Brightness of His Eyes) 00:02:50
11. Act II: Cyt! Tamburyny brzeczca (Listen! Tambourine and Zither) 00:04:51
12. Act II: Ktos mglisty przeszedl (A Shadow Passed There) 00:01:11
13. Act II: The Sheperd Appears 00:00:43
14. Act II: O przychodze sam (See, I Have Come to You) 00:04:20
15. Act II: A, uspij swoj lek i gniew (Ah, Set Aside Anger and Wrath) 00:02:36
16. Act II: We mnie wierza! (By Faith!) 00:00:51
17. Act II: Tajemnych glebin (With this Hand I Wake the Deep Secret) 00:02:42
18. Act II: Dance of the Sheperd's Followers 00:01:57
19. Act II: Entrance of Roxane: A - , A - (Chorus) 00:01:59
20. Act II: Soldiers Seize the Shepherd: Kto smie moj czar (Who Would Bind Me) 00:02:36
21. Act II: Sluchajcie ... W ciszy nocy (Hear ... in the Silence of the Night) 00:05:12

CD2

1. Act III - The Ruins of a Greek Theatre - Introduction: Wokol martwota glazow (Only Dead Stone Around) 00:06:36
2. Act III: Rogerze! Rogerze! (Roger! Roger!) 00:01:35
3. Act III: Na sad, na sad (Yield to Justice, King), Chorus 00:03:13
4. Act III: Slyszysz! Jeny cichy fletni spiew (Listen! Only the Sound of the Gentle Flute) 00:02:24
5. Act III: Rogerze! Rogerze! (Roger! Roger!) 00:04:57

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6. Act III: *Edrisi, juz swit! (Edrisi, day dawns!)* 00:01:48

7. Act III: *Slonce! Slonce! (The Sun! The Sun!)* 00:02:25

8. *Prince Potemkin: Incidental Music to Act V* 00:10:19

King Roger - Andrzej Hiolski, baritone

Roksana - Barbara Zagórzanka, soprano

Pasterz - Wiesław Ochman, tenor Edrisi - Henryk Grychnik, tenor Archiereios - Leonard

Andrzej Mroz, bass Dyakonissa - Anna Malewicz-Madley, contralto

Polish State Philharmonic Chorus & Orchestra

Karol Stryja

As Nietzsche gave up the ghost on August 25, 1900, a generation was discovering itself in his vision of the Übermensch -- including composers Delius (*Eine Messe des Lebens*), Mahler (*Symphony No. 1, "Titan"*), Busoni (*Doktor Faust*), Richard Strauss (*Also sprach Zarathustra, Ein Heldenleben*), and Scriabin (*Symphony No. 3, "Divine Poem," Prometheus -- Poem of Fire*). Though the works of Strauss and Scriabin were close models for Szymanowski's early compositions, he absorbed Nietzsche more thoroughly than either of them. Through the war years, Szymanowski explored what Nietzsche had identified as the Dionysian pole of human experience -- Eros, ecstasy, intoxication, the chthonic -- in such works as the *Masques for piano*, the *Symphony No. 3, "Song of the Night,"* and the *Violin Concerto No. 1*. When his cousin, poet Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz, proposed in June 1918 a libretto to be written around "the initiation of the hero...into the Dionysian mysteries...against the background of the ruins of the theatre at Syracuse or Segesta," Szymanowski was enthusiastic, embracing the idea as a way of making his preoccupations articulate, explicit, and testamentary. Euripides' *Bacchae* provided a point of reference, though the libretto was spun around twelfth century King Roger II of Sicily (1095-1154), both for the cultural crossroads suggested -- Byzantine, Arabic, Greek, European -- and scenic effect ("...the Byzantine-Arabic palace interiors would be perfect," Szymanowski wrote. "Just imagine: tarnished gold and rigid patterns of mosaics as background, or Moorish filigree...."). Despite Iwaszkiewicz's rapid loss of interest and piecemeal delivery of the libretto, Szymanowski composed the first two acts of *King Roger* between 1918 and 1923. Meanwhile, having welcomed Poland's independence and taken up residence in Warsaw at the end of 1919, he became deeply identified with the creation of an ancestrally rooted, modern, specifically Polish music, for which he found inspiration in the raucously eloquent folk music of the Tatra mountains. Subjective concerns were supplanted by responsibility, with a new emphasis on the Apollonian pole of Nietzsche's philosophy, which Szymanowski tried to incorporate in *King Roger*, rewriting the libretto of Act Three in 1921. He failed to find, in T.S. Eliot's phrase, the "objective correlative" for the new viewpoint -- Roger's final monologue remains dramatically and musically unconvincing -- but realizing that a large portion of his most powerful music lay in *King Roger*, he forced himself to finish it with rising irritation. To Zofia Kochanska he wrote on August 12, 1924, "I am terribly tired, because that bit of the third act which remained to be done is a real instrumental-contrapuntal hocus-pocus, so unfortunately I

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am not sure that I have extricated myself from it with honour!" The self-parodying third act aside, King Roger is Szymanowski's largest and richest score -- subtle, grand, glowing, and evocative of an archetypal dimension that places it among such other testaments in music as Schoenberg's Moses und Aron, Berg's Lulu, Pfitzner's Palestrina, Hindemith's Mathis der Maler, and Busoni's Doktor Faust. The premiere was given at Warsaw's Teatr Wielki on June 19, 1926, conducted by Emil Mlynarski, with Szymanowski's sister, Stanisława Szymanowska, taking the part of Roxana. ---Adrian Corleonis, Rovi

Król Roger jest operą niezwykłą. Niezwykły był już sam początek w wyobraźni kompozytora i z mistrzostwem przez Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza zrealizowany pomysł libretta, które czyniąc miejscem akcji średniowieczną Sycylię, spleta atmosferę surowego ascetyzmu wczesnego chrześcijaństwa z barwnym i tajemniczym światem kultury arabsko-bizantyjskiej oraz z kultem wysublimowanego erotyzmu i radości życia (ucieleśnionej w postaci Pasterza, przemieniającego się następnie w greckiego boga Dionizosa). Niezwykły był stopień żarliwości i osobistego zaangażowania twórcy, dla którego Król Roger miał stać się nie tylko wielkim osiągnięciem czysto artystycznej natury, ale także rozwiązaniem wielu osobistych problemów psychicznych i moralno-filozoficznych. Niezwykła wreszcie była sama muzyka, łącząca śmiałą nowoczesność z par excellence operową śpiewnością partii solowych i teatralną efektownością scen zespołowych.

Nie znalazł Król Roger kontynuatorów wśród polskich twórców, trudno też znaleźć dlań bezpośrednich prekursorów w muzyce europejskiej; pozostał dziełem wspaniałym i samotnym.
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