

Franz Schrecker - Der Schatzgräber (Treasure-seeker) [2012]



01. Prologue 02. Act I 03. Act II 04. Act III 05. Act IV 06. Epilogue Der König: Tijn Favets (bass) Die Königin: Basja Chanowski (silent role) Der Schreiber/Der Kanzler: Alasdair Elliot (tenor) Der Herold/Der Graf: André Morsch (baritone) Der Schultheiss/Der Magister: Kurt Gysen (bass) Der Narr: Graham Clark (tenor) Der Vogt: Kay Stieffermann (baritone) Der Junker: Mattijs van de Woerd (baritone) Elis: Raymond Very (tenor) Der Wirt: Andrew Greenan (bass) Els: Manuela Uhl (soprano) Albi: Gordon Gietz (tenor) Ein Landsknecht: Harry Teeuwen (bass) Erster Bürger: Cato Fordham (tenor) Zweiter Bürger: Richard Meijer (baritone) Solo's: Marieke Reuten (mezzo-soprano), Inez Hafkamp (alto) & Hiroko Mogaki (alto) Koor van De Nederlandse Opera & Nederlands Philharmonisch Orkest Marc Albrecht (conductor) De Nederlandse opera, Muziektheater Amsterdam 15.IX.2012 Direct FM-broadcast Radio 4 (NL)

The Austrian composer Franz Schreker made quite an impression on Germany, especially with his chief work *Der Schatzgräber* (The Treasure Digger) (1915 - 1918), which highlighted his strengths as the most significant musical-dramatist after Wagner. When he composed the opera's prologue, four acts, and epilogue, as a musical-dramatist would, he also drafted his own libretto. In this piece, he worked with remarkable craftsmanship, creating music that was melodically sensuous and harmonically individual, using a rich musical language that synthesized expressionism with symbolism and melodramatically combined elements of naturalism and mysticism. He utilized the rhythm of spoken language, wrote limber arioso lines, and created an exotic sensation within orchestration. Although most of his operas contain complex decorative rhythmic motifs within a beat, the leitmotif system in this work is considerable less prominent than those found in his other compositions. Instead, the emphasis in *Der Schatzgräber* shows a tendency toward more triadic harmony, with much parallelism, and a slightly less complicated texture. Set in the fairy-tale "Middle Ages," the plot of this opera tells of stolen treasures, separated lovers, murder and accusation, and closes with reference to a mystical palace of dreams where the main characters can be reunited among the greatest of treasures. It was premiered in Frankfurt on January 21, 1920; in 1923, the composer's wife, Maria Schreker, with her delicately lyrical voice, began her career as an operatic soprano when she was cast as Els, one of the lead roles.

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The success of Der Schatzgräber along with Die Gezeichneten (1913 - 1935), made the composer a celebrity, and he then was offered the prestigious post of director of the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. There, he presided over an outstanding teaching staff, which included Hindemith, until 1931 when he was pressured by the Nazis to "resign." Since his death in 1934, his reputation in Central Europe has been based on the texts he wrote for eight of his operas; the most popularly recorded have been those of his early and middle periods, and include Der Schatzgräber. --- Meredith Gailey, Rovi

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