

Shostakovich - Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk (Rostropovich) [1993]

Wpisany przez bluesever

Wtorek, 20 Kwiecień 2010 22:48 - Zmieniony Poniedziałek, 05 Maj 2014 14:39

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CD1 1. Act I Scene I 2. Act I Scene II 3. Act I Scene III 4. Act II Scene IV 5. Act II Scene V
6. Act III Scene VI CD2 7. Act III Scene VII 8. Act III Scene VIII 9. Act IV Scene IX
Galina Vishnevskaya (Katerina), Nicolai Gedda (Sergey), Dimiter Petkov (Boris), Werner
Krenn (Zinovi), Robert Tear (Shabby Peasant), Taru Valjakka (Aksinya), Birgit Finnilä
(Sonyetka) London Philharmonic Orchestra Mstislav Rostropovich – conductor

The Soviet censors' condemnation of Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk just a few years after its wildly popular premiere effectively crushed Shostakovich's operatic career, a genuine musical tragedy, because Lady Macbeth and its predecessor, The Nose, reveal Shostakovich to have all the instincts of a born opera composer. Shostakovich made a revised version, Katerina Ismailova, in 1962, that toned down the opera's sexual and political content, but this 1979 recording by two of the composer's fiercest allies, conductor Mstislav Rostropovich and his wife, soprano Galina Vishnevskaya, is the first of original version, and it's a knock-out. Rostropovich fully embraces the score's ironically manic juxtapositions of the opera's first three acts, as well as the heartfelt anguish of its fourth act. The London Philharmonic Orchestra and Ambrosian Opera Chorus wholeheartedly throw themselves behind Rostropovich's inspired leadership and perform with ferocious passion, and occasionally, with an almost shocking wildness. If the performances seen by Stalin and his minions came close to the intensity of this one, it's easy to see why, with their buttoned-up sensibilities, they would have taken offense. The singers, from the leads down to those with the briefest solos, are fully invested in their roles and deliver performances that are beautifully sung and memorably characterized. Vishnevskaya was hardly in the bloom of youth when the recording was made, but you'd never know it from the freshness, flexibility, and radiant clarity of her voice. She invests the complex title role with impetuous vitality and makes Katerina entirely believable. Nicolai Gedda is at his caddish best as her lover Sergey, singing with abandon but without ever losing his pure and focused tone. Most of the singers in the secondary roles, Dimiter Petkov as Boris Ismailov, Werner Krenn as Zinoviy Ismailov, Robert Tear as the Shabby Peasant, Birgit Finnilä as Sonyetka, Aage Haugland as the Sergeant, Leonard Mróz as the Priest, and Alexander Malta as the Old Convict, were stars in their own right, and all of them deliver star performances, both vocally and in the aptness of their characterizations. EMI's sound is clear and vivid, and the sound

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effects are especially sophisticated and effective. This outstanding recording should be of strong interest to any fan of new opera, or any opera fan. --- Stephen Eddins, Rovi

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