

Tchaikovsky - *Iolanta* (Mariinsky 2009)



1. *Iolanta* 1:35:57 Cast *Iolanta*: Anna Netrebko Graf Tristan Vaudémont: Piotr Beczala René, König der Provence: Mikhail Kit Robert: Alexei Markov Ebn-Hakia: Alexander Gergalov Almeric: Andrei Zorin Bertrand: Fyodor Kuznetsov Martha: Natalia Evstafieva Brigitte: Eleonora Vindau Laura: Ekaterina Sergeeva Orchestra and Chorus of the Mariinsky Theater, St. Petersburg Valery Gergiev – director Monday 27. July 2009 Mariinsky Theater, St. Petersburg

The setting is a beautiful garden on the estate of King René of Provence, in the mountains of southern France, in the fifteenth century:

Princess *Iolanta*, the King's daughter, has been blind from birth, and lives in a castle in isolated splendour. She has never been allowed to know that she is different from other people, or even that she is a princess. Her friends bring her flowers and sing her to sleep. Almerik, the King's armour bearer, announces the King's arrival and Bertrand, the palace gatekeeper, warns him not to speak of light in *Iolanta*'s presence, or to tell her that her father is the King. *Iolanta* is betrothed to Robert, Duke of Burgundy, who does not know of her blindness. The King brings a Moorish doctor, Ibn-Hakia, who insists that *Iolanta* must learn of her disability and wish to see, before he can treat her. The King firmly refuses. At nightfall two knights arrive to the castle. One of them is Robert, and the other is his comrade in arms, Count Vaudemont. They stumble into *Iolanta*'s garden, ignoring the signs warning them to keep out. Robert is in love with someone else, and hopes that the King will release him from his vow. Vaudemont sees *Iolanta*, and falls in love with her. Robert fears that she is a sorceress, and goes off to gather his troops. *Iolanta* picks flowers for Vaudemont, but gives him white ones when he asks for red. He realizes she is blind and attempts to explain sight to her. They are discovered. Vaudemont swears he loves *Iolanta*, whether she is blind or not. Her desire to see is not strong enough, so the King threatens to execute Vaudemont if the treatment is unsuccessful. After the treatment has begun, the King releases Vaudemont, revealing that the threat was only an attempt to increase his daughter's desire to see. Robert arrives and admits that he loves another. The King releases

him from his promise and gives lolanta to Vaudemont. When the bandages are removed from her eyes, lolanta can see her surroundings. General rejoicing. --- tchaikovsky-research.net

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