

opposing styles of these two experiments—the romantic-lyrical style of Salammbô, and the realistic style of Marriage.

In the autumn of 1868, Vladimir Nikolsky, a professor of Russian history and language, and an authority on Pushkin, suggested to Mussorgsky the idea of composing an opera on the subject of Pushkin's "dramatic chronicle" Boris Godunov. Boris the play, modelled on Shakespeare's histories, was written in 1825 and published in 1831, but was not approved for performance by the state censors until 1866, almost 30 years after the author's death. Production was permitted on condition that certain scenes were cut. Although enthusiasm for the work was high, Mussorgsky faced a seemingly insurmountable obstacle to his plans in that an Imperial ukaz of 1837 forbade the portrayal in opera of Russian Tsars (amended in 1872 to include only Romanov Tsars)



HIGHLIGHTS
FROM
Moussorgsky's
**BORIS
GODUNOV**

Boris Christoff

CHORUS OF THE NATIONAL OPERA OF SOFIA

THE PARIS CONSERVATOIRE ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTED BY

André Cluytens

Boris Godunov was composed between 1868 and 1873 in Saint Petersburg, Russia. It is Mussorgsky's only completed opera and is considered his masterpiece. Its subjects are the Russian ruler Boris Godunov, who reigned as Tsar (1598 to 1605) during the Time of Troubles, and his nemesis, the False Dmitriy (reigned 1605 to 1606). The Russian-language libretto was written by the composer, and is based on the 1825 drama Boris Godunov by Aleksandr Pushkin, and, in the Revised Version of 1872, on Nikolay Karamzin's History of the Russian State.

Among major operas, Boris Godunov shares with Giuseppe Verdi's Don Carlos (1867) the distinction of having an extremely complex creative history, as well as a great wealth of alternative material. The composer created two versions—the Original Version of 1869, which was rejected for production by the Imperial Theatres, and the Revised Version of 1872, which received its first performance in 1874 in Saint Petersburg.

Boris Godunov has often been subjected to cuts, recomposition, re-orchestration, transposition of scenes, or conflation of

the original and revised versions.

Several composers, chief among them Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov and Dmitri Shostakovich, have created new editions of the opera to "correct" perceived technical weaknesses in the composer's original scores. Although these versions held the stage for decades, Mussorgsky's individual harmonic style and orchestration are now valued for their originality, and revisions by other hands have fallen out of fashion.

In the 1980s, Boris Godunov was closer to the status of a repertory piece than any other Russian opera, even Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin, and is the most recorded Russian opera.

By the close of 1868, Mussorgsky had already started and abandoned two important opera projects—the antique, exotic, romantic tragedy Salammbô, written under the influence of Aleksandr Serov's Judith, and the contemporary, Russian, anti-romantic farce Marriage, influenced by Aleksandr Dargomizhsky's The Stone Guest. Mussorgsky's next project would be a very original and successful synthesis of the

Moussorgsky Boris Godounov (Highlights)

The Paris Conservatoire Orchestra, André Cluytens

Chorus Of The National Opera Of Sofia

- 1 Coronation Scene (Prologue Scene 2) 10:53**
- 2 Pimen's Monologue (Act 1, Scene 1) 5:49**
- 3 Varlaam's Song (Act 1, Scene 2) 2:30**
- 4 Monologue Of Boris (Act II) 6:08**
- 5 Clock (Act II) 6:08**
- 6 Love Duet (Act III) 3:52**
- 7 Pimen's Monologue: Farewell And Death Of Boris (Act IV, Scene 2) 17:33**

Bass Vocals – Boris Christoff

Chorus Master – Luben Kondov

Mezzo-soprano Vocals – Ana Alexieva

Soprano Vocals – Evelyn Lear

Tenor Vocals – Dimitr Ouzounov, John Lanigan

Recording Info: Released by EMI 1963

Engineer - Robert Gooch

Producer - René Challan



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