

NAXOS

Kara KARAYEV

The Seven Beauties The Path of Thunder (Ballet Suites)

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra • Dmitry Yablonsky



Kara Karayev (1918-1982)

The Seven Beauties • The Path of Thunder

Born in Baku, his favourite city, which he called 'an enormous, multi-voiced symphony', Kara Karayev was a composer with a highly expressive, individual style. His compositions are infused with the harmonies and melodic characteristics of his native Azerbaijani music, in particular the oriental intervals that derive from the centuries-old tradition of *mugam*, a highly improvisatory form of folk-music. Karayev once said: 'Traditional music of Azerbaijan is my native language. As a composer I grew up on Azerbaijani folk melodies and, regardless of whatever artistic problem I am working on, I cannot, and do not want to break away from their influence.' Karayev's father was a famous professor of medicine, and his mother a talented pianist with a passion for poetry. Karayev's musical education began in Baku in 1930 and in 1938 he was accepted to study composition at the Moscow Conservatory. His long and illustrious career as a composer, pedagogue, music writer and critic began after his return to Baku in 1946 as a conservatory graduate. He died on 13 May 1982 in Moscow.

Karayev studied composition with Dmitry Shostakovich, becoming one of the brightest representatives of his class. Shostakovich, a sensitive, and at the same time demanding teacher, had enormous influence on the young composer both personally and professionally. Karayev's music shows how he assimilated and adapted some aspects of his teacher's compositional style into his own in such areas as instrumentation and harmonic language. He wrote in a variety of genres, which included music for plays and musicals, opera, ballet, symphonic and chamber works, romances, cantatas, children's music, and film music. Karayev loved Bach, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev and Shostakovich, and was strongly drawn to Albanian, Vietnamese, Turkish, Bulgarian, Spanish, African, and Arabic folklore and music. He once said that 'from the very beginning, East and West co-existed in me', and his eclectic works are a testament to this happy co-existence. Karayev was also keenly interested in masterpieces of world literature and poetry by Nizami,

Pushkin, Shakespeare, Cervantes and Omar Khayyam, to name but a few.

The Seven Beauties – Ballet Suite

In 1949 Karayev composed the symphonic suite *The Seven Beauties*, inspired by a famous poem written in 1197 by the twelfth-century poet Nizami. The poem's subject matter is the legend of Shah Bachram Gur and his seven wives, 'the Seven Beauties', who lived in seven pavilions. In 1953, using the 1949 suite as its basis, Karayev composed the first full-length Azerbaijani ballet, *The Seven Beauties*. The Suite heard on this recording is extracted from the ballet. Before we 'meet' the Beauties, we hear the highly energetic *Waltz*, followed by a calming, peaceful *Adagio*, with a beautiful horn solo playing a romantic, expansive melody. The following movement, *The Dance of The Clowns*, comes as a sharply contrasting and spirited scherzo. The section known as *The Seven Portraits* (tracks 4-11) depicts an old ruined castle, where seven portraits of the Beauties hang on the walls. After a short introduction, *The Indian Beauty* is intoned by the solo flute, accompanied by a lilting percussion accompaniment. *The Byzantine Beauty* storms in, with a feisty, fiery dance, which gradually becomes more subdued. *The Khorezmian Beauty* is a highly energetic dance, which contrasts with the following *Slavonic Beauty*, whose instantly recognisable melody evokes a Russian folksong. *The Maghrebian Beauty* is a passionate dance in the style of a bolero, with castanets and traditional Spanish harmonies. *The Chinese Beauty* is a spirited dance, with a lovely flute solo, followed by *The Most Beautiful of The Beauties*, with prominently featured harps and clarinets, and a mesmerising and romantic oboe melody. The suite closes with *The Procession*, an energetic march redolent of Prokofiev-like harmonies and rhythms. It provides an impressive finale to what has been an outstanding display of an exotic array of melodies, rhythms and harmonies.

The Path of Thunder – Ballet Suite No. 2

Karayev's second ballet, *The Path of Thunder*, was premièred in Leningrad In 1958, and was immediately accepted into the Kirov's (now Mariinsky) permanent repertoire, and awarded the Lenin prize in 1967. The ballet, dedicated to the memory of Prokofiev, was inspired by the novel *The Path of Thunder*, by the South African writer Peter Abrahams (b. 1919) in 1948. Published in the same year as the National Party brought in legislation enforcing a system of racial segregation, or apartheid, it tells the story of forbidden love between two people of different races. Lanny Swartz, a young mixed-race schoolteacher from the rural village of Stilleveld, returns home after studies in Cape Town to establish a school for his deprived community. He falls in love with Sarie Villier, a young, white girl and daughter of a local Afrikaner patriarch. They elope, but lose their lives at the hands of Afrikaners in a vain struggle to maintain their love. Karayev, who studied the folklore and traditions of African music as well as elements of Afro-American music, commented that in the music of the ballet he aimed to 'use characteristic intonations and rhythms of African folklore.'

1948 was also a significant year for Karayev. While Soviet composers Prokofiev, Khachaturian, and his former teacher Shostakovich were subjected to a public humiliation during the infamous Zhdanov decree that denounced them for formalism, Karayev was awarded a Stalin prize for his symphonic poem *Leyla and Mejnun* [Naxos 8.570720] based on the eponymous poem of Nizami. He also accepted the position of chair of the

Union of Composers of the Azerbaijan SSR and became the rector of the Azerbaijan State Conservatoire.

General Dance opens the suite with a characteristic and somewhat menacing drone on the piano and percussion, and a melody scored for bassoon, alto flute and clarinet. This is followed by *The Dance of the Girls with Guitars*, where the instruments are represented by two harps and cellos, and an oboe introduces the expressive main melody, which floats over the ethereal sounds of the celeste. It develops into a moderately paced dance, richly and elegantly scored. *The Dance of the Black Community* aims to depict the deprivation suffered by the people of Lanny's community, with a prominent percussion section and intricate rhythms, and minimal participation of strings in this fast-paced number. It gives way to the languorous *Night in Stilleveld*, introduced by shimmering strings and the plaintive cries of the oboe and English horn, and with a languorous atmosphere of night. *Scene and Duet* evokes the freshness of early dawn and the first rays of the sun, with clear portrayals of Sarie and Lanny on violin and cello respectively. It is the most beautiful and soulful movement of the suite, with passionate surges in the strings, and long, arching melodies. The lilting and gentle *Lullaby* provides calm before the Finale's dramatic energy. The tempestuous Finale, *The Path of Thunder*, depicts the lovers' tragic demise. It begins with menacing rhythms on the piano, which underpin the flutes and the strings, gradually developing into a dissonant, militant march.

Anastasia Belina-Johnson

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Patron: HRH The Duke of York, KG • Artistic Director and Principal Conductor: Charles Dutoit



Photo: Robert Taylor

Formed in 1946 by Sir Thomas Beecham, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) has enjoyed more than 65 years of success, giving first-class performances of a wide range of musical repertoire all over the world with artists of the highest calibre. Under the inspired leadership of Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Charles Dutoit, the Orchestra maintains and builds on a demanding schedule of performances, tours, community and education work, and recordings. Throughout its history, the Orchestra has been directed by distinguished conductors including Rudolf Kempe, Antal Doráti, André Previn, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Daniele Gatti. Today the Orchestra continues to enjoy the support of high-ranking conductors such as Pinchas Zukerman, Grzegorz Nowak and Daniele Gatti. Central to the RPO's thriving concert schedule is its prestigious annual series at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall. At the Orchestra's London home Cadogan Hall, the intimate and luxurious surroundings provide the perfect concert atmosphere in an idyllic location. Completing the Orchestra's London programme of concerts, the iconic Royal Albert Hall provides the ideal setting for a varied series of monumental performances, ranging from large-scale choral and orchestral works to themed evenings of familiar repertoire. The Orchestra offers a comprehensive regional touring programme, with established residencies in Croydon, Northampton, Lowestoft, Reading, Crawley, Ipswich, High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Dartford. Internationally the Orchestra is in high demand, undertaking several major tours each season. Recent tours have included performances in the United States, Canada, China, Russia, Azerbaijan, Spain, Italy, Germany and Japan.

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Dmitry Yablonsky



Photo: Lluís Casas

including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, collaborating with leading soloists. Dmitry Yablonsky has made more than seventy recordings, many of them prize-winning, as conductor and cellist for Naxos, Erato-Warner, Chandos, Blair Music, Sonora, and Connoisseur Society. He has organized international festivals, including the Wandering Stars Festival, which takes place in different countries each year. He is Co-Artistic Director of Qabala Music Festival in Azerbaijan, and Music Director of the Baku Chamber Orchestra. In 2009 he became an academician of the Independent Academy of Aesthetics and Liberal Arts in Moscow, and also professor of cello at the Baku Academy of Music.

Dmitry Yablonsky was born in Moscow into a musical family. His mother is the distinguished pianist Oxana Yablonskaya, and his father Albert Zaionz has for thirty years been principal oboist in the Moscow Radio Orchestra. Dmitry began playing the cello when he was five and was immediately accepted by the Central Music School for gifted children. When he was nine he made his orchestral debut as cellist and conductor with Haydn's *Cello Concerto in C major*. In Russia he studied with Stefan Kalianov, Rostropovich's assistant, and Isaak Buravsky, for many years solo cello of the Bolshoy Theatre Orchestra. Before immigrating to the United States he performed on many occasions in Moscow and many cities of the former Soviet Union. He was finally able, in 1977, to obtain a visa that allowed him and his mother to move to New York, where he became a pupil of Lorne Munroe at The Juilliard School of Music. In 1979, at the age of sixteen, he participated in the Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont, the youngest to do so that summer. In 1980 he met Aldo Parisot, distinguished cellist and professor at Yale University, where he spent four years, at the same time furthering his interest in conducting. After graduating from Yale, he spent two years in the artist diploma programme at The Juilliard School with Zara Nelsova. Dmitry Yablonsky made his debut as a conductor in Italy at the age of 26, when he stepped in to replace another conductor at the last minute. As a cellist he has played in major concert halls throughout the world, and in chamber music has collaborated with distinguished colleagues. For four years he has been Principal Guest Conductor of the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra and has conducted many other orchestras,

Also available:

NAXOS

Kara
KARAYEV

Symphony No. 3

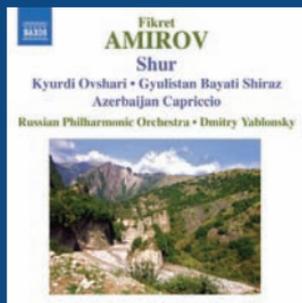
Leyla and Mejnun • Don Quixote

Russian Philharmonic Orchestra

Dmitry Yablonsky



Also available



8.572170



8.572666

Born in Baku, Kara Karayev was one of Dmitry Shostakovich's most distinguished pupils. Karayev absorbed his teacher's influence, binding it to his own distinctive use of native Azerbaijani folk melodies and harmonies to produce music in an eclectic range of genres. *The Seven Beauties* is the first full-length Azerbaijani ballet, and the suite heard here brims with an exotic array of appealing rhythms and melodies. *The Path of Thunder* uses elements of African and Afro-American music in its exploration of the theme of forbidden love in apartheid-era South Africa. Karayev's *Symphony No. 3* and other orchestral works can be heard on 8.570720.

Kara
KARAYEV
(1918-1982)

The Seven Beauties (1953)		The Path of Thunder (1958)	
– Ballet Suite		– Ballet Suite No. 2	
	30:35		38:47
1 I. Waltz	4:12	13 I. General Dance	5:35
2 II. Adagio	4:54	14 II. The Dance of The Girls with Guitars	5:40
3 III. The Dance of The Clowns	2:04	15 III. The Dance of The Black Community	3:19
IV. The Seven Portraits		16 IV. Night in Stillefeld	5:26
4 Introduction	1:33	17 V. Scene and Duet	9:43
5 1. The Indian Beauty	2:11	18 VI. Lullaby	4:00
6 2. The Byzantine Beauty	0:56	19 VII. The Path of Thunder (Finale)	5:05
7 3. The Khorezmian Beauty	0:55		
8 4. The Slavonic Beauty	2:06		
9 5. The Maghrebian Beauty	2:37		
10 6. The Chinese Beauty	1:15		
11 7. The Most Beautiful of The Beauties	4:00		
12 V. The Procession	3:53		

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra • Dmitry Yablonsky

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from *Chamse* (Five Great Epics) by the Persian poet Nizami (1141-1209)

Islamic Miniature, 15th century (R. u. S. Michaud / akg-images)

NAXOS

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8.573122

Playing Time
69:22



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