

MK 216D

GLINKA
IVAN
SUSANIN

Complete Opera
Four Acts and Epilogue

Chorus and Orchestra
of the
BOLSHOI THEATRE

CONDUCTED BY
BORIS KHAIKIN

Cast

Ivan Susanin PETROV
bass

Antonida FIRSOVA
his daughter soprano

Bogdan Sobinin GRES
a soldier, Antonida's betrothed tenor

Vanya KLEPATSKAYA
Susanin's adopted son mezzo-soprano

Sigismund PANKOV
King of Poland baritone

A Messenger VALAITIS
bass

A Russian Soldier MISHUTIN
tenor



PRODUCED IN THE U.S.S.R.

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Vanya *Valentine* KLEPATSKAYA
Susanin's adopted son mezzo-soprano

Sigismund *Gyorgy* PANKOV
King of Poland baritone

A Messenger *Vladimir* VALAITIS
bass

A Russian Soldier *Anatoly* MISHUTIN
tenor

The label "father of Russian music", which inevitably precedes or follows text-book mention of the name Mikhail Glinka has become as tiresome a cliché to us as "father of the symphony", the once-universal summation of Haydn's contribution to the art of music. Modern musicology has made our use of such pat tags self-conscious by proving them to be either totally false or, at best, slightly exaggerated. With Glinka we might say that the label is a slight exaggeration, for although Glinka was by no means the first composer to write an opera on a Russian subject, with Russian text, and in a musical style at least in part derived from Russian folk idiom, he was so infinitely more gifted in the employment of his materials that his predecessors have become little more than entries in reference books.

Glinka was, by the standards applied to Borodin and Mussorgsky, a rather un-Russian Russian. He knew comparatively little about the "people" of his country, and had probably not spent very much time listening to their music until he was at work on *Ruslan and Ludmila*, composed in 1841, five years after the completion of *Ivan Susanin*. His favorite compositions were the operas of Bellini and Donizetti. From 1830 to 1833, Glinka lived in Italy, and from all accounts he tirelessly attended opera performances there, sitting through Bellini's *Montecchi e Capuletti*, Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*, etc., countless times. Toward the end of 1833, Glinka left Italy and took his time about returning to Russia, although in his letters he frequently refers to his "homesickness". On his very roundabout return trip, the first sketches for *Ivan Susanin* were made.

With *Susanin* Glinka did not cast aside all the musical traditions which were in fact foreign to Russia (the work of numerous Italians, Frenchmen, and Italian and French-schooled Russians) but accepted as a "national" music. No composer before him, however, had ever introduced such a large measure of genuinely national material. For his subject matter, Glinka chose the story (based, in part, on actual historical events of the seventeenth century) of a peasant's loyalty to his Tsar. In *Susanin* the composer brought a small slice of peasant life to the stage. These peasants spoke Russian rather than Italian, drank kvas and vodka, and sang songs which might conceivably be considered part of their heritage. Glinka, then, produced a work genuine quality along patriotic-heroic lines which were more Russian than anything else, at least as regards the elements mentioned. It is still, at times, very much part of the Grand Opera tradition, with its grandiose choruses, romantic involvements, and five-act structure. Italian cantilena is freely employed. But there can be no doubt that Italian and French audiences must have found *Ivan Susanin* to be a creation somewhat foreign to their sensibilities. The national stamp which Glinka put on his opera was, if not comparable to that which Mussorgsky put on his *Boris Godunov*, sufficiently far removed from plain and simple aping of the French and Italians that Russians were enabled to claim Glinka as a composer more uniquely their own than any of his predecessors.

The Genesis of Glinka's Ivan Susanin, in the Composer's Own Words

Berlin, 1834: "I have a scheme in my head, an idea. Perhaps this isn't the moment for a complete confession; perhaps if I told you all I would detect signs of incredulity on your face . . . And yet I must warn you that you will find me somewhat changed. I am certain that you will find much more in me than you could have believed at the time I was living in Petersburg . . . I now fancy that I . . . have the ability to give our stage a large scale work. . . . What do you say to this? The main thing is to choose the subject well. And not only the subject but the music; I want my fellow-countrymen to feel absolutely at home in it, and I don't want

to be considered abroad as a vainglorious jay decked out in borrowed plumage."

From the composer's Autobiography:

"When I avowed my wish to write a Russian opera, Zhukovsky (a popular writer of the time) sincerely approved my intention and suggested to me the subjected of *Ivan Susanin*. The scene in the forest—with the Poles in Act IV—deeply impressed itself on my imagination. I found in it much that was original and typically Russian. Zhukovsky wanted to write the words himself, and as a specimen wrote some lines used for the trio with chorus in the Epilogue. His affairs prevented his carrying out his intention, so he put me in touch with Baron Rosen, an industrious German man of letters, who was at that time secretary to the Tsarevich. My imagination, however, forestalled the industrious German: as if by magic both the plan of the whole opera and the idea of the antithesis of Russian and Polish music, as well as many of the themes and even details of the working-out—all this flashed into my head at one stroke. I began to work, and from the wrong end; for I began with the part that others write last—the overture, which I wrote for piano four hands, with indications of the scoring. . . . Themes for different parts of the opera, often with indications of contrapuntal treatment, were written down in notebooks as I invented them. During the spring, i.e., March-April, 1835, Rosen prepared the libretto of Acts I and II according to my plan. This gave him more than a little trouble . . . for a great part, not only of the themes but of the working-out of numbers was already done; and he had to fit the words to the music, which sometimes demanded the strangest meters. But Rosen was a splendid fellow at this: you only had to ask for so many lines in such-and-such a metre. It was all the same to him: you came back the next day, and there they were.

"I took the libretto with me on my honeymoon and I remember that somewhere beyond Novgorod I composed the 'Bridal Chorus' in the carriage. The details of our life in the country have escaped my memory. I only know that I worked diligently. Every morning I sat at the table of the big, cheerful drawing-room in our house at Novospasskoe . . . I first wrote the Trio in 2-4 time and in A minor, but reflected that I had already got a lot of duple time in the first act—viz., the Introduction, Antonida's aria, and Susanin's recitative; So I rewrote the melody in 6-8 and in B flat minor, which far better expressed the languor of love.

"When we returned to Petersburg, I found my work still progressing very well. . . . The scene of Susanin in the forest was written during the winter (1836). I frequently read the whole of this scene aloud before I began the composition, and so vividly imagined myself in the position of my hero that my hair stood on end and I felt frozen with fear.

"Before I had finished opera, various parts of it were tried out in private homes. At the home of Count Vielhorsky, Gedenov, director of the Imperial Theaters, was present, and he suggested several changes in what I had written. The Introduction had no coda, and on his suggestion, I added one. In the scene with Susanin (the chief theme of which is taken from a folk song) before the arrival of the bridegroom, there was no chorus on the stage—only behind the scenes. The Count advised me to add the chorus on stage *crescendo* and end it ff, which I did successfully, and the appearance of Sobinin was thereby made immeasurably more brilliant.

"At the end of the summer, I wrote the trio with chorus in the Epilogue, from which I constructed the adagio of the overture, in an hour of merriment . . . I remember that fifteen of us fellows were in Kukolnik's flat, and that I wrote this touching scene amid the noise and conversation of my carousing friends."

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Side 1
A street in the village of Domnin. In the background, a river. A group of peasants sing the praises of their young Prince, Mikhail Fedorovich. *Side 2* As the peasants disperse, Antonida, Ivan Susanin's daughter, enters to sing of her lover, the soldier Bogdan Sobinin:

I gaze across the plains, across my beloved river.
Long have I waited for the sight of the boats which will bring my lover. My brave soldier has not come. But we have heard from him. He will return this very day—to his village and to me. His beauty will light my life. How I long for him! He will come and I will whisper to him: "You have returned, my beloved hero! What happiness you bring me, my beloved!" . . . Your beloved awaits the gay wedding feast.

Susanin enters and is greeted by the villagers. He tells Antonida and the villagers that there will be no wedding feast, for Russia is threatened again by the Polish invaders who have raised a fresh army. The singing of boatmen is heard. Sobinin arrives and rushes to greet Antonida. He recounts his adventures in the battle of Moscow and tells all to be merry for Moscow is safe and the Russians are assured of victory. Susanin is less optimistic, realizing that without a legitimate Tsar his country can enjoy no peace. *Side 3* Sobinin begs Susanin not to let his gloomy thoughts delay the wedding. Antonida and her father suggest to Sobinin that he be patient, while the chorus of peasants supports Sobinin. The soldier then tells the assemblage that he will not have to wait for long, for the grand council is at this moment choosing the young Mikhail Fedorovich to be their Tsar. Upon hearing this joyous news Susanin decides to allow the young pair to marry immediately. The act concludes with an ensemble in praise of Russia and the happy couple.

ACT II

A Polish-occupied city. Polish nobles and soldiers. Elegantly-dressed couples are dancing a polonaise. In a chorus they sing of the Poles' impending victory over the Russians. They know nothing of their losses at Moscow as yet. We hear from them that Vladislav, the King of Poland's son, is to be made Tsar. Several dances follow. Then a messenger enters bearing news of the Russian victory at Moscow. He informs them that Mikhail has been given the throne. But the young prince is still in hiding and knows nothing of his election. The soldiers proclaim their desire to kidnap Mikhail, thus leaving the Russians without a ruler. The band of soldiers leaves to carry out their plan.

ACT III

Side 5
The interior of Susanin's hut. Vanya, Susanin's adopted son, sits singing:

The little bird was left alone, cold and hungry, when his mother died. The nightingale saw the unhappy one and protected him under his wings. When the little son's mother died the nightingale fed him, protected him. The little son was a poor orphan. Ah! Ah!

Susanin's entrance is not noticed by Vanya, who continues his song:

A good man felt pity for the poor orphan and took him into his home, into his family, to give him all that he could desire, to love him like a father.

Susanin tells Vanya the joyous news about the imminent accession of Mikhail to the throne. The old man is happy and soon Vanya catches his spirit. Susanin's statement that he will defend his young Tsar to the death is echoed by Vanya. Vanya laments the fact that he is too young to go and fight for his country; but Susanin tells the lad that his turn may come sooner

than he thinks. Peasants enter to wish Antonida happiness, for the marriage feast is soon to begin. In a quartet, Antonida, Sobinin, Vanya, and Susanin once more express their joy over the salvation of Russia and predict a happy life for the young couple. Their revels are interrupted by the entry of several of the Polish soldiers encountered in the previous act. They tell Susanin to lead them to the young Tsar. He feigns ignorance of the Tsar's whereabouts, and invites the soldiers to stay for the wedding, and then suggests that after the celebration, a villager will be sent to find out where the Tsar is staying. They angrily tell him that he is wasting their time and they express their certainty that Susanin can lead them to the Tsar. Susanin answers:

The Tsar is in a holy dwelling, with the Lord as its defender, and all Russia its sentry. The angels of the Lord protect it! Let the enemy beware!

The Poles become increasingly angry with the old man. They tell him that they are tired of his stupid fairy tales. They threaten him with their swords. He shows his defiance:

Death does not frighten me! I would gladly lay down my life for Tsar and country!

The soldiers do not know whether to kill Susanin or simply abduct him. Susanin, in an aside to Vanya, states they he will join the soldiers and lead them into the swamps, where they will die. The soldiers next offer him money. Susanin pretends that he is dazzled by the sight of what they offer and agrees to do what they desire of him. Antonida enters, begging her father not to go with the Poles. He tells her that he must, and that she and Sobinin must marry in his absence. The Poles leave with Susanin and Antonida begins to cry. Peasant girls sing to Antonida:

The girls are happy, except for one. She sits crying. In the morning her falcon will carry her away. Antonida cries, "Do not take me away from my home!" Her beloved will carry her away. "Leave me, beloved, and let me keep my freedom." Why do you cry, dear friend on such a happy day?

To which Antonida replies in her romanza:

I do not cry because I am losing my freedom. I cry because of the tragic event which has taken place. The enemy has been here. The cruel Poles came and took my father away.

The girls try to console Antonida, but to little avail. She continues:

Your words do not console me. I fear the worst. My father will never return. He will die.

ACT IV

Side 7
Night. The forest. Sobinin and a group of armed peasants enter.

out
SOBININ: We cannot find the enemy in this darkness. But we shall be victorious in the end. Neither storm nor darkness can dampen our Russian courage. We shall find our father. My beloved waits. For you, my beloved, we shall return victorious. We will return your father to you, and you will call me your hero. Come brother, let us show the Poles our courage! We must find our father and slay the Poles.

The scene changes to the edge of the forest near the monastery where Mikhail Fedorovich's servants are staying. Vanya enters:

My horse is dead. I have come on foot. Hurry, my Prince, the enemy is near! (He knocks at the door of the monastery.) Open! Were I a giant, this door would fall in splinters! I would rush in and shout so that even the dead could hear me: "Servants of the Tsar, tell your lord that the enemy is near!" The good Lord in heaven will protect the Tsar!

The door finally open and Vanya delivers his message. Vanya tells the Tsar's entourage of the Poles' arrival in Domnin and of Susanin's plan to mislead them. The boy tells them to warn the Tsar.

The scene changes to another snow-covered forest. A starless night. The Poles are becoming irritated with Susanin for leading them on this long trek. They begin to suspect that he has lost his way. They threaten him, but soon sink to the ground, exhausted, and sleep.

Susanin remains standing, and sings:

They begin to know the truth. Let dawn break! Let me hear that my Tsar is safe! My dawn approaches. My time has come. They will torture me. My heart grieves. Lord, fill me with strength in this, my final hour! Lord, give me strength! . . . But a while ago I rejoiced at the wedding feast. Now I am far from my loved-ones, here in the dark and forbidding forest, about to be killed by the enemy. Antonidushka, you feared for my life, and cried bitterly when we parted. You will return to your father's home; but your father will never return. My broken body will lie far from the sight of those I love. My body will be food for the beasts of sky and forest. To you, my son-to-be, I leave my precious daughter. Guard her forever! Love each other forever! But I must not forget my little Vanya. He flies to the Tsar like a little bird. Oh death, you merciless death! My heart is frozen. The enemy sleeps. I too will sleep. Rest may give me strength to face their cruelty.

The Poles wake Susanin and make him confess his deception. He rises defiantly and says:

I have taken you where even the wolves fear to go. I have brought you to face God's judgement. You are murderers and will yourselves face your end in this lonely spot. My Tsar is safe!

The Poles kill Susanin, but he dies with the knowledge that he has given his life for the Tsar. Sobinin and the villagers enter to engage the Poles in battle.

EPILOGUE

Red Square in Moscow. Antonida, Sobinin, Vanya, soldiers.

CHORUS:

Glory to our immortal Tsar! May your family be immortal! May all Russia prosper under you! Let the bells ring out! Our Tsar is coming. Rejoice! Glory to our Tsar! Hurrah!

— Herbert Glass

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33 1/3 об. в мин.

33 Д—08381(а)

Вторая гр. 1

М. ГЛИНКА
M. GLINKA—"IVAN SUSANIN"
Overture. Act I. At Dominio
M. MISHUTIN (Russian warrior)
Bolshoi Theatre Choir and Orchestra
Conductor B. KHAIKIN

33 Д—08381(а) 1-1



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33 Д--08382(а)

Вторая гр. 2

М. ГЛИНКА
M. GLINKA - "IVAN SUSANIN"
Act I (Leonid)
I. PETROV (Ivan Susanin)
V. FIRSOVA (Antonida)
M. GRES (Sobinin)
Bolshoi Theatre Choir and Orchestra
Conductor B. KHAIKIN

33Д08382/1-2



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33 Д—08383(a)

Вторая гр.-3

М. ГЛИНКА
M. GLINKA—"IVAN SUSANIN"
Act I (end), Act II
A Ball in the King Sigismund's palace
I. PETROV, V. FIRSOVA, N. GRES
Bolshoi Theatre Choir and Orchestra
Conductor B. KHAIKIN

33 Д—08383(a)



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33 Д-08384(а)

Вторая гр.-4

М. ГЛИНКА
Опера «ИВАН СУСАНИН»
M. GLINKA — «IVAN SUSANIN»
Act II (end)
G. PANKOV (Sigismund)
V. VALAITIS (messenger)
Bolshoi Theatre Choir and Orchestra
Conductor B. KHAIKIN

33Д08384/1-1



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33 Д—08385(a)

Вторая гр.-Б

М. ГЛИНКА
Опера «ИВАН СУСАНИН»
M. GLINKA — «IVAN SUSANIN»
Act III. In Susanin's hut
I. PETROV, V. FIRSOVA, N. GRES
V. KLEPATSKAYA (Vanya)
Bolshoi Theatre Choir and Orchestra
Conductor B. KHAIKIN

3310385 1-1 5



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33 Д—08386(а)

Вторая гр. - 6

М. ГЛИНКА
M. GLINKA—"IVAN SUSANIN"
Act III (end)
I. PETROV, V. FIRSOVA
N. GRES, V. KLEPATSKAYA
Bolshoi Theatre Choir and Orchestra
Conductor B. KHAIKIN

33Д08386/1-1 6



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33 Д—08387 (a)

Вторая гр.-7

М. ГЛИНКА
M. GLINKA—"IVAN SUSANIN"
Act IV, Scene 1. Near the settlement
Scene 2. In the wood
I. PETROV, V. KLEPATSKAYA
Bolshoi Theatre Choir and Orchestra
Conductor B. KHAIKIN

33Д08387/1-1 7



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33 1/3 об. в мин.

33 Д—08388(а)

Вторая гр.-8

М. ГЛИНКА
M. GLINKA—"IVAN SUSANIN"
Act IV. Scene 2 (end). Epilogue
At the Red Square in Moscow
L. PETROV
Bolshoi Theatre Choir and Orchestra
Conductor B. KHAIKIN

33Д08388/1-1