

Modest Mussorgsky

BORIS GODUNOV

October 23, 2010

Conductor **Valery Gergiev**
Production **Stephen Wadsworth**
Set Designer
Ferdinand Wögerbauer
Costume Designer **Moidele Bickel**
Lighting Designer **Duane Schuler**
Choreographer **Apostolia Tsolaki**

Marina **Ekaterina Semenchuk**
Grigory **Aleksandrs Antonenko**
Shuisky **Oleg Balashov**
Rangoni **Evgeny Nikitin**
Boris Godunov **René Pape**
Pimen **Mikhail Petrenko**
Varlaam **Vladimir Ognovenko**
Shchelkalov **Alexey Markov**
Holy Fool **Andrey Popov**

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PROLOGUE 1598. Boris Godunov has retreated to the Novodievichy Monastery near Moscow. The Streltsy police force a crowd to beg Boris to become Tsar of Russia, but he still refuses the throne. A procession of pilgrims prays to God for help. Streltsy warn the crowd to be at the Kremlin the next morning ready to cheer.

The following day the bells of Moscow herald Boris's coronation. The new tsar implores God to look kindly on him.

ACT I 1603. In the Chudov Monastery, the monk Pimen is writing a history of Russia. The novice Grigory questions him about the dead Tsarevich Dimitry, rightful heir to the throne. Pimen recounts the events of Dimitry's murder by Boris and remarks that the tsarevich would have been Grigory's age. Grigory condemns Boris and decides to escape the cloister.

Now on a mission to expose Boris and proclaim himself the Tsarevich Dimitry, Grigory is trying to cross into Lithuania to find support for his cause. At an inn near the border, he is almost arrested but manages to escape, pursued by the Streltsy.

ACT II Boris's daughter mourns the death of her fiancé. Boris comforts her and talks with his young son about inheriting the throne, then reflects to himself on the crime that gained him the throne and the fears that torment him. Shuisky, a powerful boyar, brings news of a pretender to the Russian throne, supported by the Polish court and the Pope. When Boris learns that the pretender claims to be Dimitry, he is deeply shaken. Alove, he gives way to his terror, imagining that he sees Dimitry's ghost. Torn by guilt, he prays for forgiveness.

INTERMISSION

ACT III Grigory, who now openly claims to be Dimitry, has made his way to Sandomir Castle in Poland. He hopes to win the powerful and ambitious Marina Mnishek, but she rejects his protestations of love until she is certain of his determination to become tsar.

INTERMISSION

ACT IV Outside the Cathedral of St. Basil in Moscow, peasants debate whether Tsarevich Dimitry still lives, as news reaches them that his troops are near. A group of children torment a Holy Fool. When Boris and his court come from the cathedral, the Holy Fool demands that Boris kill the

children the way he killed Dimitry. Boris asks his accuser to pray for him, but the Holy Fool refuses to intercede for a murderer and, as the crowd disperses, laments Russia's dark future. The council of boyars passes a death sentence on the pretender. Shuisky arrives with an account of Boris's hallucinations of the murdered tsarevich. Boris suddenly storms in, disoriented and crying out to Dimitry. When he regains his composure Shuisky brings in Pimen, who tells of a man who was cured of blindness while praying at Dimitry's grave. Boris breaks down. He sends the boyars away, calling for his son. Naming him heir to his throne, he bids a loving farewell to the boy and dies.

In a forest clearing near Kromy, an angry mob proclaims its resolve to tear down the old order. The false Dimitry arrives with Marina and his army. He calls for the cheering people to follow him on his march to Moscow. The Holy Fool stays behind, lamenting Russia's bleak, uncertain fate.

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