

1 NYP 17-09: *The Cunning Little Vixen*

2 (CD TRACK 1: Opening billboard) :50

3 AB: ...and this week:

4 (MUSIC EXCERPT UP AND UNDER)

5 AB: We bring you a tale of love...lust...and life: The
6 Cunning Little Vixen by Leos Janacek. Hello again,
7 everybody. This is Alec Baldwin inviting you to
8 listen as we present a complete performance of this
9 moving opera. The cast features Isabel Bayrakdarian
10 [buy-rock-DAR-ee-an] in the title role with Alan
11 Opie as the Forrester, Keith Jameson as the School
12 Master, Marie Lenormand as the Fox, Wilbur Pauley
13 in the duo-role of the Badger and the Parson, and
14 Joshua Bloom as the poacher, Harašta. The New York
15 Choral Artists, The Metropolitan Opera Children's
16 Chorus, and the New York Philharmonic are all
17 conducted by Alan Gilbert.

18 (CD TRACK 2: Alan) 1:00

19 AB: Music Director Alan Gilbert.

20 AB: The Cunning Little Vixen is indeed very symphonic
21 in scope. This symphonic nature even translates
22 into the composer's treatment of the vocal line.
23 Tenor Keith Jameson, who portrays the role of the
24 School Master in this production, explains:

25 (CD TRACK 3: keith 01) :30

26 AB: In a memoir published in 1959, Marie Stejskalová
27 [SHTAYs-clove-UH], a maid in the Janáček household
28 for over four decades, took credit for giving the
29 composer the inspiration for *The Cunning Little*
30 *Vixen*. The Vixen was a character in what we'd now
31 call a comic strip in a Brno newspaper in the 1920s.
32 Gavin Plumley, one of the world's leading Janacek
33 scholars and curator of the website:
34 leosjanacek.co.uk spoke further about the origins
35 of this work:

36 (CD TRACK 4: gavin 01) :50

37 AB: The presence of young people and animals in this
38 work (along with a nostalgic tone) have, at times,
39 caused the opera to be labeled as a "children's
40 piece." But Gavin Plumley reminds us that it is, in
41 fact, a work of much more profound dimensions:

42 (CD TRACK 5: gavin 02) :24

43 AB: Alan Opie, who sings the role of the Forrester,
44 agrees:

45 (CD TRACK 6: AO 01):36

46

47

48 AB: Act I of the Cunning Little Vixen opens in a
49 forest. We see animals and insects playing and
50 dancing about. The Forrester enters and lies down
51 against a tree for a nap. His slumber is disturbed
52 when a curious Vixen cub chases a frog right into
53 his lap. Against her will, the Forester decides to
54 take the vixen home as a "pet."

55 AB: Time passes through a lush orchestral interlude and
56 we see that the Vixen--now grown to a young adult--
57 has been tied up in the Forrester's yard. Here,
58 she keeps company with a collection of farm
59 animals—including a conservative old dog and
60 several chickens. Unhappy with domesticated life,
61 the Vixen chews through her rope. He then tricks
62 and kills the chickens...and escapes.

63 AB: In Act II, the Vixen is back in the forest, where
64 she has evicted a Badger from his lair. Over
65 drinks in a nearby inn, the Pastor, the Forrester
66 and the Schoolmaster discuss their mutual
67 infatuation with the gypsy girl Terynka. The
68 drunken Schoolmaster leaves the inn and mistakes a
69 sunflower behind which the vixen is hiding for
70 Terynka and confesses his devotion to her. Keith
71 Jameson discusses the Schoolmaster's role in
72 greater depth here:

73 (CD TRACK 7: jameson 02):47

74 AB: The Forrester, also on his way home, sees the Vixen
75 and fires a couple of shots at her, which sends her
76 running. Later, the Vixen--now entering womanhood--
77 meets a charming boy-fox. They retire to the
78 Badger's home. An unexpected pregnancy and a forest
79 full of gossiping woodland creatures necessitate
80 their marriage, which...rounds out the act. Isabel
81 Bayrakdarian--our Vixen--discussed the "completeness"
82 of her role:

83 (CD TRACK 8: IB 01) 1:20

84 AB: A common theme we hear from all of the singers and
85 production staff is the universality of *The Cunning*
86 *Little Vixen* and timelessness of its message.
87 Director Designer/Doug Fitch explains:

88 (CD TRACK 9: doug 01) :35

89 AB: Producer Eduoard Getaz also discussed some of the
90 considerations in bringing a work of theater to the
91 concert hall:

92 (CD Track 10: ed 01) 1:00 [cuttable]

93 AB: ...and now we hear Acts I and II of the *Cunning*
94 *Little Vixen* by Leos Janacek. Alan Gilbert
95 conducts...The New York Philharmonic.

96 (MUSIC: Act I & II)

97 (APPLAUSE)

AB: We just heard Acts I and II of the *Cunning Little Vixen* by Leos Janacek. Isabel Bayrakdarian stars in the title role with Alan Opie as the Forrester, Keith Jameson as the School Master, Marie Lenormand as the Fox, and Wilbur Pauley in the duo-role of the Badger and the Parson. You can find a complete cast list and other information about the production when you visit nyphil.org.

I'm Alec Baldwin. We'll be back with Act III in just a moment. You're listening to The New York Philharmonic This Week.

(FADE TO BLACK)

(LEGAL ID) :10

(FADE IN)

AB: In Act III of *The Cunning Little Vixen*, we encounter the poacher Harasta, who is engaged to Terynka. He is out hunting in preparation for their marriage. The Vixen's numerous cubs mock a fox trap that has been set. Harasta, watching from a distance, shoots and kills the Vixen, sending her children running.

122 Later, at Harasta's wedding, the Forrester is
123 surprised to discover that the poacher's bride is
124 wearing the Vixen's pelt. The Forrester rushes
125 into the forest to reflect. While there, he
126 encounters one of the Vixen's cubs—who bears a
127 striking resemblance to her mother...and he also
128 meets the grandson of the frog who leapt into his
129 lap in Act I. The cycle of life continues. Here's
130 Alan Opie with a few words on that final scene:

131 (CD Track 12: AO 2) :30

132 AB: While it isn't explicitly expressed in the score or
133 libretto, Director/Designer Doug Fitch shared some
134 of his thoughts as to how the Forrester is impacted
135 by the death of the vixen:

136 (CD TRACK 13: doug 02) 1:00

137 AB: Alan Gilbert shared these final thoughts:

138 (CD TRACK 14: alan 02) :37 (probably cuttable)

139 (APPLAUSE)

140 AB: ...and we return to the stage for Act III of the
141 Cunning Little Vixen by Leos Janacek. Alan Gilbert
142 conducts...The New York Philharmonic.

143 (MUSIC: Act III)

144 (APPLAUSE)

145 (FADE TO BLACK)

146 AB: We just heard a complete performance of The Cunning
147 Little Vixen by Leos Janacek from June 2011. In
148 the cast, we heard Isabel Bayrakdarian in the title
149 role with Alan Opie as the Forrester, Keith Jameson
150 as the School Master, Marie Lenormand as the Fox,
151 Wilbur Pauley as the Badger and the Parson, and
152 Joshua Bloom as Harařta. The New York Choral
153 Artists, The Metropolitan Opera Children's Chorus,
154 and the New York Philharmonic were all conducted by
155 Alan Gilbert. You can learn more about the
156 production and see a complete cast list when you
157 visit nyphil.org.

158 The production was by Giants Are Small. The scenic
159 design was by G.W. Mercier and Doug Fitch; lighting
160 design was by Clifton Taylor; costume design was by
161 DougFitch, and make-up design was by Cookie Jordan.

162 The performance is available commercially as part
163 of the Philharmonic's Digital Download Series.
164 More information is available at nyphil.org and
165 wherever you buy music online.

166 (INSERT CREDITS AND CLOSERS)

167 Thank you!