

1 NYP 18-29, "A Night at the Opera"

2 (THEME MUSIC & OPENING BILLBOARD)

3 AB: ...and **THIS week:**

4 (MUSIC: UP and UNDER)

5 AB: ...we enjoy a visit to the opera. I'm Alec
6 Baldwin. Please take a seat next to me as we
7 hear a complete performance of Bluebeard's
8 Castle starring Tatiana Troyanos and Siegmund
9 Nimsgern. We'll also hear highlights from
10 Wagner's Ring Cycle and the Verismo period.
11 But first: most operas begin with an overture.
12 So let's hear the Leonore Overture No. 3 by
13 Beethoven. Leonard Bernstein conducts...The New
14 York Philharmonic.

15 (MUSIC)

16 AB: Beethoven composed four overtures to his opera
17 Fidelio. We just heard one of them—the Leonore
18 Overture No 3. The New York Philharmonic was
19 conducted by Leonard Bernstein.

20 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

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23 AB: The libretto to Wagner's Ring Cycle reads a lot
24 like a really good comic book. It's filled
25 with gods and heroes, action and romance,
26 dragons, swords, curses, treasure, and evil
27 dwarves. Oh, and of course a magic ring.

28 By the time we get to the final scene of the
29 tetralogy, the hero Siegfried is dead. The
30 world of gods and men is cursed. And the only
31 way to restore balance is to destroy the Ring
32 of Power.

33 Noble Brünnhilde, the former Valkyrie and bride
34 to Siegfried orders a funeral pyre to be made
35 by the Rhine river, so that she can take her
36 own life in it. Carrying the ring, she tells
37 the Rhinemaids to claim it from her ashes
38 once the fire has removed the Ring's curse.

39 Here's Brünnhilde's Immolation Scene.
40 Montserrat Caballé is the soloist and Zubin
41 Mehta conducts...The New York Philharmonic.

42 (MUSIC)

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46 AB: Brünnhilde rides her horse, Gane, into the
47 flames. Valhalla and the Gods are consumed by
48 fire, and the Rhinemaiden's gold and the Ring
49 are returned to the river. So ends Wagner's
50 Ring Cycle. We just heard the Immolation
51 Scene. The New York Philharmonic was conducted
52 by Zubin Mehta. Brünnhilde was sung by
53 Monsterat Caballé.

54 (MUSIC)

55 AB: Pietro Mascagni will forever be best known for
56 his quintessential verismo opera, Cavalleria
57 Rusticana. But he did score a few other
58 successes. These aren't heard very often in
59 the States, but the operas *Iris* and *L'amico*
60 *Fritz* have never fully left the repertory in
61 Italy.

62 And it should be said that the so-called
63 "cherry duet" from the second Act remains
64 universally popular as a concert piece for
65 tenor and soprano. In it, Suzel is preparing
66 to pick cherries as the farmers go out to the
67 fields. Enter Fritz, who offers to lend a hand.
68 The two then sing of the enchantment of the
69 spring and the flowers.

70 AB: Here, now, are Placido Domingo and Adrianna
71 Morelli to perform the cherry duet from L'Amico
72 Fritz. Zubin Mehta conducts..,the New York
73 Philharmonic.

74 (MUSIC)

75 AB: We just heard the cherry duet from Act II of
76 L'Amico Fritz by Pietro Mascagni. Adrianna
77 Morelli and Placido Domingo were the soloists.
78 The New York Philharmonic was conducted by
79 Zubin Mehta.

80 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

81 AB: Still to come on this broadcast: a complete
82 performance of Duke Bluebeard's Castle by Bela
83 Bartok. But first, we turn things over to our
84 producer, Mark Travis, for a feature we're
85 calling, "Following In Their Footsteps."

86 (FEATURETTE)

87 AB: After a pause for ID, our broadcast will
88 conclude with music of Bartok. I'm Alec
89 Baldwin and you're listening to The New York
90 Philharmonic This Week.

91 (ID)

92 AB: Duke Bluebeard's Castle was written to a
93 libretto by the symbolist poet, novelist, and
94 dramatist Bela Balasz [buh-LAHSH]. Balasz, who
95 based his text on a fairy tale by Charles
96 Perrault [SHARL pair-OHL], actually first
97 conceived the piece for his roommate, composer
98 Zoltan Kodaly. The first edition of the
99 libretto bares a dedication to both Kodaly AND
100 Bartok.

101 But it seems Bartók was more attracted to the
102 project. He completed the score in time for
103 submission to a competition in 1911. Little is
104 known about the contest, save for the fact that
105 Bluebeard's Castle didn't win. A subsequent
106 competition the following year motivated the
107 composer to make a few modifications to the
108 opera, but again Bartok didn't receive the
109 prize. It seems that with only two characters
110 and a single location, Bluebeard's Castel
111 wasn't "dramatic" enough for the jurors of the
112 day.

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116 AB: Though the judges failed to see it, Bartok's
117 work was considerably less opaque than many
118 similar pieces from the symbolist genre. Today,
119 most would consider no survey of 20th century
120 literature complete without a visit to Duke
121 Bluebeard's Castle.

122 AB: The story of the opera is centered on the title
123 character and his new wife, Judith. Having been
124 brought to his castle, Judith is both
125 frightened and curious to see what is behind
126 the seven doors of the castle's great hall.
127 They reveal a torture chamber, an armory, a
128 secret garden of roses spotted with blood, a
129 treasure room, Bluebeard's kingdom, a lake of
130 tears, and, finally, his three beautiful former
131 wives. One by one, the doors close until the
132 Duke is once again alone. .

133 AB: It was the success of Bartok's ballet The
134 Wooden Prince in 1917 that paved the way for
135 the world premiere of Duke Bluebeard's Castle,
136 which took place on May 24, 1918, at the
137 Budapest Opera.

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140 AB: Musically, the overall feeling of the piece is
141 gloomy and cold. Bartok made great use of the
142 minor 2nd interval (think the theme music to
143 Jaws) to highlight the sadness and danger
144 evident in the libretto.

145 AB: The piece is very challenging for the singers
146 due to the highly complex musical language and
147 to the speech-rhythm inflected style Bartok
148 employs. For a non-native speaker, the
149 Hungarian libretto can be particularly
150 difficult to master as well.

151 AB: Now, from a 1981 broadcast recording, we hear
152 Duke Bluebeard's Castle by Bela Bartok. Mezzo-
153 soprano Tatiana Troyanos and bass Siegmund
154 Nimsgern are the soloists. Rafael Kubelik
155 conducts...The New York Philharmonic.

156 (MUSIC)

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162 AB: Adorned with a bejeweled cloak and crown,
163 Judith disappears through the seventh door to
164 join her predecessors. Duke Bluebeard is alone
165 once again.

166 We just heard Duke Bluebeard's Castle by Bela
167 Bartok. Tatiana Troyanos and Siegmund Nimsgern
168 were the soloists. The New York Philharmonic
169 was conducted by Rafael Kubelik...bringing this
170 week's broadcast "from the Opera" to a close.

171 (INSERT CREDITS)

172 PROMO for NYP

173 AB: On our next New York Philharmonic broadcast, we
174 feature several works that were given their
175 premiere by orchestra. This is Alec Baldwin.
176 I hope you'll join me as we hear works by
177 Copland, Carter, Corigliano and Dvorak. It's a
178 program of "Phil Firsts" on the New York
179 Philharmonic This Week.

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