



A Roadkill Opera: the underground opera sensation: World Premiere Performances Black & White Edition

Stephan Alexander Parker

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A Roadkill Opera tells the story of the hour before the lights go up on opening night for a comedy improv troupe in 1988 Jackson Hole, Wyoming: the Roadkill On A Stick Frozen Foods Theatre Company. During that hour, they find out their showroom at the Silver Dollar Bar is being torn down. This original story and English libretto by Parker is set to music by Ferdinando Paer, Beethoven's direct competitor. 59 minutes (in English) This very funny show was workshopped at Artomatic 2012 in Crystal City, Virginia, by Maestro Jeffrey Dokken. Ferdinando Paer, the Parma-born music director at the Kärntnertortheater in Vienna and a regular performer in Marie Therese's private concerts, moved to another court in Dresden while Austria was at war with Napoleon. It was in Dresden that Paer finished his Leonora for the Empress in 1804. The overture and first act of Paer's Leonora are the musical basis for A Roadkill Opera. After Napoleon defeated the Austrians, Paer moved to Paris where he eventually headed up the Opéra-Italien, to be succeeded by Rossini. When Paer died in 1839, his Leonora was forgotten. Forgotten, that is, until another musical denizen, intrigued by Beethoven's high praise for Paer's music, recovered Paer's Leonora. Peter Maag was a renowned Swiss conductor who, among other things, took two years off from conducting to meditate in a Buddhist monastery. At one point he was the artistic director at the Vienna Volksoper. When he found Paer's Leonora, Maag was artistic director of the Teatro Regio di Parma in Paer's home town. Maag was so taken with it that he mounted a radio production in 1976 and followed up with a 3-disc boxed set on London Records in 1978. After 140 years of neglect, Paer's Leonora was back. Late one winter's night in 1979/1980, some disc jockey at Chicago's WFMT played the first act of Maag's Leonora (still the only commercially released recording of it). The Bampton Opera put up a production of Leonora in 2008, with one concert in Bampton and second concert in London. Artistic directors Gilly French and Jeremy Gray commissioned Brian Clark at Prima la musica! to create performance sheet music. Flautist extraordinaire Martine Micozzi and music director and conductor Jeffrey Dokken were the cornerstone of the 2012 Artomatic workshop and the commercially-released 2013 studio recording of A Roadkill Opera that got us invited to the GRAMMYs in February 2015. This edition of the libretto was prepared for the world premiere performances of A Roadkill Opera at the Mead Theatre Lab at Flashpoint in Washington DC, in January 2016. Black & White Edition.

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