

S T E R L I N G M A N

or

GENEROSITY REWARDED

Chamber Opera in One Act, Four Scenes

by

Klaus George Roy

Op. 30, 1955-56

Libretto translated and adapted from a short story by the Russian humorist

Arkady Averchenko (1881-1925)

The time: November 10th, the night before St. Martin's Day (Martinmas), the saint who divided his cloak with a beggar but has become known as the patron of feasting and convivial gatherings. In many countries, it is customary to prepare a "Martin's goose". The Place: A small town, in a country where the saints' days are observed.

CAST

The Old Man.tenor (buffo)
(Jonathan -- Jon.)

The Old Woman. mezzo-soprano or soprano
(Jacqueline -- Jac.)

A Stranger.baritone

A Beggar. bass
(or Vagabond -- Vag.)

ORCHESTRA

Woodwind Quartet (Flute, Oboe, B-flat Clarinet, and Bassoon) and Piano

(The work is so scored that it may be rehearsed and, if absolutely necessary, performed with the accompaniment of the Piano alone. The full score serves also as the vocal score. Total duration c. 43 minutes.)

The completion of the opera was made possible by a generous grant from a private foundation, November 1954. Sketches had been begun in May of 1952, and the draft was completed on June 15, 1955, at the Cummington School of Arts, Cummington, Massachusetts. The score is dated September 9, 1956, Newton Centre, Massachusetts.

The first performance took place on April 18, 1957, as a television production over WGBH-TV and FM, Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, produced by Sarah Caldwell and David M. Davis. Miss Caldwell directed the Boston University Opera Department, with the following cast: John King, Gwendolyn Belle, Robert Mesrobian, and Herbert Gibson. The woodwind players were Josef Cobert, Milton Hamilton, Sherman Friedland, and Lawrence Intravaia; Merle Puffer was the pianist and vocal coach.

The first stage performances were given on May 26-27-28, 1960, at the Eldred Theatre of Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, as the seventh program in the Second Cleveland May Festival of Contemporary Music. Eugene Kilinski of WRU conducted, and the stage director was Elsa Findlay of the Cleveland Institute of Music. The cast was as follows: Keith Mackey as the Old Man; Gloria Shafran and Mary Eileen Fogarty alternating as the Old Woman; George Kleinfeld and Stephen Szaraz as the Stranger, and John Dietz and Stephen Szaraz as the Beggar. The woodwind ensemble was constituted by Walter Mayhall, Virginia Poole, Frederic Cohen, and Margaret Perry; David Gooding was pianist and vocal coach.

The opera has also been performed at Karamu Theatre (18 performances) and at Iowa State University (on a double bill with "Amahl and the Night Visitors").

NOTE to person in charge of performance publicity:

In order to preserve the surprise elements of the story, it is suggested that only the following comments, and not a synopsis, be provided to newspapers etc. in advance of performance:

"The story of Sterlingman deals with an elderly and impoverished couple visited on St. Martin's eve by a mysterious stranger with an appealing proposition. In the ensuing events, the quality of mercy is severely strained."

(May add:) "The opera is a somewhat bitter satire on a variety of human foibles, including gullibility, avarice, and hypocrisy. Nobody comes off too well in the piece, but - as in all satire - the shoe need pinch only whom it fits. At the same time, the work is intended to be funny and entertaining. The scoring of the instrumental ensemble which accompanies the four singers - woodwind quartet and piano - contributes to the sharp and pointed effect of the story."

* * * * *

Between 1948 and 1957, the composer was librarian and instructor at the Boston University College of Music (School of Fine and Applied Arts). Since 1958, he has been Program Book Editor and Director of Publications for The Cleveland Orchestra. Born in Vienna in 1924, he has been an American citizen since 1944, when he served in the U. S. Army. He is a graduate of Boston University and Harvard.

* * * * *

PRESS COMMENTS on the TV premiere and stage premiere of Sterlingman:

"The story is a perfect basis for a short opera ... The music is light and bouncy, carefully adjusted to the pace and amount of action, and never developed for its own sake..."

Cyrus Durgin, The Boston Globe, April 19, 1957

"An inventive, quicksilver score that flutters lightly and imaginatively from mood to mood...Subtle and truly comic musical observations ... Both in writing and production an exciting and brilliantly mastered experiment in musical drama..."

Melvin Maddocks, The Christian Science Monitor, April 19, 1957

"The tale is amusing. It is entertainingly embellished with witty music. As might be expected in so cynical and compact a drama, there is little room for lyric flights. But it moves with dispatch in declamatory lines of much rhythmic interest, fresh harmonies and distinctive sonorities."

Herbert Elwell, Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 27, 1960

"Roy's most effective work to date ... well presented ... fast-moving production ..."

Bain Murray, Cleveland Heights Sun-Press, June 2, 1960

"Keeps a biting, cynical satire alive from title to closing chord ... Sharp, brittle musical style ... A contemporary idiom of musical speech, veering more toward polytonality than atonality, more toward angular than lyrical expression... The small orchestra of woodwinds and piano provided just the right tight pithy commentary ... For freshness and inventiveness this could be the brightest event of the series"... (Second Cleveland May Festival of Contemporary Music)

Frank Hruby, The Cleveland Press, May 27, 1960

"One of the high points of the nine (Cleveland May Festival) programs ... The work is a natural for the many college and university workshops across the nation."

Musical America, July 1960

"STERLINGMAN" SUITE

for Woodwind Quartet

Score

1.

KLAUS GEORGE ROY
Op. 30a (1955)

Andante sinistro (♩=66)

Musical score for the first system (measures 1-9) of the "Sterlingman" Suite. The score is for a woodwind quartet (Flute, Oboe, B♭ Clarinet, Bassoon) in 2/4 time. The tempo is Andante sinistro (♩=66). The key signature has one flat (B♭). The score begins with a *mf* dynamic. The Flute part features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Oboe and Bassoon parts provide harmonic support with rhythmic patterns. The B♭ Clarinet part has a more static role. A first ending bracket is shown above measure 9, leading to a second ending.

Musical score for the second system (measures 10-18) of the "Sterlingman" Suite. The score continues from the first system. Measure 10 is marked with a box containing the number 10. Dynamics include *cresc.* (crescendo) and *f* (forte). The Flute part has a *tr* (trill) in measure 14. The Oboe and Bassoon parts also feature *tr* markings. The B♭ Clarinet part has a *tr* marking in measure 14. A first ending bracket is shown above measure 17, leading to a second ending. The score concludes with an *attacca* marking.

2.

Allegro agitato (♩=104)

Musical score for the third system (measures 19-23) of the "Sterlingman" Suite. The tempo is Allegro agitato (♩=104). The key signature has one flat (B♭). The score begins with a *f* (forte) dynamic. The Flute part features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Oboe part has a rhythmic pattern. The B♭ Clarinet and Bassoon parts provide harmonic support. The score concludes with a *f* dynamic.

5

mf

mf

mf

Detailed description: This system contains measures 5 through 9. The top staff features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and slurs. The middle and bottom staves provide harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The dynamic marking 'mf' (mezzo-forte) is present in the first two staves.

10

f

Detailed description: This system contains measures 10 through 14. Measures 10-12 are mostly rests in the upper staves. Measure 13 shows a melodic entry in the top staff with a dynamic marking of 'f' (forte). Measure 14 continues this melodic line. The bottom staff has a few notes in measure 14.

15

f

poco stringente

Detailed description: This system contains measures 15 through 19. Measures 15-17 show melodic activity in the top staff. Measures 18-19 continue the melodic line. A handwritten annotation 'poco stringente' is written in the third staff. The dynamic marking 'f' is present in the first staff.

20

attacca

Detailed description: This system contains measures 20 through 24. Measures 20-22 show melodic activity in the top staff. Measures 23-24 are mostly rests in the upper staves, with some notes in the lower staves. The word 'attacca' is written at the bottom right of the system.

Andantino ostinato (♩ = 72)

5

Flute

Oboe

B♭ Cl.

Bass.

10

1. poco tenuto

2. poco tenuto poco rit.

attacca

Allegretto comodo (♩=126)

Flute *mf - pp*

Oboe *mf - pp* *p - pp*

B♭ Cl. *mf - pp*

Besn. *p - pp*

mf

mp

p

p

mf

mf

mf

mf

72
Adagietto espressivo (♩=56)

Flute

Oboe *p*

B♭ Cl. *p* *mf*

Besn. *p*

5

tenuto *a tempo*

p *pp* *p* *p*

10

rit. *a tempo*

f *mf* *mp*

15

poco rall.

pp *p* *mf*

attacca

Vivace giocoso (♩=100)

Flute

Oboe

Bb Cl.

Bssn.

5

(♩ = ♩.)

mf

10

p

mf

p

(♩=100)



System 1: Measures 1-4. Treble clef, 3/4 time. Dynamics: *f*. Features a melodic line in the upper voice and a bass line in the lower voice.



System 2: Measures 5-8. Treble clef, 3/4 time. Dynamics: *f*. Features a melodic line in the upper voice and a bass line in the lower voice.



System 3: Measures 9-12. Treble clef, 3/4 time. Dynamics: *f*. Measure 10 is marked with a box containing the number 20. Features a melodic line in the upper voice and a bass line in the lower voice.



System 4: Measures 13-16. Treble clef, 3/4 time. Dynamics: *f*. Measure 14 is marked with a box containing the number 25. Features a melodic line in the upper voice and a bass line in the lower voice.

30 11

35

Larghetto mesto (♩=60)

8.

Flute
p sempre

Oboe
p sempre

B♭ Cl.
p sempre

Bssn.
p sempre

10

Con brio spiritoso (♩=138)

Flute *mf*

Oboe *mf*

B♭ Cl. *mf*

Bsn. *mf*

5

8

10

p

p

p

15

f

f

p

f

f