

Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth

presents

The Metropolitan Opera

HD LIVE

Boris Godunov

Modest Mussorgsky

Sat, Oct 9, 2021, 1 pm

Spaulding Auditorium

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Free tickets for Dartmouth students to attend The Met: Live in HD are supported by a gift from Cynthia and Jeffrey Manocherian P'15, '18

Boris Godunov

Modest Mussorgsky

Duration: 2 hours, 20 minutes

(Cast in order of vocal appearance)

Grigory	David Butt Philip
Boris Godunov	René Pape
Shuisky	Maxim Paster
Pimen	Ain Anger
Shchelkalov	Aleksey Bogdanov
Varlaam	Ryan Speedo Green
Conductor	Sebastian Weigle
Production	Stephen Wadsworth
Set Designer	Ferdinand Wögerbauer
Costume Designer	Moidele Bickel
Lighting Designer	Duane Schuler
Fight Director	Steve Rankin

Synopsis

Scene I

Boris Godunov has retreated to the Novodevichy Monastery near Moscow. The Streltsy police force a crowd to beg Boris to become tsar of Russia. The boyar Shchelkalov announces that Boris still refuses the throne and laments Russia's insoluble misery. A procession of pilgrims prays to God for help. The Streltsy warn the crowd to be at the Kremlin the next morning ready to cheer.

Scene II

The following day, the bells of Moscow herald the coronation of Boris. The new tsar, overcome by fear and melancholy, implores God to look kindly on him. He invites the people to a feast. The people cheer.

Scene III

In the Chudov Monastery, the monk Pimen is writing the last chapter of his history of Russia. The novice Grigory awakens from a nightmare and expresses regret that he hasn't tasted glory in war and society. He questions Pimen about the dead Tsarevich Dmitry, rightful heir to Boris's throne. Pimen recounts the events of Dmitry's murder (the assassins implicated Boris before they died) and mentions that the tsarevich would have been Grigory's age. Alone, Grigory decides to flee the cloister and condemns Boris: "You will not escape the judgment of man or God!"

Synopsis *continued*

Scene IV

Now on a mission to expose Boris and proclaim himself the Tsarevich Dmitry, Grigory is trying to cross into Lithuania to find support for his cause. He falls in with two vagrant monks, Varlaam and Missail, at an inn near the border, and uses them as cover. No sooner has he asked directions to the border from the innkeeper, who warns that the frontier is heavily patrolled, than a police officer enters with a warrant for Grigory's arrest. The officer is illiterate, so Grigory reads the warrant, substituting a description of Varlaam for his own. But Varlaam can read. Grigory escapes, pursued by the Streltsy.

Scene V

In Boris's apartments, his daughter mourns the death of her fiancé. Boris comforts her tenderly, talks intimately with his son about inheriting the throne, then reflects to himself on his inconsolable sadness: All that he does for his people seems to go wrong, and he is blamed for everything after the murder of the tsarevich. 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 Dmitry, he is deeply shaken. Shuisky reassures him again that the real tsarevich was in fact killed and tells of seeing the boy's body after his murder--over three days there was no sign of decay, only a mysterious radiance. Shuisky leaves, and Boris gives way to his terror, imagining that he sees Dmitry's ghost. Torn by guilt and regret, he prays for forgiveness.

Scene VI

Outside the Cathedral of St. Basil in Moscow, starving peasants debate whether Tsarevich Dmitry still lives, as news reaches them that his troops are near. A group of children torment a holy fool and steal his last kopek. When Boris and his retinue come from the cathedral to distribute alms, the holy fool asks Boris to kill the children the way he killed Dmitry. Shuisky orders the holy fool seized, but Boris instead asks his accuser to pray for him. The holy fool refuses to intercede for a murderer. When Boris's retinue passes and the people disperse, the holy fool laments Russia's dark future.

Scene VII

In the Duma, 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 the dead child. When he regains his composure, Shuisky brings Pimen before the Duma. Pimen tells of a man who was cured of blindness while praying at Dmitry's grave. Boris collapses. He sends the boyars away, calling for his son. Naming him heir to his throne, he bids a loving farewell to his children and dies.

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