



Aram Il'yich
KHACHATURIAN

DDD
8.550801

Spartacus
(Suites Nos. 1 - 3)

St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra
André Anichanov, Conductor



Aram Il'yich Khachaturian (1903 - 1978)

Spartacus

Suite No. 1

Introduction - Dance of the Nymphs

Adagio of Aegina and Harmodius

Variation of Aegina and Bacchanalia

Scene and Dance with Crotala

Dance of the Gaditanae - Victory of Spartacus

Suite No. 2

Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia

Entrance of the Merchants - Dance of a Roman Courtesan -

General Dance

Entrance of Spartacus - Quarrel - Treachery of Harmodius

Dance of the Pirates

Suite No. 3

Dance of a Greek Slave

Dance of an Egyptian Girl

Night Incident

Dance of Phrygia - Parting Scene

At the Circus

The Armenian composer Aram Khachaturian was born in Tblisi in 1903 and had his musical training at the Gnesin Music Academy in Moscow, entering in 1929 the Moscow Conservatory, where he was a pupil of Prokofiev's friend and mentor, Miaskovsky. He established himself as a composer during the 1930s and held official positions in the Union of Soviet Composers, although he was included in the condemnation of formalism, together with Shostakovich and Prokofiev, in 1948. Nevertheless his style of composition, with the use of regional elements from Armenia and elsewhere in the southern areas of the Soviet Union, in the end ensured his continuing reputation, enhanced once

more, after the death of Stalin in 1953, by his ballet *Spartacus*, a work that combined spectacle in its crowd scenes and attention to individual virtuosity in its solos, with a plot that could not but satisfy the ideals of the régime. Writing in a tonal idiom with richly coloured orchestration, Khachaturian was opposed to modern experiment in composition and in spite of the condemnation of 1948 held publicly that Soviet composers enjoyed a creative freedom impossible in the West, with its modernising fashions, to which subservience was obligatory. During his life-time he received many honours, including in 1954 the title People's Artist. He died in 1978.

The ballet *Spartacus*, the score of which was completed in 1954, deals with the slave rebellion led by the hero of that name against Roman domination. The historical Spartacus himself was Thracian by birth, a shepherd who became a robber. He was taken prisoner and sold to a trainer of gladiators in Capua, but in 73 B.C. he escaped, with other prisoners, and led a rebellion during the course of which he defeated the Roman armies and caused devastation throughout Italy. He was eventually defeated by Crassus, a general well known for his wealth, and put to death by crucifixion, together with his followers. It should be added that to Karl Marx Spartacus was the first great proletarian hero, a champion of the people, while the ultimate fate of Crassus, killed in 53 B.C. during the course of a campaign that had taken him to Armenia, might have had a particular significance for Khachaturian.

Spartacus was first produced at the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad in 1956, with choreography by Leonid Jacobson, and was re-staged at the Bolshoy in Moscow two years later, with choreography by Igor Moiseyev. The relative failure of these productions was followed by what must be seen as the definitive version at the Bolshoy in 1968, with choreography and a revised libretto by Yuri Grigorovich, Vladimir Vasiliev as Spartacus and Ekaterina Maximova as Phrygia.

The ballet opens in Rome, where Crassus is buying Thracian prisoners, including Spartacus and his wife Phrygia. Spartacus will not accept his fate. In the second scene the slaves are sold, below the walls of the Capitol, and Phrygia, separated now from her husband, laments her uncertain fate. She has been bought by Crassus and in his villa his mistress Aegina mocks her fears: she herself cares only for power, money and dissolute living. In an orgy two blindfold slaves trained as gladiators are brought in and made to fight each other to the death. One of them wins and reveals himself as Spartacus, dismayed now at having killed a fellow-slave. He wonders what his fate will be. The scene changes to the barracks of the gladiators, where Spartacus urges his fellow-slaves to fight for freedom. They swear to follow him.

The second of the three acts of the final version opens with a shepherd dance. Runaway slaves arrive and urge them to join the revolt, with Spartacus as their leader. He resolves to find and set free his wife Phrygia. Crassus celebrates his triumph and Spartacus now learns of Phrygia's fate. During a banquet given by Crassus, Spartacus escapes with Phrygia. Aegina does her best to gain her ends by dominating Crassus, who himself has grandiose political ambitions: he uses force and she uses her wits, but both have similar aims. At his villa the guests of Crassus celebrate, but news is brought that Spartacus and his men have surrounded the place. Crassus, Aegina and the nobles make their escape, leaving the slaves in charge of the villa. Spartacus realises that Roman strength lies in its armies and in the subservience of the people: in fact the Romans are cowards. In the fourth scene of the act Crassus is defeated and brought before Spartacus, who insists on single combat, rather than putting his enemy to death. Crassus loses, but is spared by Spartacus, who sends him contemptuously away.

The third act brings a conspiracy against Spartacus. Crassus is urged by Aegina to seek revenge and raises an army for the purpose. Aegina has time to give vent to her hatred of Spartacus and in the following scene enters the slave camp by night. Phrygia is uneasy and Spartacus tries to calm her. A messenger brings news of the advance of the Roman legions, against which Spartacus has a daring plan, to which his immediate supporters object. Aegina, meanwhile, with the help of the traitor Harmodius, is still intent on revenge. This she accomplishes as the slaves wait for their leader's battle signal. She now plies them with wine and brings women to corrupt and weaken them, leading to their defeat by Crassus and her own reward. Crassus is determined that they shall die. In a final battle Spartacus is surrounded and captured, to be raised up on legionary spears. Phrygia comes to seek him, and is left mourning over his dead body.

The first three suites from the ballet were arranged by the composer between 1955 and 1957, before the revision of the score for the Bolshoy in 1968. Music is taken from various scenes in the ballet, with the best known the solo of Aegina, a quick waltz, followed by general celebration in a Bacchanalia, the following dance with the crotala, an instrument similar to the castanets and the moving *Adagio* of Spartacus and Phrygia, with the dance of the girls from Cadíz, the Gaditanae, from the second act, when Spartacus and Crassus fight in single combat. Other movements in the suites are taken from various parts of the original ballet, with characteristic dances providing divertissements, in a work that in general follows a spectacular use of the corps de ballet with a solo dance that reflects the feelings of the principal characters in the story.

St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra

The St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra was established in 1969 as the Russian State Concert Orchestra. Work with the conductor André Anichanov began in March 1991. In the following year the orchestra was awarded State Symphony status and changed its name, continuing its established and wide-ranging repertoire, with particular proficiency in the interpretation of Russian music. The orchestra performs in the St Petersburg Philharmonic Hall, the Academic Capella and Smolny Cathedral and has undertaken successful tours abroad, from near-by Finland to as far afield as South Korea. Recordings for Naxos include the three symphonies of Rimsky-Korsakov and the *Spartacus* and *Gayane* ballet suites of Khachaturian.

André Anichanov

Born in St. Petersburg, André Anichanov studied orchestral and choral conducting at the St. Petersburg State Conservatory. After winning an award in 1986 at the State Conducting Competition, he worked with a number of St. Petersburg choirs and in 1989 began conducting the Mussorgsky Opera and Ballet Theatre, of which he was appointed Chief Conductor in 1992, winning success in a number of theatre tours, to Italy, America, Japan and France. In 1991 he was appointed Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra.



8.550801

STEREO

Aram Il'yich KHACHATURIAN

(1903 - 1978)

Spartacus (Suites Nos. 1 - 3)

St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra
André Anichanov, Conductor

DDD

Playing
Time:
69'21''

Spartacus: Suite No. 1

- 1 Introduction — Dance of the Nymphs (4:49)
- 2 Adagio of Aegina and Harmodius (6:46)
- 3 Variation of Aegina and Bacchanalia (4:13)
- 4 Scene & Dance with Crotala (3:22)
- 5 Dance of the Gaditanae —
Victory of Spartacus (6:45)

Spartacus: Suite No. 2

- 6 Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia (8:31)
- 7 Entrance of the Merchants —
Dance of a Roman Courtesan —
General Dance (5:11)

- 8 Entrance of Spartacus — Quarrel —
Treachery of Harmodius (5:34)
- 9 Dance of the Pirates (1:16)

Spartacus: Suite No. 3

- 10 Dance of a Greek Slave (2:21)
- 11 Dance of an Egyptian Girl (3:50)
- 12 Night Incident (3:03)
- 13 Dance of Phrygia — Parting Scene (5:01)
- 14 At the Circus (7:23)

Recorded at the Studio One, St Petersburg Radio, Russia,
from 26th November to 2nd December 1994.

Producer: Andrew Wheeler

Engineer: Seymon Shugal

Music Notes: Keith Anderson

Cover Painting: Spartacus (from a production by the Bolshoy ballet)

