



Zakharia Petrovich Paliashvily (1871-1933)
Absalom and Etery, opera in four acts
KHCD-2013-033-2CD Track Listing & Synopsis
Disc 1

- Introduction: Orchestral Prelude
- **Act I: A wooded landscape**
 - Tableau 1: The shepherdess Eteri is sitting on the bank of a stream. A hunting song is heard from the distance. Eteri listens to it.
 - No. 1. Song of the hunters: "Avatandil hunted through the forest..." This is a song of the huntsman's joy and sorrow.
 - No. 2. Aria of Eteri: She laments her fate, made miserable by an evil stepmother. She longs to be free from her suffering: "If only someone will come and save me from this bitter torment..."
 - No. 3. Song of the hunters repeated
 - No. 4. Scene of Eteri, Abessalom, and Murman: The king's son, Abessalom, returning from the hunt, find Eteri sitting by the stream and is deeply affected by her beauty. "When I saw you my eyes filled with tears..." Murman, Abessalom's chamberlain and companion, who secretly loves Eteri himself, is tormented with jealousy. Although he knows that he has to defer to his master, he does not want to lose Eteri: "Mild and gentle was my heart, but now it clamors to be curbed no longer". Abessalom tries to win Eteri by means of gifts (a gold-embroidered veil and a horse), but she rejects them, and Murman exclaims: "The fairest chooses the boldest, only by him can she be won". What follows recalls a scene with Gretchen, because Eteri declares "You are a lord of exalted rank...I am an orphan..."; she is afraid of being deserted "when the desire of your heart has been attained..." Abessalom swears "by water and earth" that this will never happen. Eteri and Abessalom sing a duet; Murman expresses his secret longing. Eteri hurries away, and Abessalom follows her. Murman remains behind: "I would be a coward...if I failed to win you by force..."
 - Tableau 2: Eteri's stepmother's farm
 - No. 5. Scene of Eteri and her stepmother: The stepmother comes out of the house. She threatens Eteri with even worse treatment, because she resents the girl's desire to find happiness. Eteri stands up to her in an argument.
 - No. 6. Scene and duet of Abessalom and Eteri: Abessalom enters. "Eteri, o Eteri, who would ever be untrue to you?" Eteri accepts the fact that Abessalom can save her, and responds to his wooing: "I will give myself wholly to you, from the depths of my soul". As a token of his love, Abessalom gives Eteri a golden dagger, and repies to her in her own words.
 - No. 7. Aria of Murman: He sings of Eteri's beauty, and bewails the fact that he has lost her. He is still unwilling to give her up: "Can I find someone to help me get near to Eteri, the sun of my existence?"
- **Act II: The King's Palace** - Ceremonial entrance of King Abio and Queen Natela, Abessalom's parents.
 - No. 8. Chorus: The King's praises are sung - he has freed his people. They ask for God's blessing on him. The sound of horns is heard from afar. Abessalom nad Eteri enter.
 - No. 9. Wedding procession: The chorus sing a song of praise. Abio blesses the bridal pair. The old King wishes the young couple well, and hopes that a male heir will soon be born. The people are proud that Abessalom has chosen a commoner as his bride.
 - No. 10. Quintet (Scene and Chorus): Eteri, Marich, Natella, Abessalom, Abio: The family sing of the love, fidelity, and sense of unity which binds them. The wedding guests (chorus) call for a "Tamada" (Georgian

toasts). Abio tell the army commander Tandaruchto to begin the toasting. He asks happiness for the bridal couple: "...Protect them against evil spells". The King also proposes a toast. A splendid Tamada scene follows.

- No. 11. Entrance of Murman: (Abessalom is astonished by Murman's absence) Murman arrives too late for the celebration, but he has brought a gift for Eteri - a necklace of great value. Murman mutters, aside: "Soon Eteri will be mine, because my gift will make her ill, so that her face will be changed, and she will become abhorrent to the King". - Abessalom invites Murman to the table, and asks his sister Marich to sing a song.
- No. 12. Canzonetta of Marich: She sings of the bride and her beauty.
- No. 12-a. Scene: Marich's song is applauded. Tandaruch concludes the toasting and announces a dance.
- No. 13. Ballet: (Kartuli and Mirsaya)

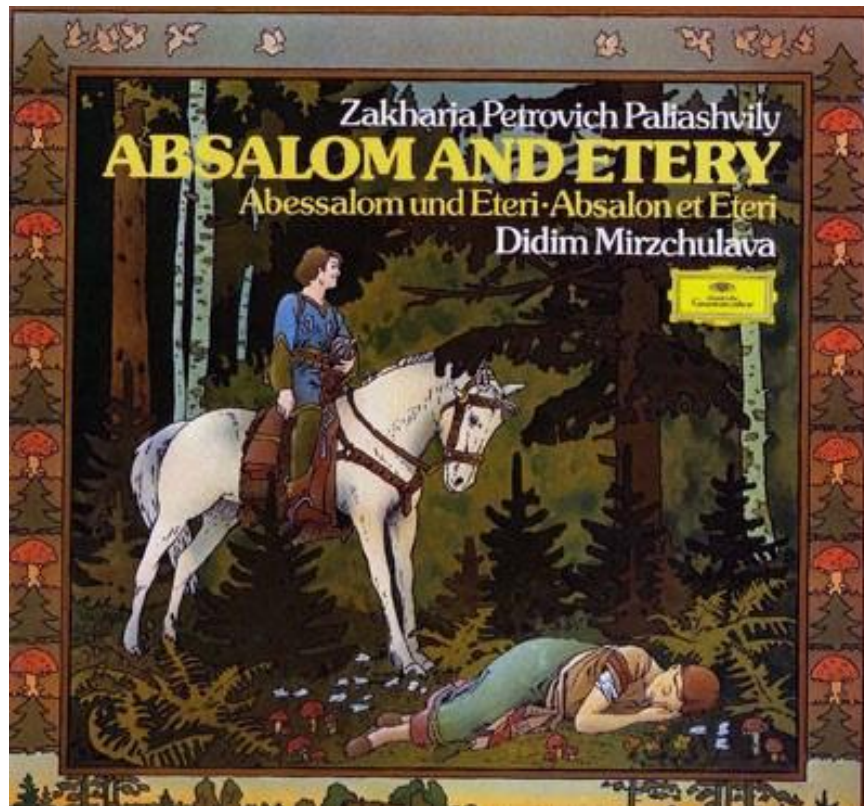
Disc 2

Act III

- No. 14. Scene and aria of Abessalom: Abessalom sits alone, dejected. He laments a bitter fate: I have lost you, Eteri, I must live in darkness without the sun..." Murman's magic spell has worked.
- No. 15. Finale: A lament is heard in the distance. The ladies of the court are leading the sick Eteri along. Chorus: "Our rose has become a yellowed lily" (a reference to the sudden loss of Eteri's beauty). Abessalom is in despair, and is unable to decide what to do. The ladies (the Queen and Marich) join Abessalom in lamenting Eteri's fate and his own. He is advised to send Eteri away. Abessalom refuses; only when Eteri herself begs him to allow her to go ("Let me flee to the fields alone, make off like a shy little animal...") does he give her away. Murman offers to look after Eteri: "Only with me can she be saved". Lamentation is heard again: "Ah, the rose has become a yellowed lily".

Act IV

- No. 16. Naana and women's chorus: Naana, Murman's mother, and her daughters sing a song in praise of Eteri, who came from a hovel, became queen, and now has been received as a daughter by Naana. She is honored as the "crown of the house". Eteri blames Abessalom for having broken his oath. Abessalom curses whoever it was who called a curse down on their love. Naana again sings in praise of Eteri ("This maiden is a precious jewel").
- No. 17. Scene: Abessalom, Murman and the Major-Domo: Abessalom summons Murman to him to enquire about Eteri. Murman fears the meeting.
- No. 18. Duet of Abessalom and Murman: Murman reports truthfully, how Eteri's beauty has been restored to her ("no-one will part me from her, she reflects God's beauty").
- No. 19. Scene and 2nd duet: Abessalom, who - sick through his longing for Eteri - feels himself close to death, decides to send Murman to India to bring "water of life" to cure him. Murman, who cannot disobey this command, is in despair at having to leave Eteri ("Ah, how heavy my heart is! This is an evil turn of events").
- No. 20. Scene of Natela and Abessalom: The Queen realizes how unwell her son is, and is determined to get Eteri back.
- No. 21. Duet of Eteri and Natela: The Queen uses all her powers of persuasion in an attempt to get Eteri to return. Eteri refuses, because Abessalom "broke his word before God" (when he let her go with Murman).
- No. 22. Natela and Abessalom: The Queen tells of her unsuccessful attempt to get Eteri back. Abessalom sends his sister Marich to Eteri.
- No. 23. Quartet: Marich, Eteri, Natela, Abessalom (Marich plays Tchonguri): Marich puts her case so persuasively that she wins Eteri back: "If seeing me again will ease your brother's pain, yes, I will gladly suffer for the sake of reunion". Abessalom sings of Eteri as the "morning sun of my dreams".
- No. 24. Marich, Eteri, and Abessalom: Marich brings Eteri to her sick brother Abessalom, who can no longer leave his bed. Abessalom, overjoyed by Eteri's return, wants to reward her again with gifts, but Eteri will accept none: "Eteri does not want presents, there will be no more riding away...Look at me for the last time, see what I have suffered for you". Eteri openly shows her constant love for Abessalom.
- No. 25. Ensemble: Abessalom expresses his gratitude to Eteri in an inward, poetic manner: "In eyes lost in dreams you have made gardens bloom. Eteri, your coming has brought forth joy and thankfulness almost past expressing". During this Quartet all four sing in the same words of their joy at being together again.
- No. 26. Concluding scene: Abessalom, near death, hopes that Eteri, united with Murman, will no longer remember him. Abessalom dies. His death makes Eteri convinced that life without him would be devoid of meaning. ("Ah, my suffering is too great!"). Eteri takes the dagger which she once received from Abessalom and plunges it into her heart. All the others fall on their knees, deeply moved, and sing of the reunion of the lovers in heaven. ("Their souls were one; here on earth they were afflicted, but now they are forever joyously united in heaven").



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