

L'ambasciatore

(The ambassador)

Opera in one act

Libretto by: Walter Zidarič
freely inspired to “*Death of Ivan I’lič* “ by Lev Tolstoj

Music by: Simone Fermani

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Cast of Characters

The Ambassador: superficial, amoral type, convinced of being irresistibleTenor

His wife: careerist, worldly, she would not give up her standard of living for any reason...Soprano

His daughter: like her mother, for the worse.....Soprano

Her boyfriend: appears only at the end, he seems genuinely in love.....Barytone

The Russian servant: simple, sincere, honest.....Barytone

Choir and ballet: colleagues of the ambassador and then invited to party.

The scene is set at the Ambassador of Russia’s house in Moscow, in the 80s

Orchestra set

Piccolo
2 Flutes
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets
2 Bassoons

4 Horns in F
2 Trumpets in B
3 Trombones
Cimbasso or Tuba

Harp

Timpani
Triangle
Cymbals
Snare drum
Bass drum
Drum set

1st Violins
2nd Violins
Violas
Cellos
Double - Basses

Preface

by Walter Zidaric*

*author of libretto, Full Professor of Italian Language and Literature
and former director of the Department of Italian Studies at the University of Nantes

Freely adapted from L. Tolstoj's "*Death of Ivan Ilič*", The Ambassador is a one-act opera set in the Moscow residence of the Italian ambassador to Russia in the 1990s.

A vain and worldly fellow, who has made a career out of political friendships and has a weakness for young women, the ambassador retraces what he considers the important stages of his life in a dialogue with the Russian servant, the only person who tells him the truth about his behaviour. In the flashback that opens the second scene and lasts until the penultimate one, we see in turn the ambassador's arrival party in Moscow, the story of his disillusionment with his marriage, his quarrels with his wife after the arrival of their first child and the hypocritical arrangements to keep up appearances, his failure to get promoted and his arrival in Moscow.

During the reception for his daughter's engagement, the ambassador finally receives news of a stock market crash where he loses everything: it is the end of a frivolous, worldly and hypocritical life. The final scene is linked to the initial one: the ambassador finds himself alone with the servant, whom he sincerely esteems, recognises that he has lived in vain and decides to accept his fate, not without irony, sharing a last glass of champagne with the latter.

Imagined scenic device

The scenic changes take place "on sight", without musical interruption or pauses, so that the initial setting is transformed from time to time by opening or closing walls and walkways, only to return identical in the final scene.

The opera opens on the interior of the ambassador's residence in Moscow, where he is dining in an intimate but elegant setting and while the servant finishes clearing the table, when dinner is over, the walls open up to create a vast hall (scene II). As scene II is ending, the walls close again and we return to the initial setting with a single table on which there is a bottle of champagne and a goblet (scene III). At the end of the short scene, a simple change of lights reduces the visible space to create a smaller, more intimate, private sitting-room type environment where the argument between husband and wife takes place (scene IV). At the end of scene IV, there is another change of light and the environment of the initial scene reappears (scene V). As the scene is ending, the walls open again to create a large space that will be the great hall of a ministry, full of light and people (scene VI). At the end of the scene, during the toast, the walls are closed and we return to the drawing room in the ambassador's house, as in Scene IV (Scene VII). For Scene VIII, we return to the setting of Scene II, a large, well-appointed salon for a social reception full of guests, where there is drinking and dancing. When the news of the financial ruin arrives, the setting is gradually reduced, the semi-darkness prevails, and we return to the scenography of the scene that opened the opera, with the ambassador and the faithful servant.

This is the scheme of the scene changes:

Scene I - scene A
Scene II - scene B
Scene III - scene A
Scene IV - scene C
Scene V - scene A
Scene VI - scene D
Scene VII - scene C
Scene VIII - scene B
Scene IX - scene A

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