

Lewis Spratlan, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in Music, 2000, for his opera *Life is a Dream*, is a widely performed and much honored composer. A native of Miami, he studied with Mel Powell and Gunther Schuller at Yale and has taught and conducted at Tanglewood, The Yale Summer School of Music and Art, and Amherst College, where he has been on the faculty since 1970. His music has been performed in New York, Los Angeles, Washington, Pittsburgh, Miami, London, Moscow, Montreal, Toronto, and Boston. He is the recipient of Guggenheim, NEA, Massachusetts Artists-Foundation, and MacDowell Fellowships. His opera *Life is a Dream* won a top prize in the Rockefeller Foundation-New England Conservatory Opera Competition and *Apollo and Daphne Variations* won the New England Composers Orchestra Competition for readings of new works. His music is recorded on the Opus One and Gasparo Labels.



Learn more about *Life is a Dream* at www.musicsalesclassical.com.
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Lewis Spratlan

Life is a Dream

An opera in three acts (1978)



"A POWERFUL,
PROFOUND DRAMA."

- *The Denver Post*

Life Is a Dream

An opera in three acts (2017)



Music by Lewis Spratlan

Libretto in English by James Maraniss

Based on play by Pedro Calderon de la Barca

Duration: 2 hours

Premiere: July 2010, Santa Fe Opera

Orchestra: 1(afl,pic).1(ca).1(bcl).1/2.1(pi
ctpt).1.0/2perc/hp/pf/str

cast list

BASILIO, the King
Bass

SEGISMUNDO, Basilio's son
Tenor

CLOTALDO, Segismundo's jailor
Baritone

ROSAURA, Clotaldo's Daughter
Soprano

CLARÍN, Rosaura's servant
Tenor

ASTOLFO, Basilio's nephew
Baritone

ESTRELLA, Basilio's niece
Mezzo-soprano

CHORUS - SATB

COURTIERS

SOLDIERS

CAMP FOLLOWERS

SOLO ROLES (drawn from chorus)

FIRST SERVANT: *Tenor*

SECOND SERVANT: *Baritone*

FIRST SOLDIER: *Baritone*

SECOND SOLDIER: *Tenor*

composer's note

The music of *Life is a Dream* hangs very much on its verbal language. Vocal lines mostly follow the rhythm and contour of spoken English, at times heightened, at times plain. The orchestra functions variously: in moments of exposition its role is simple — to support and articulate; in moments of intensity it sometimes illustrates or elaborates the action, sometimes undercuts it or provides ironic commentary, and sometimes establishes links with earlier musical/dramatic ideas. A variety of traditional forms (dances, marches, a madrigal, a lament) provide musical oases — stable, rounded moments — in a texture which is otherwise highly open-ended, full of change, and, reflecting the hero's character, somewhat wild. Consonant with Calderón's intricate verbal edifices, the music on occasion builds itself into grand, symmetrical designs, which, as in the original, virtually consume the characters. But the prevailing musical discourse tends to proceed as in life, always unfolding, with the occasional reiteration for emphasis. This is enabled by an unmetered, quasirecitative technique which slips in and out of the texture with very little fuss, allowing for quick and unobtrusive musical gear-shifting. The instrumental forces are modest: single woodwinds, two French horns, a single trumpet and trombone, piano, harp, percussion, and strings.

— Lewis Spratlan

synopsis

In a faraway kingdom in the distant past, king, Basilio, banishes his son, Segismundo, to a tower in the wilderness rather than subject his people to the reign of a cruel and tyrannical prince, a future foretold by the stars. Basilio, when Segismundo comes of age, has second thoughts. Maybe the stars were wrong. Or perhaps will is stronger than fate. Basilio orders that the prince be drugged and brought to court. If he is good he will remain and inherit the throne; if not, he will be drugged once again and sent back to the tower, where he will be made to believe that what he saw was only a dream.

"AN IMPOSING
ACCOMPLISHMENT."

- *The New Mexican*

"THIS OPERA... NEEDS TO
BE SEEN EVERYWHERE."

- *The Berkshire Review*

"VIVID, COLORFUL,
IMAGINATIVE."

- *The Boston Globe*