

Lewis Spratlan

Life Is a Dream

learn more about at www.schirmer.com



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, perhaps, most significantly, Boston, where he has received commissions and premieres from the Boston Musica Viva, Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble, soprano Karol Bennett, and pianist John McDonald. Other New England-based ensembles, including the Springfield Symphony Orchestra, the Lydian String Quartet, the Windsor Quartet, and Ancora have performed his works as well.

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.

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover and inside photographs by Ken Howard, courtesy of Santa Fe Opera.

ORDERING INFORMATION

Rental orders and fee quotations:

G. Schirmer/AMP Rental and Performance Department online web form
www.schirmer.com/rental

Perusal materials:

SchirmerOnDemand digital scores via free download
digital.schirmer.com

G. Schirmer/AMP Promotion Department paper scores
perusals@schirmer.com

Sales materials:

The Hal Leonard Corporation distributes G. Schirmer/AMP music in print. See your music dealer or order online from www.musicdispatch.com

Publisher and Agency Representation for the Music Sales Group:
www.schirmer.com

The Music Sales Group of Companies

USA: G. Schirmer, Inc.
Associated Music Publishers, Inc.
E-mail: schirmer@schirmer.com
Tel: +1 212 254 2100

UK: Chester Music Ltd
Novello & Co Ltd
E-mail: promotion@musicsales.co.uk
Tel: +44 20 7434 0066

Denmark: Edition Wilhelm Hansen AS
Email: ewh@ewh.dk
Tel: +45 33 117888

Spain: Unión Musical Ediciones
E-mail:
unionmusicalediciones@musicsales.co.uk
Tel: +34 91 308 4040

Australia: G. Schirmer Pty Ltd
E-mail: JMakim@Musicsales.com.au
Tel: +61 2 9299 8877

Germany: Chester Schirmer Berlin
E-mail:
chester.schirmer.berlin@musicsales.co.uk
Tel: +49 30 223 220 19

France: Chester Music France
E-mail: chesterfrance@musicsales.co.uk
Tel: +33 1 53 24 68 52



Lewis Spratlan

Life Is a Dream

“...an extraordinary dramatic and musical journey.” — The Denver Post



Life Is a Dream

Opera in Three Acts Music by Lewis Spratlan

Libretto in English by James Maraniss
after the play *La vida es sueño* by
Pedro Calderón de la Barca

DURATION: 2 hours

WORLD PREMIERE

July 24, 2010

Santa Fe Opera

Leonard Slatkin, conductor

Kevin Newbury, director

PREMIERE CAST

BASILIO: John Cheek (bass)

SEGISMUNDO: Roger Honeywell (tenor)

CAST

BASILIO, the King: Bass

SEGISMUNDO, Basilio's son: Tenor

CLOTALDO, Segismundo's jailor: Baritone

ROSAURA, Clotaldo's daughter: Soprano

CLARÍN, Rosaura's servant: Tenor

ASTOLF, Basilio's nephew: Baritone

ESTRELLA, Basilio's niece: Mezzo-soprano

Chorus: SATB

COURTIERS

SOLDIERS

CAMP FOLLOWERS

Solo roles (drawn from the chorus)

FIRST SERVANT: Tenor

SECOND SERVANT: Baritone

FIRST SOLDIER: Baritone

SECOND SOLDIER: Tenor

ORCHESTRA

1(afl,pic).1(ca).1(bcl).1/2.1(pictpt).1.0/2perc/hp.pf/str



ACCLAIM

"...a powerful, profound drama — grand opera in the fullest sense of the term."

— Kyle MacMillan, *The Denver Post*

"...an important opera, the rare philosophical work that holds the stage and gives singing actors real characters to grapple with."

— Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*

"...an imposing accomplishment, the more so in light of the bland pablum that has so often been tendered in stage works of more recent vintage."

— James M. Keller, *The New Mexican*

"New Mexico has been a great and appropriate place to premiere this opera, but it needs to be seen everywhere."

— Charles Warren, *The Berkshire Review*

"The vocal writing defines the characters in basic and subtle ways; it also keeps the text clear; the orchestration is vivid, colorful, imaginative, and characteristic in the sense that it too defines the characters."

— Richard Dyer, *The Boston Globe*

SETTING

a faraway kingdom in the distant past

SYNOPSIS

A 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.



COMPOSER 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, quasi-recitative 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.