the opera to the exclusion of all else and to the detriment of the DVD.

Like Arthaus’s *Moses und Aron*, *Jenuďa* is presented in an anamorphic transfer with clean colors that highlight the importance the stage production placed on hues to transmit emotion. The audio track is available in DTS or Dolby 5.1 and, if anything, is fuller in range than *Moses und Aron*. The performance is recorded live and captures a bit of the electricity of attending live theater. But the camera work is sometimes questionable, focusing too much on faces and missing important activity performed by the chorus, and the production itself is a bit heavy-handed in its symbolism to work completely in an intimate medium such as television.

Janáček began down the road to operatic success late in life; he was fifty when *Jenuďa* premiered and sixty-one before it played in Prague. But even with the late start, his reputation has steadily climbed throughout the past century and *Jenuďa* in particular has become a staple of opera houses worldwide. It owes its success both to the beauty of Janáček’s vocal writing and the immediacy and veracity of his plotting. Instead of focusing on philosophical issues like Schoenberg, Janáček turned his gaze to the local and provincial, allowing smaller stories to tell broader truths. In this opera, for instance, he tells the tragic story of Jenuďa, a pregnant young woman who secretly gives birth during the second act’s winter only to have her stepmother, Kostelnička, abscond with the child, leaving it to die of exposure. This intimate story resonates loudly between the pull of tradition and the necessity of change.


Gian Carlo Menotti composed *Help, Help, the Globolinks!* in 1968 as a pro-music opera for “children and those still young at heart.” Unlike his earlier and more successful works, including *The Consul* (1950) and *The Saint of Bleeker Street* (1955), *The Globolinks* contains little of Menotti’s usual originality or charm. The music is in the style of Puccini, accessible and light but not particularly interesting. The plot too is simple:
aliens invade Earth, music drives them away. The audience is pounded with the message that music is important and good. Although Menotti had written well for children previously—his television opera Amahl and the Night Visitors has become a holiday staple—this work is condescending to the audience and without much merit, save for students of Menotti’s works or designers interested in the aesthetic of the German avant-garde of the 1960s.

This DVD contains a version of the opera filmed in 1969 and based on the premiere’s staging and design. The audio quality is very good, but the video has been reclaimed from old footage and is grainy. While the singing is generally very good, the production itself can only be described as “trippy.” In the first scene, schoolchildren dressed much like the Von Trapp clan find themselves lost in the woods, and soon strange creatures appear, accompanied by an abstract light show set among “steel towers fitted with tilting and rotating mirrors.” (DVD booklet, 14) These creatures are the Globolinks. Female Globolinks are portrayed by acrobats in vivid leotards with ten-foot quills rising from their backs, much like porcupines. The male aliens are dancers in segmented tubes of fabric; they scuttle and hop across the sets. The children—led by William Workman in excellent voice as the children’s bus driver—soon discover that music banishes the Globolinks. Emily, sung very well by Edith Mathis, is the only one of the children who has a musical instrument with her—a violin. She begins to play and fends off the aliens as she searches for help for the rest of the group.

In the second scene, music teacher Madame Euterpova, sung well but badly overacted by Arlene Saunders, complains to the school principal that none of the children have taken their instruments with them to practice on their holiday. Madame Euterpova, dressed in swirls of pink and accessorized by a tuning fork and an enormous and pointless false nose, regales the principal with her woes, swooping about his office. Once she leaves, the Globolinks attack the principal. He is tone deaf and cannot sing or play to them, and begins to morph into a Globolink himself. His staff discovers that he can no longer speak, but can only make the beeps and blurps of the Globolinks, sounding much like a forerunner to R2-D2. In the third scene, he is sent into the forest to rescue the children, the rationale being that he can communicate to some degree with both aliens and humans.

In the final scene, Emily’s violin is destroyed by the Globolinks, the principal still cannot sing, and all seems lost. Just as the Globolinks flood the set and their light show begins, Madame Euterpova and a marching band made up of the school’s staff arrive to save the day. The principal, now fully alien, is taken by the Globolinks as they depart in defeat.

The DVD contains a booklet with a plot summary, chapter titles, a brief biography of Menotti, and a note on the production and design of the opera.

Kendra Preston Leonard
Drexel Hill, PA


This is the second commercially available video of Britten’s Gloriana; the first is a 1984 performance by the English National Opera starring Sarah Walker as Queen Elizabeth (DVD; Arthaus Musik, 2006, [1984]; 102 097). The main difference between these two versions is that the former is specifically adapted for film and the latter is a staged version captured on film. Opera North performed and filmed this production for BBC Television in 1999, which was initially realized on stage. The award-winning director Phyllida Lloyd directed both the stage and film versions...