

Bartók's "pantomime in one act" *The Miraculous Mandarin* caused such an uproar at its première in Cologne in 1926 that it was banned immediately and not seen again in the composer's lifetime. It tells the story of three thugs who use a beautiful prostitute to ensnare a succession of men, whom they then brutally rob. Bartók's score reflects the menace and melodrama of the story; he himself described the music as "hellish".

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Playing Time
62:12

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Béla
BARTÓK
(1881-1945)

The Miraculous Mandarin (Complete Ballet)

**The Miraculous Mandarin, Sz73 (Op. 19):
Pantomime in One Act (1926) 32:52**

- 1 Opening – The girl and three tramps 3:18
- 2 First seduction game:
the shabby old rake 3:41
- 3 Second seduction game:
the young student 3:10
- 4 Third seduction game 1:39
- 5 The Mandarin enters and remains
immobile in the doorway 2:31
- 6 The girl begins a hesitant dance... 5:48
- 7 The Mandarin stumbles – the chase
becomes even more passionate 0:41
- 8 The three tramps leap out, seize the
Mandarin and tear him away from
the girl 2:52
- 9 Suddenly the Mandarin's head
appears between the pillows
and he looks longingly at the girl 3:20

10 The terrified tramps discuss how they
are to get rid of the Mandarin 1:56

- 11 The body of the Mandarin begins to
glow with a greenish blue light* 1:52
- 12 She resists no longer – they embrace 2:04

Dance Suite, Sz77 (1923) 17:33

- 13 I. Moderato 3:55
- 14 II. Allegro molto 2:21
- 15 III. Allegro vivace 3:10
- 16 IV. Molto tranquillo 2:52
- 17 V. Comodo - Finale 5:16

Hungarian Pictures, Sz97 (1931) 11:47

- 18 I. An evening in the village 3:04
- 19 II. Bear dance 1:47
- 20 III. Melody 2:08
- 21 IV. Slightly Tipsy 2:26
- 22 V. Swineherd's Dance 2:21

Bournemouth Symphony Chorus* and Orchestra • Marin Alsop

To hear Marin Alsop introduce Bartók's *The Miraculous Mandarin*, go to naxos.com/alsop/mandarin

Recorded on 19th and 20th July 2004, at The Concert Hall, Lighthouse, Poole, England.

Producer: Andrew Walton (K&A Productions Ltd.) • Sound Engineer: Mike Clements

Post-Production: Andrew Walton • Booklet Notes: Richard Whitehouse

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Cover image: *Backdrop for Scene II of The Miraculous Mandarin, production designed by Enrico Prampolini for La Scala, Milan, c.1930* (The Art Archive / Private Collection / Marc Charmet)