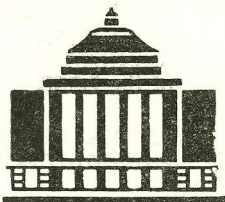




RAT · ESTONIA ·



## ANSELM'S TALE



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LEPO SUMERA

# **ANSELM'S TALE**

A ballet in 3 acts

Libretto by MAI MURDMAA,  
based on motifs of the fairy-tale "The Golden Pot" by E. T. A. HOFFMANN

The premiere took place on March 2, 1978

Choreographer and director:  
MAI MURDMAA, Merited Art Worker of the Estonian SSR

Conductor:  
VALLO JÄRVI, Merited Art Worker of the Estonian SSR

Designer:  
AIME UNT, Merited Artist of the Estonian SSR (as a guest)

Ballet masters:  
HELMU PUUR, People's Artist of the Estonian SSR,  
AIME LEIS, Merited Artist of the Estonian SSR  
and  
ANTON BOME

Concert master of the orchestra:  
MATI UFFERT

Manager of the performance:  
PEETER KARELL or JÜRI KRUUS

Characters:

- Anselm, a student — VYACHESLAV MAIMUSSOV, Merited Artist of the ESSR  
GENNADI GORBANYOV, People's Artist of the LSSR
- Paulmann, a higher official — ALEXANDER BASIKHIN  
ALEXANDER KIKINOV
- Veronica, his daughter — ELITA ERKINA, Merited Artist of the ESSR  
INGE ARRO
- Lindhorst, archivist and king of salamanders — JANIS GARANCIS, Merited Artist of the ESSR  
ALEXANDER KIKINOV
- Serpentina, his daughter — TAMARA SOONE, Merited Artist of the ESSR  
LARISSA TOLKACHOVA
- Market woman, governess Lise and witch — JUTA LEHISTE, Merited Artist of the ESSR  
TATYANA LAID, Merited Artist of the ESSR
- Heerbrand, an official, Veronica's admirer — MIKHAIL BOGATYRYOV  
MIKHAIL NECHAYEV
- Two golden snakes — KATRIN KIVIMÄGI  
SAIMA KRANIG  
ELENA MARTINSON  
LARISSA TOLKACHOVA  
TATYANA VORONINA

People in the crowd, burghers, hieroglyphs

LEPO SUMERA, born in 1950, studied composition at the Tallinn State Conservatoire under the guidance of Prof. Heino Eller and Heino Jürisalu. Of his major works, one might mention "In memoriam" for the symphony orchestra (dedicated to H. Eller, graduation work), the cantata "On Life and Death" (text by Ly Seppel), a brass quintet, "Music for the Chamber Orchestra" (dedicated to the chamber orchestra of the "Estonia" theatre). He has likewise composed music for quite a number of films, for which, in 1977, he got awards on two occasions: at the First Soviet Estonian Festival of Nature Films, (for music of the films "Man and Nature", "The Nesting Place", "In the Quiet of Bogs", "The Hunter"), and the yearly music prize of the Estonian SSR, for music of the animated cartoon "The Hunter" and the documentary "Firm in Their Own Truth".

Hoffmann's fairy-tale attracted me most of all by the relation between the world of poetry and reality. Hoffmann has fused both these worlds in such a way that the border-line between them is rather vague. It is so in real life, too, if we are able to perceive it, and I have tried to render this thought by my music.

LEPO SUMERA

I have always been irritated by a primitively material approach to life and to conventionality being considered superior to spiritual values. I am glad that in the "Golden Pot", a fairy-tale by Hoffmann, I have found a possibility of expressing this idea by means of my art.

MAI MURDMAA

The student Anselmus, the principal character of "The Golden Pot" by E. T. A. Hoffmann, has little experience in life, but his heart is pure and his searchings are sincere. He is faced with a choice between the career of a burgher and the world of fantasy and poetry. In the ballet "Anselm's Tale", the plot of Hoffmann's tale has been somewhat altered, but the characters have been left the same. The finding of one's place in life is an eternal problem, and here the contrary possibilities are dictated by timeless, symbolical characters. The force of burgherdom is represented by the witch who, when living with people, performs the role of a market woman or the governess Lise. The ideas of poetry are supported by the king of salamanders (according to mediaeval concepts, the salamander is an embodiment of the eternal element of burning—fire), who in his human shape is the archivist Lindhorst, and by his daughter Serpentina, the symbol of dreams, and ideals, and of perfect love.

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**Introduction.** The struggle for Anselm between the king of salamanders and the witch.

**Scene 1.** Amidst a noisy crowd and robust merry-making, Anselm feels a stranger. An unknown old woman—the witch—prophesies him imminent perdition.

**Scene 2.** It is evening. Thinking of his numerous failures in life, Anselm deploras his fate. Suddenly his attention is attracted by a strange, ringing sound. Out of the tree, under which Anselm is sitting, there appear three beautiful snakes, the daughters of the king of salamanders, being summoned by their father. Anselm at once accepts the vision as a reality. He is particularly attracted by one of the golden snakes—Serpentina.

The king of salamanders orders his daughters to return home, and they disappear in the tree which instantly loses its mysterious air.

**Scene 3.** A company of burghers taking a walk, among whom we also see Paulmann, Veronica, and Heerbrand, are amazed at the sight of Anselm embracing a tree and imploring the golden snakes to return. They think that the young man has gone mad. Noticing people surrounding him, Anselm senses the absurdity of the situation.

The king of salamanders appears in his prosaic shape, in the guise of archivist Lindhorst.

Scene 4. A party at Paulmann's. Anselm and Lindhorst are also among the guests. Anselm dances with Veronica. The play of light in the room suddenly reminds him of Serpentina—he senses that she is there. Forgetting Veronica and the company, Anselm begins to chase his dream, to the consternation of those assembled. Finally he comes to his senses and feels greatly embarrassed by having behaved in such a silly manner.

Lindhorst comforts Anselm and reveals to him his two forms of existence.

Scene 5. Lindhorst takes Anselm to a world full of colour and mysterious light. They come finally to a big library where Anselm is left alone. At first the old parchments seem dead and unundersandable. He tries to get at their mysterious essence, and suddenly the ancient hieroglyphs come alive. Anselm experiences an unprecedented feeling of spiritual joy.

## ACT II

Scene 1. At Paulmann's there is again a gathering of self-satisfied burghers. Enters Anselm, who displays now a particular self-assurance, which at once raises his value in the eyes of the "good society". Veronica, who formerly also felt attracted by the nice but awkward young man, begins to see in him her partner in the "good match" she has been dreaming about—Anselm might become a court councillor in the future!

When Veronica and the governess Lise are left alone, Lise tells the girl of her proficiency in witchcraft, and offers Veronica her help for winning Anselm.

Scene 2. Anselm derives a great satisfaction from working in Lindhorst's library. And yet, he begins to sense an indefinite longing which gradually gains in intensity. Enters Serpentina, and Anselm becomes aware of their belonging together.

Scene 3. The witch and Veronica practise witchcraft so as to cast a spell on Anselm and make him change his mind in favour of Veronica.

Scene 4. A punch party at Paulmann's, which turns to a grotesque drinking bout of the burghers, getting livelier and livelier, and finally verging on absurdity. Anselm forgets his ideal—the golden snake Serpentina—and succumbs to Veronica's charms.

## ACT III

Scene 1. Veronica's and Anselm's engagement party. The witch triumphs.

Scene 2. At Lindhorst's everything seems now offensively drab and common to Anselm; the books are lifeless, and the archivist himself is simply a wizened old man. The lost world of poetry seems likewise ridiculous to the young man who now feels that his right place is with the respectable burghers.

Scene 3. Anselm is among those "respectable people" once again, in a closed, restricted circle. Of the whole company, it is only he who realizes that they all are prisoners. On the background of general well-being his fits of despair get intenser and intenser.

The prosaic circle round Anselm closes. At the culmination point of his inner struggle there appear the king of salamanders and the witch who begin fighting for Anselm. The champion of the spirit emerges winner, and Anselm escapes from the oppressive circle.

Serpentina and Anselm find each other once again.

Scene 4. The burghers mourn for Anselm, now irretrievably lost for "good society". Veronica, however, feels that Heerbrand might be a good replacement for Anselm, and thus the funeral procession turns into an engagement parade. Watching it pass, Anselm smiles ironically. He senses that he is free, and that he belongs to the world of poetry.

Price 30 kop.