

Emilia as Eugenia Montez, a gypsy woman with whom he had an affair in Andalusia half a century before. Emilia tells him Eugenia is not dead, and in Spanish, calls him by a pet name and asks him for a kiss. All except Jaroslav leave. He demands an explanation of her strange interest in his family, and reveals that the mother of the Baron's child was recorded as "Elina Makropulos" - who might be the same as "Ellian MacGregor", whose love letters he has read. Only a descendant of "Ferdinand Makropoulos" can claim the estate. Emilia offers to buy a mysterious document found with the will, but Jaroslav refuses and leaves. Albert return and again pleads his love, but Emilia merely falls asleep, and Albert leaves. Janek returns, and Emilia asks him to get the document for her. Jaroslav overhears this, and orders Janek to leave, then agrees to provide the document himself if Emilia will spend the night with him.

Act III

Emilia's hotel room the next morning

Emilia and Jaroslav have spent the night together. Though Jaroslav was disappointed by Emilia's coldness, he gives her the envelope containing the document. They are informed that Janek has committed suicide due to his infatuation with Emilia. Jaroslav grieves, but Emilia is absolutely indifferent. Jaroslav hardly has time to express his anger at her reaction before Count Hauk-Šendorf enters, thinking that Jaroslav and Emilia are leaving for Spain. Albert, Kolenatý, and Kristina enter, with a doctor who takes Count Hauk-Šendorf away. Kolenatý has noticed that Emilia's handwriting matches that of "Ellian MacGregor", and suspects her of forgery. They begin to search her papers and belongings. Emilia draws a pistol, but Albert disarms her. Emilia says she will explain after she dresses. The searchers find many documents and keepsakes, all bearing names with the initials "E.M." Jaroslav says that the handwriting of "Elina Makropulos" (on Ferdinand's birth certificate) also matches. Emilia at last decides to tell the truth: she is Elina Makropulos, born in 1585. Emilia tells of the age-defying potion and how she has lived for three centuries. To conceal her longevity, she has assumed many identities: Eugenia Montez, Ekaterina Myshkin, Ellian McGregor, and others. She gave the formula to Baron Joseph, who placed it in the envelope for his son. But the potion is finally wearing off. Elina wanted the formula to gain another 300 years of life. As the potion wears off and the first signs of old age appear on her face, they come to believe her. Elina has realized that perpetual youth has led her to exhausted apathy, and resolves to allow death to come naturally to her. Aging rapidly before the eyes of the astonished onlookers, she offers them the precious formula, but only Kristina takes it, to burn it in a candle flame. Elina expires as she recites the first words of the Lord's Prayer in Greek.



ENGLISH SUMMARY

Leoš Janáček (1854–1928)

THE MAKROPULOS AFFAIR

*The Makropulos Affair is a three-act opera
by Czech composer Leoš Janáček.*

*The libretto, based on a play of the same name
by Karel Čapek, was written by the composer.*

MUSICAL PREPARATION
CONDUCTOR
SETS
MOTION CO-OPERATION
CHORUS MASTER

ROBERT JINDRA
ROBERT JINDRA
DAVID BAZIKA
BOHUSLAVA KRÁČMAROVÁ
JURIJ GALATENKO

Cast:

Emilia Marty
Albert Gregor
Dr. Kolenatý, *a lawyer*
Vítek, *Kolenatý's clerk*
Kristina, *his daughter*
Baron Jaroslav Prus
Janek, *his son*
Count Hauk-Šendorf
Stage Technician
Cleaning Woman
Maid

Eva Urbanová
Aleš Briscein
Peter Mikuláš
Jozef Kundlák
Agnieszka Bochenek-Osiecka
Ivan Kusnjer
Luciano Mastro
Václav Morys
Jaroslav Kosec
Erika Šporerová
Michaela Kapustová

**Chorus and Orchestra of the National Moravian-Silesian
Theatre – concert masters Vladimír Liberda and Petr
Kupka**

The opera is performed in Czech with English surtitles.

The Makropulos Affair was his penultimate opera and, like much of his later work, it was inspired by his infatuation with Kamila Stösslová, a married woman much younger than himself. The world premiere of the opera was given at the National Theatre in Brno on December 18, 1926, conducted by František Neumann. Janáček's operatic version was written between 1923 and 1925. He had seen the play early in its run in Prague on 12 December 1922, and immediately saw its potential. He entered into a correspondence with Čapek, who was accommodating towards the idea, although legal problems in securing the rights to the play delayed work. When these problems were cleared on 10 September 1923, Janáček began work on the opera straight away. He wrote the libretto himself, and by December 1924 had completed the first draft of the work. He spent another year refining the score, before completing it on 3 December 1925.

Musically, much of the piece has little in the way of thematic development, instead presenting the listener with a mass of different motifs and ideas. Janáček's writings indicate that this was a deliberate ploy to give musical embodiment to the disruptive, unsettling main character Emilia Marty / Elina Makropulos. Only at the end of the final act, when Makropulos' vulnerability is revealed, does the music tap into and develop the rich lyrical vein that has driven the music throughout. It is often argued that Emilia Marty, like the other female heroes in Janáček's later operas, stands for one of the aspects of Kamila Stösslová, the woman with whom he was in love for the last decade of his life. Marty, with a clever and manipulative exterior hiding a core of vulnerability, is a 'snapshot' of Stösslová, like the coquettish and shy Cunning Little Vixen and the tragic Káťa Kabanová.

Two years after its premiere, the opera was given in Prague, and also in Germany in 1929, but it did not become really popular until a production by the Sadler's Wells company in London in 1964. While performed with some regularity, it has not become part of the core opera repertory in the same way as have *Jenůfa*, *Káťa Kabanová* or *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

During the end of the 16th century Emperor Rudolf II gave his alchemist Hieronymus Makropulos the task of preparing a potion that would extend his life and ordered him to test it on his daughter Elina. She fell into a coma and Hieronymus was sent to prison. But after a week Elina woke up and fled with the formula. She embarked on an itinerant life, becoming one of the best singers of all time.

Act I

Kolenatý's law office, Prague, 1922

Vítek, Kolenatý's clerk, notes that the probate case of Gregor versus Prus has been going on for almost a century. Kolenatý represents the middle-class Gregors against the wealthy and aristocratic Prus family. Albert Gregor asks about the case. Vítek tells him Kolenatý has taken it to the Supreme Court, but has not returned. Vítek's daughter Kristina, enters. She is a young singer, and praises Emilia Marty, the famous singer she has been rehearsing with. Kolenatý returns, accompanied (surprisingly) by Emilia Marty, and reviews the case. Baron Joseph Ferdinand Prus died in 1827, leaving no will or legitimate children. His cousin claimed the estate, but so did Albert's ancestor, Ferdinand Gregor, who asserted that the Baron had promised the estate to him. Here Emilia interrupts. Speaking with unusual familiarity of these long-ago events, she states that Ferdinand Gregor was the illegitimate son of Baron Joseph and opera singer Ellian MacGregor. Kolenatý says the case will finally be decided in favor of the Prus family, because there is no will. Emilia asks what would be required for Albert Gregor to win, and Kolenatý says the missing will. Emilia describes an old cupboard in the Prus mansion where important papers were kept (such as the will). Kolenatý thinks Emilia is making up stories, but Albert insists he investigate at once. He leaves, and Albert tells Emilia that if he does not get the estate, he will be penniless and shoot himself. He is already infatuated with Emilia, and tries to make love to her. But Emilia, bored and indifferent, coldly refuses him. However, she asks his help in retrieving a document that will be found with the will. Kolenatý returns with Jaroslav Prus. They found the will where Emilia said it would be, and Jaroslav congratulates Albert on his victory - if he can prove that Ferdinand Gregor was the Baron's illegitimate son Ferdinand. Emilia says she can prove that.

Act II

The empty stage of the opera house

A stagehand and a cleaning woman discuss Emilia's extraordinary star performance the night before. Jaroslav enters, seeking Emilia, accompanied by his young son Janek, and Kristina. Emilia enters, but spurns them all, including Janek, who falls under her spell, and Albert, who brings her expensive flowers. Old (and by now senile) Count Hauk-Šendorf enters, and thinks he recognizes