

MAVRA

Igor Feodorovich Stravinsky

Opera buffa in 1 act

Libretto by Boris Kochno, after Pushkin's rhymed story *The Little House in Kolomna*

A Russian village, circa 1840.

In a room of her mother's house, Parasha is embroidering. She is in love with the boy next-door, the young hussar Vassili. "Oh, my dearest," she sings, full of desire. Her lover appears at the window: "Zing-a-ling!" They strike up a duet. The hussar withdraws, and Parasha's mother enters. She complains how difficult it is to find a capable maid-servant, now that her former cook, the great Thecla, has passed away. She orders her daughter to go and find a new servant for her. "Good morning": the nosy neighbour's wife turns up. The two women discuss their domestic problems, and the high cost of clothes nowadays. Parasha now arrives triumphantly, accompanied by a young lady possessing excellent skills, she says. Her name is Mavra, and she was formerly employed by old Anna, their neighbour. `Mavra' is actually the hussar in disguise, dressed up as a kitchen maid, but the mother and the neighbour's wife do not recognize `her'. In a quartet, both women point out to Mavra that she will have to do her utmost to equal the late Thecla. The neighbour's wife goes home, and the mother leaves the room. In a duet, the lovers give expression to their joy at having successfully smuggled Vassili into Parasha's house. Parasha and her mother then go for a walk. Vassili, alone, sings of his love for Parasha and then takes the opportunity to shave. He is caught by the returning ladies during this little male business. The mother faints, the neighbour's wife rushes forward, and Vassili jumps out of the window. Parasha stays behind, plaintively crying for her hussar.