

characters

- Mrs. **POPOV** (Soprano) Widow and Landowner. Small, with dimpled cheeks.
- Mr. **GRIGORY S. SMIRNOV** (Baritone) Gentleman Farmer.
Middle-aged, and with a violent temper.
- LUKA** (Tenor) Mrs. Popov's Footman. A senile old man

instrumentation

(9 Performers)

- 1 Flute (doubling piccolo)
- 1 Clarinet
- 1 Bassoon
- Percussion for one player (including xylophone, snare drum, tenor drum,
cymbals, blocks, triangle, gong)
- 1 Vibraphone
- 1 Piano
- 1 Violin
- 1 Viola
- 1 Double-Bass

There is one scene, the drawing room of a Russian country house during the middle of the last century.

the story

A pretty, young widow remains fanatically faithful to the memory of a husband who has been openly unfaithful in his lifetime. "THE BRUTE", Smirnov, intrudes upon the widow's quiet life to demand payment of a bill for a huge quantity of oats purchased by the late master for a pampered horse named "Toby". Their conversation develops into such an exchange of insults that "THE BRUTE" challenges the widow to a duel! Not only does she accept the challenge, but swiftly unpacks her late husband's pistols, and demands the brute teach her how to use them quickly so that she can promptly shoot him. He falls in love at once. A servant, Luka, returns with help to stop the duel only to find his mistress and the former brute passionately embracing. "Toby" goes oatless.

DURATION: ca. 23 minutes