

# SYNOPSIS



## Koukourgi

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A recording from Stadttheater Klagenfurt, Klagenfurt 2010

The debut performance of Koukourgi fell victim to the revolutionary reign of terror in Paris in 1792/93. Cherubini was forced to break off from composing the piece on the eve of the so-called September massacres when he was only halfway through the finale. The incomplete score was long believed to have been lost and was only rediscovered a few years ago in Krakow.

Heiko Cullmann, the musicologist and chief dramaturge at the Stadttheater Klagenfurt, has succeeded in making the manuscript accessible to the public in a new version for the stage. If we think of his tragic opera, Medea, we think of Cherubini as an artist who excels at portraying wounded souls. With Koukourgi, however, he created music full of wit and spirit. During a period that offered little by way of enjoyment, he produced a feather-light score of almost unlimited richness of form. The libretto humorously blends irony, the magical and the historical, private yearnings and political utopias. The plot takes place in China in days of old. When Fohi the nobleman learns of the love affair between his adopted son, Amazan, and his natural daughter, Zulma, he banishes him. Fohi's castle is then seized by enemy tartar soldiers, although Zulma succeeds in fleeing to the camp of the timid Commander Koukourgi. She asks him - of all people - to rescue her father. Koukourgi places Amazan at the head of his troops, and thanks to Amazan's bravery, the battle is won and Fohi is freed. But it is not Amazan who is offered Zulma's hand in marriage; instead it is the pathetic and cowardly Koukourgi, who dozed through every battle. In despair, Amazan launches himself into a new fight against the Tartars ...

On the occasion of the 250th anniversary of Luigi Cherubini's birth, his incomplete work, «Koukourgi», had its world premiere at Stadttheater Klagenfurt on 16 September 2010.

**Year:** 2010

**Run-Time:** 1 x 120 min.

**Directed by** Josef E. Köpplinger, directed for television by Felix Breisach

**ORF**

**Languages:** French (ORIGINAL) , German (SUB TITLE)

**Format:** 16:9 , 16:9

**HD**

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