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MUSSORGSKY  
PICTURES  
AT AN EXHIBITION  
PIANO CONCERTO VERSION  
PICTURES FROM THE CRIMEA

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

Geoffrey Simon

# PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

## MODEST MUSSORGSKY (1839-1881)

### Pictures at an Exhibition

**Piano Concerto Version** arr. Lawrence Leonard

- |    |   |        |
|----|---|--------|
| 1  | <b>Promenade I</b>                        | [1.43] |
| 2  | I. Gnomus                                 | [2.45] |
| 3  | <b>Promenade II</b>                       | [0.56] |
| 4  | II. The Old Castle                        | [4.16] |
| 5  | <b>Promenade III</b>                      | [0.31] |
| 6  | III. Tuileries                            | [1.04] |
| 7  | IV. Bydlo                                 | [2.55] |
| 8  | <b>Promenade IV</b>                       | [0.54] |
| 9  | V. Ballet of the Chickens in their Shells | [1.11] |
| 10 | VI. Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle        | [2.30] |
| 11 | <b>Promenade V</b>                        | [1.33] |
| 12 | VII. Limoges-The Market Place             | [1.28] |
| 13 | VIII. Catacombs-Sepulchrum Romanum        | [1.47] |
| 14 | <b>Cum Mortuis in Lingua Mortua</b>       | [1.53] |
| 15 | IX. The Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba Yaga)    | [3.24] |
| 16 | X. The Great Gate of Kiev                 | [4.54] |

### Two Interludes from Khovantchina

- |    |   |        |
|----|---|--------|
| 17 | I. Dawn on the Moscow River - Introduction to Act I | [4.55] |
|    | (orchestrated by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov)           |        |

- |    |  |        |
|----|--|--------|
| 18 | II. Galitsin's Journey - Entr'acte to Act IV | [4.48] |
|    | (orchestrated by Leopold Stokowski)          |        |

- |    |                                    |        |
|----|------------------------------------|--------|
| 19 | <b>Gopak from Sorochinsky Fair</b> | [1.26] |
|    | (orchestrated by Anatol Liadov)    |        |

### Pictures from the Crimea

(orchestrated by Walter Goehr)

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|----|-------------|--------|
| 20 | I. Hoursoff | [4.04] |
|----|-------------|--------|

- |    |                     |        |
|----|---------------------|--------|
| 21 | II. Rêverie (Douma) | [4.20] |
|----|---------------------|--------|

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|----|----------------|--------|
| 22 | III. Capriccio | [5.02] |
|----|----------------|--------|

- |    |                                   |        |
|----|-----------------------------------|--------|
| 23 | <b>Scherzo in B flat</b>          | [3.26] |
|    | (orchestrated by Rimsky-Korsakov) |        |

- |    |   |        |
|----|---|--------|
| 24 | <b>A Tear-Drop</b> (orchestrated by Hans Kindler) | [4.09] |
|----|---|--------|

- |    |                                   |        |
|----|-----------------------------------|--------|
| 25 | <b>Night on Bald Mountain</b>     | [1.36] |
|    | (orchestrated by Rimsky-Korsakov) |        |

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA  
GEOFFREY SIMON CONDUCTOR

Mussorgsky composed the piano suite *Pictures at an Exhibition* as a tribute to his artist friend Victor Hartmann, who died suddenly in 1873. A memorial exhibition, featuring Hartmann's sketches and paintings, was organized the following year and, fittingly, Mussorgsky's personal homage became the musical equivalent of a tour around the gallery. Pianistic depictions of assorted pictures are interspersed here and there by a recurring *Promenade* theme which represents the visitor wandering from one picture to another.

The evocative titles of the various pieces, together with the instinctive feeling among many musicians that here was an orchestral piece struggling to break out of its two-stave format, occasioned many orchestrations: the first made in 1891 by Mikhail Tushmalov, a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov, and featuring seven of the "Pictures".

Sir Henry Wood made a highly picturesque arrangement in 1915, setting all the "Pictures" but only the first of the "Promenades". The first absolutely complete orchestration came from Leo Funtek, a Slovenian musician working in Finland, where he conducted the Helsinki Philharmonic in the première of his version in 1922. That same year, a version for "Salon Orchestra" appeared in Berlin, transcribed by Giuseppe Becce, a noted composer and arranger of music for silent movies.

Simultaneously, what was to become the most celebrated orchestration of all was in progress—that by Maurice Ravel. It was commissioned by the Russian conductor Serge Koussevitzky, who knew of Ravel's admiration for Mussorgsky. The first performance of the French composer's version of *Pictures at an Exhibition* took place in Paris on May 3, 1923, and it was received with high acclaim.

At that time, the publishing firm of Bessel were still jealously guarding their rights in Mussorgsky's works, and they reluctantly gave Koussevitzky permission to perform Ravel's independently-created orchestral version, on the condition that he would not allow anyone else to conduct it. Their conviction was that an arrangement of one of their piano publications would bring them no commercial advantage.

That Bessel were mistaken became evident as the Ravel orchestration proved ever more successful. Since Koussevitzky was to retain sole proprietary conducting rights in his commission for a period of five years, Bessel hastened to bring out a rival orchestration of their own. This they did by approaching a precocious twenty-one-year-old Russian-born pianist named Leonidas Leonardi who was at that time studying orchestration with Ravel himself. Doubtless the publishers were hoping for an even greater triumph from the pupil than had been achieved by the master, but in this they were

to be disappointed. Although Leonardi dedicated his version to Stravinsky and conducted the Lamoureux Orchestra in its Paris première in June 1924, with the US première being given under Walter Damrosch the following December, it has remained in virtual obscurity ever since. (Undaunted by the failure of this particular project, however, Leonardi immediately took up residence in the United States and pursued a varied musical career in theatre, films, radio and the concert hall which lasted until his death in New York in March, 1967.)

Meanwhile, Koussevitzky had taken over the Boston Symphony Orchestra and given the American première of the Ravel transcription on November 7, 1924. Five years later, he published the score in his own *Editions Russe de Musique* and in 1930 made the first recording of Ravel's version, on 78rpm discs. The Philadelphia Orchestra, not wanting to be outdone by the opposition in New York and Boston, engaged one of their own orchestra members, Lucien Caillet, to make an arrangement which their new conductor, Eugene Ormandy, could call his own, and he too recorded it on 78s.

Leopold Stokowski, Ormandy's predecessor in Philadelphia and a great rival of Koussevitzky's, now entered the fray, pronouncing the Ravel "too French". In 1939, both in concert and on record, he introduced his own transcription which, with a lavishly-coloured musical canvas, aimed at a more "Slavic" style of orchestration.

Toscanini, not to be outdone by Koussevitzky and Stokowski, took up the Ravel version. He put aside (yet again!) his famous "do as written" credo, and sought to make it even more spectacular by re-orchestrating parts of it himself. Meanwhile, back in the USSR, Nikolai Golovanov also took on the Ravel score. He followed Sir Henry Wood's example of dropping all but the first of the "Promenades" and did a drastic re-touching job of his own on Ravel's orchestration.

In 1942, Walter Goehr (whose *Pictures from the Crimea* was still to come) was commissioned to prepare an arrangement more accessible to smaller forces unable to run to the large orchestra required by Ravel. Rather curiously, he dropped the Gnomus altogether and made Limoges the first of the "Pictures". Of the many other versions that have followed, too numerous to mention here, the most notable in recent years have been those by Sergei Gortchakov, written in the 1950s, and the 1982 orchestration by Vladimir Ashkenazy.

This "world première recording" is a previously unperformed arrangement by the British composer and conductor Lawrence Leonard. His version of *Pictures at an Exhibition* dates from 1977 and is unique amongst all the other orchestrations in that, by retaining the piano as an integral part of the arrangement, Leonard has produced, in effect, a Mussorgsky piano concerto. Indeed, this setting evidences a clear affinity with

the “sound-world” of other celebrated Russian piano concertos, most notably those by Tchaikovsky.

The opening *Promenade* serves as a purely orchestral introduction, a typical start to any piano concerto, though an intriguing pre-echo of the solo instrument is present at the very beginning, where horns, trumpets and tubular bells cleverly suggest the sound of a piano with its sustaining pedal held down. (This “Promenade” has been utilized as the introduction to a “composite” version, taken from nine different orchestrations, devised in recent years by the American conductor Leonard Slatkin.)

The soloist enters with *Gnomus*, Mussorgsky’s depiction of Hartmann’s bizarre sketch showing a toy nutcracker in the shape of “a little gnome walking awkwardly on deformed legs”. *Promenade II* is for piano solo, but muted strings then steal in to introduce *The Old Castle*. Here the soloist plays the melody in both hands—an oddly haunting effect—and to add to the “outdoor” atmosphere, in which a troubadour is singing in front of a mediaeval castle in Italy, an eerie breeze is distinctly heard, wafting through the battlements.

*Promenade III* alternates between piano, brass and strings, whilst the *Tuileries* in Paris bring the woodwinds into play. *Bydlo*, that huge Polish ox-wagon, lumbers

past to a heavy, pounding piano with low strings and brass before finally disappearing into the distance.

The soloist is given a brief rest during the elegiac *Promenade IV* but re-enters for the witty and humorous *Ballet of the Chickens*. The next picture, showing *Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle*, has the orchestra for the pompous Goldenberg and the piano for the whining Schmuyle.

Soloist and orchestra reinforce each other both in *Promenade V* (the one omitted in the Ravel orchestration) and in *The Market Place at Limoges*—a picture depicting a bunch of argumentative Frenchwomen. The interior of the Paris *Catacombs*, which shows three candle-lit figures, one of them Hartmann himself, is suitably sombre, as is *Cum Mortuis in Lingua Mortua*—Latin for “With the Dead in a Dead Language”—in which the “Promenade” theme is restated in melancholy mood.

*The Hut on Fowl’s Legs* now makes a shattering entrance. The tiny Russian witch *Baba Yaga*, who eats human bones, is represented in Hartmann’s drawing by a clock in the Russian style of the fourteenth century, carved in bronze and enamel with elaborate ornamentation. Mussorgsky’s music depicts *Baba Yaga*’s wild ride through the air in her mortar, and Lawrence Leonard makes the soloist’s part more powerful by having the orchestra take over the accompanying harmonies.

Even more colour is added by the whistling wind, heard as the little witch rushes through the sky!

And so to *The Great Gate of Kiev*, where the piano is again predominant, thundering out those massive chords in the grand Rachmaninov manner. It brings to a close this novel “concerto concept”, so expertly applied to one of the most popular works in the Russian repertoire.

## Two Interludes from Khovantchina

- 17 I. Dawn on the Moscow River - Introduction to Act I (orchestrated by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov)
- 18 II. Galitsin's Journey - Entr'acte to Act IV (orchestrated by Leopold Stokowski)

When Mussorgsky died in 1881, he left behind the unfinished vocal score of a five-act opera, *Khovantchina*. As with so many of his manuscripts, it had to be edited by Rimsky-Korsakov and was first performed in St Petersburg in 1886. The opera derives from Russian historical sources and is concerned with the intense power struggle and political unrest which characterized the “regency” period in seventeenth century Russia, preceding Peter the Great's accession to the Tsarist throne. The Introduction to Act I is a superbly atmospheric tone-painting of daybreak over Moscow. Birdcalls are heard in the woodwinds and, as the sun

rises, the bells of the Kremlin call the believers to Mass. The Entr'acte to Act IV illustrates the journey into exile of Prince Galitsin, one of the once-powerful protagonists in the story. Leopold Stokowski's “Symphonic Transcription” of this music makes it more dramatic and sonorous than Rimsky-Korsakov's, and in his published score he wrote: “Of all the inspired music of Mussorgsky, this is one of the most eloquent... We hear the harsh tolling of bells, the gradual unfolding of a dark and tragic melody, with under-currents of deep agitated tones, all painted with sombre timbres and poignant harmonies.”

- 19 Gopak from Sorochinsky Fair (orchestrated by Anatol Liadov)

*Sorochinsky Fair*, a satirical opera based on a tale by Gogol of peasant life and the supernatural, was begun in 1874 but, predictably, left unfinished. In due course performing editions were prepared by Cui, Sakhnovsky, Tcherepnin and Shebalin. The lively *Gopak* is heard here in the orchestration by Liadov, a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov and a composer himself of many delightful orchestral miniatures.

## Pictures from the Crimea

(orchestrated by Walter Goehr)

- 20 I. Hoursouff
- 21 II. Rêverie (Douma)
- 22 III. Capriccio

Having heard the most famous set of “Pictures” ever composed (albeit in an unfamiliar guise) we turn to another suite of previously unrecorded Mussorgsky “Pictures”—three of his lesser-known piano pieces given superb orchestral dress by Walter Goehr. Born in Berlin in 1903, Goehr was a precocious conductor for the theatre and radio while still in his teens. In 1933 he emigrated to England, where he became a prolific recording conductor. His son, the composer Alexander Goehr, recalls that his father made many orchestral arrangements in the 1930s and 40s: “The Mussorgsky was just one item of a huge repertoire of similar arrangements which used to live in our garage at home when I was a child, from Duke Ellington to Lehár—upwards and downwards!”

For this 1946 suite (which has its parallels with Respighi’s *Three Botticelli Pictures*, also recorded by Geoffrey Simon and the Philharmonia Orchestra SIGCD2161), Walter Goehr selected two piano pieces inspired by a visit Mussorgsky made to the Crimea region of Southern Russia in 1879. Originally, he

intended to compose three “impressions” of his journey there, but in the event the third piece was never written down. The two “reminiscences” of Crimean localities were eventually published as *En Crimée Gourzouf—Notes de Voyage* (also known as *Impressions of a Voyage in the Crimea*) and *En Crimée Baidary—Capriccio* (otherwise *Near the Southern Shore of the Crimea*). To separate these, Goehr chose a reflective piece dating from 1865 entitled *Rêverie* (or *Douma*), as a contrasting middle movement.

- 23 **Scherzo in B flat**  
(orchestrated by Rimsky-Korsakov)

In 1858, Mussorgsky wrote two scherzos for piano—one in C sharp minor, the other in B flat major. The latter piece is presented here in an edition prepared for publication after the composer’s death by Rimsky-Korsakov. Mussorgsky had, in fact, attempted an orchestration of his own with Balakirev’s help, so it is likely that Rimsky-Korsakov’s contributions are quite minimal. In any event, this is a delightful miniature in which lively, dance-like outer sections frame a quiet and melodious central theme.

- 24 **A Tear-Drop** (orchestrated by Hans Kindler)

*Une Larme (A Tear-Drop)*, written in 1880, was one of the last piano pieces Mussorgsky wrote and is a

kind of lament which might have come from the pen of Tchaikovsky. We hear it in a charming orchestration by Hans Kindler, who recorded it in 1941 on a 78rpm disc with the title *Song of Russia* and published it a few years later as *Chanson Russe*. Kindler was born in 1892 and began his musical career in his native Holland before emigrating to America, where he became first cellist of the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski from 1914-21. Ten years later he founded the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington D.C. and was its conductor until November 1948, a few months before his death at the age of 57.

#### 25 **Night on Bald Mountain**

(orchestrated by Rimsky-Korsakov)

We conclude this selection of rare Mussorgsky with one of his most familiar works. In the composer's hands, *Night on Bald Mountain* went through several transformations, beginning life in 1867 as an orchestral fantasy depicting the orgiastic revels of Satan and the Spirits of Darkness on the Bald Mountain, near Kiev.

Although the composer's own original version has in recent years been published and performed, Rimsky-Korsakov's expert, highly colourful reworking of Mussorgsky's rough-hewn score remains deservedly popular. This work was given added stimulus by its inclusion in Walt Disney's classic animation feature

*Fantasia*, where it was vividly realised in visual terms that closely mirrored the musical narrative.

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## GEOFFREY SIMON

Australian conductor Geoffrey Simon is resident in London and has appeared there with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players and English Chamber Orchestra.

Internationally, he has appeared with the Adelaide, Atlanta, Bournemouth, Canberra, City of Birmingham, Fort Worth, Melbourne, Milwaukee, Queensland, Sapporo, Shanghai, St Louis, Sydney, Tasmanian, Vermont and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, the Israel, Moscow, Munich and New Japan Philharmonic Orchestras, the American Symphony, the Residentie Orchestra of The Hague, the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony and the Australian Opera.

His music directorships have included the Albany Symphony Orchestra (New York), the Australian Sinfonia (London), the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra (Indiana), the Orquestra Simfònica de Balears "Ciutat





de Palma” (Majorca) and the Sacramento Symphony (California). With the Palma Orchestra he conducted Paul Patterson’s *Te Deum* for the King and Queen of Spain, and with the Sacramento Symphony he created the *World View* series of concerts, attracting audiences from twenty non-European cultures.

Geoffrey Simon is Music Director Emeritus of the Northwest Mahler Orchestra in Seattle, with which he has conducted the Mahler symphonic cycle and Messiaen’s *Turangalila Symphony*. He is Consultant for Classical Special Projects for Arts Global (a foundation for emerging artists, London, Montreux and New York) and has served as a jury member for Young Concert Artists, PianoTexas, Australian Cello Awards and Royal Over-Seas League.

Geoffrey Simon was a student of Herbert von Karajan, Rudolf Kempe, Hans Swarowsky and Igor Markevich, and a major prize-winner at the first John Player International Conductors’ Award. He has made forty six recordings for a number of labels, combining discoveries with familiar works by Tchaikovsky, Respighi, Borodin, Mussorgsky, Smetana, Bloch, Grainger, Debussy, Ravel, Saint-Saëns and Les Six. Amongst the contemporary composers he has recorded are Barry Conyngham, John Downey, Paul Patterson and Zhou Long.

For Cala Signum, Geoffrey Simon has brought together large ensembles of single instruments—violins, violas,

cellos, double basses, horns, trumpets, trombones and harps—drawn from London’s leading solo, orchestral and chamber musicians. Known as *The London Sound Series*, the recordings have attracted interest amongst instrumentalists worldwide. Geoffrey Simon’s virtuoso 20-cello ensemble, The London Cello Orchestra, has performed for H.M. The Queen and H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, and appeared in New York, Switzerland and South Korea.

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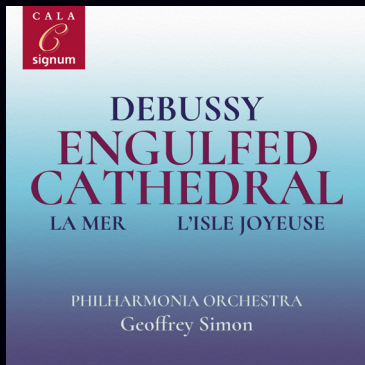
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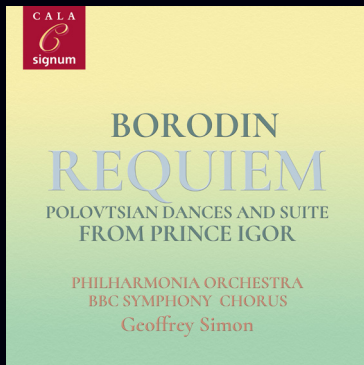
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	<b>Total timings:</b>	[67.08]

\* *World Premiere Recording*

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA  
GEOFFREY SIMON CONDUCTOR

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