

intangible classics

From Russia

music for clarinet and orchestra

Music by Tchaikovsky,
Mussorgsky | Rimsky-Korsakov
and traditional themes

Ian Scott *clarinet*
Royal Ballet Sinfonia
Robin White *conductor*



divine art

From Russia

music for clarinet and orchestra arranged by Robin White

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881) arr. R. White

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Sorochinsky Fair - Introduction | 4:29 |
| 2 | Sorochinsky Fair - Gopak | 1:41 |

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) arr. R. White

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------------|------|
| 3 | Clarinet Concerto (Konzertstück in E flat) | 8:04 |
|---|--------------------------------------------|------|

Robin White (b.1945)

- | | | |
|---|---------------|---------|
| | Russian Suite | [18:26] |
| 4 | I | 4:04 |
| 5 | II | 3:51 |
| 6 | III | 3:20 |
| 7 | IV | 4:14 |
| 8 | V | 2:40 |

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) arr. R. White

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 9 | String Quartet no. 1 in D major, Op. 11 - II. Andante cantabile | 7:04 |
| 10 | Humoresque, Op. 10 No. 2 | 3:09 |
| 11 | Six Romances, Op. 6 - No. 6 "None but the Lonely Heart" | 2:46 |
| 12 | Album for the Young, Op. 39 - No. 8 (9) Valse in E flat major | 1:44 |

and a visitor from Italy:

Vittorio Monti (1868-1922) arr. R. White

- | | | |
|----|---------|------|
| 13 | Czardas | 4:41 |
|----|---------|------|

Total duration 52:56

**Ian Scott (clarinet); Royal Ballet Sinfonia
conducted by Robin White**

THE MUSIC

Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky (1839 - 1881)

One of the group of Russian nationalist composers known as “The Five” or “The Mighty Handful”, which included Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin, Mussorgsky is chiefly remembered for his opera *Boris Goudonov*, his orchestral tone-poem *Night on a Bare Mountain* and his piano suite (orchestrated by Ravel) *Pictures at an Exhibition*. From a life shortened by alcoholism, he left unfinished a comic opera *Fair at Sorochinski*. The final, spirited *Gopak* (Russian dance) is entirely his own work, but the ‘Introduction’ (clearly not an overture: an entr’acte, presumably?) was orchestrated after his death by Lyadov. As an atmospheric piece, surely it bears comparison with Grieg’s ‘Morning’ from *Peer Gynt*, or even Beethoven’s *Pastoral*?

Nikolai Andreyevich Rimsky-Korsakov (1844 - 1908)

With orchestral works too numerous and well-known to warrant listing here, Rimsky-Korsakov was above all a master of orchestration, completing and/or revising many of his contemporaries’ works. He began his career as a naval officer, then became a civilian inspector of naval bands: this explains the scoring of his *Clarinet Concerto* with military-band accompaniment. It may well have served as a test piece for what had become the principal melody-instrument in bands, with a full range of colours and technical effects in this one-movement work, originally titled *Konzertstück in E flat*.

Robin White (b.1945)

The five movements of the *Russian Suite* (1987, revised 2019) are arrangements of traditional themes, folk-songs and dances, as performed by various Russian-style folk groups from the writer’s experience as a freelance bass-player. They span many moods, with the songs (movements 2, 3 & 4) indicating deep sadness and longing as well as joy. The first movement is built on a fragment of melody (‘Little Apple’) also used by Glière in his ballet *The Red Poppy* (Russian Sailors’ Dance), while the Finale, familiar to many, is a lively *Gopak* similar to Mussorgsky’s (above).

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 - 1893)

Unlike the Russian nationalist composers referred to above, Tchaikovsky's music is mainstream European, universal, above all intensely melodic. For many people its appreciation begins with a childhood visit to the ballet, progressing via the *First Piano Concerto* and *Violin Concerto* to the symphonies, and possibly the operas. His string quartets are less well-known, but the haunting *Andante Cantabile* from the D major Quartet No. 1 has always had a direct appeal, and is featured as a solo item by many instrumentalists.

From his wealth of piano music, two pieces stand out as most suitable for orchestral treatment: The *Waltz in E flat* from his *Album for the Young*, simpler in structure but otherwise in the style of the great waltzes from his ballet scores, and *Humoresque* (or *Humoreske*), a Bohemian-style polka which incorporates as its central section one of his French songs, *La Fille aux Oranges*.

Finally, his soulful ballad *None but the Lonely Heart*, sung by everyone from Boris Christoff to Frank Sinatra, also features in the repertoire of a variety of instruments, and in many different arrangements.

Vittorio Monti (1868 - 1922)

“What's this? An Italian composer in a Russian album?” Yes, unashamedly so!

Although regarded by many as a one-work composer, Monti wrote ballets and operettas while conductor of the Lamoureux Orchestra in Paris around 1900: also other solo pieces for the violin and mandolin. But it has to be admitted that it is for the *Czardas* that he will be remembered: not strictly Russian, but definitely in the Slav idiom, and featured as a solo item by just about every instrument.

THE ORCHESTRA



Due to the Covid-19 pandemic regulations on gatherings in the UK during 2020 and 2021, the orchestra personnel had to be placed further apart than usual, by 'social distancing' rules. This required additional microphone placements.

**IAN
SCOTT**



**ROBIN
WHITE**

THE MUSICIANS

ROBIN WHITE (CONDUCTOR/ARRANGER)

Robin trained at Imperial College and the Royal College of Music in London, studying conducting with Vernon Handley and orchestration with Bryan Kelly.

In a varied music career, Robin has conducted many orchestras and ensembles, particularly in open-air, pop-classics concerts at National Trust properties and similar venues across the south of England and the midlands.

His recording for Chandos in 1992 of Edwardian light music with his own Southern Festival Orchestra was played extensively on Classic FM. This led to an invitation from Silva Classics to record Noel Coward's original ballet scores with the City of Prague Philharmonic. Subsequent recordings have included 'Music for a Royal Wedding' and 'The Perfect Fool' for Classic Fox Records, and 'Nunc Dimittis' (Russian sacred choral music) for Claudio Records.

He has worked extensively with choirs, and appeared with his own Alban Voices in a pivotal episode of the British TV soap opera EastEnders in December 2002.

As an arranger, his work has been broadcast by BBC orchestras on Radio 2 light-music programmes, and featured by the Australian Pops Orchestra in a live concert in Melbourne.

IAN SCOTT (CLARINET)

Ian is the principal clarinet of the Royal Ballet Sinfonia, having previously held the same post with the Gulbenkian Orchestra in Lisbon.

Born in Perth, Scotland, he studied initially with Charles Maynes, then with Henry Morrison at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, subsequently journeying to the University of Arizona to study with leading British clarinettist John Denman.

He has been a guest principal with major London orchestras, and appeared as soloist with I Solisti Veneti and the Orchestra da Camera in Padova, as well as the Gulbenkian Orchestra on tour in the Far East.

He has previously recorded British clarinet concertos for ASV White Line and Dutton Epoch, the latter including world-premiere recordings of Leighton Lucas and Humphrey Procter-Gregg concertos. This recording features premieres of the Rimsky-Korsakov Concerto (orchestral version) as well as Robin White's Russian Suite

ROYAL BALLET SINFONIA

The Sinfonia is Britain's busiest ballet orchestra, playing for Birmingham Royal Ballet in the UK and abroad.

It also accompanies the Royal Ballet, and other leading companies such as the Kirov, New York City Ballet, and the Australian Ballet. Opera performances have included the Royal Opera's acclaimed production of Puccini's *Turandot* at Wembley Arena.

Recorded at the Henry Wood Hall, London.
Tracks 1, 2, 10-12 in March 2021. Engineer: Tony Faulkner
all other tracks in September 2020. Engineer: Paul Crichton
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Producers (2020): Rob Miles, (2021): Johnny Mindlin
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Ian Scott at the recording session



Harpist Lucy Haslar relaxes between takes, during September recording sessions



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