



RUSSIAN TALES

Myaskovsky Cello Sonatas

Glazunov Two Pieces, Chant du Ménestrel

ANDREAS BRANTELID
BENGT FORSBERG

Russian Tales

Nikolay Yakolevich Myaskovsky (1881-1950)

Sonata No. 1, Op. 12 for cello and piano (1911)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|-------|
| 1 | I. Adagio - Andante | 7:05 |
| 2 | II. Allegro passionato | 11:54 |

Sonata No. 2, Op. 81 for cello and piano (1948)

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|------|
| 3 | I. Allegro moderato | 9:11 |
| 4 | II. Andante cantabile | 6:04 |
| 5 | III. Allegro con spirito | 6:18 |

Alexander Konstantinovich Glazunov (1865 -1936)

Two Pieces, Op. 20 (1888)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|------|
| 6 | I. Mélodie | 6:23 |
| 7 | II. Sérénade espagnole | 3:09 |

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 8 | Chant du Ménestrel, Op. 71 (1900) | 4:01 |
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Total Time:	54:33
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Nikolay Y. Myaskovsky

Nikolay Myaskovsky, despite of an enormous and masterly production, is one of the most underestimated and often overlooked Russian 20th-century composers. One reason could be that in contrast to his contemporary composers such as Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Stravinsky, he didn't contribute equally to the stylistic musical development. Myaskovsky completes a grand Russian tradition in continuation of Glazunov, Tanayev, and Borodin, but has a personal distinctive character. His music is possibly not of the type which you'd recognize after a few bars, just as you can with for example Janáček, Scriabin, Fauré and Korngold. Myaskovsky remains his whole life relatively traditional and true towards his ideals, but he still proves that you can write fantastic and meaningful music, even though it isn't necessarily innovative and progressive in the history of music.

The first sonata from 1911 is a grand romantically founded work, written in two continuous movements, which reminds us of the Russian writers Tolstoy and Dostoevsky's epic tales. The opening, with its fantasy-like character, indicates that we have a great story in front of us. It's almost as if the sonata begins with a "once upon a time..." with the cello's quiet, secretive, almost mystical free musings around the piano's fairytale bass-tones. From

this is born a bright and simultaneously melancholy theme in the piano. A theme, which since shapes the frame of the whole work by returning again and again. Sometimes the music spans from intimate whispers, generous melodies and nervous whims at times uncannily violent outbursts, yet in the end just returns to the well-known notes in the form the theme from the beginning, but this time in a new perspective founded in the fantastic journey Myaskovsky has brought us along.

All of 37 years later in 1948, he writes his 2nd cello sonata. The work is securely based in 19th-century Romanticism but is simpler and less sophisticated than the first sonata. It doesn't contain as many compositional finesse and diffuse hints but instead accentuates something popular in the melody. During this period, Myaskovsky had to submit to rather harsh directions from the "Composer's Union". It was a union, that in time developed to be a kind of control body, who by threatening methods made sure that the prominent composers didn't write music in advanced musical forms. The music was not allowed to be modernistic or personal, but should be comprehensible for ordinary people, and most of all glorify the Soviet society.

It is well known that this created traumas and periodical constant terror for especially Dmitri Shostakovich. Also

Prokofiev, Kachaturian, Kabalevsky and many others came under the same stress.

Except for a few raised fingers, because of a couple of symphonies and string quartets which pointed forward in style, Myaskovsky managed to come through and avoid becoming banned and criticized by the composer's union. This was due to M's ability to adapt his style to the harsh demands. You can hear it in the sonata from 1948, where the language which in many ways is quite outdated. At this time Late-Romanticism was long gone. Stravinsky, Berg and Bartok had already 30 years previously indicated the new directions and even Schönberg's twelve-tone technique was "old news" in 1948. But still there is in this sonata an old style, you find something highly personal and unique. A great melancholy. And a vulnerability which probably had little standing in the self-esteem for the Soviet régime. Maybe this pronounced melancholy can be interpreted as a discreet comment from Myaskovsky on the cruelty of the régime. This work is still very important and topical to us – even in 2020!

Andreas Brantelid

Alexander K. Glazunov

Like Myaskovsky, Alexander Glazunov remained conservative in his musical language throughout his life. By conservative we mean that Glazunov with great love safeguarded the Russian romantic style he had learnt from his mentor Rimsky-Korsakov in the 1880's. A style based on strong emotions, immediacy and sentimental melodies, which we also know from Borodin and Tchaikovsky.

Glazunov was throughout his life a very respected composer in Russia. He was renowned for his craft, and especially orchestration was part of his forte. For 23 years he was both principal and professor of composition at the conservatory in Saint Petersburg and among his students was a young Dmitri Shostakovich, who at his exam received the highest distinction from Glazunov. The latter also cleared the way for the first performance of the 19-year-old Shostakovich's first symphony. Even the young emerging (teenage) violinists Nathan Milstein and Jascha Heifetz learned from Glazunov, when they played his violin concert under his guidance.

Glazunov's career in Russia ended suddenly when after a tour to West Europe and America in 1928 he chose not to return to Russia. Instead he settled in Paris in 1929, 64 years old. At this time the "new generation" of progressive composers were showing the way in the development

of music. But Glazunov couldn't find his place in this company. For example, when he heard the new opera by Franz Schreker *Der ferne Klang*, he exclaimed it was "schreckliche Musik!" or when he heard Stravinsky's *Feu d'artifice* and said: "no talent – only dissonance!" It later came to light that he regarded Stravinskij as a master of orchestration.

Two Pieces, Op. 20, were originally written for cello and orchestra, but on this album, they are played in cello and piano in the composer's own arrangement. The two pieces begins with *Mélodie*. A work which lives up to its' title by having a real "earworm" as a consistent theme.

Besides, the piano part is far more than just a simple accompaniment. It's is rather both refined and diverse and extremely well-written for the piano. The other piece in opus 20, *Sérénade espagnole*, is a little charming pearl, which contains both affections, a humoristic gleam in the eye and on top of that a southern temperament in the middle section.

In *Chant du Ménestrel* (Song of the Minstrel) opus 71, a lyrical and melancholy piece, we hear oriental sounds which turn the thoughts toward Borodin's *On The Steppes of Central Asia* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*.

Shortly before his demise in 1936 Glazunov read the score for Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*, and he commented: "He orchestrates with excellent

taste... He knows his stuff... Could it be that Rimskij and I, after all, have inspired all these young modern composers?"

Andreas Brantlid & Bengt Forsberg

Andreas Brantelid



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Andreas Brantelid was born in Copenhagen in 1987 to Swedish/Danish parents. After receiving early tuition from his father Ingemar, Andreas made his soloist debut at the age of 14 in a performance of the Elgar concerto with the Royal Danish Orchestra in Copenhagen. Today, Andreas is one of the most sought-after performing artists from Scandinavia, winning worldwide critical acclaim for his thought-provoking interpretations, uniquely colourful sound and engaging personality.

Andreas plays the 1707 'Bon-Hegar' Stradivarius, which has been

made available to him by the generous support of Norwegian art collector Christen Sveaas. Andreas Brantelid lives with his wife and four daughters in Nærum near Copenhagen.

Among the musicians who inspired and strongly influenced Andreas are pianist Bengt Forsberg and violinist Nils-Erik Sparf, both of whom Andreas has played with since 2002 in different chamber music formats. Lately he has started a trio with the Austrian violinist Benjamin Schmid and the Norwegian pianist Christian Ihle Hadland.

Andreas has released albums on Proprius, EMI and BIS. His recording from 2017 with Gabriel Fauré's music for cello and piano has received great praise from both national and international press.

"Andreas Brantelid and Bengt Forsberg... form a lovely team. Their album does Fauré's form music a favour, displays a width in the expression, which surprises and pulls the music out from the mere charming, superfluous and "salon-like".

Politiken

"Brantelid demonstrates his beautiful singing tone throughout this disc, and an excellent recorded balance between cello and piano means you hear all the detail at all times. The performers clearly have a great rapport as phrasing and character are always well matched." Presto Classical.

Bengt Forsberg



Pianist Bengt Forsberg (b.1952) is among the most highly regarded Swedish musicians today. Originally educated as an organist, he later changed to the piano and has been known as both soloist and recitalist with a repertoire that is exceptionally wide and includes lesser-known and unjustly neglected composers. Among the composers he has recorded and played are Charles Alkan, Kaikhosru Sorabji, Camille Saint-Saëns, Charles Koechlin, Léon Boëllmann, Nikolai Medtner and Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

Much of his renown is focused on his work in the field of chamber music, where his regular partners include Andreas Brantelid, Nils-Erik Sparf and Ellen Nisbeth. His longstanding collaboration with the mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter has been particularly successful, which the many highly acclaimed recordings bears witness of.



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Nikolaj Y. Mjaskovskij

Nikolaj Mjaskovskij er på trods af en enorm og mesterlig produktion en af de mest undervurderede og ofte oversete russiske 1900-tals komponister. En årsag kunne være, at han i modsætning til jævnaldrende komponister som fx Sjostakovitj, Prokofiev og Stravinskij ikke bidrog i samme grad til den stilistiske udvikling af musikken. Mjaskovskij fuldender en stor russisk tradition i forlængelse af Glazunov, Tanejev, og Borodin, men har alligevel et personligt særpræg. Hans musik er muligvis ikke af den type, som man kan genkende efter nogle få takter, ligesom man kan hos eksempelvis Janáček, Skriabin, Fauré og Korngold. Mjaskovskij forbliver derimod hele livet relativt traditionel og tro mod sine idealer, men alligevel beviser han at man kan skrive fantastisk og meningsfuld musik, selvom den ikke nødvendigvis er nyskabende og progressiv for musikhistorien.

Den første sonate fra 1911 er et stort romantisk anlagt værk, skrevet i to sammenhængende satser, som minder os om de russiske forfattere Tolstoj og Dostojevskijs episke fortællinger. Indledningens fantasi-lignende karakter vidner om, at vi har en stor fortælling foran os. Det er næsten som om, at sonaten starter med et ”Der var engang..” med celloens stille, hemmelighedsfulde, næsten mystiske fabuleren rundt om klaverets

eventyrlige bastoner. Af dét fødes et lyst og samtidig vemondig tema i klaveret. Et tema, som siden danner rammen om hele værket med sin tilbagevendende rolle. Undertiden spænder værket fra de inderligste hviskninger, generøse melodier, nervøse indfald og til tider uhyggeligt voldsomme udbrud, for til sidst igen at vende tilbage til velkendte toner i form af temaet fra begyndelsen, men denne gang i et nyt perspektiv grundet den fantastiske rejse Mjaskovskij har taget os med på.

Hele 37 år senere, i 1948, skriver han sin anden cellosonate. Værket er forankret i 1800-tallets romantik, men er anderledes enkel og mindre sofistikeret end den første sonate. Den indeholder ikke lige så mange kompositoriske finesser og diffuse antydninger, men fremhæver snarere folkeligheden i det melodiske.

Mjaskovskij var på denne tid pålagt de strenge direktiver, der kom fra den såkaldte ”sovjetiske komponistforening”. Det var en forening, som med tiden udviklede sig til at blive et slags kontrolorgan, der ved hjælp af truende metoder sørgede for, at de fremtrædende komponister ikke skrev musik i avancerede musikalske former. Musikken måtte ikke blive for modernistisk og personlig, men skulle være begribelig for almindelige mennesker og helst af alt forherlige det sovjetiske samfund. Dette skabte som bekendt traumer og

periodevis konstant rædsel for især Dmitri Shostakovitj. Også Prokofjev, Khatjaturjan, Kabalevskij og mange andre fik dette at mærke. Med undtagelse af nogle løftede pegefingre som følge af et par symfonier og strygekvartetter, som pegede for meget fremad i stilens, så lykkedes det Mjaskovskij at komme helskindet igennem og undgå at blive bandlyst og kritiseret af komponistforeningen. Det skyldes, at Mjaskovskij formåede at tilpasse sin stil i forhold til de strenge krav. Det kan man høre i sonaten fra 1948, hvor tonesproget på mange måder er helt forældet. På dette tidspunkt var senromantikken for længst forbi. Stravinskij, Berg og Bartók havde allerede 30 år tidligere tegnet de nye retninger, og selv Schönbergs tolvtoneteknik var "old news" i 1948. Men alligevel er der i denne sonate i gammel stil noget højt personligt og unikt at finde. Et stort vemod. Og en særlig sårbarhed, som sikkert ikke ligefrem har været et ideal i det sovjetiske regimes selvforståelse. Måske kan dette udprægede vemod tolkes som en diskret kommentar fra Mjaskovskij til regimets grusomheder. Dette værk er stadig meget vigtigt og aktuelt for os, selv i 2020!

Andreas Brantlid

Aleksander K. Glazunov

I lighed med Myaskovsky forblev også Aleksander Glazunov konservativ i sit musikalske sprog hele livet. Med konservativ mener vi, at Glazunov med stor kærlighed værnede om den russiske romantiske stil, han lærte af sin mentor Rimsky-Korsakov i 1880'erne. En stil med vægt på stærke følelser, umiddelbarhed og smægtende melodier, som vi også kender det fra Borodin og Tjajkovskij.

Glazunov var gennem hele sit liv en meget respekteret komponist i Rusland. Han var kendt for at kunne sit håndværk, og især orkestrering hørte til hans forcer. I hele 23 år var han både rektor og professor i komposition ved konservatoriet i Sankt Petersborg, og blandt hans elever var en ung Dmitri Shostakovitj, som ved sin eksamen modtog den højeste udmærkelse af Glazunov. Han banede også vejen for førsteopførelsen af den 19-årige Shostakovitj første symfoni. Også de unge fremadstormende (teenage) violinister Nathan Milstein og Jascha Heifetz lærte af Glazunov, når de spillede hans violinkoncert under hans direktion.

Glazunovs karriere i Rusland fik en brat afslutning, da han efter en turné til Vesteuropa og Amerika i 1928 valgte ikke at rejse tilbage til Rusland. I stedet slog han sig ned i Paris i 1929, 64 år gammel. På dette tidspunkt var det den "nye generation" af progressive komponister, som viste vejen

for udviklingen af musikken. Men i dette selskab kunne Glazunov ikke finde sig til rette. Da han hørte Franz Schrekers nye opera *Der ferne Klang* udtalte Glazunov for eksempel, at det var *schreckliche Musik!* Eller da Glazunov hørte Stravinskys *Feu d'artifice* sagde han: *Intet talent - kun dissonans!* Senere kom det dog frem, at Glazunov anså Stravinskij for at være en mester i orkesttring.

Two Pieces Op. 20, er oprindeligt skrevet for cello og orkester, men på dette album spilles de for cello og klaver i komponistens eget arrangement. De to stykker starter med *Mélodie*. Et værk, som lever op til sin titel ved at have en rigtig ørehænger som gennemgående tema. Desuden er klaverstemmen langt mere end blot et enkelt akkompagnement. Det er snarere både raffineret og varieret og dertil yderst velskrevet for klaveret. Det andet stykke i opus 20, *Sérénade espagnole*, er en lille charmerende perle, der rummer både underlighed, et humoristisk glimt i øjet og sågar også sydlandsk temperament i midterdelen.

I *Chant du Ménestrel* (Troubadourens sang), opus 71, et lyrisk og vemodigt stykke, hører vi orientalske klange, som fører tankerne i retning af Borodins *På centralasiens stepper* og Rimsky-Korsakovs *Scheherazade*.

Kort før sin død i 1936 læste Glazunov partituret til Debussys *Forspil til en fauns eftermiddag*, hvorefter han

kommenterede: "Han instrumenterer med fremragende smag... Han kan sit kram... Kan det mon være, at Rimskij og jeg alligevel har inspireret alle disse moderne komponister?"

Andreas Brantlid og Bengt Forsberg.

Andreas Brantelid

Andreas Brantelid er født i København i 1987 af svenske/danske forældre. Efter at have modtaget undervisning fra sin far Ingemar, fik Andreas sin solo-debut i en alder af 14 år med Elgars cellokoncert sammen med Det Kgl. Kapel i København. I dag er Andreas en af de mest eftertragtede musikere fra Skandinavien, som har modtaget anmelderroser fra kritikere i hele verden.

Andreas spiller på en 1707 'Boni-Hegar' Stradivarius venligst udlånt af den norske kunstsamler Christen Sveaas. Han bor i dag sammen med sin kone og 4 børn i Nærum.

Blandt de musikere, der har inspireret og påvirket Andreas kunstnerisk, er pianist Bengt Forsberg og violinist Nils-Erik Sparf, som Andreas har spillet med siden 2002 i forskellige kammermusik-konstellationer. På det seneste har han dannet en trio med den østrigske violinist Benjamin Schmid og den norske pianist Christian Ihle Hadland.

Andreas har tidligere udgivet album på bl.a. Proprius, EMI og BIS. Hans indspilning fra 2017 med Gabriel Faurés musik for cello og klaver modtog stor ros fra både national og international presse.

"Andreas Brantelid og Bengt Forsberg.... er et dejligt makkerpar. Deres album gør Faurés musik en tjeneste, viser en bredde i udtrykket, der overrasker, og hiver musikken ud af det rent charmerende,

overfladiske og 'salonagtige'." Politiken
Brantelid demonstrates his beautiful singing tone throughout this disc, and an excellent recorded balance between cello and piano means you hear all the detail at all times. The performers clearly have a great rapport as phrasing and character are always well matched. Presto Classical.

Bengt Forsberg

Pianist Bengt Forsberg (f. 1952) er blandt en af de mest ansete og anerkendte svenske musikere i dag. Oprindeligt er han uddannet som organist, men skiftede senere over til klaveret, og hvor han blev kendt som solist med et repertoire med et fokus som blandt andet inkluderer både mindre-kendte og ukendte komponisters værker, såsom Charles Alkan, Kaikhosru Sorabji, Camille Saint-Saëns, Charles Koechlin, Léon Boëllmann, Nikolai Medtner og Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

Meget af Bengt Fosbergs berømmelse er fokuseret omkring hans arbejde med kammermusik, hvor han ofte arbejder med Andreas Brantelid, Nils-Erik Sparf og Ellen Nisbeth. Hans særlige langvarige samarbejde med mezzosopranen Anne Sofie von Otter har været særlig succesrigt, hvilket deres mange strækt roste indspilninger vidner om.



Tak til | Thanks



Producer: Preben Iwan

Forside | Coverdesign: Manila Design

Fotos | Photos: © Anna Hållams, Ida Wang, ELI

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Nikolay Myaskovsky was one of the most prolific and influential composers in 20th-century Russian musical life. These two works come from the beginning and end of his distinguished career: the warmly expressive *First Cello Sonata* recalling the style of Rachmaninov, and the equally romantic *Second Cello Sonata* revealing the subtle influence of folk music typical of Myaskovsky's later years. **Alexander Glazunov**, both absorbed and continued the great Romantic lineage with his poignant *Chant du Ménestrel* and the Iberian evocations for the *Sérénade espagnole* from *Two Pieces*.

RUSSIAN TALES

Nikolay Yakovich Myaskovsky (1881-1950)

1-2 **Sonata No. 1, Op. 12 for cello and piano (1911)**

3-5 **Sonata No. 2, Op. 81 for cello and piano (1948)**

Alexander Konstantinovich Glazunov (1865-1936)

6-7 **Two Pieces, Op. 20 (1888)**

8 **Chant du Ménestrel, Op. 71 (1900)**

Andreas Brantelid • Bengt Forsberg

Producer and Engineer: Preben Iwan

Pictures: © Anna Hällams, Ida Wang and ELI

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