

A promotional poster for a concert. Three men are shown from the chest up, wearing black tuxedos with white shirts and bow ties. The man on the left is older, with thinning hair, looking slightly to the left. The man in the center is younger, looking directly at the camera. The man on the right has dark, curly hair and is looking slightly to the right. The background is a patterned curtain.

onyx

**WITH
LOVE
FROM
RUSSIA**

**BORODIN
DARGOMYZHSKY
GLINKA
PROKOFIEV
RACHMANINOV
TCHAIKOVSKY**

HANS EIJSACKERS | HENK NEVEN | JAN BASTIAAN NEVEN

WITH LOVE FROM RUSSIA

Mikhail Glinka (1804–1857)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| 1. Doubt* | 4.41 |
| 2. Where is our rose? | 1.15 |
| 3. Cradle Song | 4.13 |
| 4. Do not tempt me needlessly | 2.57 |

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

From 'Chout' op.21 arr. for cello & piano by Roman Sapozhnikov

- | | |
|-------------------------|------|
| 5. Chout & Chouticha | 2.01 |
| 6. The merchant's dream | 1.28 |

Alexander Dargomyzhsky (1813–1869)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| 7. I am sad | 2.03 |
| 8. Elegy* | 2.23 |
| 9. The Youth and the Maiden | 1.09 |
| 10. The night zephyr | 3.17 |

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873–1943)

- | | |
|--|------|
| 11. Gopak (from Mussorgsky's <i>Sorochintsky Fair</i>) | 2.00 |
| 12. Morceaux de fantaisie op.3 | 5.39 |
| 13. Do not sing, my beauty, in front of me op.4/4
(arr. for violin & tenor by Fritz Kreisler) | 4.27 |
| 14. Prelude in G sharp minor op.32/12 | 2.50 |

Alexander Borodin (1833–1887)

- | | |
|---|------|
| 15. The Pretty Girl No Longer Loves Me* | 3.06 |
| 16. The Lovely Fisherwoman* | 1.18 |
| 17. Listen to my song, little friend* | 3.21 |

Sergei Prokofiev

From 'Chout' op.21 arr. for cello & piano by Roman Sapozhnikov

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 18. Chouticha | 1.02 |
| 19. The sad merchant | 1.55 |
| 20. Dance of Chout's daughters | 1.11 |

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

- | | |
|--|------|
| 21. Mild stars shone down on us op.60/12 | 3.21 |
| 22. Night op.73/2 | 4.00 |
| 23. Only he who knows longing op.6/6 | 3.03 |

*Original arrangements for voice, piano & cello by the composer

All other songs are arranged by Hans Eijsackers and Jan Bastiaan Neven

Total timing: 62.51

Henk Neven *baritone* | **Hans Eijsackers** *piano* | **Jan Bastiaan Neven** *cello*



Stichting Bekker-la Bastide-Fonds

Glinka's hundred or so songs include several settings of his regular opera librettist Nestor Kukolnik. One of the best known is *Doubt* (1838), a lengthy, intense song about the doubts that overtake a man separated from his lover. The previous year Pushkin had died in a duel and Glinka made three different settings of his short verse *Where is our rose?*, a lovely miniature about the brevity of life.

Another of Glinka's major collaborations with Kukolnik was *Farewell to St Petersburg* (1840), a set of twelve songs. The fifth is *Cradle Song*, simple and tender, with a gently undulating accompaniment.

Finally, another favourite, *Do not tempt me needlessly* (1825), sets a typically melancholic verse by Baratynsky. The poet begs his lost love not to cruelly and needlessly raise his hopes. The ebb and flow of the melody traces his fluctuating eagerness.

Prokofiev was a prolific dramatist, writing operas, ballets and film and theatre scores. Diaghilev commissioned *Chout (The Tale of the Buffoon)* in 1915, but the war delayed its premiere until 1921. A buffoon fools seven others into murdering their wives by promising to bring them back to life. When he fails, he escapes by disguising himself as a woman and marrying a wealthy merchant before swindling him out of 300 roubles. Prokofiev composed typically witty, spiky music for this grotesque story. The cellist Roman Sapozhnikov published these five arrangements in 1962.

Dargomyzhsky's naturalistic, declamatory style paved the way for Mussorgsky, but he was equally adept at melodic writing. *I am sad* (1848) sets Lermontov's lament of a spurned lover, the elegant facade hiding the text's bitterness until the last repeated line. Nikolai Yazykov's *Elegy (She is coming)*, is a mysterious tale of intense expectation in a gloomy landscape. Several composers have set Pushkin's tender *The Youth and the Maiden*; Dargomyzhsky's, from the early 1840s, is a gently swinging waltz whose two varying stanzas deftly trace anger subsiding into forgiveness.

The night zephyr (1844) is another hugely popular Pushkin text, set to music by around forty composers. The Guadalquivir is a huge river in southern Spain.

The Caucasus has always been a subject of fear and fascination to Russia and Pushkin's lyric *Do not sing, my beauty* is as much a reflection of that as a distant lover's plea not to stir painful memories. Around twenty composers had set it before Rachmaninov and he evokes the oriental with melismata that seduce the declamatory text. The arrangement on this recording transposes the arrangement Fritz Kreisler made for violin and tenor voice to cello and baritone.

Borodin only wrote sixteen songs and these three, all from 1855, employ his own instrument, the cello. Early in his career, Borodin was still imitating popular salon music, but even if they are not very profound, they are charming. *The Pretty Girl No Longer Loves Me* is another tale of frustrated love, but the hero determines to find consolation in his music, though she no longer likes it. *The Lovely Fisherwoman* is a short humorous skit, and *Listen to my song* is a very short plea for sympathy from an orphan.

Some of the best-loved Russian songs are amongst the hundred or so that Tchaikovsky wrote. In *Mild stars shone down on us* (1886), the poet remembers a calm night full of hope, and wonders where it has gone. The first two verses rise to abbreviated climaxes before the third marks a determined change of direction. But the last returns to the opening despondent mood. The poet Alexei Pleshcheyev was a radical, imprisoned alongside Dostoyevsky, but his later work was less political. Nevertheless, there are lines that could equally be read as contemplations of lost political dreams.

Tchaikovsky wrote *Night* in 1893, the year he died and in the middle of composing his last symphony. The poem, by his friend the amateur poet Rathaus, features that stand-by of romantic literature, the tortured lover unable to sleep for dreams of his beloved. The turbid, repeatedly sinking accompaniment evokes his troubled restlessness and inescapable weariness.

Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre (Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship)* helped kick-start the Romantic movement and Mignon's song *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt (Only he who knows longing)* was set by many of the great *Lieder* writers: Schubert set it no fewer than six times! Tchaikovsky set Mei's translation in 1869 and it became, perhaps, his most popular song, known in English as *None but the lonely heart*.

John Leman Riley

MIKHAIL GLINKA

1. Doubt (*Kukolnik*)

Translation © Victor Han

www.lieder.net

Be stopped, restlessness of passion!
Fall asleep, hopeless heart!
I weep, I suffer,
The soul is tired of separation:
I suffer, I weep,
Not to sob the grief into tears.
In vain hope to my happiness looks,
I do not believe, I do not believe insidious vows!
Separation takes love away.

Like a sleep persistent and terrible,
I dream of my happy rival,
And a secretly and maliciously
Boiling jealousy blazes,
And secretly and maliciously
My hand searches for a weapon.
In vain jealousy brings treason to me,
I do not believe, I do not believe the insidious slander.
I am happy: you are mine again.
Sadly the time passes,
We again embrace each other,
And passionately and warmly my happy heart throbs again,
And passionately and warmly our lips melt together.

2. Where is our rose? (*Pushkin*)

Translation © Thomas B. Shaw

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Where is our rose, friends?
Tell if ye may!
Faded the rose, friends,
The Dawn-child of Day.
Ah, do not say,
Such is life's fleetness!
No, rather say,
I mourn thee, rose, – farewell!

3. Cradle Song (*N. Kukolnik*)

Translation © John Sidwick

Courtesy of Opus 111

Gently sleep, my child,
Close your bright eyes, my lovely angel,
My child, sleep peacefully!

If you keep them open, time will fly by.
Black clouds will gather,
A thousand passions will trouble your heart,
Everywhere storms will rage.

God Almighty,
Save him from these storms!
Cast aside the threatening shadows,
Over his brow bring serene skies!
My child, sleep peacefully!

Gently sleep, my child,
Close your bright eyes, my lovely angel,
My child, sleep peacefully!

Listen! There is a noise at the threshold...
Enemies have come, and are knocking on the door...
Sorrow, sacrifices and hopes,
A host of dreadful dreams and bitter thoughts.

God Almighty,
Save him from these storms!, *etc.*

4. Do not tempt me needlessly (*Baratynsky*)

Translation © Onyx Classics

Do not tempt me needlessly:
Affection lost cannot return.
How foreign to the broken-hearted
Are all the charms of bygone days!
I can no longer trust your promise;
I have no longer faith in love;
And cannot suffer once again
To be deceived by phantom visions.

Do not augment my anguish mute;
Say not a word of former gladness.
And, kindly friend, oh do not trouble
A convalescent's dreaming rest.
I sleep: how sweet to me oblivion:
Forgotten all my youthful dreams!
Within my soul is nothing but turmoil,
And love shall wake no more for thee.

ALEXANDER DARGOMYZHISKY

7. I am sad (*Lermontov*)

Translation © Emily Ezust
www.lieder.net

I am sad because I love you
And know that your blossoming youth
Will not be spared by insidious gossip
For every good day, for every sweet moment
You will have to pay fate with tears and grief
I am sad because I love you.

8. Elegy (*Yazykov*)

Translation © 2018 Anastasia Witt
www.artistdigital.co.uk

You have failed, oh blissful dreams
Of my dearest hope!
My beauty, my light,
My desired one, where are you?

Not so long ago I admired
The peace of your azure eyes,
And the waves of the passionate thoughts
In my mind were soothed by your talk.

You are far away, but patiently
I have succumbed to my fate.
The divine memory of yours
Is still alive in me.

The same way awakening
Saves the traces of a magical dream.
The same way the sparkle is shed upon the world
By the glory of the sky, the Moon.

9. The Youth and the Maiden (*Pushkin*)

Translation © Onyx Classics

A jealous maiden, weeping bitterly,
Chided a young man.
Leaning on her shoulder,
The youth suddenly fell asleep.

The maiden immediately fell silent,
Nurturing his light sleeping.
And smiled at him,
Through her silent tears.

10. The night zephyr (*Pushkin*)

Translation © Emily Ezust
www.lieder.net

The night zephyr
Streams through the ether
Courses, roars,
Guadalquivir.

Now the golden moon has risen,
Listen... hark... the ringing of a guitar...
See, a young Spanish lady
Has perched upon a balcony.

The night zephyr
Streams through the ether
Courses, roars,
Guadalquivir.

Shed your mantle, dear angel,
And appear as a bright day!
Through the cast-iron balustrade
Thread your sublime little foot!

SERGEI RACHMANINOV

13. Don't sing, my beauty, in front of me (*Pushkin*)

Translation © Robin Kallsen

www.lyricstranslate.com

Don't sing, my beauty,
Your sad songs of Georgia for me:
They remind me
Of a different life and a faraway shore.

Alas! your bitter melodies
Remind me of the steppe,
The night, and, bathed in moonlight,
The distant landscape and a poor maiden.

I am a kind phantom, fateful;
I forget it all when I look upon you;
But then you sing – and before me
It appears again in my imagination.
Don't sing, my beauty,
Your sad songs of Georgia for me:
They remind me
Of a different life and a faraway shore.

ALEXANDER BORODIN

Translations: Copyright control

15. The Pretty Girl No Longer Loves Me (*Vinogradov*)

The beauty loves my curls and my bright eyes no more.
She loves my songs and tales no more...
All the joys have withered like flowers; the tender
caresses have gone like stones thrown into water.
What shall I do? I will fly up in the sky, and sing there
a wonderful, silver-toned song of my love.

16. The Lovely Fisherwoman (*Heine*)

O lovely fisherwoman! Steer to the shore,
come out and give me your hand.
Put your head onto my breast.
Do not fear, as you do not fear sea waves.
The heart is like the sea: it can be rough or calm,
and it hides many precious pearls in its depth.

17. Listen to my song, little friend (*Von Kruse*)

Listen to my song, girlfriends.
It's a song about my fate.
Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!
It is so sad to be a lonely orphan,
it is so hard to keep my grief to myself.

PYOTR ILYCH TCHAIKOVSKY

21. Mild stars shone down on us (*Pleshcheyev*)

Translation © Onyx Classics

Mild stars shone down on us,
A soft breeze barely stirred the air,
Flowers spread their fragrance all around,
And waves were gently lapping
At our feet.
We were young, we were in love,
With faith we looked to the future;
Joyful dreams were alive in us,
We weren't afraid of the blizzards
Of grey-haired winter.

Where, now, are those starlit nights,
Their beauty in all its fragrance,
The mysterious murmur of the waves,
Of all those hopes, those joyous dreams,
Where's the bright swarm?
The stars are dimmer now, and dejectedly
The faded flowers droop...
Can you forget, oh heart, all that used to be,
The gifts spring gave the two of us,
Can you forget?

22. Night (*Rathaus*)

Translation © 2017 Jennifer Gliere
www.lieder.net

The dim light of the candle flickers,
Depressing gloom creeps all around,
And longing grips the chest
With incomprehensible power.

On my sad eyes
Quietly sleep descends,
And at that moment, my heart
Converses with the past.

My spirit is exhausted
With deeper anguish.
Appear then, my distant friend,
If only in a dream!

23. Only he who knows longing (*Goethe*)

Translation © Richard Wigmore

Only he who knows longing
Knows what I suffer.
Alone, cut off
From all joy,
I gaze at the firmament
In that direction.
Ah, he who loves and knows me
Is far away.
I feel giddy,
My vitals are aflame.
Only he who knows longing
Knows what I suffer.

We would like to express our gratitude to Concert and Congress Centre De Doelen in Rotterdam for their support and for letting us record in their lovely 'Jurriaanse Zaal'. We would also like to thank Hotel Emma in Rotterdam, Stichting-Bekker-la Bastide and our numerous sponsors for their generous help and support in making this recording possible.

Hans, Henk and Jan Bastiaan

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Recording location: 4–7 September 2017, De Doelen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Cover photo: © Ronald Knapp

Design: WLP Ltd 

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