

CHAN 6511

Russian Masterpieces

Scottish National Orchestra
London Symphony Orchestra
Neeme Järvi

collect

Russian Masterpieces

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Festive Overture, Op. 96 (1947) | 5:50 |
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Sergey Sergeyevich Prokofiev (1891–1953)

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 2 | Montagues and Capulets
from Suite No. 2 from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> | 6:48 |
|---|---|------|

Aram Il'yich Khachaturian (1903–1978)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|------|
| 3 | Sabre Dance
from <i>Gayaneh</i> | 2:29 |
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Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 4 | Procession of the Nobles
from <i>Mlada</i> | 5:12 |
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Alexander Konstantinovich Glazunov (1865–1936)

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 5 | Bacchanal | 4:02 |
| 6 | Petit adagio
from Scene 4 'L'Automne' of <i>The Seasons</i> | 3:29 |

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 7 | The Flight of the Bumble Bee
from <i>The Tale of Tsar Saltan</i> | 3:18 |
|---|---|------|

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|------|
| 8 | Infernal Dance* | 4:45 |
| 9 | Lullaby*
from <i>The Firebird</i> | 3:31 |

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

- | | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 10 | Dubinushka, Op. 62* | 3:54 |
| 11 | The Young Prince and the Young Princess
from <i>Scheherazade</i> | 10:53 |

Sergey Sergeyevich Prokofiev

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 12 | The Enemy God and the Dance of the Spirits
from <i>Scythian Suite</i> | 3:07 |
| 13 | March
from <i>The Love for Three Oranges</i> | 1:32 |

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 14 | Festival Coronation March
in D major | 5:07 |
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TT 64:27

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As a leading Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich was expected to provide celebratory works for public occasions, and his **Festive Overture, Op. 96** was composed in 1947 for the thirtieth anniversary of the October Revolution. It coincided, however, with one of the bouts of official censure which Shostakovich suffered under the Stalin régime, and the Overture remained unheard until a Moscow concert in 1954. Flamboyant brass fanfares at the start and finish enclose two suitably jubilant melodies of a traditional Russian flavour.

Romantic story-ballets continued to flourish at this time, and Sergey Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, composed in 1935, became the most successful three-act ballet score since those of Tchaikovsky. **Montagues and Capulets** highlights the proud assembly at the Capulets' ball, and a quieter central section relates to Juliet's shy dance with Count Paris. *Gayaneh* was originally a wartime production of 1942, a tale of life on a collective farm, and the **Sabre Dance** in the last act's wedding celebrations made Aram Khachaturian's name world-famous.

From an earlier generation, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (who taught both Prokofiev and Igor

Stravinsky) was an unrivalled master of orchestral resources. His *Mlada* was completed in 1890, a 'magic opera-ballet' on an epic scale and a colourfully pagan folk legend, from which the grandiose **Procession of the Nobles** heralds a scene of festive dancing. **The Flight of the Bumble Bee** is from another magical opera, *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* (1900), and was originally an interlude depicting a Prince's return in the guise of a bee to take revenge on his wicked aunts by stinging them unmercifully.

In the same year as Rimsky-Korsakov's opera was premiered in Moscow, Alexander Glazunov had a major success in St Petersburg with his music for *The Seasons*, a one-act ballet by the celebrated choreographer Marius Petipa in which the nineteen-year-old Anna Pavlova had her first created role, leading the Autumn **Bacchanal**. This comes last in the allegorical dances of the four seasons and is portrayed by Bacchantes dancing under a whirl of falling leaves to the exhilarating main theme. The *Petit adagio* was added here to bring back dancers from previous scenes.

The Firebird was the first of the ballets that brought rapid international fame to Stravinsky in the years before 1914, and it later became

so closely associated with him that he said he was once accosted by a total stranger as 'Mr Fireberg'. It was premiered in Paris in 1910 by the Ballets russes of Sergey Diaghilev, with Tamara Karsavina as the Firebird and Mikhail Fokin, its choreographer, as Prince Ivan. Captured by Kashchey and his monsters in the **Infernal Dance**, Ivan summons the Firebird with a feather she has given him, and in the **Lullaby** she puts the evil characters to sleep to enable him to make his escape.

Stravinsky dedicated his music for *The Firebird* to his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, to whose influence the music owed a large debt. Not long before this, Rimsky-Korsakov had been caught up in the fervour of political events in 1905, and took the theme of **Dubinushka, Op. 62** (Little Oak Stick), a folksong long famous for its revolutionary associations, to make an orchestral showpiece expressing the prevailing public feeling; the next year he extended it orchestrally, and added to it an optional chorus part.

Rimsky-Korsakov's musical achievement is the more remarkable for a man who began as a Naval officer and was largely self-taught in the craft of musical composition. Among his most enduring works is *Scheherazade*, a symphonic suite prompted by the widely

familiar stories of *A Thousand and One Nights*. He composed it in 1888, and its immediate success when it was premiered that year has never since deserted it. **The Young Prince and the Young Princess** is the third of its four movements, self-evidently a love-story in the ardent main theme which is contrasted with a lightly dancing melody and a sinuous violin solo identifying Scheherazade herself as the storyteller.

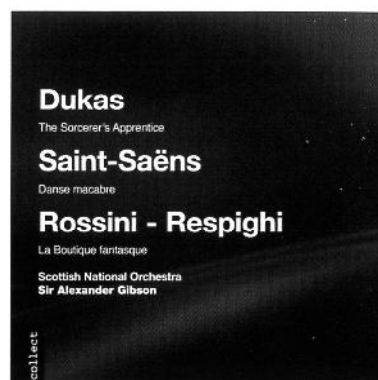
Prokofiev was first asked for a ballet by Diaghilev in 1914, but when he came up with *Ala and Lolli* as the barbaric subject which Diaghilev had wanted, it was rejected. The composer accordingly turned his music into the four-movement *Scythian Suite* for concert performance; the second movement, **The Enemy God and the Dance of the Spirits**, played here, is graphically fierce and frenetic. Menace turns to humour for the **March** from *The Love for Three Oranges* (1921), in which a melancholy Prince is sent on a quest by a wicked Witch. The martial mood continues to the end of the disc with Tchaikovsky's **Festival Coronation March**, a celebration of the Coronation of Alexander III as Tsar of All the Russias in 1883.

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What CD?

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