

## SIR JOHN BARBIROLI

**NICOLAY RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (1844–1908)**

- 1 Capriccio espagnol, Op. 34** 14:24  
–Alborada—Variazioni—Alborada—Scena e canto gitano—Fandango asturiano  
*recorded: Free Trade Hall, Manchester 20 December 1953 (HMV BLP1058)*

**ANATOLE LIADOV (1855–1914)**

- 2 The Enchanted Lake, Op. 62** 6:08  
*recorded: Free Trade Hall, Manchester 23 December 1953 (HMV 7ER 5026)*

**PYOTR ILYCH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)**

**Swan Lake – Ballet, Op. 20**

- 3** – Scene (*Swan Theme*) 2:30  
**4** – Introduction & Dance of the Queen of the Swans (Act 2)<sup>†</sup> 5:05  
**5** – Dance of the Little Swans (Act 2) 1:27  
**6** – Waltz (Act 1) 4:28  
**7** – Hungarian Dance (Czardas) (Act 3) 3:26  
*recorded: Kingsway Hall, London 17 October 1950 (HMV BLP1004)*

- 8 Romeo and Juliet – fantasy overture after Shakespeare** 20:38  
*recorded: Free Trade Hall, Manchester 13 June 1957 (Pye CCL30128) ©1959*

- 9 Marche slave, Op. 31** 8:34  
*recorded: Free Trade Hall, Manchester April 1959 (Pye GSCC14029 Stereo) ©1959*

**HALLÉ ORCHESTRA**

<sup>†</sup>Solo Violin: Laurance Turner

*All the recordings were transferred from the original master tapes except for tracks 2 & 7*

# BARBIROLI

**RUSSIAN  
FAVOURITES**

**TCHAIKOVSKY**

SWAN LAKE – Excerpts  
ROMEO & JULIET  
MARCHE SLAVE

**LIADOV**

THE ENCHANTED LAKE

**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV**

CAPRICCIO ESPAGNOL

Hallé Orchestra



The Barbirolli Society



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- Remastering: Peter Reynolds
- Final master preparation: Reynolds Mastering, Colchester, England
- Tape Transfer Engineer: Ian Jones, Abbey Road Studios, London
- Design: Paul Brooks, Design & Print – Oxford
- Art direction: Guild GmbH
- Executive co-ordination: Guild GmbH
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that the solo violin (and other instruments) play a prominent role. The finished composition is a suite of five linked movements. As its name suggests, the music has a strong Spanish flavour. It is brilliantly orchestrated and is enormously enjoyable – without any need for analysis.

**Pyotr (Peter) Ilych Tchaikovsky** was the son of a government mining engineer. He was proficient as a pianist from an early age. After leaving school, he became an under-secretary in the Ministry of Justice, and continued with this employment whilst pursuing his musical studies at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He later became a full-time student – studying harmony, counterpoint and fugue with Zarembo, and instrumentation and composition under Anton Rubinstein. His compositions in the field of ballet, opera, symphonic and orchestral works are numerous, and many are justifiably popular.

*Swan Lake*, first produced as a ballet at the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, in 1877, has since been presented in many different versions and revisions. All five sections of this orchestral suite are taken from Tchaikovsky's music for the original production, and Barbirolli works his magic on the music of this sumptuous score.

*Romeo and Juliet* is described as a Fantasy-Overture, but its form is that of a classical sonata with a slow introduction and a coda. Its contrasting elements include depictions of Friar Lawrence, the feuding Montagues and Capulets, and the tragic love affair of Romeo and Juliet – with its particularly memorable 'love theme'.

*March Slave* was written in 1876 for a benefit concert – to raise funds for soldiers wounded in the war between Turkey and Serbia, and in which Russia later became involved. Tchaikovsky responded to the request from his friend, Nikolay Rubinstein, and completed the work within a week. At first known as the "Serbo-Russian March" it later became known as the "Slavonic March" or *March Slave*. Some of its melodies are based on Serbian folk songs and there is also a repeated chorale-sounding theme, which has an association with the Russian Anthem "God save the Tsar".

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The theme, *Russian Favourites*, provides an opportunity to bring together a number of recordings, made by the Hallé with Barbirolli, of works by Russian composers. Three of these appear on CD for the first time. Together, they form only a very small part of an extensive repertoire of works by Russian composers which were played in concert by the Hallé under Barbirolli's baton. Nowadays, Barbirolli may not be thought of as a conductor of Russian music, but a survey of his many recordings and of his far more extensive concert performances reveals an extensive 'Russian' repertoire - developed throughout his long career.

In 1928, Barbirolli conducted performances of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, *Le Coq d'Or*, with the British National Opera Company and, henceforth, an orchestral suite from the opera appeared at intervals in his concert programmes for the rest of his life.

His early recordings for HMV included works by Glazunov, Mussorgsky and Tchaikovsky. His 1932 recording of Tchaikovsky's B flat minor Piano Concerto (with Artur Rubinstein as soloist) undoubtedly helped to establish John Barbirolli's name as a conductor of international repute. In 1933, he recorded an orchestral suite from Tchaikovsky's music for the ballet *Swan Lake* with the LPO.

In November 1930, Barbirolli took a break from his work on tour with the Covent Garden Opera Company to conduct a series of six concerts with the Scottish Orchestra in Glasgow and Edinburgh. His first concert with them included *Cortège des Noces* (Wedding March) from Rimsky-Korsakov's *Le Coq d'Or* and, a week later, Liadov's *The Enchanted Lake*. As conductor of the Scottish Orchestra (1932–1937), Barbirolli added to his repertoire many other works by Russian composers: Balakirev, Borodin, Glinka, Mussorgsky, Rachmaninov, Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky and Tchaikovsky. *Capriccio Espagnol* and the orchestral suite from *Swan Lake* were among the items which Barbirolli first conducted, in concert, with the Scottish Orchestra.

During his time as conductor of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, (1936–1943) Barbirolli continued to expand his Russian repertoire, adding works by Arensky, Myaskovsky, Rachmaninov, Rimsky-Korsakov, Rubinstein, Prokofiev, Scriabin, Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky. He first conducted the Fantasy-Overture *Romeo and Juliet*, in Carnegie Hall, in November 1939. Whilst in New York, he also introduced works by several expatriate Russian composers who

had become citizens of the USA: Berezowsky, Dubensky, Gretchaninov, Koussevitzky, Mischa Portnoff.

The commercial recordings which Barbirolli made with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra comprised: Tchaikovsky's *Francesca da Rimini* (for RCA Victor, in 1938), Rimsky-Korsakov's *Capriccio Espagnol* and Tchaikovsky's *Suite No. 3 in G* (for the American Columbia Company, in 1940 and 1942, respectively).

After his appointment as permanent conductor of the Hallé Orchestra in 1943 and for the rest of his career, Barbirolli continued to conduct many of the works by Russian composers which were already in his repertoire, and he added additional works by Russian composers which he had not previously conducted. These included: Arensky, Budashkin, Mussorgsky, Rachmaninov, Prokofiev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Shostakovich, Stravinsky and Tchaikovsky. *March Slave* was one of the works which were added.

The *Russian Favourites* included on this disc, all appeared early on in the concert schedules of Barbirolli's reconstituted Hallé Orchestra. *Capriccio Espagnol* was included in the first week of concerts given by the rebuilt Hallé in the Prince's Theatre, Bradford in early July 1943. *Romeo and Juliet* was played during the orchestra's visits to Edinburgh and Glasgow in the following weeks. The orchestral suite from *Swan Lake* was first heard by Barbirolli's Hallé audiences at the King's Hall, Belle Vue, Manchester, in an all-Tchaikovsky programme, in April 1944. *The Enchanted Lake* was, likewise, first heard in an all-Russian programme given in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh, in May 1944. Tchaikovsky's *March Slave* first appeared, in January 1945, at the Victoria Hall, Hanley.

The many works by Russian composers, which formed an integral part of the staple fare presented to Barbirolli's Hallé audiences over many years, were heard throughout Britain. Liadov's *The Enchanted Lake* was not only programmed for the Usher Hall, Edinburgh; The Royal Hall, Harrogate and the Free Trade Hall, Manchester: it was heard also by audiences at the King's Hall, Belle Vue; the Public Hall, Preston; the Champness Hall, Rochdale; and the Empire Theatre, Oldham. This was all part of Barbirolli's mission to bring a wide range of classical music to people from all walks of life, living in many parts of Britain and, on occasion, living beyond these shores.

In addition to the recordings included on this disc, Barbirolli's commercial recordings with the Hallé Orchestra, of works by Russian composers, comprised: Stravinsky's Concerto in D for

strings (1948); Tchaikovsky's *Andante Cantabile* (1957) and the fourth, fifth and sixth symphonies (1957–59). He also made several recordings of Russian works, with other orchestras. Arensky: *Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky* (LSO, 1964); Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No.1 (John Ogdon, Philharmonia, 1962); Serenade for Strings (LSO, 1964); *Romeo & Juliet* [incomplete – without final coda] (New Philharmonia Orchestra, 1969); *Francesca da Rimini* (NPO, 1969).

**Liadov (Anatoly Konstantinovich Lyadov)** A pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov, and highly thought of by Mussorgsky, he nevertheless developed a reputation for being an unreliable composer, self-critical and somewhat lacking in confidence. Although he composed a large number of piano works, his orchestral output remained relatively small and he did not complete any lengthy compositions. He seems to have produced his best work in descriptive programme music and his best known compositions in this genre are his tone poems *Baba Yaga* (Op. 56), *The Enchanted Lake* (Op. 62), and *Kikimora* (Op. 63).

*The Enchanted Lake* is a miniature, symphonic fairy-tale of muted colours and hazy impressionism. The instruments employed are muted divided strings, small woodwind and brass sections, timpani, percussion, celeste and harp. Although a very unique and personal composition, it has been said to be indebted to the example of Debussy's *La Mer*. If so, this may go some way towards explaining Barbirolli's fascination with the piece and its early addition to his symphonic repertoire.

**Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov** showed musical ability from an early age, but studied at the Russian Imperial Naval College, and pursued an early career in the Russian Navy. He was encouraged by Balakirev to develop his musical talents, and he subsequently resigned his naval commission and switched to composition as a career. He eventually became professor of composition and orchestration at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and his pupils included Glazunov, Prokofiev and Stravinsky. He was a prolific composer, producing a number of operas, including *Le Coq d'Or* (which Barbirolli conducted) but he is probably best known in the West for his orchestral compositions, most famous among which are *Capriccio Espagnol* and *Shéhérazade*.

*Capriccio Espagnol* was originally conceived by the composer as a "Fantasy on Spanish themes" for violin and orchestra, but he rapidly realised that he could only do real justice to the music as a purely orchestral work – he was a supremely masterful orchestrator. But, it is not surprising