

Completions and Reconstructions of Musical Works

Part 4: Russian School

by Stephen Barber

Borodin left his opera *Prince Igor* unfinished and it was completed from sketches and memory by Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov. A scene by scene account of their contributions is available [here](#). (Rimsky-Korsakov's role in making performing editions of the work of his compatriots cannot be overestimated, though he freely recomposed and rearranged in a way even the boldest of modern scholars would hesitate to do.) This is the standard version, with recordings by Oskar Danon (Eloquence) and Mark Ermler (Melodiya) among others. Some other recordings omit the third act, which is mostly by Glazunov. Valery Gergiev recorded a new reconstruction (Philips). This is based on a fresh examination of all the sources; it takes into account an unpublished vocal score by Pavel Lamm, which reverses the order of the first two acts and has some other changes, and it also has additional material by Yuri Faliak. Another new edition, by Dmitri Tcherniakov and the conductor Gianandrea Noseda, was mounted and recorded by the Metropolitan opera (DG DVD).

Borodin also did not complete his third symphony, or rather, he did not write it all down. Two movements were reconstructed by Glazunov, partly from memory. There are numerous recordings, including Loris Tjeknavorian (RCA) and Neeme Järvi (DG).

Mussorgsky worked on many operatic projects but completed few of them. He left two versions of *Boris Godunov*: the 1869 original and his revision of 1872, with extra scenes but also cuts. In practice, most productions are conflated, drawing on both versions, making cuts, moving scenes and otherwise reorganizing the work. Furthermore, for many years it was heard in Rimsky-Korsakov's revision, which not only provided a more colourful orchestration but also revised Mussorgsky's harmonies on more traditional lines. There is a full account of the different versions [here](#). The Rimsky-Korsakov version has nowadays been largely abandoned. A later version by Shostakovich does not seem to have been much taken up (unlike his *Khovanshchina*) but has been recorded by Dušan Miladinovic (Arkadia). For a conflated version which aims to provide the best from the composer's two versions the obvious choice is Claudio Abbado (Sony). Those who dislike conflation will want Valery Gergiev, who provides complete performances of both 1869 and 1872 (with some adaptation) in one box (Philips). For the Rimsky-Korsakov version the fullest version is Mark Ermler (Regis). Otherwise, I again refer readers to Ralph Moore's comprehensive survey [here](#).

Mussorgsky left *Khovanshchina* unfinished and here the ministrations of Rimsky-Korsakov were even more needed and even sooner came under criticism. Diaghilev commissioned new orchestrations from Ravel and Stravinsky working together, but their score was lost at the Revolution, apart from the closing chorus, by Stravinsky, which had been published. (I suppose it is not impossible the score may yet turn up, as did Stravinsky's *Chant funèbre*.) Rimsky-Korsakov's version continued to be performed and recorded until Shostakovich made a new version from the authentic vocal score, and this has generally replaced it. Claudio Abbado's recording (DG) uses this, somewhat adapted to bring it closer to Mussorgsky's intentions, with Stravinsky's ending. Valery Gergiev's version (Philips) uses Shostakovich without some of his additions. There are more details [here](#).

Mussorgsky completed and performed *The Marriage (Zhenitba)* but only with piano accompaniment. Again there have been several orchestrations. The currently available one is by Gennady Rozhdestvensky (Melodiya). Zoltan Pesko made a version of scenes from *Salamambo* (Warner). There have been several attempts at completing *Sorochyntsi Fair* (the title is spelled in many different ways);

the one which has become established is by Vissarion Shebalin. There have been recordings by Vladimir Esipov (Olympia) and Evgeny Brazhnik (Brilliant Classics) and there is a useful review [here](#).

St John's Night on Bald Mountain, to give it its proper title, had a complicated history, which you can read [here](#). Again, the score was put into shape by Rimsky-Korsakov, and his version continues to be played. There are many recordings; a personal favourite is Georg Solti (Decca). Of Mussorgsky's original a good account is Claudio Abbado (DG), which also contains the surviving fragments of some other opera projects, as edited by Rimsky-Korsakov. Mussorgsky's own choral version was intended for an opera. Abbado has recorded this also (Sony).

Pictures at an exhibition was written for solo piano but has become enormously popular through the orchestration by Ravel. However, Ravel's version is only one of at least twenty. There is a list of them [here](#); not all have been recorded. Of the others I shall mention only Leopold Stokowski (Decca), which has also had several recordings by other conductors; I have a particular fondness for Matthias Bamert (Chandos). The piano original is also frequently recorded, but some pianists follow Vladimir Horowitz (RCA) in embellishing Mussorgsky's rather un pianistic writing; these include Mikhail Pletnev (Virgin Classics) and Leif Ove Andsnes (EMI).

The *Songs and Dances of Death* were written for voice and piano. Mussorgsky intended to orchestrate them but never did. There have been several orchestrations, starting with Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov working together, recorded by Boris Christoff (EMI), and others including Shostakovich, recorded by Sergei Aleksashkin (Eloquence) and Sergei Leiferkus (DG), Edison Denisov, recorded by Vladislav Sulimsky (Oehms) and Kalevi Aho, recorded by Matti Salminen (BIS).

Tchaikovsky's second symphony was written in 1872 and considerably revised in 1880. This revised version is what is normally played, but the composer Taneyev, who was a great friend, and others have preferred the first version. The only recording of it so far is by Geoffrey Simon (Chandos). As with Prokofiev's fourth symphony, both versions really deserve to remain in circulation.

In addition to the six numbered symphonies and the unnumbered *Manfred*, Tchaikovsky drafted a symphony in E flat which would have come between the fifth and sixth. He abandoned the project and used the material of the first movement in his third piano concerto, Op. 75, in one movement, published posthumously. This is all that is usually played. However, the other two movements were worked up by Taneyev in a piano concertante work as *Andante and Finale*. This was also included in Tchaikovsky's catalogue posthumously as Op. 79. There have been several recordings of Opp. 75 and 79 together as a synthetic complete third concerto, for example by Peter Jablonski (Decca) and Konstantin Scherbakov (Naxos). In the 1950s Semyon Bogatyrev worked over the material again and reconstructed the symphony, adding a scherzo orchestrated from a piano piece (Op. 72 No. 10), for which Tchaikovsky had used material drafted for the symphony, and called it, rather misleadingly, No. 7 (I suppose 5½ would have been absurd). The first recording was by Eugene Ormandy (RCA). Subsequent recordings include Neeme Järvi (Chandos) and Dmitri Kitajenko (Oehms). It is an attractive work, if not quite first-rate Tchaikovsky, and I consider the material works better as a symphony than as a concerto. There has been another, more recent, reconstruction of the symphony, by Pyotr Klimov, but this has not yet been recorded.

If you count both versions of the second symphony, *Manfred* and the Bogatyrev reconstruction, there are really nine Tchaikovsky symphonies. Complete cycles nowadays usually include *Manfred* along with the six numbered works; so far, only Ormandy (Sony) also includes the Bogatyrev reconstruction. No one has yet included the first version of the second symphony.

In his later years Scriabin had a grandiose and unrealizable project for a work to be called *Mysterium*. He completed seventy-odd sketch pages of a preliminary work called *Prefatory Action for the Final Mystery*. These came into the hands of Sergei Protopopov, a remarkable composer who, however, did nothing with them. They were then taken up by Alexander Nemtin, who spent many years creating an orchestral work with solo piano based on them. It has been recorded by Vladimir Ashkenazy with Alexei Lubimov (Decca). This is worth hearing, though it is so long – nearly three hours – that it must be largely pastiche, and the idiom actually seems less advanced than some of Scriabin's final piano pieces.

Rachmaninov's first version of his Piano Concerto No. 1 dates from 1892. He revised it in 1917, universally considered a great improvement and what is usually played. The 1892 version has been recorded by Karina Wisniewska (Musica Classic 780010-2) and also by Alexandre Ghindin (Ondine). Similarly, Rachmaninov twice revised his Piano Concerto No. 4. Most recordings are of the final version of 1941, but there are a few, such as Ghindin again (Ondine) and Sudbin (BIS) of the 1926 first version, and one, William Black (Chandos), of the intermediate 1928 version. I should also mention here Alan Kogowski's orchestration of the *Trio Elégiaque* as a concerto (Chandos), coupled with an orchestration by Corneliu Dumbraveanu of the *Corelli Variations*.

Rachmaninov revised and considerably shortened his Piano Sonata No. 2 many years after he first composed it. Some pianists play either the original, such as Leslie Howard (Melba) or the revised version, such as Peter Jablonski (Decca), but Horowitz (RCA) – with the composer's approval – made a conflation of the two versions, itself revised more than once, and many others have followed this exactly or with some changes, such as Nikolai Lugansky (Naïve), Yevgeny Sudbin (BIS) and Steven Osborne (Hyperion).

Rachmaninov completed the first act in short score of an operatic setting of Maeterlinck's play *Monna Vanna*, but discovered that the rights had been given to another composer. Igor Buketoff orchestrated the draft and recorded it (Chandos), coupled with the 1928 version of the Piano Concerto No. 4. There is another orchestration by Gennadi Belov, recorded by Vladimir Ashkenazy (Ondine).

Stravinsky's *Chante funèbre* (Funeral Song), in memory of Rimsky-Korsakov, who was his teacher, was given one performance in 1909 and then forgotten. The score was lost at the revolution but the parts were discovered in 2015 and the score reconstructed. The first recording was by Riccardo Chailly (Decca), since when there have been at least two more.

Three of the Diaghilev ballets do not raise any issues of reconstruction, though listeners should note that for *The Firebird*, as well as the complete original ballet of 1910 there are three different suites, 1911, 1919 and 1945. Stravinsky made a piano solo version of the ballet for rehearsal. This has been recorded by Lydia Jardon (AR Ré-S), together with *Le Chant du Rossignol*, uncredited but probably transcribed by Arthur Lourié. Stravinsky also allowed Guido Agosti to make a virtuoso transcription of the last three numbers; this is often included in recordings of Stravinsky's piano music, for example that by Martin Jones (Nimbus).

There are two different versions of *Petrushka*, 1911 and 1947. The differences are mainly ones of orchestration, but they do change the character of the work. Dorati made a conflation of the two, basically using 1947 but in some passages reverting to 1911, following his memories of the composer's unrealised ideal version (Decca – his Mercury version is 1947). The piano duet version Stravinsky made for rehearsal has occasionally been recorded, for example by Katya Apekisheva and Charles Owen (Quartz), along with the duet version of *The Rite of Spring*. The *Three movements from Petrushka* which Stravinsky arranged for Artur Schnabel are quite a different proposition, being a virtuoso vehicle,

with the piano part elaborated from the orchestral version. There are numerous recordings, classics including Rubinstein himself (RCA) and Maurizio Pollini (DG). Drawing on both the duet version and the *Three movements*, Mikhail Rudy made and recorded a complete solo piano version (EMI). This has not been published, but there is an uncredited solo piano version published by Schirmer.

The Rite of Spring was first performed in 1913 but the score was repeatedly revised, and the current standard version dates from 1967. The changes mostly affect notation and instrumentation, but Stravinsky rescored the final Sacrificial Dance in 1943 in a version which was not incorporated into the 1967 score and is consequently not often performed. (We could do with a proper critical edition of the whole work.) This has been used by Stravinsky himself (Sony) and Robert Craft (Naxos). David Zinman has recorded the original (pre-performance) 1913 version side by side with the 1943/1967 one (Sony). The piano duet version Stravinsky made for rehearsal is nowadays frequently used as a recital work, as already mentioned. There is no official piano solo version; Artur Rubinstein apparently made one and played it to Stravinsky but did not publish it. The one by Vladimir Leyetchkiss was apparently approved by the composer. It was recorded by Ralph van Raat (Naxos) and Svetlana Belsky (Centaur), and there is an earlier one by Sam Raphling, recorded by Dickran Atamian (Delos) and Eric Ferrand N'Kaoua (Grand Piano).

The fourth Diaghilev ballet *Les Noces* (The Wedding) is more problematic. Stravinsky started work on this after *The Rite of Spring*, but completion was delayed both by the war and by his difficulty in settling on the instrumentation. His first idea for a very large orchestra was abandoned, as were two other ideas. In 1917 he almost completed a version with chamber orchestra. Still dissatisfied, in 1919 he started one for an ensemble of two cimbalons, a pianola, a harmonium and percussion, but abandoned it after the first two scenes as impractical, even though he later thought that this was the best realization. Finally, he rescored it for four pianos and percussion, completing this in 1923. This is the standard version, frequently recorded. The one by James Wood (Hyperion) is a favourite of mine. The early versions are also well worth hearing. The 1917 version was put into performable form by the team of Colin Matthews, Ramiro Cortez, William Harkins and Robert Craft, who made the first recording (Columbia LP M33201, not transferred to CD but available as a download from Sony). This is coupled with the 1919 version, which also needed some filling out, carried out by Colin Matthews. There is a more recent recording of 1917 and 1923 together by Peter Eötvös (Hungaroton). René Bosc recorded 1923 and the two scenes of 1919 (Radio France). The third and fourth scenes of 1919 were realized by Theo Verbey; René Bosc did not include them in his CD recording but you can hear his performance of them [here](#). A few years ago Steven Stucky made yet another version, not yet recorded, retaining the percussion but replacing the pianos with a normal orchestra. It is greatly to the credit of the publishers (Chester) that scores of all these versions are available.

Symphonies of Wind Instruments exists in two versions, 1920 and 1947. In the revision Stravinsky revised the notation and replaced the alto flute and alto clarinet with the standard instruments and so also had to modify the music. Both versions remain in circulation. Most conductors, including Robert Craft (Sony), prefer 1947; some, such as Boulez (Sony and DG) and Dutoit (Decca), prefer 1920, and so do I. Stravinsky first published the closing section as a piano solo. He then authorized Arthur Lourié to complete the transcription, included in some recordings of Stravinsky's piano music, such as Martin Jones (Nimbus). Lourié also made authorised piano transcriptions of two other Stravinsky works, recorded by Benedikt Koehlen, the *Concertino for string quartet* (Telos Music), and the *Octet* (Arte Nova). Stravinsky himself made his own piano transcriptions of *Ragtime* and the *Circus Polka*. These

are also usually included in recordings of his piano works. The one he made of *Apollon Musagète* is not, and it is really just a rehearsal score, but it has been recorded by Christopher O'Riley (Nonesuch).

Towards the end of his life Stravinsky made sketches for an orchestral work he did not complete. Robert Craft and Stravinsky's widow invited Charles Wuorinen to design a work around these. The result was *A Reliquary for Igor Stravinsky*, recorded by Oliver Knussen (DG).

Prokofiev began work on the opera *Maddalena* in his student years. He completed the piano score and started work on the orchestration but abandoned it when hopes for a performance faded. After his death his widow asked the conductor Edward Downes to complete it. This was recorded by Gennady Rozhdestvensky (Olympia). There is another orchestration, by Sergei Gavrilov, which has been recorded by Kirill Tikhonov (Melodiya).

Prokofiev completed his second piano concerto in 1913. But the score was lost in the Revolution and he reconstructed it from memory in 1923, saying he had completely rewritten it. This is the only score, and it is regularly recorded.

Prokofiev wrote a good deal of incidental music for plays and film music. Most of the incidental music has been gathered together and recorded by Vladimir Jurowski, though the convenient three disc set (Capriccio 7001) does not include *Pique Dame* (Capriccio 67149). The music for *Eugene Onegin* was reassembled and orchestrated by Edward Downes, whose own recording has the spoken parts in English (Chandos). Some of the film music was turned into suites, and *Lieutenant Kijé* and *Alexander Nevsky* are well known in that form. The original film score for *Alexander Nevsky* was first reconstructed by William Brohn and recorded by Yuri Temirkanov (RCA) and again in a new version by Frank Strobel (Capriccio). Several concert versions of *Ivan the Terrible* have been produced. Abram Stasevich's is the most commonly recorded. I particularly recommend the Christopher Palmer version, recorded by Neeme Järvi (Chandos). You can see the complete list [here](#).

At his death Prokofiev left his *Cello Concertino* unfinished. It was completed by Rostropovich and orchestrated by Kabalevsky. Rostropovich made the first recording (Warner) since when there have been several others. It was reorchestrated in a lighter manner for chamber orchestra by Vladimir Blok and this version has been recorded by Steven Isserlis (Virgin Classics and BIS) and Alexander Rudin (Naxos).

Shostakovich allowed Rudolf Barshai to arrange some of his string quartets for string orchestra, then called *Chamber Symphonies*, and confirmed his approval by giving them opus numbers in his catalogue. Barshai recorded a collection of them (DG) and a larger one (Brilliant Classics). Misha Rachlevsky made a similar arrangement of String Quartet No. 15, recorded by him (Claves). Shostakovich also approved another version of his String Quartet No. 8, by Abram Stasevich, which added timpani to the string band. This has been recorded by Paavo Järvi (Alpha). There are also some arrangements by others.

Shostakovich wrote music for many films and plays. There are two substantial collections of his film music, by Vassily Sinaisky (Chandos) and by Dmitry Yablonsky (Naxos) as well as single discs, for example from Riccardo Chailly (Decca) and Vladimir Jurowski (Capriccio). His incidental music for plays has not yet been systematically collected, and some of it is lost, but some has appeared, such as that to *Hamlet* (two stage productions, not the same as the film score) and *King Lear* from Mark Elder (Signum) and there are others by Mark FitzGerald (Naxos). Some of these have involved a good deal of reconstruction.

Shostakovich abandoned immediate plans for further operas after Stalin condemned *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. However, during the Second World War he began an opera using Gogol's play *The Gamblers* as libretto. He completed only the first of three projected acts. This has been recorded by Gennady Rozhdestvensky, coupled with *The Nose* (Melodiya), and by Vasily Petrenko, coupled with Shostakovich's completion and orchestration of the one act opera *Rothschild's Violin* by his pupil Veniamin Fleishman (Avie). *The Gamblers* was completed by Krzysztof Meyer and recorded by Vladimir Jurowski (Capriccio). There are sketches for several other operas. The revised version of *Lady Macbeth*, retitled *Katerina Izmailova* and recorded by Gennady Provorov (Melodiya), is nowadays usually abandoned in favour of the original version, first recorded by Rostropovich (EMI), who said this was the composer's preference. However, Maxim Shostakovich, the composer's son, apparently planned to use a conflated version, which casts some doubt on this, but his recording was never made.