



# MARIA RAZUMOVSKAYA

**TCHAIKOVSKY**  
Seasons

**MUSSORGSKY**  
Pictures at an Exhibition

**Malachite**



## MODEST PETROVICH MUSSORGSKY

### Pictures at an Exhibition

1. PROMENADE (1.22)
2. Gnomus (3.17)  
Gnome
3. PROMENADE (0.45)
4. Il vecchio castello (4.38)  
The Old Castle
5. PROMENADE (0.27)
6. Tuileries (Dispute d'enfants après jeux) (0.55)  
Tuileries (Children's Quarrel after Playing Games)
7. Bydło (3.28)  
Oxen
8. PROMENADE (0.56)
9. Balet nevylyupivshikhsya ptsentsov (1.07)  
Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks
10. Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle (2.40)
11. PROMENADE (1.20)
12. Limoges. Le marché (La grande nouvelle) (1.17)  
Limoges (The Big News)
13. Catacombæ (Sepulcrum romanum) (2.50)  
Catacombs (Roman Tomb)
14. Con mortuis in lingua mortua (2.39)  
With the Dead in a Dead Language
15. Izbushka na kuryik nozhkakh (Baba Yaga) (3.38)  
The Hut on Hen's Leg's (Baba Yaga)
16. Bogatyrskiy vorota (V stolnom gorode vo Kiyev) (5.04)  
The Bogatyr Gates (In the Capital City in Kiev)





'Mussorgsky' by Clive Wright (2019)



## PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

### Seasons, Opus 37a

17. January: By the Fireside (4.30)

A little corner of peaceful bliss,  
the night dressed in twilight;  
the little fire is dying in the fireplace,  
and the candle has burned out.  
ALEXANDER PUSHKIN

18. February: Shrovetide Carnival (2.34)

At the lively Mardi Gras  
soon a large feast will overflow.  
PIOTR VYAZERNSKY

19. March: The Song of the Lark (2.19)

The field shimmering with flowers,  
the stars swirling in the heavens,  
the song of the lark  
fills the blue abyss.  
APOLLON MAYKOV

20. April: The Snowdrop (2.16)

The blue, pure snowdrop – flower,  
and near it the last snowdrops.  
The last tears over past griefs,  
and first dreams of another happiness.  
APOLLON MAYKOV

21. May: White Nights (3.42)

What a night! What bliss all about!  
I thank my native north country!  
From the kingdom of ice, from the kingdom  
of snowstorms and snow,  
how fresh and clean May flies in!  
AFANASY FET

22. June: Barcarolle (4.26)

Let us go to the shore;  
there the waves will kiss our feet.  
With mysterious sadness  
the stars will shine down on us.  
ALEKSEI PLESHCHEYEV

23. July: The Song of the Reaper (1.45)

Move the shoulders,  
shake the arms!  
And the noon wind  
breathes in the face!  
ALESKEI KOLTISOV

24. August: The Harvest (3.17)

The harvest has grown,  
people in families cutting the tall rye down to the root!  
Put together the haystacks,  
music screeching all night from the hauling carts.  
ALEKSEI KOLTISOV

25. September: The Hunt (2.51)

It is time! The horns are sounding!  
The hunters in their hunting dress  
are mounted on their horses;  
in early dawn the borzois are jumping.  
ALEXANDER PUSHKIN, GRAF NULIN

26. October: Autumn Song (4.56)

Autumn, our poor garden is all fading away,  
the yellowed leaves are flying in the wind.  
ALESKEI TOLSTOY

27. November: Troika (2.52)

In your loneliness do not look at the road,  
and do not rush out after the troika.  
Suppress at once and forever  
the fear of longing in your heart.  
NIKOLAI NEKRASOV

28. December: Christmas Eve (4.37)

Once upon a Christmas night  
the girls were telling fortunes:  
taking their slippers off their feet  
and throwing them out of the gate.  
VASILY ZHUKOVSKY





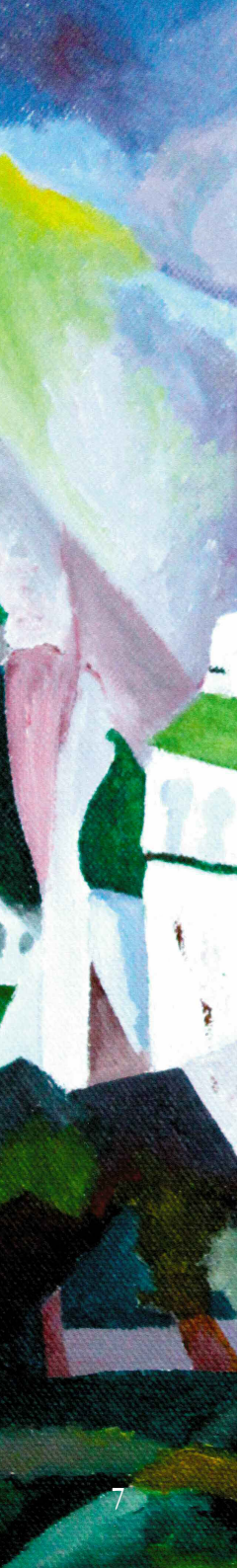
'Tchaikovsky with Flower' by Clive Wright (2019)



**P**IOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY's 'Seasons' (1876) and Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky's 'Pictures at an Exhibition' (1874) need little introduction as the two pioneering Russian piano cycles of their age. Each of the two cycles were composed with exceptional rapidity – Mussorgsky's 'boiled feverishly' within him for three weeks; Tchaikovsky set aside one morning each month to 'quickly toss and turn' each of his twelve 'pancakes'. Both cycles are made up of a series of miniatures, many headed by evocative and intriguing titles, and some with additional epigraphs. Tchaikovsky called his pieces 'characteristic scenes' – less a literal programmatic depiction than a tableau suggesting the emotional response that the spirit of a particular month evoked for him. Mussorgsky revealed that he wanted his 'promenades' to capture the uncouth ruggedness of his physiognomy and uneven stride as he beheld of the canvases in turn.

The allure of titles has inevitably encouraged much discussion about the individual miniatures encased within both cycles. Musically, the iconic tropes that are scattered throughout the two cycles also lend themselves well to a comforting sense of 'recognition' for performer and audience alike: the pealing of festive church bells; the delicately jingling troika sleigh bells; Russian Orthodox chants; the flickering of torches in underground catacombs; the bustling energy of Shrovetide carnivals and market squares; the shivering of the poor downtrodden Jew; nagging children and squabbling nannies; the song of the lark; the mud flicking off the massive wheels of the passing ox-drawn cart; the reaper's song and agitation to clear away the harvest before the autumn downpours; the swooping flight of the terrifying witch, Baba Yaga, in her pestle and mortar through the forest canopy, and so on. Far less discussed, however, is what kind of larger artistic narrative these evidently autobiographic moments captured in Tchaikovsky's scenes or Mussorgsky's canvases might form. It is this overarching journey is what can really allow a performer to make his or her personal mark on the interpretation of these masterpieces.





For me, these are studies in personal character – a collection of self-portraits that bring Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky on an introspective journey that tackles anxiety and takes them onto the path of self-acceptance. The insistent juxtaposition of work and repose in Tchaikovsky's 'Seasons' reflects his deep-rooted nervousness of time's fateful passage and fear of its idle waste ('I make an appointment with Madame Muse every morning at exactly eleven o'clock'); with his yearning for stillness in which to immerse himself and delight in life's charms and dreams – the delicate impressions of which would quietly savour with that distinctive nostalgia.

Standing face-to-face the freakish and grotesque Mussorgsky's *Pictures* vividly grapple with the fear of isolation. He does so with an impish sense of humour – ridiculing the pretentious, and finding something indulgently heart-warming in the outcast. Moving from the innocent to the downright dark and sinister surveys that make their appearance towards the end of the cycle, the triumphant Great Gate of Kiev announces Mussorgsky's overcoming of doubt and fear – standing at the cusp of Kievan Rus, the symbolic beginning of the Slavic peoples, his wandering through the exhibition has charted a journey that has faced his insecurities and brought him back to his roots, heartland and soul.

Maria Razumovskaya © 2019

The front cover painting is by Maria Razumovskaya, in the manner of Vasily Kandinsky

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Piano: Steinway & Sons

Technician: Joseph Taylor

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**M**ARIA RAZUMOVSKAYA has been described as a 'virtuoso story-teller of the piano' (Le Courier). As a soloist and chamber musician her recitals, recordings and radio broadcasts have taken her to some of the most coveted festivals and concert platforms around the world. With her playing praised as 'exquisitely cast' (Pizzicato) and 'staggeringly passionate' (Gramophone), Maria Razumovskaya's interest is in giving performances that aim to narrate the autobiographic, psychological inner-world of the composer. Underpinning her commitment to sharing the curiosities shaping the stories of the music and its makers is her writing – including monographs, book chapters and articles – and teaching at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and guest faculty member at numerous international festivals.