

MARCO POLO

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Anatol **LIADOV**

Baba Yaga • Intermezzo • Ballade
Enchanted Lake • Mazurka • Nenie
Polonaises • Kikimora • Apocalypse

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra
Stephen Gunzenhauser



Anatol Liadov (1855 - 1914)

Anatol Liadov belongs to the younger generation of Russian nationalist composers, one of the first to attend the musical Friday evenings of Belyayev that were to replace in popularity the Tuesdays of Balakirev, self-appointed guide to Stasov's Mighty Handful. He was born into a musical family. His grandfather had been a musician and his father was for eighteen years, until 1868, conductor at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, where his son was born in 1855.

Conservatories had been established in St. Petersburg and in Moscow by the Rubinstein brothers in the 1860s, against the opposition of Stasov, who took exception to Anton Rubinstein's description of his favourite musicians as amateurs, and feared the regimentation that German-style conservatories might impose. Liadov's first lessons were from his father, followed, in 1870, by admission to St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he initially studied piano and violin. These interests were soon to be replaced by lessons from Johannsen in counterpoint, an abiding interest, and composition classes with Rimsky-Korsakov, from the second of which he was expelled after unexcused absences. Composition classes were resumed in 1878 and Liadov graduated with a setting of part of Schiller's *Bride of Messina* as his graduation composition.

After completing his studies, Liadov was employed at the Conservatory as a teacher of elementary theory, later taking over classes in counterpoint. He resigned in 1905 at the time of Rimsky-Korsakov's dismissal, after the student disturbances of that year, with which Rimsky-Korsakov had expressed sympathy. He resumed his position, as did other members of staff, when Rimsky-Korsakov was reinstated, with Glazunov replacing Bernhard as director of the establishment.

Even in the 1870s Liadov had made an impression on the Five, with whom

his name was to be associated. Mussorgsky described him as an original and Russian young talent, and his collaboration with Borodin, Cui, Rimsky-Korsakov and Shcherbachov in a light-hearted set of variations, *Parafrazi*, on a common-place theme, had delighted Liszt, who used the work as a demonstration piece for his pupils.

At first Liadov had received encouragement from Balakirev, emerging from a period of silence, but still inspired with uncomfortable religious zeal. In the 1880s he became one of the first to join Belyayev's group, serving as an adviser on the publications that the latter paid for and sharing the responsibility for the concern with Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov after Belyayev's death in 1904.

As a composer Liadov was less hard-working than he might have been. It was his tendency to procrastinate that was to win Stravinsky his chance with Dyagilev, when the score commissioned for *The Firebird* was not finished in time, although the work had already been advertised for performance in Paris. It was on that occasion that he was asked by Dyagilev how the music was progressing, and replied that things were going very well and that he had just bought some ruled paper.

Liadov's music was to be used by Dyagilev's company after the composer's death in 1914. In 1916 Massine choreographed *Kikimora*, which was performed first in San Sebastian. This was to form part of a longer ballet, *Contes russes*, offered in Paris in 1917 season. The part of *Kikimora* was created by Lydia Sokolova. *Baba-Yaga*, completed in 1904, was to form part of Massine's ballet, the story of the witch Baba-Yaga, who crunches up children's bones and flies through the air, with her hut on bird's legs.

The *Intermezzo*, Opus 8, was written for piano in 1883 but orchestrated by the composer in 1902. The *Ballade* subtitled *About olden times* (*Prostarinu*), was composed for piano in 1889 and arranged for orchestra in 1906.

The *Enchanted Lake* (*Volshebnoye ozero*), Opus 62, was completed in 1909, a magic creation, based on Russian legend, while the *Mazurka*, Opus

19, described as A Village Scene by the Inn (Sel'skaya stsena u korchnoi), a self explanatory sub-title, was the work of 1889, its origins clear enough.

Nénie, Opus 67 (Skoronaya pesn), Liadov's final symphonic poem, a lament written in the last year of his life, marks something of an extension of harmonic idiom, while the Polonaise, Opus 49, and the Polonaise, Opus 55, written in 1899 and 1902 respectively, are commemorative works, the first in memory of the poet Pushkin on the centenary of his birth, and the second to mark the unveiling of a statue to Anton Rubinstein.

Kikimora evokes one of the ugliest of Russian demons, trouble-making wife of the Domovoi, the house-spirit, to be propitiated only by washing pots and pans in fern-tea. The piece was written in 1909, followed in 1912 by From the Apocalypse, Opus 66 (Iz Apoklipsisisa).

Both Kikimora and The Enchanted Lake contain music intended for an abortive opera, Zoryushka, its subject old Slavonic legend. The programmatic appeal of these pieces and Baba-Yaga and the strong rhythms of the dance-pieces explain easily enough the attraction the music of Liadov has had for choreographers.

Stephen Gunzenhauser

The American conductor Stephen Gunzenhauser was educated in New York, continuing his studies at Oberlin, at the Salzburg Mozarteum, at the New England Conservatory and at Cologne State Conservatory. His period at the last of these was the result of a Fulbright Scholarship, followed by an award from the West German Government and a first prize in the conducting competition held in the Spanish town of Santiago.

For NAXOS Gunzenhauser recorded Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5, Beethoven's Overtures, the Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony, Orff's Carmina Burana and the symphonies of Borodin.

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STEREO

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MARCO POLO

Anatol
LIADOV
(1855 - 1914)

Orchestral Works

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra
Stephen Gunzenhauser, Conductor

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|-----------|---|---------------|
| 1 | Baba Yaga, Op. 56 | (3:04) |
| 2 | Intermezzo, Op. 8 | (2:48) |
| 3 | Ballade, Op. 21b | (5:16) |
| 4 | The Enchanted Lake, Op. 62 | (7:55) |
| 5 | Mazurka, Op. 19 | (7:25) |
| 6 | Nénie, Op. 67 | (3:34) |
| 7 | Polonaise, Op. 49 | (6:20) |
| 8 | Polonaise, Op. 55 | (4:21) |
| 9 | Kikimora, Op. 63 | (8:10) |
| 10 | Fragment from the Apocalypse, Op. 66 | (8:41) |

Recorded at the Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic
Orchestra in May, 1985.

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