



Nikolai RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

Capriccio Espagnol

Nikolai Andreyevich Rimsky-Korsakov (18 March 1844 – 21 June 1908) was a Russian composer, and a member of the group of composers known as The Five. He was a master of orchestration. His best-known orchestral compositions—*Capriccio Espagnol*, the Russian Easter Festival Overture, and the symphonic suite *Scheherazade*—are staples of the classical music repertoire, along with suites and excerpts from some of his 15 operas. *Scheherazade* is an example of his frequent use of fairy-tale and folk subjects. Rimsky-Korsakov believed in developing a nationalistic style of classical music, as did his fellow composer Mily Balakirev and the critic Vladimir Stasov. This style employed Russian folk song and lore along with exotic harmonic, melodic and rhythmic elements in a practice known as musical orientalism, and eschewed traditional Western compositional methods. Rimsky-Korsakov appreciated Western musical techniques after he became a professor of musical composition, harmony, and orchestration at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory in 1871. He undertook a rigorous three-year program of self-education and became a master of Western methods, incorporating them alongside the influences of Mikhail Glinka and fellow members of The Five. Rimsky-Korsakov's techniques of composition and orchestration were further enriched by his exposure to the works of Richard Wagner. For much of his life, Rimsky-Korsakov combined his composition and teaching with a career in the Russian military—first as an officer in the Imperial Russian Navy, then as the civilian Inspector of Naval Bands. He wrote that he developed a passion for the ocean in childhood from reading books and hearing of his older brother's exploits in the navy. This love of the sea may have influenced him to write two of his best-known orchestral works, the musical tableau *Sadko* (not to be confused with his later opera of the same name) and *Scheherazade*. As Inspector of Naval Bands, Rimsky-Korsakov expanded his knowledge of woodwind and brass playing, which enhanced his abilities in orchestration. He passed this knowledge to his students, and also posthumously through a textbook on orchestration that was completed by his son-in-law Maximilian Steinberg. Rimsky-Korsakov left a considerable body of original Russian nationalist compositions. He prepared works by The Five for performance, which brought them into the active classical repertoire (although there is controversy over his editing of the works of Modest Mussorgsky), and shaped a generation of younger composers and musicians during his decades as an educator. Rimsky-Korsakov is therefore considered "the main architect" of what the classical-music public considers the "Russian style".[3] His influence on younger composers was especially important, as he served as a transitional figure between the autodidacticism exemplified by Glinka and The Five and professionally trained composers, who became the norm in Russia by the closing years of the 19th century. While Rimsky-Korsakov's style was based on those of Glinka, Balakirev, Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt and, for a brief period, Wagner, he "transmitted this style directly to two generations of Russian composers" and influenced non-Russian composers including Maurice Ravel, Claude Debussy, Paul Dukas, and Ottorino Respighi.

Capriccio espagnol, Op. 34, is the common Western title for a five movement orchestral suite, based on Spanish folk melodies, composed by the Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov in 1887. It received its premier on 31 October 1887, in St. Petersburg, performed by the Imperial Orchestra conducted by the composer. Rimsky-Korsakov originally intended to write the work for a solo violin with orchestra, but later decided that a purely orchestral work would do better justice to the lively melodies. The Russian title is *Каприччио на испанские темы* (*Capriccio on Spanish Themes*). The work has five movements, divided into two parts comprising the first three and the latter two movements respectively. The first movement, *Alborada*, is a festive and exciting dance, typically from traditional Asturian music to celebrate the rising of the sun. It features the clarinet with two solos, and later features a solo violin with a solo similar to the clarinet's. The second movement, *Variazioni*, begins with a melody in the horn section. Variations of this melody are then repeated by other instruments and sections of the orchestra. The third movement, *Alborada*, presents the same Asturian dance as the first movement. The two movements are nearly identical, in fact, except that this movement has a different instrumentation and key. The fourth movement, *Scena e canto gitano* ("Scene and Gypsy song") opens with five cadenzas — first by the horns and trumpets, then solo violin, flute, clarinet, and harp — played over rolls on various percussion instruments. It is then followed by a dance in triple time leading attacca into the final movement. The fifth and final movement, *Fandango asturiano*, is also an energetic dance from the Asturias region of northern Spain. The piece ends with an even more rousing statement of the *Alborada* theme. A complete performance of the *Capriccio* takes approximately 16 minutes. It is scored for piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes (one doubling on cor anglais), 2 clarinets (in B \flat and A), 2 bassoons, 4 horns (in F), 2 trumpets (in B \flat , A), 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine, castanets, harp, and strings.