

Seagull Research/Thoughts

Music in Russia did not change as rapidly as music did in Europe because of the bar on music held by the Orthodox Church. Music did start to evolve in Russia though and by the reign of Peter the first we were seeing to forms of Russian music. Peter saw European music as a mark of civilization and a way of Westernizing the country so he fully embraced these new forms. Music from the time of *The Seagull* was in the European style but still have many influences of “old style” Russian music. This is why listening to Russian classical music you can tell it apart from other countries classical music.

For this production perhaps we use music directly from the time period, but we use only piano instead of full orchestrations. Piano only to foreshadow Konstantine somberly playing piano in the 4th act. To me this is a very important moment in the show and I would like to incorporate piano into the whole show. We could use full orchestrations as a bookend for the show. They have more energy and can draw the audience in at the beginning and give them a good ending. If possible still use piano forward compositions to help with the sound flow of the show.

Russian Composers

Shostakovich

Shostakovich achieved fame in the Soviet Union under the patronage of Soviet chief of staff Mikhail Tukhachevsky, but later had a complex and difficult relationship with the government. Nevertheless, he received accolades and state awards and served in the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR (1947–1962) and the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union (from 1962 until his death).

After a period influenced by Sergei Prokofiev and Igor Stravinsky, Shostakovich developed a hybrid style, as exemplified by *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. This single work juxtaposed a wide variety of trends, including the neo-classical style (showing the influence of Stravinsky) and post-Romanticism (after Gustav Mahler). Sharp contrasts and elements of the grotesque characterize much of his music.

Shostakovich's orchestral works include 15 symphonies and six concerti. His chamber output includes 15 string quartets, a piano quintet, two piano trios, and two pieces for string octet. His piano works include two solo sonatas, an early set of preludes, and a later set of 24 preludes and fugues. Other works include three operas, several song cycles, ballets, and a substantial quantity of film music; especially well known is *The Second Waltz*, Op. 99, music to the film *The First Echelon*.

Rimsky- Korsakov

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.

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Sergei Vasilievich Rachmaninoff was a Russian composer, pianist, and conductor. Rachmaninoff is widely considered as one of the finest pianists of his day and, as a composer, one of the last great representatives of Romanticism in Russian classical music.

Early influences of Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and other Russian composers gave way to a personal style notable for its song-like melodicism, expressiveness and his use of rich orchestral colors. The piano is featured prominently in Rachmaninoff's compositional output, and through his own skills as a performer he explored the expressive possibilities of the instrument.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Was a Russian composer whose works included symphonies, concertos, operas, ballets, chamber music, and a choral setting of the Russian Orthodox Divine Liturgy. Some of these are among the most popular theatrical music in the classical repertoire.

Mily Balakirev

was a Russian pianist, conductor and composer known today primarily for his work promoting musical nationalism and his encouragement of more famous Russian composers, notably Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. He began his career as a pivotal figure, extending the fusion of traditional folk music and experimental classical music practices begun by composer Mikhail Glinka. In the process, Balakirev developed musical patterns that could express overt nationalistic feeling. After a nervous breakdown and consequential sabbatical, he returned to classical music but did not wield the same level of influence as before. In conjunction with critic and fellow nationalist Vladimir Stasov, in the late-1850s and early 1860s Balakirev brought together the composers now known as The Five—the others were Alexander Borodin, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. For several years, Balakirev was the only professional musician of the group; the others were amateurs limited in musical education.

Anton Rubinstein

He was a Russian pianist, composer and conductor who became a pivotal figure in Russian culture when he founded the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. He was the elder brother of Nikolai Rubinstein who founded the Moscow Conservatory.

As a pianist, Rubinstein ranks amongst the great 19th-century keyboard virtuosos. He became most famous for his series of historical recitals—seven enormous, consecutive concerts covering the history of piano music. Rubinstein played this series throughout Russia and Eastern Europe and in the United States when he toured there.

Although best remembered as a pianist and educator (most notably in the latter as the composition teacher of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky), Rubinstein was also a prolific composer throughout much of his life. He wrote 20 operas, the best known of which is *The Demon*. He also composed a large number of other works, including five piano concertos, six symphonies and a large number of solo piano works along with a substantial output of works for chamber ensemble.