

MUSORGSKY

Modest Petrovich
(1839 -1881)

Musorgsky was the only member of the 'Moguchaya Kuchka' to die before the advent of the Belaieff publishing house, and much of his music had already appeared in print—predominantly through Bessel (who was to continue to produce posthumous works until 1922/23 in Paris). Others of his publishers include Bernard (through his periodical 'Le Nouvelliste'), Jurgenson, Gutheil, Büttner, Johansen and Bernard, the last named being responsible for his earliest published composition, the 'Porte-enseigne' Polka (1852).

Belaieff had the opportunity to acquire the publication rights of a few compositions of Musorgsky which had previously appeared with, respectively, Büttner and Johansen. They may be described collectively as 'a mixed bag'. Certain of the miscellaneous group of seven songs, entitled 'Romances et Chansons', are among Musorgsky's finest and best known. Belaieff was the first and only publisher in Russia before nationalization of the music industry following the Revolution, to issue Musorgsky's song, 'The Seminarist', dating from 1866, and privately printed by Musorgsky in Germany in 1870, due to censorship restrictions.

The title pages of all Belaieff publications of Musorgsky's works are exhibited. Though none falls into the 'coloured, decorative' category, the pre-eminent position held by Musorgsky in the history and development of Russian music dictates that he be accorded a proud place in the Belaieff catalogue.

'ZWEI KLAVIERSTÜCKE / TWO PIANO PIECES'

The title is that of the Belaieff edition. The pieces are as follows:

No.1 'Ein Kinderscherz'. The first autograph is dated 26th September, 1859, titled 'Ugolki' and dedicated to Nikolai Alexandrovich Levashev.

No.2 'Intermezzo'. The work originated in the early 1860's,¹ when Musorgsky was staying in the country, in the area of Karev and Toropetzky, in the Pskov government. V. V. Stasov relates how, in the 1870's, Musorgsky told him that the severe opening theme was suggested by the sight of peasants stumbling through the snowdrifts.

Unlike the conventional 'Kinderscherz', agreeably fleet fingered in the harmonic manner of Balakirev, the 'Intermezzo' is full of angularities, and has been described as one of the first works to represent a complete break with Balakirev. Indeed, it seems to presage something of Musorgsky's 'Pictures from an Exhibition'.

Both these pieces were first published in Germany by A. Büttner in 1873,² within an album for piano, known as 'Frühlingsblüten', containing the following:

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| 1. M. v. Azanchevsky | Allegro tranquillo |
| 2. F. Czerny | A la Mazurka |
| 3. I. Johansen | Am Meer |
| 4. M. Musorgsky | Ein Kinderscherz |
| 5. M. Musorgsky | Intermezzo |
| 6. A. Reichhardt | Walzer |
| 7. A. Rubetz | Kinderstückchen |
| 8. H. Wölfl | Energico |

According to Rimsky-Korsakov, Belaieff acquired the rights to publish these pieces from Büttner in 1889. Although not dated, as is usually the case with Belaieff scores, their plate numbers (viz. 305 & 306 respectively) would suggest that they appeared the following year. The title pages are plain, with black lettering on a white background. The printing of the music is in very small type.

