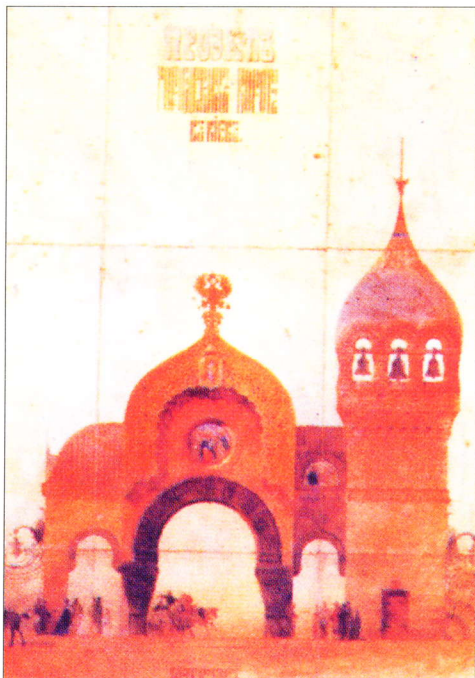


*Mussorgsky*

A portrait of pianist Nina Kavtaradze with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a red dress and a necklace. The background is a dark blue gradient.

**COMPLETE PIANO WORKS Vol 2**  
**Nina Kavtaradze**

Jana  
cord



Hartmann. Architectural sketch for a City Gate of Kiev.

## Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky (1839-81): Piano music, vol. 2

**Pictures at an Exhibition** (1874) 38:46

[ 1 ] **Promenade** 1:25

[ 2 ] **Gnomus** 3:39

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[ 4 ] **Il vecchio Castello** (The old Castle) 4:42

[ 5 ] **Promenade** 0:30

[ 6 ] **Les Tuileries** (Dispute d'enfants après jeux) (The Tuileries. Children's quarrel after a game) 1:14

[ 7 ] **Bydlo** 2:56

[ 8 ] **Promenade** 0:59

[ 9 ] **Ballet of the unhatched Chickens** 1:27

[10] **Deux juifs l'un riche et l'autre pauvre.** (Samuel Goldenberg und Schmuyle) 3:12

[11] **Promenade** 1:25

[12] **Limoges. Le marché. (La grande nouvelle)** (Limoges. The Market) 1:48

[13] **Catacombæ (Sepulcrum Romanum)** (Catacombs) 2:05

[14] **Cum mortuis in lingua mortua** (With the dead in the language of the dead) 2:17

[15] **The Hut on Chicken's Legs** (Baba Yaga) 4:23

[16] **The Heroic Gate (in the Capital of Kiev)** 5:39

[17] **Hopak de jeunes ukrainiens (fragment d l'opéra) "La foire de Sorotchintsy"**

(Hopak of the young Ukrainians (fragment of the opera) "The Fair of Sorochinsk"

(second version) (Transcription for the piano by the composer), G major (1874-80) 1:52

[18] **Scène de foire (de l'opéra) "La foire de Sorotchintsy"** (Scene at the Fair (from the opera)

"The Fair of Sorochinsk" (Transcription for the piano by the composer) (1874-80) 5:01

**Sonata (for piano duet)**, C major (1860) 10:48

[19] **Allegro** 6:12

[20] **Scherzo** 4:40

with Michail Voskresensky - piano

## Nina Kavtaradze - Piano

## **Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky (1839-81): Piano music, vol. 2**

The Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky belongs to the group with which the pianist and composer Mily Balakirev surrounded himself and which the critic Stasov called “The Mighty Handful”, later, in the West, altered to “The Five”. Balakirev’s and the group’s ideal was national music which could liberate itself from the forms and styles of Western music. With his songs set to his own words and those of Russian poets and, perhaps first and foremost, his opera “Boris Godunov”, Mussorgsky attempted to live up to this ideal and indeed became the most Russian of all Russian composers.

Already as a youth when he began training as an officer he manifested himself as an outstanding, virtuoso pianist, probably one of the best Russian players of his generation. However it was not as a concert pianist he was to achieve success. Under Balakirev’s tutelage he had begun to compose at an early age, but he had difficulty in establishing himself. It was thought that the unusual, strange character of his music was owing to a lack of musical training, and it was only later that people understood that this element of strangeness was quite simply an expression of profound and personal originality rooted in Russian folk-lore.

Mussorgsky had an alcohol problem and this is probably the most important reason for the limited extent of his artistic production and why he left more uncompleted works than perhaps any other composer. Apart from songs and piano music only the opera “Boris Godunov” was completely finished, in two versions at that, for even though he composed his other folk-opera “Khovantchina” right through to the end, he never managed to orchestrate it.

Most of Mussorgsky’s piano works are short characteristic pieces, many on a trifling scale, but often of significant content. His greatest work apart from the operas is the piano suite “Pictures at an Exhibition” which was composed in 1874.

Mussorgsky’s good friend, the draughtsman and architect Victor Hartmann, died unexpectedly and a memorial exhibition was arranged for him. Mussorgsky visited the exhibition and felt moved to commemorate his late friend in music.

The suite consists of ten “pictures” introduced by a “Promenade” which returns several times during the suite, albeit each time in altered form. This piece is a depiction of Mussorgsky himself and appears between the pictures when he leaves one exhibition room in order to enter the next. The varying form of the piece each time it is heard reflects the shifting moods of the composer.

“Promenade” is in all its manifestations a remarkable and extremely original piece of music. It is centred upon the modes (the old medieval church modes) and is characteristic in its clear, angular melodic form and irregular, constantly changing time signatures.

The first picture is “Gnomus”. In his programme for “Pictures at an Exhibition” Stasov writes: “Gnomus – drawing which shows a little gnome awkwardly staggering on his bow legs”. This is a tragic figure, an embittered person who hits back at the insults he receives. His sufferings seem mortifying and the music is reminiscent of the figure Jurodivy in “Boris Godunov”. Hartmann’s drawing has disappeared.

After a repetition of “Promenade” now in altered form comes a romantic picture of a medieval Italian castle where a troubadour stands below in front of a balcony and sings his serenade. The piece sounds so uncanny however that one is compelled to believe that it is an apparition which stands in front of the haunted castle singing a song which is suggestive of Death’s serenade in Mussorgsky’s song cycle “Death’s songs and dances”.

Another “Promenade” is followed by a Parisian picture of children playing in the park Les Tuileries. The children start quarrelling when play is over. “Bydlo” is a picture of a Polish ox cart which is dragged through heavy, sticky mud by the animals, a realistically depicted scene which also tells of the poor peasants’ drudgery.

Again a “Promenade” and after that “The Ballet of the unhatched Chickens”. Hartmann’s drawing is a costume sketch for the ballet “Trilby”. Mussorgsky gives a precise and charming picture of the small chickens pecking their way out of the eggs.

The following picture appears in various versions under different titles, but it represents two Jews, one rich and the other poor, who talk and quarrel. In some sources they are called “Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle”. Here Mussorgsky brilliantly describes the two characters, the one whining and braying loudly, the other condescendingly unruffled in his deep bass register.

At this point “Promenade” comes for the last time followed by a lively depiction of a market scene in the French town Limoges. From there we are led to the catacombs under Paris where Hartmann – and another architect – shudder at the sight of the skulls which smilingly greet them. The piece continues without a break in “Con mortuis in lingua mortua”, with the dead in the language of the dead, where the Promenade theme is quoted, perhaps as an expression of Mussorgsky’s fear of death.

The witch is a favourite motive in Russian folk-tales. She is called Baba Yaga and is familiar to every Russian child. Traditionally her dwelling is represented as a hut standing on a chicken’s legs.

The piece leads directly into the suite’s finale, an architectural sketch for a triumphal arch in Kiev that was never built. Here the Russian tone – and Mussorgsky’s pianistic virtuosity – is exultant. In mighty chords everything one associates with Russia is conjured up: hymn-like melody and imitations of pealing bells which lead the suite to a grandiose close.

“Pictures at an Exhibition” was not published in Mussorgsky’s lifetime, but when the work reached Western Europe it aroused such enthusiasm that several composers attempted to make it better known by arranging it for orchestra...Ravel’s adaptation has become the most familiar, but there are others by Leopold Stokowski, Sergei Gorchakov, Vladimir Ashkenazy and the Finnish conductor Leo Funteks.

The opera “The Market in Sorotchinsk” is one of Mussorgsky’s many unfinished works. Mussorgsky was apparently extremely enthusiastic about his music and transcribed some numbers from the opera for the piano. The dance “Hopak” is the more well known of them. It is often heard in the orchestral version by Mussorgsky’s friend Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov.

The market scene from “The Market in Sorotchinsk” was also arranged for piano by Mussorgsky himself. Highly characteristically for the composer, who in many respects anticipates Debussy’s later impressionistic style, the tonality is blurred. The piece begins in F sharp minor but the tonality constantly changes.

Mussorgsky put off finishing the opera because he feared that as a Russian it would not be possible for him to compose Ukrainian-sounding recitatives. But a circle of friends commissioned a completion of

the opera, also in order to support him materially, and in the summer of 1880 a music periodical mentioned a forthcoming *première*. Work was however interrupted owing to Mussorgsky's illness and death.

The Sonata in C major is Mussorgsky's only essay in the classical form. Characteristically enough the composer never completed this work either, since there are only two movements, allegro and scherzo, of which the scherzo builds on a previously-composed piece, Scherzo in C sharp minor.

The first movement hardly sounds like Russian music at all and is in an already slightly outdated style. Mussorgsky tries to observe the classical sonata-movement form, making the piece somewhat predictable. The scherzo seems more original. Here the Russian inspiration is unmistakable.

*Mogens Wenzel Andreassen*  
Translated by Gwyn Hodgson

This recording was supported by the Augustinus Fonden and Solistforeningen of 1921.  
Piano: Steinway, Juhl-Sørensen.

## **Nina Kavtaradze**

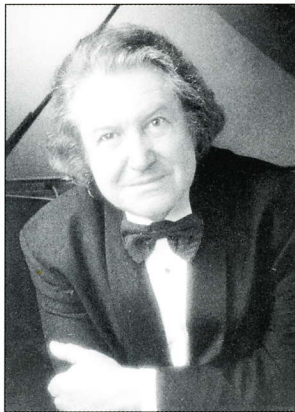
commenced her musical studies at the age of 6 at the Central Music School of the Conservatoire in her city of birth, Moscow. Eleven years later she graduated to the Conservatoire proper joining the class of Lev Oborin. Following her graduation, the great teacher was to write this of his pupil: "she is a musician who possesses talent of the very highest order, with considerable artistic depth and brilliant individuality". Kavtaradze has given concerts through the former Soviet Union, USA and in many European countries, performing as a soloist under conductors such as Yuri Ahronovitch, Sir Charles Groves, Leif Segerstam, Jorma Panula, Kurt Sanderling, Lamberto Gardelli and Mariss Jansons. She has given recitals with artists such as Jean-Pierre Ra—pal, Felix Ayo, Liana Isakadze and Victor Pikaizen, and since 1986 she has formed a duo with Erling Blöndal Bengtsson with whom she has appeared extensively throughout the world. Her vast repertoire comprises both the familiar and the lesser known (she has recently recorded the complete piano works of Richard Wagner for the label Kontrapunkt and edited these works for the internet company Amazing Music World). With her individuality and virtuosity she remains, in the words of a leading critic; "one of our foremost pianists".

### **The press wrote a.o. about Mussorgsky Complete Piano Works Vol. 1 DACOCD 551**

*The pianist is off to a fine beginning with this Mussorgsky-project. The interpretations are colorful and the well-done recording adds to the pleasure of listening to this music*  
WAA, the Netherlands

*"Nina Kavtaradze's contribution, strongly individual and Slavic is of great interest.*  
American Record Guide, USA

*What a wonderful composer Mussorgsky is. And how richly this is expressed in the way Kavtaradze plays, always marked by sensitivity and engagement*  
Kristeligt Dagblad, Denmark

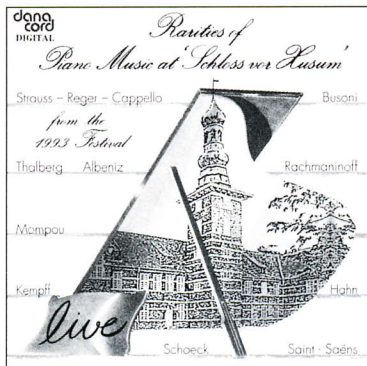
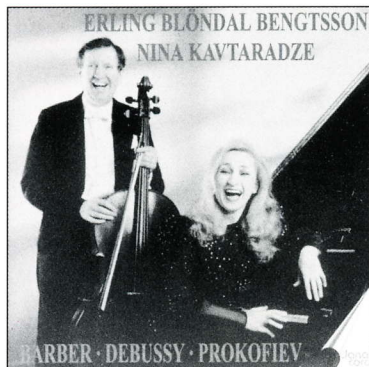


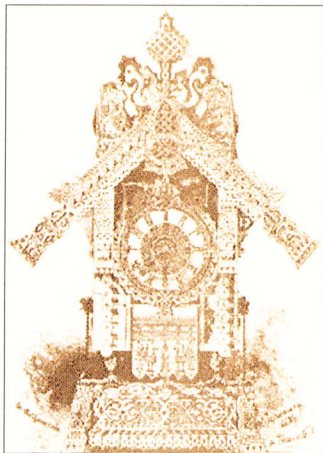
### **Michail Voskresensky**

is one of the leading pianists of Russia. The prizewinner of 4 international piano competitions (Schumann in Berlin, in Rio de Janeiro, George Enescu in Bucharest and Van Cliburn in Fort Worth, Texas), he has also received such awards as The Merited Artist in Russia (1966) and The People's Artist of Russia (1989). Voskresensky has an intensive concert career. His concerts in USA and Mexico in January 2001 received brilliant reviews. Voskresensky's repertoire includes all the sonatas by Beethoven, the complete works of Chopin, 52 concertos with orchestra which he has played with more than 150 conductors. Among these are John Pritchard, Kurt Masur, Evgenyi Svetlanov, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Kiril Kondrashin etc. Among his 37 compact disc releases you will find all the sonatas and studies by Scriabin and music by Mussorgsky and Shostakovich. The pupils of this well-known Professor at the Moscow Conservatoire have won 75 prizes in the international competitions, among them 32 gold medals. As a juror at international competitions he has been in London, Leeds, Sydney, Hamamatsu, Berlin, Utrecht and other places as well as at the Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov Competitions in Moscow. He is constantly the chairman of the Scriabin International Competition in Moscow. Voskresensky is the president of The Scriabin International Society and The Grieg Society in Moscow, the patron of EPTA-RUSSIA (European Piano Teachers' Association), Guest Professor at the Toho Gakuen School in Tokyo.

## Nina Kavtaradze

recordings on Danacord. For details please see: [www.danacord.dk](http://www.danacord.dk)





Hartmann. The catacombs in Paris.  
Design for a clock in the form of Baba Yaga's hut. - Costume design for the ballet "Trilby".





**DAC OCD 552**

DIGITAL DDD

Total playing time  
56.47

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Piano music, vol. 2

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