

BALAKIREV

Symphony No 1 · Tamara

Piano Concerto No 1 · Oleg Marshev

AARHUS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

JAMES LOUGHRAN



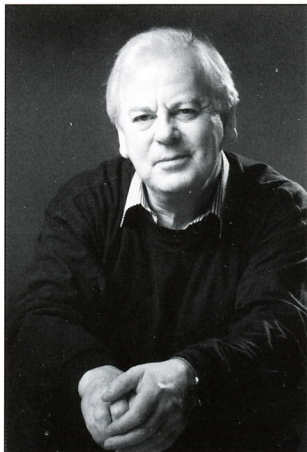
Mily Alexeyevich Balakirev (1837-1910)

- [1] **Tamara, Symphonic Poem**, 1882 21:47
Andante maestoso – Poco a poco più animato –
Allegro moderato, ma agitato – Poco animato –
Poco più animato – Meno mosso (doppio movimento)
– Poco meno mosso. Allegretto quasi Andantino –
Più agitato – Poco più animato – Vivace (alla breve) –
Poco meno mosso, ma agitato – L'istesso tempo –
Pochissimo meno mosso – Poco a poco più animato –
Animato – Poco più mosso – Ancora poco più animato –
Andante (meno mosso. Tempo di comincio)
- [2] **Piano Concerto**, Op 1 in F-sharp minor, 1855 13:33
Allegro moderato – Maestoso – Meno mosso.
Tempo moderato – Tempo I – Meno mosso.
Cantabile amoroso – Cadenza – Tempo I.
Più mosso – Meno mosso. Cantabile amoroso
- Symphony No 1** in C major, 1864-97 42:59
- [3] I Largo – Allegro vivo – Alla breve –
Più animato 13:14
- [4] II Scherzo: Vivo – Poco meno mosso –
Tempo I – Coda. L'istesso tempo 7:31
- [5] III Andante – attacca il finale 12:35
- [6] IV Finale: Allegro moderato (Thème russe) –
L'istesso tempo – Tempo di polacca 9:37

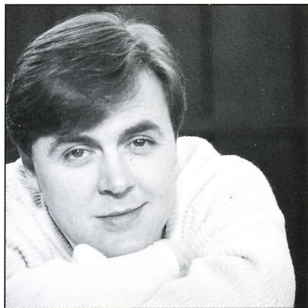
Oleg Marshev, piano [2]

James Loughran, conductor

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra



James Loughran (Photo ©Eric Thorburn)



Oleg Marshev (Photo: Danacord)

Mily Balakirev is one of the strangest figures in the history of music as well as being one of his country's most important. Depending on which calendar one uses he was born at the end of 1836 or the beginning of 1837 and grew up in Nijni-Novgorod, where at an early age he was taught the piano and attracted the attention of a local, music-loving landowner. He allowed the boy to avail himself of his capacious music library, and here the young Balakirev acquainted himself with Beethoven's chamber music. His mother took him to St. Petersburg where as a youngster he studied the piano with Alexander Dubuque, a pupil of the renowned Irish pianist and composer John Field, the "creator" of the nocturne, who had lived in the city for several years.

During his teens Balakirev was a soloist in Beethoven's "Emperor" concerto, playing for an audience which included the tsar and tsarina, and it was thought that he would pursue a career as a piano virtuoso. He undoubtedly had both the talent and technique necessary for this, but a delicate nervous system soon put a stop to these career prospects. Balakirev began composing at an early age, and although he had little grounding in the theory of music and composition, it soon became evident that he had considerable creative talent, well able to handle a large romantic symphony orchestra. But he worked slowly when composing, which was partly owing to his delicate mental disposition, and partly to his many activities as a musical co-ordinator and conductor. He had a remarkable ability for detecting talent in young, music-loving men and succeeded in finding with great confidence Alexander Borodin, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky and Nicholas Rimsky-Korsakov, all of whom he encouraged to compose, something they had not had much opportunity to do, and to keep away from the newly-opened conservatoires in St. Petersburg and Moscow and instead become Russian composers who, without being influenced by west European

classicism, could compose according to their own convictions and be influenced by Russian poetry, history and folklore. In other words, songs, operas and symphonic poems, rather than symphonies, string quartets and piano sonatas, which in the event only Cui and Mussorgsky complied with, since Borodin wrote two symphonies and two string quartets, Rimsky-Korsakov three symphonies. Nor was Balakirev himself true to his own ideals, writing as he did two symphonies, two piano concertos and a masterly piano sonata. Nicholas Rimsky-Korsakov has this to say about Balakirev in his book of memoirs: "From the very beginning Balakirev made a strong impression on me. He was a brilliant pianist, and his ability to sight-read and improvise was boundless...He had a comprehensive knowledge of all kinds of music and was at any given moment able to recall every single bar he had ever heard or read...We were completely spellbound by his talents, his authority, his magnetism..."

In the middle of his life and a promising career as a composer and conductor he turned his back on music in disappointment, and driven by religious scruples, he worked for some years as a railway official. He did however resume his musical career, but to his dissatisfaction realized that the public had forgotten him, and he died a disillusioned man. Nevertheless he is remembered for his efforts in awakening three young officers and a doctor to musical awareness and together with them created the group called "The Five", the national counterpart to the academically trained composers headed by Tchaikovsky. Besides the already mentioned works the symphonic poem Russia and the technically fiendishly difficult piano fantasia *Islamey* are worthy of mention.

Tamara, symphonic poem

With its oriental inspiration this skilfully crafted orchestral work is the direct inspiration for the

extended symphonic fairy-tale suite “Scheherazade”, based on The Arabian Nights Entertainments, by Balakirev’s friend Rimsky-Korsakov.

The starting point is a poem by Lermontov about the mysterious woman Tamara, and the music depicts abysses, torrential rivers, mists, a mysterious tower. The main theme in the work is Tamara’s seductive melody, which is presented on the flute and oboe in unison and is followed by a similar theme on the clarinet. The ill-fated traveller, who is ensnared by Tamar’s sorcery, dies when the nocturnal festivities end, and the lifeless person is swept away by the river.

With its lavish orchestral elaboration and seductive melodies Tamara ought to be capable of delighting an audience enamoured of Rimsky-Korsakov’s oriental charm in Scheherazade.

Concerto for piano and orchestra in F sharp minor

This so-called “juvenile concerto” is one of the very earliest Russian piano concertos (only Anton Rubinstein’s two first concertos written in 1850-52 are earlier, and they are not particularly Russian in character). It was written by an eighteen-year old young man with no musical training and with little experience of composing and is astonishing in its assured craftsmanship. Not only is the texture of the solo part pianistically brilliantly handled, but the treatment of the orchestra is also convincing.

The style could be described as Chopin with a Russian accent, but in particular the extremely beautiful second subject in the one-movement concerto is not without personality and demonstrates the composer’s dependence on Russian folk-music.

Symphony no. 1 in C major

The slow-working Balakirev slaved at this symphony with interruptions for thirty-three years. But the result was worth waiting for, since this is one of the most

important Russian symphonies of the nineteenth century, a wide-ranging work in the traditional four movements, but crafted with great originality. A sizeable orchestra is called for: three flutes, two oboes and cor anglais, three clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, three timpani, percussion including a triangle, cymbals and bass drum, and finally strings and harp.

The first movement has a slow introduction which incorporates the embryo of the allegro movement’s themes, since the main subject grows out of the first two bars of the slow introduction, while the second subject stems from a melodic idea played on the flute and violas from bar five onwards. In the accompanying second violins is heard a quotation from the opera Boris Godunov by Balakirev’s friend and pupil Mussorgsky. Balakirev’s exploitation of the thematic material, which is in evidence in every conceivable variation and metamorphosis, evinces the born symphonist with a superb sense of structure.

The scherzo, which is in A minor, has something of the Mendelssohnian, elfin-like airiness, but is clearly Russian in character. The lyrical theme from the D-minor trio section reappears at the end of the movement.

The scherzo’s languishing conclusion leads directly into the Andante, the longest movement in the symphony. It is in D flat major, and the main theme is presented on the clarinet accompanied by the harp and strings. The second subject in the movement, which is in sonata-rondo form, is in E major. With a series of arpeggio chords the harp leads directly into the finale in C major. A Russian-sounding theme is introduced as the main subject on the cellos and double-basses and is followed by a subsidiary theme in D major, played by the clarinet. Here Balakirev uses a song he had heard sung by a blind beggar.

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English translation: Gwyn Hodgson

James Loughran, a Scot, born in Glasgow, first came to notice when he won the Philharmonia Orchestra's Conducting Competition in 1961. The jury members included Otto Klemperer, Carlo Maria Giulini and Sir Adrian Boult. Subsequently, he became Principal Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra as well as making his debut conducting opera at Covent Garden, Sadler's Wells, the Netherlands Opera and the Scottish Opera.

In 1971, he was appointed successor to Barbirolli by the Hallé Orchestra and in 1979-83 he was Principal Conductor of the Bamberger Symphoniker.

James Loughran made outstanding recordings of the Beethoven and Brahms Symphonies during those years and his recording of Holst's "The Planets" won him a Gold Record. In July 1993 the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra conferred the title of Permanent Guest Conductor upon James Loughran, and he has regularly conducted in Japan.

Although James Loughran has a reputation as an excellent conductor of romantic music, he has championed contemporary composers and forged a policy of commissioning new works for the orchestras under his direction.

James Loughran has regularly conducted European orchestras from Stockholm to Barcelona as well as in the USA and Australia.

From 1996 to 2003 James Loughran committed himself to Denmark's Aarhus Symphony Orchestra as Chief conductor and now regularly returns as a very popular Guest conductor. In 1998 the orchestra recorded Brahms' Serenades under his direction. The CD was followed by recordings of Dvorák's Serenades and with Oleg Marshev Rachmaninov's works for piano and orchestra and Emil von Sauer's 2nd Piano Concerto.

Born in Baku, ex-USSR, **Oleg Marshev** trained with Valentina Aristova at the Gnesin School for Highly Gifted Children and with Mikhail Voskresensky at the Moscow Conservatory where he completed his Performance Doctorate in 1988 gaining the Diploma with Honour. Marshev is thus a direct representative of the fifth generation of Russian pianists since Liszt, through Alexander Siloti, Konstantin Igumnov and Voskresensky's teacher, Lev Oborin.

Marshev's First Prize in the 1988 "Pilar Bayona" International Piano Competition (Spain) proved the first in a series of illustrious competition victories which have confirmed the artist's reputation as one of the most talented Russian pianists of his generation: in 1990 he took First Prize and the Gold Medal at the AMSA World Piano Competition of Cincinnati; in 1991 First Prize at the Concorso Pianistico Internazionale "Citta di Marsala" and the following year he was awarded the coveted *Primo Premio Assoluto* in the Italian capital's premier competition, the Concorso Pianistico Internazionale "Roma 1992".

In addition to numerous engagements in his native country, Marshev has performed all over Europe, Scandinavia, Japan, New Zealand and in the United States and Canada. 1991 saw his New York debut with a highly acclaimed recital at the Lincoln Center "Alice Tully Hall" which led to an invitation to perform at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. Resident in Italy, the artist gives concerts regularly in that country's leading music centres. He is also in increasing demand as a teacher, holding masterclasses in Spain, Italy and the USA, and as a competition jury member (including that of the World Piano Competition in Cincinnati).

Oleg Marshev is an exclusive Danacord artist and has recorded more than 25 compact discs.

www.olegmarshev.com

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra

Aarhus Symfoniorkester

Chief Conductor: Giancarlo Andretta

General Manager: Leif V.S. Balthzersen

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Aarhus Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1935.

The venue of the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra is the Concert Hall Aarhus, which has a capacity of 1500 seats.

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra gives about thirty subscription concerts a year; furthermore the orchestra plays fifteen opera performances, about 100 concerts at local schools, chamber concerts, summer concerts, concerts for the elderly, and CD recordings.

The orchestra performs the whole classical repertoire, including choral works, but also enthusiastically supports contemporary music and has commissioned works by Danish composers. It performs regularly at the NUMUS and SPOR contemporary music festivals. In 1992 the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra played at the NEMO Festival and at the ICMC Festival 1994, the International Computer Music Conference. The Aarhus Symphony Orchestra has co-operated with The Royal Danish Ballet, the MBT Dance Theatre and the Leipzig Ballet.

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra has recorded a complete cycle of Vagn Holmboe's thirteen symphonies under the baton of the Welsh conductor Owain Arwel Hughes and a recording of a complete cycle of the symphonies of Franz Schubert with the Austrian conductor Hans Graf. The orchestra has recorded Brahms' Serenades under the direction of the orchestra's Scottish Chief Conductor James Loughran, followed by Dvorák-serenades and the

complete works for piano and orchestra by Rachmaninov. Other recordings include works by Niels W. Gade, Richard Strauss, Per Nørgård, Niels Viggo Bentzon, Bent Lorentzen, Francis Poulenc, Ivar Frounberg and Rued Langaard and the much acclaimed interpretations of music by Frederick Delius.

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra has a permanent co-operation with The Danish National Opera (Den Jyske Opera), and has since 1983 attracted international acclaim at the annual Festival in Aarhus, which has included Wagner's The Ring of the Nibelung, Tristan and Isolde and Parsifal and Strauss' Elektra, Salome and Die Schweigsame Frau.

The Aarhus Symphony has toured Sweden and Finland (1978), Canada (1986), Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival (1988), Edinburgh Festival (1990), Sweden and Spain (1991), England and Northern Ireland (1992), Gdansk, Riga, Tallinn and St. Petersburg (1995), Germany (1996) and Sweden (2003).

Ole Schmidt was Chief Conductor 1978-85, Norman Del Mar 1985-88, Eri Klas 1991-96 and James Loughran 1996-2003. Giancarlo Andretta was appointed Chief Conductor in 2003.

Recordings: Aarhus, Frichsparken,
18 September 2002 and 3-7 November 2003
Recording Producer and Supervisor: Lennart Dehn
Balance Engineer, Editing and Mastering:
Torbjörn Samuelsson
Executive Producer: Jesper Buhl

Cover illustration: Birgitte Bærentzen Pihl,
violinist in Aarhus Symphony Orchestra

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra on CD

Niels W. Gade: Korsfarerne (The Crusaders)
Frans Rasmussen, conductor (BIS CD-465)

Richard Strauss: Aus Italien & Macbeth
Norman Del Mar, conductor (ASV CD DCA 750)

Per Nørgård: Symphonies 2 & 4
Jorma Panula, conductor (Point PCD 5070)

Niels Viggo Bentzon: Symphonies 5, opus 61 'Ellipser' &
7, opus 83 'De tre versioner'
Ole Schmidt, conductor (dacapo 8.224111)

Vagn Holmboe: Symphony Cycle
Owain Arwel Hughes, conductor (BIS CD 572, 573, 605, 618,
695, 728, 750 and the complete cycle: BIS 843/846)

Niels Viggo Bentzon: Symphonies 3 & 4
Ole Schmidt, conductor (dacapo 9102)

Bent Lorentzen: Oboe and Trumpet Concertos
Frans Rasmussen, conductor (dacapo, DCCD 9314)

Francis Poulenc: Concerto for two pianos and orchestra
Frans Rasmussen, conductor (OLYMPIA, OCD 364)

Ivar Frounberg: What did the Sirens sing, as Ulysses Sailed by?
Frans Rasmussen, conductor (dacapo 8.224027)

Bent Lorentzen: Comics/**Jørgen Jersild:** Alice in Wonderland
Frans Rasmussen, conductor (Danacord, DACOCD 501)

Johannes Brahms: Serenades, Opus 11 & 16
James Loughran, conductor (Kontrapunkt 32286)

Rued Langgaard: Sinfonia Interna
Frans Rasmussen, conductor (dacapo 8.224136)

Antonin Dvorák: Serenades, opus 22 & 44
and some Slavonic Dances
James Loughran, conductor (Kontrapunkt 32308)

Frederick Delius: Danish Masterpieces
Bo Holten, conductor; Henriette Bonde-Hansen, soprano;
Johan Reuter, baritone; The Danish National Opera Chorus,
Aarhus Chamber Choir (Danacord, DACOCD 536)

Niels Viggo Bentzon: Piano Concerto no. 4, opus 96 &
Mobiles, opus 125 Ole Schmidt, conductor
Anker Blyme, piano (dacapo 8.224110)

Franz Schubert: Complete Symphonies
and some ouvertures Hans Graf, conductor
(Kontrapunkt 32318; 32321/22, 32319/20)

Frederick Delius: Norwegian Masterworks
Bo Holten, conductor; Henriette Bonde-Hansen, soprano;
John Kjølner, tenor; Hummerkoret; Aarhus University Choir;
Aarhus Chamber Choir (Danacord, DACOCD 592)

Sergei Rachmaninov: 4 Piano Concertos, Paganini Rhapsody;
James Loughran, conductor; Oleg Marshev, piano
(Danacord, DACOCD 582-583)

Gunnar Berg: Piano & orchestra; Ole Schmidt, conductor
Aloys Kontarsky, piano (Danacord, DACOCD 611-612)

Emil von Sauer: Piano Concerto No. 2.
Oleg Marshev, piano; James Loughran, conductor
(Danacord, DACOCD 596)

Tage Nielsen: Il Giardino magico, Passacaglia
Jean Thorel, conductor (dacapo 8.224702)

Knudåge Riisager: Quartsiluni. Månerenen;
Bo Holten, conductor (dacapo 8.226022)





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Torbjörn Samuelsson

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Mily Balakirev

(1837 – 1910)

Tamara
Symphonic Poem 21:47

Piano Concerto No 1
in F sharp minor, Op. 1 13:33

Symphony No 1
in C Major 42:59

Oleg Marshev, piano

James Loughran, conductor

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra

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