

The Swiss conductor, Ernest Ansermet, came from a musical family; he successively studied the clarinet, violin and brass instruments, which he used in fanfares; later he wrote military marches for the Swiss army which he did not consider important. Besides Music, he studied Mathematics in Lausanne and graduated with a Diploma in 1903; until 1906 he taught at the Lausanne Grammar School, then he decided to continue his studies at the Sorbonne and, at the same time, to attend courses at the Paris Conservatory. After his return to Lausanne, he taught Mathematics for one more year before devoting himself entirely to music.



Ansermet was a particular advocate of the Swiss composers Arthur Honegger and Frank Martin. He conducted the first performances of the following works of A. Honegger: *Horace victorieux* (1921), *Chant de joie* (1923), *Rugby* (1928) and *Pacific 231* (1923), which was dedicated to him, and of the following works of Frank Martin: *Symphonie* (1938), *In terra pax* (1945), *Der Sturm* (1956), *Le mystère de la Nativité* (1959), *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* (1963) and *Les Quatre Éléments*, which were dedicated to him. Also important were the first performances of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* (1946) and *Cantata misericordium* (1963).

## BORODIN

SYMPHONY NO. 2 - SYMPHONY NO. 3 - PRINCE IGOR - IN THE STEPPES OF CENTRAL ASIA

L'ORCHESTRE DE LA SUISSE ROMANDE

ANSERMET



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Though far from prolific as a composer -- by day he was a scientist noted for his research on aldehydes -- Alexander Borodin nevertheless earned a secure place in the history of Russian music. As a creative spirit, Borodin was the most accomplished of the Russian nationalists composers. He had a particular gift for the distinctive stripe of exoticism so evident in his most frequently performed work, the Polovtsian Dances from the opera Prince Igor.

The illegitimate son of a Georgian prince and a doctor's wife, Borodin enjoyed a comfortable upbringing. As a child he learned to play several instruments and tried his hand at composing, but other aptitudes directed his formal education. He studied chemistry at St. Petersburg's Medico-Surgical Academy, obtaining his doctorate in 1858 and pursuing further studies in Europe until 1862. Upon his return to Russia, he became a professor at his alma mater; but even as an academic career apparently loomed before him, he maintained a devotion to music.

Under the influence of Mily Balakirev, whom he met in 1862, Borodin became interested in applying elements of Russian folk music to works for the concert hall and stage. He joined a circle of like-minded composers -- Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, and Cui -- famously dubbed "The Five" or "The Mighty Handful." The influence of Balakirev in particular is at once in evident in the Symphony No. 1 in E flat major (1867). Borodin

began the much craggier Symphony No. 2 in B minor in 1869, the same year he commenced labor on his most important work, the opulent four-act opera Prince Igor. While it took Borodin more than five years to complete the symphony, work on Prince Igor dragged on for decades. Borodin, who had in the meantime completed a number of other works, left the opera unfinished at the time of his death. It was completed posthumously by Rimsky-Korsakov, a skillful craftsman and a particularly apt match for Borodin's colorful musical character, and Alexander Glazunov. Glazunov also completed the Symphony No. 3 in A minor, which the composer had been working on until the time of his death.

Aside from teaching chemistry and conducting research, Borodin helped found a series of medical courses for women in 1872. Such activities, as well as the poor health that plagued him in the 1880s, drained the energy that he might have devoted to composition. Still, as a part-time composer, Borodin jeft a significant oeuvre: more than a dozen worthy songs, miscellaneous piano pieces, two string quartets (the second of which contains a ravishing Nocturne often performed in an arrangement for string orchestra), and the popular tone poem In the Steppes of Central Asia (1880). He died while attending a ball in St. Petersburg on February 27, 1887.

# BORODIN

L'ORCHESTRE DE LA SUISSE ROMANDE ANSERMET

**Symphony No. 2 In B Minor**

- 1. Allegro 7:19**
- 2. Scherzo (Prestissimo) 5:35**
- 3. Andante 13:07**
- 4. Finale (Allegro) 7:14**

**Symphony No. 3 In A Minor (Unfinished)**

- 5. Moderato Assai 8:49**
- 6. Scherzo (Vivo) 10:36**
- 7. Prince Igor Dance of the Polovtsian Maidens 2:29**
- 8. Prince Igor Polovtsian Dances with Chorus 11:13**
- 9. In the Steppes of Central Asia 6:44**

**Total Time: 1:13:06**

**Symphony No.2 & 3 recorded 1954 Producer Victor Olof Engineer: Roy Wallace**

**Prince Igor : Polovtsian Dances recorded 1960 In the Steppes of Central Asia recorded 1961**

**Producer James Walker Engineer: Roy Wallace at Victoria Hall, Geneva**



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