

Montgomery Philharmonic 2016 - 17 Our 11th Season – Inspired by...

Concert 4, Sunday, March 26, 2017 – Inspired by Nature

Borodin | Vaughan Williams | Holst

About Alexander Porfiriyevich Borodin –

Borodin was the child of a married friend of his father's, but because the friend was not nobility, he was registered as the son of one of his father's Russian serfs. Although Borodin's father was 62 when he was born, he saw to it that his son received an extraordinary private education through home tutors, which led to his becoming an accomplished and published chemist and surgeon. Borodin eventually became the Professor of Chemistry at the Imperial Medical–Surgical Academy in St. Petersburg and, as a champion for women studying medicine, developed medical courses for women in 1827.

Borodin met Mily Balakirev in 1862 and wrote his first symphony while studying with him. In the midst of working on his second symphony, Borodin became enamored of opera and started writing *Prince Igor*. The *Polovetsian Dances* from this opera are often played alone and to this day remain his most famous piece. In fact, they found their way into the musical *Kismet*. The opera was finished by Rimsky–Korsakov and Glazunov because Borodin died quite suddenly at the age of 53 while dancing at a ball.

- **Born:** November 12, 1833, Saint Petersburg, Russian Empire
- **Died:** February 27, 1887 (age 53), Saint Petersburg, Russian Empire
- **Occupations:** Composer, Physician/Surgeon, and Chemist
- **Compositions:** : *In the Steppes of Central Asia*, 2 Symphonies (The 3rd Symphony was unfinished), Opera – *Prince Igor*, 2 string quartets
- **Wife:** Ekaterina Protopopova, a pianist
- **Parents:** Luka Stepanovich Gedevanishvili, a Georgian nobleman and Evdokia Konstantinovna Antonova
- **Children:** 1 daughter – Gania

In the Steppes of Central Asia (1880) – Alexander Borodin (1833–1880)

In the Steppes of Central Asia is a musical picture of a scene of a caravan of Asians traveling through the Russian-protected Steppes region of the Caucasus mountains. In the tableau, the listener hears the caravan approaching softly, represented by an Asian sounding theme. You can hear the plodding camels' and horses' hoofs, played by the strings. The woodwind section plays the exotic Asian theme. The brass support both strings and woodwinds with a contrapuntal melody. As the caravan approaches the Russian guards, the music becomes more intense, with pounding strings, exotic woodwinds, and blaring brass combining their various themes. The caravan approaches in a crescendo and leaves in a diminuendo.

This piece was written for the jubilee of Tsar Alexander II to accompany a historical tableau that would be part of the festivities. Though a relatively minor work, its charm has made it far more popular than its composer's modest ambitions. Although Borodin was considered an amateur composer because he held other professional positions, his music endures. His orchestration of the work develops colors that create the mood for the piece.

Instrumentation – 2 flutes, oboe, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, strings

Artifacts –

<http://archives.nyphil.org/index.php/search?search-type=singleFilter&search-text=Borodin&doctype=visual&sort-order=asc&sort-column=npv:SortID&page=1#assetId=a62b30ab-43b9-4e34-8db2-3b081666eba7> – Borodin publicity photo

<http://archives.nyphil.org/index.php/artifact/b6c5a649-659e-4ca5-bd45-7a477daa4f6b/fullview#page/1/mode/2up> – First Edition score of Steppes of Central Asia


1. Borodin: Prince Igor (Highlights) - In the Steppes of Central Asia - Kiev Chamber Choir, Theodore Kuchar & Ukrainian National Radio Symphony Orchestra
2. The World of Borodin - Various Artists
3. Borodin: Symphonies Nos. 1 & 2 - Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

1. In the Steppes of Central Asia
2. IN STEPPES OF CENTRAL ASIA STUDY SCORE (Edition Eulenburg)
3. "Polovtsian Dances" and "In the Steppes of Central Asia" in Full Score (Dover Music Scores)
4. The New Grove Russian Masters I: Glinka, Borodin, Balakirev, Musorgsky, Tchaikovsky (The New Grove Series)