

International

Kartinki s Vystavki

(Pictures at an Exhibition)

Association

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Modest Mussorgsky

Pictures at an Exhibition

Introduction to the holdings in the collection of David DeBoor Canfield

The following lists that comprise all of the known (to this compiler) arrangements and recordings of distinct performances of Mussorgsky's famous *Pictures at an Exhibition* are divided into two logical sections. Note that these lists do *not* constitute a discography of the work (which the compiler at one time considered, but gave up as impractical), but rather only one example of each distinct performance, in any arrangement, and without regard to the number of movements included (some items are listed that contain only one movement of the suite). The record label and number reflect that of the pressing of the performance in the collection of the compiler. I have sought to acquire the original pressings of the performance in question in most cases (in some cases, where the original recording was on the 78rpm format, I also own an LP or CD pressing of that performance). The movements are numbered according to the following code:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Promenade I | 9. Ballet of Unhatched Chicks |
| 2. Gnomus | 10. Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle |
| 3. Promenade II | 11. Promenade V |
| 4. The Old Castle | 12. The Market Place at Limoges |
| 5. Promenade III | 13. Catacombs |
| 6. Tuileries: Children Quarreling at Play | 14. Lingua Mortua |
| 7. Bydlo | 15. Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba-Yaga) |
| 8. Promenade IV | 16. The Great Gate of Kiev |

It should be understood that certain orchestrations omit certain movements (e.g. Ravel omits movement 11), and that these versions are considered complete (with no concomitant numbers in the movement numbers column) if they are recorded as the arranger wrote them. Exceptions to this rule, however, come where the arrangement omits a significant number of movements.

The format column indicates which format (LP = long playing record; CD = compact disk; 78 = 78rpm shellac recording; CT = cassette) applies to the item in my archive. Many performances, originally issued in an older format, have subsequently been reissued on LP or CD, or both. The recording date is given as precisely (in the format of year-month-day) as is ascertainable from the accompanying notes on the record; in many cases, even absent such specificity, my research has been able to obtain an exact recording date. Sometimes, only the year is known with certainty. In a considerable number of cases, all indicated by the use of *ca.* preceding the year, I can give only an educated guess as to the date of the recording. For many of these, there are hints on the record jacket; if not, I had to use knowledge gained in my 28 years' experience as a dealer in classical records in all formats. I would be very grateful to anyone who can supply missing information in any place that it might exist on these lists, or any corrections for typos or other wrong information that is encountered by the user.

Obviously, I would be even more grateful to know of any omissions of performances, whether by pianist, orchestra or other ensemble from this list. My attempt is to make this list as complete as possible. As of this writing there are more than 800 distinct performances of which I am aware, but there must exist many others

that are not found herein. It is my belief that *Pictures* is the most recorded and arranged piece of classical music—to date, I have located more than 250 versions of the work, some of which are awaiting their first recording, as is noted.

The first list, then, comprises all of the recordings of the original piano version, either exactly as Mussorgsky wrote it, or with slight emendations by the pianist (such as is found in the recordings by Vladimir Horowitz and John Browning). In cases where the same pianist has, or seems to have, recorded the work more than once, I have done my best to ascertain that these are indeed different performances, sometimes even playing and carefully comparing two or more recordings. Only in the section devoted to the performances by solo pianists will one see a final column containing my rating of the performance. The number, written in bold, by some of the performances (I will expand these as I listen critically to more of the recordings) is indicative of my assessment of the performance, according to the following schema:

- 1 = performance inspired throughout
- 2 = performance inspired in places; very good throughout
- 3 = good overall performance
- 4 = competent performance
- 5 = incompetent performance

Since *Pictures* is a very difficult piece for a pianist to conquer, on both technical and musical grounds, the piece itself tends to weed out inferior performers. However, there *are* some truly awful recordings of the piano version. Deklava and Marsico are laughably inept in their attempts to manage the technical demands of the work, while Joselson somehow succeeds in making one of the most exciting pieces ever written boring. If I were to choose just one performance of the piano version to recommend, I would probably pick that of Sviatoslav Richter, whose live recording from Sofia in 1958 combines interpretation and technique in a palpably exciting fashion. This recording likely single-handedly launched the barrage of piano recordings that followed it (from the advent of recording up through 1958, there are only about 35 piano performances on disk, leaving more than 280 that have been recorded in the almost 50 years since that seminal Richter performance).

The second list includes all arrangements of the piece, organized first by the instrument(s) or ensemble for which the arrangement was made, and then alphabetically by arranger. For space reasons, I have abbreviated the orchestras and large ensembles by a few code letters, the explanation of which is given following the list.

Under some listings, the reader will find the phrase **(NEEDED)**. Any listing containing this phrase signifies an item that I would like to purchase for my collection if you happen to come across it. I can promise to pay more than fair market value for such items. The same goes for any performance **not** contained in these lists. With a work as popular as this one has become (note how few recordings there are before 1940), it will never be possible to obtain a recording of every single commercial, semi-commercial and private recording ever made, but I will continue to try. Please note that I will likely not be interested in open-reel or cassette tape or CDR recordings taken off the air **unless** they contain a performance of an arrangement of the work that is not otherwise available. My additional contact information for those who can supply recordings and/or corrections/additions is:

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