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Newsletter of the

International

Kartinki s Vystavki

(Pictures at an Exhibition)

Association

Society formed to promote Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*

At the suggestion of Julian Yu, the arranger of a successful new version of *Pictures at an Exhibition*, [see review on next page] composer, collector and archivist David DeBoor Canfield is herein forming a society to promote this work, which is one of the great masterpieces of 19th-century romantic writing, as well as being a work far in advance of its time. *Pictures* holds the distinction of being the most-arranged piece of classical music ever composed (there are at least 140 different arrangements of the work), and very likely also the work with the greatest number of distinct recorded performances, which number 619 at present count. The association uses in its name the original (transliterated) Russian title of the work, which is actually best translated, *Pictures from an Exhibition*. IKVA will, however, use the traditional English translation of the title.

IKVA has been formed for the following purposes:

1. To promote performances and arrangements of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.
2. To compile a listing of as many arrangements and distinct recordings as possible.
3. To provide its members with sources to obtain unusual or hard-to-find recordings of the work.
4. To allow its members to contribute articles about the work, or recordings or performances of it, to share with other members.
5. To allow members also to contribute their opinions about their favorite recordings or arrangements of the work.
6. In general to provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas among the membership of the association.
7. To provide members with periodic updates on the master list of recordings of various performances of the work.
8. To encourage members to be on the lookout for new and/or obscure recordings of *Pictures* that they can share with other members, and also help build up the master list of existing recordings of the work (available at no charge to all members).

There are no dues required to join IKVA—the only requirement is an interest in the music of Mussorgsky in general and *Pictures at an Exhibition* in particular. To subscribe to these newsletters, just send your name and email address to David DeBoor Canfield at davecanfield@sbcglobal.net. David is, by virtue of his initiative, and by his owning the world's largest collection of recordings of the work, the founder and president of IKVA. Raymond D. Kickbush, retired judge in Valparaiso, Indiana, and long-time collector of recordings of *Pictures*, is the vice-president. Please forward this email newsletter to anyone you know who might be interested in joining IKVA so that our organization might grow and thrive and better serve its members!

Featured recording of the month:

**Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition
(arr. Julian Yu)**

Prokofiev: Classical Symphony

Hiroyuki Iwaki, conductor

Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa

Recorded on Warner Classics WPCS-11745

Available from:

<http://www.hmv.co.jp/index.asp>

Composer and arranger, Julian Yu's recent (2002) arrangement of *Pictures* is a worthwhile new addition to the ever-growing number of arrangements of the work. Yu, born in China and now living in Australia, has conceived the work in terms of a chamber orchestra, rather than as an opulent extravaganza for massive orchestral forces, characterized by many of the orchestrators (most notably Ravel and Stokowski). Yu has a fine ear for color, however, and his version is one of the most distinctive that this reviewer has ever heard. You'll never mistake it for any other version you've ever heard! This listener was also amused by the interpolations of Chinese elements into Mussorgsky's original writing. That this is quite appropriate will be seen when one considers that the opening promenade theme is pentatonic (perhaps one reason that this piece has received so much attention in the Far East).

From the very beginning of this version, the listener will hear distinctive touches. The opening promenade is played by a solo viola, for instance. This is immediately followed by overlapping pitches in the woodwinds, creating a kind of natural reverberation. This reviewer also appreciated the touches of humor that pervade Yu's version. Mussorgsky himself interjected some humorous elements into the score, and it is quite appropriate that these should be developed and expanded. One of this reviewer's favorite movements is Yu's orchestration of "Limoges," a veritable orchestrational tour de force. It reminds one not so much of a market place in France, but a bustling market in the busiest part of Hong Kong. One can almost hear the honking of taxi drivers as they nearly collide with bustling shoppers! This movement alone is worth the price of the CD, but the entire disk will provide many hours of enjoyment from repeated hearings.

David DeBoor Canfield

If any of our readers would like to write a review for this column (which I hope to have in every issue of the newsletter), please email to me at davecanfield@sbcglobal.net.