

Susanin's Aria

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka (1804-1857)

Arr. Rimsky Korsakov (1844-1908)

Edited by Alan Lumsden

Rimsky Korsakov, a Russian composer born in 1844 and a member of the group of composers known as The Five, was highly influenced by Mikhail Glinka. He wrote in his autobiography: "*Work on Glinka's scores was an unexpected schooling for me. Even before this I had known and worshipped his operas... There were no bounds to my enthusiasm for and worship of this man of genius.*" He always acknowledged his debut to Glinka and amongst his earliest memories was his mother singing an aria from A Life for the Tsar by Glinka.

This Susanin's Aria from the opera "A Life for the Tsar" is arranged by Rimsky Korsakov for double bass solo and string orchestra. And this version for double bass and piano that will be performed in contra bassoon tonight is edited by Alan Lumsden.

A Life for the Tsar is set in the year 1612. The story centers around the attempt by the invading Polish army to capture the young Tsar. The attempt is foiled by the peasant Ivan Susanin and he sacrificed his life to save the Tsar. In this Aria, knowing that death is near, he meditates on his approaching fate while rejoicing that he has saved his country. The piece begins and ends with a cadenza-like passage with chordal accompaniment by piano. The melody is passionate and deep-emotional that suits perfectly with the sound quality of contra bassoon.