

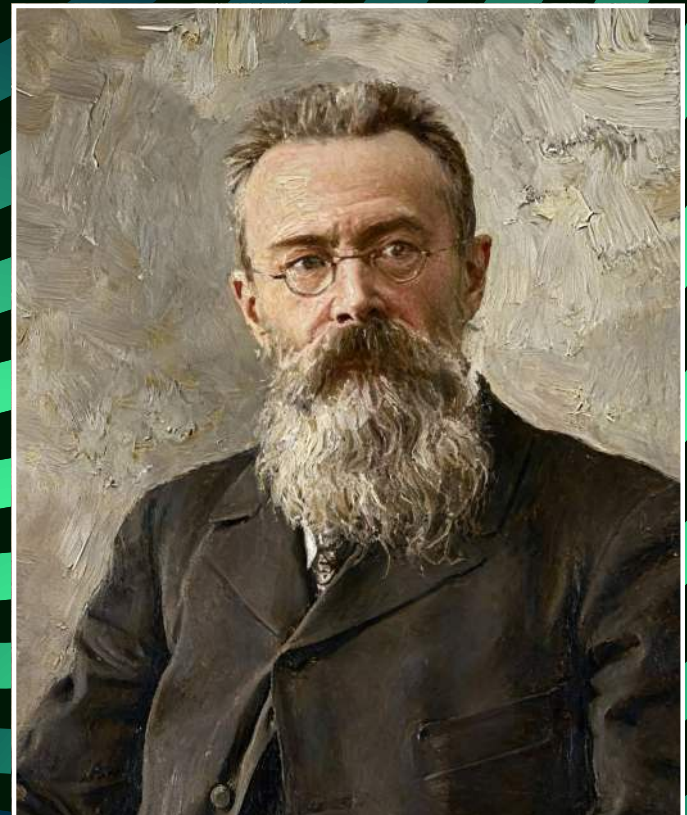
RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

Scheherazade, Op. 35

Boris KORSAKOV, *violin*

USSR TV & Radio Large Symphony Orchestra

Vladimir FEDOSEYEV



Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Scheherazade, Op. 35

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| 1 | I. The Sea and Sinbad's Ship | 9:40 |
| 2 | II. The Tale of the Kalender Prince | 11:54 |
| 3 | III. The Young Prince and the Young Princess | 8:16 |
| 4 | IV. The Festival at Baghdad - The Sea - Shipwreck on a Rock
- Surmounted by a Bronze Warrior - Conclusion | 11:40 |

Boris Korsakov, violin

USSR TV and Radio Large Symphony Orchestra

Vladimir Fedoseyev, conductor

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NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) was born in Tikhvin near St. Petersburg into a naval family, initially training as an officer before pursuing music under Mily Balakirev's influence. Joining "The Five" nationalists alongside Alexander Borodin, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky and Balakirev, he composed fifteen operas, symphonies, and orchestral masterpieces including while serving as naval band inspector and later professor at St. Petersburg Conservatory from 1871.

His naval band duties honed expertise in woodwinds and brass, leading to a seminal orchestration textbook completed posthumously by his son-in-law, emphasizing timbre as structural force. His orchestral works, most notably *Scheherazade*, exemplify his "kaleidoscopic" palette - shimmering solos, layered textures, and coloristic effects - that influenced global orchestration, earning him recognition as its preeminent innovator.

Rimsky-Korsakov shaped Russian music's national identity by integrating folk songs, exotic harmonies, and orientalist elements,

rejecting Western forms for vivid, folk-inspired narratives in operas like *Le Coq d'Or* and *Sadko*. He edited and published works by "The Five" (controversially revising Mussorgsky), bringing them into the standard repertoire and mentoring the next generation of composers, including Igor Stravinsky, Alexander Glazunov, and Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov.

Rimsky-Korsakov composed *Scheherazade, Op. 35*, during the summer of 1888 at his family dacha near Luga, Russia while editing works by Mussorgsky and Borodin. The composer drew inspiration from *One Thousand and One Nights*. Recent research indicates that the version of these tales that Rimsky-Korsakov used as the basis for the suite are based on 14th-century Syrian manuscripts that found their way into Antoine Galland's popular 18th-century French adaptation, fueling Rimsky-Korsakov's "kaleidoscope of fairy-tale images." His intent was a work of atmospheric generality as opposed to strict narrative, blending Eastern fantasy with sophisticated symphonic color.

The suite premiered on October 28, 1888, in St. Petersburg under Rimsky-Korsakov's baton, and its vivid orchestration left a profound impression on musicians and audiences. The composer structured the suite around a depiction of a vengeful Sultan whose bride, Scheherazade, delays her execution by captivating him with endless stories over 1,001 nights. He introduced dual motifs - a stern trombone theme for the Sultan and Scheherazade's seductive solo violin over harp - unifying the four movements. Each carries a title that does not explicitly draw on a specific story from *One Thousand and One Nights* but instead sets a broader theme that predominates the tales.

The work unfolds as a seamless Oriental reverie in four movements, showcasing Rimsky-Korsakov's virtuosic palette of piquant melodies, rhythmic vitality, and brilliant passages for soloists.

- I. "The Sea and Sinbad's Ship" opens with the Sultan's ominous brass, countered by Scheherazade's violin; swells into undulating waves and Sinbad's voyage, culminating in majestic brass sails.
- I. "The Story of the Kalender Prince" unfolds with folk-like strings and winds, evoking the prince's adventures through lyrical serenades and capricious dances.
- III. "The Young Prince and Princess" is an Adagio emphasizing strings and harp, depicting nocturnal romance through rich melodies unfolding in an evocative, narrative movement.

- IV. “Festival at Baghdad” is the work’s explosive finale - an episodic movement depicting action, adventure, danger, and revelry, culminating in a cataclysmic shipwreck, and concluding with Scheherazade’s theme quietly triumphant over a reconciled Sultan.

Audra Fendrick

NOTES ON THE ARTIST

Vladimir Fedoseyev, artistic director and chief conductor of the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra (formerly the Moscow/USSR Radio and Television Orchestra) and permanent guest conductor of Opernhaus Zurich and Zurich Tonhalle, is a conductor of international renown.

Over his long career, Fedoseyev has won numerous international awards: Russia’s order “For Services to the Motherland” and Austria’s Silver Cross for his services to culture (both 1996); the Gold Star from the City of Vienna (2002); the Cross of Honour for Science and Art, First Class, from the Austrian Academy (2005); the most recent Gold Medal of the International Gustav Mahler society (2007); and others.

In 2012, at the Salzburg Festival, he conducted the opera Cleopatra by J. Massenet. In 2016, he performed at La Scala in new productions of the ballets The Nutcracker and The Sleeping Beauty by P.I. Tchaikovsky, and also performed the Story of Doctor Johann Faust by A. G. Schnittke at the Golden Hall of the Vienna Musikverein.

Vladimir Fedoseyev graduated from Moscow’s Gnessin Musical Academy and Tchaikovsky Conservatory (class of Professor Leo Ginzburg) and was invited by the legendary Evgeny Mravinsky to conduct the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra. He made his opera debut also in Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg), his native town, in the Mariinsky Theatre.

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