Near the Southern Shore of the Crimea

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881) • Arranged by Joseph M. Chopp

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Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky - Russian composer, one of the group known as “The Five.” He was an innovator of Russian music in the romantic period. He strove to achieve a uniquely Russian musical identity, often in deliberate defiance of the established conventions of Western music.

The spelling and pronunciation of the composer's name has occasioned some confusion. The baptismal record gives the composer's name as “Muserskiy.” The addition of the “g” to the name was likely initiated by the composer's elder brother Filaret to obscure the resemblance of the name's root to an unsavory Russian word:[7] mycop (músor) – n. m. debris, rubbish, refuse. Mussorgsky apparently did not take the new spelling seriously, and played on the “rubbish” connection in letters, routinely signing his name Musoryanin, roughly “garbage-dweller.”

His primary career as a government civil servant was made more precarious by his frequent 'illnesses' and absences, due to alcoholism as a form of rebellion with his artist colleagues against proper society. His music-loving superior treated him with great leniency – in 1879 even allowing him to spend three months touring twelve cities as a singer's accompanist and also playing his own compositions and improvisations. The two movements for piano (ON and NEAR) of “Pictures from the Crimea” were written at this time.

- Wikipedia