

## 31. Se nyne blagoslovite Gospoda Op. 29, No. 2

Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov  
(1859-1935)  
*arr. William Melton*

### **Ippolitov-Ivanov, Mikhail Mikhailovich**

(born 19 November 1859 in Gatchina; died 28 January 1935 in Moscow)

A choirboy at the imposing cathedral of St. Isaac in St. Petersburg, Ippolitov-Ivanov was accepted into the city's conservatory in 1875, where he studied composition with Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov. At graduation in 1882 the young man took over the direction of the music conservatory and theatre orchestra of Tbilisi, Georgia. During his decade-long stay he developed a fascination for the folk music of the Caucasus, and he would incorporate it into works like *Caucasian Sketches* (1895). In 1893 Tchaikovsky recommended his appointment as professor of harmony, composition and orchestration at the Moscow Conservatory (Reinhold Glière would be a future composition pupil). He also conducted at opera houses in the city and in 1906 became Director of the Conservatory. Though he composed in all genres from opera to symphony and chamber music, the name Ippolitov-Ivanov is associated primarily with ethnic-flavoured orchestral works like *Iveriya* (a second series of *Caucasian Sketches*, 1906), *Armenian Rhapsody* (1909), *Turkish Fragments* (1930) and *On the Steppes of Turkmenistan* (1935).

In a lesser known role, Ippolitov-Ivanov conducted Moscow's Russian Choral Society (1895-1901) and composed a notable body of secular and sacred music for chorus. 'Se nyne blagoslovite Gospoda' ('Behold Now, Bless the Lord'), Op. 29, No. 2 is a setting of Psalm 133 that was first published by P. Jurgenson of Moscow in 1899. The conservative style shows the influence of the orthodox choruses that the composer had sung in his youth (a particular feature of which is the subterranean bass pedal point that begins at bar 53). Though barlines and time signatures have been added for convenience, the original contains no barlines, and the notated breath marks are much more reliable guides to natural phrasing.

*Text by William Melton*

## 32. Kol' slaven nash Gospod (Glory to our Lord)

Dmitri Bortniansky  
(1751-1825)  
*arr. William Melton*

### **Bortniansky, Dmitri Stepanovich**

(born 1751 in Hlukhiv; died 10 October 1825 in St. Petersburg)

A chorister at the Court Chapel in St. Petersburg at the age of eight, the Ukrainian-born Bortniansky studied with Baldassare Galuppi. In 1769, Bortniansky followed Galuppi to Italy with the help of a stipend from Czarina Catherine the Great. He studied in Venice, Bologna, Rome and Naples, and saw his first operas produced in Italian theatres (*Creonte*, 1776; *Alcide* and *Quinto Fabio*, both 1778). After returning to St. Petersburg in 1779, he was named Kapellmeister to Catherine's son Paul. When the latter became Czar Paul I in 1796, Bortniansky was made director of the Court Chapel Choir (the first native Slav to be appointed to the post). He expanded the ensemble to over one hundred singers and introduced the great choral works of Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven to audiences in St. Petersburg. Czar Alexander I would honour the composer by appointing him privy-councilor.

Bortniansky composed comic operas to French texts, including *La fete du seigneur*, *Le faucon* (both 1786), and *Le fils rival* (1787), and also wrote keyboard pieces. Dubbed the 'Russian Palestrina', he also left a large body of liturgical music that included a Catholic and a Greek Orthodox Mass, psalms, cantatas, hymns and sacred concerti (the sacred vocal works later appeared in ten volumes edited by Tchaikovsky). The hymn 'Kol slaven nash Gospod v Sione' ('How Glorious is Our Lord in Zion', text by Mikhail Kheraskov) was widely published both in and outside of Russia. Sung in churches across Germany in both Latin and German ('Ich bete an die Macht der Liebe', text by Gerhard Terstegen), it remains popular to this day in both a cappella and military band arrangements.

*Text by William Melton*