A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT PERFORMANCE VERSIONS OF
MUSORGSKY'S NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN, BASED ON THE HISTORY AND
CONTENT OF MUSORGSKY'S ORIGINAL EXTANT VERSIONS
AND
A NEW ORCHESTRATION OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN, RESPECTFULLY
BASED UPON MUSORGSKY'S ORIGINAL EXTANT VERSIONS

Document

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By

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* * * * *

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1992
"... I see in my sinful pranks an original Russian production; not deriving from German profundity and routine, but, like Savishna, springing from our native fields and nourished with Russian bread."

-- Modest P. Musorgsky
To My Parents
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. A HISTORY OF THE FIRST EXTANT VERSION OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters from Summer, 1867, Documenting Completion</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balakirev’s Response</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancies Between the Original and First Extant Versions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Extant Version</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. MUSSORGSKY’S FIRST OPERATIC VERSION OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN, FOR USE IN MLADA, 1872</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. MUSSORGSKY’S SECOND OPERATIC VERSION OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN, FOR USE IN SOROCHINTSY FAIR, 1880</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Comparison of Mussorgsky’s Extant Versions</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posthumous Completions of Sorochnitsy Fair</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE PROBLEM WITH RIMSKY-KORSAKOV’S VERSION OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V., Cont'd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rimsky-Korsakov's Content Versus Original Sources</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rimsky-Korsakov's Orchestration Versus Musorgsky's</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rimsky-Korsakov's View of Musorgsky Differences in Style and Musical Philosophy</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VI. THE PROBLEM WITH STOKOWSKI'S AND LEIBOWITZ' VERSIONS OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN | 83

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background of Stokowski's Version</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stokowski’s Version of Bald Mountain</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leibowitz' Version of Bald Mountain</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VII. THE PROBLEM WITH SHEBALIN'S ORCHESTRATION OF THE SECOND OPERATIC VERSION OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN | 94

VIII. A DEFINITIVE MUSORGSKY VERSION OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN | 99

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Need for a New Orchestration</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchestral Process</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN, 1880 (DREAM VISION OF THE PEASANT LAD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score List</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867, 1880 Programs</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Score</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BIBLIOGRAPHY                                                      | 235  |
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Musorgsky's Second Operatic Revisions, First Section Only</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. First Excerpt from Musorgsky Letter of Original</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Second Excerpt from Musorgsky Letter of Original</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Discrepancy Between Letter and Extant Score</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. First Extant Ending</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Musorgsky's Added Devil Solo Melody</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Devil Solo Derivation</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The Second of Musorgsky's Added Themes, as It Originally Appeared in Salammbô</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. <em>Salammbô</em> Theme, as It Appears in the Second Operatic Version of Night on Bald Mountain</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Rimsky-Korsakov's Repeat of Jeering Eighths</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Musorgsky's Variation of Jeering Eighths</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Musorgsky's Theme</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Rimsky-Korsakov's Interpretation of the Theme</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Actual Musorgsky Origin of Rhythmic Figure</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Musorgsky's Use of the Whole-Tone Scale</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Rimsky-Korsakov's Chromatic Scale Substitution</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Rimsky-Korsakov's A-minor Figure</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Musorgsky's Daring Original</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Musorgsky's Church Choir Hymn</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. First Extant Phrase Borrowed by Rimsky-Korsakov .......... 64
20. Musorgsky Second Operatic Excerpt ................. 65
21. Rimsky-Korsakov Borrowing from First Extant Violins .......... 65
22. Musorgsky's First Extant Jeering Eighths .... 69
23. Rimsky-Korsakov's Jeering Eighths ............... 70
24. Musorgsky's Contrasting Calls ................. 71
25. Rimsky-Korsakov's Single-Timbre Melody ...... 72
26. Second Example of Rimsky-Korsakov's Use of Non-contrasting Timbres .......... 72
27. Second Example of Musorgsky's Contrasting Calls .......... 73
28. Pizzicato Bass Motive .......................... 89
29. Jeering Eighths .............................. 89
30. Opening Pizzicato Bass Motive ................. 97
31. Jeering Eighths .............................. 97
32. Trombone/Tuba Melody .......................... 98
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The preparation of Modest Petrovich Musorgsky's works for performance, since his death in 1881, has involved every editorial process possible. Such processes include simple editing and organization, orchestration and reorchestration, compositional completion, rediscovery of originals, the recombining of versions, and actual recomposition. Unfortunately, the complexity and variety of these processes, together with the numerous and varied individuals participating in them, have produced a cloud of confusion, which tends both to obscure historical details and to cast all of the consequent editions into a shadow of undefined equality. Edward R. Reilly has responded to the situation with an extremely valuable and concise volume entitled, The Music of Mussorgsky: A Guide to the Editions. Perhaps no single example of Musorgsky's works has suffered more from the general confusion than his well-known orchestral tone poem, Night on Bald Mountain. In part, the established popularity of Rimsky-Korsakov's version of the work has kept the situational details out of the minds of conductors,

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1 Musorgsky's name has often been spelled "Mussorgsky" or "Moussorgsky," but most recent, significant biographies by Russian and Soviet scholars agree to the English translation, "Mussorgsky."


3 The use of "Bald" or "Bar" in the title is simply a matter of translation. "Bald" is the more accurate of the two, because, in Musorgsky's July 12, 1867, letter to V. V. Nikolsky, he compares the mountain's baldness to that of Nikolsky's bald head.
orchestral musicians, and naturally, the listening public who have helped to make it so popular.

The very fact that Rimsky-Korsakov saw a need to produce his own version of the tone poem raises obvious questions. What was Musorgsky's original version? Did Musorgsky ever complete it? Did he orchestrate it, or like Pictures at an Exhibition, did he leave only a version for piano? If he did complete and orchestrate it, what prompted Rimsky-Korsakov's version? Further confusion comes from the fact that Stokowski did a version of his own for use in the popular Disney movie, Fantasia. Again, questions arise, and without investigation the unfortunate assumption is that something must be wrong with Musorgsky's original(s). Strangely enough, these two versions by Rimsky-Korsakov and Stokowski, though widely-performed and recorded, have done little to reveal the actual composition, whose history has, excepting a recent resurgence of interest, left it in comparative obscurity.

In order to clarify the status of the origins of Night on Bald Mountain, what follows is a brief summary of its history, which will be the topic of detailed discussion in subsequent chapters. The first version of Night on Bald Mountain was an orchestral tone poem, completed and orchestrated by Musorgsky in 1867, and entitled St. John's Night on Bald Mountain. It was a programmatic work, depicting a witches' sabbath. At some point before 1872, Musorgsky revised it, though neither version ever received a public performance, due largely to Balakirev's critical reaction. The early revision is the earliest surviving version of the piece; it had been lost until 1933 and remained unpublished until 1968, when it was published for
rental only. This first extant version is currently available for sale through Kalmus, who published it in 1984, which partly accounts for the recent increase in recordings and performances it is receiving. Musorgsky was clearly excited about his composition and wanted badly to have it performed; he also displayed an ongoing fascination with the subject matter. It may well be these two factors that led him later to revise it for use in two different operas.

By 1874, Musorgsky apparently completed his second version of Night on Bald Mountain, which was intended for insertion into an opera/ballet, Mlada. I call this his "first operatic version." No manuscript of this version has survived, nor has any copy, but from letters, it is clear that it included choral parts and other revisions. It is also highly likely that it served as the basis for his last version.

The third and final version of Night on Bald Mountain was intended as an interlude to his unfinished comic opera, The Fair at Sorochintsy. Musorgsky never lived to orchestrate this "second operatic version," but left a completed piano/vocal score, from 1890. The vocal parts are believed to be leftover from his Mlada version, as are the other extensive revisions. If this is true, the most important change after the lost Mlada version was the addition of the contrasting ending that depicts the arrival of dawn. The second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain is known only in one posthumous completion of the opera, which Shebalin orchestrated for Lamm's collection of

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3 Reilly calls it the "second choral version" in Reilly, Mussorgsky in Memoriam, 140.
Musorgsky's works in the 1930's. Though Shebalin may have had a brief opportunity to see the first extant version, it seems likely that his orchestration was largely completed without the benefit of Musorgsky's original tone poem, which was still lost throughout most of Shebalin's working period. At least in part because of the choral parts, and because it was intended for use in an opera, the second operatic version is not performed often as a separate work.

To summarize, of Musorgsky's many revisions, two completed versions remain extant. The first was an orchestral tone poem, orchestrated and revised by Musorgsky himself. The last was to be an intermezzo in an opera, completed but not orchestrated by Musorgsky, which included major revisions and an added ending, not to mention the addition of choral parts. The lack, therefore of a definitive Musorgsky version, along with the fact that the extant tone poem was missing for approximately forty years, have contributed to an unfortunate situation of Musorgsky not actually receiving performances of his own material.

Compositional terms for a wide variety of processes are often interchanged without clear and accurate differentiations in meaning, which produces a need for a brief clarification of my use of terms in this writing. An "edition" of a work indicates a specific publication that may or may not include corrections from a previous edition, or markings that attempt to clarify style and performance practice; "edition" does not indicate that any changes beyond these mentioned have been applied to the initial source. "Arrangement" implies that the work has been orchestratorially adapted, or re-scored, to suit a different instrumentation than the initial source. Since
"orchestrating" a work implies scoring it for performance by an orchestra, an "orchestration" is generally true to the original source in all major items of notational and stylistic content, diverging only in such details as doublings, octave placement, possibly articulations and dynamics, and the addition of such textures as percussion. A "reorchestration" is the same process as an orchestration, except that it is applied to a previously orchestrated work.

A "version" of a work, on the other hand, implies a conception of the work from a particular point of view, as compared with other points of view.¹ If it is a new version, more changes have been made from the original source than orchestral or editorial changes. It implies more changes have been made than would be necessary to arrange the work for a different instrument or ensemble. A new "version" of a piece implies either that the work has been, at least in part, recomposed, creating a new viewpoint. Keeping these distinctions in mind, a more detailed look at the history of Musorgsky's own versions of Night on Bald Mountain, as well as evaluation of the posthumous versions and orchestrations of it in light of that history, are forthcoming.

CHAPTER II
A HISTORY OF THE FIRST EXTANT VERSION OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN

Historical Background

The ten years leading up to Musorgsky’s composition of Night on Bald Mountain were pivotal for him, both personally and professionally; one reason for their importance is the associations he developed within the artistic community. Perhaps the earliest of these associations was with Alexander Borodin, whom he met when serving as an orderly officer at a military hospital in 1856. Within the following two years, he met A. S. Dargomizhsky (1813-1869) who was then the “most renowned composer in Russia,” Mili Balakirev, Cesar Cui, and the Stasov brothers (Vladimir and Dmitri) who eventually became closely associated with this select circle of musicians. By 1862, he had made his fourth and final acquaintance within the group of composers that would eventually become widely known as the Mighty Handful, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov.

As early as 1857, Musorgsky was taking lessons in form-and-analysis from Balakirev, who said, “We would play through all the symphonies of Beethoven at the piano from four-hand arrangements, and many compositions by Schumann, Schubert,

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Glinka, and others."

Probably due in large part to his association with Balakirev, he began to work seriously at composition during the late 1850's.

Perhaps the first seeds, that would later result in the composition of Night on Bald Mountain, were planted around Christmas of 1858, when Musorgsky planned an opera based on Gogol's story, St. John's Eve. It was to be a corporate effort, involving Boborykin, Yashirov, Balakirev, Musorgsky, and Musorgsky's brother, Filaret. Ex Though nothing appears to have developed from those plans, the idea captured Musorgsky's imagination.

Less than two years later, Musorgsky wrote Balakirev on September 26, 1860, telling him of his preparation of a new work based on a drama by Baron Mengden called, The Witch. The scene was to take place on Bald Mountain, and Musorgsky said that it contained:

... a witches' sabbat, separate episodes of sorcerers, a solemn march for all this nastiness, a finale--the glorification of the sabbat in which Mengden introduces the commander of the whole festival on Bald Mountain. The libretto is very good. I already have some material for it; it may turn out to be a very good thing."

Whether or not his musical "material" had any actual connection with Musorgsky's later work, is unknown, and even the Mengden drama seems to have been lost. Leyda and Bertensson report that, "Though many of Baron Mengden's plays exist in print or in manuscript, no copy of The Witch has been uncovered." Musorgsky made no further mention of his efforts or of Mengden's

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10 Brook, op. cit., 42.
11 Reilly, "The First Extant Version of Night on Bare Mountain," 137.
13 Ibid (see footnote).
drama.

In 1862, Balakirev and G. Y. Lomakin formed the Free School, which was a free workshop that heard performances of new works evenings and Sundays. Filaret Musorgsky, Musorgsky's only surviving brother at that time, remarked of Modeste's association with the Free School composers, who later became known as the Mighty Handful, "While his friends had to admit that his piano-playing had become quite brilliant, they still under-rated his musical intelligence, and jeered about his aspirations as a composer." As will be seen, this attitude toward Musorgsky was more than a source of frustration for him; it affected his direction as a composer and even the long-term status of certain of his works, among which Night on Bald Mountain serves as an example.

By 1863, Musorgsky was struggling financially and took on a government job, which limited his compositional activity mainly to work on songs and the opera, Salammbô. The death of his mother, to whom he was unusually devoted, brought about a return of a nervous disorder and his first serious bout with alcoholism, in 1865. Musorgsky's brother reported his disease to be delirium tremens, which is a violent trembling condition brought on by the prolonged use of alcohol, and reports that Modeste moved in with him and his wife in the autumn of 1865. Modeste apparently recovered his health at his brother's farm, and in March of the following year, he was inspired by a performance of Liszt's Totentanz, played by his former piano teacher, Anton Herke (1812-1870). The performance took place in St. Petersburg at a concert of the Russian Music Society,

14 Brook, op. cit., 46.
15 Leyda and Bertensson, op. cit., 65.
conducted by Anton Rubinstein.

The following month, on Wednesday, April 20, 1866, Musorgsky reported to Balakirev that he had begun "to sketch out the witches; I am stuck with the devils--Satan's cortege doesn't satisfy me yet." Whether this was the actual start of Night on Bald Mountain or not, is unclear, because Musorgsky later claimed to have planned the work in 1866, but to have written it entirely in the summer of the following year, 1867. Orlova offers this possible solution: "We do not know what Musorgsky meant by 'sketch out.' It is possible, and quite likely, that he did not mean the actual writing, but rather experimentation at the piano. Musorgsky only began writing down the piece in the fall of 1867." If there is any truth to Abraham's suggested correlation between Liszt's setting of the Dies Irae and one of Musorgsky's themes from Night on Bald Mountain, however, he must have carried over at least musical ideas from his "sketches" of April, 1866.

Whatever role, if any, these early projects had in contributing to the final product of Night on Bald Mountain, is uncertain, but they reveal at least the incubation of an idea that had been growing in Musorgsky's mind for eight years. Musorgsky received favorable reviews for a March, 1867, performance of The Destruction of Sennacherib. By June 12, he had quit his job and moved again to his brother's for the summer. It was during that Summer that Musorgsky wrote Night

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17 Ibid., 19.
19 Orlova, op. cit., 141-142.
on Bald Mountain, and the letters he wrote during the Summer of 1867 document the final process in relative detail.

**Letters from Summer, 1867, Documenting Completion**

On July 5, 1867, Mussorgsky reported his completion of the work to Rimsky-Korsakov and revealed his source of visual pictures for the witches' sabbath, upon which *Night on Bald Mountain* was based:

There is a book, *Witchcraft*, by Khotinsky, containing a very graphic description of a witches' sabbath provided by the testimony of a woman on trial, who was accused of being a witch, and had confessed love pranks with Satan himself to the count. The poor lunatic was burnt--this occurred in the sixteenth century. From this description I stored up the construction of the sabbath.

As a footnote to the letter, Leyda and Bertelson provide further information about the volume by Matvei Stepanovich Khotinsky, *Witchcraft* and *Mysterious Phenomena of Modern Times*, which was published in St. Petersburg in 1866. They provide a description of a traditional sabbath from the book, and also:

...the main annual sabbath was celebrated on St. John's Eve... [In Russia] at night the witches, hair falling over their shoulders, mount brooms, oven-forks, spades, besoms, or whisk-brooms, and fly up the chimneys to the sabbath on Bald Mountain or the Devil's Lode where the sorcerers and demons and sometimes the babayaga [ogress] assemble.  

According to Richard Anthony Leonard, Bald Mountain is an actual location called Mount Triglav. He describes it as,

...a three-pronged, bald peak near Kiev in Southern Russia, named after a three-headed god. It was the legendary scene of the *Slavic Walpurgisnacht* which took place each year on the eve of the feast of John the

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*Leyda and Bertelson, op. cit., 87.*
The program in Musorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*, served as more than simply a source of inspiration; it also determined the form. In the letter, Musorgsky calls the piece, "... a musical picture with the following program: (1) assembly of the witches, their chatter and gossip; (2) cortege of Satan; (3) unholy glorification of Satan; (4) witches' sabbat." Later, in a letter written to Nikolsky, he stipulates that the program should be included with every public performance. The four categories correspond to four large sections of the work, which Musorgsky describes briefly in the letter.

In the same letter of July 5, 1867, to Rimsky-Korsakov, Musorgsky reveals the details of completion. He says:

On the twenty-third of June, on the eve of St. John's Day [Midsummer Day] was finished, with God's help, St. John's Night on Bald Mountain ... The score was written directly on white without a draft--it was begun on the tenth day of June, and by the twenty-third there was joy and triumph. The composition is dedicated to Mili [Balakirev] ... This account confirms that there was never a piano score or rough draft, and that the work was completed in less than two weeks.

Also significant in this letter is how confident and pleased Musorgsky was about his new work, both because of its quality and its originality. In discussing the relationship of the formal plan to the program, he says, "The plan and form of the composition is rather original." He boasts of its "filthy"
and "ribald" characteristics and at using "Russian style with variations". He comments further on its originality, saying, "In my opinion, St. John's Night is something new and is bound to produce a satisfactory impression on a thoughtful musician... Let us understand that I am not going to start altering it; with whatever shortcomings it is born, it will have to live, if it does live." He continues, revealing his whole attitude toward the sort of compositional approach he used and the orchestral choices he made, in keeping with that approach:

The form of interspersed variations and calls is, I think, the most suitable for such a commotion.--The general character of the thing is hot; it doesn't drag, the transitions are full without any German approach, which is remarkably refreshing.--However, God grant that you will hear it for yourself."

This request, however, was never granted.

One week later, another letter from Musorgsky, this time to Vladimir Nikolaev, confirms his enthusiasm for St. John's Night on Bald Mountain. He asserts, "In form and character my composition is Russian and original. Its tone is hot and chaotic." About his own musical convictions, he emphasizes the importance of "the true representation of folk fantasy," instead of the "German manner." In his excitement he reports, "something so boiled up in me that I didn't know what was going on with me..." He again reveals his approach to orchestration, this time spelled out more clearly: "In the witches' sabbat, I did the orchestration in scattered, separate parts that will be easily perceived by the auditor, because the coloring of the winds and strings produces sufficiently perceptible contrasts." Finally, he apologizes for his own

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\[Ibid., 85-87.\]
exuberance by saying, "... I suppose this comes from the fact that I see in my sinful pranks an original Russian production; not deriving from German profundity and routine, but, like Savishna [a song by Musorgsky], springing from our native fields and nourished with Russian bread."26

Concerning the two letters, Calvocoressi claims that, "Nowhere else in Mussorgsky’s writings do we see him exulting, as he does here, over the purely musical aspects of a work of his."27 In contrast to his spirited description of St. John’s Night on Bald Mountain, Musorgsky completed his B-minor Intermezzo during the same period, and reported only days after the aforementioned letter to Rimsky-Korsakov, "The piece is nothing but a tribute to the Germans. . .."27 Though Rimsky-Korsakov responded quickly and enthusiastically to Musorgsky’s letter about St. John’s Night, he had not seen the score, and may not have until years later. There is no recorded response from Nikolsky about St. John’s Night.

**Balakirev’s Response**

Musorgsky’s next discussion of the piece comes in reaction to Balakirev’s apparently cool response to St. John’s Night on Bald Mountain. It is important to remember that the work was dedicated to Balakirev, who was the the Musical Director of the concerts at the Free School, that Musorgsky had written few large works at that time, and that he was struggling financially. On September 24, 1867, Musorgsky reveals his hurt at what he calls Balakirev’s “evasive response to my witches,”

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26 Ibid., 90.


27 Orlova, op. cit., 148.
in a letter to Balakirev. He defends the work, saying, “I rated, will rate and I will continue to rate this piece a decent one, particularly because in it, after several independent trifles, for the first time I independently approached a large work.” He goes on to the crux of the matter, which is that he wanted to have his piece performed, yet continues in its defense:

Whether or not you agree, my friend, to perform my witches, that is, whether or not I hear them, I will alter nothing in the general plan or in the treatment, closely connected with the content of the picture, and executed sincerely, without pretense or imitation . . . I shall only change a lot in the percussion parts, which I have abused. 28

His plea did not finally achieve its desired end; St John’s Night on Bald Mountain was never performed during Musorgsky’s lifetime, by Balakirev or anyone else.

The effect on Musorgsky of Balakirev’s rejection, though impossible to measure, must be taken into account. As Edward Garden points out:

From the very first, Musorgsky’s letters show him to be on intimate terms with his teacher, who was clearly something of a father-figure to him despite the fact that the difference in their ages was hardly more than two years. 29

Donald Brook notes, “Musorgsky was conscious of the fact that Balakirev ‘patronized’ him and never took his aspirations seriously, and being a very sensitive young man, this knowledge was a source of considerable irritation.” 30

28 Leyda and Bertensson, op. cit., 99-100.
30 Brook, op. cit., 46.
What is especially disturbing in Balakirev’s rejection of
*St. John’s Night on Bald Mountain*, is that it may well have
directed Musorgsky away from further attempts at instrumental
compositions. Reilly says:

I do not believe there can be much doubt that the negative
reaction of Balakirev, to whom Musorgsky wished to
dedicate the composition, inhibited the composer from
undertaking further large-scale orchestral works. 31

He also points out that Musorgsky abandoned plans for another
large orchestral work, *King Podebrad of Bohemia*, at a time
corresponding to Balakirev’s rejection. Garden claims that
shortly thereafter, “While Dargomyzhsky’s influence on Musorgsky
increased, Balakirev’s decreased . . .”32 No specific negative
or positive reaction toward *Night on Bald Mountain* came from
others in Musorgsky’s circle at that time, in part because
Musorgsky seems to have shelved the work (at least in his
communications) following Balakirev’s refusal to perform it.

**Discrepancies Between the Original and First Extant Versions**

The three aforementioned letters that Musorgsky wrote, to
Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolaev, and Balakirev, present his thoughts
about *St. John’s Night on Bald Mountain* quite clearly, and yet,
the first, to Rimsky-Korsakov, also reveals discrepancies
between the score he describes and the extant version of it.
This means that though he initially said to both Rimsky-Korsakov
and Balakirev that he did not plan to make changes, he
eventually did make changes, and, as will be shown, not just to
the percussion parts. The question of when he revised the work

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is unknown, because the only mention of it after 1867 is in Musorgsky’s own catalog of works, of 1871, after which he replaced it with the first operatic version. It is therefore assumed that he must have made the revisions between 1867, the year of its completion, and 1872, the year he began an entirely new version.

Reilly, who provides an excellent analysis of the piece based on Musorgsky’s discussion of it, points out the discrepancies in detail,” as does Oldani.” The most striking discrepancy between Musorgsky’s description of the piece and the extant version is a seven-bar excerpt that he writes out in the letter, from Part III. Musorgsky says, "... in the vile glorification, for example, there is a fragment for which Cesar [Cui] will send me to the conservatory. Here it is:

Example 1. First Excerpt from Musorgsky Letter of Original.

\[\text{[Musical notation image]}\]

B minor—here the witches are honoring Satan—as you see, naked, barbarous, and filthy."\(^{35}\) Neither the above example, nor anything remotely like it, can be found anywhere in the surviving score.

\(^{32}\) Reilly, "The First Extant Version ...,” Musorgsky in Memoriam, 141-155.

\(^{34}\) Kirkor/Oldani, Preface to revised edition of Night on the Bare Mountain (Miami, Florida: Edwin F. Kalmus, 1984), 2-3.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 2.
The other musical example Mussorgsky provides in the letter, shown below, has been altered in the extant score.


\[ \text{Musical notation image} \]

The discrepancy involving the first two measures of the excerpt. Examination of the extant score, below, compared to the example from his letter, reveals rhythm changes and the added notational dissonance of E-natural against E-flat in the extant score:

Example 3. Discrepancy Between Letter and Extant Score.

\[ \text{Musical notation image} \]

Other alterations include the relocating of an Eb-minor section (from Part II to Part III), the apparent removal of a section in b-minor (Part III), and the removal of the "semiecclesiastic quasi-trio" (Part III). Reilly says of Part III, the vile glorification of Satan, "... the specific musical information that he [Mussorgsky] provides shows

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35 Ibid.
conclusively that this portion of the work was at sometime substantially rewritten." 37

While overlooking the above discrepancies, Kirkor accurately observes, "The archival score of St. John's Night, a completely finished clean copy, shows no trace of changes or author's corrections in the percussion parts." 39 Though Musorgsky left no specific evidence of changes to the percussion parts, it seems likely that they were also revised. Oldani points out, "...the percussion parts are used with restraint in the published score, even though Musorgsky told Balakirev...that he had 'abused' them." 39 It seems likely, then, that Musorgsky's revisions to the piece were so extensive he had to recopy the score, or introduce completed insertions, which Reilly points out might be determined by a careful analysis of the paper and ink used. 40

It is natural to assume that additional revisions, outside of those revealed by Musorgsky's letter, may have been imposed. Musorgsky did, however, remain true to the original program, to much of the original material, and to the use of contrasting orchestral colors. He clearly saw his changes as revisions, and not as a new version of the piece. The first extant version of Musorgsky's score carries this inscription, which he must have backdated to the date of the original composition: 41 "Planned in 1866. Began to write for orchestra, June 12, 1867, finished the work on St. John's Day, June 23, 1867...." 42

37 Reilly, "The First Extant Version...," Musorgsky in Memoriam, 150.
38 Kirkor/Oldani, op. cit. 4.
39 Ibid., 3.
41 Kirkor/Oldani, op. cit. 3.
42 Calvocoressi, Musorgsky, 176.
Part of the confusion that has surrounded Musorgsky’s *Night on Bald Mountain* is a direct result of the disappearance and publication history of the score. As far as historians can know for certain, no one but Balakirev and Musorgsky ever saw the actual original. Musorgsky must have made his revisions before he began work on the first operatic version in 1872. After that, the orchestral version is never mentioned, and seems to have disappeared altogether until in 1933 it was rediscovered by Nikolai Malko, a Russian conductor who was also responsible for its first performance. There is evidence that would indicate that Rimsky-Korsakov saw the score after Musorgsky’s death (see Chapter V) but his accounts themselves are inaccurate and inconclusive. Assuming Rimsky-Korsakov did see the score, he appears to have been the last to see it before its rediscovery in 1933.

Even after its discovery, the first extant version remained unpublished until 1968, when Georgi Kirkor’s edition was published by State Music Publishers in Moscow, as a rental edition of 650 copies. In the revised Kalmus edition of 1984, Oldani has translated Kirkor’s original preface into English and corrected a number of oversights on Kirkor’s part. The autograph manuscript of the first extant version is preserved in the manuscript division of the Leningrad State Conservatory. The ramifications of this late rediscovery and later publication are far-reaching because, not only had other versions already

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43 Kirkor/Oldani, op. cit., 4.
44 Ibid.
become popular, the extant original was not available for consultation for many years after Musorgsky’s death in 1881.

The 35-year lapse between the rediscovery of the original tone poem and its actual publication, in addition to another 16-year lapse between the limited rental publication and the final revised Kalman edition, raises the obvious question, why did it receive so little attention? One aspect of the answer has already been mentioned: Rimsky-Korsakov’s version had already established a place in the international orchestral showpiece repertoire. The first extant version does also have weaknesses, as Edward Garden remarks:

The original Bare Mountain music with its brash orchestration is crude, primitive, gauche, radical and utterly riveting. But it is perhaps too long for its content and too lacking in contrast, as well as being difficult to play."

A perhaps more historically significant aspect of the answer is that Musorgsky’s later revisions are not reflected in the original orchestra score, so that it cannot stand alone as the authority of Musorgsky’s final intent.

Still, the original has been sadly neglected. As Musorgsky indicated to Balakirev, Night on Bald Mountain was the first large, independent work he wrote. It was a pivotal work for Musorgsky, too, establishing his musical direction and orchestral style for Boris Godunov and other major operatic endeavors. Reilly praises Musorgsky’s boldness:

While it betrays an occasional lack of experience, it shows a youthful daring and exuberance which make it in many ways the most interesting of all the Bare Mountains that were to follow. This freshness is probably most immediately apparent in the startling variety of scale.

formations. Not simply the whole-tone material, but the free use of modal scales, and mixed scales containing diatonic, whole-tone, and chromatic segments, provides a rich profusion of alternatives to the more straightforward major and minor patterns."

Musorgsky’s exposure to whole-tone scales is normally attributed to Borodin and Glinka. Along with Musorgsky’s break from traditional scale use, his phrase-lengths are interesting and varied, and his treatment of harmony is unusual for his time. Reilly observes, "... Musorgsky shows in many passages a strong move toward non-functional, coloristic progressions." The daring he displayed may indeed have resulted in part from his desire to establish his own independent identity from Balakirev’s restrictive influence, and from austere academic influences within the Mighty Handful, personified then by Cesar Cui, and later by Rimsky-Korsakov.

True to Musorgsky’s assertion to Rimsky-Korsakov, St. John’s Night on Bald Mountain is indeed a work in "Russian style with variations," an approach that extends far back into the history of Russian folk song. Though contrasting thematic material does exist in the first extant version, most of the material spins out of former themes, leaving numerous, but closely related themes, all of which stem from the familiar opening turn figure. Reilly eloquently describes this approach, as well as mentioning Musorgsky’s Russian influences:

In approaching the structure of his piece, Musorgsky completely abandons his earlier adherence to simple recurrent forms, and builds, very freely, on the tradition of the folksong-variation type of composition cultivated by Glinka, Dargomyzhsky, and Balakirev, sacrificing the emphasis on balanced restatement of thematic material to a continuously unfolding design with constantly differing

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\(^{47}\) Reilly, "The First Extant Version . . .," Musorgsky in Memoriam, 155.

\(^{48}\) Ibid.
motivic inter-connections."

As to breaking stride and expanding beyond classical traditions, Musorgsky may well have also learned from European pioneers of his day, especially Berlioz and Liszt.

Though no slow ending had been composed at the time of this version's writing, the work is still longer than all current versions, because of the many "variations" of thematic material. The ending is somewhat startling and strange, arriving from an upward scalar sweep in the violins on high, glassy 16th notes:

Example 4. First Extant Ending.

The violins are supported only by a bass drum roll and a high, sustained chord in the flute, oboe, and trumpet. Reilly says, "One reaches the end as if suddenly awakening from a shattering nightmare." Specific differences between the first extant version of Night on Bald Mountain and later versions, will be the topic of further discussion in later chapters of this writing.

\[56\] Ibid., 156.

\[55\] Ibid., 154.
CHAPTER III

MUSORGSKY’S FIRST OPERATIC VERSION OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN, FOR USE IN MLADA, 1872

Five years after Musorgsky completed St. John’s Night on Bald Mountain, the Director of the Imperial Theaters, Stepan Gedeonov, commissioned the opera/ballet, Mlada. The commission was somewhat unusual, in that it was to be a collaborative effort, involving four of the Mighty Five composers, who were Cui, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Musorgsky. Ludwig Minkus, then official ballet composer of the Imperial Theaters, was to compose the ballet portions. Rimsky-Korsakov mentions the contributing influences of both Nikolai Alexeyevich Lukashévich, a painter who was Head of the Art Department at the Mariinsky Opera, and V. V. Stасsov.51

Gedeonov actually devised the production, which Abraham describes as a large, spectacular work, “in which melodrama was curiously mingled with folk-lore and archaeology, and fantasy with pageantry and dancing.”52 The libretto was to be written by V. A. Krilov, whom Abraham calls a “dramatic hack.” At the time Mlada was commissioned, in the Winter of 1872, the only composer from the Mighty Five “quartet” that had had an opera staged, was Cui, a fact which must have made

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51 Leyda and Bertensson, op. cit., 180-181.
52 Abraham, op. cit., 91.
the elaborate proposal all the more attractive to them. It afforded a broad scenario that would allow their full use of creative powers, without burdening any one of them with the entire responsibility of the production.

Rimsky-Korsakov's account of an organizational meeting at Gedeonov's home mentions the presence of four of the five composers commissioned, Minkus being presumably absent from the meeting. It was at this gathering that decisions about each composer's contribution were made. Cui was to compose the entire first act, Borodin, Act IV, and Musorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, who were roommates at the time, were to share Acts II and III.

Musorgsky's plan included adapting his Night on Bald Mountain for inclusion in the second half of Act III. The Bald Mountain portion involved the appearance of the Black God, or as Stasov later reported, "the Black Goat." This "god/goat" discrepancy can be explained by Khotinsky's description of a traditional sabbath: "He who smeared himself with a special ointment fell into a deep sleep. He then saw the devil in the form of a black goat, seated on a stone or rotting treestump [emphasis mine]."52 Thus, even though Night on Bald Mountain's role would change from orchestral tone poem to dramatic music for stage production, the program of the witches' sabbath remained largely in tact.

By early spring, Cui had finished his act, with Borodin close behind. Problems were developing, however, with both Musorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, who were frustrated with the situation. Musorgsky complained scornfully about the

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52 Leyda and Bertensson, op. cit., 87.
libretto in a letter to Stasov, slamming Krilov and lamenting, "It’s a shame to take my pen to picture ‘Sagana, chukh!’ and such rot, written by somebody, sometime, perhaps, with a drunken eye and brain . . . ." The text to which Musorgsky was referring was a meaningless demon language, which he ironically later carried over to his second operatic version. In the same letter, he complains of Gedeonov’s lack of moral ethics and the "hireling attitude" of the collaborators. Despite Musorgsky’s complaints, he also states, "I am writing the Black God, which is turning out quite well, very good in the voices." Meanwhile, Rimsky-Korsakov complained that the incomplete scenario held him up.

Troubles with Mlada, however, did not end with such murmuring. Unlike Rimsky-Korsakov’s later claim that Gedeonov quit his post and disappeared, the project actually collapsed because of budgetary problems." The last reported activity regarding Mlada was a May 1st play-through of the completed parts at Cui’s home.

In 1911, Cui published his act "in memory of my dear comrades," making only minor changes for melodies that had been used in other works. Rimsky-Korsakov later rewrote the libretto and composed his own entire version of Mlada, completed in 1891. Abraham reports, "Borodin’s contribution to the communal work was in the opinion of his three collaborators the best of all." Most of Borodin’s material was later inserted into Act IV of Prince Igor, which had been

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54 Ibid., 181.
55 Abraham, op. cit., 93.
56 Ibid., 107.
started before Mlada, but not completed.

Though the opera-ballet Mlada was never completed, Musorgsky did fulfill part of his portion of the project. His work mainly involved the adaptation of work previously written, yet inactive. Stasov reports that "... Musorgsky used fragments from the end of the third act of Salammbo... and fragments from Night on Bald Mountain (Witches) of 1866." His dating of Night on Bald Mountain, at least in its written form, is a year too early. That Musorgsky used "fragments" from Night on Bald Mountain is also misleading, since Musorgsky replaced the whole first extant version with his Mlada version in his 1874 catalog of works; Stasov's statement, however, is correct about Musorgsky's use of material from Salammbo, material which he had composed even earlier for Oedipus. Musorgsky's contributions include an effective market scene (an eventual source for the opera, Sorochintsy Fair), an elaborate, unfinished chorus derived from Oedipus/Salammbo, an unorchestrated processional march with chorus (dated February 26, 1872), and the Festival of the Black God, which was also unorchestrated.

Though the original score of this first operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain has never been found, evidence suggests that Musorgsky simply used the same version in creating his second operatic version, for Sorochintsy Fair, several years later. First, as shown earlier, it is clear from one of his letters that Musorgsky wrote choral parts for the first operatic version, and choral parts using the same demon language were included in the second operatic version.

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57 Stasov, op. cit., 178.
Second, Rimsky-Korsakov reported to Stasov concerning the second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain, "... it turned out to be all old stuff, left over from Mlada and, except for two or three pages, not even copied out afresh [emphasis mine]." He confirms this again after Musorgsky's death, suggesting the material was the same, except for "the addition of a little picture of early dawn. ..." The libretto of Mlada had called for a cock crow to end the sorcery of the Festival of the Black God, which may have given Musorgsky the seeds of the idea for an added ending to the second operatic version in Sorochintsy Fair.

As mentioned before, the last corporate activity surrounding Mlada was in May of 1872, at which time, the project was still in progress; its collapse seems to have occurred shortly thereafter. Strangely enough, Musorgsky must have continued work on the second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain beyond this time, because his 1874 catalog assigns the date of 1873 for the Festival of the "Black God." His revisions to the first extant version, as will be seen in Chapter IV, were extensive. This affirms his ongoing dedication to, and belief in, a work whose written development then spanned at least seven years, yet remained unrewarded by performance; the same belief and dedication would lead Musorgsky to return to his material one final time before his death.

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59 Leyda and Bertensson, op. cit., 403.
50 Leyda and Bertensson, op. cit., 280.
CHAPTER IV

MUSORGSKY'S SECOND OPERATIC VERSION OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN, FOR USE IN SOROCHINTSY FAIR, 1880

Historical Background

The writings of Nikolai Vasilyevich Gogol were favorites of Musorgsky's because of their rich depiction of Russian life. He not only had planned an opera to Gogol's St. John's Eve as early as 1858, but shortly after his first Bald Mountain, he had partially completed a musical drama called The Marriage, based on a Gogol play. In the 1870's, Gogol captured his imagination again with Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka, a collection of short stories.

According to Abraham, Rimsky-Korsakov and his fiancee, Nadezhda Purgold, were especially fond of Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka, which includes a story entitled "The Fair." It was apparently Nadezhda who first suggested to Rimsky-Korsakov, in December of 1871, that the story would "... be suitable for an opera, but not for you."61 Either she or her sister must then have then suggested the idea to Musorgsky, judging from his response in a letter dated January 3, 1872. Musorgsky writes: "I know the Gogol subject well. I thought about it two years ago but it does not suit the path I have

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61 Abraham, op. cit., 217.
chosen.  Nevertheless, the suggestion must have made an impression on him, because two and a half years later, he was working on the opera.

Musorgsky’s first recorded mention of Sorochintsy Fair comes in a July 23, 1874 letter to Lubov Karmalina. In the letter, he claims to be working simultaneously on Khovanshchina and the comic opera, Sorochintsy Fair. He refers to Sorochintsy Fair as a light diversion from Khovanshchina and his latest opera, Boris Godunov, and he makes mention of his investigation into Ukrainian folk song as part of the project.  

On April 20, 1875, however, Musorgsky wrote to Lubov Karmalina again, claiming to have “given up the Little-Russian opera . . . .” because of the difficulties with the Ukrainian speech needed for the recitatives.  At some point before July of the following year, Musorgsky changed his mind. Letters to Ludmila Shestakova and Vladimir Stasov, ranging from July to the end of the year, 1876, reaffirm Musorgsky’s simultaneous work on Sorochintsy Fair and Khovanshchina.

Stasov claimed that Musorgsky thought of Sorochintsy Fair to create a role for O. A. Petrov, a bass singer and friend who performed in Boris Godunov.  Whether this is true or not, Petrov was a source of advice and inspiration throughout the project’s early stages. His death on March 2, 1878, may indeed have slowed Musorgsky’s progress on the

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52 Orlova, op. cit., 254.
53 Leyda and Bertessson, op. cit., 277-8.
54 Ibid., 296.
55 Stasov, op. cit., 187.
opera, as Paul Lamm claims.\footnote{Paul Lamm, \textit{Mussorgsky: Complete Works}, 21 vols., forward to Piano/Vocal Score, German trans. by D. Ussow (New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, 1933), V, xviii.}

Lamm indicates that early manuscripts for \textit{Sorochintsy Fair} date back to 1876, when Musorgsky began sketching Ukrainian folk songs, labeled \textit{Sorochintsy Fair}, and also began sketches of individual songs and choruses for voices and piano.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, xvi.} The collecting of Ukrainian folk songs spanned from 1876 to 1879.

On May 19, 1877, Musorgsky wrote out the stage plans, which contain a reference to \textit{Night on Bald Mountain}. He positioned the piece as an interlude between the first and second acts, but with a question mark: "Act 2. N. E. Intermezzo?". \footnote{Leyda and Bertenson, \textit{op. cit.}, 355.} On August 15th of the same year, Musorgsky's plans had apparently not changed, for he says in a letter to Arseni Golenishchev-Kutuzov, "This act (2nd), as you'll remember, follows hard upon the Intermezzo (Witches' Sabbath on Bald Mountain;--which will be called "Dream of the Young Peasant Lad").\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 359.}

The source of Musorgsky's inspiration in placing \textit{Night on Bald Mountain} in this particular opera likely came more from the piece itself than from the opera. Outside of his obvious desire to have it performed, the dream plan may have come from the program of the original work. It is perhaps more than coincidence that the primary source of Musorgsky's inspiration for \textit{Night on Bald Mountain}, the sabbath description by Khotinsky, included one falling into a deep
sleep and seeing the devil, as happens similarly to the Peasant Lad. The Dream Vision of the Peasant Lad has little to do with the plot, but provides a dramatic setting for the musical interlude.

Progress on this second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain took place between July of 1879 and May of 1879. Mili Balakirev wrote Stasov on July 28, 1878, telling him of a visit Musorgsky had paid him. In it, he seems pleasantly surprised by Musorgsky’s modesty and attentiveness, and he reveals that Musorgsky received his suggestion of taking harmony lessons from Rimsky-Korsakov amicably. Concerning Night on Bald Mountain, he says:

... I’ve set him to a good piece of work; he has taken from me the score of his witches’ sabbat to revise and rewrite. There are such powerful and beautiful things in it that it would be a pity to leave it in its present disorder."

Though Balakirev is more positive and supportive here than usual, his continued underestimation of Musorgsky’s work is apparent by his choice of words. The letter does not state which version of Night on Bald Mountain Musorgsky took with him, but it is presumed to be the first operatic version, from Mlada. Judging from available documentation, it is not clear whether Musorgsky actually took formal lessons from Rimsky-Korsakov; he did play him the score at least once as it progressed, but, as mentioned in Chapter III, most of Musorgsky’s revisions were already in place from Mlada. The extent of Rimsky-Korsakov’s influence on Musorgsky’s revision

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"Ibid., 370."
of Night on Bald Mountain for the opera, Sorochnitsy Fair, is not clearly documented and likely insignificant. Rimsky-Korsakov reported his own account of Musorgsky’s plans for the second operatic version of Bald Mountain, and, as seems to have often been the case with his recollections, not every detail is entirely accurate. He says:

But between Acts II and III there was projected (for reasons unknown) a fantastic Intermezzo The Dream of a Peasant Lad, for which the music came from A Night on Bald Mount or St. John’s Eve. . . . With some additions and changes, this music had done duty, in its time, for the scene of Chernobog (Black God) in Mlada. Now, with the addition of a little picture of early dawn, it was to form the projected stage-intermezzo, forcibly squeezed into The Fair at Sorochnitsy.”

The Intermezzo, as shown in previously cited letters, was intended to precede Act II, not Act III. As mentioned before, however, his statement does help confirm that Musorgsky used the first operatic version as the basis for the second, and that the added ending accounted for a significant part, if not all, of the revision(s) made for the second operatic version. To further substantiate the Sorochnitsy Fair version’s relationship to the earlier Mlada version, Rimsky-Korsakov adds, “The demon language from the Mlada libretto was to supply the text of this Intermezzo, too.”

It is not known exactly when Rimsky-Korsakov heard the second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain, but his account of the event creates another discrepancy. He says:

I vividly recall Moussorgsky playing us this music; and there was a pedal of interminable length on the note C

Rimsky-Korsakov, op. cit., 145.
sharp, to play which was the task of V. V. Stassov, who took great delight in its endlessness. When Moussorgsky subsequently wrote this Intermezzo in the form of a sketch for piano and voices he did away with this interminable pedal, to Stassoff's profound sorrow; but it could never be restored, owing to the composer's death.\textsuperscript{72}

Oddly enough, the C\# pedal was not done away with at all; rather, it alternates octaves in the left hand of the piano, supporting almost the entire ending section, continuing, unbroken, for 59 measures. Rimsky-Korsakov's sketchy memory seems again the only logical answer to the discrepancy.

In the same account, however, he does provide a possible clue as to Musorgsky's motivation for adding the ending section. He says that the lyrical lines that occur near the end were to represent the peasant lad, and "were to appear as 'leading motives' in the opera itself [emphasis mine]."\textsuperscript{73} This seems to indicate that the Intermezzo may have been written before other uses of the peasant lad theme in the opera. Musorgsky may, then, have added the ending to Night on Bald Mountain for his own programmatic and musical reasons, and not simply to validate the whole piece's inclusion in the opera. In other words, the musical source for the peasant lad's leading motive may indeed have been the Intermezzo itself, even though the motive appears throughout the opera.

At any rate, Musorgsky always referred to Night on Bald Mountain, in all its forms, as a separate, complete work, even when it was prepared for insertion into Mlada and Sorochintsy Fair.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
The final manuscript of Musorgsky’s final Night on Bald Mountain, for voices and piano, four hands, is dated May 10, 1890. The manuscript confirms Musorgsky’s plan to insert Bald Mountain in Act I, bearing the inscription: “The Fair at Sorochintsy, Act I, Second Tableau”. On August 5 of the same year, Musorgsky confirms the work’s completion to Stasov, “... there’s a great deal done and the Black God is all ready.” Then, on August 22, he asks for help from Stasov with the staging of the Black God.

Along with the manuscript is Musorgsky’s note about the demon language and its source. He writes, “The text for this part of the scene was borrowed from Sakharov’s collection. M. Musorgsky.” Narratives of the Russian People is the title of Sakharov’s collection, which dates back to St. Petersburg, 1841. One of the tales, Song of the Witches on Bald Mountain, apparently is about a Cossack who heard the witches’ song on Bald Mountain and was killed for it, leaving the unintelligible song to wander the earth. Another, Sabbat Song of the Witches, concerns the return of a young girl from her condition as a witch to her natural condition, so that she is able to reveal the song to the villagers. Leyda and Bertensson refer to an excerpt of her language:

Gutz!
Alegremos!
Astaroth, Behemoth!”

74 Ibid., footnote, 262.
75 Leyda and Bertensson, op. cit., 404.
76 Ibid., footnote, 181.
77 Ibid., 182.
Stokowski's notes on the collection also display a translated excerpt:

Kumara
Nikh, nikh, zapalan, bada,
exhokhomo, lavasa, shoboda,
Kumara,
Junjou
Vikhada, ksara, gujatum . . .

The above excerpts have no translation and are examples of the same type of nonsensical language Musorgsky had complained about when working on his choral parts to Mlada.

Despite documentation of the second operatic version's 1880 completion, records reveal that it may actually have been completed earlier. Lamm mentions that Musorgsky repeatedly performed a version for voice and piano on a concert tour of Southern Russia with the singer Leonowa, between August 18 and October 17, 1879. If the numbering system used by Lamm for the autograph scores is chronologically accurate, Night on Bald Mountain was one of the first completed manuscripts of the opera. It is Autograph #140 in a series of manuscripts that include Sorochintsy Fair, numbering in range from 104 to 411.

A Comparison of Musorgsky's Extant Versions

Musorgsky's death, in 1881, ended his work on both Sorochintsy Fair and Khovanshchina, and left both operas unfinished. Though unorchestrated, The Dream Vision of the

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75 Leopold Stokowski, Musorgsky-Stokowski Night on Bare Mountain Witches' Sabbath (c. 1938), Preface to the orchestra score (Curtis Institute of Music, 1980).
76 Lamm, op. cit., xviii.
Peasant Lad was complete, revealing all Musorgsky's intended formal and notational revisions to Night on Bald Mountain. As can be observed in the score, this final version of the work was definitely not simply the 1867 tone poem with choral parts and an added ending; rather, it was an entire reworking of the piece.

Differences between the first extant version and the second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain are too numerous to elaborate in a text of this nature, but drawing comparisons is possible. Since the music is so closely allied with the program in both versions, it is helpful to divide the two versions into parallel programmatic sections. Compare here, the program of the first extant version, on the left, with the program of Dream Vision of the Peasant Lad, as found in Musorgsky's August 22, 1880 letter to Stasov, on the right:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Program</th>
<th>Peasant Lad Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Assembly of the witches, their chatter &amp; gossip.</td>
<td>1) An underground rumble of inhuman voices, pronouncing inhuman words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Cortege of Satan.</td>
<td>2) The underground kingdom of darkness asserts its rights, jeering over the sleeping Lad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Portents of the appearance of the Black God and Satan.</td>
<td>4) The spirits of darkness leave the Lad. Appearance of the Black God.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

79 Leyda and Bertenson, op. cit., 405.
3) Unholy glorification of Satan.

4) Witches' sabbat.
(No added ending)

5) Glorification of the Black God and the black mass.

6) Witches' Sabbath.

7) At the very climax of the Sabbath the bell in the village church strikes. The Black God vanishes instantly.

8) Suffering of the demons.

9) Voices of the church choir.

10) Disappearance of the demons and the awakening of the Lad.

With the exception of the ending, literary comparison reveals obvious similarities, the later version being more detailed than the original, but sequentially the same.

The two musical works, though different enough from each other that they are difficult to compare side-by-side, do concur structurally with the programmatic divisions shown above. The four original divisions are the structurally most significant of both versions, while the added divisions help in further understanding the form of the later version.

Musical comparison, then, becomes far more valuable with the help of the programs, the latter of which is reflected in the actual piano/vocal score.

The most immediate difference between Mussorgsky's two scores is that the first extant version is substantially longer than the second operatic version. The first extant version is 540 measures long; the second operatic version is
371 measures without the added ending section, and 438 measures with the ending. Without looking into the nature of Musorgsky's revisions, it would be easy to assume that he simply cut the piece down to squeeze it into the opera. A closer look at the sorts of revisions made indicate that Musorgsky did not merely make logical edits, thus shortening it; rather, he rewrote the piece with greater economy of language, thus tightening its structure. A further indication that he was not merely trying to shorten the piece is that Musorgsky added the sixty-seven bar ending section, as well as other additional material to the original tone poem; the end result is that the two versions are only two to three minutes different in actual performance length.

The first major division within St. John’s Night on Bald Mountain and The Dream Vision of the Peasant Lad is without question where the two versions are most similar. Most of the changes in the first section involve a condensation of the presentation of musical material and reworkings of similar musical material. On the following page is a table of compositional changes made in the first major section, not including minor changes in dynamics and articulation. Notice that Musorgsky made no actual excisions of more than two measures, but the revised version of the section is seventeen measures shorter than the same section of the first extant version.

Side-by-side comparison in subsequent sections is of less profit, because not only are all portions of the thematic material not the same, but the sequence of thematic
Table 1. Mussorgsky’s Second Operatic Revisions, First Section Only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT OF REVISION</th>
<th>FIRST EXTANT VERSION</th>
<th>SECOND OPERATIC VERSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(St. John’s Night . . .)</td>
<td>Assembly of the Witches, 1-86</td>
<td>Underground inhuman Voices, 1-71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1A</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening tempo, meter</td>
<td>Vivace, 4/4</td>
<td>Allegro, Alla breve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. 5-6 and other &quot;surge&quot; passages</td>
<td>Pizzicato bass motif drops out</td>
<td>Pizzicato bass motif continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. 5-6 and other &quot;surge&quot; passages</td>
<td>&quot;Turn&quot; motif continues</td>
<td>&quot;Turn&quot; motif becomes tremolo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deletion . . .</td>
<td>M. 11 included</td>
<td>M. 11 deleted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeering Neighbor 8th-note motif</td>
<td>Drops out at M. 21</td>
<td>Continues until cadence (MM. 20-23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deletion . . .</td>
<td>MM. 25-26 included</td>
<td>Same is deleted - between MM. 23 &amp; 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm alteration . . .</td>
<td>MM. 29-36: triplets</td>
<td>MM. 26-31: eighth notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deletion . . .</td>
<td>MM. 33-34 included</td>
<td>Same is deleted - between MM. 29 &amp; 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condensation . .</td>
<td>MM. 38-40 (3 measures)</td>
<td>Condensed to 2 measures (MM. 33-34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condensation . .</td>
<td>MM. 41-42: &quot;turn&quot; motif</td>
<td>Condensed to 1 measure (M. 35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizzicato bass motif</td>
<td>Absent from MM. 41-42: delayed entry</td>
<td>Starts immediately (M. 35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condensation . .</td>
<td>MM. 51-52: 2 measures of pizz. bass motif</td>
<td>M. 44: only 1 bar of pizz. bass motif</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deletion . . .</td>
<td>MM. 62-63 included</td>
<td>Same deleted - between MM. 53 &amp; 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeering Neighbor 8th-note motif</td>
<td>Drops out at MM. 67-68</td>
<td>Continues through MM. 57-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewrite of same material . .</td>
<td>MM. 69-74</td>
<td>MM. 53-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewrite, condensation . .</td>
<td>MM. 75-86 (12 measures)</td>
<td>MM. 65-71 (7 measures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence deleted . .</td>
<td>MM. 86: rest w/fermata</td>
<td>M. 71 segue into M. 72 - no rest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1B</th>
<th>- their Chatter and Gossip, 87-141</th>
<th>Darkness rights. Jeering, 72-124</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhythms alteration . .</td>
<td>MM. 87 - on: triplet accompaniment</td>
<td>MM. 72 - on: eighth-note accompaniment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewrite, condensation . .</td>
<td>MM. 87-90: 4-bar introduction</td>
<td>MM. 72-73: 2-bar introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sforzandi omitted . .</td>
<td>MM. 87-102: many sforzandi</td>
<td>MM. 72-85: no Sforzandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar material . .</td>
<td>MM. 103-114 (12 measures)</td>
<td>MM. 86-90 (13 measures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reharbing . .</td>
<td>MM. 112B-114</td>
<td>MM. 95-98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar material . .</td>
<td>MM. 115-122</td>
<td>MM. 99-106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic placement . .</td>
<td>M. 127: strong 1 &amp; 3</td>
<td>M. 111: strong 1 &amp; 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplification . .</td>
<td>MM. 129-130: sustained notes included</td>
<td>MM. 113-114: sustained notes deleted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale language modification . .</td>
<td>MM. 133-139; mixed-mode scales</td>
<td>MM. 117-120: mostly whole-tone scales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condensation . .</td>
<td>MM. 133-139 (7 measures)</td>
<td>MM. 117-120 (4 measures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condensation . .</td>
<td>MM. 140-141: pause for trill</td>
<td>Trill deleted between MM. 120 &amp; 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition . .</td>
<td>Next section follows immediately</td>
<td>MM. 121-124: added cadential material</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
presentation is not the same, and development of the variations is vastly different. The only major excision takes place at the beginning of the second major section, the Cortège of Satan, where Musorgsky omitted 59 measures (in the first extant version, MM. 142-201). This material, excepting its distant relationship to earlier material, does not appear anywhere in the revised version.

Musorgsky added two new themes, not found in the first extant version, to the operatic version. The first is a bass solo in D-minor, programmatically representing Satan's appearance, occurring in MM. 154-170. Here is the melody:

Example 5. Musorgsky's Added Devil Solo Melody.

Clearly the devil solo is related to earlier accompaniment figures which first occur in MM. 26-29 of the piano/vocal score:
Example 6. Devil Solo Derivation.

The devil solo returns in MM. 240-248, transposed to Db-major.

The second new melody has its roots in Musorgsky’s unfinished opera, Salammbo (1863-6). Though he borrowed the theme, it is closely related to the opening material of Night on Bald Mountain. Musorgsky wove it skillfully into his variations, playing upon its similarity to the initial themes. Below is an example of the theme’s original presentation in Salammbo:

Example 7. The Second of Musorgsky’s Added Themes, as It Originally Appeared in Salammbo.

Its altered identity in the sabbath of The Dream Vision of the Peasant Lad is as follows:
Example 8. Salammbo Theme, as It Appears in the Second Operatic Version of Bald Mountain.

By the end of the second section, all of the thematic material has been presented, and the last two sections involve variation, recombination, and development of the material. These processes result in two drastically different workings-out of what is, in part, the same material. In addition to the countless differences in thematic development, Musorgsky had made free use of whole-tone scales in his first score, especially in the Unholy Glorification and Sabbat, but he removed most of them in the second operatic version, preferring various combinations of chromatic and traditional scales.

Musorgsky was consistent with his approach of actual rewriting (as opposed to slight editing and minor revision) through the end of the Witches' Sabbath. The two endings (discounting the added dawn section) are markedly different from one another. In both versions, Musorgsky increases the tempo before the end; in the first extant version, he marks "Ancora piu vivo" for the final sixteen measures, and in the
second operatic version, he marks "Ancora piu mosso" for the last 21 measures.

In the earlier work, Musorgsky begins with twelve bars of cadential material in D-major, followed by two measures of rising sixteenth-note scales in D, which arrive on the glassy high f#’s, mentioned in Chapter II. These diminuendo to the last note, which is not played by the full orchestra, thus leaving a surprising, if slightly deflated, ending, predictably in D-major.

By way of contrast, the second operatic version begins the section with twelve bars of agitated motives drawn from earlier in the work, concentrating less on the D-major tonic, and more on contrasting neighbor chords to D-major, such as Eb-major. Six bars of cadential material ensue. The two-measure climaxing scale descends, instead of ascending, and instead of the D-major scale, it is a mixed chromatic scale. This scale culminates in a climactic pause, followed by the final fortississimo octave C#’s! The effect is jarring and dramatic. Musorgsky’s choice to end on C# also carried over into his added ending, which is in C#-major. It is not necessarily reasonable to assume that he changed the key of the ending to fit the opera, since the opera material surrounding the piece was not even completed, and the drop to C# is overtly dramatic, bearing no attempt at transition or concealment. Further discussion of the ending key choice may be found in Chapter V.
Posthumous Completions of Sorochintsy Fair

The opera, Sorochintsy Fair, was close enough to completion at Musorgsky’s death to warrant the several efforts at its posthumous completion. Rimsky-Korsakov himself had planned to complete the opera, as early as 1895, but never actually worked on it. The first actual attempt was by Antol Lyadov, who, at Rimsky-Korsakov’s suggestion, orchestrated five numbers before abandoning the project. W. G. Karatygin added three more numbers and prepared a 1912 Bessel edition from Lyadov’s work. This incomplete version of the opera did not include the Night on Bald Mountain Intermezzo. It was performed at the Moscow Free Theater on October 8, 1913, half as an opera, and half as a comedy with spoken text. J. S. Sachhnowski orchestrated mostly the same portions of the opera in 1913, with a few additions, but his work was also left unfinished.

It was Cesar Cui who first completed Sorochintsy Fair, in 1916. Bessel replaced the Karatygin/Lyadov version with Cui’s in a 1916 edition. Cui followed Musorgsky’s musical plan carefully, but composed his own music for the incomplete sections. Because of the question mark left by Night on Bald Mountain in Musorgsky’s stage plans, and perhaps also because of Rimsky-Korsakov’s foregone successful rendition, Cui chose not to orchestrate or include it in the opera. Cui’s completion of Sorochintsy Fair was called a “Musical Drama” at its first performance on October 13, 1917, in St.

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Petersburg.\textsuperscript{62}

Nicolai Cherepnin, a one-time pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov, completed the second full version of \textit{Sorochintsy Fair}, in 1923. This, too, was published by Bessel, and received its premiere performance in Monte Carlo, 1923. Cherepnin’s approach was to remain truer to Musorgsky’s music, but he had to restructure Musorgsky’s plans to do so. He used parts of the various existing orchestrations, inserting parts of other works by Musorgsky where additional material was necessary. He acted more as a compiler/orchestrator than a composer. He did not orchestrate the \textit{Night on Bald Mountain} intermezzo, either, but he did use motives from it in his conclusion of Act II.\textsuperscript{63} While Cui’s version has been largely forgotten, Cherepnin’s, possibly because of his greater faithfulness to Musorgsky’s music, has received more performances and attention.

The third and last completion of \textit{Sorochintsy Fair}, was that prepared for Lamm’s \textit{Complete Works} in 1933 by Vissarion Shebalin. He worked entirely from Musorgsky’s original manuscripts and, by so doing, was forced to reorganize the opera. Shebalin was the only one of the three who orchestrated the \textit{Night on Bald Mountain} intermezzo (\textit{The Dream Vision of the Peasant Lad}) possibly because of the difficulties involved in its placement into the opera. The intermezzo appears in Act III, not between Acts I and II, as Musorgsky had originally planned.

\textsuperscript{62} Lamm, op. cit., V. xx.

Though Musorgsky's stage plans seem to favor the Intermezzo's placement in Act III, between the "Peasant Lad's Song" and "Morgendammerung," Lamm describes the problems such positioning would create: 1) the theme of the "Peasant Lad's Song" is presented in the ending of the Intermezzo, which, following the lad's song, would be musically weak; 2) the song's musical material is not particularly suited for transition to the dream, which requires the Lad falling asleep; 3) the "Peasant Lad's Song" contains lyrics better suited to the Act I plot scenario, and 4) material from the song is needed in Act I to fill out the stage plans and avoid the addition of new material. His solution was to use 27 measures (the "love" theme) of the "Peasant Lad's Song" as a transition to the Bald Mountain intermezzo in Act III; the main body of the "Peasant Lad's Song," he retained for Act I."\(^{54}\) Why Shebalin did not consider placing the Intermezzo between Acts I and II, as Musorgsky originally suggested, is likely because of staging problems and the insufficient quantity of material to fill out Act III.

Shebalin's orchestration of Night on Bald Mountain is absolutely faithful in form and largely faithful in material to the original piano/vocal score. By orchestrating Musorgsky's piano/vocal score, he produced a performable conception of the work that includes Musorgsky's last revisions. Reilly offers this evaluation of Shebalin's orchestration:

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\(^{54}\) Lamm, *op. cit.*, VI, xxiv.
My personal preference is for the Shebalin version, because it is based on a more faithful transcription of Musorgsky’s original manuscripts, includes the Bare Mountain episode, and because it preserves the cultivated simplicity of the idiom that Musorgsky adopted in this work.\textsuperscript{85}

Stasov also testified to The Dream Vision of the Peasant Lad’s quality by saying, “For grandioseness, fantasy, and originality, it is among the most sublime creations of Musorgsky’s entire life.”\textsuperscript{86} Shebalin’s version of Sorochintsy Fair, including the Bald Mountain intermezzo, has been preserved in scattered recordings (see Chapter VII for more specific information about available recordings).

Since the first extant version of Night on Bald Mountain had not reappeared until the same year as Shebalin’s new orchestration, the only version of Night on Bald Mountain known to the public was by Rimsky-Korsakov, who had completed his own version many years before. The fact that Shebalin’s orchestration emerged within an opera, tended to cloud its merits as a scholarly and performable version of Night on Bald Mountain. As will be seen, Rimsky-Korsakov’s approach was not in the same spirit as Shebalin’s relatively faithful orchestration of the work.

\textsuperscript{86} Stasov, op. cit., 178.
CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEM WITH RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S VERSION OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN

Historical Background

The purpose of this chapter, as well as the other chapters in this writing, is not to diminish the accomplishments of Rimsky-Korsakov or anyone else, but to clarify with factual information the history of the various versions of Night on Bald Mountain. Without such clarification, no legitimate conclusions concerning its performance status may be drawn. Rimsky-Korsakov's role in helping to make possible public performances of many of Musorgsky's works is undeniable, and without his contributions, Musorgsky might well have quickly faded from notoriety. Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestral version of Night on Bald Mountain was invaluable, in that it was the only published version of the tone poem until Shebalin's orchestration of the second operatic version was published in 1933.

Rimsky-Korsakov is partly to blame, however, for the confusion that has surrounded Night on Bald Mountain, especially since he was one of the only early sources of information. His memory of the work's compositional history
was faulty in several respects. In speaking of the difficulty he was having with Musorgsky's scores, he reveals several errors:

A Night on Bald Mountain was the only thing I could not find my way with. Originally composed in the 60's, under the influence of Liszt's Totentanz,--for the piano with accompaniment of orchestra, this piece (then called St. John's Eve and both severely and justly criticized by Balakireff) had long been utterly neglected by its author, gathering dust among his unfinished works.""

As indicated in Chapter II, though Musorgsky was apparently inspired by Liszt's Totentanz, he did not hear it until 1866, at which point he began plans for the orchestral tone poem of 1877, not a piece for piano and orchestra; Balakirev's criticism was regarding the same orchestral tone poem. That much is clear in Musorgsky's letters and the dated inscription on the score of the first extant version. If Musorgsky's earlier 1860 "sketches" for a piece after Mengden involved piano and orchestra, there is certainly no documentation that would support the existence of such a version.

Rimsky-Korsakov's statement that Musorgsky had long neglected Night on Bald Mountain seems rooted in his errant implication that Musorgsky never actually finished the work. It is possible that Rimsky-Korsakov viewed the work as incomplete because he believed it was in need of revision, but certainly his implication in the above statement is that the work had not been completed at all. Apparently Rimsky-Korsakov had long forgotten or discounted Musorgsky's letters

"Rimsky-Korsakov, op. cit., 261."
of 1867, which documented both the completion and instrumentation of Night on Bald Mountain.

Continuing his discussion of working on the Night on Bald Mountain score, Rimsky-Korsakov refers to Musorgsky's choice to use the work in Sorochintsy Fair as "...queer and incoherent... without rhyme or reason." He then goes on to describe his own task and explain his process of arriving at the new version, which also includes misleading information:

In the working of Musorgsky's piece I made use of its last version for the purpose of closing the composition. Now then, the first form of the piece was for piano solo with orchestra, the second form and the third--vocal compositions and for the stage, into the bargain (unorchestrated)! None of these forms was fit to be published and performed. With Musorgsky's material as a basis I decided to create an instrumental piece, by retaining all of the author's best and coherent material, adding the fewest possible interpolations of my own [emphasis mine].”

Aside from the repeated claim of a piano/orchestra version, to the neglect of the original tone poem, Rimsky-Korsakov says that none of the forms were fit for publication and performance. These statements would seem to indicate that either his memory of the tone poem score was faulty or he never really saw it (the issue will be taken up in more detail later in this chapter). His claim that the idea to make an orchestral tone poem from the disheveled versions was his own, clearly does not corroborate historical evidence.

Whether Rimsky-Korsakov really did see the first extant version or not, the most logical response to the situation would have been simply to orchestrate the completed

97 Ibid., 262.
Sorochintsy Fair version; this, as he describes in the above account, is not what he chose to do. In the same account, Rimsky-Korsakov admits to struggling with the work, saying "It was a difficult task of which the satisfactory solution baffled me for two years . . . . I had been unable to get at either form, modulation or orchestration; and the piece lay inert until the following year." 68

Nevertheless, Rimsky-Korsakov did finish Night on Bald Mountain, in 1886. Balakirev apparently did not approve of Rimsky-Korsakov’s version, and had planned to undertake the project himself. 69 Rimsky-Korsakov conducted the premier performance on October 27, 1886, which was highly successful. He said of Night on Bald Mountain in the 1886-87 concert season, "... the piece, given by me at the first concert in a manner that could not be improved upon, was demanded again and again with unanimity." 70 It was, therefore, Rimsky-Korsakov’s version that became immediately popular with audiences, and continues to enjoy frequent performances over a century later; Balakirev dropped his plans because of the Rimsky-Korsakov version’s success.

Rimsky-Korsakov’s Content Versus Original Sources

The problem with Rimsky-Korsakov’s version is not a question of quality; that he was a gifted orchestrator and composer, few would argue. The question of how respectfully he treated the original scores, however, is another matter.

68 Ibid., 262.
70 Rimsky-Korsakov, op. cit., 281.
Formally, his version is entirely based on Musorgsky's second operatic version of *Night on Bald Mountain*. If Rimsky-Korsakov did not have access to the first extant version of the tone poem, he could not be faulted for choosing his own orchestration, since *The Dream Vision of the Peasant Lad* had never been orchestrated. (Evidence that he did have access to the first extant version, which, as discussed earlier, was orchestrated by Musorgsky, will be presented later in this chapter). Even discounting the first extant version, however, his version reveals an unnecessary and complete recomposition of the work.

Says Edward R. Reilly of the Rimsky-Korsakov version:

> . . . this adaptation is by no means simply a 'touching up' of any of Musorgsky's own versions. It is in fact a reworking of the material from the second choral version [*Sorochintsy Fair*] with substantial modifications of the original structure and other aspects of its musical style.\(^{31}\)

Calvocoressi called the version a "bowdlerization" of the original score,\(^{32}\) implying that Rimsky-Korsakov removed or glossed over the elements considered vulgar. Garden calls Rimsky-Korsakov's version an "emasculatory revision," which "fatuously masquerades as a work by Musorgsky."\(^{33}\) In more specific agreement on the nature of Rimsky-Korsakov's revisions, Reilly says, "These procedures [of revision] ranged from minor changes to total recomposition, and nearly always involved a smoothing out or toning down of the

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\(^{32}\) Calvocoressi, *Musorgsky*, 177.

distinctive qualities of the original composition."

When considering the above statements, it is not surprising that comparing Musorgsky's original versions with Rimsky-Korsakov's, side-by-side, is difficult, if not impossible. It is, however, possible to compare the presentation of thematic material in Rimsky-Korsakov's version with that of Musorgsky's second operatic version, a process which involves the first two major structural divisions. The changes are numerous, and often involve single measures being added or left out, changes in the cadences, melodic variations being changed to simple restatements, a general toning down of harmonic language, and, by the end of The Assembly of the Witches, a reordering of thematic appearance. Actual notes are also freely changed, both in scale material and melodies. By the third major section, which consists primarily of variation and development of material already introduced, the two versions become too different for direct comparison. The end result is that the Rimsky-Korsakov version is 21 measures longer than the Sorochintsy Fair version, on which it is based, despite the fact that Rimsky-Korsakov omitted certain of Musorgsky's material; the reason for this is that Rimsky-Korsakov added literal recapitulations of presented material.

The forthcoming musical examples are for the purpose of sampling the extent and types of specific local revisions Rimsky-Korsakov employed, but they do not reveal the entire scope of major changes he made involving structure, harmonic motion, thematic placement, and the development of thematic

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material. Countless examples from Rimsky-Korsakov’s score demonstrate that he either did not appreciate or did not understand Musorgsky’s variation style, which was rooted in the Russian folk-song tradition. Musorgsky had even told Rimsky-Korsakov that he had used the approach in his first exuberant letter, documenting Night on Bald Mountain’s first completion (Chapter II). The first group of examples, then, specifically relates to Rimsky-Korsakov’s approach of smoothing-out and “correcting” Musorgsky’s variation style of composition.

The first example of Musorgsky’s variation style being ironed out by Rimsky-Korsakov occurs early into the work, where the opening material returns, transposed up a half-step, in both versions. Musorgsky shortens the return and varies it by bringing in the familiar bass theme immediately (MM.35-44), whereas Rimsky-Korsakov simply transposes the opening for an exact restatement (MM. 36-46).

In his process of smoothing out Musorgsky’s variation techniques, Rimsky-Korsakov also freely changed notes and harmonies. The following passage, like the passage discussed above, occurs during the return of the opening material. Again, while Rimsky-Korsakov adheres to the more German tradition of restatement (MM. 47-8) Musorgsky opts for growth and change of the original statement (MM. 45-6):

In the above restatement, Musorgsky has changed the top note and the top interval, creating a dramatic, surprising whole-step, instead of the first statement half-step version. Rimsky-Korsakov has simply eliminated the variation, opting for a repeat of the earlier figure.

In addition to smoothing out Musorgsky's variation techniques, Rimsky-Korsakov freely reinterpreted thematic material. The upper voices of such a theme in Musorgsky's version of the piano score (MM. 62-64) are as shown:

Example 11. Musorgsky's Theme.

Contrast the above example with Rimsky-Korsakov's loose interpretation of it (MM. 64-6) shown below:
Example 12. Rimsky-Korsakov's Interpretation of Theme.

Though these obviously represent related thematic material, Rimsky-Korsakov alters the rhythm and articulation and adds grace notes to the third measure shown. The lower voices (not shown in this example) are close to identical in the two scores, but Rimsky-Korsakov's revision in the upper voices draws on a rhythmic presentation that Musorgsky created for a later theme:

Example 13. Actual Musorgsky Origin of Rhythmic Figure.

Incidentally, Rimsky-Korsakov's later presentation of the theme (M. 250) is in a different key, is marked by a contrary
dynamic, and does not have the grace notes from Musorgsky's corresponding presentation (M. 273).

Rimsky-Korsakov's choices of scales and harmonies in numerous places reveal his predisposition to a more conservative harmonic language than that favored by Musorgsky. The result is generally a less-colorful harmonic motion than that of the original Peasant Lad score, and a toning down of the savage qualities inherent in the program. The following examples demonstrate the two composers' difference in approach to the actual musical language.

In the example shown below, Musorgsky's use of a whole-tone sweep is in keeping with the other-worldly appearance of witches (MM. 117-120):

Example 14. Musorgsky's Use of the Whole-Tone Scale.

It is entirely replaced in the Rimsky-Korsakov version by chromatic scales (MM. 126-129):

Example 15. Rimsky-Korsakov's Chromatic Scale Substitution.
Notice also that Musorgsky’s scale spans a range greater than two octaves, whereas Rimsky-Korsakov’s change compresses it by an entire octave.

Immediately before the above scales, the score reveals a clear example of Rimsky-Korsakov attempting to “tone down” Musorgsky’s local harmonic language. In this passage, as well as in many others, Rimsky-Korsakov opted for safe, traditional lines and consequent harmonies, in the face of Musorgsky’s expressionistic, unrefined originals. Here, Rimsky-Korsakov’s passage is in a straightforward A-minor

Example 16. Rimsky-Korsakov’s A-minor Figure.

![Music notation image]

(MM. 120-1), while Musorgsky introduces a contrasting tritone between A-natural and Eb (MM. 113-14):

Example 17. Musorgsky’s Daring Original.

![Music notation image]
Again, Musorgsky's extreme range in the above passage reflects the heated energy of the subject matter, while Rimsky-Korsakov's more conservative range mitigates the effect.

Not only did Rimsky-Korsakov change individual notes and harmonies in his revision, but he occasionally changed whole key areas, presumably to smooth out the harmonic progression of the piece. A striking example of Rimsky-Korsakov taking the same basic material, and transposing it to suit harmonic motion, occurs during the second major section, following Satan's appearance (M. 171 in Musorgsky's; rehearsal [G] in Rimsky-Korsakov's). Musorgsky's score alternates between G#-minor and C#-minor, and beginning in MM. 177, stark bi-tonal dissonances heighten tension until the cadence in G#. By way of contrast, Rimsky-Korsakov's alternates between A-major and D-minor, and politely neglects the dissonances. Both composers arrive at the C#-major of the following section logically; Musorgsky does so by cadencing on C#'s dominant, G#, and Rimsky-Korsakov forgoes the cadence by simply sliding from D-A down to C#-G#.

If changing the harmonic progressions was one way Rimsky-Korsakov tried to streamline Musorgsky's score, in several instances, he achieved the same end by taking a more conservative approach to range, and by simplifying runs that were likely designed to contribute a wild brutality to Musorgsky's picture. Many of Musorgsky's grace-note run figures span an entire octave, while most of Rimsky-Korsakov's are compressed to a perfect fifth.
Rimsky-Korsakov also omitted the eight bars of frenzied, ascending, E-major quintuplets, which Musorgsky used as an energetic accompaniment to his fanfare theme (MM. 279-86). The fact that Rimsky-Korsakov rewrote certain of the scale passages to simplify them rhythmically, may have been a wise choice that made them more accessible to orchestras; however, his restriction of the actual material reveals a contrast in character between his version and the original score.

Rimsky-Korsakov applied revisions of another sort, as well; he selectively omitted certain melodies from the original score, perhaps because he believed they were inherently more vocal than instrumental. The devil solo from the second major section is an excellent example (shown in Chapter IV) as the melody cannot be found anywhere in Rimsky-Korsakov's score. The voice in Musorgsky's score was doubled in the piano, which means it would have been stated by instruments as well, if Musorgsky had lived to orchestrate the Dream Vision of the Peasant Lad, himself.

The most startling omission in Rimsky-Korsakov's score occurs in the ending section of the piece, where, as part of the program, Musorgsky includes a chorale-style hymn. Its programmatic subtitle is "Voices of the church choir," and the hymn, which occurs over an ongoing C# pedal, is shown below:
In Musorgsky’s work, the hymn serves to welcome the dawn and scatter the dissonant suffering of the demons. Rimsky-Korsakov, whose ending is a perfect ternary form with coda, may have felt it did not fit the structure of his traditional form; also feasible is that he may have avoided the hymn simply because it was sung by the chorus. Whatever his reasoning, the hymn’s repose may not have been as formally essential to Rimsky-Korsakov’s generally consonant ending as it was to Musorgsky’s ending, which places greater emphasis on the contrasting struggle between the dawn and dissonant demonic suffering.

Before the ending section, Rimsky-Korsakov ends the final Sabbath in a manner entirely different than Musorgsky ends his original. While Musorgsky, as discussed in Chapter IV, closes the section by building to a disturbing, fortississimo (fff) C# fermata, Rimsky-Korsakov favors an anticlimactic diminuendo into the added ending section,
without pause. This directly conflicts with the literary program which states, "At the very climax of the Sabbat, the bell in the village church strikes [emphasis mine]." Not only is the approach entirely contrary to Musorgsky's, but the arrival note is D-natural, instead of C#.

From this D-natural arrival, Rimsky-Korsakov keeps the ending section in D-major, using a pedal on D-natural, instead of C#. His choice of D-major may well stem from his own philosophy that different keys inherently represent different moods. According to this belief, D-major represents daylight." As mentioned, he leaves out the hymn theme, and the harmonies in the final major section are generally more consonant than Musorgsky's. At the end of the first statement of the lyrical Peasant Lad theme, for example, Musorgsky's version resolves into a jarring A-B-C#-D bi-tonal collision; Rimsky-Korsakov's resolves into a D-major triad. Programmatically, Musorgsky's dissonance represents the suffering of the demons as the early light of dawn drives them away. Rimsky-Korsakov's decision to change Musorgsky's C#-major to D-major results in the two versions ending a half-step apart.

Edward Garden excuses Rimsky-Korsakov's decision to end in D-major, by saying, "... Musorgsky is leading the listener on to his next scene while Rimsky is rounding off a self-sufficient work." There are problems with this point of view, however. In Chapter VIII of this writing, the fact

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98 Leyda and Bertensson, op. cit., 405.
00 Garden, "St. John's Three Nights . . .," The Musical Times, 335.
that Musorgsky had intended to orchestrate his *Peasant Lad* Intermezzo for separate concert performance will be discussed. Beyond that, the opening of Act II is in B-minor, so that ending in D-major would not have posed any real compositional problems. In fact, Shebalin’s Act I ends in D-major as it is!

The question of why Musorgsky ended in C#, instead of keeping his tonal center around D, may simply be answered by the programmatic notion that he wanted to change moods and worlds. The C# of dawn creates grating conflict, opposing the D of night, as the black night of sorcery reluctantly gives ground to the new dawn. Ending in a different key than a piece had begun or abruptly shifting from one key area to another, would have been highly unusual for others in the Mighty Five, but it was not unusual for Musorgsky. As Leonard notes, “In the course of a song he [Musorgsky] did not bind himself to any tonality, often ending in a different key from that in which he had begun.”

The discussion of Rimsky-Korsakov’s approach to *Night on Bald Mountain* has thus far been limited to comparison with the second operatic version; the question of whether or not Rimsky-Korsakov actually saw and worked from both of Musorgsky’s extant versions has been raised surprisingly little by historians. Most have assumed that Rimsky-Korsakov did see the two originals, as he states in his writings. The obvious problems of Rimsky-Korsakov’s errant claims about the first extant version and the general lack of similarity between his orchestration and Musorgsky’s, however, raises

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the alternate possibility that the first extant version had already been lost and that Rimsky-Korsakov simply had no access to the original orchestration. This scenario, which would vindicate Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestration to a certain extent, begins to crumble under careful scrutiny.

Garden's investigation into the matter concludes that Rimsky-Korsakov did have access to both scores. His prognosis is based primarily upon the excerpt shown below, where both the first extant version and Rimsky-Korsakov's version include two beats of triplets inserted into the middle of an otherwise classical four-bar phrase."


Notice that Rimsky-Korsakov adds the triplets without Musorgsky's meter change, and he inserts a false recapitulation of the opening bass motive. Musorgsky omits the extra beats in his second operatic version, leaving regular four-bar phrases.

Other examples of similarities between Rimsky-Korsakov’s score and the first extant version are primarily orchestral. The opening statement’s orchestration is similar to Musorgsky’s original, and Rimsky-Korsakov adds sustained notes that could only have come from the original orchestration. Below is an additional example -- a two-bar excerpt from Musorgsky’s piano/vocal score:


Rimsky-Korsakov adds triplets in the first violins, as shown below, which are strikingly similar to the succeeding sextuplets Musorgsky used in his first extant violin parts:

The above examples and other orchestral similarities render inconceivable the notion that Rimsky-Korsakov did not see the original first extant version, even though his own orchestration only seems to borrow occasional ideas from it.

That Rimsky-Korsakov apparently did see the first extant version of Night on Bald Mountain, casts a shadow over his role in the work's history, for several reasons. As mentioned, the circumstance reveals that he could indeed have been more faithful to Mussorgsky's intentions, had he been so inclined. The circumstance further implies that Rimsky-Korsakov may have been the last to see the first extant version before its disappearance. Adding to the shadow is Rimsky-Korsakov's subsequent faulty memory of the original manuscript, at a time when he was one of a very few sources of information about it. The assembly of these facts and the mystery surrounding Bald Mountain's disappearance could perhaps unfairly provoke the suspicion that Rimsky-Korsakov might have himself been somehow instrumental in the suppression of the first extant version of Night on Bald Mountain.

To investigate such conjecture is beyond the scope and purpose of this writing, and it is likely that specific information concerning the details of the first extant version's disappearance and rediscovery may be available in St. Petersburg. The only conceivable motive for the intentional suppression of Mussorgsky's first extant version on the part of Rimsky-Korsakov, would have been an unwarranted concern for his own musical popularity and
longevity. In 1895 Rimsky-Korsakov said, "After awhile they'll forget my music just as completely as they've disliked and rejected it during my lifetime. Save for some fragments, it will sink into oblivion."\(^ {100}\) This, coupled with the fact that his own version of Night on Bald Mountain has always been among his most renowned and performed works, might fuel speculation. As has generally been unquestioned by historians, however, Rimsky-Korsakov presumably acted in good faith in preparing his own version of Night on Bald Mountain and is blameless in claiming, "... the manuscripts went to the public library on leaving me."\(^ {101}\)

While it is true that Rimsky-Korsakov freely recomposed the second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain, it is nevertheless clear that he worked from it; contrarily, he showed absolutely no formal deference to the first extant version. The only literal similarities between Rimsky-Korsakov's work and Mussorgsky's tone poem are small specific items, like those mentioned earlier. In both thematic content and formal structure, Rimsky-Korsakov was much closer to the second operatic version than to the first extant version, and comparison reveals that his version is in no way a combination of the two scores.

Rimsky-Korsakov's overall approach to the content of Night on Bald Mountain necessarily deflates the formal foundations upon which Mussorgsky's two original scores were composed. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, Rimsky-Korsakov largely ignored the variation technique inherent in

\(^ {100}\) Yastrebtsev, V. V. op. cit., 131.
\(^ {101}\) Rimsky-Korsakov, op. cit., 249.
both versions (especially the first extant version) favoring instead, simple restatement of material. Also stated earlier, Rimsky-Korsakov omitted significant portions of contrasting melodic material that Musorgsky, presumably to reduce over-redundance of thematic material, had added to his shorter second operatic version. The resulting composition, both bereft of the variational evolution inherent in the first extant version, and of much the contrasting episodic material from the second operatic version, is replete with literal repetitions typical of the German classical tradition.

**Rimsky-Korsakov’s Orchestration Versus Musorgsky’s**

Orchestrationally, the two composers were as opposed in their actual choices as they were in their choice of material and form. Since only the first extant version of Night on Bald Mountain was orchestrated by Musorgsky, it is the only score suitable for orchestral comparison with Rimsky-Korsakov’s version. As in the case of former comparisons, the differences between thematic presentations in the two works makes it difficult to make direct comparisons beyond the first major section.

The instrumentation of the two scores itself reveals initial differences in the desired sound of the orchestra: Musorgsky included cornets, triangle, tambourine, and snare drum, which Rimsky-Korsakov did not, and Rimsky-Korsakov included chimes and harp, which Musorgsky did not. Rimsky-Korsakov’s addition of chimes and harp was exclusively for
the unorchestrated ending and is therefore unrevealing; the actual reduction of the brass and percussion sections in the main body of the composition is, however, indicative of a difference in orchestrational approach. It would seem from these differences that Musorgsky believed that the fantasy and scope of the program required greater instrumental variety and force than Rimsky-Korsakov deemed necessary.

With respect to the percussion, Rimsky-Korsakov, for all practical purposes, ignored Musorgsky’s original score. The very fact that Rimsky-Korsakov chose to exclude snare drum substantially distinguishes the two percussion scores. An obvious example of a more specific difference in treatment occurs in the opening of the work: Musorgsky doubles the opening bass motive in the timpani and accompanies the answering wind flourishes with bass drum and timpani rolls, while Rimsky-Korsakov omits the timpani doubling of the bass theme and uses only timpani rolls in the flourishes. Below is the succeeding staccato eighth-note motive in Musorgsky’s score (MM. 13-27) which begins with no percussion:

Example 22. Musorgsky’s First Extant Jeering Eighths.
Contrarily, Rimsky-Korsakov adds bass drum eighth notes to the same eighth-note motive (MM. 12-24):


![Musical notation image]

Musorgsky adds a snare drum roll at the height of the ensuing low brass phrase, and Rimsky-Korsakov adds a timpani roll at a later point in the phrase. In the passage immediately following the above passage, Rimsky-Korsakov substitutes Musorgsky's bass drum with timpani. As the work progresses and the variety of percussion usage increases, the differences between the two composers' use of percussion multiplies.

Examples of specific orchestral differences between Musorgsky's first extant version of Night on Bald Mountain and Rimsky-Korsakov's version typically reveal that Musorgsky was primarily devoted to the chaotic contrasts needed to
depict the unusual program, while Rimsky-Korsakov preferred a smoother symphonic approach. As Musorgsky stated in his July 5, 1867 letter to Rimsky-Korsakov, "The form of interspersed variations and calls is, I think, the most suitable for such a commotion." More specifically, he said to Vladimir Nikolsky one week later, "In the witches’ sabbat, I did the orchestration in scattered, separate parts . . . ." The following musical illustration shows an example of Musorgsky’s calls between winds and strings (MM. 91-96):

Example 24. Musorgsky’s Contrasting Calls.

Compare the above example with Rimsky-Korsakov’s, which keeps the melody in one oboe/bassoon timbre (letter [C]):

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102 Leyda and Bertensson, op. cit., 87.
103 Ibid., 90.

Notice that the above accompaniments are also orchestrated differently.

A similar contrast involving Rimsky-Korsakov's choosing to keep a musical line in one instrumental color (MM. 140-147) instead of Musorgsky's scattering of instrumental interjections (MM. 217-224) is shown below. Contrast Example 26, showing Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestration, with succeeding Example 27, showing Musorgsky's orchestration:

Example 26, cont'd.

Example 27. Second Example of Mussorgsky's Contrasting Calle.
In Rimsky-Korsakov’s score, the above passage remains entirely in the violins with flute and oboe (excepting the addition of clarinet halfway) whereas in Mussorgsky’s, the winds interject entrances on top of the violins at two measure intervals. Mussorgsky, throughout his first extant version, is consistent in his use of dialoguing instrument groups, even during thematic presentation.

Rimsky-Korsakov chose his own orchestral ideas over Mussorgsky’s, not only in the smoothing of orchestral lines, but also in his general approach to the techniques of orchestration. Referring back to the staccato eighth-note examples, Rimsky-Korsakov here replaces Mussorgsky’s flute/oboe/cornet/trumpet grouping (Ex. 22) with his own flute/oboe/clarinet/violin grouping (Ex. 23). The point of this example is not simply to highlight Rimsky-Korsakov’s inattention to Mussorgsky’s orchestration, but to reveal a clear example of his contrary style of orchestration. Notice in the same passage that Mussorgsky gives the moving notes to doubled flute/oboe/cornets and places the static octave F-naturals in the trumpets, so that a collision between major and minor is created when the moving notes interact with the trumpets’ unyielding static notes. In contrast, Rimsky-Korsakov causes the collision between the moving and static notes in each of his four instrumental colors, so that the sound is more homogeneous, and the major-minor contrast less bare. Rimsky-Korsakov’s avoidance of brass instruments in the passage also reduces its biting impact.
Anyone interested in comparing Rimsky-Korsakov’s orchestration with Musorgsky’s will see that the limited examples shown above are in no way exceptions to Rimsky-Korsakov’s approach. In fact, few passages, if any, are orchestrated identically; therefore, examples of orchestral differences are almost innumerable.

**Rimsky-Korsakov’s View of Musorgsky**

The musical examples discussed in this chapter serve to illustrate a crucial, irrefutable point: Rimsky-Korsakov’s version of *Night on Bald Mountain* is not an accurate reflection of his original sources, and though it has served an important purpose, it cannot be considered an entirely valid representation of Musorgsky’s work. Not only do the major changes he made reflect a lack of respect for Musorgsky’s originals, but they also reveal foundational differences in his approach to composition. Various scholars and colleagues of the two composers freely attest to those differences, and Rimsky-Korsakov’s own statements reveal a personal lack of respect for Musorgsky’s compositional skill.

As previously mentioned, Rimsky-Korsakov stated that Balakirev had criticized Musorgsky’s original score, *St. John’s Night on Bald Mountain*, "both severely and justly."\(^{104}\) Other statements reveal his view of Musorgsky’s work in general. He summarized his opinion with this statement: “His ideal style lacked a suitable crystal-like finish and graceful form; this he lacked because he had no knowledge of

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\(^{104}\) Rimsky-Korsakov, op. cit., 261.
harmony and counterpoint. In discussing the state of Musorgsky's works as he received them, Rimsky-Korsakov makes this statement:

All of these were in exceedingly imperfect order; there occurred absurd, incoherent harmonies, ugly part-writing, now strikingly illogical modulation, now depressing absence of any at all, ill-chosen instrumentation of orchestrated pieces, in general a certain audacious self-conceited dilettantism, at times moments of technical dexterity and skill but more often of utter technical impotence.

Such words barely appear to be those of a respectful colleague, much less, a devoted friend.

Rimsky-Korsakov contested another area of Musorgsky's craft, as well -- that of Musorgsky's treatment of orchestration. He scoffingly refers to orchestration "blunders" in portions of Sorochintsy Fair. It cannot be surprising, then, that Rimsky-Korsakov did not set out to orchestrate or recombine original versions of Night on Bald Mountain, but rather, right or wrong, he felt compelled to correct Musorgsky's "errors" in the process.

In My Musical Life, Rimsky-Korsakov discusses Musorgsky's final deterioration. He mentions Musorgsky's distance from his colleagues following Boris and complains of a change in his attitude, which Rimsky-Korsakov describes as "a certain mysteriousness, even haughtiness" and the growth of Musorgsky's "self-conceit." He also describes Musorgsky's late-night drinking habits with companions, "then unknown to

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106 Rimsky-Korsakov, op. cit., 73.
107 Ibid., 249.
108 Yastrebtsev, op. cit., 96.
us. The following excerpt serves to further shed light upon Rimsky-Korsakov’s underlying attitude toward Musorgsky, more than to reveal specific information.

What was the cause of Moussorgsky’s spiritual and mental decay? To a considerable degree it was due at first to the success of Boris (owing to which his pride and ambition as author began to grow); later on it was due to its failure... On the one hand, V. V. Stassov’s delight in Moussorgsky’s brilliant flashes of creative genius and improvisations had raised Moussorgsky’s self-conceit; on the other hand, the adulation of people incomparably inferior to the author, yet his boon companions, and the approval on the part of others who admired his virtuosity, though they were unable to distinguish between its true flashes and its felicitous talent for playing pranks, still pleased and irritated his vanity.  

Particularly disturbing are Rimsky-Korsakov’s thoughts about Musorgsky’s “pride,” “self-conceit,” and “vanity,” when throughout his entire life, Musorgsky had often struggled unsuccessfully against enormous opposition from the Five, critics in the press, and his own health.

Differences in Style and Musical Philosophy

Rimsky-Korsakov’s view of Musorgsky may realistically have had its roots in an overall difference in compositional style and philosophy. The author, V. V. Stasov, who had initially had a similarly unflattering view of Musorgsky, later became his close friend and ardent supporter. He recognized the separation between Musorgsky and many of his contemporaries and testified to that separation in his articles. Here is one such testimony:

106 Rimsky-Korsakov, op. cit., 144.
109 Ibid., 145, 146.
When Musorgsky (and Borodin) found a way out of the circle of academism and into the domain of popular polyphony, their friends found it necessary to correct 'their mistakes'. Many of the peculiarities of Musorgsky's music originate in the traditions of popular heterophony . . . and the lyrical folk song . . . with their unorthodox rhythmic, textural, harmonic, and formal tendencies.\footnote{Stasov, op. cit., 45.}

He goes on to state:

Very few of Musorgsky's contemporaries were prepared to recognize or accept the extent of his adaptation of the Russian folk song, and very few had understood his intonational realism in music.\footnote{Ibid., 45-6.}

Contrast Stasov's statement about Musorgsky's use of folk song, above, with his following statement about Rimsky-Korsakov's use of folk song:

Rimsky-Korsakov, despite his extensive use of Russian folk songs, was not a 'Slavophile'. His musical language was based entirely on Western precepts . . . Folk song was primarily decorative.\footnote{Ibid., 8.}

The tendency, therefore, to think of the Mighty Handful as a group of composers unified by thought and purpose, is convenient, but not altogether accurate. Stasov further summarizes Musorgsky's separation from his contemporaries in this way:

. . . his [Musorgsky's] letters, song texts, opera librettos, and the principles underlying the music itself have parallels only in the thought of his contemporaries who were not musicians. Thus, from the outset he was worlds removed from musicians who superficially appeared to hold the same ideas.\footnote{Ibid., 6.}
Stasov was only one of many individuals who recognized differences between Musorgsky's musical philosophy and Rimsky-Korsakov's. Gerald Abraham, in opposition to Rimsky-Korsakov's statement that Musorgsky was ignorant of harmony, said, "He [Musorgsky], too, was an empiricist of genius -- of far greater harmonic genius than Rimsky-Korsakov at any period of his life."114 Abraham speaks of Dargomizhsky's influence on Musorgsky, especially in the area of using chords and progressions on the grounds of their dramatic expression and color, rather than their theoretical correctness. Even Debussy commented that Musorgsky's music was "spontaneous and free from arid formulas."115

Leonard corroborates the differences between Musorgsky's philosophy and those of the Five. Of the members of the Five, he calls Musorgsky "the most uncompromising nationalist," citing his "penetrating use of the Russian folk idiom" and his breaking from technical conventions. Summing up the roots of Musorgsky's differences, Leonard says, "... he [Musorgsky] was the only one of the Five who espoused the new doctrine of realism in art as opposed to the prevailing romanticism."116

Arsenii Golenishchev-Kutuzov was a poet, a close friend of Musorgsky's, and, during the mid-1870's, Musorgsky's roommate. He answers the popular notion (propelled by the writings of Rimsky-Korsakov, Stasov, and others) that Musorgsky's creative ability suffered from a gradual decline,

114 Gerald Abraham, op. cit., 262.
116 Leonard, op. cit., 84.
beginning in the mid-1870's. His contrary belief is that Musorgsky was simply breaking free from the constraints of his many critics. He states:

Generally speaking, in 1875 Musorgsky was already becoming more and more independent. The formerly obedient steward of someone else's orders had begun to set his own themes and tasks more consistent with his nature and talent... The natural consequences of this emancipation was that the former "worshippers" and leaders were no longer able to sympathize with his altered direction, and they began to find his new works, "foggy, bizarre, disconnected, and even tasteless."... Nor could they accept the best passages of The Fair at Sorochintsy.117

In his article, Golenishchev-Kutuzov goes into greater specific detail than is appropriate for discussion here, but once again, it seems reasonable that the criticisms of Rimsky-Korsakov and others were at least partially rooted in an overall difference in musical philosophy and perception.

Stokowski, too, was understandably familiar with both Rimsky-Korsakov's and Musorgsky's philosophical differences, in at least as those differences affected their musical expression. Here is his revealing, if general, assessment:

Rimsky-Korsakov was naturally drawn to ancient Russian legends and fairy tales, to the romantic and magical, to the beautiful and sunlit side of life. Moussorgsky was passionately interested in Russian history, in "Mother Russia" as he called it, in the dark, fantastic, grotesque, mysterious and terrifying side of life.118


118 Leopold Stokowski, Notes from "A Night on Bare Mountain," on the LP A Night on Bare Mountain and Other Russian Selections, perf. by Leopold Stokowski and "his Symphony Orchestra" (RCA Victor/Red Seal Records 1816, 1954).
Stokowski incidentally had an ongoing devotion to Russian music that is reflected in his numerous performances of even the more obscure works by Mussorgsky.

David Lloyd-Jones, who has conducted the first extant version of Night on Bald Mountain, specifically summarizes the difference of the overall effect of Mussorgsky's first extant score, as compared to Rimsky-Korsakov's:

... an original Russian production it remains, and it succeeds in conveying the uncouth, orgiastic nature of a witches' sabbath where Rimsky-Korsakov's well-groomed, academic sequences so singularly fail.\textsuperscript{119}

Finally, Reilly affirms the evidence of the same differences between Rimsky-Korsakov's and Mussorgsky's Bald Mountain scores:

Rimsky-Korsakov's re-composition of Bare Mountain demonstrates the fundamental differences of his musical perspective as compared to that of Mussorgsky in either of his own two surviving conceptions of the composition [emphasis mine].\textsuperscript{120}

From the comparison of Mussorgsky's music and philosophy to Rimsky-Korsakov's, an important question arises: Why did the musicians of 1886 not object to Rimsky-Korsakov's treatment of Night on Bald Mountain? The first answer might well be that Rimsky-Korsakov's version was simply well-done. The fact that the public liked it, and that Rimsky-Korsakov had made its performance possible, naturally made him a hero, rather than a villain. The second answer is that the general

\textsuperscript{119} David Lloyd-Jones, Notes from "Night on Bald Mountain (Original Version)," on the jacket Claudio Abbado: The London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, RCA Red Seal (New York: RCA Corporation, 1981).

\textsuperscript{120} Reilly, "The First Extant Version...", Mussorgsky: In Memoriam, 141.
public, as well as Rimsky-Korsakov's colleagues, trusted and respected his judgment; therefore they may not have even questioned his methods of arriving at the new work.

A darker third reason that Rimsky-Korsakov's efforts were not strongly challenged may begin with the notion that many of Rimsky-Korsakov's colleagues shared his view of Musorgsky, a view which perhaps had its roots more in Musorgsky's personal weaknesses with alcoholism and tendency not to complete projects, than in his actual compositional ability. Additionally, there is a distinct possibility that the musical establishment in Russia was simply not ready for the non-traditional originality of Musorgsky's musical language. Whatever the exact combination of reasons, time quickly obscured the processes and problems surrounding the many emerging editions of Musorgsky's works, so that Night on Bald Mountain tended to blend into the confusion.

Clearly, between 1886, when Rimsky-Korsakov completed his version of Night on Bald Mountain, and 1933, when Shebalin orchestrated The Dream Vision of the Peasant Lad, there was simply no choice as to which version of Night on Bald Mountain best represented Musorgsky; Rimsky-Korsakov's was the only performable version. The 1930's, however, became a time of renewed interest in Night on Bald Mountain, when Shebalin's version appeared in Lamm's Complete Works, the first extant version (St. John's Night on Bald Mountain) was rediscovered, and Stokowski produced his own version of Night on Bald Mountain. For conductors, musicians, and audiences, a new question was arising: Which one is "right"?
CHAPTER VI
THE PROBLEM WITH STOKOWSKI’S AND LEIBOWITZ’ VERSIONS OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN

Historical Background of Stokowski’s Version

An encounter with one of Musorgsky’s original manuscripts inspired Leopold Stokowski to create his own version of Night on Bald Mountain. Subsequently popularized by the Disney movie Fantasia, the resulting version has also received scattered performances and attention. As is true for Rimsky-Korsakov’s version, the crucial goal of investigation is not to assess the version’s quality as an independent work, but rather to determine what processes the creator employed in determining its specific content.

Stokowski’s account of seeing the original score raises immediate questions, because he does not specify which original version he saw; nor does he even mention that more than one original version of the work exists:

Mussorgsky composed Night on Bald Mountain and later Rimsky-Korsakov changed and added certain passages. When I was in Russia, soon after the Revolution, I asked to see the original manuscript of Mussorgsky, and only with great difficulty was I able to find it. The authorities permitted me to photograph Mussorgsky’s original score which I have in my library.\(^{120}\)

\(^{120}\) Oliver Daniel, Stokowski: A Counterpoint of View (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1962), 222.
The phrase, "soon after the Revolution," would imply that Stokowski saw this particular original sometime after 1921, when the new government was soundly in place in Russia; his actual trip to the Soviet Union was not until ten years later, in 1931.\textsuperscript{121} Since Mussorgsky's first extant version was supposedly not rediscovered until 1933, the version Stokowski saw and photographed must have been the original piano/vocal score of the second operatic version (from Sorochintsy Fair). If this assumption is incorrect, then it is possible that Stokowski should be given the credit for Bald Mountain's rediscovery.

My own search for Stokowski's private photograph of the manuscript in various library collections (including the Curtis Library) has proven fruitless. I am led to conclude that it is in the hands of a private collector or, along with a small portion of Stokowski's personal possessions being transported down the English Channel for transfer to the U. S. in 1980, it washed overboard.\textsuperscript{122}

The decision to include Night on Bald Mountain in the motion picture, Fantasia, developed on September 10, 1938. Stokowski suggested its inclusion to Walt Disney and others in a meeting, though his own version had not yet been completed. He likely completed the new version of Mussorgsky's work in the interim between the September meeting and the world premier, which took place in San Francisco, on February 18, 1939. Recording sessions for Fantasia followed,

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 209.

\textsuperscript{122} I would like to thank Dr. Edwin E. Heilakka, Librarian of the Curtis Institute of Music Library, for information concerning the reported washing overboard of a portion of Stokowski's collection in England.
in April, 1939, and the movie was released in 1940. The animated film drew attention to Stokowski’s new version of Night on Bald Mountain, and its continued popularity insures that Stokowski’s score will enjoy a similar longevity. The occasional recordings and performances that Stokowski’s version of Night on Bald Mountain has received have not resulted in an actual publication of the score; interested performers may, however, rent it from the Curtis Library.

Between the time of Stokowski’s trip to the Soviet Union, and the decision to include Night on Bald Mountain in Fantasia, the first extant version of Night on Bald Mountain had been rediscovered (see Chapter II). Despite Stokowski’s lack of clarity as to which original he photographed, the Russian embassy sent him Lamm’s hand copy of the first extant version on November 29, 1938, presumably in response to his request. It is also interesting, that in the Preface to his own Bald Mountain score, he includes information about the witches’ language used in Sorochintsy Fair. At any rate, since the first extant score was in his possession at the time he prepared his own version of Night on Bald Mountain, it follows that he must have referred to at least the original tone poem, if not both Mussorgsky originals.

Stokowski’s Version of Bald Mountain

Stokowski was clearly familiar with Mussorgsky’s works, as he had already created a version of Boris Godunov and an

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124 Stokowski, Mussorgsky-Stokowski Night on Bare Mountain Witches’ Sabbath.
orchestration of *Pictures at an Exhibition*. His own statements perhaps best reveal the reasons for his new version of the *Bald Mountain* score and the actual process involved. In one account, he says:

The version we have performed is based on the original of Mussorgsky with certain changes and additions of Rimsky-Korsakov. I have reorchestrated the whole composition because of passages which were out of balance and therefore unclear.  

The above statement seems to say that he kept selected changes of Rimsky-Korsakov, at times favoring the original, and that the orchestration is at least partly his own. In another account, Stokowski says this:

In Russia I searched for, and finally found, the original version of Moussorgsky's score, and have made a new version embodying what seemed to me to be the most inspired parts of the original Moussorgsky and of the later Rimsky-Korsakoff orchestration (emphasis mine).  

The key part of this statement is that Stokowski freely admits to establishing himself as the ultimate authority over what was and was not inspired in both scores, instead of deferring to the original(s) as the ultimate authority.

As in the case of Rimsky-Korsakov, Stokowski was so respected that few questioned his methods of preparing the new edition, and the fact that he had seen the original score(s) seemed automatically to add scholarly credence to his new version. Reilly, who has been extremely helpful in

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127 Daniel, op. cit., 222.

128 Leopold Stokowski, notes from "A Night on Bare Mountain," on the jacket entitled *A Night on Bare Mountain and Other Russian Selections*, Leopold Stokowski conducting "his Symphony Orchestra," (RCA Victor/Red Seal 1818, 1954).
assessing versions and editions of Musorgsky’s works, has only this to say of Stokowski’s version:

Stokowski’s version is in fact an adaptation and reorchestration of the Rimsky-Korsakov arrangement, with a new ending. It is no closer to Musorgsky’s own treatments than is the Rimsky-Korsakov version.\(^\text{127}\)

Further exploration and elaboration confirms that Reilly’s assertion is correct.

It is true that Stokowski’s primary source was Rimsky-Korsakov’s version, rather than Musorgsky’s original piano/vocal score or the first extant version. As shown earlier in this writing, Musorgsky’s second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain (Dream Vision of the Peasant Lad) cannot easily be compared, measure-by-measure, with his own first extant version, due to the extensiveness of his own revisions. Also demonstrated earlier, Rimsky-Korsakov’s rewrite cannot easily be compared, measure-by-measure, with either of Musorgsky’s versions; Stokowski’s version, however, does follow quite clearly the form of Rimsky-Korsakov’s. The formal changes Stokowski made to Rimsky-Korsakov’s score were mainly large-scale excisions that he occasionally attempted to smooth over with brief transitional inserts. One such excision is 50 measures long, and another is 48. The final result is a composition that is 136 measures shorter than Rimsky-Korsakov’s.

Stokowski may have shortened Night on Bald Mountain to suit its function in the Disney movie Fantasia, but he may also have been reacting to the over-repetition of Rimsky-\(^\text{127}\) Reilly, The Music of Musorgsky: A Guide ..., 34.
Korsakov. A London Times critic defended Stokowski’s edits, saying, “He [Stokowski] was accused of excising parts of the Bald Mountain score, even if it could be argued that some at least of the excised passages were tautologous.”\footnote{Daniel, op. cit., 817.} If Mussorgsky could be accused of over-repetition in the variations of his first extant version, the same allegation could not be made against his second operatic version, which is both shorter and has far more melodic material than the earlier version. As mentioned in Chapter V, the redundancies in Rimsky-Korsakov’s score are due, in large part, to the fact that he had replaced Mussorgsky’s variation style with literal repetitions and simply left out portions of Mussorgsky’s contrasting melodic material. Again, the original versions seemed to be lurking in the shadows, obscure and virtually unknown to the public.

Stokowski’s version included more revisions to Rimsky-Korsakov’s score than simple omissions. The instrumentation is expanded over Mussorgsky’s and Rimsky-Korsakov’s to include two piccolos (instead of one), English horn, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, contrabassoon, and expanded horn and trombone sections. The orchestration is generally heavier, favoring bass instruments and a perhaps an over-zealous use of percussion (much heavier than Mussorgsky’s first extant version). The dominant percussion is particularly noticeable in the opening section. He also incorporates small formal aspects of the second operatic version, generally favoring Mussorgsky in both use and non-use of fermatas and pauses.
The ending section includes a 20-measure cut of the already-shortened Rimsky-Korsakov version, and, though not in Stokowski’s actual score, the Fantasia version includes a segue to the popular Schubert hymn, Ave Maria.

A brief look at the opening of Stokowski’s version provides specific examples of his approach to the orchestration, as opposed to Mussorgsky’s. The opening bass motive, shown below, is immediately different in the two scores. While Mussorgsky employs timpani, pizzicato cellos and basses, and two bassoons, Stokowski only employs pizzicato violas, cellos, and basses. The ensuing upward surges in Mussorgsky’s score occur in the woodwinds, with support from cellos and basses; Stokowski uses only piccolo and upper strings. The same staccato eighth-note figure that is addressed in Chapter V, shown below, reveals further


Example 29. Jeering Eighths.
distinctions. Musorgsky's orchestration consists of flute/oobecornet/trumpet, with no percussion, while Stokowski's consists of piccolo/flute/oobedeltahorn/clarinet/trumpet, and snare drum played as a tom-tom, without snares. Such clear differences between the two orchestrations are evident throughout the work's entirety.

In Stokowski's defense, however, his version does tend to bring out the Russian characteristics and the brutality inherent in the program and the original orchestration. As Stokowski said, "My aim has been to express the original conception of demoniac fury and sinister darkness, contrasted with the sweetness and purity of the early morning which follows ..."127 The smoothing-out process, which Rimsky-Korsakov seems to have sought after, is undone in Stokowski's version, and Stokowski's orchestration is truer in character to the scattered calls that Musorgsky had incorporated into his original tone poem. Also to Stokowski's credit is his instrumentation of the church bells as chimes with tam-tam; he is the only orchestrator thus far to have been true to Musorgsky's instrumentation of church bells in other works, such as Boris Godunov.

Even though Stokowski may have come closer to the original spirit of Musorgsky's work than Rimsky-Korsakov did, he accomplished this more by his own talent and understanding of Musorgsky's scores, than by his literal respect for the original sources. Again, the problem is not the quality of Stokowski's product; rather, it is the lack of scholarly

127 Stokowski, Musorgsky-Stokowski Night on Bare Mountain Witches' Sabbath.
respect he paid to Musorgsky's original scores. In the end, by following Rimsky-Korsakov's established precedent of the unexplained, free recomposition of Night on Bald Mountain, Stokowski missed a historical opportunity to establish a new precedent of attempting to discover and present the actual substance of the composer's intent.

**Leibowitz' Version of Bald Mountain**

Another conductor to follow Rimsky-Korsakov's precedent was Rene Leibowitz. He created his own version of Night on Bald Mountain for a 1964 recording; like Stokowski, he was a conductor, and like Stokowski, his version is primarily a reaction to the weaknesses of Rimsky-Korsakov's version. The jacket reads, "For this recording, Rene Leibowitz wrote a new version after extensive research of all available Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov material."\(^{126}\) Leibowitz conducts the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in his new version, which he apparently never published. The recording reveals, however, that Leibowitz did little more than to reorchestrate Rimsky-Korsakov's version and affix a collection of his own ideas to it.

Like the Stokowski version, Leibowitz' version follows the form of Rimsky-Korsakov's score quite closely, excepting major excisions and a smattering of his own added material. The first cut is an eight-bar omission, beginning the fifth measure of [G] (in Kalmus' miniature score of Rimsky-

Korsakov’s version). A massive transitional ritardando at [L] precedes the next omission, which involves 34 measures of material; Rimsky-Korsakov devotes the 34 measures almost entirely to restatements of motives. The last major excision foreshortens the repeat of opening material, and it occurs two bars before [T]. It encompasses 48 measures, and Leibowitz again adds transitional material of his own, this time to prepare the ending section. The ending is formally identical to Rimsky-Korsakov’s, except for the insertion of a bizarre, romantic climax that closes the work, building from six measures before the Rimsky-Korsakov ending. The ending is purely Leibowitz’ own creation, not deriving from any Musorgsky or Rimsky-Korsakov version.

Leibowitz did not seem to get most of his orchestral ideas from Musorgsky either, because he uses an expanded orchestra. Audible additions include xylophone, expanded percussion, bass clarinet, and contrabassoon. The effect is interesting, but could not seriously have resulted from “extensive research of all available Musorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov material.”

The truth is that both Stokowski and Leibowitz reacted to what they did not like about Rimsky-Korsakov’s version. Both conductors reacted against what they saw as needless repetition in Rimsky-Korsakov’s version, and it is needless. As stated earlier, Musorgsky’s second operatic version does not suffer the same malady of over-repetition. Stokowski and Leibowitz also reacted against Rimsky-Korsakov’s over-civilized orchestration, which is neither typical of
Musorgsky's orchestral style nor suited to the program. Both conductors sought to rectify the problem by getting inspiration from the original and orchestrating in a manner more fitting for Musorgsky's subject. Perhaps the real answer to their frustrations lies exclusively in Musorgsky's original scores, instead of in the patching up of Rimsky-Korsakov's reworking of the piece.
CHAPTER VII

THE PROBLEM WITH SHEBALIN’S ORCHESTRATION OF THE SECOND OPERATIC VERSION OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN

Shebalin’s orchestration of The Dream Vision of the Peasant Lad, as described in Chapter IV of this writing, is without question the only posthumous version of Night on Bald Mountain to date that is faithful to its original source. Not only is it generally faithful to the notes and form of the piano/vocal score, but the orchestration succeeds in retaining the style of contrasting calls favored by Musorgsky; as discussed in Chapter V and VI of this writing, no other versions can boast of a similar faithfulness. Shebalin’s orchestration has remained, then, the only truly representative, valid version of Musorgsky’s second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain; the existence of the first extant version, which was discovered shortly before Lamm’s publication of Sorochintsy Fair, however, dwarfs and confuses Shebalin’s accomplishment.

The rediscovery in 1933 of Musorgsky’s orchestral tone poem, St. John’s Night on Bald Mountain, confused the performance issue in two respects; first, the event automatically produced a historically viable performance version of the piece. Even though it did not include
Musorgsky's later revisions, few would argue that his original version deserves to be performed, especially in favor of Rimsky-Korsakov's and later Stokowski's and Leibowitz' rewritten versions. After all, it is Musorgsky's only orchestration of Night on Bald Mountain. Because it is longer and looser in structure than Rimsky-Korsakov's version (and Musorgsky's later version) however, and because it did not include such added Sorochnitsy Fair material as the beautiful ending to which audiences had grown accustomed, most listeners probably preferred Rimsky-Korsakov's version to the rediscovered original.

The second cause for confusion stemming from the rediscovery of St. John's Night reveals the problem with Shebalin's orchestration: Lamm's edition of Musorgsky's works was faithfully based on existing manuscripts, which did not officially include the new, rediscovered first extant version of Night on Bald Mountain. Thus, Shebalin's orchestration of the second operatic version would appear to be his own, not deferring orchestrationally to Musorgsky's original tone poem. This one factor alone detracts from its historical authenticity. The uneducated and perhaps unconscious response of conductors and audiences to this confusion has been to assume that, since none of the second operatic versions are historically perfect, Rimsky-Korsakov's is as acceptable as any.

Having established that the first extant version of Night on Bald Mountain was not an official source manuscript in Lamm's collection, a curious discrepancy arises. As
mentioned, Shebalin's orchestration, completed between 1931 and 1933, follows Musorgsky's Peasant Lad score reasonably carefully. The exceptions are few, and usually involve the addition of accompanimental sustained pitches and trills, octave additions, and dynamic adjustments. The author has found that many of the added trills and sustained pitches conform to similar material in Musorgsky's first extant version, even though Shebalin's orchestration generally does not. The unexplainable concurrences between the two scores can only mean two things: 1) Shebalin did see the newly-discovered St. John's Night on Bald Mountain shortly before his own orchestration was published; this prompted him to add the trills and sustained notes, and possibly to adapt parts of his orchestration, and 2) he either did not desire to, or did not have time to, conform his orchestration more closely to Musorgsky's original orchestration.

Though Shebalin's orchestration of the Peasant Lad intermezzo is similar in spirit to Musorgsky's original, and limited excerpts are literally similar, the orchestration is clearly Shebalin's own. This factor, again, reduces the scholarly and historical merits of his orchestration. His instrumentation, with the exception of his addition of harp, is the same as Musorgsky's. Shebalin adds piano, but only for the ending section.

While Shebalin's orchestration is significantly different from Musorgsky's, it is equally clear that if Shebalin borrowed any ideas from Rimsky-Korsakov, they were few and insignificant. The following brief examples serve to
highlight a select few of numerous specific differences between Shebalin's and Musorgsky's orchestrations. In the opening pizzicato bass motive, shown again below, Shebalin

Example 30. Opening Pizzicato Bass Motive.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{pizzicato bass motive}
\end{array}
\]

omits Musorgsky's timpani and bassoons, leaving only the lower strings. In the jeering eighth-note motive, shown here, instead of Musorgsky's flute/oboe/cornet/trumpet

Example 31. Jeering Eighths.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{jeering eighth notes}
\end{array}
\]

combination, Shebalin employs a flute/oboe/clarinet/cornet combination, voiced in the manner of Rimsky-Korsakov's, shown in Chapter V. Further exemplifying orchestral differences, Shebalin adds cellos, contrabasses, and bassoons to the ensuing trombone/tuba melody, which is shown for reference below:
Example 32. Trombone/Tuba Melody.

Other specific types of orchestral style differences between Shebalin and Musorgsky are mentioned in Chapter VIII. Whether Shebalin was thwarted in his desire for an entirely historical presentation of Dream Vision of a Peasant Lad by unfortunate timing, or he simply preferred to employ his own orchestration, it remains that the two orchestrations are clearly distinct from one another.

The Shebalin orchestration of Dream Vision of a Peasant Lad, and therefore Musorgsky's second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain, has continued in relative obscurity, arousing few recordings and performances. Another reason for its obscurity, besides the popularity of Rimsky-Korsakov's version, is that the piece is generally ignored as part of a patched-together opera. Even though Musorgsky had intended it for concert performance (see Chapter VIII) Dream Vision of a Peasant Lad has never been released as a separate work. Also associated with its position within Sorochintsy Fair, Musorgsky's inclusion of vocal parts doubtlessly hamper the work's attraction to orchestras. The added vocal parts contradict Musorgsky's earlier intent and Night on Bald Mountain's embedded tradition as an orchestral work, thus making it less desirable for frequent concert performance.
CHAPTER VII

A DEFINITIVE MUSSORGSKY VERSION OF NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN

The Need for a New Orchestration

The previous chapters in this writing serve to provide historical background and evaluative commentary for the existing versions of Musorgsky’s Night on Bald Mountain. It is in light of the history of these various versions and the current performance practices surrounding them, that the need for a definitive Musorgsky version becomes apparent. Rimsky-Korsakov himself realized:

If Musorgsky’s compositions are destined to live unfaded for fifty years after their author’s death, (when all his works will become the property of any and every publisher) such a musicologically accurate edition will always be possible, as the manuscripts went to the Public Library on leaving me. For the present, though, there was need of an edition for performances, for practical artistic purposes, for making his colossal talent known, and not for the mere studying of his personality and artistic sins (emphasis mine).  

Though musicologically accurate editions of Musorgsky’s first extant version and his second operatic piano/vocal score have since become reality, no existing orchestration of the second operatic score can claim such musicological credibility.

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131 Rimsky-Korsakov, op. cit., 249.
It is unfortunate that neither the rediscovered tone poem nor Shebalin’s orchestration of the second operatic version have received much attention from conductors or the general public. Ironically, the two most historically accurate scores have remained virtually unknown, while the Rimsky-Korsakov and Stokowski recomposed versions have enjoyed public approval. Due to Kalmus’ relatively recent republication of the first extant version, however, the original tone poem is again receiving ripples of interest. The general performance status of the various versions is reflected in current lists of available recordings. The number of available recordings of each version of Night on Bald Mountain, as reported by Schwann’s Opus and Phonologic Reports through Summer, 1991, is listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version of Piece</th>
<th>Number of Recordings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rimsky-Korsakov’s version</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stokowski’s version</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musorgsky’s first extant version</td>
<td>3 (2 are new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shebalin’s orchestration (within opera)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leibowitz’ version</td>
<td>1 (re-released)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the warranted historical interest in performing the first extant version, Musorgsky’s intent was to replace it entirely. Musorgsky himself had apparently planned to orchestrate the Peasant Lad intermezzo, and not only for use in his opera, but for separate concert performance. Rimsky-Korsakov wrote Stasov on May 11, 1880, mentioning the plans (his letters, being timely in their reports, are far more reliable than his later remembrances). The excerpt reads, “For the concerts of the Free School he [Musorgsky] promises
to instrument the intermezzo from Sorochintsy, which would be good." It is entirely possible that Musorgsky's new orchestration would have been performable without the voices, which, though necessary for coherence within the opera, might well have been considered superfluous in the proposed performance version. The notion of performing the concert orchestration without voices is naturally suggested by Musorgsky's first conception of the piece. Incidentally, Shebalin, apparently also seeing the value of the piece as a separate concert score, included instrumental cues for performances of the piece without voices. Undeniably, Musorgsky had intended the second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain as a performance piece, to be played on the concert stage, and not exclusively as a part of Sorochintsy Fair; the resulting score would have entirely superseded Musorgsky's earlier orchestral work.

Chapters V, VI, and VII of this writing specifically treat the shortcomings of each of the four orchestrated versions of Night on Bald Mountain, all of which are based, directly or indirectly, on Musorgsky's final second operatic piano/vocal score. The need for an orchestral tone poem that includes Musorgsky's thirteen years of revisions is not a new idea. Aside from Musorgsky himself, Rimsky-Korsakov, Shebalin, Stokowski, and Leibowitz all recognized the value of such a version. Shebalin is the only one of the four composers, however, who took seriously the idea of creating a faithful orchestration Musorgsky's Peasant Lad score. The

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132 Leyda and Bertensson, op. cit., 403-4.
crux of the matter is that no one has yet solidly founded a final orchestration of the *Peasant Lad* piece upon Musorgsky's original orchestration, as realized in his rediscovered tone poem.

Thoroughly unknown to most musicians, the second operatic version of *Night on Bald Mountain*, as presented in *Sorochintsy Fair*, is an exciting, tightly-woven piece, without the weaknesses in structure and long-winded tendencies of the first extant version. It is in no respect wanting the formal revisions of Rimsky-Korsakov or anyone else. Antol Lyadov, who initially began completing *Sorochintsy Fair*, made a wise general observation:

> It is, of course, easy to throw out this or that strange doubling, to clean up various unpleasant parallelisms, to bring modulations in order. There's just one problem: the result is not at all the same as Musorgsky's. Gone somewhere are the salient features and peculiarities (of this or that turn), gone is the composer's personality, lost is something that is very essential to Musorgsky's style.\textsuperscript{133}

It is exactly this respect and understanding that has been lacking as a fundamental precedent in the treatment of the second operatic version of *Night on Bald Mountain*.

Since the rediscovery of *St. John's Night on Bald Mountain*, the resources have been available to present a version of *Night on Bald Mountain* that is as close to Musorgsky's final intent as is posthumously possible. An orchestration of his second operatic version that remains true to the form and content of the piano/vocal score and

\textsuperscript{133} Vladimir Morosan, "Folk and Chant Elements in Musorgsky's Choral Writing," *Musorgsky: In Memoriam*, 105.
derives its orchestration, as much as is possible, from his first extant version, is exactly what is needed to achieve such an end. Edward Garden understood the ultimate need for a scholarly replacement of Rimsky-Korsakov’s version:

It [Rimsky-Korsakov’s version of Night] has always been one of the most popular Russian pieces in the repertory and it will remain the closest approximation to Musorgsky’s definitive views on his radical early piece until somebody makes an orchestral arrangement that is more faithful to the original ‘symphonic interlude’ in Sorochintsy Fair [emphasis mine].

Speaking of Musorgsky’s orchestration of St. John’s Night, Reilly noted, “Musorgsky’s orchestration also may surprise those who still believe in the countless statements that affirm his incompetence.” Certainly a composer of Musorgsky’s stature, or any composer, deserves a public presentation of his own work that is as undistorted as possible, regardless of what the final public reaction may be.

The purpose of the new orchestration of Night on Bald Mountain is not to foment even greater confusion and invite casual comparisons of all the editions; on the contrary, the purpose is to clarify Musorgsky’s original intent and dispel the confusion created both by the work’s natural history and by the well-meaning musicians who have contributed to it. My own opinion is that such a definitive Musorgsky version will prove itself to be the best rendering of all the preexisting versions, not only because of its historical authenticity,

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but also because of its inspirational content.

Orchestral Process

PART TWO of this document presents a new orchestration of Musorgsky's second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain (in Sorochintsy Fair, it is entitled Dream Vision of the Peasant Lad). I have based the evaluation of specific problems and choices on a foundational hierarchy of authority:

1) Form, note content, dynamics (where marked), and articulations:

   literally based on Musorgsky's final piano/vocal score contained in Sorochintsy Fair (1880).

2) Orchestration:

   Wherever possible, specific orchestration is taken from similar material in Musorgsky's first extant tone poem (1866-1871).

3) Rare instances of Musorgsky's adding entirely new material to the late piano/vocal score:

   The orchestration defers to a combination of four sources, and in the following hierarchical order:

   A. the derivation of similar types of passages from Bald Mountain
   B. the derivation of similar types of passages from other comparable orchestrations by Musorgsky (Boris Godunov and orchestrated portions of Sorochintsy Fair)
   C. Shebalin's orchestration of the Intermezzo

   (The most significant examples of Musorgsky's added material occur in the devil solo and the new ending).
4) Any needed portion of Shebalin's orchestration that contradicts clearly-established patterns of Musorgsky's orchestrational principles:

I either altered them to suit those patterns or discarded them entirely, deriving the orchestration instead from similar types of material in Musorgsky's own orchestrations.

5) Occasional instances where Musorgsky added choral parts and solos, not either doubled in other voices or instrumented by Shebalin:

I have orchestrated them myself, carefully using Musorgsky orchestrations as models. Otherwise, they would have to have been omitted entirely.

When the choral parts and solos are doubled in other voices:

I have omitted them as a separate entity.

6) When greater specificity of dynamic markings was necessary, beyond those fixed in the piano/vocal score:

I deferred to Shebalin, as long as his were not contrary to Musorgsky's practices in the tone poem.

7) Octave doublings:

Octave doublings were added only if they were implied by the passage itself or by the same passage in Musorgsky's tone poem, and they were beyond the practical possibility of being included in the piano/vocal score.

I have labored carefully to break precedent and not to add orchestrational ideas of my own, except as I have had to employ my own decision making. The decisions were always based on the above principles, and always considered with the utmost careful respect and deference to the two primary original sources.
Within the boundaries of the above premises, an enormous number of decisions had to be made, many of which involved the reconciliation of Musorgsky's two scores. As was discussed in Chapter IV of this writing, Musorgsky substantially rewrote the final piano/vocal score, thus making an exact orchestration from the original tone poem impossible. Still, a large portion of the material is the same or related, enough so that the resulting orchestration of the second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain is substantially distinct from any previous versions and orchestrations of it. Enumerating and discussing all or many of the exact decisions involved in the orchestration of Night on Bald Mountain would be tedious and inappropriate in a work of this size, but a brief discussion of a sampling of specific difficulties that confronted me as a decision-maker will follow.

Although I have employed the exact same orchestra that Musorgsky did in his first extant version (excepting additions for the new ending section) transposing instruments are not necessarily in their original key. I have made use of clarinets in both Bb and A, even though Musorgsky used only Bb clarinets in the first extant version. My reasoning is that Musorgsky later did use clarinets in both keys (such as in Boris) and that his second operatic version is harmonically more adventurous than his first extant version. Such sharp keys as A-major, f#-melodic-minor, and C#-major, make the clarinet in A preferable in various passages, especially in the ending section. I have put the four horn
parts in F, as Musorgsky did in Boris, instead of the D and Bb horns that he used in the first extant version; I have also changed the old notation Musorgsky used in the first extant version to standard modern horn notation. Finally, instead of trumpets in D, I have written the trumpet parts in C, since orchestral players would normally play the D part on a C trumpet anyway. The cornet parts I have left in their original key of Bb.

Keeping in mind that the new orchestration follows the exact form of Musorgsky’s piano/vocal score, which includes time signatures and tempos, one particular curiosity must be noted. Unlike Musorgsky’s first extant version (which is mostly in common time) the piano/vocal score is in cut time through measure 243. After a two-bar change to 3/2 time, Musorgsky then changes back to common time, instead of cut time, even though the material, note values, and tempo seem to remain the same as before the change. Following the meter change, Musorgsky never returns to cut time. Despite the change to 4/4, study of the material and comparison with the first extant version seem to indicate that no actual change of tempo was intended. It is possible that Musorgsky left out an intended change back to cut time at measure 249, or that he simply made a mistake in measure 246, using a “C” instead of the cut time symbol. Musorgsky may have also been torn between using common and cut time, as the meter difference between his two versions might indicate. My solution was to insert an indication that the quarter note should remain constant, and that such a marking is my own
suggestion, and not Musorgsky's actual marking.

An area that presented occasional difficulties in the new orchestration is that of dynamic markings. For example, Musorgsky apparently did not include an opening dynamic for the Bald Mountain intermezzo in his piano/vocal score, since Lamm includes brackets around the opening p marking. As a result, the dynamic is uncertain for the first eleven measures; the same is true for the transposed return of the opening (MM. 35-44). Musorgsky opens the earlier tone poem with a ff marking, but dynamics in his two scores are frequently contradictory. Lamm likely chose a quieter dynamic for the opening because of Musorgsky's program and score remarks: the program for the opening is "An underground rumble of inhuman voices, pronouncing inhuman words," and Musorgsky's staging remark is, "Desolate hilly scene. Subterranean, getting gradually nearer; chorus of the powers of Hell (emphasis mine)." For the same reasons of the underground voices and notion of "getting gradually nearer," I deferred to Shebalin's dynamic markings in the opening, except where they contradicted Musorgsky's precedent of marking certain instruments louder or softer than others in the same passage.

Musorgsky's piano/vocal score often has more musical lines occurring simultaneously than the first extant score; naturally, this causes orchestration difficulties. As an example, see measures 1-11 of the new orchestration. In

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136 Leyda and Bertensson, op. cit., 405.
Musorgsky’s tone poem, he drops the pizzicato bass motive during the upward flourishes (MM. 5-6 and 9-10), freeing the cellos and basses to reinforce the flourishes; in the piano/vocal score, he continues the pizzicato motive throughout. The most natural solution was to divide the basses in the pizzicato motive so that the cellos could be free to color the wind flourishes, as in the original.

For another example of Musorgsky’s juxtaposition of simultaneous musical lines in the second operatic version, see measures 12-25 of the new orchestration. In the earlier orchestra score, Musorgsky drops the eighth-note accompaniment at the measure equivalent to measure 20, freeing the trumpets and cornets to participate in the cadential melodic material. Since he does not drop the eighth notes in the later piano/vocal score, I was forced to compromise the original orchestration slightly to accommodate the increase of material. The same type of problem of running short of instruments to cover the rewritten material occurs in scattered passages throughout the piece. Running short of available instruments is also a minor problem in the instrumentation of added voice parts, although Musorgsky had already orchestrated in the first extant version portions of what became vocal lines in the later score.

The abundance of melodic and orchestral variation in Musorgsky’s first extant version adds another dilemma to the practice of using the score as an orchestral source. One melody in particular appears so many times in the early orchestration, that it is difficult to decide which
orchestral occurrence to apply to the melody's more limited appearance in the second operatic version. See measure 74 of the new orchestration for the melody in question. The same problem arises with the melody at measure 125. In such instances, observing each appearance of the melody in the first extant version, noting the range, dynamics, and context, often leads to a fairly obvious conclusion; at other times, I simply had to make an educated choice between likely possibilities.

A disadvantage of working from the piano score, is that Musorgsky probably was often not able to include textural sustained notes and trills, as he normally would have. My solution to the problem was to occasionally take such sustained notes from his original orchestration, and, in the case of new material, to occasionally add those that Shebalin added. In my caution to honor Musorgsky's material, I have been conservative about such additions to the piano/vocal material.

Working from the piano/vocal score very occasionally presented problems of ranges. The clearest example of this may be found in measures 14-20. Unlike the three-octave trombone/tuba melody in the first extant version, Musorgsky's piano score has a four-octave melody, the top octave occurring in the voices. If taken directly from the piano score, the tuba would have to play the passage an entire octave lower than in the first extant score, taking it down to the very bottom extreme of its range and a perfect fifth below its absolute lowest note in the first extant score. To
do so would be highly questionable, based on Musorgsky's original orchestration and on the weakness of the tuba at such an extreme range. Even adding contrabasses to the passage (which would significantly change the brass timbre) would require the use of extensions. In the format of a piano score, Musorgsky would have had no other option to show that he wanted three orchestral octaves in the passage without adding the extra bass octave. In this rare instance, I chose to leave the bottom octave out, believing that Musorgsky intended to show that he wanted an entire three-octave melody in the orchestra, more than that he intended to substantially change his pattern of orchestration for tuba; Shebalin and Rimsky-Korsakov also dropped the piano score's bottom octave.

As for Musorgsky's addition of entirely new material in the second operatic version, the devil solo in d-minor (measures 153-170) serves as one of the longer examples. The melody does not occur in the first extant version, nor does anything very similar. This is one of the only longer passages (eighteen measures) in the new orchestration that mostly represents Shebalin's orchestration. In order to maintain the original solo characteristic of the voice line, I added unison bassoons to Shebalin's strings. The same melody reappears for nine measures at the end of the section, this time in Db-major.

From measure 171 to 239, the orchestration is based mostly on Musorgsky's score, even though the ideas had to come from various different variations within the original
orchestration. An initial glance at the section in question tends to be confusing, because the second operatic version appears too different to compare to the first extant version; upon closer study, however, even when material has been significantly altered, educated comparisons of various passages produce conclusive solutions. The confusion is largely a result of Musorgsky's changes in the local sequence of events. In the case of rare, limited exceptions, where no clear solution based on the original orchestration could be found, Shebalin's orchestration bridges the "gaps".

Other portions of the new orchestration required a similar collecting of passages from Musorgsky's first extant score for comparison; in no way does this invalidate the process, because the nature of the themes and variations in the two scores is quite closely related, and at times almost literally the same. Measures 347 through 371 is an example of a section that required a combining of orchestration ideas from more than one related passage in the first extant score. Musorgsky's marking of *tutta forza* at 355 of the piano/vocal score made his intentions clearer.

Musorgsky does very occasionally reveal such orchestration plans in the piano/vocal score itself. In measure 127, for example, he indicates that the clarinet was intended for what appears to be the middle octave of the melody, which makes it simpler to choose between different statements of the melody in the first extant version. Beginning with bassoon in measure 125, then, becomes the only obvious choice, even though beginning with clarinet would
have been a second option in the original orchestration. In measure 129, Mussorgsky indicates that the rising marcato scale is to be played by trombones, and, updating his original orchestration, he specifies the change to trumpets in 135. This clue helped to reveal not only the passage in question, but his general changing approach to the trombone range. Finally, in measure 222, Mussorgsky notes that the marcato melody is to be played by three trombones, which Shebalin incidentally ignores in his orchestration.

Since Shebalin’s orchestration is not based primarily on Mussorgsky’s orchestration, I have naturally orchestrated most specific passages differently, to reflect Mussorgsky’s orchestration; further, in order to defer to Shebalin’s orchestration when occasionally necessary, I have had to make alterations to Shebalin’s score. Though Shebalin was relatively faithful to the piano/vocal score, he did take certain questionable liberties, such as adding octaves even in instances where Mussorgsky could easily have added them in the piano, had he desired. Other of Shebalin’s liberties with the original piano/vocal score include adding notes to fill out harmonies that are unclear, changing articulations, and changing whole areas of dynamic markings. When using any portion of his orchestration, I carefully eliminated these discrepancies with the original score.

Shebalin took another type of liberty that was probably quite unconscious—that of not heeding Mussorgsky’s established style of orchestration. For example, when Mussorgsky wanted to indicate the sound of crash cymbals in a
very soft, thinly orchestrated passage, he consistently did so by combining tambourine with triangle in the first extant score; this is evident in the frequent passages that include crash cymbals at strong dynamic levels, and recur softly with tambourine and triangle. When using Shebalin’s orchestration, therefore, if he wrote crash cymbals in a very soft passage, I was able to be fairly confident in my decision to use tambourine with triangle or suspended cymbal instead; the same held true when Musorgsky changed a relatively loud, thick-textured passage in the first extant version, to quiet, sparser one in the piano/vocal score. Shebalin’s use of percussion is inconsistent with Musorgsky’s in other aspects, as well; in most problem-posing passages, therefore, I tried to temper my use of Shebalin’s percussion material with Musorgsky’s style practices.

Shebalin’s general style of scoring of woodwinds is significantly different from Musorgsky’s and far-reaching in its overall effect on the sound of the orchestration. In loud passages in his score, he is apt to write the highest melodic line for unison upper woodwinds, while filling in the harmony and lower octaves with horns and brass. Musorgsky’s score, on the other hand, more often reveals a full compliment of harmonies in the upper woodwinds, sometimes doubling that at the octave in other instruments. Musorgsky tends to double like woodwind timbres often, but he doubles differing woodwind timbres less than Shebalin; as a result, each pair of winds in Musorgsky’s orchestration tends to maintain a more distinct voice of its own. Shebalin
frequently scores the clarinet and oboe in unison or in the exact same upper register, whereas Mussorgsky tends to be faithful about stacking his woodwinds from low to high, in score order (bassoons, clarinets, oboes, flutes, and piccolo). As a result, Mussorgsky’s clarinets are more frequently in middle and low registers than Shebalin’s. Finally, Shebalin freely puts like woodwind timbres in octaves with each other, when Mussorgsky is far more likely to write unison pairs of like woodwinds in octaves with contrasting pairs. As before, when using any of Shebalin’s orchestration, I revoiced the woodwind writing where it was in clear contradiction with specific examples of Mussorgsky’s style.

Shebalin’s personal style of orchestration naturally affected the brass and strings as well as the woodwinds. Whenever I was forced to borrow from Shebalin’s orchestration, if I could be fairly certain, based on Mussorgsky’s first extant score, that Mussorgsky would not have scored a particular passage in the same manner, I adapted the voicing based on actual passages of Mussorgsky’s. In so doing, I have endeavored to be faithful to Mussorgsky’s original orchestration in style, even where I could not be in literal orchestral content.

Originally, I assumed it would be necessary to defer entirely to Shebalin’s orchestration for the ending section, since Mussorgsky had not orchestrated the section; eventually, however, I was able to confidently derive almost the entire ending from other of Mussorgsky’s orchestrations. For the
bells and opening six measures, I consulted several excerpts from Boris Godunov, which Musorgsky composed in the early 1870's. The two most important excerpts, because of their similarity to the ending of Night on Bald Mountain, were the scene in Act IV of Boris' death and the Moscow apartment scene in Act II (same music as the Clock scene). Also supportive to my orchestral decisions were the Act I, Scene 2 Prologue, which is the coronation scene, and the monk's scene of Act I, Scene 1. From these, I settled on the bell sound, which is a large bell or chime in C# with tam-tam; pizzicato strings, and in the louder opening the bass trombone, also contribute to the sound of the bell.

The use of pizzicato strings continues with the harp for the continuous pedal C#; another range problem emerges from the piano/vocal score with respect to the pedal. The only orchestral instruments that have the capacity to play the bottom C# are contrabassoon, piano, harp, and extended double bass. Musorgsky did not include contrabassoon in his orchestration, and Shebalin's introduction of the piano does not seem consistent with Musorgsky’s orchestration of Boris or other works. The use of harp, however, is quite possible and provides a successful bottom C#. The problem is that the ongoing pizzicati, as used by Musorgsky in the apartment scene and others, cannot continue without extended double basses.

Though Musorgsky did not normally write for extended double bass, he certainly must have been familiar with the possibility. Since Bach's and Handel's time, composers had
occasionally written the double bass down to the same low C. The Encyclopedia Britannica of 1913-1915 reports that London orchestral basses had low D strings as early as 1835. This was likely necessary because Beethoven had included extended double bass in all of his symphonies but Symphony No. 2. In Musorgsky’s day, Wagner, Brahms, and Rimsky-Korsakov were all writing for double basses below the standard E. Finally, Rimsky-Korsakov wrote low D’s in his orchestration of the ending, and Shebalin wrote divisi basses, including the bottom C#. To remain faithful to Musorgsky’s piano/vocal score and Musorgsky’s orchestral character as revealed in Boris Godunov, therefore, I have written the bottom C# pizzicati for those contrabassists with extended instruments.

For the “suffering demons” melody in measures 378-390, I drew from the Czar’s death and the apartment scenes, along with the continued sound of the pedal. The use of harp is consistent with the arpeggiated figures and Musorgsky’s use of harp in Boris Godunov, so I agreed with Shebalin’s and Rimsky-Korsakov’s conception of its inclusion. For the beautiful hymn at measure 393, “the voices of the church choir,” I deferred to Shebalin’s use of cellos because of the range, the need for like timbres, and the quiet dynamic. In 412-413, I also deferred to Shebalin’s entrance of brass, supportive as it is of the dynamic and the idea of breaking dawn.

The two woodwind solos have another source entirely, and it is the opera Sorochintsy Fair itself. Musorgsky only orchestrated small portions of the opera, including the

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beginning of the Song of Parnassus, which follows the Bald Mountain (Dream Vision of the Peasant Lad) intermezzo in Act III, Scene 2. The woodwind solos and voicing of their accompaniments in the song are similar enough to use as actual models for Night on Bald Mountain. As it happens, these solos confirm Shebalin’s use of clarinet in the first solo and oboe in the second. The instrumentation of the accompaniments, however, contradicts Shebalin’s. Musorgsky’s \textit{f} dynamic marking and change from minor to major at the second solo is accompanied by his stage marking that the stage is filled with sunlight. It is programmatically interesting that Musorgsky starts the ending section with a strong dynamic, and each of the three “suffering demons” statements in the violins becomes quieter, while the opposing “good” forces increase in dynamic.

The final chord sequence at the ending of Night on Bald Mountain is almost identical to the ending of Act I, Scene 1 of Boris Godunov; thus, I took the voicing of the final chords directly from there. The use of three flutes in the ending of Night on Bald Mountain is based on Musorgsky’s practice in both Boris and the Song of Parnassus. The third flute player is available for the ending because of the absence of piccolo.

As for the performance of the ending section, the case could be made that Musorgsky added the ending for the sole purpose of binding the Bald Mountain interlude to the opera. While I do not agree with the hypothesis, the second operatic version of Night on Bald Mountain ends strongly, with or
without the added ending. If conductors wish to stop at the end of the main body, whether for specific performance or philosophical reasons, they now have that option.

It has been my sincere intent that my completion of the following orchestration of Night on Bald Mountain will reveal Modest Musorgsky's own personality as a composer and orchestrator, as far as we the living can imperfectly know. Referring to the lack of support and nurture that Musorgsky received during his life, Arsenii Golenishchev-Kutuzov said that Musorgsky's "... enormous and original talent... barely hinted to his contemporaries and posterity what Musorgsky should have been and what he could have achieved under different social circumstances." My hope is that the following new orchestration of Night on Bald Mountain will remove a small portion of the same social obstacles that remain in Modest Musorgsky's path long after his death.

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139 I would be happy to discuss my notes on exact orchestral decisions with interested musicians. A performance copy of the score and parts will be available to conductors, as well, whether or not the work receives formal publication.

140 Golenishchev-Kutuzov, op. cit., 99.
MODEST P. MUSORGSKY

NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN, 1880
(DREAM VISION OF THE PEASANT LAD)

Historical Orchestration Based Upon 1867 Original
By Daniel Lochrie

CONDUCTOR’S SCORE
ORCHESTRA

Piccolo/Flauto III
2 Flauti
2 Oboi
2 Clarinetti (B, A)
2 Fagotti

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4 Corni (F)
2 Cornetti (B)
2 Trombe (C)
3 Tromboni
Tuba

*

Timpani
Triangolo
Tamburino
Tamburo
Piatti
Gran Cassa
Tam-tam
Campana (C#)
Arpa

*

Violini I
Violini II
Viole
Violoncelli
Contrabassi
1867 PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>MEASURE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Assembly of the witches,</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their Chatter and Gossip</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Cortege of Satan</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Unholy Glorification of Satan</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Witches’ Sabbath</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No added ending)</td>
<td>(372)</td>
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</tbody>
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1880 PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>MEASURE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) An underground rumble of inhuman voices, pronouncing inhuman words.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) The underground kingdom of darkness asserts its rights, -- jeering</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td>over the sleeping Lad.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Portents of the appearance of the Black God and Satan.</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) The spirits of darkness leave the Lad.</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance of the Black God.</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Glorification of the Black God and the black mass.</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Witches’ Sabbath.</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) At the very climax of the Sabbath the bell in the village church</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strikes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Suffering of the demons.</td>
<td>378, 402, 421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Voices of the church choir.</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Disappearance of the demons.</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Night on Bald Mountain

Modest P. Mussorgsky
(1839-1881)
Orch. - Leont'ev
"This designation is not in Musorgsky's original."
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Musical Scores


