

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

REFLECTED AND REFRACTED

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THE COLOUR AND GRANDEUR OF A JOURNEY THROUGH RUSSIA

Most people come to Mussorgsky's piano suite *Pictures at an Exhibition* via Ravel's sleek orchestration, only to discover, when they finally hear what Mussorgsky wrote, that the original is altogether darker and more rugged than the Frenchman's arrangement. In fact Ravel's is only one of many arrangements: I believe there are now well over 30 versions of the piece, for guitar, for brass quintet, brass band and percussion ensemble.

Perhaps it was the pentatonic nature of Mussorgsky's introductory *Promenade* that sent Yu, musically speaking, back to his native China. In my memory of the first performance of Yu's orchestration, I actually recall there being Chinese instruments, too, but in fact there aren't any. On the contrary, much of the time Yu seems to be dealing in a deliberately kitschy Western idea of what Chinese music sounds like. His arrangement is full of musical jokes. I

a particular effect. More than once I could have sworn there was amplification and reverb being used - the music seemed suddenly to have entered a cavernous space - but again it turned out to be merely the result of skilful orchestration.

Listening to Pro Arte playing Mussorgsky's notes dressed up in Yu's orchestral clothing you sometimes feel you are hearing them for the first time. In some cases, you are - this is



Vladimir Horowitz even made one for piano, which was surely unnecessary. Why would anyone bother with yet another arrangement, you might wonder. You need only listen to a few seconds of Julian Yu's new version to hear the reason. There is still so much to say about this remarkable piece, and in Yu's case what he says is very personal.

remember grinning broadly when I heard it in the concert hall.

Yu uses a small orchestra but he is incredibly resourceful with what is at his disposal, creating one striking effect after another. At the premiere, I remember looking around the orchestra trying to discover which instrument or combination of instruments was producing

not a strict arrangement by any means - but more often than not it is simply a matter of perspective. And that perspective counts for a lot. Like Ravel before him, Julian Yu has produced a new piece out of Mussorgsky's original. This CD should be filed under Y, not M.

Andrew Ford

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

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MUSSORGSKY
GLINKA
GLIERE
TCHAIKOVSKY

ARRANGED BY
JULIAN YU

AUSTRALIA PRO ARTE
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
CONDUCTED BY
JEFFREY CRELLIN

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION by Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881) arranged by Julian Yu

- 1** Promenade 1'31"
- 2** Gnomes 2'34"
- 3** Promenade 0'48"
- 4** The Old Castle 4'15"
- 5** Promenade 0'27"
- 6** Tuileries – Children's Dispute After Play 1'04"
- 7** Bydlo 2'34"
- 8** Promenade 0'39"
- 9** Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks 1'14"
- 10** Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle 2'35"
- 11** Promenade 0'53"
- 12** The Market in Limoges – Astounding News 1'36"
- 13** The Catacombs – Roman Sepulchre 1'51"
- 14** Talking with the Dead in the Language of the Dead 1'52"
- 15** The Hut on Chickens' Legs: Baba Yaga 2'45"
- 16** The Great Gate of Kiev 5'20"

COLORATURA CONCERTO FOR OBOE AND STRING ORCHESTRA

by Reinhold Glière (1875-1956) arranged by Julian Yu

- 17** First movement 8'25"
 - 18** Second movement 5'41"
- Oboe: Jeffrey Crellin

19 THE NIGHTINGALE 6'35"

Variation by Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857) on a romance by Alexander Alyabyev (1787-1851)
Arranged for oboe and strings by Julian Yu (Variation IV added by Julian Yu)
Oboe: Jeffrey Crellin

TWO PIECES FROM THE SEASONS

by Peyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) arranged by Julian Yu

- 20** June – Barcarolle 5'27"
- 21** October – Autumn Song 4'44"

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

by Modest Mussorgsky,
arranged by Julian Yu

Mussorgsky wrote his piano suite *Pictures at an Exhibition* in 1874, recording his impressions of an exhibition of pictures by his late friend Victor Hartman. By the year 2000 Mussorgsky's work had already been arranged for orchestra by over 70 different composers, to say nothing of the numerous non-orchestral arrangements.

The version on this CD, written in 2001, is a new, unique and frequently-performed one for chamber orchestra or ensemble of 16 players by Australian-Chinese composer Julian Yu. This arrangement has attracted some outstanding reviews. To quote from two of them:

Since the appearance of this new arrangement, we must say goodbye to the fixed ideas and models of Ravel's arrangement (Seito Hiromi CD Journal Database, May 2004).

Ravel's position is unshakeable, but from an intellectual point of view, this new arrangement surpasses that of Ravel. (<http://sound.jp/kanazawa/oekcd/pictures.htm>).

The uniqueness of Yu's version is due at least in part to his background in Chinese music with its refined elegance and its tradition of ornamentation, of 'making something new from the old'. He does not aim for grandeur but contrast, and gives himself the freedom to diverge from and develop Mussorgsky's original ideas, the better to bring out their meaning and achieve special effects and atmospheres. His orchestration is rich and varied, with a

refinement of timbre often heard in chamber music and in Chinese instrumental music. The pentatonic nature of Mussorgsky's *Promenade* theme lends itself to oriental treatment, and in one spot Yu even breaks into fragments of a well-known Chinese melody, Han Tian Lei. But mostly the oriental influence occurs more subtly.

Some textbooks describe the process of orchestration as clever copying, but this certainly does not apply to Yu's creative arrangement. Some prominent features include:

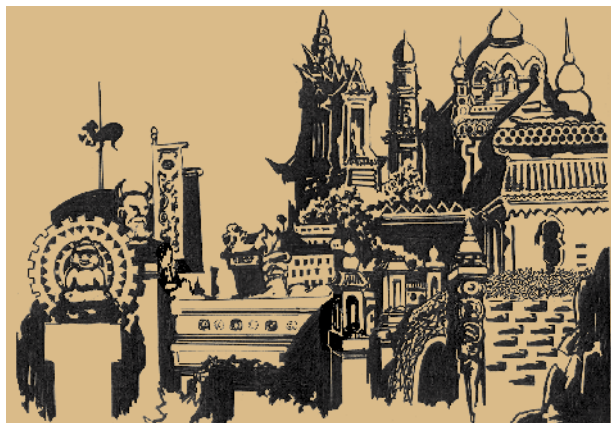
◆ **Use of solo instruments to represent characters:** Mussorgsky himself wandering through the exhibition is represented by the viola throughout the whole work and, to cap off the impersonation, Yu has added a newly composed viola cadenza in the last occurrence of the *Promenade*. *Samuel Goldenberg*, the rich Jew, is portrayed by solo double bass, the poor Jew by the clarinet, and the children playing in the *Tuileries* Gardens by the xylophone.

◆ **Reverberation and "timbre melody":** Sometimes several instruments separately take one note of the melody which they sustain to create an artificial reverberation such as might be heard in a large cathedral. Examples of this can be heard in the *Promenades*. At other times an echo effect is produced by the delayed entries of several voices all playing the same melody in a close canonic formation, as in *The Old Castle*.

◆ **Hocket and pointillism:** Yu achieves a highly original sound through the traditional method of hocket (distribution of the notes of a melody between two or more players). Often the effect is heightened by Webern-like pointillism, resulting in big jumps in pitch albeit here in a tonal context. These two methods are particularly evident in *Limoges*.

◆ **Descriptive sound:** Often throughout the work a specific sound effect is used to convey a certain image. A few examples are the tone clusters with crescendo and trombone glissandi describing the straining of the oxen pulling the cart in *Bydlo*; the parallel major and minor second intervals imitating the high-pitched voices of children arguing and bickering in the *Tuileries*; and the pitchless sound of rushing air and rhythmic pitchless articulations describing the witch flying over the forest at night in *Babayaga*.

◆ **New elements:** There are many new elements in this piece, most notably the inclusion of snatches of the Chinese melody *Han Tian Lei* in the *Promenade*, and a new layer of chords creating a mysterious sound in the *Catacombs*. In *With the Dead in a Dead Language*, the celesta plays a few tinkling arpeggio notes to convey the glowing of the skulls, and the whole work concludes with a peal of bell chimes.



1 Promenade

In some other arrangements this is pompous and fanfare-like, dominated by the trumpet. By contrast, Yu uses the viola to introduce the theme, which to him represents Mussorgsky strolling from picture to picture, as Yu associates this instrument with scholarship and intellect. After this the theme echoes around the exhibition gallery, but without the original harmonies, creating an eerie and light feeling. The snatches of Chinese folk tune which emerge here seem to combine naturally with Mussorgsky's theme.



2 Gnomes

The picture is a sketch of a child's toy, a nutcracker shaped like a short-bodied gnome.

Because it is

a wooden toy, Yu makes a feature of the marimba. He writes with humour and sympathy, avoiding the heavy, scary effect of some other arrangements.

3 Promenade

The *Promenade* makes its second appearance, once again introduced by the viola.

4 The Old Castle

The picture is of a medieval castle. A theme in the English horn, reminiscent of a troubadour's song, is echoed atmospherically by the orchestra. Twice you can hear the evening breeze stirring the air within the castle.

5 Promenade

This time it appears only in the strings, contrasting sharply with the next section.



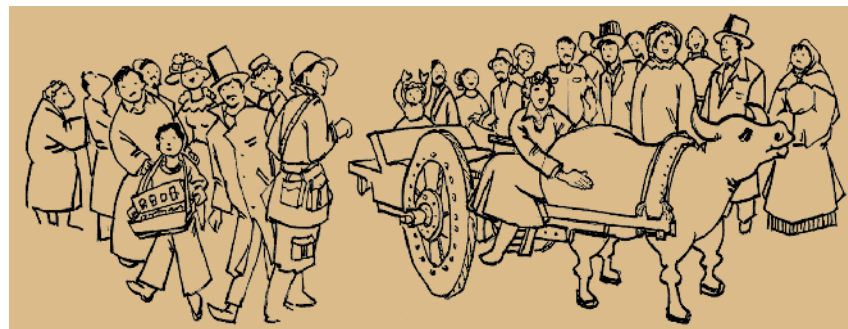
6 Tuileries – Children's Dispute After Play

This is a vivid musical picture of Parisian children arguing in high-pitched voices in the *Tuileries* gardens. The querulous atmosphere is typified in the dialogue between the strings

and the upper registers of the woodwinds, while a xylophone adds to the liveliness.

7 Bydlo

The title of this piece means 'bullock cart'. One imagines a large Polish cart with huge wheels, drawn by oxen. The rhythmic pattern played by the cellos and double basses describes the slow, plodding movement as the cart approaches, passes



and disappears into the distance. The lowing of the oxen can be heard in the folk-style melody played by the bassoon, and tone clusters in the strings and glissandi in the trombone add to the climax as the cart passes. At the loudest point the conductor thought someone was humming with the melody, but then realized that this effect comes from the orchestration.

8 Promenade

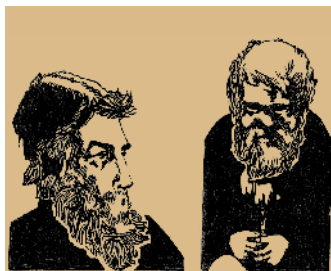
This time it starts with the twinkling, transparent notes of the celesta. The solo viola, representing Mussorgsky himself, can be clearly heard.

9 Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks

This music was inspired by Hartman's drawing of a ballet. The static birds in the drawing are brought to life by Mussorgsky's animated piano music, which necessitates simple orchestration. Yu employs the piccolo instead of the flute to add brightness, his bassoon part sounds quite hen-like, and his use of the piano is unique. As a Japanese critic remarked

after hearing Yu's arrangement of the *Unhatched Chicks*, "What else can be done with this piece?"





10 Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle

This is a portrait of two Jewish men, one rich and one poor. Yu has diverged further from Mussorgsky's

original here than in the other pieces. The rich man is portrayed by the solo double bass, which plays a newly-created cadenza-like embellishment, while the timpani in the background produce a low, coarse sound. Fast-repeated notes in the clarinet describe the poor man pleading with the rich man. After appearing separately, these two musical ideas are combined and then juxtaposed at the end.

11 Promenade

In some orchestrations the last appearance of the *Promenade* has been omitted, but in this version it appears in abridged form, with a noticeable Chinese influence. The viola takes the lead in an added 'soliloquy' which seems to express Mussorgsky's own feelings deeply.

12 The Market in Limoges – Astounding News

This piece depicts an animated gossip session among the market women of *Limoges*. The orchestration is unique: the original harmony has been omitted leaving just the melody, which has been subjected to rapid changes in register and timbre. The market is bustling with noise and excitement!

13 The Catacombs – Roman Sepulchre

This music is inspired by two watercolour paintings of the ancient catacombs in Paris. The solo viola



melody seems to express an intensely personal emotion, while a layer of new chords in the woodwinds, added on top of the string section, contributes to the gloomy, mysterious atmosphere.

14 Talking with the Dead in the Language of the Dead

This continues on from the last piece. It consists of a dialogue between the viola and the double bass, an imagined conversation between Mussorgsky and his dead friend. In his original manuscript Mussorgsky wrote, "The soul created by my dead friend Hartman led me on until I was standing in front of the skeletons. I called out to the skeletons, and they glowed silently". [From page 4 of the preamble in the printed edition of Julian Yu's arrangement of *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Zen-On Music, Tokyo, Japan, 2006]. This sad and mysterious scene features the harp, celesta and vibraphone.

15 The Hut on Chickens' Legs: Baba Yaga

The inspiration for this piece was Hartman's design for a bronze clock in the form of a hut on chickens' legs. Mussorgsky describes not the hut itself but

the witch who lives in it, and in this arrangement we can clearly hear in the brass and woodwind instruments the rustling of the leaves and the whistling, howling and roaring of the witch as she flies over the forest.

16 The Great Gate of Kiev

In Mussorgsky's original piano version this piece starts very loudly. But Yu's unusual treatment of the final theme starts softly and gradually builds up to a climax.

Musically this works well, and solves the problem of how to create an effect of grandeur using a small ensemble. The soft beginning gives us the feeling that we are approaching the *Gate* from a great distance: as we draw nearer, the orchestra gains more and more strength, reaching its full volume in the last statement of the tune.

In the middle of Mussorgsky's piano version one can hear three different bell chimes of the Eastern Orthodox church: large, medium and small bells. The small bells cannot be heard in Ravel's orchestration, but all three bells are brought out beautifully in this arrangement, and also, as a new touch, reappear together at the end of the piece in a carillon of chimes.



COLORATURA CONCERTO FOR OBOE AND STRING ORCHESTRA by Reinhold Glière, arranged by Julian Yu

Reinhold Glière, an important Russian composer, wrote his *Concerto for Coloratura Soprano and Orchestra* in 1942-43, and the piece was premiered in Moscow in May 1943. The coloratura soprano voice is treated like an instrument, and its part is what is called a vocalise, a line sung with no words. Later on the piece was transcribed by the composer for voice and piano. Still later, transcriptions appeared for French horn and piano, and for trumpet and piano. The new version on this CD by Julian Yu is for oboe and string orchestra.

About this arrangement, Yu writes: "I first heard this piece on an old 78 rpm record when I was in my first year as a student at the Conservatorium in Beijing, where we had access to a lot of music from the Soviet Union. Whereas most European music left me cold, I was very moved by the melodic beauty of this piece, and in 1982 I made a piano reduction from the orchestral score for recital purposes, as we had no access to a piano version. After migrating to Australia in 1985, I discovered that almost nobody here knew this piece, and it was impossible to find a recording in the shops. Only recently has it gradually become known in the Western world.

"Now, thirty years on, I am glad to have had the opportunity to create a new version of this piece for Jeff Crellin and Australia Pro Arte, as the oboe has such a beautiful tone and a range similar to that of a soprano. My arrangement is mostly loyal to the original, except for the short cadenza just before the end of the second movement." [From the composer's program note to the Pro Arte performance of the work on 2 October 2005]

17 The concerto consists of two movements. The first is melancholy, lyrical and typically Russian in style, with haunting melodic lines fully developed throughout the whole movement. The development, a short dialogue between the oboe and solo violin (originally soprano and clarinet), leads into a recapitulation of themes in the strings while the dialogue continues in the foreground.

18 By contrast, the second movement is bright, elegant and waltz-like. Near the end the dialogue between the oboe and solo violin resumes, and the music becomes more instrumental in nature (remember that the original composition was a concerto for voice). Two short cadenzas for the oboe added by Julian Yu highlight this instrument's solo capacity.

19 THE NIGHTINGALE Variation by Glinka on a romance by Alyabyev Arranged for oboe and strings by Julian Yu (Variation IV added by Julian Yu)

This tune, now a favourite of music lovers the world over, was composed in the early 1820s by Russian composer Alexander Alexandrovich Alyabyev to words by Anton Delvig. In 1833 Mikhail Glinka, the composer regarded as the founder of Russian nationalism in music, wrote a set of piano variations based on this tune. This CD features Julian Yu's arrangement for oboe and strings of the first three variations from Glinka's piano work, followed by a fourth variation by Yu himself, in which the beautiful melodic line is played twice by the strings with the oboe playing an active, contrasting bird-like melody.

Two pieces from Tchaikovsky's **THE SEASONS** Arranged by Julian Yu

The editor of the St Petersburg monthly magazine 'Nouveliste' asked Tchaikovsky to write a new piece for each issue of his magazine for 1875, reflecting the mood of the month. Tchaikovsky had his servant remind him, and on a certain date each month sat down to write the required new piece. Altogether he wrote ten of these pieces, but twice he lacked inspiration, with the result that he used two of his pre-existing works: *Barcarolle* for June and *Troika* for November. These two pieces became the most famous of the *Seasons* collection.

This CD includes the pieces for June and October, specially arranged for this CD by Julian Yu using the same instrumental forces and style as *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

20 June – Barcarolle

A scene of many people boating on a lake. The orchestration is rather unusual. The first section begins with arpeggios on the harp, after which the vibraphone enters with the famous melody. It is punctuated by the brass and woodwinds which play one note each of the melody, while a celesta adds background colour. Later the notes of the melody jump from octave to octave, adding a new dimension to this cantabile melody.

In the middle section, a newly-composed violin solo adds attraction to the arrangement.

21 October – Autumn Song

This piece evokes a desolate autumn scene of falling leaves, bare trees and strong winds presaging the onset of winter. The plaintive opening melody is played by the solo oboe. A feeling of vastness is

created by the echo effect in the wind instruments and the omission of the original harmonies. Contrast is achieved by assigning the notes of the melody to different octaves.

In the middle section, the strings each play one note of a newly-added descending chromatic scale, creating a tone cluster effect to accompany the despondent melody.

Program notes by Hazel Gray

JULIAN YU

Born in Beijing in 1957, Julian Yu studied composition at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, and later joined the teaching staff there. From 1980 to 1982, he studied at the Tokyo College of Music under Joji Yuasa and Shin-Ichiro Ikebe. He migrated to Australia in 1985. In 1988, he was selected for a Composition Fellowship at Tanglewood, where he studied under Hans Werner

Henze and Oliver Knussen, and was awarded the Koussevitzky Tanglewood Composition Prize for that year.

He has written many works for orchestra, instrumental and choral groups, theatre and opera, commissioned by organizations such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), the BBC Proms, IRCAM / Ensemble InterContemporain, the City of Munich, Australia Ensemble, Melbourne International Festival, and Synergy Percussion. His music has also featured in the ISCM World Music Days in Switzerland, Mexico, Luxembourg and Hong Kong.

Julian Yu's music has won many awards in the USA, Japan, Europe, and his adopted Australia. In 1991 and 1994, an international jury unanimously selected his work for the triennial Paul Lowin Orchestral Prize. Established in 1991, this is the highest Australian award for composition.

JEFFREY CRELLIN

Currently Principal Oboe of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, a post he has held since 1977, Jeffrey Crellin also holds the position of Artistic Director (Music) of the Monash University Academy of Performing Arts. Founder and Artistic Director of the Australia Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra from 1990 until 2006, he now holds the position of Artistic Director Emeritus with Australia Pro Arte.

Born in Brisbane, he first attended the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, studying the oboe with Frank Lockwood and piano with Max Olding, before transferring to Jiri Tancibudek at the University of Adelaide, completing an Honours Degree in 1974. He was the 1973 Commonwealth Winner of the ABC Concerto and Vocal competition (now ABC Young Performers), and in 1974



received a two-year Churchill Fellowship which took him to Freiburg in West Germany to study with the renowned oboe virtuoso, Heinz Holliger. While in Germany he won first place in the Freiburgmusikhochschule Oboe Competition, returning to Australia in 1977 to take up his current position of Principal Oboe with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

He has made over one hundred concerto appearances with orchestras in Germany, France,

Japan, New Zealand and Australia, including performances with the Melbourne, Sydney, Queensland, Tasmanian and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras, the Australia Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, Adelaide Chamber Orchestra and the Australian Chamber Orchestra. A keen chamber musician he founded the Australian Chamber Soloists in 1984, touring regularly for Musica Viva, and in 1989 also undertook an Australian tour as guest artist with the Reger String Trio from West Germany. He has performed regularly in Japan in both solo and chamber music capacities in Tokyo, Osaka, Ogaki, Kyoto and Kanazawa. He was invited by Toru Takemitsu to appear at the 1989 Takemitsu Ginza festival in Tokyo, and in early 1993 spent two months as guest soloist and principal oboe with the Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa.

His discography includes *Distance* and *Entretemps* by Takemitsu with the Arditti String Quartet for the Fontec label, Riccardo Formosa's *Dedica*, written especially for him with Patrick Thomas and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra for Vox Australis, *Vers L'arc-en-ciel Palma*, by Takemitsu with guitarist Norio Sato, conductor Hiroyuki Iwaki and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra for ABC Classics, *Images* with flautist Prudence Davis and guitarist Peter Lynch, and *Pictures at an Exhibition* as soloist and conductor with the Australia Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra for Move Records.

As conductor, he has appeared with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Chamber Orchestra, Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra, Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, Geminiani Chamber Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Choir, and the Australia Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra which he founded in 1990, holding the position of Artistic Director for seventeen years from 1990 until October 2006.



AUSTRALIA PRO ARTE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Australia Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra is a crucible for the development of chamber orchestral musicianship and a home base for exceptional musicians who aspire to careers in chamber music and solo performance.

The orchestra, based in Melbourne, was founded in 1990 by Jeffrey Crellin, its Artistic Director for seventeen years and now Artistic Director Emeritus. It has always been a working combination of professional musicians and music-lovers that provides the artistic and organisational drive to promote the highest quality performance of many

of the greatest works of the chamber orchestra repertoire.

The depth of talent attracted under Crellin's leadership to the Australia Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra is personified in the identity of the Concertmaster on this recording, William Hennessey, who succeeded Jeffrey as Artistic Director in 2007.

Similarly, Julian Yu's imaginative and colourful variations on established works of the repertoire find a natural home among the superb musicians at Pro Arte. All the works on this recording, with the exception of *Pictures at an Exhibition*, are world premiere performances of these unique arrangements by Yu.

A feature of the group's programming has been



the commissioning of an array of new works over the last two decades. Jeffrey Crellin's artistic plan to portray the City of Melbourne in music, resulted in such works as *Federation Suite*, by Calvin Bowman, Brenton Broadstock, Philip Czaplowski and George Dreyfus in 2003, *Chinatown* by Julian Yu in 2004, *Birrarung Marr* by Philip Czaplowski, and *Yarra Yarra* by Brenton Broadstock in 2005, and, in 2006, *Southern Cross Station* by Christopher Willcock and *To the Edge* by Barry Conyngham.

This CD was recorded using a combination of live performance and rehearsal in BMW Edge on 2 October 2005 with post production taking place at the studios of Move Records. *The Nightingale* was recorded on 1 October 2005 in the Music Auditorium of Huntingtower School in Melbourne, with post-production at Move.

Julian Yu's arrangement of Reinhold Gliere's *Coloratura Concerto for Oboe and String Orchestra* is published by and is copyright by Musikverlag Hans Sikorski GMBH and Co. KG. All other arrangements are published by Zen-On Music Co. Ltd., Japan.

Australia Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra

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Jeffrey Crellin

Concertmaster:

William Hennessy

Solo Viola:

Caroline Henbest

Solo Double Bass:

Andrew Moon

Artistic Director:

Jeffrey Crellin

Recording, editing and mastering:

Martin Wright

Production:

Martin Wright, Jeffrey Crellin, Julian Yu

Sketches pages 5-6:

Cheng Jian-Guo

Session photos:

Martin Wright

Cover design:

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Recording

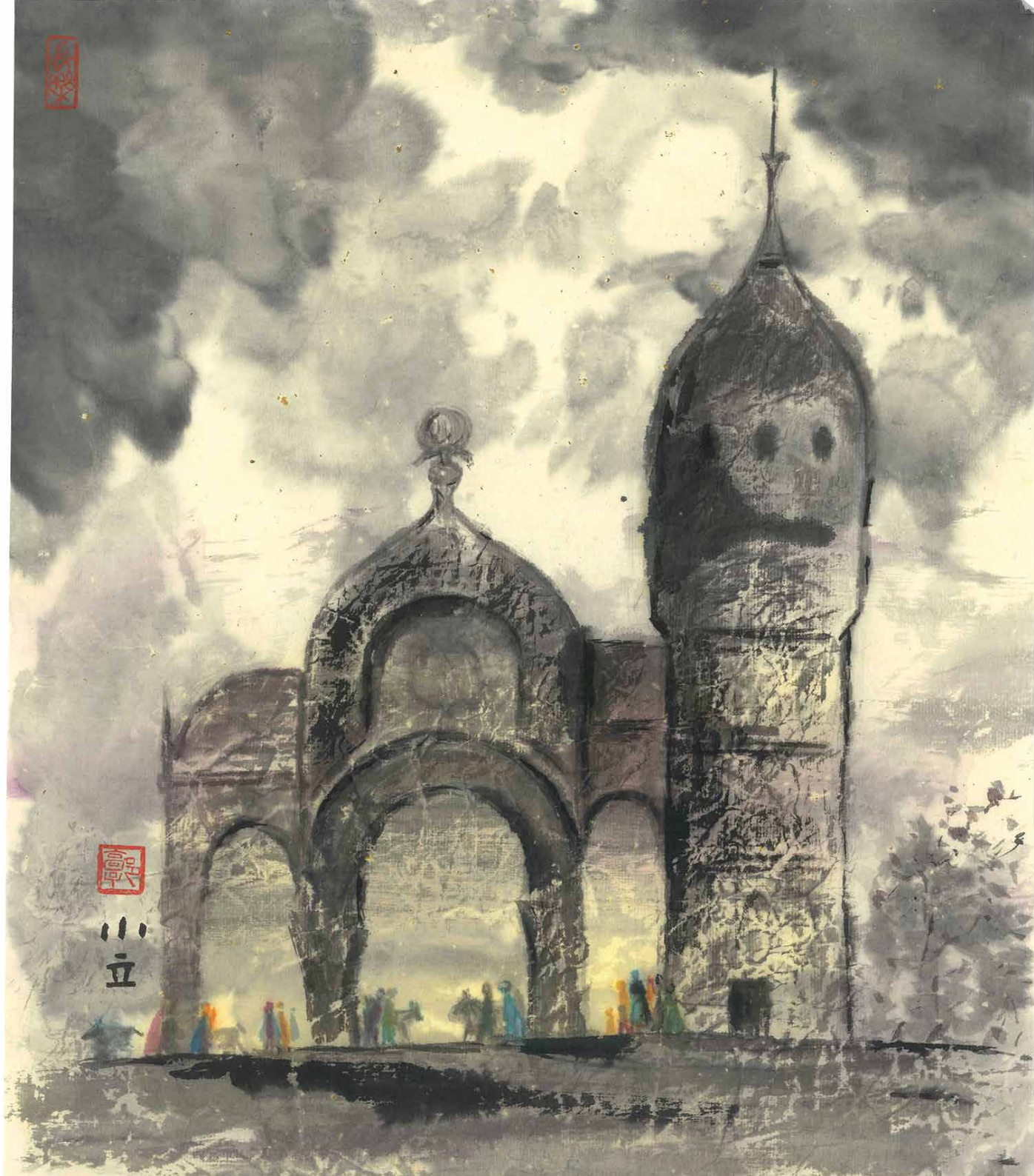
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穆索尔斯基
图画展览会
于京君编曲

PAINTING OF GREAT GATE OF KIEV: GUO XIAOLI

高

小立