

AVERILL PARK COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA

January 2020 Newsletter

APCO BOARD 2019-2020

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Director & Co-conductor

Skip Persia, Co-conductor

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FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Hello everyone,

I just want to congratulate the orchestra members again on a wonderful winter concert! We are so happy to have such dedicated and skilled musicians in the region who are willing to come together and learn some fun and adventurous programs to present to our local audiences. Thanks also to the musicians' family and friends, and other local community members who come out to support the group as listeners. You all make the music-making process worth all of the effort that goes into it!

Skip and I are now making plans for the spring season! Our first rehearsal is March 4th at Algonquin Middle School and the concert is on Sunday, May 31st at Averill Park High School.

We have a great program planned and musician recruitment is well underway. At this time, we are currently in need of the following instruments: all orchestral string instruments, along with French horn and bass clarinet. We will take others, too, of course, but those are our sections with a high priority need. Anyone who is interested can email me or call 518-948-0565.

May you all have a wonderful 2020!

Sincerely,
Christina



HELPFUL LINKS

Our webpage: <https://apcorchestra.org>

Calendar of Events:

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/r/month/2019/12/1?cid=aGFpamVoNWt1ZWRTZTlibDFibWxzGZoYWdAZ3JvdXAuY2FsZW5kYXIuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbQ>

BOARD NEWS

We are in the process of putting together a Policies & Procedures document that we anticipate will be available to members in Fall 2020. This will allow us to communicate our current process for how business is handled, both behind the scenes and with our processes related to music-making and interactions with the musicians. This document will not need to be voted on by the membership at large and can be tweaked on an as-needed basis as we refine our processes for how we do things.

LOOKING FOR PERFORMANCE VENUES FOR CHAMBER GROUPS

If you know of any places, such as local parks or senior centers, that would like some chamber musicians to perform during May or June, please contact Christina Desmond.

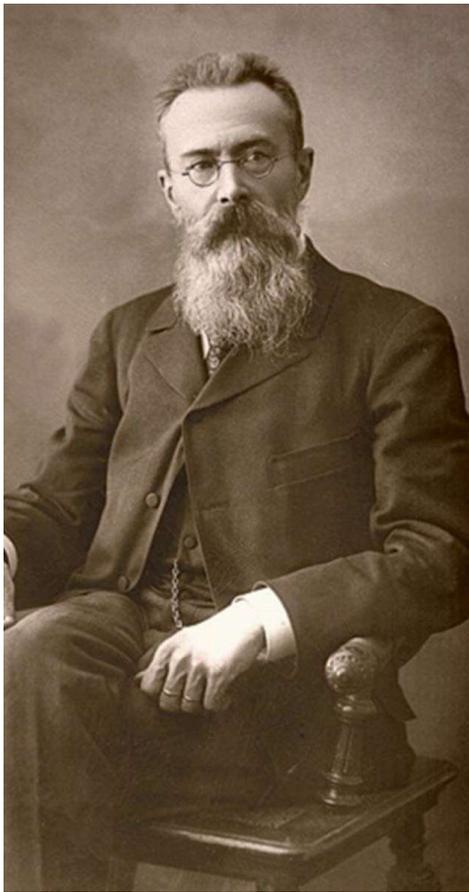
“Music can change the world.”

– Ludwig van Beethoven



COMPOSER'S CORNER

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)



Nikolai Andreyevich Rimsky-Korsakov is included in the group of Russian composers known as The Five: five prominent 19th-century composers who worked together to create a distinct form of Russian classical music. The other members included Mily Balakirev (the leader), César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, and Alexander Borodin. They all lived in St. Petersburg and collaborated from 1856-1870. Mainly known for his symphonic works, especially the popular symphonic suite *Sheherazade*, as well as the *Capriccio Espagnol* and the *Russian Easter Festival Overture*, Rimsky-Korsakov left a body of work that also included operas, chamber works, and songs.

Born in 1844, Rimsky-Korsakov studied the piano as a child but chose a naval career, entering the College of Naval Cadets in St. Petersburg in 1856. He was strongly influenced by his older brother Voin who was 22 years his senior and had a career at sea as a well-known navigator and explorer. However, he continued with piano lessons; in fact, in 1859, Rimsky-Korsakov started working with the French pianist Theodore Canille, through whom he met Balakirev, an important mentor and friend.

In 1862, after graduating from the naval school, Rimsky-Korsakov was at sea for two and a half years, devoting his free time to composition. Upon his return to St. Petersburg in 1865, Balakirev conducted his friend's First Symphony, which was hailed as the first important symphonic work by a Russian composer.

Rimsky-Korsakov was appointed professor of composition and orchestration at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1871. He retained his position in active naval service and taught his classes in uniform (military officers in Russia were required to wear their uniforms every day, as they were considered to be always on duty). The following year, he married Nadezhda Purgold, a pianist. In 1873, Rimsky-Korsakov left active duty and became inspector of navy orchestras, a job which he held until 1884.

During the 1870s, Rimsky-Korsakov composed, conducted, and collected Russian folk songs. In 1878, he started composing the opera *May Night*, after a story by Nikolai Gogol, his first stage work based on a story containing fantastic motifs. Following this production in 1880, he began work on *Snow Maiden*, based on Nikolai Ostrovsky's poetic retelling of a Slavic myth, which was performed in 1882.

Saddened by Mussorgsky's death in 1881, Rimsky-Korsakov devoted himself to editing his friend's unpublished manuscripts. A master orchestrator, he felt obliged to help colleagues whose manuscripts needed revision. Thus, in 1887, when Borodin died, he agreed to orchestrate and complete Borodin's opera *Prince Igor*.

Rimsky-Korsakov wrote the *Spanish Capriccio* in 1887, completing the *Russian Easter Festival Overture* and *Sheherazade* the following year. Having composed these resplendent works, however, he went through a period of despondency; there were deaths in his family and in 1893, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky died. He had been a trusted advisor over the years.

In 1895, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve*, another opera after a Gogol story, was produced. The composer's subsequent works recreated the rich world of Russian myths and legends. *Sadko*, completed in 1896, conjured up a medieval Russian legend. In 1901, he blended the legend of Kitezh and the story of St. Fevroniya to create a complex Christian-pantheistic narrative. *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maiden Fevroniya* was completed in 1905, the year when the politically progressive composer was temporarily dismissed from his teaching post for supporting the students' right to demonstrate as part of the Russian Revolution of 1905. Not long after his dismissal, a student production of his opera *Kashchey the Deathless* was followed by a political demonstration which led to a police ban on Rimsky-Korsakov's work. Due in part to widespread press coverage of these events, an immediate wave of outrage against the ban arose throughout Russia and abroad; liberals and intellectuals deluged the composer's residence with letters of sympathy, and even peasants who had not heard a note of his music sent small monetary donations. Several faculty members of the St. Petersburg Conservatory resigned in protest and over 300 students walked out of the Conservatory in solidarity. By December he had been reinstated under a new director. He retired in 1906.

Rimsky-Korsakov's last opera, *The Golden Cockerel*, was completed in 1907 and was inspired by a politically subversive story by Alexander Pushkin. The production of this work was a struggle because the subject matter aroused suspicions among government censors. The opera was finally produced in 1909, the year following the composer's death. He had long been plagued by chest pains and his condition grew worse during the stresses of the 1905 revolution. He died at his estate in 1908 and was buried at the Tikhvin Cemetery in Saint Petersburg next to fellow composers Borodin, Mussorgsky and Mikhail Glinka.

Selected Recordings:

Sadko: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBpN9-XOIqQ>

Capriccio Espagnol: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rqwvMMxeA8>

MEMBER PROFILE

Vartan D. Bonjukian

Instruments: Clarinet & Guitar

How long have you been an APCO member? I've been a member of APCO around 10 years now.

What made you want to join?

I told a friend that I always wanted to play the clarinet and he happened to find an old Conn in a junk shop. I had it re-corked and padded and saw the ad in the Advertiser for clarinetists wanted in the Averill Park Community Orchestra. I showed up to the practice with very little skill on the instrument. I took jazz guitar in college so I used some basic music theory and the fingering chart for the clarinet and started practicing. I am very grateful that the orchestra members and conductor, Janine B., tolerated my squawks and squeaks.

How and when did you get into playing music?

I started seriously practicing guitar when I was 16 years old. I won \$600.00 for a pen & ink drawing I entered into the Imagination Celebration exhibit at the New York State Museum in Albany. Immediately after I received the check I spent it at Parkway Music in Clifton Park to buy a steel string Washburn acoustic that I have since worn a hole in that I patched with wood epoxy. I first took lessons from a rock guitarist, then bluegrass, and finally jazz and blues.

What is something that people might be surprised to know about you?

I was a visual artist long before I began practicing music. I have been showing and selling my artwork for over 25 years and am currently the Museum Director of the Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum in Gloversville where my art is on display next to archival manuscripts. The building will be used as an event and music venue where I hope members of APCO will be able to branch out and share music. My next art exhibit will be at the Sacandaga Valley Arts Network Gallery which is part of the Northville Public Library from January 1st – February 28th. The reception is January 14th from 6-8pm. All are welcome to attend.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I like walking in the woods, swimming, and spending time with my dog as well as practicing art and music.

What was your best vacation?

My best vacation was my honeymoon where my wife and I drove around the U.S. in a big circle with only our backpacks and a tent, hiking along the way. We made it to the top of Longs Peak in Colorado, 14,000 feet above sea level.

