

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent

(Cherubicon for Holy Saturday)

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV, Nikolai Andreyevich (b. 1844, Tikhvin; d. 1908, Lubensk Estate, near Luga, Pskov District)—began writing church music upon his appointment in 1883, together with Miliy Balakirev, to head the Imperial Court Chapel in St. Petersburg. Altogether he wrote forty choral works for the Russian Orthodox Church: fourteen titles were published in two series in 1884 and 1886, respectively; a setting of *Tebe Boga Hvalim* [Te Deum laudamus] appeared in 1893; and a collection of 25 more works was published posthumously in 1910 by Evstafy Azeyev.

In his sacred choral works Rimsky-Korsakov made extensive use of authentic chant melodies as well as melodies he himself composed in the style of chant. The polyphonic treatment of the melodies is quite varied and innovative. Some melodies serve as motives for imitative counterpoint, while others are harmonized homorhythmically, using a thick choral texture replete with doublings. The harmony is often modal, preserving the archaic flavor of the chant. The choral sonorities range from a few solo voices to rich double choral writing.

Rimsky-Korsakov's setting of "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent" is based on a traditional chant melody, drawn from the square-note chant books of the Russian Orthodox Church. In the scheme of Orthodox liturgics, this hymn is sung only once a year, at the Liturgy of Great and Holy Saturday, where it replaces the Cherubic Hymn. As at every Divine Liturgy, the singing of the Cherubic Hymn accompanies the Great Entrance, during which the bread and wine are transferred from the Table of Oblation to the Altar Table in solemn procession. Ordinarily the hymn is interrupted by a series of commemorations, followed by "Amen," after which the hymn is concluded at a slightly faster tempo. Although Rimsky-Korsakov set the "Amen," there is a tradition of making this particular Great Entrance in total silence. Certainly, the "Amen" should be omitted in a concert performance.

All performance indications and the piano reduction (for rehearsal only) are the composer's. Slurs in the piano reduction, while not identical to the standard vocal slurring, are quite inconsistent and have therefore been omitted. Italian tempo markings have been added editorially in brackets next to the Russian originals. Solid barlines, indicating divisions between major musical and textual phrases, have been retained from the original; the editor has added dotted barlines as an aid to the rhythmic organization of lengthy chant phrases and proper text accentuation.

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)

English setting by Vladimir Morosan

Adagio.

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano
(for rehearsal only)

Adagio.

Solo

p

Let all mor - tal flesh, let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lent,

p

5 *Tutti* *p* and with fear and trem - bling, and with fear and trem - bling stand,

Tutti *p* and with fear and trem - bling, and with fear and trem - bling stand,

Tutti *p* and with fear and trem - bling, and with fear and trem - bling stand,

Tutti *p* and with fear and trem - bling, and with fear and trem - bling stand,

5 *p* and with fear and trem - bling, and with fear and trem - bling stand,

10 *Solo* *p* *cresc.* pon - der - ing noth - ing, pon - der - ing noth - ing earth - ly mind - ed,

Solo *p* *cresc.* pon - der - ing noth - ing, pon - der - ing noth - ing earth - ly mind -

10 *p* *cresc.*

15 *Tutti*
p
 pon - der - ing noth - ing, pon - der - ing noth - ing earth - ly mind - ed,
Tutti
p
 ed, pon - der - ing noth - ing, pon - der - ing noth - ing earth - ly mind - ed,
p
 pon - der - ing noth - ing, noth - ing earth - ly mind - ed,
p
 pon - der - ing noth - ing, pon - der - ing noth - ing earth - ly mind - ed,

15

20
 for the King of Kings and _____ the Lord _____ of Lords,
 for the King of Kings _____ and the Lord _____ of Lords,

20

24 *Tutti* *p*

for the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords

for the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords

for the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords

for the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords

24 *p*

27 *Solo* *p*

comes to be slain and to give Him - self as food

comes to be slain and to give Him - self as food

comes to be slain and to give Him - self as

27 *p*

33 *Tutti* *ritard.*

and to give Him - self as food to the faith - ful.

— and to give Him - self as food to the faith - ful.

food give Him - self as food to the faith - ful.

and to give Him - self as food to the faith - ful.

33 *ritard.*

38 *Optional.* *Più mosso.*

pp A - men.

pp A - men. *p Solo* Be - fore Him go the ranks of an - gels:

pp A - men. *p Solo* Be - fore Him go the ranks of an - gels:

pp A - men. *p Solo* Be - fore Him go the ranks of an - gels:

38 *Più mosso.*

pp *p*

43 Tutti *p* *p* Solo

all the prin - ci - pal - i - ties and pow - ers, the

Tutti *p* *p* Solo

all the prin - ci - pal - i - ties and pow - ers, the

Tutti *p* *p* Solo

all the prin - ci - pal - i - ties and pow - ers, the

Tutti *p* *p* Solo

all the prin - ci - pal - i - ties and pow - ers, the

43

48

man - y - eyed Che - ru - bim, and the six - winged ser - a - phim, —

man - y - eyed Che - ru - bim, and the six - winged ser - a - phim,

man - y - eyed Che - ru - bim, and the six - winged ser - a - phim, —

man - y - eyed Che - ru - bim, and the six - winged ser - a - phim, —

48

52

cov - er - ing their fac - es, sing - ing the hymn,

cov - er - ing their fac - es, sing - ing the hymn,

cov - er - ing their fac - es, sing - ing the hymn,

cov - er - ing their fac - es, sing - ing the hymn,

52

56 *f*

sing - ing the hymn: Al - le - lu - i - a, al - le -

sing - ing the hymn: Al - le - lu - i - a, al - le -

sing - ing the hymn: Al - le - lu - i - a, al - le -

sing - ing the hymn: Al - le - lu - i - a, al - le -

56

60

lu - i - a, al - le - lu - i - a, al - le - lu - i -

lu - i - a, al - le - lu - i - a, al - le - lu - i -

lu - i - a, al - le - lu - i - a, al - le - lu - i -

lu - i - a, al - le - lu - i - a, al - le - lu - i -

60

64

a, al - le - u - i - a, al - le - lu - i - a.

a, al - le - u - i - a, al - le - lu - i - a.

a, al - le - u - i - a, al - le - lu - i - a.

a, al - le - u - i - a, al - le - lu - i - a.

64