May Collection
continued

the most inert forms into shimmering light.

Looking toward the fair coast of Spain, Francesco Goya's "Portrait of a Young Man Reading" shows the retained youthful spirit of his earlier works which was obscured in his later preoccupation with morbid subjects.

Eugene Delecroix's "Lion and Lioness" a pastel on paper, is, for its medium, errie, but the style is magnificent.

On the whole, the exhibit, valued between 250 and 300 thousand dollars, is well worth one's while to see. It will be open till October 12. Don't miss it!

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MOUSSORGSKY. "PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION"

John Maggio

Modeste Petrovich Moussorgsky, considered the stolid member of the famous "Russian Five" and called clumsy and illiterate by Rimsky-Korsakov, was, indeed, so far ahead of his contemporaries that they could hardly have understood him. With Moussorgsky and his masterpiece, Boris Godnov, began an age of new freedom for the composer. Claude Debussy acknowledges Moussorgsky as his source of inspiration to write natural and simple music, even if some of the long established rules of harmony had to be disregarded to do so.

Much of Moussorgsky's style can be traced to the music of the Greek Catholic Church. His lavish use of the long ignored organum style of composition accounts for his tremendous power and magnificience. Also, his ignorance of the intricacies and refinements of the German and Italian schools allowed him to use chords and dissonances which a Tchaikovsky could never have brought himself to even consider. Today, the most often played of Moussorgsky's works works is "Pictures at an Exhibition." Even this masterpiece was virtually ignored until it was orchestrated in 1922 by the then unknown Maurice Ravel. Whatever or whoever threw Moussorgsky and Ravel together surely produced a high-octane combination. Ravel's enormous talent with orchestration was so perfectly suited to Moussorgsky's melodic inventiveness and harmonic power that the resulting work was immediately a success and is still a permament member of the orchestral repertoire. Two excellent recordings (Both HiFi long plays) of this piece currently available are Eugene Ormandy's interpretation with the Philadelphia Orchestra on a Columbia release and Fritz Reiner's interpretation with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on an R.C.A. Victor release.

As for the history of this suite, it was written in memory of one of Moussorgsky's closest friends, Victor Hartman, a young Russian architect who died in 1873. The composition was inspired by a memorial exhibit of Hartman's work. The suite opens with a majestic "Promenade" which represents the composer walking from picture to picture. The numbers in the suite to which the writer is most partial are: THE OLD CASTLE, a picture of a troubadour standing before a medieval castle singing a melancholy melody; BYDLO, a description of the approach and passing of a large ox-cart; CON MORTIUS IN LINGUA MORTUA; a highly elegiac form of the promenade; HUT OF BABA-YOGA, a satirical description of the well-known Russian witch and her dwelling place.

In this work, we have Moussorgsky at his inventive best. He is often criticized for his clumsy harmonies, but a more technically skilled composer could never have written such impassioned and truly Russian music.

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