

Dance of the Buffoons (Tumblers) from the Opera “Snegurochka” (The Snow Maiden) (1882)

Nikolay Andreyevich Rimsky-Korsakov (1844 – 1908)

“Snegurochka” is based on a play by the Russian playwright Alexander Ostrovsky (1823-1886), who derived his story from a folk-tale. Rimsky Korsakov wrote his own libretto for this opera, which tells of the land of Berendeys in prehistoric times. As long as the Snow Maiden is innocent of love, she is safe from death by the sun’s rays. Wishing to live the life of a mortal, the Snow Maiden is placed in the care of two villagers, and soon Mizguir, a merchant, falls in love with her and deserts his sweetheart. The Snow Maiden finally falls in love with Mizguir, whereupon the sun’s rays touch her and she disappears. Mizguir, heartbroken, commits suicide. The Dance of the Buffoons (or Tumblers) is a lively orchestral excerpt from Act 3.

© Ted Wilks, 2011