

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)

*Allegro in B-flat from 'Les Vendredis'.*

"The Fridays" in question were musical parties given in St Petersburg at the home of Mitrofan Petrovich Belyayev, a wealthy music publisher who founded a still extant publishing house in Leipzig in 1885 in order to secure international copyright for the Russian composers of whom he was an energetic and generous patron. His Friday soirées attracted the new nationalistic school of Russian composers both as composers and performers. An interesting feature of these concerts was that some of the chamber pieces performed had movements composed by different composers. For instance, Rimsky-Korsakov contributed the first movement of a string quartet with Liadov, Glazounov and Borodin entitled B-A-F, a play on Belyayev's name.

In a similar vein, the present movement is the only one by Rimsky-Korsakov in a collection published by Belyayev of 16 separate string quartet movements which had previously been performed at his Friday gatherings.