

## **MAYSKAYA NOCH**

(May Night)

Rimsky-Korsakov

Near a Little-Russian village stands, at the lakeside, a haunted house. Here, according to legend, there dwelt a Pole, whose second marriage brought upon his daughter a stepmother's hatred. Despair drives the girl to drown herself. Becoming a "russalka," she contrives to lure her enemy into the water, but the stepmother, now one of many water-nymphs, can no longer be identified. This story is told by Levko, the son of the village Headman, to Hanna, his betrothed. His father, a rival, refuses his consent to their union. Levko, overhearing the addresses paid by the Headman to Hanna, prevails upon some friends to "bait" his father. The Headman, incensed by an uproar outside his house, rushes out, and in the dark incarcerates his sister-in-law, whom he mistakes for the ringleader. He then discovers that his son is to blame, and hurries off in search of the culprit. The same night Levko, singing before the haunted house, is requested by the Pannochka (Polish) russalka to establish the identity of her stepmother, and, succeeding, is rewarded with a letter, apparently in the handwriting of a high official, commanding the Headman to expedite the marriage of his son with Hanna.