



Igor Markevitch

at Edinburgh, 1962



Markevitch gained important recognition in 1929 when choreographer-impresario Serge Diaghilev discovered him and commissioned a piano concerto from him. In addition, Diaghilev invited him to collaborate on a ballet with Boris Kochno, a dancer and librettist. In a letter to the London Times, Diaghilev hailed Markevitch as the composer who would put an end to 'a scandalous period of music ... of cynical-sentimental simplicity'. The ballet project came to an end with Diaghilev's death on 19 August 1929, but Markevitch's compositions were accepted by the publisher Schott. He produced at least one major work per year during the 1930s.

Markevitch continued composing as war approached, but in October 1941, not long after completing his last original work, the *Variations, Fugue and Envoi on a Theme of Handel* for piano, he fell seriously ill. After recovering, he decided to give up composition and focus exclusively on conducting. His last compositional projects were the revision of *L'envol d'Icare* and arrangements of other composers' music. His version of J. S. Bach's *Musikalisches Opfer* (*Musical Offering*) is especially notable.

He had débuted as a conductor at age 18 with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. After presiding at the Dutch premiere of *Rébus*, Markevitch had studied conducting with Pierre Monteux and Hermann Scherchen. As a conductor, he was much admired for his interpretations of the French, Russian and Austro-German repertory, and of twentieth-century music in general.

He settled in Italy, and during the Second World War was active in the partisan movement. He married and settled in Switzerland in 1947 following the war. He pursued his conducting career worldwide. He became permanent conductor of the Orchestre Lamoureux in Paris in the 1950s, conducted the Spanish RTVE Orchestra in 1965, and was also permanent conductor of the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra.

In 1970, after ignoring his own compositions for nearly 30 years, Markevitch began to conduct his own music frequently, triggering its slow revival. His last concert was in Kiev, his birthplace. He died suddenly from a heart attack in the Antibes on March 7, 1983, after a concert tour in Japan and Russia. - [Wikipedia](#)

Producer's Note

This is the second in our short series of radio transcription recordings made by the BBC at the Edinburgh Festival of 1962. These concerts were not broadcast at the time but appeared on transcription discs, most likely aimed at the US radio market, which should have been destroyed after use. The announcements here suggest two programmes were intended. The concert recording runs to nearly 92 minutes and is available in full in our download and streaming formats. We have had to cut the opening item, Tchaikovsky's *Francesca di Rimini* for this CD release in order to fit a single disc. Those buying the CD do of course get a free copy of the MP3 download which includes the Tchaikovsky and additional announcements not present on this disc. The recording itself is in fine BBC stereo. XR remastering has served to bring out a rather light bass, especially in the Stravinsky, conveying much more of the power and intensity of the performance. **Andrew Rose**



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SHOSTAKOVICH Two Arias from Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk

- 1 I Could See From My Window (6:03)
- 2 I Know a Lake in the Forest (7:16)

MUSSORGSKY (arr. Markevitch) Six Songs

- 3 Cradle Song (4:47)
- 4 The Magpie (2:00)
- 5 Night (1:45)
- 6 Where art thou, little star? (1:48)
- 7 The Ragamuffin (4:04)
- 8 On The Dnieper (7:34)

Galina Vishnevskaya *soprano*

STRAVINSKY The Rite of Spring

- 9 **Part 1: Adoration of the Earth - Introduction** (3:27)
- 10 The Augurs of Spring - Dances of the Young Girls (3:01)
- 11 Ritual of Abduction (1:23)
- 12 Spring Rounds (3:26)
- 13 Ritual of the River Tribes (1:53)
- 14 Procession of the Sage (0:43)
- 15 The Sage (0:23)
- 16 Dance of the Earth (1:14)
- 17 **Part 2: The Sacrifice - Introduction** (3:31)
- 18 Mystic Circles of the Young Girls (2:55)
- 19 Glorification of the Chosen One (1:36)
- 20 Evocation of the Ancestors (0:48)
- 21 Ritual Action of the Ancestors (3:10)
- 22 Sacrificial Dance (4:55)

London Symphony Orchestra *Igor Markevitch*

XR remastering by
Andrew Rose

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photograph of Edinburgh

Live concert recording
Edinburgh Festival
Usher Hall, Edinburgh
August 26, 1962

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