Dance of the Tumblers from *The Snow Maiden*
By
Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)

Lesson Plan by Janna Comeau

Click here to watch the BSO perform this piece.

About the Composer

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was born on March 18th, 1844 near Novgorod, Russia, and died of heart disease on June 21st, 1908 near Luga, Russia. He was a pianist, teacher, conductor, and composer, and was most known for *The Flight of the Bumble Bee* from *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* and the *Scheherazade* symphonic suite. He also served in the Imperial Russian Navy and sailed to the United States, staying in New York City, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.

About the Composition

Dance of the Tumblers is a fast and lively part of the third act of *The Snow Maiden*, the third opera written by Rimsky-Korsakov. Premiering at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg in 1882, *The Snow Maiden* was written from 1880 to 1881 to musically tell the springtime story of the opposition between King Frost and the Sun God. The opera involves both supernatural and regular human characters, and the *Dance of the Tumblers* is a fun, fast piece in which jesters and acrobats are dancing for the Tsar.

Teaching Ideas

- Discuss circuses students have attended, then give a bit of background on the Dance of the Tumblers.
- Have students predict what the song will sound like, then listen to the piece and have students share their reactions.
- Students can use unpitched percussion instruments to play along with the beat of *Dance of the Tumblers*. They can play louder or softer based on the dynamics of the piece.
- Students can create a dance to *Dance of the Tumblers*.

Additional Online Resources

Click here for [The United States Marine Band performing Dance of the Tumblers](#).

Click here for an animated version of *The Snow Maiden*.

Click here for [The Young Musicians Choral Orchestra performing Dance of the Tumblers](#).