

FACT SHEET

Symphony 1

Kalinnikov (1866-1901)

Composed: 1894-5

Genre: Orchestral

First Performed: Kiev, 1897

Length: 35 mins

In Brief:

Although Kalinnikov lived a devastatingly short life, he left a substantial musical footprint. Upon completing his First Symphony, he quickly established himself alongside other prominent Russian composers. Its première in Kiev was a resounding success with the second and third movements receiving an encore. Musically, the symphony evokes fond memories of Kalinnikov's homeland, the melodic movement and rhythmic patterns similar to that of the folk tradition of the day.

Structure:

- I. Allegro Moderato
- II. Andante Comodamente
- III. Scherzo: Allegro non troppo – Moderato Assai
- IV. Finale: Allegro Moderato

In Depth:

Kalinnikov was born in Voina in 1866, in the Oryol District. Growing up in a religious family he was able to study the seminary in Oryol, and it was there that he commenced running the choir at the age of fourteen. In 1884 he was awarded a scholarship with the Moscow Philharmonic Society School where he began taking lessons in both bassoon and composition. Due to the poverty of his family, Kalinnikov was forced to perform in theatre orchestras to earn a wage, further weakening his already poor health.

In 1892 Kalinnikov's fortunes looked to improve, with a recommendation (by Tchaikovsky) to take up the position of conductor at the Maliy Theatre in Moscow and the Moscow Italian Theatre. Sadly his health worsened soon after he commenced these positions and he was forced to resign in order to relocate to the warmer climates of the south to cure his tuberculosis. Kalinnikov remained in Yalta for the rest of his short life, completing his only two symphonies, as well as other instrumental works. Towards the end of his life, Kalinnikov received some financial support from Rachmaninov, who had previously visited him in Yalta and been shocked at his

poor living conditions. Rachmaninov also sought to help him finalise payments for outstanding works, although Kalinnikov barely lived to benefit from this. He died from tuberculosis in January 1901, just before his 35th birthday.

Kalinnikov's Symphony 1 in G minor was written between 1894 and 1895 and was first performed in 1897 in Kiev at a Russian Music Society concert. It was dedicated to his friend Kruglikov and is generally regarded as Kalinnikov's best achievement as a composer. Its first movement, marked *Allegro moderato*, has a lyrical theme of recognisable Russian character. The slow movement, *Andante commodamente*, is immediately contrasting in both texture and colour with orchestration echoing Tchaikovsky's influences. Kalinnikov uses the oboe solo to mark a swell to the climax before proceeding to a more lyrical section. The following *Scherzo* is even more Russian in its melodic language, contrasting the melancholy of the trio with a lively peasant dance. The finale reminisces about what has passed, before concluding with a return to the forthright principal theme. The symphony ends in gloriously positive triumph.