Mississippi State University
College of Education
Department of Music

ROSÂNGELA SEBBA
presents

A RUSSIAN RECITAL

September 20, 2012 at 7:30 PM
Robert and Freda Harrison Auditorium
Giles Architecture Building

This recital will also be presented at:
Troy University - September 25, 2012
Texas Wesleyan University – October 2, 2012
Brazil – Instituto Federal de Goiás – December 17, 2012

Please turn off cell phones and any electronic devices.
Refrain from taking pictures during the performance or leave the auditorium. 
Please hold your applause until the end of each set.
PROGRAM

Ten Piano Etudes Op. 15  Sergei Eduardovich Bortkiewicz  
(1877-1952)

IV. Andantino poco moto con morbidezza  
VI. Sostenuto  
VIII. Lamentoso con gran espressione

Pictures at an Exhibition  Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky  
(1839-1881)

I. Promenade  
II. Gnomus  
III. Promenade  
IV. The Old Castle  
V. Promenade  
VI. The Tuileries Gardens  
VII. Bydlo  
VIII. Promenade  
IX. Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks  
X. Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle  
XI. The Market at Limoges  
XII. The Catacombs (Sepulchrum romanum)  
XIII. Con mortuis in lingua mortua  
XIV. The Hut on Fowl’s Legs (Baba-Yaga)  
XV. The Great Gate of Kiev
Sergei Eduardovich Bortkiewicz (1877-1952) was born in Kharkov, Ukraine to Russian parents. Inspired by the example of his mother, a fine pianist and co-founder of the town's school of music, he embarked upon early training there. Later, he enrolled in the St. Petersburg Conservatory (1896-1899), occasionally on a part-time basis both in deference to his father's wish that he study law and in observation of his mandatory year of military service. In 1900 he enrolled at the famous Leipzig Conservatory in Germany, where he studied composition with Salomon Jadassohn and piano with Alfred Reisenauer. The latter had once been a pupil of Franz Liszt and had performed in Kharkov during his student's youth. Despite his instruction and pedigree, Bortkiewicz’s skills as a pianist always remained relatively modest in comparison with those of Russian contemporaries such as Medtner and Rachmaninov. Eventually Bortkiewicz devoted his energies primarily to teaching and composition. He lived in multiple places, including a two-year stint in Istanbul (then known as “Constantinople”), and finally settled in Vienna for the last thirty years of his life.

Piano Etudes Op. 15 (Selections)

Bortkiewicz's Etudes (or “Studies”) for piano, Op. 15, were first published in 1911 and dedicated to the memory of Reisenauer, who had died of a heart attack in 1907 at the age of 43. They show the clear influence of Chopin, Liszt, and Scriabin among other celebrated forebears and contemporaries. At times the similarities between the Op. 15 etudes and piano music by these other composers (for instance Chopin's Op. 25 Etudes) are palpable. For all their debt to outside models, however, Bortkiewicz's studies are finely wrought and immediately appealing, not to mention technically imposing for the pianist. They reflect a statement made later in life that for him Romanticism and the primacy of melody were defining values. Beyond this, they demonstrate that Bortkiewicz had fully synthesized the rhythmic and harmonic resources of his influences and created pieces that are both satisfying listening experiences and worthy examples of late-Romantic musical craft.

By contrast, the music of Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky (1839-1881) has occupied a prominent place within not only the Russian musical canon, but also the entire Western “classical” gamut. Often viewed as the preeminent talent among the group of Russian nationalist composers known as “The Five” or “The Mighty Handful” (the others members of which included Balakirev, Borodin, Cui, and Rimsky-Korsakov), Mussorgsky eventually produced music of striking intuition and originality. He was born into an aristocratic family on their estate near Pskov, in Western Russia. Like Bortkiewicz, Mussorgsky received his first musical lessons (in piano) from his mother; but unlike Bortkiewicz, Mussorgsky's subsequent music education was patchy, consisting only of some further piano lessons (ending in 1854) and private composition training with Balakirev. Otherwise, he was largely self-taught, aided by his own voracious exploration and study. As was common for a young man of a well-to-do Russian family,
Mussorgsky enrolled in Cadet School in 1852 while continuing to pursue music. Feeling secure in his background of privilege, he eventually abandoned his military commission in order to concentrate upon a musical career. Meeting Balakirev and other nationalists helped to shape his path as a composer. Like the other members of The Five, Mussorgsky aspired to creating distinctively Russian art, drawing particularly from his country's language, folk music, and history. (At the same time, The Five were decidedly influenced by Western European composers and models). He also became sympathetic to the idea of “realism” - the notion that art cannot exist for its own sake, but must reflect actual life while enriching it. In 1861, while Mussorgsky was still developing as a composer and artist, Russia banned serfdom. This meant the downfall of his estate-provided financial security. Even as he began to produce his greatest achievements - such as his songs, his opera Boris Godunov (2 versions, 1868-1874), and his masterpiece for piano, Pictures at an Exhibition (1874) - Mussorgsky's material situation declined. At various times he was forced to accept menial employment and to rely on the support of friends and relatives for basic living needs. A destructive alcoholism contributed to these circumstances and eventually got the better of Mussorgsky, leading to his death at the age of 42. This caused his other great opera, Khovanshchina, to remain incomplete.

Pictures at an Exhibition

Mussorgsky's keen musical ability to evoke scenes and images, especially apparent in his orchestral work Night On Bald Mountain (1867) and in his vocal works, is on full display in Pictures at an Exhibition. Like Robert Schumann's Carnaval (1833-1835), it stands as a superlative example of a depictive miniature cycle for the piano. It also carries the fingerprints of Mussorgsky's mature style in its idiosyncratic treatment of form, melody, and harmony. The work was first conceived after the composer attended an 1874 showing of visual art by his recently-deceased friend, Victor Hartmann. Greatly inspired, Mussorgsky aimed to capture this experience and Hartmann's art in a piano cycle. Its structure involves a main theme, coined “Promenade” and intended to evoke the viewer walking from picture to picture, that is interspersed throughout a succession of other pieces representing each image viewed. The Promenade theme varies with every statement, reflecting how the viewer feels or is changed after gazing at a picture. Occasionally, the theme may hint at things to come in addition to reflecting on past images or acting as transition. This occurs notably with the fourth Promenade theme statement, the end of which clearly presages the next scene depicting the ballet of unhatched chicks. (Perhaps on the way to the new canvas, the viewer catches it out of the corner of his/her eye first.) Later in the cycle, the Promenade theme ceases to recur as a separate number and instead resurfaces to various degrees in the scenes that follow (for instance, very recognizably so in the middle section of the “Catacombs” number). This indicates that, in the words of Francis Maes, “the spectator has ceased to be an outsider and has entered the world portrayed in the music.” (A History of Russian Music, 2002) The Promenade theme occupies a prominent place in the multi-sectioned last number, based upon Hartmann's design for a Great Gate at the city of Kiev. Here its demeanor is accordingly majestic. In keeping with the cycle's allusive and integrated nature throughout, perhaps only at the end does the Promenade theme most fully reveal the Slavic character it had all along.
BIOGRAPHIES

Brent Funderburk has taught in the Department of Art at MSU for 30 years during which he was awarded a John Grisham Teaching Excellence Award and the Burlington Northern Faculty Excellence Award. He was selected as the USA International Ballet Competition Official Artist in 2010, and has exhibited in thirty one person exhibitions. Funderburk will present his 31st solo show in Beijing, China in 2013.

Ryan Ross is an Assistant Professor of Music at Mississippi State University, where he teaches music history and appreciation courses. Prior to his appointment at MSU in 2012, he served for three academic years as an adjunct instructor of music at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, as well as M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in musicology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign respectively. Professor Ross’s scholarly interests center around northern European and American concert works of the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as music for films and other media. He has published writings in several venues, including Twentieth-Century Music, Notes, and Carl Nielsen Studies. Among his current projects are research on the compositions and college music pedagogy of Randall Thompson, and work on a Ralph Vaughan Williams research and information guide forthcoming from Routledge.

Rosângela Yazbec Sebba combines an active concert and teaching schedule, and is noted for her lecture-recitals and research in Brazilian music, specifically the music of M. Camargo Guarnieri. She is the founder and coordinator of the Brazilian Music Festival, an annual event at Mississippi State University. She has performed and given master classes/lectures in the United States, Brazil, Mexico and Portugal has given lectures at state, regional, national and international conferences. She is on the board of the Mississippi Music Teachers Association as the VP for Collegiate Competitions. Dr. Sebba currently serves as Associate Professor of Piano, Music Theory, and Ear Training. Prior to her appointment at MSU, she held positions at Gustav Ritter State Conservatory - Brazil, the University of Southern Mississippi and Pearl River College. Her CD album Eight Sonatinas and the Sonata for Piano Solo by M. Camargo Guarnieri, was released in June 2010 and it has been featured in different broadcasts on WWFM, in the classical piano program The Piano Matters, in New York and New Jersey area. In the fall of 2008 Dr. Sebba took a sabbatical leave in New York City. While there she took classes at the Juilliard School and was invited to perform at David Dubal’s lecture at the Cervantes Institute, which was broadcast on WQXR, the prestigious classical radio station of New York.
The paintings presented today are works by Victor Hartmann and three MSU students:

Jennifer Lee
Art major/Concentration in Graphic Design
Department of Art
Mississippi State University
Senior from Summerdale, AL

Jason Bradley Chapman
Art major/Concentration in Graphic Design
Department of Art
Mississippi State University
Senior from Jackson, MS

Stormi Steele
Art major/Concentration in Painting
Department of Art
Mississippi State University
Senior from DeKalb, MS