

Russian Sketches was written in response to a request from the Minnesota-based International Alliance of Women in the Arts for a piece to celebrate the opening of a show by their sister organization, Misia, in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. Remembering the excellence of Russian string players, I wrote for string quartet plus contrabass. Having already done some research on Russian folk songs in preparation for my opera, *Snow*, I used several of my favorites as themes for the three short fantasies the comprise the *Sketches*.

Finding the melody in the first sketch, “Up the Hill I Climb,” will prove difficult; it doesn’t appear intact until the very end of the movement. In contrast, “Where Have You Been?” appears immediately after a short introduction to the second movement. “The Rustic Castle” is very brief and is heard first in the bass some sixty measures into the third movement.

Russian Sketches was premiered by

The String Orchestra of the Moscow Symphony
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, USSR
September 3, 1993