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RUSSIAN CHORAL MUSIC TO 1917: ITS BACKGROUND,
NATURE, AND SUITABILITY FOR THE CHORAL ENSEMBLE

by

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A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

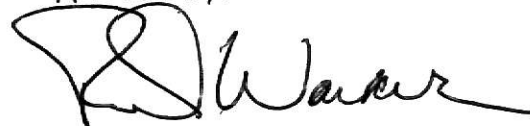
MASTER OF MUSIC

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1975

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BACKGROUND OF RUSSIAN MUSIC TO THE TIME OF GLINKA

Introduction

The Russians have always been isolated from Europe. The Iron Curtain was not, of course, an invention of the Soviets, but has existed for almost a thousand years. This separation from the rest of Europe, moreover, was not the result of simple causes like distance, or climate, or her impingement upon Asiatic and Near Eastern peoples. The chief reason why Russia is geographically European and culturally only part-European derives from an event now remote and ossified in the pages of history--the breaking up of the Roman Empire.¹ From that division Russia inherited the Greek or Byzantine civilization of the East, instead of the Latin civilization of the West.

It was geographical position, however, which determined Russia's early interaction with the Eastern Roman Empire. In the ninth century the beginnings of a Russian state are visible in a dynasty, headed by Vikings from the North, which centered at the ancient city of Kiev. "The Slav and Finnish tribes inhabiting the region between Lake Ladoga and the Dnieper's upper waters paid tribute to Northmen (Variags) from Rus, a region probably located in Sweden."² These early Slavs were a primitive people who lived by agriculture and herding. They were heathens, worshippers of wooden idols. For centuries they had been

¹The following historical summary is drawn largely from Richard Anthony Leonard, A History of Russian Music (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), pp. 12-13, and James Bakst, A History of Russian-Soviet Music (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1962), pp. 3-5.

²Leonard, p. 12.

in contact with the Eastern Roman Empire, moving down their natural waterways to trade at Constantinople. They came bearing furs, honey, amber, wax, and--the inevitable prize of barbaric warfare--slaves. In exchange for these they purchased the fine Byzantine cloths and wine.

In 859, the tribes freed themselves from the Northmen and then three years later, unable to settle their quarrels, invited the Northmen to come and rule over them. Three brothers, Ruric, Sineus, and Truvor, princes of Rus, accepted the invitation and founded, in 864, the Russian state with the City of Novgorod as its chief city.

According to Nestor (1056-1114), one of the earliest Russian chroniclers and a monk of the Pechersky Cloister of Kiev, the City of Kiev was founded by three brothers, also. Their names were Kiy, Shcheck, and Khorik. After their deaths the Variags, Askold and Dir, followers of Rurik, seized Kiev. In 882, Rurik's successor, Oleg, conquered Kiev and made it the chief city of what became the Grand Duchy of Kiev. "The Grand Duchy of Kiev was formed from the consolidation of various eastern Slavic tribes, who united against the attacks of militant neighboring peoples."³

Under Prince Svyatoslav, who reigned from 964 to 972, the Grand Duchy of Kiev became one of the most important states in medieval Europe. It was visited by merchants and diplomatic guests from various countries. Painters, architects, and medieval scholars came and were welcomed by the prince and the nobility.

Music was important at these and all state functions. Military music was played at the departure of troops and during battles. Ancient Russian chronicles and poetic works mention trumpets and various percussion instruments.

³Bakst, p. 3.

The church, which usually condemned all instruments connected with pagan customs and secular entertainments, recognized the trumpet. An ancient church precept states: "Just as a trumpet assembles warriors, during prayer it assembles heavenly angels, while gusli assemble shameless devils."⁴

An idea of national consciousness which emerged in the Grand Duchy of Kiev was reflected in heroic and glorifying songs. A victorious outcome of a military expedition and the heroic deeds of warriors were described in songs, which were popular with the prince's troops, among whom military honor, courage, and devotion to duty were prized above everything. The authors of these songs were highly respected by the prince and his entourage as men possessing wisdom and keen insight.

Prince Vladimin (956-1015) had many contacts with the Byzantine emperors, which were of great importance to the Grand Duchy especially through inter-marriage with leading European ruling families. These contacts were even more important when the Prince had to make a final choice from among world religions for his people.

Sacred Music

The immediate prologue to the history of Russian sacred music belongs to the tenth century, when Prince Vladimir of Kiev brought Christianity to Russia. The saga of this event tells that Vladimir had to make a final choice from among the religions of the world and adopt one for his people. He sent his councilors abroad to observe "by whom and how God was worshipped. We did not

⁴Bakst, p. 5. The gusli is a primitive one-stringed instrument, pear-shaped, covered with skin, with a long neck ending in decorative carving usually of an animal's head, and played with a bow. The single string is usually made of twisted horsehair as is the bow. Milos Velimirovic, 'Gusle,' Harvard Dictionary of Music, ed. Willi Apel (2nd ed., Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1970), p. 364.

know whether we were in heaven or on earth,"⁵ they related to him on their return from the Church of St. Sophia in Byzantium. Vladimir made his choice.

In the year 988 when the ruler of Kiev, Vladimir I, forcibly converted his subjects to Christianity, he called in priests of the Eastern Church to teach the new faith. As the religion quickly spread through the country it brought with it the seeds of Byzantine culture.⁶

Newly built churches and monasteries became centers of learning. The written language was not solely the privileged possession of the Russian clergy, however. Book knowledge was popular among the upper classes of the population.

In the early monasteries appear the first Russian chronicles, and the beginnings of a literature of sacred writings. With the first priests there also came singers and choristers to teach the performance of the Byzantine chant.

Byzantine church music was an art of imposing splendour, comparable with the Gregorian music of the Roman Church. Music as an established part of the ceremonial had in fact entered the Christian Church through the Eastern branch, one of whose great figures, St. John Chrysostom, had helped to develop a liturgy of hymns and chants. During the centuries when the Ambrosian and Gregorian chants were flourishing in the Roman Church, there grew up in the Eastern Church an immense literature of religious poetry, of such wealth and beauty that it has been called 'the chief artistic contribution of the Byzantine Empire to the world's literature.' This poetry was created to be set to music, and thus ornament the liturgy of the church.⁷

⁵Victor Ilyitch Scroff, The Mighty Five (New York: Allen, Towne and Heath, Inc., 1948), p. 4.

⁶The following information on Russian Sacred music largely drawn from James Bakst, A History of Russian-Soviet Music (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1962), pp. 4-14; Richard Anthony Leonard, A History of Russian Music (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957); and Alfred J. Swan, Russian Music and its sources in chant and folk-song (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1973), pp. 30-64.

⁷Leonard, p. 13.

The Byzantine monophonic style of music was of two types: one was an expressive narrative psalmody based on speech intonations; the other, usually used in hymns, was melodic and emotional.

The forms of Byzantine church singing were perfected in the eighth century and systematized in the Octoechos of the Greek Church, compiled by St. John of Damascus. It is a liturgical book containing the stanzas and canons of the liturgy in the order of their tones.

The principal chant of the Russian Church in medieval times was known as the znamenny chant. Smoliensky [1848-1909, a Russian authority on church music] began with this chant as it existed in the sixteenth century and was able to work backward, exploring its history to the thirteenth century, where he was balked by inability to decipher with certainty the old manuscript notations. In the opinion of most authorities the direct descent of the znamenny chant from the Byzantine chant is certain. There is some doubt, however, about the precise amount of change and amplification which the medieval Russian singers imposed on the product they had imported from the old Eastern Roman Empire. Again, most authorities agree that the change was considerable, and that with the slow passage of centuries the Russian choristers gradually transformed the chant to suit their own temperament and tongue, even colouring it with ideas and idioms borrowed from their native folk music, until the znamenny chant became a completely Russian art form.⁸

Alfred J. Swan, a renowned musicologist and Russian music authority, has several things to say on this subject:

No one would be inclined to argue about the origin of folk-songs: like rivers and forests they are an outgrowth of the Russian soil, the faithful companions of the husbandmen and herdsmen, the choice treasures of families, the adornment alike of young girls and older women. But with the chant the question is not so simple. As an attribute of a new faith imported from abroad, it naturally was received as an alien phenomenon which only time and persistent use might assimilate and render familiar. This assumption was touched off by the testimony of a document belonging to the Golden Age, which coincided with the reign of Ivan IV (16th C.), a curious chronicle called the Degree Book (Stepennaya Kniga). It was the work of the Moscow Metropolitan Makari, a famous author of the times and also compiler of Lives of the Saints. The passage in question reads as follows:

'In the year 6559 (1051) three Greek singers came to Kiev from Byzantium and brought with them the znamenny, tripartite, and the

⁸ Leonard, p. 14.

beautiful demestvenny singing, and from them it spread through the entire Russian land.'

Even if it were true that the znamenny and demestvenny chants had come from Byzantium, the inclusion of tripartite singing exposes the authors of the book, of which the Metropolitan Makari was only one of several, to the suspicion that they, as laymen in matters of singing, simply assumed that what was current in their time--the sixteenth century--must have existed before. For long this testimony dominated all accounts of the origin of the Russian chants, but nowadays it is not taken seriously.

Actually the entire connection of the chants with what arrived with the Byzantine ritual in the tenth century is now doubtful. Maxim Brajnikov, the most comprehensive of all modern scholars of Russian church music, makes the following statement in his latest publication:

'Russian Church Music--the Znamenny Chant--was in the long past derived from Byzantium, but was no sooner on Russian soil than it encountered an entirely new medium--the musical perception of the Russian people, its whole culture and custom, and thus began its second Russian life.'

This conclusion of Brajnikov sums up a whole series of earlier pronouncements on the subject of the origin of the chant, the earliest being by the anonymous author of a preface to an anthology of sacred music of c. 1650 who directs his principal blow precisely at the statement of the Degree Book:

'from whom (he exclaims) could those three singers have obtained the znamenny chant and its variants, since in all Greek lands and in Palestine the singing is different from ours . . .?'⁹

Meanwhile, there had also been a change in language. The chant came from Byzantium with Greek words, but by the twelfth century the Russians were singing it partly in Greek and partly in their own tongue. In another two centuries the Greek words had disappeared, and the znamenny chant had become wholly Russian. For a period of about four hundred years--from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries--the znamenny chant melodies remained basically intact except for minor alterations.

As for the exact musical nature of the earliest Russian chant, present-day knowledge is still limited by the problem of notation. Like its earlier prototypes, the znamenny chant was written in a neume notation, the forerunner of the modern staff notation which permits notes to be written indicating

⁹ Swan, pp. 31-32.

exact pitch. The neume notation was a kind of music shorthand, which gave rough indications of the direction the melody would take but could not indicate the exact pitch of every note.

Neume notations go back to early Christian times when the liturgical books showed by chironomic (i.e., hand-movement) symbols certain upward and downward movements of the conductor's hand above and below the texts in the Gospels to facilitate the expressive reading of them. From this, whole systems of notation developed both in the East and the West. But while the West moved quickly, introducing through efforts of various inventors such as the monk, Guido of Arezzo, our system of parallel lines on which the notes were written, the East clung to neumes and Russia followed the Byzantine system which had been introduced at the time of christianization. From this complex tradition, the Russians developed their own notation which, however, they failed to explain adequately, leaving us very much in doubt as to the meaning of a number of the signs used. I have briefly described the various endeavors of theoreticians old and new to fathom those signs. But no matter how touching the efforts of Byzantine and Russian specialists, and how ingenious their findings, the bulk of the pre-seventeenth-century Russian religious music can hardly be used by singers or composers as a living source. Only the last stage of the Neume notation, amply supplied with the red-letter (The auxiliary marks invested by the Novgorod master Ivan Shaidur, or Shaidurov) marks, can be read by the connoisseurs, among whom are the so-called Old Believers (Raskolniki), Orthodox Christians who seceded and fled from the ruling Church when some seventeenth-century western innovations were sanctioned for general usage.¹⁰

For that reason all early church music had to be memorized by the singers and passed on to other singers orally. Manuscripts could only be reminders of the melodies, and not exact representations as they are today. In spite of these difficulties modern scholars have been able to reconstruct even some of the earliest Russian chants in detail.

By the sixteenth century, excessive expression began to characterize church singing. A sixteenth-century pamphlet entitled Beseda Sergiya i Germana (A Discussion of Sergei and Herman) describes church singing practices in the following words: 'They bellow like bulls, kick with their feet, shake the hands, and nod the heads like people who are possessed.'¹¹

¹⁰ Swan, p. 30.

¹¹ Bakst, p. 13.

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS PAGES
WITH DIAGRAMS
THAT ARE CROOKED
COMPARED TO THE
REST OF THE
INFORMATION ON
THE PAGE.**

**THIS IS AS
RECEIVED FROM
CUSTOMER.**

By the year 1700 the 'musical stave period' of Russian church music had entered, and only from here on can one speak of true familiarity with its profoundly important source. The great good fortune was that, along with the appearance on the stave of the alien melodies and harmonies imported by westerners, some of the old chants were likewise transcribed and eventually published (1772) by enterprising singers and typographers. It is from these transcriptions that one can derive a knowledge of Znamenny Chant, the essential glory of Russian church music.

The melodies are inextricably tied to the texts. Hence the length of each phrase is determined by the corresponding length of the verbal phrase. Any hard and fast rhythm or metre is out of the question. The canticle proceeds with a stately delivery, the singer being free¹² to make retards and actual breaks at the termination of each sentence.

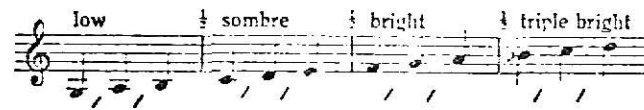
It can be seen that the melodies are strictly diatonic. "No chromatic steps are to be found in any of the material available in the five books. They move in the middle of a range extending from the G below the middle C to the B flat or C of the next octave. The low notes of this range of twelve notes, as well as the high ones, are used only as an exception. Wide leaps (such as a fourth or a fifth) may occur, but are also the exception rather than the rule."¹³

Ex. 1. Troparion, eighth echos, znamenny chant, from The Triodion, 1899.



Znamenny chant is divided into trichords. Each trichord has its own color. These range from low (dull) to triple bright.

Ex. 2. Four trichords of znamenny chant.



"On the whole, however, the attempt to describe the individual domains as maintaining a certain predominant mood or colour (vigorous, confident, mournful, dirge-like, etc.) has not been too successful."¹⁴

To be appreciated, znamenny chant as a whole must be singled out as a corpus melodiarum, a type of music unlike anything else whether in the Middle Ages or in more modern times, and must be placed side by side with other bodies of music. Then it will gradually become clear that it is similar not so much to Gregorian, Ambrosian, or other liturgical dialects, as to the vast domain of the Russian folk song. It is its Russian character that is the determining factor, and not how it pertains to purposes of worship, prayer, and glorification, "though the latter in their turn determine its flow and dignity, its elevated, solemn progress."¹⁵

"It stands to reason, then, that the category of folk-song nearest to the znamenny chant consists of the protyajnaia, the love-songs, the laments, and the family songs of all types."¹⁶

Composing in medieval times did not mean inventing something new. On the contrary, the best composer was the one who could come nearest in manner and skill to his master. For znamenny chant a great number of thoroughly familiar patterns were set up. Often these were listed at the end of a book of canticles, and when a new work was needed for the glorification of a new

¹⁴Swan, p. 37.

¹⁵Swan, p. 38.

¹⁶Swan, p. 38.

saint, or any other occasion, the singer was expected to manipulate these patterns in such a way as to do justice to the new words and make his work a worthy sequel to those already in existence.

The honor of being the first Russian composer known by name belongs to Tsar Ivan IV. Historians now assign to him the composition of two stichera (the old designation of more elaborate canticles) in the year 1547 when he was only seventeen years old.

The forms of church sign singing reached their greatest development during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Similar to the richly ornamental architecture and flowery literature of the period, church music was characterized by a wealth of melodic ornamentation independent of the text. This ornamentation, called razvody (tunes), became fixed and was indicated by special signs which, by the sixteenth century, numbered a few hundred.

Example 3 is a sample of some of these signs with the red-letter markings (mentioned earlier) of Shaidurov.

Four books of znamenny chant were published in 1772 at the urging of the head technician of the Moscow Synodal Typography, Stephen Byshkovsky, who became convinced that there was no reason why the typographical printing of music should not be patterned on some extant models going back to the end of the seventeenth century.¹⁷

Stephen Byshkovsky was successful in his pursuit and arranged the following books:

1. Heirmologion, the oldest and purest collection of znamenny canticles, listing over one thousand specimens of the heirmos, which is the model stanza for the great Kanon with its nine odes forming a vast musical panorama in the early morning service. The heirmos itself is a brief canticle and because of this brevity and conciseness one of the most eloquent.

¹⁷Swan, p. 64.

Ex. 3.

Запелу и восточнѣннѣнну Алѣксѣю Алѣксѣевичу
 Свану
 из 70-му дню рождѣнія.
 3-го Октября 1960 г.

Упомянутой рукописи XVII в. хран.
 в Музее.
 1790.

Specimen of Kriuk notation with cinnabar marks of Shaidurov,
 transcribed by Gardner.

11. Octoechos, the book in which the longer canticles (but also heirmoi) are listed in the form of eight (octo) domains that underlie the entire body of the znamenny chant, each domain consisting of a set of characteristic sound patterns by which the echoe (Octo-echos) are recognized. While the names heirmologion and octoechos point to a direct Byzantine derivation, the musical nature of the canticles in all these books is purely Russian.

III. Prazdniky, being the nine great immovable feasts of the church year: Nativity of the Virgin, Exaltation of the Cross, Presentation of the Virgin at the Temple, Christmas, Epiphany, Purification of the Virgin, Annunciation, Transfiguration, and Assumption of the Virgin. Canticles are here listed in accordance with the texts that are appropriate for all these occasions.

IV. Obikhod (ordinarium), listing the canticles in their proper succession, as they follow each other in the daily round of services, starting with the Vespers and ending with the Divine Liturgy.¹⁸

Polyphonic (many-voiced) church music evolved in the middle of the sixteenth century. This polyphony was called strochny (line or part) singing. The polyphony was usually two-part or three-part. A four-part polyphony appeared in the middle of the seventeenth century. It was crude and primitive, often characterized by an acerbity (sourness or bitterness) of harmony. In three-part polyphony, the sign melody was written as a middle voice with simple melodies added above and below.

During the seventeenth century, the Moscow state expanded its territory and became a powerful multinational feudal state. The peasantry was reduced to serfdom and the tsar relied on the support of a landowning nobility.

The period of 1598 to 1613 was filled with peasant revolts. The Moscow government was helpless to suppress popular discontent as well as strife and jealousy among the nobility. The weakened state was invaded by Poland and then Sweden.

The 'Times of Troubles' ended with the rise of the Romanov dynasty. The Romanov tsars restored the power of the nobility and the serfdom of the peasantry.¹⁹

What finally caused the downfall of the old znamenny chant, however, was a violent event inside the Russian Orthodox Church itself. A great schism occurred midway in the seventeenth century when Nikon, the Patriarch of Moscow, tried to reform (using the ancient Byzantine originals) the rituals and purge them of errors and differences that had crept in through the ages. A faction known as the Old Believers arose in fanatical revolt, and the holy war that swept through Russia almost tore the nation apart. "Rather than accept Nikon's

¹⁸ Bakst, p. 14.

¹⁹ Bakst, p. 14.

tampering with orthodox beliefs thousands of the Old Believers died at the stake: others immolated themselves by the score in houses and wayside barns, sure that the advent of the Antichrist was at hand."²⁰ Many others went into hiding while their leaders were executed, banished, anathematized, or unfrocked. For a generation the struggle went on until the Old Believers were finally put down. The service books and rituals were corrected, and even the icon figures whose faces were not painted in accord with old Byzantine patterns were destroyed, or had the offending eyes of their saints gouged out.

"One of the casualties of Nikon's church reforms was the ancient znamenny chant. It survived for a time as the Old Believers went into hiding and struggled to preserve the tenets of their faith; then it disappeared forever from the Russian church liturgy."²¹

Now that the znamenny chant was no longer in the liturgy, it became increasingly difficult for collectors to find examples of it. There are other problems which also face the collector. Collectors, in their attempts to go back into the early periods of chant, are often thwarted by a lack of understanding on the part of the common people. These people fail to realize the importance of old songbooks and manuscripts which they have seen but have not used for years. Here is what one collector found:

On arrival in a village he [Vladimir Malyshev, looking for a precious anthology of liturgical music] would question the older peasants about ancient books. Here are some of the answers that he got: 'Yes, we remember seeing some of those, but in those days people were ignorant and used to write on leather (parchment). Now we use paper.' 'So what did you do with the books?' 'We burnt them for fuel.'²²

The next step in the evolution of Russian church music was a confused and hurried attempt at modernization, chiefly by the introduction of harmony. This occurred in the seventeenth century when the harmonized music of the West

²⁰Leonard, pp. 18-19.

²¹Leonard, p. 18.

²²Swan, p. 38.

began to penetrate Russia. At the same time the old neume notations were abandoned and all Russian music was thenceforth written in the new staff notation. Russian scholars today are skeptical of the ultimate value of this wholesale grafting of Western ideas of harmony on to the native Russian church music. The change was hardly a natural one, but rather a headlong rush to adopt ideas which were foreign to the old art, and for which the Russian musicians were not prepared. For almost two hundred years, until the middle decades of the nineteenth century, Russian liturgical music lost most of its originality. "It became instead weakly imitative of the music of Western Europe."²³

The znamenny chant itself, having practically disappeared with the Old Believers, did not undergo the harmonizing process. It was the later and simpler chants which, lending themselves more easily to harmonic structure, became the new music of the Russian church. All unison singing vanished. In their haste to reconstruct the chants according to Western theories of harmony and counterpoint, the adapters made no attempt to preserve either the important contours or the spirit of the melodies. Much of the time they were influenced in their procedure by Italian opera, which entered Russia early in the eighteenth century.

And so, the evolution of Russian choral singing, religious and secular, can for the present be observed more or less consistently from the time of the systematic Europeanization of Russian church music, i.e., from the first experiments of a harmonic, 'part' singing (the second half of the seventeenth century) and from the adoption of the Western European system of notation.²⁴

After having established itself in Southern Russia, the new style of

²³Leonard, p. 19.

²⁴B. V. Asaf'ev (Igor' Glebov), Russian Music (From the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century), trans. Alfred J. Swan (Moscow-Leningrad: Academia Press, 1930), p. 112.

religious choral singing began to penetrate into Moscow under the Tsar Alexei Michailovich. The early technique of part-singing rested on the following foundations: "the melody to be harmonized was in the tenor (a kind of cantus firmus), over it the alto went on its way, and below--a very movemented bass, (figured or 'excellenter,' as it was called). Thus we are here not yet confronted by the harmonic style of the figured bass, and the tonal functions are not yet fully realized."²⁵

At this time there were model choirs such as the Tsar's singing deacons (from the fifteenth century) and the patriarchal deacons and sub-deacons (from 1589). These singers were something like corporations, organized in a peculiar manner, with their directors (ustavshchiki), and were subdivided into teams (stanitsi), six or seven teams, composed of five singers each, the first two teams consisting of the most experienced, meritorious singers. From the Tsar's singers (in 1713 Peter the Great transferred them to St. Petersburg) originated the St. Petersburg Court Choir, which at the end of the eighteenth century was renamed the Court Chapel Choir.

With the appearance of foreign composers in the new capital, chiefly Italians, the many-part harmonic chorus style of the seventeenth century began to even itself out into the typical homophonic style with the principal melody above and with an unmistakable prevalence of chordal voice-leading over polyphonic. The bass part begins to acquire all the typical functional traits of the figured bass, and the cadences on a tonic-dominant alternation are now clearly crystallized. In this way there arose the Russo-Italian style. It is impossible to trace the succeeding stages of its development. According to available data the principal influence emanated from two 'Varengians,' gifted and strong of stature: Galuppi and Sarti. The former was in Russia from 1763 to 1768, the latter from 1786 to 1801. Galuppi's style moves in characteristically Venetian forms of the solemn figured motet or the choral concerto. Sarti carried this style to an unheard of sumptuousness and rhetorical saturation in sound, especially in his imposing oratorios extolling the victories of the Russian armies. In his oratorios we find, in addition to chorus and orchestra, (often doubled), bells, cannons and fireworks. Such works of

²⁵Asaf'ev, p. 115.

Sarti are the highest peak of the culture of the St. Petersburg musical baroque. Galuppi and Sarti composed also liturgical a cappella choruses, infusing into them traits of worldliness and artificiality so typical of the religious life of that epoch. The style of Sarti possesses no inward emotional value whatever: it is all directed outward, to impress the masses of listeners by such effects (piling up of sonority, mighty chord complexes--colonnades, a grandiloquent decorative attire). It is as if we had before us the future grandiose conceptions of Berlioz, but as yet untouched by the spirit of the Great Revolution.²⁶

The first Russian-born musician to direct the Imperial Chapel Choir with great results was Maxim Soznovich Berezovsky (1745-1777), who is regarded as one of the fathers of the art of religious music in Russia. The beauty of his voice and his aptitude for composition when a boy attracted the attention of Catherine (the II), who sent him to Bologna where he studied for several years under the guidance of Padre Martini. Returning to his native country he applied himself to the composition of devotional works and did his utmost to initiate some necessary reforms in the Greco-Russian church service. "His early death is attributed to the chagrin consequent on the failure of these endeavours."²⁷ (He cut his throat with a razor.) That the failure was not total is evident from the fact that he is today considered one of the most gifted composers known to the history of Russian sacred music. Berezovsky anticipated Bortniansky in his usage of characteristic intonations of the rising Russian choral style of the epoch of classicism.

The works of Bortniansky (1751-1825), a pupil of Galuppi and the Russian rival of Sarti, were already less sumptuous and rhetorical in their style, size, and character. In his music there took place the same reaction, as in contemporary Russian architecture: from the decorative forms of the baroque to a greater severity and moderation--to classicism. It is customary to view Bortniansky with the eyes of Glinka or even Tchaikovsky--to condemn him for his 'Italianisms' quite

²⁶ Asaf'ev, pp. 116-117.

²⁷ Montagu Montagu-Nathan, A History of Russian Music (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), p. 6.

irrespective of his historic role, and to lose out of sight two very simple things. First that the 'Italianisms' of Bortniansky are in many respects the most stamped and widely used 'Europeanisms,' i.e. the generally accepted melodic and harmonic intonations of the academic style of the Courts. Second, that Bortniansky himself did not always and everywhere move along the line of least resistance. He fought, as much as he could, for the national religious chant (and we must not forget that this fight was against very powerful influences) and achieved, in his choral arrangements of the old melodies, results that were very marked for his time and for his gifts. Besides, in moving from the sumptuous rhetorical concert forms to the typically 'vertical' formations of his hymns and above-mentioned arrangements, that were modest constructively and decoratively, Bortniansky elaborated a homophonic-harmonic style with characteristic turns, that preserved itself for several generations. These characteristic turns (especially cadences using the secondary--particularly the sixth--degrees) could later be found not only in Glinka, but in Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin.²⁸

With its great number of new harmonic turns, derived from the canti and enriched by modal elements, quite alien to the Italians and due to the still continuing influence of the melodies of the old chants and folk songs, the style of Bortniansky is a typical outcome of Russian choral writing--the second stage on the path of its Europeanization. Bortniansky has become a classic of this style of the eighteenth century, since he summarized and organized the experiments and achievements in the domain of choral singing over more than fifty years in the life of the new capital. But one can also speak of the classic harmonies of Bortniansky from the point of view of "simplicity, logic of construction, and moderate decorativeness."²⁹

Secular Music

Secular music in Russia follows a path of its own. It is, however, much more difficult to trace, primarily because it was not notated as was some of the sacred music.

Music was important in the daily life of Russian families. It was played during ceremonies, receptions, festivities, and hunts. It was a popular

²⁸Asaf'ev, pp. 117-118.

²⁹Asaf'ev, p. 118.

pastime in the homes of the Kiev nobility. Although the church did not approve of secular music, Russian aristocrats cultivated musical entertainments and supported singers and instrumental players. Some members of the nobility composed music in a style similar to that of Western Troubadours.

Music in the Grand Duchy of Kiev was also developed by the 'buffoons' or Skomorokhs. The Skomorokh was a skillful and resourceful artist, popular in all sections of medieval Russian society. He participated in every national festivity, and his presence was required at family celebrations. He is mentioned in Russian folk songs, proverbs, and adages. The word skomorokh is probably of Arabic origin, denoting laughter or ridicule.

The ancient Russian bylinas (epic songs) mention the skomorokhs at Prince Vladimir's banquet in Kiev where they occupied a place of honor at the table. They are represented on frescoes in the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev and illuminated Russian manuscripts.

The orthodox church was opposed to the skomorokhs and often issued condemnations of and interdictions against them. The priests warned their congregations against the sinful plays of these buffoons which attracted the common people and left the churches empty. Church literature often identified a skomorokh with the devil, and their performances were likened to the temptations of Satan.

Such was the ecclesiastical precept of disfavor with which the Church regarded every popular amusement. In the following centuries the Skomoroch (traveling theatrical groups, such as those portrayed in Shakespeare's plays) and Guslars (men who sang and accompanied themselves on instruments), for whom the wealthy Novgorod merchants were ready to empty their cases of gold, were outlawed and cursed as scum and the disciples of the Devil.

The battle reached its peak when in 1636 the Moscow Patriarch, Joseph, not only decreed that all musical pursuits in the home were unlawful, but ordered the confiscation of all musical instruments. Fifty wagons were loaded with instruments gathered from the population and brought to the Moscow River. Among the wild cheers of the people, avid for any kind of spectacle, the instruments were burned

in big bonfires and dumped into the river, all in the name of God. 'At last peace will reign on all the lands of Russia,' noted the chronicle.³⁰

The skomorokhs were musicians, actors, dancers, animal trainers, acrobats, and magicians. They were creators of epic songs and tales. The Russian word which described a skomorokh was umeltz, that is, a versatile person. Their garb consisted of a short coat and narrow trousers.

The skomorokhs' art was national in character and can be traced to Slavic antiquity when they performed important functions in pagan rites and plays. They disguised themselves with masks, which were supposed to possess magic powers, and through the centuries became the symbols of buffoonery.

Many skomorokhs traveled around the country and were always welcomed by the people. They added the art of magic and miracle-making to their work as musicians, actors, and entertainers. Despite their popularity, they did not have social rights and the protection of the law. Those who attached themselves to the household of a prince, however, were similar to Western minstrels and enjoyed the patron's protection.

"The second half of the seventeenth century witnessed the decline of the art of the skomorokhs who were the heralds of popular discontent, and in 1649, they were banished from Moscow."³¹

The city of Novgorod played an important role in preserving and developing the cultural traditions of the Grand Duchy of Kiev. Novgorod was, next to Kiev, the most important city in ancient Russia. The princes of Kiev often occupied the throne in Novgorod, and, in troublesome times, took refuge there.

When Kiev's power declined in the twelfth century, Novgorod's influence grew. During the Mongol (Tartar) domination (1238-1462), Novgorod was the only Russian city in which literature and the arts flourished.

³⁰ Seroff, p. 4.

³¹ Bakst, p. 17.

The comfortable and prosperous life of the Novgorotsky fostered household music-making. The mercantile activities in the city, which brought crowds of foreign guests and visitors from other Russian cities, encouraged public festivities and celebrations. Singing and playing invariably accompanied these activities.

The art of gusli (see p. 3, footnote 4) playing was also developed in Novgorod. In addition to the gusli, the skomorokhs used the gudok, a string instrument played with a bow, and the domra, an instrument resembling the tambour.

This home music-making and these festive occasions led to the use of many different types of songs for the celebration of each occasion.

As one looks through all the collections there appears approximately the same order or grouping of the various types of songs: (a) Spiritual verses; (b) byliny or historical songs; (c) the Wedding Rite, wedding songs and incantations; (d) satirical songs; (e) roundelays and dance songs; (f) protyajnaia, in the form of love songs, laments, family songs, soldiers' and prison songs.

Some collectors, e.g. Filippov, held the Spiritual Verses to be the oldest, but I am inclined to place the Wedding Rite in an even earlier period for reasons that are inherent in it: its many pagan implications, its confusion of idolatrous and Christian traits, its ties with nature and natural phenomena pertaining to the seasons. [Note Example 4.]

Ex. 4. From the Swan collection, 1936.

'O Lord Christ, bless us,
To start the wedding game,
To set the tables, to spread the table cloths,
To bring bread and salt and the sweetmeats,
The sweetmeats and the mead from the cellar . . .'

Here, we have a clear instance of a pagan wedding game for which God's blessing is invoked:



But while the Wedding Rite is still cherished in nearly every village with special pride as the oldest and most beautiful of all, the Spiritual Verse has become exceedingly rare, one might say non-existent.

- Ex. 5. *Kniga Golubinaya*, The Dove Book, Riazan province, collected by A. Liadov, published in Thirty-five Songs of the Russian People, 1902.



- Ex. 6. *Vaizay s prilejaniem* (Gaze with attention). Two variants of the same song from different parts of Russia.
 a) Latgallin, from Zavoloko, Spiritual Verses of Olden Times, 1933.
 b) Olonetz province, from the Istomin and Dyutch collection of 1894.



Yet at one time it [Spiritual Verses, Examples 5 and 6] was one of the main forces in popular literature and music, permeated by subjects taken from hagiography in the early stages of Christianity with its semi-historical, semi-legendary heroes and saints, nay even Biblical stories of Abraham, David and Elijah. For instance, how touching in its charming confusion is the account of the great Dove Book (*golubinaya kniga*) falling out of a cloud on Jerusalem, and of all the Christian princes rushing there to find out from it the story of the creation of the world. The eternal question was: which is the oldest city, mountain, river, tree, or beast? King David, as the ruler of the oldest city, Jerusalem, had to provide the answer.³²

The bylinas were preserved in northeastern Russia, which became the center of unification and the bulwark of the struggle against the invading Tartars from the east. Through the centuries, the individual characteristics of persons and events described in the epic songs were obscured. The heroes of the bylinas became stereotypes of persons possessing courage, resourcefulness,

³²Swan, pp. 22, 213.

modesty, love of truth, pride, and independence. The narrative is characterized by smoothness and solemnity. The bylinas are performed as a combination of singing and narration with elements of recitatives, rests, retardations, and repetitions of short tunes. The rhythmical variations of a tune enable the performer to diversify and accentuate aspects of the text. This style is presently being practiced in the northern regions of Russia.

The word bylina is derived from the word byl (was), and it indicates the realistic, rather than the fairy tale character of the heroic epos. Among the people, the performer of the bylinas was called a starina or starinka (old man).³³

Historical songs were popular during the reign of Ivan the Terrible (1533-1584). The power of the Moscow state was at its height, and the songs described the successes of the tsar, replacing the bylinas, which ended their development in the seventeenth century. Historical songs were different from bylinas because they contained less fantasy and poetic invention and more vitality, dramatic representation, and realistic description.

Satirical songs ridiculing religious and secular authorities, laziness, hypocrisy, mercenariness, and licentiousness were also popular in the seventeenth century. These songs reflected the emergence of attitudes among the Russian masses critical of the intellectual stagnation which had dominated their lives. Along with religious themes in writing and painting, there developed more secular interests in daily life and science.

If the above categories are found chiefly in the north, central Russia abounds in the roundelays (Khorovdnyia) and dancesongs (pylasovyya); of these all our collections show a vast number. The Khorovod is an arrangement of the dancers either in a circle, or, more frequently, in two long lines facing each other and always advancing towards each other in the progress of the dance. They represent two opposing camps vying with each other in vigour, brave exploits, and skill, in playing some game that is recounted chorally while the dance is going on. Each season of the year

³³Bakst, p. 8.

stresses particular games or rites. The yearly round starts with the carols. These are found almost exclusively in the southwestern regions of Russia, the Ukraine and Byelorussia. The Russian name (*kolyada*) is derived from the Latin *caleo* (heat), and they begin with the Christmas festivities, when the sun turns back towards summer. Many traces of paganism can be found in the carols, e.g., ³⁴ the mythical personage of Ovsen or Tausen, a dweller in the fields.

Ex. 7. Tausen (The God of the Fields), Riazan province, collected by Liadov from Thirty-five Songs of the Russian People, 1902.



But one category of folk song is as alive now as ever--the long-drawn-out elegy (*protyajnaia*), whether it is in the form of a love song, or lament, or soldier's tale, or family song, or prison song. It is independent of any particular historical epoch, a strictly individual outpouring of sentiment to all humanity. The occasional mention of contemporary events or personages are of no consequence; the core of the song is complaint, or grief. "Whether it is the soldier's widow, or the young bride who had to suffer from a gnarling mother-in-law, or the young lover separated from his beloved: the mournful curves of the melody are equally eloquent, and move within the familiar range and order of intervals."³⁵ It is from these songs with this particular group of intervals that the Russians get the peculiar and mysterious touch which they call *Pesennost*, "the sum-total of song-like intonations that characterize any idiom as Russian, as distinct from western or eastern, from German, or Italian."³⁶ This was heard and intoned by Feodor the Christian in the sixteenth century, and by Glinka in the nineteenth; "nor can it elude any

³⁴ Swan, pp. 23-24.

³⁵ Swan, p. 24.

³⁶ Swan, p. 24.

of us in the twentieth, so long as we are those who have ears to hear."³⁷

The Protyajnaia are the most popular and widespread type of folk song, and they are still being studied.

Ex. 8. Sneshki belye, pushisty (White fluffy snow), Archangel province, collected by Istomin and Dyutch, 1894.



In their singing of music they do not produce their songs in unison, as is done elsewhere, but polyphonically with a number of different melodies, so that in a crowd of singers . . . you will hear as many melodies as there are people, and a distinct variety of parts finally coming together in a simple consonance.

It is this vagueness of the description that fits to perfection the practices of Russian singers. Starting with a solo intonation (zapevalo), the ensemble of singers would without any warning split into parts, each of which was also a self-sufficient melody not too divergent from the one that could conceivably be termed 'principal.' In actual fact there was no principal melody. Each singer could contend with justice that he was giving the basic contours of the song. The resultant tonal image converged into unison only at the very end, while the bulk of the song--always excepting the solo opening--was intoned in a kind of unfixable, yet new and baffling harmony. Musicologists have given it a specific name: heterophony. In contradistinction to harmony and polyphony, the laws of this popular heterophony are indeterminable.³⁸

A unified system, such as we have developed for the polyphony of Bach or Palestrina can never be attained, since the folk singer obeys only such laws as are indicated by natural beauty and taste. "Natural beauty (euphony) is a compound of consonance and dissonance, the latter occurring in a passing movement and never obscuring the former."³⁹ The inborn good taste of these folk singers will not allow any kind of abuse of either one. "Thus a delicate

³⁷Swan, p. 24.

³⁸Swan, p. 25.

³⁹Swan, p. 26.

and highly musical balance is maintained, and those who have imputed to the peasant an unrestrained and chaotic use of dissonant intervals will eventually be convinced of their error."⁴⁰ There are no rules or laws in heterophony. "The peasant has no pedantic fear of parallels, whether they be fifths or octaves. Even parallel fourths and sevenths may occur, on very rare occasions, if they happen to suit the melodic line of the performer."⁴¹ Construction of any sort of system for these songs appears unlikely at this time, "and the folk-singer is comparable only to the great composer who, at all times, suited himself in the matter of either complying with convention or simply ignoring it."⁴²

Ex. 9. Po seyan, seniushkam (On the porch, the little porch), from an old Cossack wedding rite collected by Listopadov.



But if its harmony gives the folk-song a delicate character of its own, even greater originality lies in the moulding of the song, its complete freedom from symmetrical (not to say square-cut) construction. This is conditioned mainly by the absence of any firm tonic. Palestrina and those who came before him--Ockeghem, Josquin, Obrecht--can be cited as models of a fascinating instability. In fact, wherever we are confronted with the mediaeval modes or scales, the feeling of a tonic, as a magnet or gravitation, is faint. Russian folk-song has been viewed in the light of the mediaeval--or, what is worse, the ancient Greek--modes. True, it can sometimes be described as lying in the Dorian, Mixolydian, or Aeolian scale: more often, however, it eludes such feeble constraints.⁴³

Russian folk songs are not restrained to one mode. They may involve several different modal intonations within one song.

⁴⁰ Swan, p. 26.

⁴² Swan, p. 26.

⁴¹ Swan, p. 26.

⁴³ Swan, p. 27.

Ex. 10. Da svaty moi (So, my marriage brokers).



We have a Dorian turn in bar two, but in bar four the Aeolian of the opening is aimed at but not established, as the last chord is Ionian (major), and so it ends, to be re-stated in its quaint waywardness.

Equally wayward is the metrical construction of the folk-song, which it has in common with the liturgical chant. Try to determine where the strong accent comes!

Ex. 11. Da u Lebedia.



The bar-line is more of an impediment than an aid. All this is still far from known and far from being ingrained in our musical perception. It provides an everlasting challenge to immerse oneself in the fount of the sources and come out invigorated and enriched. . .⁴⁴
The impact of the folk-song on Russian composers has been enormous.

Secular music of the kind known to Western Europe finally gained a foothold in Russia about the middle of the seventeenth century, with the accession of the remarkable and liberal-minded Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich (1645-1676).

⁴⁴Swan, p. 28.

This man has been overshadowed in history by his son, Peter the Great, but it was Alexis who broke ground for much that Peter was later able to do.

During the power struggle over Nikon's reforms, the church suffered a serious loss of power. The old order had changed, and one of the first indications of the new order was the attitude of Tsar Alexis. He aligned himself with those aristocrats, especially the influential boyar, Matviev, who wanted to pull Russia out of her medieval backwardness and orient her toward the West. Matviev had married a woman of Scotch descent, and in their home Tsar Alexis saw for the first time European furniture, carpets, clocks, and paintings; he read books on mundane subjects considered scandalous by the Church. Alexis married Natalia, an adopted daughter of the Matvievs, and their child was Peter the Great. Her influence upon Alexis encouraged him to form a choir (the Tsar's Singers).

It was Peter the Great (1672-1725) who permitted the first wave of Western culture to pour over the wall of Russia's isolation. Peter tried to modernize his country in one gigantic thrust.

Peter was more interested in theatre than in music. He had toured in Western Europe and had seen theatrical entertainments, including Italian Opera; on his return he took steps to revive the theatre which had been closed since his father's death. "He sent out emissaries to attract foreign actors and musicians to Russia, and the call was first accepted by a German actor from Danzig, Johann Christian Kunst."⁴⁵ This man appeared in Moscow in 1702 with his wife and a troupe of seven other actors. In return for 4,200 rubles a year and the title "' Director of the comedians of His Majesty the Tsar,' Kunst contracted to 'entertain and cheer' his Majesty by theatrical divertissements, and to remain sober while so doing."⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Leonard, p. 25.

⁴⁶ Leonard, p. 25.

"Only a year later Kunst died, but his work was carried on by Otto Furst, whose Russian name was Artemiem."⁴⁷

An orgy of extravagance began in 1730 with the accession of Empress Anne, whose particular pleasure was to indulge herself in all manner of entertainments--balls, parties, masquerades, and theatricals. For the festivities of her coronation Augustus II of Saxony sent to Petersburg a company of Italian players. Their sparkling comedy delighted the Russians, who had tired of the German mystery plays. Empress Anne thereupon formed a permanent Italian theatrical company at her court. To direct the operatic performances she secured the services of an Italian composer, Francesco Araja, who arrived in Petersburg in 1732 with a company of singers and orchestral players, a scenic artist, a stage 'machinist,' a ballet master, and a group of dancers. Araja's company introduced the ballet as well as Italian opera to Russia.⁴⁸

In 1732, the direction of the nation's music fell into the hands of Francesco Araja, a Neapolitan who had relinquished the honors bestowed upon him at home to gain fresh laurels.

In St. Petersburg, Araja wrote annual pieces for court occasions, beginning with the cantata "La forza dell' amore e dell' odio" (The Power of Love and Hatred) on February 9, 1736. From that date onwards Araja spent the greater part of his life in Russia, returning to Italy twice for short visits.

During the period from 1736 until his death in c. 1770, Araja composed and produced a series of operas in the Italian style. "At first Araja composed to Italian librettos which were then translated into Russian; later he was able to work directly from Russian texts."⁴⁹

Cephalus and Procris was the most revolutionary of all Araja's operas, for in addition to a Russian libretto by the poet Soumarokov, it was produced with a cast composed entirely of Russian singers. "'The music of this opera,' writes the Russian musicologist Nicholas Findeisen, 'was very much above the average, and the success of the Russian singers was great.'"⁵⁰

⁴⁷Leonard, p. 26.

⁴⁸Leonard, p. 27.

⁴⁹Leonard, p. 27.

⁵⁰Leonard, p. 27.

The arrival of the nineteenth century brought a sudden eclipse in the vogue of Italian opera at Petersburg. Alexander I ascended the throne in 1801, and the young tsar's early admiration for the French and his first flirtings with Bonaparte caused repercussions in the affairs of the Imperial Opera. The popular French composer Boieldieu arrived in Petersburg in 1803, and during an eight-year stay in Russia he composed and produced ten operas in the gay and frivolous French comic opera style of the period.

Boieldieu was succeeded by a German, Daniel Steibelt, who was famous in his day as a pianist and composer, and infamous for a private life of singular disrepute. In Vienna, in 1800, he achieved a moment of immortality when he engaged in two pianistic duels with a young rival virtuoso--Ludwig van Beethoven. In 1808 Steibelt turned up in Petersburg, thus putting a safe distance between himself and an army of creditors. He became conductor of Alexander's opera company, for which he composed several operas and ballets in the French style.⁵¹

The French influence was not long-lasting as another of the Italians arrived. Catterino (Albertovich) Cavos was destined to play a very big role in the development of the Russian operatic theatre as a conductor, a teacher, an organizer, and a composer.

To Cavos's credit it must be said that he did not remain merely an indifferent foreign visitor, who for good pay would write a certain type of official music. . . .

Cavos was actually swayed by the feelings that motivated the upper classes of Russian society and a small part of the intelligentsia. His music gives one reason to believe that he was sincere. The Italian Cavos tried to be a Russian European and fulfilled the tremendous job of adapting Russian musical material (nearly all song-material) to the European methods and forms of musical expression current at that time. Cavos's gifts were not striking or original, but for the important historic role that fell to him it was, precisely, unnecessary to possess uncommon gifts. And if nowadays, Cavos's style appears to us as pseudo-Russian, it is not the fault of the composer. We must not forget that in his time--before Glinka--he was as truly Russian as the baroque, classical, and Empire buildings that the foreign architects erected in Russian surroundings and in the atmosphere of Russian life.⁵²

⁵¹ Leonard, p. 34.

⁵² Asaf'ev, p. 2.

The most important Russian secular composer before Glinka was Alexis Nicholayevich Verstovsky. His greatest success was Askold's Tomb, "which by its sincere and naive melodies conquered the whole of Russia."⁵³

With its songs and choruses in the Russian manner, sentimental airs (romances), the colorful figure of the young Toropko, and an artless yet moving libretto, with its easily accessible vaudeville ingredients, this opera survived for a very long time. However, it would be unfair to determine Verstovsky's historic role merely by this work. It is true, he could not make much of the symphonic and coloristic elements of a romantic opera. His vocal style derives from the suburbs of cities (and not from the polyphony of the folk-song). His instrumentation is crude and awkward, while his dances are of the salon type. He abused the rhythms of the polonaise and the polka. And yet much that is valuable still remains. He is by no means a weak imitator of Weber and the Italians. In his own way he seeks to write a theatrical music with the aid of the material stored up with the Russian society of that period and conditioned by daily life. He is no longer content to write music in general. He tried to make it characteristic, expressing the moods and emotional states of certain personages and situations. Thus, in spite of the absence of a pliable technique and his inability (as with Cavos) to extricate Russian opera from small vaudeville forms, he may be termed a romantic composer of the nineteenth century. We must not forget, in appraising Verstovsky, one important fact: with his Askold's Tomb he satisfied the musical cravings of the whole country and prepared it for the perception of more complex and more artistic and powerful forms of the musical culture of the cities, just as Bortniansky had done it before him in another sphere. By his nature, Verstovsky is a lyricist, and this quality affected the whole style of his operas, preponderantly lyrical. The nearer they are to the Russian song element, the fresher the impression from them. He also knew how to utilize Slavonic song and dance elements. Only where his music becomes some kind of neutral 'central-European' music, does it lose its interest. We must emphasize his gift for dramatic characterization through vocal lyricism.⁵⁴

Verstovsky brings Russian music to the point where Mikhail Ivanovitch Glinka, the Father of Russian Music, was able to formulate the mature style of his nationalistic music.

⁵³Asaf'ev, p. 2.

⁵⁴Asaf'ev, pp. 4-5.

THE NATURE OF RUSSIAN CHORAL MUSIC
FROM GLINKA TO 1917

Introduction

The nature of truly nationalistic Russian music must be traced from the time of Glinka. He was the pioneer, and from his beginnings there arose two separate and distinct schools of thought.

The nationalists, "The Five," led by Balakirev, were all amateur musicians who believed that truly Russian music must come from strictly Russian sources. These sources included the Russian folk song and the znamenny chant in church music. They felt that these sources should not be used in conjunction with German, Italian, or any other foreign musical training or techniques.

The composers who looked to the West were also striving to create nationalistic music, also using the same sources, but they believed this could be done only through a thorough knowledge and understanding of the compositional techniques to be studied in the Moscow Conservatory and the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

The first section of this essay, on the "Nature" of Russian music, will deal with the "Older Generation." These include Glinka, the founding "Father of Russian Music;" Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, members of "The Five;" Tchaikovsky, a product of the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Anton Rubinstein; and Archangelsky, a choir director, music educator, and composer.

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka

The chief significance of Glinka in the history of Russian music is that he was the formulator of the Russian musical language. Glinka's music sprang from that of his Russian precursors--Verstovsky,

Cavos, and a whole host of romance-writers . . . In comparison with the works of his predecessors, Glinka's music is outstanding in its absolute professionalism. For the most part his mature compositions are beautifully constructed and free from the all-too-obvious links and joins characteristic of the Cavos-Verstovsky school. Apart from his role as a harmonic and orchestral innovator, he is also remarkable for his thorough knowledge of Russian folk music.¹

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka was born on May 20, 1804, in the village of Novospasskoe in the Province of Smolensk on the small estate of his father, Ivan Nikolaevich Glinka, a retired captain and a wealthy landowner. His childhood and adolescent years were spent in the usual village environment in close contact with folk song and folk life.

Soon after I was born my mother, Evgeniya Andreevna (nee Glinka), was forced to leave my early upbringing to my grandmother, who, in taking charge of me, moved me into her own room. I passed three or four years with her as my foster mother and governess, only rarely seeing my parents. I had a weak constitution, a scrofulous condition, and an extremely nervous disposition; my grandmother, a woman in her declining years, was nearly always sick and therefore kept her room (where I lived) at a temperature of at least 77 degrees. Despite this, I always wore my fur coat. At night and often in the daytime I was given tea with cream and a lot of sugar, plus cracknels and several kinds of crackers; I was seldom allowed out in the fresh air, and then only in warm weather. There is no doubt that this early upbringing had a great effect on the development of my physique and that it also explains my irresistible longing for warm climates. Even now, at fifty years, I must say that I really prefer to live in the south and that I suffer there less than I do in the north.²

Glinka was severely spoiled and physically weakened by the treatment he received from his grandmother. She died in 1810, and he went home to his mother and father where he was allowed a more normal life.

Like most musically gifted people, Glinka remembered well his first impressions of sound. As a child, he loved the tolling of bells and used to imitate them by striking copper pots and pans. On festive occasions his uncle, who lived in the neighborhood, would send over his private serf-orchestra to play Ecossaises,

¹ Gerald R. Seaman, History of Russian Music (New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), p. 155.

² Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka, Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka Memoirs, trans. by Richard B. Mudge (Norman, Okla.: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, Inc., 1927), pp. 3-4.

Mazurkas and other dance music, but little Misha didn't want to dance. Instead, he would stand quite close to the orchestra, fascinated, and sometimes he would pick up a violin or a piccolo and try to join in.³

His father would become very angry and would scold him for not dancing and also for leaving the guests; however, Glinka relates that he would always return to the orchestra at the first opportunity.

Their dinner on these occasions was served to the tune of Russian folk songs played by two French horns, two flutes, two clarinets and two oboes, and it was these sad melodies which, according to Glinka, predetermined the whole subsequent course of his life.

'On one such occasion,' he related to his friends, 'when I was ten or eleven years old, they played Crusel's Quatuor for Clarinet and Strings which made an indescribable, novel and enchanting impression on me. All that day I was in a state of feverish excitement, I felt as if something inexplicable and yet wonderful were happening within me, and the next day during my drawing lesson, I was simply unable to concentrate. The teacher scolded me for my absent-mindedness and finally, having guessed what was the matter with me, said he had noticed that I could think of nothing but music. 'What can I do about it?' I replied, 'music is my soul!'⁴

During this time Glinka began to take piano lessons from his mother and then a governess. He dearly loved his music, but his father would not consider his son's becoming a musician.

At the age of thirteen he was sent, along with his brother, to a school for aristocratic young men. He attended this school for five years but hated every minute. During his school years he was also taking piano lessons. He had three lessons from John Field, the Irish pianist. Then he studied with several German teachers: Carl Meyer, piano; J. L. Fuchs, theory; and Bohm, violin.

³Mikhail Osipovich Zetlin, The Five (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1959), p. 3.

⁴Zetlin, p. 4.

Glinka's father again stepped in and forced him to take a job in the Ministry of Communications in Petersburg, which for a time resolved the difficulty.

At this point Glinka's health failed him. He had always been ill with one pain or illness after another. "Finally, a noted doctor examined the young man and found 'a whole quadrille of ailments' which could only be dispelled by three years in a warm climate."⁵

With his father's consent Glinka went to Italy. Here he was finally free from his father and could study music as he wished. He enrolled in the Milan Conservatory and studied under Francesco Basili, who was a teacher in counterpoint. He soon became bored by these lessons and quit to go visit a friend who was taking voice lessons in Naples. He was allowed to sit in on some of these lessons from the noted voice instructor Nozzari. During this same time he heard for the first time some of the music, especially operas, of Bellini and Donizetti. He thoroughly enjoyed these and even wrote some pieces in the Italian style.

Glinka soon realized that if he was to learn very much about composition, he must find a teacher. He travelled to Berlin and studied with Siegfried Dehn, a theorist of wide repute. He studied harmony, counterpoint, fugue and instrumentation. Later he commented upon this time, that Dehn "not only put my musical knowledge into order but also my ideas on art in general, and after his lessons I no longer groped my way along, but worked with the full consciousness of what I was doing."⁶ These studies were cut short by the death of Glinka's father which required his immediate return to Russia to help settle the family estate.

⁵Leonard, p. 41.

⁶Leonard, p. 43.

Shortly before his return to Russia, Glinka had written these words to a friend in St. Petersburg: ". . . I feel that I, even I, have the ability to give the Russian stage a large-scale work. It will not of course be a masterpiece . . . but I don't think it will be too bad. . . . Most important of all is the choice of a subject: it must be national in every respect, for in this as in the music, I want my fellow-countrymen to feel the spirit of the Russian homeland . . . "7

In 1835 on the eighth day of May Glinka married Maria Petrovna Ivanova. This marriage was not happy and the couple separated within a short period and eventually were divorced.

The marriage happened just before one of the most important events in Russian musical history. In 1836 Glinka's A Life for the Tsar was produced and was an immediate success. This success was followed immediately by Glinka's appointment as director of the Imperial Chapel, a post which he held from 1837-1839.

Four years later Glinka's second opera was performed and met with general disapproval. Ruslan and Lyudmila was hissed by the audience, and the royal family left before the end of the performance.

The unusual and unfamiliar nature of the music brought forth outspoken criticisms, though some writers were wholehearted in their support. Odоеvsky, for instance, concluded one of his articles on Ruslan with the following words: 'O, believe me! In our Russian soil has arisen a luxurious flower--it is our joy, our glory. Let the worms climb up its stem and soil it--the worms will fall to the ground, but the flower will remain.'⁸

The true value of Ruslan and Lyudmila was not recognized in Russia until after the composer's death.

⁷Donald Brook, Glinka, Borodin, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Scriabin (Salisbury Square, London: Pockliff, 1946), p. 6.

⁸Brook, p. 8.

The failure of Ruslan was the primary reason for Glinka's sojourn in Italy and France in 1844, and during the next few years he travelled extensively in Western Europe. He saw Berlioz in France and renewed the acquaintance which had begun in 1831. He wrote several orchestral pieces of which the symphonic poem "Kamarinskaya" is the most famous.

In 1852-53 Glinka turned his attention toward church music. He was convinced that the harmony of the folk song was based upon the ecclesiastical modes. He left for Berlin to study this idea with Dehn in 1856. This term of study was cut short when early in February of 1857, Glinka caught a cold returning home from a performance of the trio from A Life for the Tsar and died suddenly on February 15, 1857.

Music

"It was Russian opera that played a very important part in the development of choral music: already with Glinka the chorus immediately occupied an outstanding position in the dramatic action."⁹

Glinka's music was in one of two categories of composition according to Alfred J. Swan:

. . . it was either a simple melody in the top line, with more or less conventional harmony underneath. . . . or it was strict polyphony. The secret lay in the way Mozart dealt with polyphonic themes; in giving them a certain cantabile curve, e.g., in the Finale of the Jupiter Symphony

Ex. 12. Mozart.



⁹Asaf'ev, p. 121.

Glinka took the Mozart manner to heart, and it is not too difficult to imagine that his eyes were opened precisely by Dehn. How near Glinka's manner is to that of Mozart we can see from the opening chorus in his opera Life for the Tsar.

Ex. 13. Glinka, Life for the Tsar.



. . . His ear enabled him to hear what was below the surface and what constituted the hidden Russian pesennost which the whole preceding period could not hear . . . That Glinka's pesennost, though it came near that of the folk-songs, did not coincide with them, is only another manifestation of his genius. Only occasionally, as in the *Kamarinskaya*, does he resort to actual folk melodies. Often he gives some theme that his ear was quick enough to catch, a kind of symphonic transformation . . . His own pesennost is consequently the result of the workings of his musical mind. This makes him akin to the sixteenth-century Moscow precentors who used the familiar patterns of *znamenny* chant and moulded them in accordance with their musical fancy. In either case the material was of the quality that makes up the Russian pesennost, which is devoid of alien features and should suggest to the Russian as well as the western ear a typically Russian sound.¹⁰

Glinka decided that the place for him to develop the truly nationalistic music, which he was to champion, was the opera. Life for the Tsar, Glinka's first opera, was loved immediately "precisely because its intonations were almost entirely rooted and pre-existing in their epoch and surrounding milieu . . ."¹¹

Ruslan was an entirely different opera in music and organization. It was composed in fragments over a period of six years. Pieces of it were performed in public concerts long before it was ever completed in its entirety.

The whole-tone scale is the only real leitmotiv in Ruslan, but there is a wealth of folk song material. The source theme appears to be in Ruslan's aria in Act II (Ex. 13). The roots of this theme go clearly back to a familiar

¹⁰Swan, pp. 63-66.

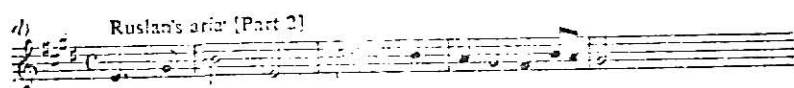
¹¹Seaman, p. 163.

ILLEGIBLE DOCUMENT

**THE FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S) IS OF
POOR LEGIBILITY IN
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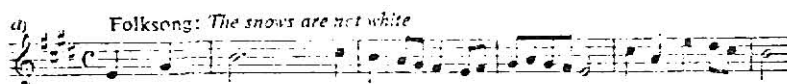
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COPY AVAILABLE**

Ex. 14.



folk tune (Ex. 15). Finn's Ballad (Ex. 16) is used as the introduction to Act I (Ex. 17).

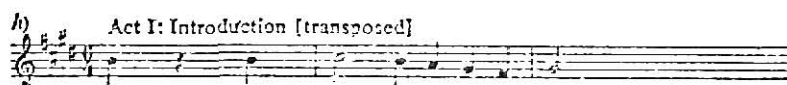
Ex. 15.



Ex. 16.



Ex. 17.



There are examples of folk music that is not Russian in Ruslan, such as the triumphal chorus to Lel--No. 3. The theme is a Gregorian folk dance.

Ex. 18.

Allegro risoluto assai ♩ = 200

SOPRANI E CONTRALTI



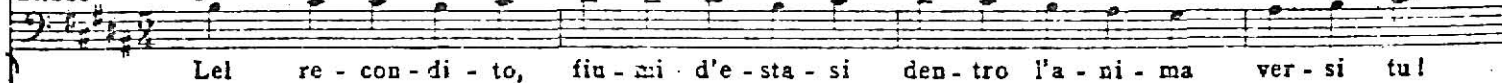
Lel re - con - di - to, fiu - mi d'e - sta - si den - tro l'a - ni - ma ver - si tu!

TENORI



Lel re - con - di - to, fiu - mi d'e - sta - si den - tro l'a - ni - ma ver - si tu!

BASSI



Lel re - con - di - to, fiu - mi d'e - sta - si den - tro l'a - ni - ma ver - si tu!

26 Allegro risoluto assai ♩ = 200



The finale of Ruslan is a three-part structure. The second section is a chorus. "This is one of Glinka's most exquisitely decorated inventions, with delicate chromatic enrichment and short strands of semiquavers affording gently emanating counterpoint"¹² (Ex. 19). This chorus sounds very similar to the Cavatina in Act III, which similarly is aided by the similarity of the soprano phrase in Ex. 19 (bars 3-6) and Ex. 20.

Ex. 19. Ah, Lyudmila, the tomb must not take you, dear princess.

Allegretto

[mf] Akh, Lyud-mi - la! Ne mo-gi - la vzyat - teb -

ya - dol - zha, mi - la - - - ya knyazh - na

¹²David Brown, Mikhail Glinka (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 233.

Ex. 20. "Is it really possible for me, in the prime of life and love, to say: 'Farewell forever!'"

a) *Allegro moderato
con passione*

[vut] — U-zhe-li mne — vo tsv-te let — lyub-vi ska- zat — 'Pro- sti na-

pp dolce

Glinka made contributions to Russian nationalistic music in every area. His contribution to choral music was primarily through the field of opera, where his choruses played such an important part.

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka, therefore, is the first great figure in Russian music. Not only was he more skilful, more imaginative, more gifted than his predecessors, but he was the first to formulate the principles of the Russian musical language--a language that was to be used and developed by the majority of his successors and admirers throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. In every form that Glinka touched, whether the romance, chamber music, orchestral music or opera, he infused something new and elevated it to a higher plain, though he had no desire for exaggerated effect. In Glinka, as in Pushkin, formal perfection is united with a Classical restraint, and Italian love of melody with Beethovenian counterpoint, the Russian folk idiom with the sophistication of Mozart and John Field. And yet Glinka is not a mere imitator of any one of these. As a man of genius and through a natural musical instinct he raised Russian music to unprecedented heights.¹³

Modest Petrovitch Moussorgsky

Moussorgsky (Mussorgsky) was that most appealing and yet most tragic of artists--a misunderstood genius. His case was not simply the familiar one of a man ahead of his time. He was the victim of a whole series of events and misfortunes which for years caused not merely his purposes as an artist to be obscured and deprecated but his music itself to suffer actual disfigurement.¹⁴

A portrait of Moussorgsky could not be any more picturesque than the description of Nadejda Purgold, who later became Mrs. Rimsky-Korsakov:

¹³Seaman, p. 209.

¹⁴Leonard, p. 84.

Moussorgsky's personality was so unusual that nobody who had met him could ever forget it. He was well built and of average height; he had attractive wavy hair (beautifully brushed), large, rather glassy eyes and elegant hands, but his features were plain. He used to account for the reddishness of his nose by saying that it had been frost-bitten when he was on parade. His face was not very expressive, but suggested a mystery concealed in it. . . . His manners were elegant, and he had the bearing of a cultured man of the world. . . . His personality impressed both of us. . . . there was so much in it that was arresting, peculiar and enigmatic. His singing was delightful: he had a small, pleasant baritone voice which he used with a remarkable range of expression. His perfect understanding of every shade of feeling, the simplicity and sincerity of his interpretation, without the least exaggeration or affectation, was most fascinating. I was much impressed by his versatility as a performer: he was equally good in lyrical and dramatic as in comic things. He was also a brilliant pianist: he combined strength with elegance, life with humor. . . . Yet he could act the parts of Ivan the Terrible and Tsar Boris with deep dramatic feeling. He was the enemy of everything commonplace, not only in music but in every branch of life, and hated routine. He did not like ordinary, simple words. He always tried to twist people's names. His letters were characteristic: piquant, sparkling with wit, humor and penetrating epithets. In later years this style became an affectation,¹⁵ which sometimes showed itself in the whole of his behavior.

"The Five" were the leaders of the nationalist movement in Russia and were causing a great amount of controversial clatter. The most uncompromising nationalist was Moussorgsky. He used the folk idiom more extensively than any other member of "The Five," and "it was he who broke most violently with the technical conventions of the older Western music."¹⁶ He was also the only one of "The Five" who adopted the new doctrine of realism in art as opposed to romanticism.

Born on March 21, 1839, Moussorgsky was reared in a small village near and amidst the folklore that was to be the very center of his music. His childhood nurse told him many folk tales. He also took piano lessons from his mother and was playing some small Liszt pieces by the age of seven. At nine he played a grand concerto by John Field in public performance. His technique

¹⁵ Brook, p. 5.

¹⁶ Leonard, p. 85.

continued to improve under the instruction of the German pedagogue, Anton Herke, who also helped him learn to improvise.

As a young man he entered the Preobrajensky Guards, a fast living, fun loving group. His experiences with them later led to alcoholism and ultimately to his death.

During this time he met Borodin and Balakirev. Balakirev took him in and began to teach him composition. He had as yet had no formal training in harmony or counterpoint.

His family had always been landowners, and when the serfs were set free his family was suddenly in financial trouble. Moussorgsky was forced to find work and found a job in the government at the Ministry of Transport. He received a poor salary, worked from 11:00 to 4:00 five days a week for eighteen years and tried to compose during his spare time.

Moussorgsky suffered some severe setbacks in 1865. He was already an alcoholic and had his first attack of delirium tremens. His mother, to whom he had always been close, died during this year. Moussorgsky did recover from these and began to compose again.

In 1869 Moussorgsky was working on an opera, The Marriage, when one evening he met Professor V. V. Nikolsky, an authority on the works of Pushkin. He suggested that Moussorgsky write an opera based on the drama of Boris Godunov. Moussorgsky was delighted by the idea, had a copy of the drama given to him, and had completed the opera within six months.

He submitted his opera to the Imperial Opera, and in July, 1870, it was rejected. They offered to review it again if he would make some revisions. He made the revisions and it was accepted. It enjoyed only a very short time of public appearance and was retired from the repertoire.

A subsequent revision after Moussorgsky's death by Rimsky-Korsakov was

and is widely heard.

Above and beyond all controversy about Boris Godunov and its various versions there remains one fact--the unassailable greatness of the original music itself and its imperviousness to change. For all his tinkering and retouching Rimsky-Korsakov could not improve the work, nor in the long run did he really mar it. In any version Boris Godunov remains one of the monuments of the lyric stage, and one of the greatest works of art ever to come out of Russia.¹⁷

On a day early in February, 1881, the unfortunate man came to Mme. Leonova (an elderly lady whom he had boarded with for many years) in great agitation, saying that 'he had no place to go, that nothing was left for him but to walk the streets.' That night he acted as accompanist for one of Leonova's pupils at a party in a private home, where he was suddenly taken with an epileptic fit induced by acute alcoholism. Two days later he was removed to the Nikolaevsky Military Hospital in the suburbs of Petersburg. There a kindly young doctor who knew and grieved for the great artist behind the wreck of the man, saw that he received decent care. The composer had moments of lucidity and others of completely insane ravings. The doctors indicated that he might have lived that way for as long as a year but, mercifully, his sufferings were cut short. 'Terribly weak, changed and grown grey,' he had the strength to sit up while Repin painted his shocking portrait, and in the early morning of March 28, 1881, Moussorgsky died.¹⁸

Music

Russian national life was the great theme of Moussorgsky, and he writes portraits of realistic human episodes which are often as vivid and as authentic as anything found in the Russian novel or the drama. He once wrote:

It is the people I want to depict; sleeping or waking, eating and drinking, I have them constantly in my mind's eye; again and again they rise before me in all their reality--huge, unvarnished, with no tinsel.¹⁹

Moussorgsky produced eighty songs in his short career. That he was the greatest Russian master of this art form is beyond dispute, but for a long time the variety, originality, and strangeness of these songs stood in the way of their wide acceptance.

¹⁷Leonard, p. 104.

¹⁸Leonard, p. 123.

¹⁹Leonard, p. 92.

Even his friends and the other musicians of the time had very little esteem for his work. In 1863 Stasov wrote to Balakirev:

'What is there for me in Moussorgsky? . . . I didn't hear from him a single idea or a single word expressed with real profundity of understanding, with the profundity of a raptured, moved soul. Everything about him is flabby and colorless. To me he seems a perfect idiot.'

Balakirev agreed that 'Moussorgsky is practically an idiot.' Cui found several of his early songs 'rather ridiculous' . . . 'In his work, of course, I don't believe.'²⁰

These statements are due primarily to a lack of understanding of Moussorgsky. He was a realist and a champion of the "disinherited by fate." The others were primarily romantics.

Moussorgsky's works disgusted Balakirev. He lost interest in him when Moussorgsky decided to go on his own way with songs such as "Fragment" from Oedipus Rex, and "Prayer."

Ex. 21. "Prayer," 1865.

²⁰ Leonard, p. 89.

Moussorgsky also loved Hebrew music. Perhaps this came from the fact that he considered himself the champion of the "disinherited by fate." The Jews certainly do fit into this category. For whatever reason, he does use Hebrew music, especially in "Joshua."

Very fine is the chorus of 'Joshua,' which shows us the young Moussorgsky . . . in his most impetuous vein. The composer adapted the scriptural text himself; the original Hebrew themes, which are developed in the chorus with a fine sense of style, were picked up by Moussorgsky from an old Jew who chanted his prayers in the courtyard over which the composer lodged.²¹

Ex. 22. "Joshua."

à Madame N. Rimsky-Korsakow

1

JOSHUA

For Mixed Voice Chorus (S.A.T.B.)

English Version by A.W. COX

M. P. MOUSSORGSKY
(1877)

Allegro marziale M.M. $\text{♩} = 96$

The musical score is for a mixed voice chorus (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano. The tempo is *Allegro marziale* at a metronomic marking of $\text{♩} = 96$. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics for all voices are: "Hear ye the word of God: Go, my peo-ple, forth tri-um-phat." The piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and accents.

²¹ Oscar von Rieseemann, *Moussorgsky* (New York and London: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929), p. 332.

Ex. 22, cont.

Take arms a - gainst the foe, The A-mor-ite Kings their hearts do hard - en.

Take arms a - gainst the foe, The A-mor-ite Kings their hearts do hard - en.

Take arms a - gainst the foe, The A-mor-ite Kings their hearts do hard - en.

Take arms a - gainst the foe, The A-mor-ite Kings their hearts do hard - en.

Moussorgsky, of course, uses folk songs in such works as Boris Godunov.

The Coronation Scene from Boris is marked with several folk songs, as shown in Ex. 23.

'Moussorgsky was an enemy of every sort of routine and commonplace, not only in music, but in every phase of life, even in trifles.' That is the aesthetic key to almost every measure of his music.

The idea that haunted Moussorgsky from the start was that music should reproduce the accents of human speech, raising it to a higher plane of course, but always following its natural flow. Like a red thread this notion runs through all his creations forming a counter-focus to his innate lyrical vein, his instinct to 'melodize' all that he touched. It is in the fusion of these two opposing impulses that the highest originality of Moussorgsky lies. But such a fusion was not always achieved in his music, where one can often observe a desperate struggle between lyrical and realistic elements. This disparity puzzled Balakirev in the first years of their acquaintance and caused Rimsky-Korsakov's notorious 'corrections' in Boris and Khovanshchina, and made even Stassov turn away from the last song-

cycles. Small wonder that Moussorgsky, in the autobiographical note which he wrote in the last year of his life, placed himself apart from 'any of the existing musical circles.'²²

Ex. 23. Coronation Scene, Boris Godunov.

Allegro moderato ($\text{♩} = 108$)

p

As the sun lights all heav - en, So reigns our great Tsar Bor -

p divisi

As the sun lights all heav - en, So reigns our great Tsar Bor -

p

As the sun lights all heav - en, So reigns our great Tsar Bor -

Allegro moderato ($\text{♩} = 108$)

f

p

Nikolay Andreyevitch Rimsky-Korsakov

As the youngest member of "The Five," Rimsky-Korsakov was one of the, if not the, outstanding Russian composer of the second half of the nineteenth century. He was very creative, and his genius was nurtured by the traditions of Russian musical classicism blended with the principles of Western romanticism. However, few scholars would grant him the originality and power of Moussorgsky. "Korsakov is a musical portrayer of Russian national manners and

²² Swan, p. 92.

morals, storyteller, historian, and musical landscape painter."²³

He was born March 18, 1844, and lived in the country near Novgorod until he entered Naval School in St. Petersburg in 1856. As a child he took piano lessons and became quite proficient. A professional musician, Theodore Camille, introduced him to Balakirev, the leader of "The Five," while he was still attending the Naval School.

Balakirev began to work with him in the area of composition, and within a short period of time after his work with Balakirev began, Rimsky-Korsakov began work on his first symphony.

I who did not know the names of all the intervals and chords, to whom harmony meant but the far-famed prohibition of parallel octaves and fifths, who had no idea as to what double counterpoint was, or the meaning of cadence, thesis and antithesis, and period--I set out to compose a symphony.²⁴

In 1862 Rimsky-Korsakov graduated from the Naval School and shortly thereafter was sent on a two-and-a-half year voyage during which he continued to keep in touch with Balakirev and to work on his symphony. Upon his return to Russia in 1865, he settled in St. Petersburg where he remained the rest of his life.

Rimsky-Korsakov's First Symphony, the first work in this form by a Russian composer, was completed and performed in St. Petersburg under the direction of Balakirev on December 31, 1865. It was a success.

Balakirev continued to work with him until, in 1871, Rimsky-Korsakov was appointed professor of composition and orchestration at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Rimsky-Korsakov was not at all adequate in his own technique, but he accepted the position and taught himself along with his students. He was to remain on the faculty until his death.

Rimsky-Korsakov was a great teacher and greatly influenced all composi-

²³Bakst, p. 161.

²⁴Leonard, p. 145.

tion in Russia by the pupils he instructed. They included: Glazunov, Liadov, Arensky, Ippolitov-Ivanov, Gretchaninov, N. Tcherepnin, Steinberg, Stravinsky, Spendiariov, Gnossin, Prokofiev, and Myaskovsky.

Upon Rimsky-Korsakov's appointment to the St. Petersburg Conservatory, he was widely criticized by the other members of "The Five." He was adopting one of the things they had fought against most bitterly, the conservatory type of education. However, he remained friendly with them all, and after Moussorgsky's death, edited and completed many of Moussorgsky's works.

In proper perspective, he had not thrown out the ideals of "The Five," but had decided that their ideals could be supplemented by the thorough knowledge of harmony and counterpoint that he could learn and teach at the Conservatory. He had not abandoned their ideals but eventually was able to give their music a prominent place among all music throughout the world.

Music

National Russian art decisively influenced Korsakov's artistic trends and the essential features of his musical language, closely related to Russian folk songs. Many folk songs, authentic or altered, appear in his compositions, especially in the operas. Imbued with the spirit of Russian folk songs, Korsakov created in his operas original melodies which cannot be distinguished from authentic folk songs.

Structural elements of national Russian melodies, pentatonic turns and intonations of fourths, fifths, and seconds, for example, are also characteristic of Korsakov's original melodies.

Oriental music is an important feature in Korsakov's operatic and symphonic compositions.²⁵

Rimsky-Korsakov carried on Glinka's traditions and formed his own personal musical style. He had an optimistic outlook on the world which is reflected in his music. "Love, spiritualization, and incarnation of nature in Korsakov's compositions are the results of his interest in pantheistic mythology."²⁶

²⁵ Bakst, p. 149.

²⁶ Bakst, p. 147.

The greater part of the accompanied choruses of Rimsky-Korsakov are formal stylizations of material which are based upon folk songs. These are his best pieces. The works that are not based upon folk songs are not emotionally expressive or genuinely polyphonic.

Rimsky-Korsakov was a master at using the folk song within his compositions. This recitative from Sadko is an example.

Ex. 24. Sadko, Tableau One.



Rimsky-Korsakov's whole ideology was built on the folk-song. He relished its modal structure; its unsymmetrical rhythms, even the unstable tonic must have intrigued him, and in his strictly organized musical world he would find the proper moment to apply all these touches.

Ex. 25. Russian soldier's song, 1866.



But touches they must remain; they never aspire to a self-sufficient role. This is why all through his output a modal cadence is gently modified, a wayward rhythm tamed.

Ex. 26.

ff
Give peace on — earth, may Thy — laws be held, Ho - ly Fa - ther,
ff
Give peace on — earth, may Thy — laws be held, Ho - ly Fa - ther,

Above all, the classic-romantic code of part-writing must be clung to religiously. Rimsky-Korsakov's code prescribed uniform four-part harmonizations. It had its simple laws of melodic leading: conjunct progression was the rule, disjunct the exception; it determined the spacing of chords, forbidding certain doublings in a manner completely contrary to the practice of the folk-singer. As for consonances and dissonances, the style can only be described as 'Palestrinian' with preparations and resolutions managed in a manner only slightly less strict.

Much of this code was permitted by authentic folk-song so long²⁷ as folk-melodies could be controlled where discrepancies occurred.

Rimsky-Korsakov's music cannot be expected to move deeply. Its purpose is to entertain, to beguile, like so many delightful multi-colored illustrations from the book of fable. Here this profoundly serious and sincere artist actually re-created in modern²⁸ guise something of the rich legacy of ancient Russian minstrelsy.

²⁷Swan, p. 141.

²⁸Swan, p. 125.

Piotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky

Because the music of Tchaikovsky is so easily appreciated by 'the man in the street,' is so rich in appealing melodies, is so colorful and frank in its expression of the composer's emotions, and has kept most of the British orchestras in existence during the past thirty years by balancing their budgets, or at least by substantially reducing their deficits,--because of these things, the musical snob refers to it with a supercilious smile and takes the utmost care to see that no one is within earshot whenever he plays his well-worn record of the B-flat minor Concerto.

. . . To any honest musician, to anybody who loves music, the defects in Tchaikovsky's music are far outweighed by its merits. There is something wrong with those who can find no pleasure at all in the wealth of melody, the dramatic intensity, and the vivid colors in the works of this master.²⁹

That Tchaikovsky was neurotic or extremely pessimistic or in a constant state of mental depression may be true. It is true, however, that his music brought him measures of both satisfaction and pain. He learned to be extremely fluent in his composition and could turn out works of major proportions in a few months or even a few weeks.

. . . but with that fluency went unevenness of inspiration. The composer was only happy when working at tremendous speed and with a spate of ideas flowing from his brain; but later when he judged with cold reflection what he had done he was often appalled and maddened. The mediocre and the affected too often alloyed the gold of real genius.³⁰

This composer, Piotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky, was born May 7, 1840. He was the son of a mining inspector in the Ural Mountains, received a good general education and was given music lessons. He went to school in St. Petersburg at a school of jurisprudence from which he was graduated in 1859. Tchaikovsky had musical talent and at the age of 21 entered the newly established St. Petersburg Conservatory. Anton Rubinstein, the founder of the Conservatory, was his composition instructor. Although Tchaikovsky was repelled by Rubinstein as a person, he continued to study with him and was graduated from the Conservatory in 1865.

²⁹Brook, p. 73.

³⁰Leonard, p. 175.

Tchaikovsky's composition for graduation must have been unusual. It was a cantata to Schiller's "Hymn to Joy," and Rubinstein was so annoyed by it that he threatened to withhold the diploma.

Indeed, the unlucky cantata had the distinction of being condemned by all parties, one not easily achieved in Petersburg in those days. A work which compelled Anton Rubinstein, Cui and Serof to agree must, one feels, have possessed very unusual qualities.³¹

After the calamity of his first attempt at composition, it is a wonder that Tchaikovsky ever composed again. In spite of this blow to his pride, however, he did compose. He was appointed professor of harmony at the Moscow Conservatory and composed at a tremendous rate from that point until his death.

Travel occupied much of Tchaikovsky's time during 1868-1874. He attended the first Bayreuth Festival in 1876, and was married in 1877. This was a short marriage, and Tchaikovsky left his wife after three days. They were separated within nine weeks, though they were never divorced.

The most unusual of Tchaikovsky's relationships was that with Nadezhda von Meck, a wealthy widow, whom he never met (except for some fleeting, accidental encounters in public). She learned of Tchaikovsky's financial needs, commissioned several compositions, and then arranged to pay him an annuity of 6,000 rubles. This friendship lasted until Madame von Meck notified him of the termination of her subsidy and a termination of correspondence in 1889 for unknown reasons.

In 1893 a severe cholera epidemic struck St. Petersburg, and everyone was warned not to drink unboiled water. Nonetheless, Tchaikovsky did exactly that, no doubt from carelessness.

He showed the symptoms of cholera soon afterwards, and nothing could be done to save him. The melodramatic hypothesis that

³¹ M. D. Calvocoressi and Gerald Abraham, Masters of Russian Music (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1936), pp. 260-261.

the fatal drink of water was a defiance of death, in perfect knowledge of the danger, since he must have remembered his mother's death of the same dread infection, is untenable in the light of published private letters between the attendant physician and Modest Tchaikovsky at that time. Tchaikovsky's fatalism alone would amply account for his lack of precaution.³²

Music

Tchaikovsky was a nationalist, but he did not approve of the militant nationalism of "The Five." His musical principles were more restrained and classical. He greatly admired the accomplishments of Western musicians, and as a graduate of the Petersburg Conservatory, he believed in a thorough training in musical theory and composition.

During Tchaikovsky's life his Western sympathies were thought to be opposed to the ideas of "The Five." In retrospect, the differences between Tchaikovsky and "The Five" are of no significance. Tchaikovsky and "The Five" represented various aspects of Russian nationalism and all these men absorbed in their own way Western musical influences. The common features in the styles of these composers are preference for subjects from Russian life and for a musical realism.³³

Tchaikovsky was interested in the spiritual and emotional aspects of human personality. This makes him most similar to Moussorgsky of "The Five" in what he desired to portray in his music. Tchaikovsky himself wrote:

Everyone knows that quite often a clumsy peasant has a more sympathetic perception and knows how to behave himself better than an elegant nobleman dressed in a swallow-tailed coat.³⁴

Loneliness was a part of Tchaikovsky's life, and he found happiness in submerging his own personality in the collective "We" of the Russian people.

The Russian peasant often thinks in collective terms. Loneliness is not a Russian characteristic, but rather a Western European attitude. Tchaikovsky's feeling of loneliness was the result of the depressing Russian realities of his time and it became the link between his musical style and the West. In expression of the bitterness and poignancy of contemporary reality, he was on common ground, not with extreme Russian

³² Bakst, p. 183.

³³ Bakst, p. 181.

³⁴ Bakst, p. 183.

musical nationalists, but with Western romantics. This is³⁵
the reason his music remains popular in the Western world.

Choral Music

There are three main categories for Tchaikovsky's choral compositions:

(a) cantatas, (b) short a cappella or piano-accompanied choruses, and (c) church music.

The religious music is more important, though here we approach a field--the liturgical music of the Russian Orthodox Church--so specialized that an English critic must tread warily indeed, so specialized that Tchaikovsky himself is alleged, as we shall see, to have often tripped.³⁶

Most of Tchaikovsky's church music comes from the 1878-1885 period. He did not appear to have any special spiritual crises or tendencies during this time. His general attitude toward Christianity was "acceptance of Christian ethics, regretful rejection of the doctrines of the Orthodox Church, artistic (or sentimental) pleasure in the ritual of the Church."³⁷

Tchaikovsky's contribution to church music is acknowledged to be of historical importance. It was one of the heralds of an artistic revival in Russian church music. A Russian critic, N. Kompaneysky, in an article in the Russkaya Muzikalnaya Gazeta of October 31, 1904, said "The third Cherubic Hymn is as important in Russian sacred music as A Life for the Tsar in Russian secular music: 'both freed Russian thought from slavish dependence on foreigners.'"³⁸

Russian liturgical music is extremely difficult to write, because there are so many restrictions put upon the composer. He must compose without

³⁵Bakst, p. 184.

³⁶Gerald Abraham, The Music of Tchaikovsky (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1946), p. 231.

³⁷Abraham, p. 231.

³⁸Abraham, p. 233.

allowing the music to obscure the text, use no accompanying instruments, and the music must not have any independent beauty or significance.

in spite of these restrictions Tchaikovsky has contributed several works of great beauty to the church. The two most popular are the "Liturgy of St. Chrysostom" and his "Vesper Service."

Tchaikovsky stated in the preface to his "Vesper Service" (1882):

The present work is an attempt at a four-part harmonization of a number of unmodified, with a few modified, liturgical melodies. Some of these genuine church chants (borrowed from the musical publications of the Most Holy Synod) I have left untouched; in others I have allowed myself a few insignificant changes; in others, again I have in places altogether abandoned the originals and followed my own musical feeling. In the harmonization I have kept to the narrow limits of the so-called strict style, i.e., I have absolutely avoided chromaticism and only in an extremely limited number of cases allowed myself the use of dissonances.³⁹

The three "Cherubic Hymns" written in 1885 are freer in style and reveal a creative personality.

Ex. 27.

Ex. 123.

Slow poco cresc

Tritas Aize

mp

HI - NE SI - LA NE - DE SI - TA S NA - HI etc

Te mpo (Crescendo)

The opening of the third setting in C, about which Kompaneysky was quoted earlier, is an example of Tchaikovsky's treatment of an old melody. The division of parts and submediant chords in these examples is characteristic of Tchaikovsky.

³⁹Abraham, p. 234.

Ex. 28.

Ex. 124. *Slow*

Violins
Tenors
Basses

III KEE - RU VI MI KEE RU VI

Cresc. dim.

In his own country and in his own day, Tchaikovsky's music was disdained by the nationalists as being too Western and eclectic. It is true that his training was in the German academic tradition, that he gradually lost interest in the use of the idioms of Russian folk music, and that he was heavily influenced by Italian and French opera and by Liszt; even so his music retains a singular Russianness. Igor Stravinsky noted this quality in a tribute to his predecessor's art:

"Tchaikovsky's music, which does not appear specifically Russian to everybody, is often more profoundly Russian than music which has long since been awarded the facile label of Muscovite picturesqueness. This music is quite as Russian as Pushkin's verse or Glinka's song. Whilst not specially cultivating his art the 'soul of the Russian peasant,' Tchaikovsky drew unconsciously from the true, popular sources of our race."⁴⁰

In 1956 John Ireland told Alfred Swan:

I still like Tchaikovsky, believe it or not. When we were at the College (Royal College of Music) we all thought he was the last word in music. I heard the first performance in England of his Sixth Symphony. It simply swept us off our feet. We had never heard such music before . . .⁴¹

Alexander Andreyevich Archangelsky

Alexander Andreyevich Archangelsky (Arkhangelsky) was born on October 23, 1846. His musical education in singing and the theory of music was acquired at the Court Chapel in St. Petersburg where he was a pupil of Potulov.

Composition was not Archangelsky's main interest or contribution to Russian music, and his compositions "catered to the average bourgeois taste and

⁴⁰ Leonard, p. 175.

⁴¹ Swan, p. 130.

were full of commonplaces."⁴² Many of his works were simple four-part harmonizations of a chant or folk song, but definitely not in a nationalistic Russian style.

Ex. 29. "Nunc Dimittis."

Nunc Dimittis

ALEXANDER ARCHANGELSKY
(1846-1924)

The English adaptation by
N. LINDSAY NORDEN

Slowly

SOPRANO *p* Lord, now let-test Thou Thy ser-vant de-part,— de-

ALTO *p*

TENOR *p* Lord, now let-test Thou Thy ser-vant de-part,— de-

BASS *p*

For rehearsal only

He was much more resigned to the Italian harmonizations than harmonies which were truly Russian. Others of his pieces did use contrapuntal and very short fugal sections mixed in with the strict homophonic texture, as shown in Ex. 30.

Archangelsky was primarily a choral conductor. In 1880 he organized a choir in St. Petersburg. This choir toured Russia in the year 1899-1900, presenting 110 concerts. In 1907 and again in 1912 his choir toured Western

⁴²Asaf'ev, p. 124.

Ex. 30.

Praise from the ser-a-phim, To Fa-ther, Son and Ho-ly Ghost.

Praise from the ser - a - phim, To Fa-ther, Son ——— and Ho - ly Ghost.

Praise from the ser - a - phim, To Fa-ther, Son ——— and Ho - ly Ghost.

Praise from the ser-a-phim, To — Fa - ther, Son and Ho - ly Ghost.

a tempo
mp
Great God who reigns on high, ——— To whom the

a tempo
mp
Great God who reigns on high, To whom the —

a tempo
mp
Great God who reigns on high, To —

mp a tempo

Europe, thus allowing many Europeans to hear Russian choral music sung by a Russian choir.

Archangelsky was the first choir director in Russia to include women's voices in the performance of sacred music. He wrote a number of choral pieces for his organization and made transcriptions of Russian church hymns. In 1923 he went to Prague as conductor of a students' choir, and died there the following year.

"By his choral concerts in the capitals he rendered a tremendous service to Russian musical education. Their repertoire was not always flawless, but as far as the craft of choral music was concerned, he certainly succeeded in moulding a firm culture that was to bear good fruit."⁴³

Accomplishments of the "Older Generation"

The last four decades of the nineteenth century, which spanned the creative careers of "The Five" (Balakirev, Cui, Borodin, Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov) and Tchaikovsky, saw a change in the entire Russian music scene.

Anton Rubinstein had won his hard battle for the emancipation of musicians. Now an aristocrat or even a man of noble rank might be a composer or a pianist and still retain his social standing . . .

The age represented the triumph of the two great conservatories founded by the Rubinstein brothers in Petersburg and Moscow. Sound music pedagogy had been established for the first time in Russia. The international reputations of men like Anton Rubinstein, Tchaikovsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov inevitably shed lustre on the two schools, and as the years went by lent them enormous prestige. A tradition of music teaching had begun.⁴⁴

In Russia the scholarship and research in music improved. There were advances in collecting and classifying folk songs and chants, and there were good teachers in the conservatories where the training of the next generation

⁴³Asaf'ev, p. 124.

⁴⁴Leonard, p. 199.

of Russian composers was taking place. These men--Liadov, Liapunov, Arensky, Ippolitov-Ivanov, Taneyev, Glazunov, Kastalsky, Rachmaninov, and Gretchaninov--were to bring Russian musical life to new heights in the next few decades.

Sergey Ivanovitch Taneyev

"Taneyev's scholarship would have awed a medieval monastic."⁴⁵

Perhaps Russia's greatest music scholars entered the Moscow Conservatory at the age of ten, entered Tchaikovsky's class in harmony at thirteen, and at fifteen Nicholas Rubinstein's piano class. He had appeared, by the age of nineteen as a piano virtuoso (playing the Brahms D minor Piano Concerto). He was graduated from the Conservatory loaded with honors and had already composed a symphony and part of a string quartet.

He took over Tchaikovsky's place on the faculty of the Moscow Conservatory in his mid-twenties, and there in the next quarter of a century he became an influential teacher and a scholar of massive reputation. In addition to these he was also a pianist, conductor, and composer.

Rachmaninov, who was one of his pupils, had this to say of Taneyev:

What a wonderful man Taneyev was! How he laughed! He would go into peals of laughter, like a happy child. He was incapable of the slightest insincerity. He was so upset by our laziness. There were four of us in the class, but I remember only Scriabin and myself. We never did any work at all.⁴⁶

Taneyev was born in 1856 and, along with the accomplishments mentioned above, he also took over Nicholas Rubinstein's piano classes in 1881. From 1885 to 1889 he was the director of the Conservatory, and from 1889 to 1906 he taught composition. Taneyev died in 1915 of heart complications suffered as a result of a cold which he caught while attending Scriabin's funeral.

Tchaikovsky considered him the finest interpreter of his music, and he

⁴⁵Leonard, p. 210.

⁴⁶Swan, p. 149.

was a first-class pianist. He had no desire to be a concert pianist, and confined himself to composition and pedagogy. He is one of the most respected figures of Russian music history.

In 1879 he grasped the importance of Russian song in the modernization of Russian music in the nineteenth century:

The task of every Russian composer consists in furthering the creation of national music. The history of western music gives us the answer as to what should be done to attain this; apply to the Russian song the workings of the mind that were applied to the song of western nations and we will have our own national music. Begin with elementary contrapuntal forms, pass to more complex ones, elaborate the form of the Russian fugue, and from there it is only a step to complex instrumental types. The Europeans took centuries to get there, we need far less. We know the way, the goal, we can profit by their experience. . . . Let us master the art of the old contrapuntists and undertake a difficult but glorious task. Who knows but within the next few decades, early in the twentieth century, Russian forms will have been evolved. It does not matter when, but they must come.⁴⁷

Music

There was already a great deal done by the beginning of the nineties, both in choral literature, and the matter of organizing choral practice and concert work. At the end of the nineties the musical centers in the various districts began to develop. On the threshold of the new century Russian composers were already giving their due, in their music, to works for chorus.⁴⁸

Taneyev was one of these. His characteristic traits in choral style were already established. He was to become the master of polyphony and a great admirer of Bach.

"He made his debut brilliantly, with the Cantata "Johannes Damascenus" to a text by the poet Aleksey Tolstoy. In certain respects this is his composition of profoundest warmth and soulfulness."⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Leonid Sabaneyeff, Modern Russian Composers, trans. by Judah A. Joffe (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, Inc., 1927), p. 29.

⁴⁸ Asaf'ev, p. 125.

⁴⁹ Sabaneyeff, p. 29.

Taneyev's views on music were summarized in the introduction to his book, *Podvizhnoy kontrapunkt strogavo pisma* (Imitative Counterpoint). 'Our tonal system is being transformed into a new system which destroys tonality, and substitutes chromatic harmony for diatonic. Destruction of tonality results in a decline of musical forms. The stability of a single tonality gives way to quickly changing modulations. Contrasting harmonies, a gradual or sudden transition to a new tonality, and a prepared return to the main tonality disclose salient characteristics of a composition. These elements, which help a listener understand musical form, are gradually disappearing from contemporary music. The result is the fragmentation of musical form and the decadence of the entire composition. A firmly cohesive composition has become rare. Large compositions are chaotic masses of mechanically connected parts which could be rearranged at will.'⁵⁰

Taneyev's works are permeated by his customary seriousness and pensiveness. His thought and contemplation often are upon subjects that lie out of the ordinary. Therefore, his lyrics and coloring are unusual. His music is said to have a peculiar charm from the constant wavering between experience and meditation, "a transfigured, ennobled and spiritualized emotionalism."⁵¹

These traits are typical of all his works with voices: his songs, choruses, opera, and vocal ensembles.

Alone of all Russian composers, Taneyev was celibate and teetotaler, so that it became a matter of course, and all his intimate friends no longer paid any attention to it. And his music, too, was just as sober and chaste: he did not even divine the states of intoxication, infatuation, or passion.⁵²

Taneyev's whole framework was especially fitted to cultivate and conserve the past. He was passionately devoted to the valuable things of culture and feared they would be hurt or lost. His musical examples were Bach, Palestrina, and the old Netherlanders.

Taneyev composed two great cantatas. They are Op. 1 and Op. 36, respectively. They begin and end his entire compositional output. Here is an example of the fugal writing which is characteristic of his work and reflects

⁵⁰Bakst, p. 245.

⁵¹Asaf'ev, p. 107.

⁵²Sabaneyeff, p. 28.

Sopran

Alt

Chor

Tenor

Baß

p

Ich zieh' auf dunk - lem Pfa - de

hin ——— in Angst und Hof - fen, starr die Glie - der, die Brust ist kalt und leer der

3

p Ich zieh' auf dunk - lem Pfa - de hin _____ in Angst und

Sinn, _____ geschlossen sind die Au - gen - li - der,

Hof - fen, starr die Glied - er; die Brust ist kalt und leer der Sinn, _____ geschlossen

Ich bin ver - stummt, und zu mir halt nicht mehr der Brüder bittres

sfz
Ich

4

sind die Au - gen - li - - - der.

Ich bin ver-

Kla - gen.

Ich spü - re nicht mehr, wie es — wallt — aus — Weih - rauch -

zieh' auf dunk - lem Pfa - de hin, — in Angst und Hof - fen starr die

mp

stummt und — zu mir halt nicht mehr der Brüder bittres

fäs - sern, — die — sie — tra - - - gen;

ich spü - - - re *mf*

Ich

Glie - der; die Brust ist kalt und leer der Sinn, — geschlossen

cresc.

Kla - gen. Ich spü - re nicht mehr, wie es — wallt — aus — Weih - rauch -

nicht mehr, wie — es — wallt aus Weih - rauch - fäs - sem die sie

zieh' auf dunk - lem Pfa - de hin — in Angst und Hof - fen, starr die

sind die Au - gen - li - - der. Ich bin ver -

fäs - sem, — die — sie — tra - - gen; ich spü - - re

tra - - gen. Ich

Glie - der; die Brust ist kalt und leer der Sinn, — geschlossen

stummt, und — zu mir hallt nicht mehr der Brü - der bitt - res

nicht mehr, wie es wallt aus Weih - rauch - fäs - - sern, die sie

zieh' auf dunk - lem Pfa - de hin in Angst und Hof - fen, starr die

sind die Au - gen - li - - der. Ich bin ver -

Kla - gen. Ich spü - re nicht mehr, wie es wallt aus Weih - rauch -

tra - - gen. Ich

Glie - der; die Brust ist kalt und leer der Sinn, *cresc.* geschlossen

stummt, und zu mir halt nicht mehr der Brüder bittres

fäs - sern, die sie tra - - - gen. Ich spü - - re

zieh' auf dunk - lem Pfa - de hin _____ in Angst und Hof - fen, starr die
sind die Au - gen - li - - der. Ich bin ver -
Kla - gen. Ich spü - re nicht mehr, wie es _____ wallt - aus - Weih - rauch -
nicht - mehr, - wie - es - wallt aus Weih - - rauch - fäs - sern, die sie

Glie - der; die Brust ist kalt und leer der Sinn, _____ geschlossen
stummt, ich - bin ver - stummt, und zu mir halt nicht mehr der
fäs - sern, - die - sie - tra - - gen, _____ aus Weih - rauch -
tra - - gen, wie - es - wallt _____ aus Weih - rauch -

sind die Au - gen - li - - - - - der.

Brü - der bitt - - - - res - Kla - - - - gen.

fäs - sern, die sie tra - - - - gen.

fäs - - sern, die sie tra - - - - - gen.

dim.

p.

3

3

ff

ff

Die Brust — ist kalt — und — leer — der Sinn, — ge - schlos - sen sind —

Die Brust ist kalt und leer der Sinn, ge-schlossen sind —

Die Brust ist kalt: und leer der Sinn, ge - schlos - sen sind —

Die — Brust ist kalt und — leer der Sinn, ge - schlos - sen

his great love and dedication to the principles of Bach.

Both of his cantatas "are saturated with music of the highest calibre--works moulded with consummate mastery, though moving within predictable spheres."⁵³ He handles parts expertly, and the form is overall perfection. He almost always uses safe and effective sonorities. However, "when, as in his songs, he was challenged by verbal images or psychological states, he at times succeeded in an uncanny fashion,"⁵⁴ in putting down the exact music to depict the situation.

Taneyev's reflections upon human life, fate, and grief of parting with life are involved in "Johannes Damascenus" (1885). "After the Reading of a Psalm" reveals his ethical and philosophical ideals. In the conclusion to this cantata is expressed Taneyev's credo:

I want a heart purer than gold
And a will strong in labor,
I want a brother who loves his brother,
I desire the truth of justice.⁵⁵

Taneyev was not only a great Russian composer, whose true worth has begun to loom clear only since his death, but for the Russian musical world he was something infinitely greater, the teacher of several musical generations, and the living and shining ideal of the musician as a priest of pure art. He was an idealistic personality as a man, and all those who in any way came in contact with him, carried away memories not only of a serious, profound and original composer, 'a Russian Brahms,' but also in a higher degree of a pure, honest and ideal human being, so typically Russian that he could not have been duplicated in other surroundings or in another nation.⁵⁶

Alexander Dimitrievich Kastalsky

The pupil of Tchaikovsky and Taneyev at the Moscow Conservatory, Alexander Kastalsky became one of the great modern authorities on the nature of the

⁵³Swan, pp. 133-134.

⁵⁴Swan, p. 134.

⁵⁵Bakst, p. 246.

⁵⁶Sabaneyeff, p. 19.

folk song and the old church chant. He contributed much to the movement for their scrupulous preservation and treatment.

In the realm of the chorus "it was Kastalsky alone who really approached the musical language of the folk-song."⁵⁷

Alexander Kastalsky was born on November 28, 1856, in Moscow. He was a student at the Moscow Conservatory from 1878-1882. In 1887 he was appointed teacher of pianoforte in the Moscow Synodal School, of which he became director in 1900.

Kastalsky is as well known as a choral conductor as he is as a composer. In 1891, he became assistant conductor of the Synodal Chorus, and in 1910 he was appointed director of the school and principal conductor of the choir. He took an extended European tour (Warsaw, Vienna, Dresden, Florence, Rome, etc.) with the choir in 1917. The Synodal School became a choral academy in 1918, and then merged with the Moscow Conservatory in 1923. At this point Kastalsky became the professor of choral singing for the Moscow Conservatory.

In the area of composition Kastalsky is a notable composer of Russian sacred music, into which he introduced modern elements, combining them with the ancient church modes.

After the Revolution Kastalsky continued to display great activity both in composition and as an organizer. He helped to create theatres for the people and centres for the study and preservation of folk music. Between 1918 and 1926 he composed over fifty works, most of them choral, including a 'Hymn to the Proletariat,' a 'Hymn to the First of May,' the cantata '1905,' arrangements of folksongs with accompanying orchestras of native instruments and, among other miscellaneous compositions, 'The Railway Train' for chorus, pianoforte, trumpet and percussion. His book, 'The Peculiarities of Russian Folk Music,' is of capital importance.⁵⁸

⁵⁷Asaf'ev, p. 133.

⁵⁸M. D. Calvocoressi, "Kastalsky, Alexander Dimitrievich," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed., IV, 708.

Music

When it came to careful workmanship, he was wholly uninhibited and was in the habit of dashing down pages only roughly sketched. In short, he was not over-burdened by schooling. If this was a defect, he made up for it by a genuine feeling for antiquity and eagerly joined the ranks of those who clamoured for a return to the sources.⁵⁹

A strong choral culture of the new century arose on a different foundation--a fusion of the musical language of the folk-songs and the melodies of the ancient religious chant--in the works of the great master of the Russian a cappella style A. D. Kastalsky, in whom two currents of melodic intonations and two spheres of melodic manifestation were combined into one stylistic whole: The song art of the peasants and the ancient Russian choral art, a product of city culture which has survived for us only in religious chants. So long as the Church was a cultured and enlightened force, musical life naturally centered around it. When in the seventeenth century the reforms of Patriarch Nikon were fought out, this struggle was paralleled in the gradual Europeanization of religious singing. In one word, the religious chant, both in its oral and written tradition, accumulated not only the richest material, but also methods of performance and a mastery of melodic compositions. At the very end of the nineteenth century this overflowing melodic material was taken in hand by Kastalsky, a composer excessively sensitive in detecting the peculiarities (constructive and decorative) of the material. In his hands--those of a musician who created out of the natural peculiarities of the material, and not from an application to the material of alien standards of voice-leading, and harmonic, rather than modal and melodic, functions--arose a wonderful choral art. In his arrangements of religious melodies Kastalsky, at first instinctively, and later from a deep understanding of the nature of folk-music and the art of the old religious singers, aimed at moulding the polyphonic texture from a melodic (horizontal) movement, unfolding itself slowly and in strict accord with the laws of breathing. A living sonority, and not a mechanical spacing of the inner parts, between the upper and the lower, is what characterizes his music. [See Ex. 32.] Melodic, and not harmonic functions, represent his voice-leading. Vocal dynamics control the sonority and methods of formation. All this seemed, up to quite lately, so new and unusual, that Kastalsky was looked upon, in these musical circles that had an unshakable faith in the schemes of German chorale voice-leading, as a queer duck and half-educated composer. But it was he who knew the truth, if for no other reason than that the sound of his choruses was invariably better than that of his critics, and his voice-leading much more intelligent.⁶⁰

It was in the Moscow Synodal School that Kastalsky developed his very

⁵⁹ Swan, pp. 143-144.

⁶⁰ Asaf'ev, p. 127.

Ex. 32.

selves, _____ for God _____ is _____ with us!

selves, _____ for God _____ is _____ with us!

original ideas on choral singing and with encouragement from Orlev, the conductor of the Synodal Choir, he began his series of stylizations of the old znamenny chant. This won immediate approval and was published. Kastalsky's historic role was clearly revealed in these settings which marked a complete departure from the official style of the Imperial Chapel. These marked a return to the old Russian canticles, into which melodic turns from the folk-songs had been infused.

Ex. 33. Christmas Kontakion, znamenny chant harmonized in 1902.

Thus the first attempt was made to restore the proper musical heritage to the Orthodox Church.

Kastalsky turned to the folk song itself later. In 1912-13, he was trying to find a bridge between church and folk music:

I am studying the materials for my coming work--summarizing the various characteristic aspects of the Russian song and at the moment scrutinizing old manuscripts of church singing, which no one has as yet read or transcribed on to the stave.⁶¹

Secular choral music has received numerous contributions from Kastalsky which are "sonorous works, original, as well as arrangements of folk songs. In his arrangements Kastalsky aims relentlessly at an approach to the intonations and methods of the polyphonic choral art of the peasants."⁶²

The entire movement toward the sources, especially in the church music, came to an end after the Revolution in 1917. All discoveries in the religious field were halted, and all of Kastalsky's collaborators at the Synodal School had to write secular choruses.

Kastalsky died in Moscow on December 17, 1926.

Sergei Vassilyevitch Rachmaninov

Rachmaninov is considered to be one of the most completely sincere and unassuming musicians that ever lived. He did not care for posterity, and even made jokes about the future of his music. He was once quoted as saying, "I have chased three hares (composing, conducting, and playing the piano). Can I be certain that I have captured one?"⁶³ It should be mentioned that only at one time did he ever even consider leaving composition.

Rachmaninov was a man burning with music, impelled to write music without any outside considerations. Music was the core

⁶¹Asaf'ev, p. 145.

⁶²Asaf'ev, p. 128.

⁶³John Culshaw, Rachmaninov (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 10.

of his life, and he could no more avoid writing it than we can avoid reading or talking;⁶⁴

Rachmaninov was and is often misunderstood. He wrote music as he felt. It was never composed to be compared with the music of Tchaikovsky or any other composer and must be judged on its own merits. This man lived in a period of great turmoil in his beloved homeland. He did not fully understand or accept the changes that were taking place around him, and his music had to be influenced to some degree by the uncertainty of his world. "Of one thing we can be certain; Rachmaninoff would ask of us, in the consideration of his music, the same sincerity by which that music was created."⁶⁵

"Sergei Vassilyevitch Rachmaninov was born on the estate of Oneg, in the province of Novgorod, on April 2, 1873."⁶⁶ He was one of six children. When he was nine years old, his mother and father separated, and his mother moved the family into St. Petersburg. With the death of both of his grandfathers, his grandmother, Madame Boutakova, moved in with them to help share the expenses.

Rachmaninov's mother and grandmother had much to do with the use he made of his talents. His mother started him in basic piano and theory lessons when he was four. He played well, but he showed little interest. In St. Petersburg he took lessons from Mlle. Anna Ornazkaya, and she suggested that he be sent to the St. Petersburg Conservatoire. The family could not afford to send him, so Mlle. Anna Ornazkaya worked with him until he was good enough to win a scholarship.

In 1883 at the age of ten, Rachmaninov was accepted into the Conservatoire. He played well, but he knew very little about theory. The faculty

⁶⁴Culshaw, p. 10.

⁶⁵Culshaw, p. 11.

⁶⁶David Ewen, Composers of Today (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1934), p. 202.

finally placed him in the proper theory class, but it soon became evident that he could learn much more quickly than the other members in the class.

His grandmother stepped in here, and with the help of Rachmaninov's cousin, Alexandre Siloti, she sent him to study with Nikolai Sverev. Each year Sverev took certain students to study with him. In order to study with him, his students had to live with him. He was an excellent teacher, though somewhat eccentric. Rachmaninov was one of these selected pupils. These pupils were to practice three hours a day, as well as take lessons in literature and language. Sverev also had another plan to provide excellent experience for the young musicians under his charge. This was the Sunday Evening Entertainment, to which he invited a mixed collection of guests for dinner. His students would then provide the entertainment. It was to one of these sessions that Tchaikovsky was invited, and Rachmaninov provided the entertainment. The composer was deeply impressed. After this initial meeting, the two of them talked often, became and continued to be great friends.

Rachmaninov made great progress, and the next year he entered the advanced harmony class at the Conservatoire in Moscow. He still lived with Sverev and took lessons from him, but the instructor in his advanced theory class, Arensky, had become the dominating influence in his life. By the end of the first year, Rachmaninov was easily the most advanced student in the class and the only one who could handle four-part harmony.

Rachmaninov then faced the examination to determine whether his musical education was to continue along general lines or whether he was to be allowed to specialize in the composer's division. The main portion of the test lay in a composition, away from the piano, of a Prelude containing certain set modulations and other technical data. He then had to perform the piece before a Board of Examiners, which included Arensky and Tchaikovsky. To enter the

composer's division, he had to receive a plus from each member of the committee. He later found out that Tchaikovsky gave him three pluses. He was on his way.

In the spring of 1892 Rachmaninov took the final Gold Medal examination. He passed it and was presented with the highest musical honor given in Russia, the Gold Medal.

Rachmaninov was very lucky to find a publisher for his works immediately upon graduation from the Conservatoire. The publisher was Gutheil, and it is in his edition that most of Rachmaninov's works appear today.

His earliest works were widely accepted, and then his first symphony was destroyed by his critics. During the next three years Rachmaninov could not compose, but busied himself as a conductor and pianist. Friends finally induced him to go see a psychologist named Dr. Dahl. He visited Dr. Dahl every day from January through April of 1900. As Rachmaninov sat in his darkened room, Dahl would repeat over and over the sentences, "You will begin to write your Concerto . . . you will work with great facility . . . the Concerto will be of excellent quality."⁶⁷ Dr. Dahl was successful, and the composer had finished the C minor Concerto by the fall of that year. He also appeared as the soloist in its first performance which Siloti conducted.

From this time on his composing career was relatively uninterrupted, until he stopped composing altogether later in his life. He composed three more concertos, two more symphonies, many piano works, choral works, songs, and operas.

Rachmaninov made his first tour of the United States in 1909. He returned to Russia, but a revolution was beginning that soon forced him to

⁶⁷Culshaw, p. 33.

leave the country he loved.

But those without official positions faced either voluntary exile or death. Among these was Rachmaninov, as we know from a note set down by Sophie Satin: Near the end of November, 1917, at about six o'clock one evening Rachmaninov rode on a slow-moving street-car along the unlit streets of Moscow to the railway station. It was drizzling; somewhere in the distance one could hear isolated shots. Only two people accompanied him: a man from the piano firm of Diederichs, who had been sent to aid in the purchase of a ticket, helping him to find a place on the overcrowded train, and myself . . . ⁶⁸

He spent his last years in many countries, finally settling in the United States.

His last tour was taken in 1942-43, and ended in Knoxville, Tennessee. This was to be his last public appearance. He was in his home in Beverly Hills when he died of cancer on March 28, 1943.

Music

"The first, and seemingly obvious, point to be realized is that Rachmaninov was a Russian, and that despite his long residence abroad the flavour of his music is equally Russian."⁶⁹ "Above all other characteristics, there is in his music a pronounced fatalism--a fervent belief that no struggle against fate can succeed."⁷⁰

This characterization of Rachmaninov is the recollection left by his contemporary and fellow musician, Alexander Goedicke:

He loved church singing and frequently, even in winter, he got up at seven and, taking a cab in the darkness, drove off to the Androniev monastery, where he attended early liturgy, listening to the old chants sung by the monks in parallel fifths. It could well happen that in the evening of the same day he would go to a symphony concert and from there to the restaurant Yar or Strelna and stay there till after midnight listening to the singing of the gypsies . . . ⁷¹

During Rachmaninov's time most composers were preoccupied with tone

⁶⁸ Swan, p. 192.

⁶⁹ Swan, p. 192.

⁷⁰ Culshaw, p. 47.

⁷¹ Swan, p. 151.

colors and various orchestral refractions and new harmonic combinations.

Rachmaninov's genius manifested itself in the shaping of renewed melodic form.

In a discussion of Rachmaninov's melodic style it would be impossible to leave out one characteristic type of passage. "It is a succession of descending scales, the upper note rising with each repetition."⁷² This pattern is chimelike and is often assumed to be the bells of one of the churches in St. Petersburg.

Rachmaninov studied the old notations under Smolensky, and his love for these ancient melodies was born at that time. He was later to use them in many of his compositions. His cyclic choral works based upon these melodies were magnificent (the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and the Vesper Service, Op. 37). In these works "a song-like polyphonic style was born, in which the marvellously rich heritage of past melodies had blossomed out with great splendor."⁷³

The Vesper Mass is dedicated to Stephen Smolensky, the authority on the styles of early Russian church music.

The most restrained and personal of Rachmaninov's works, it is nevertheless his most austere beautiful music. That Rachmaninov was at heart a deeply religious man we need not doubt; had he not been, his essentially fatalistic outlook, and its reflection in his music, would have been morbid and perhaps cynical. But beneath his somewhat forbidding exterior there lay a deep faith in the ideal of immortal peace and love; no other reason will account for the spirit behind the Vesper Mass.⁷⁴

Several pieces from the Vesper Mass will serve adequately as examples in the discussion of Rachmaninov's choral music.

Certainly the Nunc Dimittis (St. Luke 2:29) is the most strikingly beautiful of the set. A fragment of thirty-six bars, it is worthy to stand with the accepted masterpieces of religious music.

The part writing and particularly the gentle dovetailing of the

⁷²Culshaw, p. 51.

⁷³Asaf'ev, pp. 127-128.

⁷⁴Culshaw, p. 144.

phrases and repetitions, show how near to Rachmaninov's heart were the words--'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.'⁷⁵

Rachmaninov is said to have asked to have the Nunc Dimittis played at his funeral.

Ex. 34. Nunc Dimittis.

The musical score is for the 'Nunc Dimittis' by Rachmaninov, featuring vocal parts for Alto, Solo Tenor, and Tenors. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.' The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the Alto and Solo Tenor parts. The Alto part has the lyrics 'Lord, now let - - test' and the Solo Tenor part has the lyrics 'Lord, now let-test Thou'. The second system shows the Tenors and Solo Tenor parts. The Tenors part has the lyrics 'Thou Thy ser - vant' and the Solo Tenor part has the lyrics 'Thy ser - vant de - - part in peace'. The music is characterized by its simple, hymn-like melody and the use of long, sustained notes.

In the seventh piece "Glory to God" the sonority increases and there is more elaborate harmony which results in a beautifully moving work.

⁷⁵Culshaw, pp. 147-148.

Ex. 35. Vespers, opus 37, No. VII.

The musical score is written for four staves, likely representing four voices. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The first system shows the vocal parts with lyrics: "Glo - - - ry, - - - - - Glo - - -". The second system continues the lyrics: "- ry, - - - Glo - - - - - ry - - -". The score features complex contrapuntal textures with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, creating a dense, flowing melodic line. The vocal parts are often in parallel motion, while the piano accompaniment provides a harmonic foundation with sustained chords and moving bass lines.

The fourteenth hymn shows the great contrapuntal skill of Rachmaninov, as shown in Example 36.

Ex. 36.

Hymn "When Thou, O Lord, Hadst Arisen"

Melody of the Znamen Tradition

Edited by
WINFRED DOUGLAS
Slowly

S. RACHMANINOFF
Op. 37, No 14

SOPRANO *mf* When thou, *p* O Lord, hadst a -

ALTO *mf* When thou, *p* O Lord, hadst a -

TENOR *mf* When thou, *p* O Lord, hadst a -

BASS *mf* When thou, *p* O Lord, hadst

PIANO *Slowly*
for Practice only *mf* *p*

pp *mf*
ri - sen from the tomb, and burst the

pp *mf*
ri - sen from the tomb, and burst the

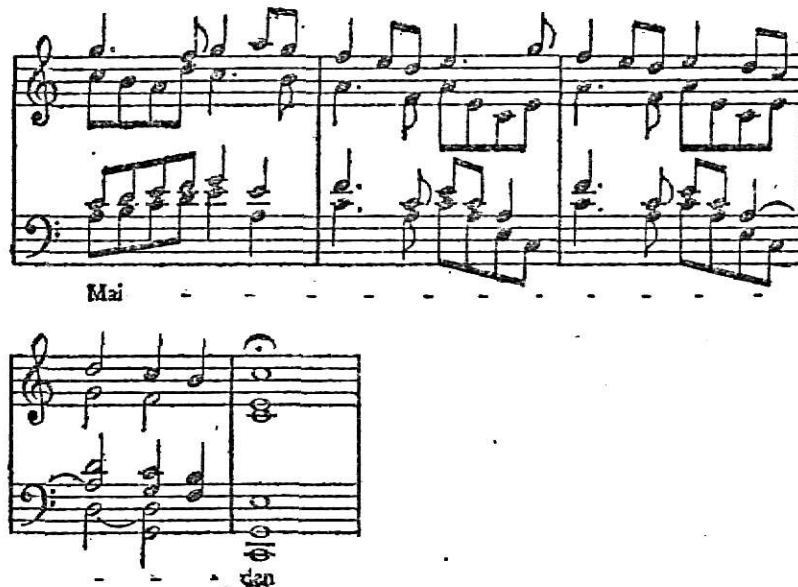
pp *mf*
ri - sen from the tomb, and burst the

pp *mf*
ri - sen from the tomb, and burst the bonds the

pp *mf*
ri - sen from the tomb,

The final five bars of the final hymn are melismatic and delicately beautiful.

Ex. 37.



Rachmaninov's two massive works in the religious domain parallel Glinka's operas in the secular with their tentative attempt to link Russian music with its natural foundations in folk-song and chant.⁷⁶

Rachmaninoff matures . . . Tchaikovsky's image vanishes little by little, obscured by the image of Rachmaninoff himself. This latter image is not all-embracing, is not broad . . . Rachmaninoff is far narrower than Tchaikovsky. But psychologically he is greater. This 'greatness' of a man is neither the merit of his creative work nor the size of his compositions. One can be the author of huge Symphonies and be little, and again compose Preludes and be vast. One may compose poor music and yet be great in spirit, and in this poor music this greatness will still come forward in some mysterious way . . . Rachmaninoff is a man of great spirit. By the same mysterious standard Rachmaninoff surpasses his genius-endowed teacher, Tchaikovsky . . . He lives through his limited experience with infinite, with titanic force. In Rachmaninoff's darkness there is still more impenetrableness as well as more majesty and solemnity.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Swan, p. 175.

⁷⁷ Culshaw, pp. 63-64.

Alexander Tikhonovitch Gretchaninov

From the surroundings of the "old musical culture" as it existed in Russia in the 1870's came Gretchaninov. There was no modernism or innovation save that of the Russian National School, "The Five," and Moussorgsky was doing the unpardonable in his music.

Gretchaninov's masterly sacred works are of historical importance, for he introduced a reform into Russian church singing by using nationally colored melodic patterns; in several of his Masses he employed instrumental accompaniment contrary to the prescriptions of the Russian Orthodox faith, a circumstance that precluded the use of these works in Russian churches.⁷⁸

Alexander Gretchaninov was born in Moscow in 1864. He died more than ninety-one years later, on January 3, 1956, in New York City. He received his first important instruction from Safonov (piano) and Arensky (composition) at the Moscow Conservatory, but then he moved to St. Petersburg to study with Rimsky-Korsakov.

He became instructor of composition at the Moscow Institute in 1903 and remained there until 1922. He was a prolific composer and had reached his Op. 100 by 1924.

In 1925 Gretchaninov left Russia for Paris. He returned shortly and then began a series of tours to the United States. He took six such tours between 1929 and 1939. As his last tour came to an end, he stayed in the United States. The Nazis had occupied France, so he decided to stay in New York City, and became an American citizen in 1946.

Music

At the same time Gretchaninov cultivated with great success two spheres in which he was destined to create a style of his own and

⁷⁸Nicolas Slonimsky, Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians, 5th ed., pp. 607-608.

win for himself a really great name as a composer of church music and music for children.⁷⁹

Outside of Russia he is probably most noted for his choral works. He is called a master of religious choral writing. His style of music stems mostly from that of "The Five." He is a serious scholar in that he uses the polyphonic effects taken directly from Russian folk music, as opposed to Western polyphony.

Ex. 38.

mf Saints and Mar - tyrs bless and praise Thee, An - gels and Arch - an - gels

mf Saints and Mar - tyrs bless Thee, An - gels and Arch - an - gels

mf Saints and Mar - tyrs, An - gels and Arch - an - gels

Saints and Mar - tyrs

mf

His work in the field of church music is unquestionably more important than his 'children's realm.' In the creation of artistic Russian church music, Gretchaninov has been continuing the line begun by Glinka, the father of Russian music. The idea of this work is to utilize the old Russian-Byzantine Church melodies and to

⁷⁹ Sabaneyeff, pp. 144-145.

work them over artistically, abreast with modern requirements and at the same time, not to contradict, in matters of style, the melody itself and the accepted type of Russian church service. This problem is not as simple as it might appear at first glance. Russian church singing is ritually locked in a choral world, for the Russian Church does not permit the use of any instruments in the church. To this day, it demands a well-nigh antique style of musical exposition, at any rate, a style which in its harmonic complexity has scarcely advanced beyond Palestrina and the music of the sixteenth century. This singing imposes very burdensome conditions upon the composer. Under these conditions, to give music an interest and a current significance, specific gifts are required. . . . Being of ecclesiastical origin Gretchaninov from childhood had been familiar with the liturgy, and understood better than the others the inner meaning and structure of this style, which in regard to its grandioseness and impressiveness undoubtedly vies with that of Roman ecclesiasticism, and with Protestant choral music. [See Ex. 39.] A perfect master of choral orchestration, if one may use this expression, knowing ideally and to perfection the properties of the human voice, Gretchaninov can extract from choral masses utterly unexpected and frequently overpowering effects. Along with the composer Kastalsky, his senior, who confined himself almost exclusively to church music, Gretchaninov at present stands out as the highest exponent of Russian church composition, a field which is almost unknown in Europe and has somehow always been left out in reviewing the achievements of Russian musical art.⁸⁰

Gretchaninov is an innovator in this realm. He widens the role of the music in the liturgy and in addition to the choir, he introduces the organ and various orchestral instruments. He did these things in his "Demyestvennaya Liturgy."

At its first appearance, Gretchaninov's 'Demyestvennaya' called forth numerous criticisms, principally in ecclesiastical circles, who saw therein the collapse of the tradition of old choral singing. But the more liberal representatives of the clergy well understood that such broadening of artistic effects was both inevitable and extremely useful.⁸¹

Gretchaninov's style has won him a great name not only in Russia, but abroad as well.

⁸⁰ Sabaneyeff, pp. 145-146.

⁸¹ Sabaneyeff, p. 146.

Ex. 39.

2

Broadly

reign - eth o'er all the na - tions. Ho - ly and migh - ty

reign - eth o'er all the na - tions. Ho - ly and migh - ty

Broadly

dim. e rit. *p*

God of glo-ry, the God that do - est won-drous things.

God of glo-ry, the God that do - est won-drous things.

dim. e rit. *p*

dim. e rit. *p*

THE SUITABILITY OF RUSSIAN CHORAL MUSIC
FOR THE CHORAL ENSEMBLE

Introduction

For purposes of this paper the choral ensemble will consist of forty-eight members, which is not a full chorus as Rimsky-Korsakov describes it. "For a full chorus, 32 singers to each of the four parts soprano, alto, tenor and bass."¹ This chorus will have twelve sopranos, twelve altos, ten tenors and fourteen basses.

One piece of music from each of the nine composers discussed in the previous essay, "The Nature of Russian Choral Music," will be used. The pieces will be examined from the standpoints of text and singability, which includes range, tessitura and voice leading. These pieces will also be analyzed briefly as to general structure.

The designation of pitches will be as follows:

- C - The bass low "C" below the staff
- c - Second space of bass staff
- c1 - Third space on tenor's treble staff
- c2 - Third space on treble staff
- c3 - Above the treble staff

The selection of specific pieces is primarily based upon availability and second upon the taste of the writer.

¹Rimsky-Korsakov, Principles of Orchestration, trans. by Edward Agate (New York: Dover Publications, 1964), p. 243.

Glinka

Title: Cherubim Song
 Composer: Glinka
 Arranger: Ralph L. Baldwin
 Publisher: G. Schirmer
 Voice Parts: SSAATBB
 Range: Soprano (e1-g2)
 Alto (b-d2)
 Tenor (f#-f1)
 Bass (G-c1)
 Tessitura: Medium for all parts
 Text: English version by Nathan Haskell Dole

Like glad Cherubim in heav'nly chorus,
 Moulded, moulded fair in marv'lous form,
 Who thrice holy songs and praises sing
 For aye to God, the blessed Trinity:

So we now far from our hearts do lay all our care,
 Ev'ry earthborn care from our hearts we lay. Amen!

We exalt the Lord of Creation,
 Who reigneth high above the ranks of all the angels,
 Unseen by keenest eyes of mortals! Hallelujah!

"Cherubim Song" would be accessible to most choruses. The ranges are narrow, not extending beyond the general range for each part. The voice leading is primarily stepwise.

The piece is in three main sections with the music reflecting the structure of the text. The first two sections are in 4/4 and the last section is in 2.

Each voice part has a certain amount of melodic interest which makes it appealing to the singers. The easy flow of the lines and the English text make it most accessible to a high school choir such as the forty-eight voice ensemble.

Moussorgsky

Title: Joshua
 Composer: Moussorgsky
 Arranger: Rimsky-Korsakov
 Publisher: Boosey & Hawkes
 Voice Parts: SATTB
 Mezzo-soprano solo
 Bass solo
 Range: Soprano (f)-a^b₂
 Alto (b^b-e^b₂)
 Tenor (e^b-a^b₁)
 Bass (A^b-e^b₁)
 Tessitura: Upper medium for all parts
 Text: English version by A. W. Cox

Hear ye the word of God:
 Go, my people, forth triumphant.
 Take arms against the foe,
 The Amorite Kings their hearts do harden.
 Haiha, Haiha, Haiha!

Jericho's walls lie heaped in ruins,
 Haiha, Haiha, Haiha!
 Gibeon's princes bow before you.
 Forward see the holy ark to Canaan's distant hills move ever,
 On to conquest it goes. To arms!

Bear aloft your sword unsheathed,
 Hurl your lance with arm unfailing.
 See high above where the eagle,
 With strong wing beating,
 Wheels while his piercing eye tracks his prey with watch untiring.

Never tiring too must be your watch, O Israel,
 Let not the guile of Canaan's women betray you.

Go forth and fear not,
 For into your hand this land is given,
 And all who resist you shall perish.
 Hear ye the word of God.

Evermore, O Israel, Great is the Lord,
 The Lord is your strength and your help.

Desolation all around them,
 Gibeon's women wander bitterly weeping.
 In the dark sky hanging over Gaza rolls the coming storm.
 All their age-long glory broken,
 By Gibeon's walls shall end this Amorite people.
 There shall be mourning and bitter tears shall fall.

Behold, O Israel, still stands the sun in heaven.

Since God hath chosen him, Joshua's praise then let us sing,
 Praise him, O Israel, sing his glory forever.
 Praise him all you people of Israel.

Canaan our inheritance the Lord into our hand delivers.
 Yonder the holy Ark is shining.

Thanks be unto Him, the Almighty God.
 He is the Lord.

The entire first portion of the piece is four-part (SATB) or five-part (SATTB) writing. The men sing alone "Never tiring . . . betray you." Full part writing returns for the next section, and then the men sing once more. The mezzo-soprano sings the next section followed by a soprano and alto repetition of the same text. "Behold, . . . in heaven" is a short bass recitative. After the recitative, the chorus returns with portions of the first part of the piece followed by the ending words still intoned by full chorus.

The voice leading is somewhat difficult, especially to our ears, due to the use of many accidentals and the Hebrew melody. The melody is taken from a traditional song sung by a Jew who lived near Moussorgsky. It does not fit the usual western tone progression. Once the melody is learned, however, there would be no difficulty in pitch distinction.

The forty-eight voice ensemble would probably spend some time learning "Joshua," but they would be able to sing it.

Rimsky-Korsakov

Title: All Praise to God the Eternal

Composer: Rimsky-Korsakov

Arranger: Harvey Gaul

Publisher: J. Fischer & Brother

Voice Parts: SSATTB
Baritone solo

Range: Soprano (e^b₁-a^b₂)
Alto (e^b₁-e^b₂)
Tenor (e^b-a^b₁)
Bass (B^b-e^b₁)

Tessitura: Medium for all parts

Text: Adapted from the Rimsky-Korsakov Collection
by Harvey Gaul

All praise to God the Eternal.
Bless us, O Father!
Glory to God.

Shelter the people
And prosper plain folk and rulers,
Glory to God.

Bless all our mills,
Bless our farm-lands.
Bless our nation,
Glory to God.

Give peace on earth,
May Thy laws be held,
Holy Father,
Glory to Thee!
All praise to God!

In this piece the bass line is quite high, often doubling the tenor line. The tenors and basses open in unison in the first section. A full four-part (SATB) chorus sings section two, followed by a baritone solo accompanied by full chorus humming. The last section is again full chorus in six parts (SSATTB) this time.

The voice leading is straightforward and stepwise. The ranges are not

excessive; however, the basses must have a good e-1. The melody is almost always in the first soprano and may at times be doubled by the first tenors.

"All Praise to God the Eternal" is short, and could easily be sung by the forty-eight voice ensemble.

Tchaikovsky

Title: Light Celestial (a vesper song from Kiev)
 Composer: Tchaikovsky
 Publisher: G. Schirmer
 Voice Parts: SSAATTBB
 Range: Soprano (g1-a2)
 Alto (b -d2)
 Tenor (g -a1)
 Bass (G -d1)
 Tessitura: Upper medium for all parts
 Text: Translated from the Church-Russian by Nathan
 Haskell Dole

Light celestial! Supernal glory!
 Oh Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
 Immortal, dwelling above in blessed dominions of Love.

We sing, as the sun declining pours down his ev'ning radiance,
 The name of Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, Triune!

Thou'rt worthy for ever and aye,
 That living creatures sing
 Thy praise with voices full of awe:

Son of God, Thou bestowest life,
 Therefore all the world praises Thee!

The ranges in "Light Celestial" are not extreme. The tenors and sopranos do have "a's" in their parts, but in each case it is a passing tone.

There are four sections to this piece. The first section is 4/4 and marked Allegro. The second section is in a flowing 3/2. Section three is a powerful 4/4 marked Piu mosso, and the final section is in 4/4 at Tempo 1.

The contrasts in sections, the dynamic change from pianissimo at the beginning to fortissimo in section three and back to pianissimo at the end, the English text and the melodic writing make "Light Celestial" a good program piece.

The choir should also find that these same characteristics make the piece enjoyable to sing.

The voice leading is always stepwise or at intervals which are easily heard from each singer's own part. Each part has some of the melodic interest throughout the piece.

"Light Celestial" could be sung by most choirs. There are eight parts (SSAATTBB) in portions; however, most of these are merely doublings in the second tenor and second soprano or second alto and bass.

Archangelsky

Title: Teach Me Thy Way
 Composer: Archangelsky
 Arranger and editor: Dimitri Milanov
 Publisher: Bourne Company
 Voice Parts: SATB
 Range: Soprano (e1-f2)
 Alto (c1-c2)
 Tenor (g -f1)
 Bass (G -c1)
 Tessitura: Lower medium in all parts
 Text: Taken from the King James version of the Bible,
 Psalm 86:11, 12, 13

Teach me thy way, O Lord
 Unite my heart to fear Thy name;
 I will praise Thee, O Lord, my God,
 With all my heart
 And I will glorify Thy name,
 For great is Thy mercy toward me,
 And Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

This piece is easily accessible for the specified chorus. The ranges remain well in the middle with no extremes, and the voice leading is stepwise.

The melody is primarily in the soprano with the other voices adding the harmonic basis. There are no contrasting sections and little interest in voices other than the soprano.

Taneyev

Title: Johannes Damascenus

Composer: Taneyev

Publisher: Bärenreiter

Voice Parts: SATB

| | |
|-------|----------------------------|
| Range | Soprano (b -a2) |
| | Alto (g -d2) |
| | Tenor (e [#] -a1) |
| | Bass (F [#] -d1) |

Tessitura: Upper medium for all parts

Text:

Ich zieh' auf dunklem Pfade hin in Angst und Hoffen,
 Starr die Glieder,
 Die Brust ist Kalt und leer der Sinn,
 Geschlossen sind die Augenlider,
 Ich bin verstummt,
 Und zu mir hallt nicht mehr der Brüder bittres klagen.
 Ich spüre nicht mehr,
 Wie es wallt aus Weihrauchfässern, die sie tragen.

This piece, which is twenty pages long, is a fugue. Taneyev is the master of the fugue which his idol, Bach, used so often and culminated in the Baroque period. The entire first two lines of text printed above is the fugue subject. It enters first in the alto, is answered by the soprano, returns in the bass, and again is answered in the tenor.

There are no extremes in ranges, and most of the tessitura is right in the middle of the range. The voice leading is not easy, but as each part

learns the fugue subject there would be little problem in hearing and finding the notes.

The chorus would be interesting for the chorus to learn. Because of the length of the fugue subject and the entire piece, it would be harder to learn. Some forty-eight voice choirs would have difficulty learning it.

Kastalsky

Title: All blessed, all holy, Lord God

Composer: Kastalsky

Editor: Archibald T. Davison

Publisher: E. C. Schirmer Music Company

Voice Parts: SSAATTBB

Range: Soprano (c1-f[#]2)
 Alto (g -b 1)
 Tenor (e -a 1)
 Bass (C -b)

Tessitura: Lower medium (basses and altos)
 Medium (tenors and sopranos)

Text: Words by H. W. T.

All blessed, all holy, Lord God,
 Thou art the Light of our light divine;
 And our eyes may not behold Thee, Lord
 Our God, in light enshrin'd,
 We praise Thee, and we bless Thee,
 We give thanks to Thee,
 O Light of light, we worship Thee,
 O Thou Infinite Majesty,
 O Light of light, our God.

All parts fit into the middle range category except the bass part, which is quite low in places. The parts are written in octaves, but the bass part progresses to the low C. Very few basses sing this note well. The baritone part is one octave higher and all the basses could sing that pitch.

The tessitura is medium, and voice leading is good with no unusual

jumps or skips.

The piece is not sectionalized, which is in accord with Kastalsky's usual manner of harmonizing a chant melody. He generally has the melody in the soprano and a very meaningful harmony in the other three parts. These parts are interesting because they each have some melodic interest. Each part may not have the primary melody, but each part has a melody, just like the Russian peasants have a primary melody and many other melodies intoned together.

This same combination of melodies would create audience interest as well as singer interest. This combined with the English text would make the piece easy to learn. The forty-eight voice choir would have few problems singing "All blessed, all holy, Lord God."

Rachmaninov

Title: Glory be to God

Composer: Rachmaninov

Editor: Winfred Douglas

Publisher: The H. W. Gray Company

Voice Parts: SSSAATTTBBB

Range: Soprano (e^b_1 - e^b_2)
 Alto (b^b - a^b_1)
 Tenor (g^b - a^b_1)
 Bass (E^b - a^b)

Tessitura: Lower medium

Text: English text by Winfred Douglas

Glory be to God on high and on earth peace,
 Peace on earth, good will towards men.
 Glory, Alleluia.

There is a low E^b as a drone throughout most of the piece in the bass line. The other parts are generally in the medium range. The piece divides the lines into as many as eleven parts. The soprano, tenor, and bass lines divide into three parts each, and the alto into two parts. This is done during very soft volume sections and should be no trouble to a choir of forty-eight voices. If there are three or four basses that can sing the E^b , there would be less difficulty with the other parts.

The voice leading is good and the sound of the piece is lush because of the full harmony and the solid bass line.

The piece is not very sectional. There is a gradual ritard toward the end as it emerges into the "Glory, Alleluia."

"Glory be to God" is very short and would be enjoyable for the chorus. The chorus would like it because of the harmonies and the interest of each voice part. There is no time signature and the number of beats per measure varies in nearly every measure. It could be conducted with the half note as the unit of measurement and would be subdivided in many places.

A forty-eight voice choir could sing "Glory be to God" well.

Gretchaninov

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Title: | O Be Joyful, All Ye Lands |
| Composer: | Gretchaninov |
| Arranger: | O. C. C. |
| Publisher: | Neil A. Kjos Music Company |
| Voice Parts: | SSAATTBB |
| Range: | Soprano ($f^{\#}1$ - $a^{\#}2$) Alto (a - $c^{\#}1$) Tenor (e - $f^{\#}1$) Bass ($E(C^{\#})$ - $c^{\#}1$) |
| Tessitura: | Medium |

Text: Text from the Psalms

O be joyful and sing unto the Lord, all ye lands.
Sing ye O Sing ye and praise His name.
All ye nations give praise unto the Lord God of hosts.
Praise Him with trumpet. Praise Him with psaltery.
Thou art exalted among all gods.

Holy and mighty God of glory,
The God that doest wondrous things.

Into all the world Thy light'nings have gone forth
Into all the land,
All nations have seen Thy righteousness.
Thou reigneth o'er all the nations.

Holy and mighty God of glory,
The God that doest wondrous things.

The bass begins, and then the entire piece is in four (SATB) or six-part (SSATTB) or (SAATBB) harmony. It is all in 3/2 with the divisions shown by fermatas in the music.

The ranges are good, in general, with only a low E in the basses and one optional low C[#]. The sopranos have an a₂, but it occurs in the broadest section of the piece and should be no trouble. The voice leading is good, no leaps or skips.

A forty-eight voice choir would be able to sing "O Be Joyful, All Ye Lands."

Conclusion

Russian choral music in the period 1836-1917 is truly Russian. The low Russian bass voice, the modal characteristics of the Russian folk song and the znamenny chant and the non-metrical rhythms give this music a sound and style that can only be characterized as Russian.

Because of the above characteristics, the music is appealing to audiences and choirs, and it is generally within the means of a chorus (such as the 48-

voice choir used in this paper) to sing this music and sing it well. Russian choral music is an enriching element and should be included, more than at present, within the choral repertoire.

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RUSSIAN CHORAL MUSIC TO 1917: ITS BACKGROUND,
NATURE, AND SUITABILITY FOR THE CHORAL ENSEMBLE

by

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RUSSIAN CHORAL MUSIC: ITS BACKGROUND, NATURE
AND SUITABILITY FOR THE CHORAL ENSEMBLE

Abstract

Russian music is unique and independent from music of any other country or region, and the Russian people are proud of this unique heritage.

RUSSIAN CHORAL MUSIC: ITS BACKGROUND, NATURE AND SUITABILITY FOR THE CHORAL ENSEMBLE divides the discussion of Russian choral music into three areas. These include the "Background," the "Nature" and the "Suitability" of Russian choral music.

The "Background" of Russian choral music includes a discussion of the sources of this music. The Znamenny Chant, the chant of the Russian Orthodox Church, may have come originally from the Byzantine Chant of the Eastern Orthodox Church. If this is true, the chant has undergone a complete change and is now entirely Russian. It bears no resemblance to the Byzantine Chant. The other major source is the folk-song. It is uniquely Russian and has suffered no outside influence.

The "Nature" of Russian choral music is approached by biographical and analytical research into the lives and music of nine prominent Russian composers: Glinka, Moussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Archangelsky, Kastalsky, Taneyev, Rachmaninov and Gretchaninov.

The "Suitability" of Russian choral music for the choral ensemble includes a brief analysis of one choral piece by each of the nine composers and evaluation according to a set of criteria.