

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: THE EVOLUTION OF THE RUSSIAN ROMANCE
THROUGH THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH
CENTURIES

Lorriana Markovic, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2006

Dissertation directed by: Professor Dominic Cossa
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This performance dissertation traced the evolution of the Russian *romance* from 1800 to the present. The Russian *romance* is a relatively unknown and greatly neglected genre of classical art songs. It is commonly believed that the Russian *romance* began with Dargomizhsky and Glinka proceeding directly to Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. Forgotten are the composers before Dargomizhsky and Glinka, the bridge composers, and the post-Tchaikovsky and post-Rachmaninoff composers. This may be, in part, because of the difficulties in obtaining Russian vocal scores. While most of the musical world is acquainted with the magnificent Russian instrumental music, the “true soul” of the Russian people lies in its *romances*.

I presented examples of the two different schools of composition, reflecting their philosophical differences in thinking that came about in the 1860s: (1) Russian National school, (2) Western European school. Each school’s influence on generations of Russian composers and their pupils have been represented in the recital programs. Also represented was the effect of the October Revolution on music and the voice of the Russian people, Anna Akhmatova.

The amount of music that could be included in this dissertation greatly exceeds the amount of available performance time and represent a selected portion of the repertoire. The first recital included repertoire from the beginning of the *romance* in the early nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century and the second recital focused on the music of the twentieth century, pre and post, the October Revolution. Finally, given the status of Anna Akhmatova and her contributions, the third recital was devoted entirely to her poetry.

The “Russian soul” is one of deep, heartfelt emotions and sorrow. Happiness and joy are also present, but always with a touch of melancholy. The audience did not simply go through a musical journey, but took a journey through the “Russian soul”. With the strong response of the audience to these recitals, my belief that this repertoire deserves a prominent place in recital programming was confirmed.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE RUSSIAN ROMANCE
THROUGH THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH
CENTURIES

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
2006

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Selected Bibliography

*“The Evolution of the Russian Romance
through the 19th and 20th Centuries”*

*Part 1:
Russian Bel Canto*



*Lorriana Markovic, soprano
Matthew Lepold, baritone
Tamara Sanikidze, piano*

*works by Varlamov, Gurilov, Bulahov, Dargomizhsky, Glinka,
Rimsky-Korsakov, Cui, Tanyeyev, Rachmaninoff, and Tchaikovsky*

*December 10, 2004
8PM
Tawes Building
Ulrich Recital Hall
University of Maryland*

Part 1: Russian Bel Canto

Don't wake her up during the dawn...	Aleksandr Varlamov (1801-1848)
Don't ask, don't call for a confession	Aleksandr Gurilov (1803-1858)
There are no other eyes in the world	Pyotr Bulahov (1822-1885)
I love him still Youth and the maiden Sixteen years	Aleksandr Dargomyzhsky (1813-1869)
The Lark To the zither I remember the wonderful moment You won't come again	Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857)
<i>INTERMISSION</i>	
Nymph The fleeting bank of cloud is dispersing The Fountain Statue at Tsarskoye Selo	Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)
Invisible in the fog	César Cui (1835-1918)
To forget so soon Why? Whether day dawns	Sergei Tanyeyev (1856-1915)
They answered Lilacs I await you!	Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
	Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

December 10, 2004 at 8Pm
Tawes Building
Ulrich Recital Hall
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PROGRAM NOTES

The earliest native Russian composers of “art music” in the Western sense were largely caterers to the bourgeois salon. Their music is characterized by a simple strophic melody, straightforward syllabic prosody, and an unaffected chordal accompaniment suitable for piano or guitar. These songs are haunted by a voluptuous “Russian” melancholy, evoked by the ubiquitous use of the minor mode and the tendency, probably inherited from folk-music, for the melody to descend, through a doleful fourth or fifth, to a cadence upon its lowest note. Though these old-fashioned and unpretentious songs have never earned much recognition outside of Russia, hearing them tonight, you will understand and appreciate their continuing popularity in Russia to this day.

From the period of Peter the Great (1672-1725), plenty of music was heard in theaters and salons of Moscow and St. Petersburg, and in the country houses of the wealthy. But almost all of it was imported. Russia became the private preserve of 18th Century Italian composers. There were however, Russian composers before Glinka, the “Father of Russian Music”. The 18th Century produced a distinguished liturgical composer in Dmitri Bortniansky. Other predecessors of Glinka were obscure dilettantes who produced pieces in the Italian or French styles. It was the work of the “Three Aleksandr’s”- *romance* composers Alyabev (1787-1851), Varlamov (1801-48), and Gurilov (1803-58) – who truly mingled the Russian *mélòs* and the reigning Italianism with the most carefree and charming ease, and in doing so laid the stylistic foundation on which the works of Glinka would be erected. The traditional songs and dances of the Russian serfs and peasants were held in contempt by a ruling class anxious to associate itself exclusively with Western European culture. As a result, no amalgam of folk music and art music was created in Russia.

Aleksandr Yegorovich Varlamov, Aleksandr L’vovich Gurilov were two composers who were born at the beginning of the 19th Century. Varlamov, of Moldavian descent, was a composer, singer, and teacher. He was one of the leading composers of the Russian *romance*, composing 138 solo songs. Varlamov, a former student of Bortniansky, wrote primarily in the folk-idiom and the romantic, sentimental vein that was popular at that time. Gurilov, also a composer and teacher, was influenced by the music of Varlamov. Gurilov, like Varlamov wrote mainly the sentimental *romance* and “Russian song”. He confined himself to these two genres; however, he does sometimes avail himself of the pathetic lyricism of gypsy song. Gurilov was extremely involved in Moscow’s literary and musical life. In his piano compositions, many of which are transcriptions of songs and operatic arias, he wrote idiomatically for the instrument, demanding considerable virtuosity of a performer; this suggests the influence of Liszt, whose own piano transcriptions had begun to enjoy considerable success in Russia at that time. Foremost among his piano works is the arrangement he made in 1848 of Varlamov’s song “Na zare ti yeyo ne budi...” Gurilov’s and Varlamov’s popularity were due to their abilities to express themselves in musical intonations which reflected Russian reality and the emotional experiences of ordinary Russian people. Pyotr Petrovich Bulahov was known as an expert vocal pedagogue and composer. Bulahov wrote Russian *romances*, gypsy romances, salon songs, and opera arias.

Aleksandr Sergeyevich-Dargomizhsky, the outstanding figure in Russian opera between Glinka's lapse into creative impotence and the advent of Tchaikovsky and the Mighty Five, had an influence, and a historical importance, out of all proportion to the frequency with which his music was ever performed. His songs and orchestral works are also of historical importance in the development of Russian music. Dargomizhsky is essentially a transitional composer and was definitely influenced by the mature Glinka. Dargomizhsky was elected president of the Russian Musical Society in 1867, and formed a slightly uneasy relationship with the Mighty Five. The Mighty Five, weary of Dargomizhsky's self-centered grumblings and apparent hypochondria, dubbed Dargomizhsky's group of friends "The Invalids". As Dargomizhsky prophesized, his opera, *The Stone Guest*, was his swan song. When he died, the opera was still in piano form and still unfinished. At Dargomizhsky's request, César Cui wrote the prelude and the end of the first scene, and Rimsky-Korsakov orchestrated the opera.

In Russia, Dargomizhsky's *romances* are acknowledged as an important contribution to the repertoire. They range from the attractive and expressive lyrical romances and the engagingly simple composed folk songs to the vivid and powerful ballads and low-key but telling comic sketches of his later years, in which he proves himself a worthy forerunner of Mussorgsky. Many of Dargomizhsky's songs fall into the category of *bytovoy*. *Bytovoy* lyrics were songs connected with the everyday working life of the Russian people. Two examples tonight are "Youth and the Maiden" and "Sixteen Years". He wrote both of these songs in 1843-4. Like Glinka, it was not until Dargomizhsky traveled from his native land, that he became more aware of his own national heritage. After he returned to Russia, Dargomizhsky endeavored to deepen their psychological content and to create a new kind of *romance*- a vocal monologue full of dramatic tension, such as the song "I still love him".

Mikhail Ivanovich-Glinka, the originator of the Russian Music School, was considered the "father of Russian music". With his 2 operas, *A Life for the Tsar* and *Ruslan and Lyudmilla*, he made music part and parcel of Russian culture. Glinka intuitively understood the intonational characteristics of peasant songs, whose melodic, rhythmic, and tonal patterns, he recreated in his music. His compositions contain musical intonations of contemporary city genres and some aspects of ancient Russian church music, in which he discovered the influence of Russian folk songs. Glinka believed that if one desired to understand the spiritual values of Russian national culture, he must study the Russian cultural heritage as an expression of the historical development of the thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of the Russian people. Glinka's musical style is a synthesis of western musical devices and forms, including the vocal polyphony of the 16th and 17th centuries; the polyphony of Bach and Handel; the classicism of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven; the impetuous romanticism of Berlioz and the romantic lyricism of Chopin. Glinka adapted these ingredients to his objectives while, at the same time, retaining his musical originality and individuality. The simplicity of his music and the sincerity of his emotional expression relate his music to Pushkin's poetry.

Glinka was the formulator of Russian musical language, just as Pushkin was the formulator of the Russian literary tongue. With Glinka, as with Pushkin, formal perfection is united with a Classical restraint, an Italian love of melody, and the Russian folk idiom with the sophistication of Mozart. As a man of genius, and through a natural musical instinct, he raised Russian music to unprecedented heights. He was also

influenced by the aesthetics of the “age of reason”. His music is rationally constructed. Logic and balance are outstanding characteristics of his style. Emotional exhibitionism and improvisational coloring, affectation, exaggeration, pedantry, and shallow illustration are absent in his music. Glinka emancipated the expression of feeling in Russian music, for at that time freedom of feeling and expression was a problem in Russia. Glinka wrote the song “I remember that wonderful moment”, during his middle years between the 2 opera, *A Life for the Tsar* and *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. During this period, Glinka turned to Pushkin a number of times for texts, and they drew from him some of his finest lyrical songs.

Nikolai Andreyevich Rimsky-Korsakov, a member of the Mighty Five, was influenced by the nationalism of Glinka. The sources of Russian folklore, especially the folk song, intelligible to diverse masses of listeners, helped him form his musical style. Rimsky-Korsakov is known as one of the great Russian opera composers. His optimistic outlook on the world found familiar imagery and representations in Russian national art, in epic poetry, in pantheistic pagan mythology, in ancient Slavic worship of the sun, and in ceremonial plays and songs associated with the cult of the Sun. Love, spiritualization, and the incarnation of nature in Rimsky-Korsakov’s compositions are the results of his interest in pantheistic mythology. He was quite proficient as an orchestrator and set himself to smoothing out some of the apparent crudities in the works of some of his fellow composers, completing and revising such works as Borodin’s *Prince Igor* and much of the seemingly uneven writing of Mussorgsky. Mostly known for his orchestral compositions, Rimsky-Korsakov wrote songs and choral music, chamber music and works for the piano. At the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, he taught many composers who would later find fame, including Glazunov, Prokofiev, and Stravinsky. He continued to be a prolific composer, producing many orchestral works, including the well known *Sheherazade* and *Capriccio Espagnole*. He also wrote fifteen operas, including *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* which includes his most famous piece, *The Flight of the Bumblebee*, since arranged for all kinds of different instrumental groups. He also reworked several of Mussorgsky’s pieces after his death in 1881. His greatest musical achievement was the integration of the elements of Western romanticism and Russian national music.

César Cui, a member of the Mighty Five, composed more than 200 songs and 11 operas, in addition to orchestral and instrumental pieces; although he is probably best known as a music critic. Like the other members of Mighty Five, his ideas for a new style of Russian art music were based on the native music of Russia. While he was extremely passionate about his artistic nationalistic beliefs, his compositions were probably the least “Russian-sounding” of the Mighty Five, because his father was French and his mother, Lithuanian. His compositions show the influence of Western romanticism, and his musical style has often been characterized as a blend of Chopin and Robert Schumann. Cui was quite comfortable composing in miniature forms, as witnessed by the large number of *romances* he wrote. For the most part, his *romances* seem better suited for the salon than the recital hall; however, the best of them are charming examples of the Russian *romance*. *The Statue at Tsarskoye Selo* is a representative example of his song style. The sculpture depicts a pensive young maiden who sits, holding the pieces of a broken water urn, through which the fountain’s stream continues to flow. A varying arpeggiated accompaniment depicts the soft flowing

fountain water. Tsarskoye Selo is a town near St. Petersburg, where Catherine the Great maintained her summer palace.

Sergei Ivanovich-Taneyev was an important figure in the continuation of the development of Russian national music. He insisted that Russian song forms had to evolve by the early 20th Century. Unfortunately, Taneyev was a false champion, for he failed to accomplish what he preached, because most of his compositions were not published and therefore are now inaccessible. His special field was theoretical counterpoint. Often called the “Russian Brahms”, Taneyev bridges the gap between Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. While studying at the Moscow Conservatory, he studied composition with Tchaikovsky and after Tchaikovsky’s resignation at the conservatory, took over Tchaikovsky’s composition classes. His composition students include Rachmaninoff, Skryabin, and Glière. Taneyev’s influence on Rachmaninoff was great. The postlude in “V dimke-nevidimke”, is strikingly similar to Rachmaninoff’s “Son”, Op. 38, No.5. “V dimke-nevidimke” is a beautiful example of artistic expressionism.

Pyotr Ilyich-Tchaikovsky is one of the most recognized composers in music. Tchaikovsky was very much influenced by the Europeans, primarily Brahms, and shares many of their characteristics. Unlike the nationalists, he did not think that the elements of Russian culture and folk music were of any great importance. For his approximately 100 songs, he chose texts by Russian poets that display the Russian predilection for melancholy, unrequited passion, and plaintive sentiment; however, Tchaikovsky treated the majority of these texts with an overwhelming and spacious lyricism, which is often at odds with Russian declamation. Rather than fusing words and music into a single entity, he subjugated the text to sweeping melodies. He uses piano accompaniments that are overly romantic and often have a contrasting counter-melody or share melodic motives with the voice. He is also a big enthusiast of piano preludes, interludes, and postludes, which you will hear in his pieces tonight. Taken as a whole, his works are striking in contrast- by turn dramatic, intensely emotional, solemn, sumptuously lyric, or reminiscent of folk songs.

Sergei Vasilyevich-Rachmaninoff was one of the most celebrated pianists of his time. He continued and developed the traditions established by Tchaikovsky in his songs. Rachmaninoff’s music reflects Russian culture at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. His works were welcomed by Russian intelligentsia as an expression of its hopes and aspirations. His songs contain the same spacious lyric approach as his piano works. This approach can be compared with that of another composer-pianist, Robert Schumann. Rachmaninoff seldom used folk-songs; nevertheless, his music contains typical Russian intonations and elements of Russian national melodies. The smoothness and effortlessness of his melodies are characteristic of Russian songs. There is also a pictorial quality in his melodies, for they often evoke associations or representations of the Russian countryside, forest, and rivers. The lyricism of his music is enhanced by rhythmic elements, which also augment the dramatic elements of his style. Rachmaninoff’s rhythms are complex and dramatic. This is revealed in persistent march-like drives, in rhythmic irregularities, and in clashes of differing rhythmic patterns. Like Tchaikovsky, he was drawn towards the inner drama of his heroes and the theme of nature, as in his song “Lilacs”, which is a tranquil contemplation of nature. His songs are filled with beautiful melodies and expressive

piano accompaniments. His accompaniments are brilliant and rich in harmonic color and texture and his treatment of them in his songs is collaborative with the voice in stating the musical material. Like Tchaikovsky, an extensive use of preludes, interludes, and postludes may be found throughout his songs. Unlike his contemporaries, Rachmaninoff's compositions do not reflect nationalistic characteristics; therefore, he is closer to Tchaikovsky than any other Russian composer.

TRANSLATIONS

Aleksandr Varlamov (1801-1848)

Don't wake her up during the dawn...

Don't wake her up during the dawn...
During the dawn she sweetly sleeps:
Morning breathes on her bosom,
Glowing cheeks with dimples

And her pillow is hot,
Her languishing dream is burning.
And falling on her shoulders
Are braids on both sides.

And brighter was the moon,
And louder whistled the nightingale.
She was becoming paler
Her heart beats more and more painfully.

Because of it on her young bosom,
In the morning her cheeks are burning.
Do not wake her up, do not...
She sleeps so sweetly during the dawn!

Aleksandr Gurilov (1803-1858)

Don't ask, don't call for a confession

Don't ask, don't call for a confession!
The seal of silence lies on me.
My one wish is to express everything
But I am doomed to suffer secretly.

During time of mourning, consolation is given to
all
Chosen friend, ease my heart
But I am worthy of my fate,
And until the grave,
I will live in my own sadness.

Pyotr Bulahov (1822-1885)

There are no other eyes in the world

There are no other eyes in the world
Darker or prettier
Than his, than his,
There are no other nice speeches
like his.
Nothing, nothing.

He looks at me – my heart is boiling.
He talks to me – my soul is flying
like an arrow, like an arrow.
Day and night I looked only to him
I lived for him, lived.

I would caress him,
Kiss him,
All the time, all the time.
I can not forget him.
Never, never.

Aleksandr Sergeevich Dargomyzhsky (1813-1869)

I love him still

Fool that I am, I love him still!
At the mention of his name my soul trembles;
as before, anguish presses my breast,
and a sultry look brings tears glimmering
involuntarily in my eyes.
Fool that I am, I love him still!

Fool that I am, I love him still!
A calm comfort penetrates my soul,
and bright joy is overwhelming my heart,
when I pray to the Creator for him!
Fool that I am, I love him still!

Youth and the maiden

Sobbing bitterly, a jealous maiden
Was scolding a youth.
Inclining on her shoulder,
The youth suddenly began to drowse.

The maiden fell silent,
Nursing his light slumber,
And smiled at him,
Shedding calm tears.

Sixteen years

I was sixteen,
But my heart was in flight;
I thought our pine forest, our stream, our field
To be the whole wide world.
A youth came to our village:
Where he came from I do not know,
But I was constantly drawn to him.
And I kept saying to myself: I know!

Wherever I went, there he was behind me.
I do not know if we shall be parted for long!
Only he with anguish,
Ah, he with anguish, silently pressed my hand.
“What do you want?” I asked,
“Tell me sorrowful shepherd.”
And with passion he said:
“I love you,”
and quietly called me darling.

And I should have said: "I love you" that moment,
But I did not know how to find the words,
And I looked down at the ground,
Blushed, trembled
And did not utter a word.
What is he angry for?
Why has he abandoned me?
And will he come back soon?

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka (1804-1857)

The Lark

Between the sky and the earth a song is heard
An unending stream of sound pours louder,
louder.
Unseen is the singer in the field where sings so loudly
Above his mate the sonorous skylark.

Wind carries the song, to whom, it does not know.
She to whom it is sung, will understand who it is from.
Pour on, my song of sweet hope
Someone remembers me and sighs furtively.

To the zither

Echoes of my crying,
Zither, why do you sound again?
Ah, to express the torment of my heart
It's not capable of love.

Strings sound in vain,
No, they cannot express
My sigh and cry of sadness,
With their shimmering sounds.

To answer the cry of torment,
The lonely sounds of the strings weep
Why do the sounds cry –
I don't know about what they sigh.

He who gave all my dreams,
Ah, will I never see him again,
To express that torment of my heart
It's not capable of love.

I remember the wonderful moment

I remember the wonderful moment
Before me you appeared,
Like a fleeting vision,
Like the genius of pure beauty.

In the anguish of hopeless sorrow,
In the cares of the noisy social whirl,
For a long time I heard your tender voice
And dreamed of your dear features.

The years passed by. The restless gusts of storms
Dissipated my former dreams,
And I forgot your tender voice,
Your divine features.

In remote and dark seclusion
My days dragged by quietly
Without a divinity, without inspiration,
Without tears, without life, without love.

The time has come for my soul to awaken:
And now again you have appeared
Like a fleeting vision,
Like the genius of pure beauty.

My heart beats in rapture,
And for it the divinity,
Inspiration, life, tears,
And love have been restored.

You won't come again

You won't come again
Past days of pleasure!
For what again is love?
And sad emotions?
Agonizing now separate us
And difficult, but fiery dreams
To believe without reason.

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)

Nymph

I know why by these shores
A secret mood overwhelms the hearts of the
sailors:
There a sorrowful nymph with loosened tresses,
Half-concealed by the melodious veil,
Now and then sings a song about the silk of her
hair,
The azure of her tear-stained eyes,
the pearls that are her teeth, and a heart that is
full of unrequited love.
If a boat passes, the sailor is enchanted
When he listens spellbound to her, and stops
rowing;
If she falls silent – for a long time on his voyage
He imagines all the while the refrains over the
water
And the nymph in the rushes,
with loosened tresses.

The fleeting bank of cloud is dispersing

The fleeting bank of cloud is dispersing,
The star, the evening star, looks sad,
Your beam casts a silver glow on the faded
plains,
And on the slumbering bay and summits of the
black cliffs;
I love your pale light on the heights of heaven:
It rouses thoughts asleep within me.
I recall your rising, familiar star,
Over the peaceful land where everything is dear
to my heart,

Where slender poplars have risen in the valleys,
Where doze the tender myrtle and dark cypress,
And sweetly roll the midday waves.
Once, there in the hills, deep in heartfelt
meditation,
I dragged out my thoughtful indolence over the
sea,
As the darkness of night descended on the huts,
And a young maid searched for you in the gloom
And called her girlfriends by name.

César Antonovich Cui (1835-1918)

The Fountain Statue at Tsarskoye Selo

A maiden drops her urn full of water;
It breaks on the rocks.
She sits sadly,
holding the broken pieces.

A miracle! The water does not dry up;
It pours from the broken vessel.
Now she sits there sadly forever
Over the everlasting spring.

Sergei Ivanovich Taneyev (1856-1915)

Invisible in the fog

Invisible in the fog, a new moon appeared,
Garden flowers breathe, apple tree, cherry tree,
She kisses, secretly and indiscreetly.
Are you not hurt? Are you not anguishing?
Exhausted in songs is the nightingale
without a rose,
The old stone in the pond, cries falling tears.
She dropped her braided head unintentionally.
Are you not hurt?
Are you not anguishing, not hurt?

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

To forget so soon

To forget so soon, my God,
All the happiness of life gone by!
All our meetings, and our conversations,
To forget so soon!

To forget the agitation of the first days,
The hour of meeting in the shade of the
branches!
The mute conversations of eyes,
To forget so soon!
To forget how the full moon
gazed at us through the window,
how the curtain softly swayed...
To forget so soon, to forget so soon, so soon!

To forget love, forget the dreams,
forget your vows - do you remember, do you
remember?
taken in the somber hours of night, taken in the
somber hours of night!
To forget so soon, to forget so soon! Dear God!

Why?

Why did the glorious rose wilt so
in the spring?

Why is the blue violet silent
beneath the green grass?

Why is the song of the little bird
so sad today?

Why does the dew hang
like a shroud upon the meadows?

Why is the sun cold and dull in the sky,
as if it were winter?

Why is the earth wet
and gloomy like a tomb?

And why am I ever more sad
each day?

Why - tell me quickly -
did you forget me?

Whether day dawns

Whether day dawns or in the stillness of night,
Whether in a dream or awake,

Everywhere I go, I am filled entirely
with one thought alone:

Always about you!

Gone are the griefs that have tortured me,
Love alone reigns supreme within my heart!

Courage, hope, and eternal devotion -
All that is good, united in my soul,

All that is noble - it is all because of you!

Whether the rest of my days pass in joy or in
sadness,

Whether my life ends soon or late,

I know that, though death overtake me,

All I do, all that I have to be thankful for,

All is for you!

Sergei Vasil'yevich Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)**They answered**

They asked: "How can we glide in flying barks,
Like white seagulls over the waves,

So that the guards won't reach us?"

"Row!" they answered.

They asked: "How can one forget forever,
That this merciless world is full of poverty,
troubles,

Full of menaces and sorrows?"

"Sleep!" they answered.

They asked: "How can we attract beautiful
women

without love-potions, so that they fall into our
arms

Having heard our words of passion?"

"Love!" they answered.

Lilacs

In the morning, at daybreak,
over the dewy grass,

I will go to breathe the crisp dawn;

and in the fragrant shade,

where the lilac crowds,

I will go to seek my happiness...

In life, only one happiness

it was fated for me to discover,

and that happiness lives in the lilacs;

in the green boughs,

in the fragrant bunches,

my poor happiness blossoms

I await you!

I await you! The sunset has died,

And night's dark covers

Are ready to descend

And hide us.

I await you!

The night suffuses the sleeping world with
fragrant mist

And this day past has said

Farewell to earth.

I am waiting! Tormented and in love

I count each moment,

Full of anguish and impatience

I wait for you!

*“The Evolution of the Russian Romance
through the 19th and 20th Centuries”*

*Part 2:
The Controversial Twentieth Century*



A Marble Fountain in the Khan Palace, Bakhchisarai

*Lorriana Markovic, soprano
Ilya Sinaisky, piano*

*works by Glazunov, Arensky, Slonimsky, Shostakovich,
Vlasov, Medtner, and Rachmaninoff*

*March 31, 2006
8PM
Tawes Building
Ulrich Recital Hall
University of Maryland*

Part 2: The Controversial Twentieth Century

When I look into your eyes, Op.4, No.3
Life is still ahead of me, Op.60, No.5
Silver Sky, Op.59, No.6
Nina's Romance, Op.102
Dream, Op.60, No.4

Alexandr Glazunov
(1865-1936)

Autumn
One sound of your name

Anton Arensky
(1861-1906)

from Six Romances
1. Careful and muted sound
5. ...On the moon
3. Half a turn, o sadness itself

Sergei Slonimsky
(b. 1932)

from The Satires
1. To the Critic
2. The Awakening of Spring

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906-1975)

INTERMISSION

Palace Fountain

Vladimir Vlasov
(1903-1986)

Day and Night, Op.24, No.1
Angel, Op.1a
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(1880-1951)

Twilight, Op.21, No.3
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Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

March 31, 2006 at 8PM
Tawes Building
Ulrich Recital Hall
University of Maryland

PROGRAM NOTES

The 20th century was one of oppression, upheavals, murders, etc... Since the revolution of 1917 profound changes have occurred in the course of Russian music. What has happened to this art and to the men who created and practiced it is again, almost incomprehensible without some knowledge of the accompanying political drama. In a totalitarian state as brutally controlled as the Soviet Union, not only every man in every walk of life, but every science, every philosophy, every art ceased to enjoy freedom of growth. Instead growth must be shaped, guided, stimulated, or extinguished by government order. In 1917, the majority of the Russian population, were at heart revolutionists who longed for an end to the Czardom and all it stood for. When the old regime fell under the weight of World War I, there existed a number of rival political parties in Russia. The faction that eventually took control were known as the Bolsheviks, who soon after called themselves Communists. Their leader was Vladimir Ilyich, whose pseudonym was Lenin. Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky, the creators of communism, were not simply revolutionists; but fanatics. To them to govern meant only two things – to oppress and suppress. At this time all religions were suppressed and the power of the Russian Orthodox Church was destroyed and the intellectual class was decimated. Many fled the country and many more died in prisons or concentration camps. The conservatories went on and at first there were not many restrictions. For public performances, every work was censored by the hierarchy, who rarely knew anything about art. Any words flattering the old regime had to be purged and all religious works were completely banned.

The so-called “New Economic Policy” ushered in the next stage of Lenin’s reign. By now the economy was falling apart and Lenin realized that he would have to compromise. He permitted the resumption of a certain amount of private ownership, both in industry and agriculture. Because of this the government relaxed many of its controls...new foreign music was performed, jazz from America was heard, etc...

After Lenin died in 1924, Stalin eventually became the new leader. This time was one of the darkest periods in Russian life since the revolution. During this period a special campaign aroused the writers and artists in Russia to intensify their efforts in glorifying the new “proletkult” and damning the “degenerate West. This had important repercussions in the field of music. Western music was played down and jazz was heard no more. At this time anyone could call themselves a musician. The lowest ranks of the society, even illiterates, were able to rise to a position of leadership. Most of them were Communist party members and their function was to provide the people with simple music-songs, marches, and dance tunes. In 1933, Stalin wanted to revive the old spirit of Russian Nationalism and Soviet writers, teachers, and scholars were urged to glorify Russia’s great heritage. In 1934, a new doctrine, “Socialist Realism”, by Maxim Gorky played an enormous part in the future of all the Soviet arts. The old concepts of realism in art were negative, critical, destructive, exposing the ugliness of life; while the new social realism was to be its antithesis – optimistic, with emphasis on only the health, security, and beauty of socialist proletariat existence. Another catchword was “formalism”. It meant art for art’s sake as opposed to art with a message. Any extreme of individualism, sophistication, or experimentation was considered “formalism”. Early in 1936, which marked the beginning of the great repression when millions of people were either killed or sent to Gulag (concentration camp), the small world of Soviet music was suddenly shaken. The official newspaper “Pravda”, issued the famous criticism of Shostakovich and his *Lady Macbeth of Mtensk*. The work was driven from the stage because of its flood of “formalist errors”, and Shostakovich, then the most eminent composer in the Soviet Union was publicly ostracized. With the publication of this article, all artistic freedoms were taken from eminent composers of the time, such as Shostakovich and Prokofiev.

The Cold War began in 1945 after the war ended. Stalin, who was carefully planning another campaign informed the Russians that the entire nation would settle back into the grooves of the communist ideology. In 1948, the axe fell on the composers with the "*Decree of Music*". This decree stated that in spite of repeated warnings many eminent composers had "persistently adhered to formalist and anti-people" practices. Singled out were Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and Myakovsky to name a few. Their faults included "atonalism, dissonance, and disharmony; the rejection of...melody, and a striving after chaotic and neuropathic discords.

Aleksandr Glazunov (1865-1936)

His father was a book publisher, his mother a pianist. Gifted with an exceptional ear and musical memory, he began to study the piano at the age of nine and to compose at the age of 11. In 1879 he met Balakirev, who recommended Rimsky-Korsakov as a private composition teacher. These studies lasted less than two years as the pupil progressed 'not from day to day but from hour to hour', in Rimsky-Korsakov's words. A lifelong friendship developed between teacher and student, despite the difference in age. When he was 16 Glazunov completed his First Symphony, which was given a successful première on 29 March 1882 under Balakirev's direction. His precocious talent aroused the interest of the art patron Mitrofan Belyayev, who devoted his immense fortune to furthering the career of Glazunov and the younger generation of Russian composers. The 'Belyayev Circle', as it became known, assembled every Friday in the palatial home of the patron, and Glazunov, despite his youth, became a prominent member, with Rimsky-Korsakov, Lyadov, and others. In a way, the Belyayev Circle continued from where The Russian Five had left off, but with an important difference: by the 1880s, the battle for a national Russian school had been won; the Belyayev Circle consolidated the gains and effected a rapprochement with the West. As Rimsky-Korsakov said: 'The Balakirev circle represented a period of battle and pressure on behalf of the development of Russian music'.

Within Russian music, Glazunov has a significant place because he succeeded in reconciling Russianism and Europeanism. He was the direct heir of Balakirev's nationalism but tended more towards Borodin's epic grandeur. At the same time he absorbed Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestral virtuosity, the lyricism of Tchaikovsky and the contrapuntal skill of Taneyev. There was a streak of academicism in Glazunov which at times overpowered his inspiration, an eclecticism which lacks the ultimate stamp of originality. The younger composers, Prokofiev and Shostakovich, abandoned him as old-fashioned. But he remains a composer of imposing stature and a stabilizing influence in a time of transition and turmoil.

Anton Arensky (1861-1906)

Arensky was a Russian composer, pianist and conductor. It was his father, a doctor, who was an accomplished cellist, and his mother an excellent pianist who gave him his first music lessons. By the age of nine he had already composed some songs and piano pieces. When the family moved to St Petersburg, he entered the St Petersburg Conservatory (1879), where he studied composition with Rimsky-Korsakov. He graduated with a gold medal in 1882. Even before this Rimsky-Korsakov had been sufficiently impressed by Arensky's talent to entrust him with a share in preparing the vocal score of *The Snow Maiden*. After graduating Arensky went straight to the Moscow Conservatory as a professor of harmony and counterpoint; among his pupils were to be Rachmaninoff, Skryabin and Glière. The move to Moscow brought him into close contact with Taneyev and Tchaikovsky, who gave him much practical encouragement.

In 1894 Balakirev recommended Arensky as his successor to the directorship of the imperial chapel in St Petersburg, and in 1895 Arensky moved to that city, resigning from his professorship at the Moscow Conservatory. In 1901 Arensky left the imperial chapel. The rest of his life was

devoted to composition and to very successful appearances both as pianist and conductor at concerts in Russia and abroad. From his early years he had been addicted to drinking and gambling and, according to Rimsky-Korsakov, his life became more disordered still in his later years. His health was quickly undermined, and he succumbed to tuberculosis.

Arensky was one of the most eclectic Russian composers of his generation. In general, Arensky's short works are his most satisfactory pieces. His ready flow of lyrical, often sentimental melody, and his easy command of keyboard textures equipped him splendidly to be a composer of songs in the *romance* manner that dominated Russian song in the 19th century. Similarly, he could produce beautifully turned keyboard miniatures. While being in no way original, Arensky could produce distinctive music, and despite Rimsky-Korsakov's prediction that he would be 'soon forgotten', some of his pieces, notably the waltz from suite no.1 for two pianos and the variations for string orchestra on Tchaikovsky's famous *Legend*, have continued to occupy a corner of the modern repertory.

Sergei Slonimsky (b. 1932)

Slonimsky is a Russian composer, pianist and teacher. The son of the writer M.L. Slonimsky and a relative of the composer and musicologist Nikolai Slonimsky, he began to study composition at the age of 11, with Shebalin. From 1945 to 1950 he attended a special music school for gifted children. Since 1959 he taught music-theoretical disciplines, and since 1967 composition, at the Leningrad Conservatory. He has taken part more than once in folkloristic expeditions, and has recorded Russian folksongs. He is a Candidate of Arts (1963, for his dissertation on Prokofiev's symphonies), professor (1976), laureate of the State M. Glinka Prize (1983) and People's Artist of Russia (1987). He runs musical gatherings devoted to the popularization of Russian 20th-century music (especially from the 1920s). He is a member of the Composers' Union.

Slonimsky belongs to the generation who came into being as composers after World War II. Since the middle of the 1950s he has been interested in the musical avant garde and in a decisive stylistic renewal. Since the end of the 1950s Slonimsky has employed, in certain cases, the 12-tone system, and since the 1960s he has used aleatory, and sonoristic techniques, non-traditional graphic notation and quant rhythm. In his later works he is frequently and unexpectedly paradoxical, and in striving to make his own all compositional models of past and present music presents them in an unbroken extravagance of generic symbiosis.

Slonimsky's continued interest in the problems facing humanity and in tragic conflicts is reflected in his five operas, which represent various types of operatic drama in different periods of world history and literature. In his vocal cycles he favours the poets of the 'silver age' and his contemporaries, Akhmatova, Mandelstam, Kharms, Reyn and Brodsky. The poet of these 3 songs is Osip Mandelstam.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

He is generally regarded as the greatest symphonist of the mid-20th century, and many of his string quartets, concertos, instrumental and vocal works are also firmly established in the repertory. His numerous film scores, extensive incidental theatre music and three ballets are of more variable quality. In 1936, political intervention cut short his potentially outstanding operatic output; such interference continued to blight his career, belying the outward signs of official favor and recognition that increasingly came his way. Amid the conflicting pressures of official requirements, the mass suffering of his fellow countrymen, and his personal ideals of

humanitarianism and public service, he succeeded in forging a musical language of colossal emotional power. Since the appearance in 1979 of his purported memoirs, which expressed profound disaffection from the Soviet regime, his works have been intensely scrutinized for evidence of such explicit communication. However, his intentions in this respect continue to provoke disagreement, not least because of the problematic status of the sources involved. He published articles and made speeches under varying degrees of duress; for much of his life his correspondence was liable to be read by censors; he destroyed almost all letters sent to him; he kept no diary; and his reported confidences to friends and family are of varying reliability. Meanwhile, the musical dimensions of his works remain comparatively little examined. He played a decisive role in the musical life of the former Soviet Union, as teacher, writer and administrator.

Because of the Soviet regime, as early as the Second Symphony, with its confrontation of avant-garde and mass song styles, a phenomenon known to Russians as 'the two Shostakoviches' had been apparent. The 'real' Shostakovich would remain an altogether elusive concept, by no means tied to stylistic uniformity or ideological one-sidedness. The 'official' Shostakovich had to be mindful of expectations from above, without wholly selling out. The dichotomy between these musical personas increased markedly after 1936.

The post-Stalin era in Russian history up to the accession of Leonid Brezhnev in 1964 is usually characterized after the title of Ilya Ehrenburg's 1954 novel as the 'Thaw'. During this period, extreme social and cultural oppression slowly gave way to more normal conditions, albeit within the framework of continued political conformism. In February 1956, Nikita Khrushchev, who had emerged with effective power early the previous year, made a famous 'secret' speech denouncing Stalin. The outward signs of Shostakovich's life suggest that he shared in some of the benefits of the Thaw. Most of his previously withheld or banned works were performed. Shostakovich was increasingly garlanded with honors at home and abroad. In 1954 he was made People's Artist of the USSR, and in 1956 he received the Order of Lenin. Numerous international awards, mainly honorary doctorates and membership of academies, came his way in this period.

Early signs of physical decline were by now becoming evident. Since the war he had had attacks of diphtheria, angina and inflammation of the lungs. In 1958 he began to experience symptoms of what was eventually diagnosed as a form of polio. Shostakovich was physically ailing and without domestic support when he came under intense pressure to join the Communist Party in 1960. He yielded, and his membership was confirmed in stages over the next two years, but he experienced acute feelings of shame. Against this background, he composed his Eighth String Quartet, reportedly as a kind of obituary for himself, incorporating quotations from and allusions to some of his most fateful works.

By 1961 the phenomenon of 'The Two Shostakoviches' had become so familiar it was the subject of an article in *Time* magazine. The reference was prompted by the recently completed Twelfth Symphony, 'the most banal of his works to date', but the supposed split personality was dated to 1948. The song cycle *Satires* of 1960 and the Thirteenth Symphony of 1962 are indeed intended to reflect the 'real life' experiences of his contemporaries, they must be counted as profoundly subversive. They reflect an oppressed Soviet state viewed in a purely satirical manner. The vocal works focus ever more intently on the subject matter of love, death, and the role of the artist

Unlike that of many composers, Shostakovich's reputation with the musical public has grown steadily since his death, fuelled by post-*glasnost*' revelations about the society in which he lived. By most conceivable measurements, he has become the most popular composer of serious art music in the middle years of the 20th century.

His influence on composers spread through the work of his most gifted pupils and protégés, Vaynberg, Chaykovsky, Tishchenko and kindred spirits abroad such as Britten, who however, died only a year after him. Others in the Soviet Union emancipated themselves from his style but took up some of the deeper implications of his work, especially his fondness for mixing styles and tones of voice, his use of musical ciphers, his exploration of the no-man's-land between dynamism and stasis and his compulsion to question the same things as he affirms. As the most talented Soviet composer of his cursed generation, Shostakovich was uniquely equipped to transcend those pressures, and as such his achievement is unrivalled.

Vladimir Vlasov (1903-1986)

Vlasov was a Russian composer and conductor. He was a pupil of Catoire, Krilov, Yampol'sky and Zhilyayev at the Moscow Conservatory (1924–31). Thereafter he was founder and artistic director (1936–42) of the Music and Drama Theatre in Frunze (now Bishkek), and manager and artistic director of the Moscow PO (1942–9). He was made a People's Artist of the RSFSR and of the Kirghiz SSR. Many of his numerous operas were written in collaboration with Fere and Maldibayev, with whom he also composed the Kirghiz national anthem.

The song Palace Fountain is about The 'Fountain of Tears' at the Bakhchisarai Palace is in one of the palace's inner courtyards. Pushkin's 1820 poem tells the story of one of the last Tatar Khans, Krim Girei, who is said to have fallen in love with a Polish girl in his harem. Girei was famous for his heartless cruelty, but when she died, he was grief-stricken and wept, astounding all those who knew him. He ordered a marble fountain to be made, so that the rock would weep, like him, for ever. The fountain was built in 1756, but the foundations of the palace were laid by Khan Abdul Sahel Girei in 1503, and the mausoleum contains the tombs of Tatar Khans and their wives from 1592 onwards. "Sarai" means palace, and "Bakhchi-sarai" means garden palace. The palace is not only a unique example of Crimean Tatar architecture but a testament to a strong and enduring community. Some of the rooms have been made to look 'lived-in' in Tatar style. This fountain is located approximately 30 kilometers from where my pianist, Ilya Sinaisky grew up.

Nikolai Medtner (1880-1951)

Medtner was Russian composer and pianist. His ancestors came from northern Europe, his father was of Danish descent and his mother of Swedish and German extraction, but by the time of his birth the family had been established in Russia for two generations and had thoroughly assimilated a Russian identity without abandoning their German cultural inheritance.

Medtner played the piano from the age of six, receiving lessons first from his mother and later from his uncle, Fyodor Goedicke. He enrolled in 1892 at the Moscow Conservatory and graduated in 1900 with the institution's gold medal as the outstanding pianist of his year. As a composer he was largely self-taught. Though he wrote music throughout his student years and in his junior course had studied theory with Kashkin and harmony with Arensky, he did not follow the customary advanced conservatory regime for prospective composers, even abandoning, with his connivance, Taneyev's counterpoint class, while continuing to take him his work informally. Medtner's professional career as a composer began in 1903 with the appearance in print of his first opus and the first public performances of his music. His Piano Sonata in F minor op.5 attracted the attention of the famous Polish virtuoso Josef Hofmann, and through him of Rachmaninoff, who in later years was to be a staunch friend and benefactor. Medtner was unsympathetic to the Bolshevik Revolution, and in the autumn of 1921 he and his wife left Russia to begin a new life abroad in Berlin. Rachmaninoff helped out financially and organized an American tour for 1924–5, after which the composer moved to Paris, where his services

disappointingly proved little more in demand than in Berlin and the artistic environment no more congenial.

The modest success the composer now began to enjoy was cut short by the outbreak of war in 1939, when concerts, the demand for lessons, and income from his German publisher all ceased. The Medtner's now depended for their survival on the generosity of friends. Though dogged by ill-health, Medtner's last years were brightened by an unexpected turn of events. In 1946 the Maharajah of Mysore sponsored the foundation of a Medtner Society, enabling the composer over the next four years to make gramophone recordings for EMI of many of his most important works, including the three concertos, the Piano Quintet, the First Violin Sonata, and many songs and solo piano pieces. These definitive performances constitute a priceless legacy of interpretative guidance.

As one of the very last Romantic composer-pianists, Medtner has a place in Russian music alongside his close contemporaries Skryabin and Rachmaninoff, whose careers overshadowed his own. Like them he made the piano the focus of his creative activity and possessed a total understanding of its expressive possibilities; his writing, though never virtuosic for its own sake, is often complex and highly demanding of the performer. In most aspects of musical style, however, his manner is quite distinct from theirs, for, unlike all but a few of his fellow countrymen, he tempered a Russian spirit with musical thought rooted firmly in the Western classical tradition, Beethoven in particular. This classical influence is to be seen in the composer's fastidious craftsmanship, his tight grasp of musical architecture, the frequent use of sonata form and his fondness for contrapuntal writing, of which he was a consummate master. Fully developed almost from the time of his first published works, his musical idiom changed very little throughout his career, and his entire output is remarkably consistent in quality.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Understandably, the piano figures prominently in Rachmaninoff's music, either as a solo instrument or as part of an ensemble. But he used his own skills as a performer not to write music of unreasonable, empty virtuosity, but rather to explore fully the expressive possibilities of the instrument.

Between 1890, when he was 17, and his departure from Russia in 1917, Rachmaninoff wrote over 80 songs. They come from deep in his Russian heritage, so deep that exile and severance from his roots meant that, while he was able to develop his art in significant new directions, especially with his orchestral music, he never felt able to return to song. Perhaps the connection to Russian culture through his devotion to her poetry, to the singers he knew and performed with, especially to the genre of song which he had inherited from Glinka and then directly from Tchaikovsky, was something that could not be transplanted, only cut off and allowed to wither. Rachmaninoff's contribution to the tradition includes renewal of the melodic richness that Tchaikovsky had discovered, together with the greater keyboard virtuosity that he himself, as one of the great pianists of history, could command.

After the failure of his First Symphony, Rachmaninoff, recovering from his own emotional beating, he spent part of his honeymoon with his bride, Natalya, on Lake Lucerne. The song, "How fair this spot", which he dedicated to Natalya, is a reflection of his contentment. It has a gorgeous lyrical vocal line surrounded by rich, sensuous harmonies. Four years past before he returned to song, with a group of 15 written in 1905 and numbered Op.26. In general, these songs continued to explore the declamatory vein like Op. 21; a striking exception is "At my window", which weaves a lyrical line between voice and piano with great art. The song "Dream" concentrates much of his art into music delicately balanced between piano and voice as if

between dreaming and waking. In his song, "Spring Waters", he uses Tyutchev's imagery of the violent Russian spring, to suggest a cascading virtuosity that can threaten to drown not only the frozen fields but the singer as well. Like a lot of Rachmaninoff's piano accompaniments, this is written very virtuosic. The piano always plays an equal role with the singer in Rachmaninoff's vocal literature.

TRANSLATIONS

Aleksandr Glazunov (1865-1936)

When I look into your eyes

When I look into your eyes
The storm in my heart becomes silent;
When I kiss you on the mouth
I believe, in my soul, of a life transformed.

When I lay on your breast
I am not on earth; but in paradise.
You say, "I love you"
And I don't know why that I begin crying.
Heinrich Heine

Life is still ahead of me

Life is still ahead of me
Visions and sounds, like a city far away,
Ringing brilliantly in the morning.
I remember every past suffering with ecstasy
Like steps that I'm walking up
To reach a bright goal.
Apollon Maykov

Silver Sky

The entire sky is silver.
The entire sea is silver.
The air is full of warm moisture
The world is quiet
Like the soul after tears.
When, O Nina,
The storm in my heart overcomes passion
And my pale cheeks become red
And in twinkling eyes
There is a dim flicker of hope and
forgiveness.

Apollon Maykov

Nina's Song

You may weep sorrowful tears,
but I don't feel pain
because I know you're not
happy with your new love.
He's like an invisible worm
gnawing away at your vulnerable life,
and what is this? I am happy that
he doesn't love you as much as I do.
But should happiness
shine from your eyes
I'll suffer terribly,
and embrace a secret hell in my breast.

Mikhail Letmontov

Dream

Not long ago
I was seduced by a charming dream.
I saw myself in the shining crown of the
king.
Dreaming that I love you
And my heart beats with pleasure.
I passionately bow at your feet.
Why doesn't passion last?
But the gods have not taken anything from
me
I have only lost the kingdom.

Alexander Pushkin

Anton Arensky (1861-1906)

Autumn

How sad, the dusky days
of silent, chilly autumn!
How cheerlessly
they imprint themselves upon our soul.

But there are other days, when in full blood
images of golden leaves
reflect autumn's fiery gaze
of moody passion.

In the hushed, timid melancholy,
only defiance can be heard,
and in her magnificent dying,
there is nothing to regret.

Afanasiy Fet

One sound of your name

One sound of your name is faintly in my
memory
The passion of the past is painfully
resurrected.

All around lively celebrations sparkle
The crowd is roaring
But, I am not myself in this crazy surge of
sorrow.
The ghost of destiny calls.

I bet on luck
And my head falls to my chest.
I quietly turn away and cry about what has
happened and past.

Sergei Slonimsky (b. 1932)

Careful and muted sound

Careful and muted sound
the fruit, fell off of the tree,
the deep silence of the forest
sang a song.

...On the moon

On the moon, not one blade of grass
grows,
On the moon everyone makes baskets
from straw,
They make light baskets.
On the moon - it's twilight and the
houses are neat,
On the moon they aren't houses-just
pigeon houses,
Light blue houses-
Miracle - pigeon houses.

Half a turn, o sadness itself

Half a turn, o sadness itself
You look at the disinterested ones.
The pseudoclassical shawl on your
shoulders
Seemed cast in stone.

The woeful voice, the bitter herb
Reveals the soul's depth.
Rachel, who played the indignant Phedra
Once stood like that.

Osip Mandelstam

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

from **Five Satires**

To a critic

When a poet, in describing a lady, writes:
'I was walking along the street,
and my corset started pinching me.'
By this 'I' of course you mustn't think
immediately that under this woman
a poet is hiding.
I'll tell you truthfully, between friends:
The poet is a man, and with a beard at that.

The awakening of spring

Yesterday my cat glanced at the calendar
And instantly stuck his tail up like a
chimney.

Then he rushed downstairs as usual, and
started to yell loudly,

As in a Bacchanalian orgy:

"A spring wedding! A civil marriage!
Come on, cats, hurry up to the loft!"

And my cactus, too, wonder of wonders,
Watered with tea and coffee grounds,
Like Lazarus, rose up and each day pushes
out of the earth ever more abundantly...

All is green! I am astounded:

"How many thoughts it arouses in me!"

Already the frozen mud is being cleared
from the pavements by rude and surly
servants,

And already the 'prince' has dropped in
today,

Taken a warm scarf and racing skis...

"The spring! The spring!" I sing like a bard,
"Take that winter trash off to the
pawnshop!"

The sun is shining.

My God, it's wonderful!

The spring has cleared the smoke and soot,

And frosts no longer bite,

But many have nothing to munch,

Just as in winter.

The trees are waiting...

The water lies stagnant, and there are more
drunks than ever!

My Creator!

Thank you for the spring!

I thought it would never return, but...

Let me escape to the quiet of the forest,

Away from life's cares, from the plaque and
bustle of the town!

A spring breeze is at my door...

Who should I fall in love with, for God's
sake!

Sasha Choirny

Alexandr Vlasov (1903-1986)

Palace Fountain

Love fountain, live fountain
I brought for you two roses.
I like your speech and poetic tears.
Your silver dust and cold dew feed me:
Pour, pour happy water!
Trickle, trickle, your story to me...
Love fountain, sad fountain!
I asked your marble:
I spoke about a far country,
but about Mary – I am silent.

Alexander Pushkin

Nikolai Medtner (1880-1951)

Day and Night, Op.24, No.1

O'er distant realm that secret lies,
Where dark mysterious spirits hover,
A glimmering veil outspreads its cover,
By will of God ordained to rise.
Know ye, 'twas thus that Day began,
Day, of new hope forever singing,
To weary mortals comfort bringing,
Servant of God, and friend of man!

But darkness, deadly foe of light,
From gloomy chasm upward stealing,
Bends from its place, the gorge revealing,
The veil, to cast it from sight!
Behold, where phantom spirits lurk,
Great gulf too horrible for mortals,
Invites unhindered to its portals;
Thus, man is fearful of the dark!

Fyodor Tyutchev

The Angel, Op.1a

The angel flew through the midnight sky,
singing softly,
The moon, stars, and clouds, all listened to
his holy song.
He sang of the bliss of innocent spirits in the
shady garden of paradise.
He sang heartfelt praises to the great God.

He carried a young soul in his arms,
Destined for the world of sadness and tears.
And his song remained, wordless, yet living,
in the young soul.
For a long time it languished in the world
Filled with great longing.
Earth's tedious songs could not replace it for
the sounds of Paradise.

Mikhail Lermontov

Waltz, Op.37, No.4

Was it not recently that with magic sounds
we danced about the hall, she and I?
Her tender arms were warm,
her star-like eyes were bright.

Yesterday they sang dirges,
the tomb was open;
her eyes closed, motionless,
she slept beneath a brocade.

I slept; above my bed
the moon hung like the dead...
yet to wondrous sounds, she and I
were flying about the hall, the two of us...

Afanasiy Fet

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Twilight

She sits pensively, alone by the window.
In the evening dusk
Her thoughtful look reflects
The limitless blue of darkening skies.
Stars silently rise
In a luminous cloud
Which mysteriously ascends
And dwells upon her bowed head.

M. Guyot

At My Window

At my window a bird cherry blossoms,
Blossoms pensively in its silvery raiment...
And with its fresh and fragrant branch
It inclines and beckons...
Of its quivering, ethereal petals
I joyfully take in the cheerful breath,
Their sweet fragrance obscures my
consciousness,
And they sing love songs without words.

G. Galina

Dream

In this world there is nothing more desired
than sleep,
Sleep has enchantments and peace.
On its lips neither sorrow nor laughter,
In its fathomless eyes secret pleasures
abound.
It has wings, wide wings
They are light, so light, as the midnight mist.
How does it carry us, whence and on what?
Its wings do not open and its body is still.

F. Sologub

How fair this spot

How peaceful it is here
Look! far away
the river blazes like fire
The meadows are carpets of color
The clouds are radiant white
There's no one here
Silence reigns
I am alone with the Lord,
the flowers, the old pine tree
And you, my dream of delight!

G. Galina

Spring Waters

The fields are still covered with white snow.
But the streams are already rolling in a
spring mood,
Running and awakening the sleepy shore,
Running and glittering and announcing
loudly.

They are announcing loudly to every corner:
"Spring is coming,
Spring is coming!
We are the messengers of young Spring,
She has sent us to come forward,
Spring is coming,
Spring is coming!"
And the quiet, warm May days
Follow her, merrily crowded
Into the rosy, bright dancing circle.

F. Tyutchev

*The Evolution of the Russian Romance
through the 19th and 20th Centuries*

*Part 3:
The Poetry of Anna Akhmatova*



*Lorriana Markovic, soprano
Ilya Sinaisky, piano
Dan Shomper, cello*

works by Prokofiev, Tavener, Sinaisky, and Slonimsky

*May 4, 2006
8 PM
Tawes Building
Ulrich Recital Hall
University of Maryland*

Part 3: The poetry of Anna Akhmatova

Five Poems of Anna Akhmatova, Op.27

Sunshine Has Filled the Room
True Tenderness
Thoughts of the Sunlight
Greetings!
The Gray-eyed King

Sergei Prokofiev
(1891-1953)

Akhmatova Songs

Dante
Pushkin and Lermontov
Boris Pasternak
Couplet
The Muse
Death

John Tavener
(b. 1944)

INTERMISSION

It Seems - A Human Voice Is Never Heard
I Know That You Are My Reward

Ilya Sinaisky
(b. 1974)

from *Ten Songs*

Lindens are Smelling Sweetly
Heart is Not Chained to Heart

Sergei Slonimsky
(b. 1932)

Seven Romances

On A White Night
The Thing, That the Dream Sang to Me About
It Could Be Better for Me to Cry Out Short Songs Vigorously
It's Not, But For Nothing I'm Said to Be Doleful
I Won't Start Drinking Wine With You
I Will Leave Your White House and Tranquil Garden
Stifling Drunkenness

Sergei Slonimsky
(b. 1932)

May 4, 2006 at 8:00pm
Ulrich Recital Hall
Taves Building
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

PROGRAM NOTES

Through much of the twentieth century, Anna Akhmatova's poetry has given voice to the deepest yearnings and struggles of the Russian people. From the most intimate longings of young lovers, to the artistic passions of St. Petersburg poets, to the collective suffering of a nation through two World Wars, the Russian Revolution and, later, the terror of Stalin, Akhmatova spoke to, and for, the soul of her people.

Born in 1889, she survived these upheavals, refusing to abandon either Russia or her craft, despite vicious attacks on her name and censorship of her work. When committing poems to paper threatened to cause her arrest, a few close friends faithfully memorized her lines. By the time she died in 1966, Anna Akhmatova was recognized as one of the world's greatest poets.

Anna Akhmatova was born Anna Gorenko near Odessa, Ukraine, as the daughter of a naval engineer. She began writing poetry at the age of 11, and adopted a pseudonym to allay her father's fears that as a "decadent poetress" she would dishonour the family. When she was sixteen, her father abandoned his family. Akhmatova attended a girls' gymnasium in Tsarskoe Selo and the famous Smolnyi Institute in St. Petersburg. At the age of 21 Akhmatova became a member of the Acemist group of poets, whose leader, the poet and literature critic Nikolai Gumilyov, she married in 1910. The movement of Acemism began in the early 20th Century, partially as a reaction against symbolism. Along with Gumilev and Mandelshtam, Akhmatova strove to bring the art form back down to earth. They did not believe poetry was tied to mysticism and thought that poets should express ideas about culture, the world, and human existence.

Akhmatova's first collection of poetry, *Večer* (Evening), appeared in 1912. She gained a wider fame two years later with *Chyotki* (Prayer Beads). Akhmatova stated, "I filled the vacancy for a woman poet." With the Acmeist group Akhmatova shared their striving for simplicity and clarity in expression. Her poems dealt mostly love or examined the Russian cultural tradition. Like a number of other Russian writers, she also identified the image of Saint Petersburg with the fate of Russia. Maria Tsvetayeva, her contemporary poet, called Akhmatova "Anna Chrysostom of all the Russians."

After her first husband was shot on charges of antirevolutionary activities in 1921 and the death of Aleksandr, Akhmatova entered a period of silence. Between the years 1921 and 1953 many of the people closest to her emigrated or were killed or imprisoned. Publication of her work was banned from 1925 to 1952, with only a brief respite during World War II in 1940, when several of her poems were published in the literary monthly *Zvezda*. Akhmatova's poem "Courage" appeared in 1942 on a front page of *Pravda*. When the siege of Leningrad had been lifted, Akhmatova returned to her home town in 1944. In 1946 Akhmatova was expelled from the Union of Soviet Writers; however, her poems eulogizing Joseph Stalin appeared in weekly magazine *Ogonyok* in the 1950s. They were designed to gain freedom for her son, who had been exiled to Siberia. In 1946 Akhmatova and the humorist Mikhail Zoshchenko were singled out as target of new attacks against artists and intellectuals. After Stalin's death, Akhmatova was slowly rehabilitated. When the American poet Robert Frost had visited her at a dacha in 1962, Akhmatova wrote: "I've had everything - poverty, prison lines, fear, poems remembered only by heart, burnt poems, humiliation and grief. And you don't know anything about this and wouldn't be able to understand it if I told you..." Two years before her death at the age of 76, Akhmatova was chosen president of the Writers' Union. Unfortunately, she did not live to see the publication of her collected works in 1986 in Moscow.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) was born, like Akhmatova, in the Ukraine. He began his career as a composer while still a student, and had a deep investment in Russian Romantic traditions – even if he was pushing those traditions to various kinds of modernism in the second decade of the new century. Like many artists, he left his country directly after the October Revolution; however,

unlike his contemporaries, he was the only composer to return, nearly 20 years later. His inner traditionalism, coupled with the neo-classicism he had helped invent, now made it possible for him to play a leading role in Soviet culture, to whose demands for political engagement, utility and simplicity he responded with prodigious creative energy.

His father Sergey Alekseyevich Prokofiev was an agronomist and managed the estate of Sontsovka, where he had gone to live in 1878 with his wife Mariya Zitkova, a well-educated woman with a feeling for the arts. Prokofiev was the last of their three children, but his two older sisters had died in infancy, so he grew up as a much indulged and pampered only child. When he was four years old his mother began his first piano lessons, and his earliest attempts at composition also date from this period. In 1902 the family stopped in Moscow on their way back from St Petersburg, and a family friend put them in touch with Sergei Taneyev, who recommended that the young Prokofiev study theory with the young composer and pianist Reinhold Glière. Glière spent the summers of 1902 and 1903 at Sontsovka, teaching Prokofiev theory, composition, instrumentation and piano. In the spring of 1903 the Prokofiev was introduced to Glazunov, then a professor at the St Petersburg Conservatory. Glazunov urged Prokofiev's parents to let him study music. While a student he met Myaskovskiy, ten years his senior. A lifelong friendship between them developed, and was maintained even during Prokofiev's years abroad. It was a relationship allowing room for frank and critical discussion of both men's works.

In 1912, Prokofiev first appeared as soloist with an orchestra when he played his First Piano Concerto with great success. The work was roundly condemned in the conservative press, while progressive critics such as Karatigin reviewed it favourably. Though still a student, Prokofiev had established himself, in the recitals of the Evenings of Contemporary Music, as a controversial innovator. Koussevitzky, who had founded his own orchestra and the Edition Russe de Musique in 1909, rejected his works at this point on the recommendation of his advisers: Skryabin, Rachmaninoff and Medtner.

Prokofiev showed quite another side of himself in the Classical Symphony op.25 (1916–17). His much-quoted remark – 'I thought that if Haydn were alive today he would compose just as he did before, but at the same time would include something new in his manner of composition. I wanted to compose such a symphony: a symphony in the classical style' – reads like an early confession of neo-classicism. Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*, the key neo-classical work, was not begun until two years later. Prokofiev was certainly referring back to classical models here in the proportions of the symphony, the well balanced sonata movements in the opening allegro and the finale, the triad-based melodies and the occasional Alberti bass figures. However, the stylization also includes Baroque elements, particularly in the third movement, a gavotte, and in the regular accompanying chords of its predecessor. These were also the direct harmonic idioms typical of Prokofiev which mark the symphony a 20th-century work.

He arrived in New York at the beginning of September 1918. He described his years abroad as a gradual process of failure, blaming the difficult conditions of American and European musical life. His first years in the USA were not as dismal as he described them in his autobiography. He appeared in New York in two concerts with the 'Russian Orchestra', an ensemble of emigrants. He played his First Piano Concerto and several solo works, and the Classical Symphony was also performed. After his second rather unsatisfactory season in America, Prokofiev turned his thoughts to Europe again. He spent the next three years giving concerts and composing in Europe during the summer months and returning to the USA for the winter season.

In the summer of 1936 Prokofiev finally moved to the Soviet Union, to live there with his wife and two sons. Stalin's power politics were approaching their ghastly climax in the purges at this time. As a composer, Prokofiev was cautious and ready to adapt in the first years after his return. In 1936 and 1937, like all composers in the Soviet Union, he was busy with works to mark the

centenary of Pushkin's death, celebrated as a great event. In 1939, for Stalin's 60th birthday, Prokofiev wrote the cantata *Zdravitsa* ('Hail to Stalin', op.85), a work on folk tunes of the most varied nationalities of the Soviet Union and one of countless works of homage to Stalin from this period. With a revised text, it maintained its place in the Soviet repertory even after the dictator's death.

In June of 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union, and the so-called 'Great War of the Fatherland' began. Prokofiev was evacuated in August, like all important artists. During the war, art had been less strictly supervised by the state. Certain works (in particular literary works by Zoshchenko and Akhmatova, and the films of Eisenstein, but also music by Shostakovich and Prokofiev) had aroused great interest in the west, and had deviated from the ideal of 'socialist realism'. But in the years 1946–8 four major resolutions affecting cultural policy were passed. The man responsible was Andrey Zhdanov, the leading cultural ideologue of the Stalinist period, and they paralysed cultural life until Stalin's death in 1953.

The infamous Decree of Music of 1948 which led to the condemnation of composers was sparked by the opera, *The Great Friendship* by Vanno Muradeli. Perhaps the saddest document in Soviet musical history, this decree was directed not so much against the composer as against the great composers of the Soviet Union. To Prokofiev, it was a blow from which he did not recover. After 1948 he was a sick and deeply wounded man; the few further works he wrote before his death bear traces of this. In the resolution Zhdanov had attacked Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, Myaskovsky and several other composers by name, denouncing their works for 'formalistic distortions and anti-democratic tendencies', as a 'rejection of the principles of classical music' and for the 'dissemination of atonality'. The list of banned works is surprising and revealing, for it affects not works which might be suspected of 'formalism', but compositions with unambiguously Soviet subjects. The list of banned works, rather, is arbitrarily drawn up with deliberate intent: only in this way could music directors and programme planners be so thoroughly alarmed that they would not venture to include any works by Prokofiev in the repertory at all. The heaviest and most threatening blow to Prokofiev followed after Zhdanov's tribunal and his letter of contrition when his first wife was arrested, accused of spying and treachery, and condemned to 20 years in a labour camp. Prokofiev heard the news from his sons, and he must have tormented himself with self-reproaches, for it was possible that he had contributed to the situation. Prokofiev's death on March 5, 1953 passed almost unnoticed, for Stalin died on that same day.

Five Songs of Anna Akhmatova (1916) which you will hear this evening, were praised by critics from the start. Prokofiev composed the songs in only a few days. They depict the stages of an initially happy love relationship which then disintegrates and comes to a deadly ending. The special correlation between poetry and music was not lost among contemporary listeners: Akhmatova's intimate poetry plays almost exclusively with hints and fine allusions which Prokofiev traces over as if with a silver pen. The voice, with its broad swinging melodic lines, is clearly in the foreground. As is appropriate with poetry of such intimate character, the piano plays more of an accompanying role; because it neither presents nor expands upon motivic material in the cycle.

Sir John Tavener was born in London in 1944 and studied at the Royal Academy of Music. In 1968, at the age of 24, he had a considerable success with *The Whale*, which was followed by a series of works which rapidly established him as one of the most individual voices of his generation. His early works continued to explore spiritual and religious dimensions – especially the ritualistic elements of Roman Catholicism. The culmination of these ideas came in 1976 with the controversial opera *Thèrèse*. Only one year later in 1977, Tavener converted to Russian Orthodoxy and described his conversion as a sensation of "home-coming". From this period onwards his music has indeed found an even greater spiritual focus and intensity. From 1981 to

1986, his music was centered almost exclusively on choral or vocal works with Orthodox texts. Texts have always been fundamental to Tavener's music, and instrumental and orchestral music was certainly not particularly important to him at this stage.

Strangely, it was an orchestral work which rekindled the flame of Tavener's reputation, *The Protecting Veil* for solo cello and string orchestra (1987). This lengthy piece takes its inspiration from the Orthodox feast of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God, and transfers the meditative calm of Tavener's vocal and choral music to another medium as well as exploiting to the full his often overlooked exuberant lyricism. The transparency to higher things evident in Tavener's musical language has left the concerns of the old avant garde far behind and simultaneously brought him a large measure of fame. The negative result of this phenomenon is evident in the sometimes formulaic approach, particularly in shorter works, in his recent output, but it is also true that few composers of the modern era have had the courage to deal so concentratedly in music with matters of the spirit, to follow their own beliefs into such initially unfashionable territory and subsequently to be so triumphantly vindicated in the public eye. He was knighted in the 2000 New Year honours.

The austere and hauntingly beautiful *Akhmatova Songs* for soprano and cello were composed in 1993 and first performed by Patricia Rozario (to whom the work is dedicated) and Steven Isserlis. Tavener first set the poetry of Akhmatova in 1979, when he composed the intense and powerfully moving *Akhmatova: Requiem*, for soprano, bass, brass, strings, and percussion. Fourteen years later, his response to her poetry remains the same: hauntingly simple and direct melodic lines, often with the barest accompaniments, (which is evident in this piece) that seem to penetrate the very essence of the poems. For the settings, Tavener selected six poems from different stages in Akhmatova's career. The first three tell of her admiration for the poets Dante, Pushkin and Lermontov, and Pasternak. In the fourth, *Couplet*, and fifth, *Muse*, she questions praise of her own poetry and speaks of her desire to write. In the final poem, *Death*, Akhmatova looks at her own death, and here Tavener brings together the musical ideas of the previous songs.

Ilya Sinaisky (b. 1974) is a second year Doctoral student in Collaborative Piano at the University of Maryland studying with professor Rita Sloan. Born in Ukraine, he emigrated to Israel in 1990. After his undergraduate studies at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance he received his Master of Music in Piano Performance from the Tel Aviv University. In 2002 he came to study at the Cleveland Institute of Music as a Professional Studies student in Piano and Accompanying. During his studies he worked at the Cleveland Music School Settlement and the Canton Orchestra. He received a second prize at the 2004 Darius Milhaud Performance Competition in Cleveland and was recipient of the 2004 Rosa Lobe Memorial Award for Accompanying at the Cleveland Institute of Music. At the University of Maryland he was awarded the Robert McCoy prize for Collaborative Piano in 2004 and 2005. In the summer of 2005 he participated at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara as a full scholarship student in Collaborative Piano and has been invited to the Cleveland Art Song Festival in May 2006. He has participated in masterclasses with Warren Jones, Elly Ameling, Peter Salaff, William Preucil, Dmitry Paperno, Emerson, Quarneri and Cavani Quartets. Mr. Sinaisky performs regularly with students and faculty of the School of Music at the University of Maryland and has performed with members of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, Israeli Opera, faculty members of the Haifa and Kyriat Tivon Conservatories of Music in Israel. His teachers include Isser Slonim, Vadim Monastyrsky, Pnina Zalzman, Natasha Tadson and Anita Pontremoli. Currently Ilya works as a piano teacher at the Jewish Community Center in Rockville and as a pianist for the Universalist National Memorial Church in Washington DC.

This collaboration began to take shape one year ago while we were discussing Russian poets and poetry. Anna Akhmatova was the favorite of both of us. Ilya expressed an interest in composing some pieces using Akhmatova's texts. I exuberantly said, "Yes, yes, yes!!! Let's do it!" Ilya and

I then began to read more of her poetry to see which poems “spoke to us.” Tonight you will hear the two pieces that mean so much to us.

Sergei Slonimsky (b.1932) a Russian composer, pianist and teacher, is one of the leading composers of Russian modern music. The son of the writer M.L. Slonimsky and a relative of the composer and musicologist Nikolai Slonimsky, he began to study composition at the age of 11, with Shebalin. From 1945 to 1950 he attended a special music school for gifted children. Since 1959 he taught music-theoretical disciplines, and since 1967 composition, at the Leningrad Conservatory. He has taken part more than once in folkloristic expeditions, and has recorded Russian folksongs. He is a Candidate of Arts (1963, for his dissertation on Prokofiev’s symphonies), professor (1976), laureate of the State M. Glinka Prize (1983) and People’s Artist of Russia (1987). He runs musical gatherings devoted to the popularization of Russian 20th-century music (especially from the 1920s). He is a member of the Composers’ Union.

Slonimsky belongs to the generation who came into being as composers after World War II. Since the middle of the 1950s he has been interested in the musical avant-garde and in a decisive stylistic renewal. Since the end of the 1950s Slonimsky has employed, in certain cases, the 12-tone system, and since the 1960s he has used aleatory, and sonoristic techniques, non-traditional graphic notation and quant rhythm. In his later works he is frequently and unexpectedly paradoxical, and in striving to make his own all compositional models of past and present music presents them in an unbroken extravagance of generic symbiosis. Slonimsky’s continued interest in the problems facing humanity and in tragic conflicts is reflected in his five operas, which represent various types of operatic drama in different periods of world history and literature. In his vocal cycles he favors the poets of the ‘silver age’ and his contemporaries, Akhmatova, Mandelstam, Kharms, Reyn and Brodsky.

Sergei Slonimsky is a close personal friend of my vocal coach Vera Danchenko-Stern and I am extremely grateful that she introduced this amazing repertoire to me. I have included Slonimsky in my previous recital and frankly, just can’t get enough of his music and decided to devote approximately half of this recital to his romances. I hope you all find his romances as beautiful as I find them.

TRANSLATIONS

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Five Poems of Anna Akhmatova, Op.27

Sunshine has filled the room

Sunshine has filled the room
with clear golden specks of dust.
I woke up and remembered,
dear, it was your birthday.

But far beyond my windows
snow has covered the ground,
And made me forget, so now to atone,
I sleep without dreams.

True tenderness

True tenderness is silent
and can't be mistaken for anything else.
In vain with earnest desire
you cover my shoulders with fur;
In vain you try to persuade me
of the merits of first love.
But I know too well the meaning
of your persistent burning glances.

Thoughts of the sunlight

Thoughts of the sunlight fainter and dimmer,
And parched the grass.
Breezes, fresh breezes at dawn's early
shimmer,
Flit by repass.

Look at the willows against a clear heaven,
Cloudless and wide.
Better, far better not to be given
Thee for thy bride!

Thoughts of the daylight dimmer and fainter.
Oh, darkness! Gloom!
Once again . . . Morning,
Tell me if winter is come.

Greetings!

Do you hear the soft rustle
beside your table?
Don't bother to write
for I'll come to you.

Is it possible you are angry
with me like the last time?
You say that you don't want to see my hands,
my hands or my eyes.

I am with you in your bright, simple room.
Don't chase me away
to where the cold, murky water
flows under the bridge.

The gray-eyed king

Hail to thee, everlasting pain!
The gray-eyed king died yesterday.

Scarlet and close was the autumn eve,
My husband, returning, said calmly to me:

"They brought him back from the hunt, you
know,
They found his body near the old oak.

Pity the queen. So young!...
Overnight her hair has turned gray."

Then he found his pipe on the hearth
And left, as he did every night, for work.

I will wake my little daughter now,
And look into her eyes of gray.

And outside the window the poplars
whisper:
"Your king is no more on this earth..."

John Tavener (b. 1944)

Akhmatova Songs

Dante

Even after his death he did not return
To his ancient Florence.
To the one who, leaving, did not look back,
To him I sing this song.
From hell he sent her curses
And in paradise he could not forget her –

Pushkin and Lermontov

Here the exile of Pushkin began,
And Lermontov's exile ended.
Here the scent of mountain herbs is delicate,
And just once I caught a glimpse by the lake,
In the plane trees' thick shadows,
In that cruel, twilight hour –
Of the shining, unquenchable eyes
Of Tamara's immortal lover.

Boris Pasternak

Endowed with some eternal childhood,
He shone open-handed, clean of sight,
The whole earth was his heritage
And this with all he shared.

Couplet

To me, praise from others is – ashes,
From you even a reproach is – high praise.

The Muse

When at night I await her coming,
It seems that life hangs by a strand.
What are honors, what is youth, what is
freedom,
Compared to that dear guest with rustic pipe
in hand.
And she entered.
Drawing aside her shawl she gazed
attentively at me.
I said to her: "Was it you who dictated to
Dante the pages of *The Inferno*?"
She replied: "It was I."

Death

I was on the edge of something
For which there is no precise name...
An insistent drowsiness,
A self-evasion...

And I am standing on the threshold of
Something that befalls everyone,
But at different cost...
On this ship there is a cabin for me
And wind in the sails – and the terrible
Moment of taking leave of my native land.

Ilya Sinaisky (b.1974)

**It Seems – A Human Voice Is Never
Heard Here**

It seems – a human voice
Is never heard here,
Only wind from the Stone Age
Knocks at the back door.
And it seems that under this wide sky
I alone have survived –
Because I was the first who wanted
To drink the deadly wine.

I Know That You Are My Reward

I know that you are my reward
For years of pain and trouble,
For never devoting myself
To earthly delights,
For not saying
To the beloved: "You are loved."
Because I forgave them all for everything,
You will be my angel.

Sergei Slonimsky (b. 1932)

from *Ten Songs*

Lindens are Smelling Sweetly

The door is half open,
The lindens smell sweet...
On the table, forgotten,
A riding crop and a glove.

The yellow circle of the lamp...
I'm listening to rustlings.
Why did you go?
I don't understand...

Tomorrow morning will be
Joyful and bright.
This life is beautiful,
Heart, just be wise.

You are completely exhausted.
Your beating is fainter, more muffled...
You know, I read somewhere
That souls are immortal.

Heart is Not Chained to Heart

One heart is not chained to another,
If you want to – leave!
There's lots of happiness in store
For one who's free.

I'm not weeping, I'm not complaining.
Happiness is not for me.
Don't kiss me, I am weary –
Death will kiss me.

Days of gnawing tedium endured
With the winter snow.
Why, oh why should you be better
Than the one I chose?

Seven Romances

On a White Night

Ah, I didn't lock the door,
I didn't light the candles.
You don't know that, exhausted,
I decided not to go to bed.

To watch how the streaks of sunset
Died away in the gloom of the firs,
Getting drunk on the sound of a voice
That resembles yours.

And to realize that all is lost,
That life is hell!
Oh, I was so sure
That you would return.

The Thing, That the Dream Sang to Me About

I have been silent since morning
About what my dream sang to me.
For the red rose and the moonbeam
And for me – a single destiny.
The snows creep down the mountain slope,
And I am whiter than snow,
But sweetly the banks
of the murky, overflowing river break off.
The cool rustling of spruce groves
Is more restful than waking thoughts.

It Could Be Better For Me to Cry Out Short Songs Vigorously

I should have raucously screeched little folk
tunes,
And you on a wheezy old squeeze box
played,

And hugging each other at night in the
oatfield,
We'd lose the ribbon of my tight braid.

Better for me to have rocked your child,
And for you to earn 50 kopecks a day,
And to walk in the graveyard
To view God's white lilacs
On Remembrance Day.

It's Not, But For Nothing I'm Said to be Doleful

How can you bear to look at the Neva?
How can you bear to cross the bridges?...
Not in vain am I known as the grieving one
Since the time you appeared to me.
The black angels' wings are sharp,
Judgment Day is coming soon,
And raspberry-colored bonfires bloom,
Like roses, in the snow.

I Won't Start Drinking Wine With You

I won't start drinking wine with you,
Because you're a naughty boy.
I know, it's a custom where you come from
To kiss anyone under the sun.

But we have peace and quiet,
Thanks be to God.

But we have no shining eyes
That rise on command.

I'll Will Leave Your White House and Tranquil Garden

I'll will leave your white house and tranquil garden.
Let life be empty and bright.
You, and only you, I shall glorify in my poems,
As a woman has never been able to do.
And you remember the beloved
For whose eyes you created this paradise,
But I deal in rare commodities –
I sell your love and tenderness.

Stifling Drunkenness

My husband whipped me with his woven belt,
folded in two.
All night I've been at the little window
With a taper, waiting for you.

Day breaks. And over the forge
Puffs a puff of smoke.
Ah, once more you couldn't be here
With this sad prisoner.

It's a gloomy fate, a torturous fate
I've accepted for you.
Are you in love with someone fair?
Or is it your sweetheart auburn-haired?

How can I suppress you, my groans!
In my heart there is dark,
stifling drunkenness,
And a few slender sunbeams lie down
On the unrumpled bed.

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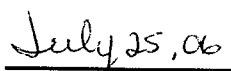
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