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RELATION TO THE SYNTHESIS OF THE ARTS IN RUSSIA,
1890-1922.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1971
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THE EARLY SONGS OF SERGEI PROKOFIEV AND THEIR
RELATION TO THE SYNTHESIS OF THE ARTS IN RUSSIA
1890-1922

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By
Robert Kenneth Evans, B.M.

Approved by

Advisor
School of Music
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LIST OF SYMBOLS

The following transliteration system will be used in this paper for transliterating Russian poetry, quotations, and terminology, but not for Russian proper names:

A a a
B b b
V v v
G g g
D d d
E e e
E e e
C c c
Z z z
I i
U u
Y y u
Φ φ φ

Х х x
Щ щ щ
Ц ц
Я я ja
Ю ю ju
Я я ja
INTRODUCTION

The first songs of Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953), Two Poems, op. 9, to texts of Balmont and Apukhtin, date from 1910. In the autumn of 1921, Prokofiev wrote his Five Poems of Balmont, op. 36. These songs constitute his last serious contribution to the solo vocal repertoire. An interval of fourteen years elapsed before Prokofiev again turned his attention to this medium. All the subsequent songs are of trifling substance and conform to the dictates of the State.

The study of the early songs of Prokofiev is based on the Soviet critical edition of the composer's collected works. All twenty songs are included in Vol. XVII of this edition, which is under the general editorship of Dmitri Kabalevsky, Lev Oborin, Konstantin Sakva, and Georgy Khubov, and in which the "errors of previous editions have been unconditionally removed."1

The poetry of Akhmatova is available in the critical edition of her works recently published by Inter-Language Literary Associates.2

The poetry of Balmont has not yet been published in a critical edition. Indeed, some of the poetry utilized in

1S. Prokof'ev, Sobranie Sočinenij Tom 17 Vokal'nye sočinenija dli' otdyha i ulina d'nyx volosov s forteplano (Moscow: Izdacej'stvo Muzyka, 1966), p. viii.
Prokofiev's op. 36 can be found only in the editions of the music itself. Otherwise the source has been the original edition of the early poetry of Balmont published by the Scorpion Publishing House.³

The purpose of this study is to investigate both music and poetry. In music the point of departure is the formal structure of each song and the establishment of the overall importance of Prokofiev's early songs and their stylistic values. Also investigated is the influence of other composers as seen in the songs of Prokofiev's early period with a special study of the mysticism and the synthesis in the harmonic structure of Scriabin's music. The relationship of Prokofiev's early songs to the Russian solo vocal repertoire is seen through an historical survey of the literature. Since the poet Balmont plays a particularly important role in the Prokofiev song literature, we include a study of Balmont settings for solo voice of three contemporaries of Prokofiev: Sergei Rakhmaninov, Nicholas Miaskovsky, and Igor Stravinsky.

In the realm of poetry is a study of the techniques of Balmont and Akhmatova and their schools of poetry as reflected in the verses set by Prokofiev and a study in depth of selected poems.

In this investigation we stress the interrelationship of poetry and music with particular emphasis placed upon the influence of the formal structure of the poetry as well as its emotional and symbolical overtones as seen in the music.

Since it is necessary to view the problem in this study in its cultural environment, we have provided a brief survey of activities of Prokofiev's contemporaries in the sphere of art, the ballet, and the theater.

³Konstantin Dmitrievič Bal'mont, Polnoe Sobranie Stixov (Moscow: Skorpion, 1907-14).
Sergei Prokofiev was born in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The cultural activities in Russia in this period provided the impetus for that last flowering of literature and the arts in the czarist regime, the Silver Age. Notable in this era was a tendency toward a synthesis of all the arts. Painters, poets, musicians, writers, and actors worked in close collaboration. Tangible evidence of this was a synthesis of both ideologies and of art forms.

In the effort toward amalgamation in the arts the names of four men are prominent: Sergei Diaghilev, Konstantin Stanislavsky, Alexander Scriabin, and Igor Stravinsky. Each of these men played important roles in the course of Russian culture and influenced the activities and thinking of Sergei Prokofiev. Their contributions are eminent in the Moscow Art Theater, the World of Art, the Diaghilev Ballet Russe, the Evenings of Contemporary Music, and in the publications of the leading poetic movements.

The synthesis of all the arts sought by Scriabin, particularly in such vast works as his Mystery (left unfinished at his death), was actually most completely realized by Sergei Diaghilev with his blending of music, painting, and dance in his Russian Ballet company. The synthetic concept that pervades much of this period in Russia had as one of its forbears a concept expressed by Charles Baudelaire, that precursor of symbolism whose influence was keenly felt among the early Russian symbolist poets. In the poem "Correspondences" from his Fleurs du Mal, the French master states: "Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent."

Other creative personalities affiliated with the above noted cultural manifestations and with the synthesis of the arts (all of whom were to wield an influence direct or indirect on Sergei Prokofiev) included:
1. In art and the ballet -- Benois, Bakst, Pokine, Nijinsky.
2. In the theater -- Nemirovich-Danchenko, Meyerhold.
3. In literature -- Chekhov, Gorky, Merezhkovsky, Gippius, Bryusov, Balmont, Akhmatova, Blok, Gumilëv, Mayakovsky.
4. In music -- Rakhmaninov, Medtner, Miaskovsky.

The cultural climate in the two final decades of the old regime permitted relatively unhampered creative activities. Within a few years after the composition of Prokofiev's Five Poems, op. 36, the dogma of Socialist Realism and the accompanying restrictions and fetters was imposed on all aspects of creative art and thought. Balmont died in exile -- disillusioned, unappreciated, fallen into quasi-oblivion and half mad. Prokofiev was absent from Russia during the first several years of the entrenchment of Socialist Realism. When he returned in the thirties, what appeared at the outset to be unquestioning acclaim proved to be a most devastating predicament for the composer after the authorities bared their fangs. Akhmatova suffered untold martyrdom -- humiliation, public shaming, enforced silence, and indignities that may never be fully exposed.

It is hoped that this study may help to clarify why the bulk of Prokofiev's early songs have fallen into neglect and why the poets employed by Prokofiev have been suppressed or disgraced. Finally, it is hoped that it may help to clarify why the solo song as an art form was to be discouraged by the Soviet authorities within a brief span of time after the Revolution.
CHAPTER I

FACETS OF THE ARTISTIC SYNTHESIS

Social and Political Atmosphere

In the reign of Nicholas II (1894-1917), there was an array of cultural events and accomplishments in all branches of the arts unparalleled in Russian history for their variety, profusion, and high level of attainment. There was also a series of chaotic and catastrophic political and military events culminating in the Revolution of 1917. The first of the political upheavals took place in June, 1896, with the triumph of the evolutionary wing of Marxist Socialists and the first general strike of thirty thousand workmen in St. Petersburg. After the chaos of World War I and the first Revolution in February, 1917, epoch-making events followed in speedy succession until the de facto recognition of the Soviets in 1921. The year 1921 coincides with the composition of the final group of early songs of Prokofiev.

Many of the events early in the reign of Nicholas were a consequence of the belated industrial revolution. This large scale industrialization, in which the most modern machines were borrowed from the West, did not reach Russia until the 1880's. It prompted some thinkers, including the symbolist poet, Alexander Blok (1880-1921), to speak of Russia as a "new America." In the opinion of Renato Poggioli:

... The most fatal consequences of the process (of industrialization) were the further alienation of the peasantry from the body politic, and the formation of a new class, ...
Chekhov saw without regret, but not without misgivings, the fading away of the charming, parasitic gentry before a new race of men, ruled only by the profit motive; he symbolized this event at the end of his play "The Cherry Orchard."¹

The chopping down of the cherry trees in this drama represented the elimination of these parasites, these "superfluous men," as they had come to be known in Russian literature.

The poet Konstantin Balmont (1867-1943) was fully mature when Nicholas II ascended the throne and reacted violently to some of the political and social injustices of this reign. Anna Akhmatova (1888-1966) and Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) were only beginning to evince awareness of life in the years immediately following the coronation of the last Romanov czar. The events of these years were to be reflected in Russian life: by the poetess in words; by the composer in his music.

After the defeat and shame of the war with Japan and the Revolution of 1905, Nicholas II was forced to grant enormous concessions. The most important were the abolition of censorship and the establishment of the Duma, the first and last of Russian parliaments. But even these failed to materialize into significant reforms. The attainment of a genuinely democratic state was thwarted by the complication of a cabinet, indeed, an entire nation, divided. It required the Revolution of 1917 and the events of the years following to transform a thousand years of autocratic rule into a Socialist State. In regard to the immediate effect of the Revolution, Poggioli has aptly stated: "The iron law of revolution seems to be that it cannot achieve its task without the help of its anti-

thesis, which is involution rather than evolution."2

Art and the Theater

The theater, the ballet, and the opera in Moscow and St. Petersburg during the reign of Nicholas II required the collaboration of some of the leading Russian painters, designers, and directors. These artists formulated activities involving many of the key figures in Russian music and the Russian theater.

Already in the last decade of the nineteenth century a high degree of excellence had been reached in every aspect of the creative and performing arts in Russia. The mood at the turn of the century was one of anticipation of innovation and expectancy of great, new strides in the cultural domain. This attitude on the part of the intelligentsia was a direct counterpart of that of the proletariat in the domain of social reforms.

The cultural surge was many-faceted and expressed itself in this Silver Age under many guises: symbolism, realism, primitivism, paganism, interest in folk tales and legends, mysticism, futurism, acmeism, neo-classicism, cubism, and impressionism. Rimsky-Korsakov led the way with his operas based on folk tales and legends such as Sadko, Kitezh, Tsar Saltan, The Golden Cockrel, and The Snow Maiden. Scriabin evolved his personal philosophy of universal mysticism in his larger orchestral pieces, culminating in Prometheus. Stravinsky expressed the tendency toward paganism, primitivism, and legends in works such as The Firebird, The Rite of Spring. Chekhov expressed the final symbolism of the old century and its mode of life yielding to the new in his masterpieces for the theater given ideal performances by the Moscow Art Theater. Fokine rebelled against the nineteenth century ballet tradition

maintained with an iron hand by his predecessor, Petipa. While continuing the high standards and technical requirements of classic ballet, he introduced a measure of naturalness and enlarged the range of expression in his choreographies. Telyakovskovsky, as director of the Imperial Theaters from 1902, gave commissions to both Benois and Bakst, the two guiding lights in the graphic arts. They in turn gravitated toward the impresario Diaghilev, who finally synthesized many aspects of the arts as no others had done before him. Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko rebelled against outmoded practices of the Imperial Theaters and introduced their method of realism, and encouraged experimental theater. Akhmatova, of the younger generation, while exhibiting traits of decadence, subscribed to the tenets of the offshoot of symbolism that came to be known as acmeism, and she became, at least for a time, a neo-classicist. A strikingly similar position was assumed by Prokofiev, also of the younger generation. He too exhibited some traits of decadence, due to the influence of the expressionistic works of Reger and the early Schoenberg, and, even more so, to the works of the mature Scriabin. Prokofiev, like Akhmatova, was to become a leading neo-classicist. Just as Stanislavsky rebelled in the theater, so did Prokofiev rebel in everything he touched in music. Both were united by their refusal to accept the mundane, the outmoded, the false, and the mediocre. Both were heralds of progress.

Sergei Prokofiev would certainly not have developed along the lines he did had he been educated elsewhere and had he not been exposed to all the ideologies outlined above, and especially these ideologies as manifested on Russian soil with its complex cultural heritage.

The Imperial Theaters of Russia have their origin in a royal decree submitted to the Senate by the Empress Elizabeth (1741-1762) in 1756. From that time until the
fall of the czarist regime in 1917, the Imperial Theaters remained under State control and subsidy. All the artists affiliated with them were graded and classified, like other civil servants. The statutes of the Imperial Theater Administration, which date from the reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855), "fixed all regulations about parts, rehearsals, costumes, deportment, fines, and punishments for the transgressors ..." Parts were stereotyped as in the French theater.

In the Silver Age the Imperial Theaters of Russia were under the general directorship of V. A. Telyakovsky. Each theater generally housed a permanent company of artists. These theaters included:


3. Mariinsky Theater -- (Presently called Kirov) -- St. Petersburg. Established 1860. The home of opera and ballet for the capitol. In the Silver Age, the choreographies of Fokine began to rival those of Petipa. Several Rimsky-Korsakov operas were given first performances here.

4. Alexandriinsky Theater -- Presently called Academic Dramatic Theater) -- St. Petersburg. Established 1833. A theater devoted to drama. From its inception it attracted several levels of Russian society. In the reign of Nicholas II it witnessed the production of such varied plays as Hostages of Life of the symbolist Fyodor Sologub (1863-1927) and Molière's Don Juan staged in 1911 by Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1942). In this production an illusion of the magnificence of the Versailles of Louis XIV was created by the

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3Marc Slonim, Russian Theater From the Empire to the Soviets (New York: Colliers Books, 1962), p. 47
sets and costumes of Alexander Golovin (1863-1930).4

In addition to the four principal Imperial Theaters there were a large number of privately supported houses that appeared in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The most important of these was the Private Opera housed in the Moscow mansion of Savva Mamontov (1841-1919). Mamontov both subsidized the opera and took part in the direction himself. He gave early encouragement to many painters and decorative artists such as Golovin, Konstantin Korovin (1861-1939), and Mikhail Vrubel (1856-1910). He engaged singers such as Fyodor Chaliapin (1873-1938). Among the directors in the employ of Mamontov was Fyodor Kommissarzhevsky (1874-1954), the brother of the actress Vera Kommissarzhevskaya (1864-1910). He was to become especially important in the staging of opera and at the end of his career staged such works as Turandot and Wozzeck in the New York City Center Opera.

Several new undertakings that showed the pathway to modernism, realism, experimental and avant-garde theater arose after the turn of the century. These privately organized theaters included:

1. The Moscow Opera House. Founded by S. Zimin. One hundred operas were produced here between 1904 and 1917.5

2. The Komissarzhevsky Theater. Established in 1904 by Vera Komissarzhevskaya. In the year of its founding this theater produced the provocative play, The Vacationists, of Maxim Gorky (1868-1936).

3. The Moscow Art Theater. Established 1898. A transformed Hermitage Theater in Carriage Row was the site selected for the first performance, Czar Fyodor. This play, the first in the historical trilogy of Count Alexei Tolstoy (1817-1875), was

4Marc Slonim, Russian Theater, p. 219.
5Ibid., p. 107.
given a production that made Russian theatrical history with its astonishing reproduction on stage of historic sites in and around the Moscow Kremlin.

4. The First Studio of the Moscow Art Theater. Founded in 1912 by Leopold Sullerschtsy (1872-1916) and others associated with the Moscow Art Theater. Its first presentation was The Shipwreck of "Hope" by the Dutch playwright Herman Heijmans (1864-1924).

5. The Ancient Theater. Organized in 1907 in St. Petersburg by Nikolai Evreinov (1879-1953). An experimental theater that prepared its stage and brought on all its props before the eyes of the audience. In its first year it presented such unusual items as medieval miracle and pastoral plays. Among these were Adam de la Halle's Jeu de Robin et de Marion for which the stage was transformed into a castle. Among the collaborators of Evreinov in his venture were such important artists as Alexander Benois (1876-1960) and Mstislav Dobuzhinsky (1878-1958).

6. The Kamerny Theater. Founded in 1914 by Alexander Tairov (1885-1950). This experimental director was to implement his theories in this theater for the next three decades. His opening night production was Kalidasa's Sakuntala in an adaptation by Balmont.

**Stanislavsky and the Moscow Art Theater**

Konstantin Sergeevich Alexeev (Stanislavsky) (1863-1938) evinced an early interest in both opera and drama. The son of a rich industrialist, Sergei Alexeev, who was intimate with many of the Maecenases supporting opera, theater, art, and the publishing of books, Stanislavsky became in 1888 the chairman of the Society for Arts and Letters. The aim of this organization was to unite artists from diverse fields and to prepare regularly scheduled theatrical productions from serious drama to light opera. He developed a twofold personality embracing a compulsion to represent life by the most natural means and an indulgence

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6Marc Slonim, *Russian Theater*, p. 119.
in the impressionism and symbolism then in vogue. This ambivalence was to remain one of the hallmarks of his personality.

On June 21, 1898, a meeting between Stanislavsky and Vladimir Nemirovich Danchenko (1858-1943) took place in a private room of the restaurant Slavjanskij Bazaar. In their eighteen hour "chat" these two great directors came to a complete agreement that the established theaters in Russia were sorely in need of reform. The result was the projection of the Moscow Art Theater, which opened its doors to the public in the fall of 1898. Of the idyllic summer that preceded this historic opening, Stanislavsky wrote:

We were perfectly happy then; the future did not frighten us, we were united by warm friendship and in love with the idea of the new theater: it loomed in front of us as something vague but beautiful and gave us enthusiasm, strength and fire. We worked and dreamt whole days and nights. . . . Our program was revolutionary; we rebelled against the old way of acting, against affectation, and false pathos, against declamation and bohemian exaggeration, against bad conventionality of production and sets, against the star system which ruined the ensemble, and against the whole spirit of performance and the insignificance of repertory.7

The opening night of the Moscow Art Theater on October 14, 1898 was a resounding success with the performance of Czar Fyodor. Nemirovich Danchenko, understanding the need to bring modern repertory into the new theater, decided to risk a production of Chekhov's Seagull. The play had been such an abysmal failure at the premiere at the Alexandriinsky Theater only two years previously that Chekhov had vowed he would never again write for the theater. Even Stanislavsky at first had doubts about the merits of the play. Nonetheless, Danchenko insisted on producing this play that he had admired from the outset.

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After an enormous amount of rehearsal, the first night of the *Seagull* took place at the Moscow Art Theater on December 29, 1898 and proved to be one of the most momentous occasions in the history of the Russian theater.

The main difficulty was in finding new inflections, new diction, a new rhythm of performance — briefly, a new theatrical language. . . . this was truly the second birth of the Moscow Art Theater. By so justly rendering the mood of Chekhov’s work, Stanislavsky and Nemirovich Danchenko initiated a new period in the history of Russian Repertory and scenic art.  

**Diaghilev and the World of Art**

The Moscow Art Theater was not the sole manifestation of the cultural surge. The year 1898 also saw the launching of the magazine, the *World of Art*, by Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929). In this literary venture, Diaghilev presented to his readers a distillation of the finest achievements of the Russian moderns in the graphic arts and poetry and, equally important, examples of the more recent trends in Western Art.

In their first issue, October, 1898, the leaders of the *World of Art* group proclaimed their belief that art is and must remain outside the sphere of politics and religion. Leon Bakst (1866-1924), as collaborating editor, wrote: "The *World of Art* is above all earthly things, above the stars, there it reigns proud, secret and lonely as on a snowy peak." The first issue of the *World of Art* included poems by French and Russian symbolists, an article by Alexander Benois, another collaborating editor, on French impressionism, along with a discussion of the

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8Marc Slonim, *Russian Theater*, p. 132.
musical philosophy of Alexander Scriabin (1871-1915), the most avant-garde and controversial Russian composer of the time. This preoccupation with all that was novel and even shocking was to become one of the hallmarks of Diaghilev's personality.

Diaghilev, Benois, Bakst, and the other chief collaborators in the World of Art aided in generating a reawakening of the intelligentsia to the value of the arts of painting and architecture of ancient Russia. This interest in primitive culture was to be reflected in poetry such as that of Balmont, as will be seen, as well as in some of the music of Igor Stravinsky, especially in his Rite of Spring, and of Sergei Prokofiev in his Scythian Suite.

In addition to Benois, Bakst, and Golovin, the painters of St. Petersburg affiliated with the World of Art movement included Konstantin Somov (1869-1939). All of these artists had in common the same high standards of excellence and integrity proclaimed by the new, progressive wing of the Russian theater. Together they made an invaluable contribution to the renovation and revitalization of art in Russian theaters.

The members of the Moscow group of the World of Art painters, including Serov, Vrubel, Korovin, Levitan, Maliutin, and Kustodiev, collaborated with the operatic enterprises of Savva Mamontov. Their prowess as displayed in Mamontov's theatrical ventures aided them in attracting the attention of V. A. Telyakovsky, the director of the Imperial Theaters at Moscow. The commissions that ensued from this recognition included all aspects of their work and extended their reknown. These artists, along with their colleagues in St. Petersburg, greatly aided the cause of modern stage music with their highly impressive and imaginative stage designs.

But the fame of these artists might not have gone
beyond the geographical limits of Russia had it not been for the decisive steps taken by Sergei Diaghilev after the World of Art had ceased publication in 1904. In 1905 Diaghilev organized an exposition of Russian historical portraiture in St. Petersburg and followed this with an exposition of Russian art in Paris the next year. Most significant was his decision to organize a season of Russian Ballet and Opera in Paris. He transported his own scenery, all of which had been rendered by his World of Art staff.

After his epoch-making successes in Western Europe in 1909, Diaghilev persuaded artists from the West to join forces. He added to his roster of associates and staff Picasso, Braque, Cocteau, and Matisse. The latter executed a portrait of Sergei Prokofiev for the program of The Buffoon, a ballet commissioned by Diaghilev and given its first performance in Paris on May 17, 1921. Similarly Diaghilev persuaded composers such as Hindemith and Ravel to join Stravinsky, Prokofiev, and other Russian composers to contribute to his venture.

Meyerhold and Futurism

Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1942) entered the drama class of the Moscow Philharmonic under Nemirovich Danchenko in 1896 and later joined the Moscow Art Theater. In 1902 he left the company to form his own group. He toured with several plays in which he put into practise his anti-realism.

In 1905 Stanislavsky established the first of several experimental workshops. The direction of the first of these, called the Studio, was entrusted to Meyerhold. Stanislavsky realized that Meyerhold possessed an extraordinary talent, but could not then foresee that he was to develop into one of the greatest experimental directors in the Russian theater. A rift with the Moscow Art Theater
ensued when Meyerhold's antirealism and tendency toward pantomime, displayed in a production at the Studio, disappointed Stanislavsky.

In 1906 Meyerhold was invited to come to the Kommissarzhevsky Theater.

It must be granted that whatever Meyerhold did, it was daring and accepted by the public. On the first night of Hedda Gabler, chosen for the opening on November 10, 1906, the new curtain by Bakst, representing a Greek temple and a sphinx (symbol of religious sources of art and Eastern wisdom) was pulled aside, and the spectators were confronted with an antirealistic production. Hedda Gabler was built on the principle of correspondence between moods and colors, so dear to the hearts of French symbolists. Each character had his own color and a fixed set of gestures. A contemporary described it as follows: "The stage seemed filled with bluish-green-silver mist. The background was blue. On the right side, a huge transom, the whole height of the stage, represented a window. Underneath stuck out the leaves of a black rhododendron. Outside the window, the air was greenish blue. In the last act, the twinkling of stars pierced the bluish mist. On the left, the whole wall was occupied by a huge tapestry representing a silvery gold woman with a deer. Silver lace decorated the top and the wings of the stage. Greenish-blue carpet covered the floor. The furniture, including a grand piano, was white. Green-white vases held large white chrysanthemums. White furs were thrown over a strangely shaped sofa, on which Hedda reclined — in a sea-watery green dress. It shimmered and flowed at her every movement, and she resembled a sea serpent with shiny scales."¹⁰

Thus Meyerhold, with the collaboration of Bakst, harmonized brilliantly the moods of a play. Meyerhold manifested his broad sphere of interests in numerous experimental presentations. This widespread activity together with a growing interest in the commedia dell'arte prompted Meyerhold to adopt the name of Dr. Dapertutto (Dr. Everywhere).

¹⁰Marc Slonim, Russian Theater, p. 212
Meyerhold's attraction to the commedia dell'arte aided him in formulating his own aesthetic of acting, an aesthetic that he placed in opposition to the thinking of the Moscow Art Theater. Against the tenet of Stanislavsky that an actor might arrive at the heart of a characterization and portray various types by dint of "inner penetration" and "authenticity of emotions," Meyerhold pitted the fixedemploi. The stock character, the basis of conventional theater, became the ideal of Meyerhold. Stressing technique and physical training, he required the actor by turns to be "a mime, a dancer, a juggler, a comedian, an acrobat."11

In regard to Meyerhold's attitude toward the actor, Poggioli declares that he

... handled the actor as if he were an inarticulate acrobat, or a blind performing machine. This last of all such reinterpretations of the role of the player, which were not always effective in practice, might stand as an allegory of that dehumanization and mechanization of life which was to be an effect of the Soviet order: and it may well be that Meyerhold was made to pay with his life for this unconscious insight. ... a symbolist of the theater in the first phase of his career and a futurist in the next.12

In 1914 Meyerhold published a shortlived review in which he extolled Gozzi and the technical approach of the commedia dell'arte. He titled this magazine Love for Three Oranges (L'amore delle tre melarancie), after Gozzi's work of the same title. This farce of Gozzi was one of ten grotesque fiabe devised to infuse new life into the moribund commedia dell'arte of the 1760's.

Meyerhold published Gozzi's full play in the first issue of his periodical. Several years later Meyerhold

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11Marc Slonim, Russian Theater, p. 221.
12Renato Poggioli, Poets of Modern Russia, p. 69.
proposed this play to Sergei Prokofiev, who drew from it both title and libretto for one of his most famous works for the theater.

It was Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944), the Italian poet and dramatist, who in 1909 published in Le Figaro the first official manifesto of futurism. Rallying around himself a group of young Italian writers and painters he proclaimed his love of danger, his admiration for speed, and advocated the destruction of the monuments of cultural heritage, even the destruction of museums. This almost morbid negativism proved contagious for the virus spread within a short period of time to Russia. There the painter, David Burliuk, having contracted it, transmitted it to Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930), the "poet of the revolution," who became one of the staunchest champions of its anarchic tendencies.

The Russian futurists issued a manifesto in 1912 that read in part:

We alone are the face of our time. Time's trumpet blares in our art of words. The past is stifling. The Academy and Pushkin are more unintelligible than hieroglyphs. Throw Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, etc., overboard from the steamer of modernity... All these Maxim Gorkys, Bloks, Remizovs, Sologubs... etc., -- all they want is a villa by the river... From the height of skyscrapers we look down on their insignificance. We demand respect for the poet's right 1) to enlarge the vocabulary with arbitrary and derivative words -- neologisms; 2) to uncompromising hatred for the language used hitherto; 3) to tear with horror from their proud heads the crowns of worthless fame made of bathroom brushes; 4) to stand upon the rock of the word "We" in a sea of cat-calls and indignation.13

Eventually Meyerhold became as closely allied with

futurism as was Mayakovsky. The latter was not only intimately associated with Meyerhold but was also connected with some of the activities of Sergei Prokofiev, who himself was labelled a futurist in certain quarters.

The experiments of Meyerhold and the avant-garde directors were all inextricably connected with symbolism. The whole artistic atmosphere in Russian educated society after the failure of the 1905 revolutionary movement was permeated with symbolism and aestheticism. In the fourth issue of the magazine, World of Art, Valery Bryusov (1873-1924), criticized the Moscow Art Theater in the following terms:

"Imitation of nature . . . is a means but not an end in art. Theater that simply aims at accurate rendering of reality is meant for people with little imagination. Art is inevitably determined by a set of conditions and patterns. The stage, with all its limitations and its three walls, is basically conventional. We must bring to it a set of consciously established aesthetic conventions, and the theater should take them for granted."14

In December, 1917, Anatoly Vasilevich Lunacharsky (1875-1933), the first Commissar for Education in the new regime, extended an invitation to some one hundred and twenty writers, painters, and actors to attend a conference on the arts under the new society. Lunacharsky, a cultured man, a writer and dramatist himself who, along with Maxim Gorky, was largely responsible for the preservation of numerous works of art and historical buildings from wanton destruction during the critical time of his position, was also to play a brief but decisive role in the biography of Sergei Prokofiev. To the conference summoned by the new Commissar, Slonim informs us:

"... only five came, among them Vladimir Mayakovsky, Blok, and Meyerhold. In January, 1918, a theatrical

14Quoted in: Marc Slonim, Russian Theater, p. 238.
section headed by Olga Kameneva (Trotsky's sister) was established "in order to create new theaters in connection with the socialist reorganization of State and Society."\(^{15}\)

Within a few years the dogma of Socialist Realism was being applied to all forms of cultural activities and the Moscow Art Theater was obliged to defend itself against attacks from the extreme leftist elements of the new Communist society. Stanislavsky proclaimed his aesthetic in those years in these terms:

... this great life of the spirit cannot be expressed by acrobatics or by constructivism, or by loud luxury of production, or by poster-like painting, or by futuristic daring. Nor do I accept the opposite extreme -- the utter simplicity of settings which ends in their complete elimination, or artificial noses and circles painted on faces, and other exaggerated external devices justified by the fashionable theory of the grotesque.\(^{16}\)

Along with Stanislavsky, Nemirovich Danchenko took a firm stand against Communist pressure to cater to their tastes and in a letter to Lunacharsky, Nemirovich stated:

We accept the Revolution but we are afraid that this music of the new world will not find for a long time an expression in dramatic literature. In any case, we do not see it yet -- and if we, the theater, will be offered dry, artificial, imperfect, stammering material, we will not be able to make it sound right -- regardless of the fact that it may be strongly tuned in to high revolutionary ideas. We cannot lower our art and ourselves ... it is impossible to force the musicians of high musical culture to play unripe, lifeless scores written by school boys.\(^{17}\)

The sentiments expressed in this letter were to be reechoed by countless other thinkers in the Soviet. But in


\(^{16}\)Ibid.

\(^{17}\)Ibid.
nearly every instance those who expressed such thoughts were to pay dearly for these extravagances. Both Meyerhold and his wife payed with their lives for the cause of artistic truth and integrity. Others ended similarly or were silenced by the State, as was the case with Anna Akhmatova. Others, like Esenin and Mayakovsky, ended their own lives prematurely rather than continue them in the new ideological straight-jacket.

The Symbolism of Scriabin

The impossibility of distinguishing ethos from pathos in the philosophy of Scriabin accounts for his being classified as a symbolist and mystic in music. Scriabin ran the gamut of several philosophical tendencies without either fully comprehending or, much less, fully subscribing to any particular school of thought. Of the philosophers with whose teachings he came into contact in an indirect manner it was probably Vladimir Soloviev who touched the most sympathetic chords. His emphasis was on the spirituality of all being, the concept of absolute one-ness, and the evolution of the God-man.

The ideology of symbolism and, in particular, its mystical implications, were epitomized in Russian music by Scriabin. This philosophy assumed a near fanatical turn when Scriabin fancied himself a new Messiah. For him, music and religion became fused. Every large composition of Scriabin in the mature period symbolizes the longing for reunion with God. In speaking of the "thread of cosmic evolution" in the works of Scriabin, Alfred Swan clarifies the composer's philosophy in these terms:

Beginning with the yearning phase the Spirit passes through a period of materialization back to its true aerial substance. Carried off in a wild,
orgiastic dance, it is finally united with God.  

Swan also helps to explain how this mystical concept receives a symbolic representation in **Prometheus** (The Poem of Fire -- dating from 1913):

Harmony in **Prometheus** finally assumes the function of melody: the latter, if divested of its harmonic basis, would undoubtedly lose most of its poignancy. Even the laconic themes of the Poem of Ecstasy seem long in comparison with the particles of themes that glitter in **Prometheus**. Not only does he seem to avoid a sustained theme, but sustained notes and sounds are equally abhorrent to him. He is afraid of their vulgarizing effect and makes use of continuous trills, little runs, appoggiaturas. This complete dematerialisation and aerial quality become still more marked in the post-Promethean sonatas... In the coda of **Prometheus** the usual device of enlarging the themes is for the first time inverted: from now on Scriabin preferred to bring them in diminution, in a kind of delirious dance...  

The "yearning phase" in the period of "materialization" is represented by the thematic material in the pre-Promethean works and by the harmony itself in **Prometheus**. The "dematerialization" is depicted by the "particles" of themes and motives.  

The **Prometheus** chord itself is the culmination of Scriabin's harmonic development: C F# B♭ E A D. Swan has commented upon the nature of the **Prometheus** chord:

This magnificent chord is derived from some of the more dissonant upper partial tones of a sound (e.g. from the lower C the row of partial tones would be the following: C -- c g c' e' g' b♭' c'' d'' f#'' g'' a'' b♭'' b'' c'''). The first ten partial tones came to their rights -- as dissonances and consonances -- before Scriabin. Thus Monteverdi used the unprepared b♭ of the above, Schumann and Chopin the unprepared
d', resolving them into what was considered a consonance. The Impressionists ceased to resolve these dissonances and herein encounter Scriabin in his "Poem of Ecstasy" period. Scriabin in his Prometheus and in isolated instances even before opened up an unexploited region by receiving with one stroke the $f#' a$ and $b\flat$ (the 11th, 13th and 14th partial tones) into the family of consonances. He omitted the g' (the 12th partial tone) owing to the retention in his harmonies of the diminished and augmented fifth (the f# and the a\sharp of the above). Having "discovered" his sounds, Scriabin proceeded to arrange them. . . . This chord is actually the only chord of Prometheus, and upon analysis it will be found to embrace all the four kinds of triads (major, minor, diminished and augmented). That is why it has been called synthetic. The timbre of the synthetic harmony is clearest in the middle register, in the bass it becomes a low murmur, in the treble -- a brilliant sheen.

Although Swan's explanation of the acoustical qualities only conforms with the fashionable view of the time, the final portion of his comment does succeed in extending our grasp of the term "synthetic" as applied to this chord. It is to be regretted that Scriabin in his lifetime did not describe with precision his harmonic system in writing.

The Prometheus chord is said to correspond to the underlying motive of the unrealized Mystery

... in which material polarities eventually would meet in an act of love from which would come a return to the primordial state of chaos, followed by a "new breath of Brahma."

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21 Victor Seroff, *Sergei Prokofiev: A Soviet Tragedy*
The clavier à lumières which Scriabin intended for use in his Prometheus was but one more step in his ascent toward his great Mystery.

Leonid Sabaneyev, the critic who was Scriabin's mentor in philosophy, has provided an interpretation of the Mystery. We quote this as the opinion of one most sympathetic with Scriabin:

The spirit (the creative principle) is conscious of a polarity of the masculine and feminine elements, the one active, the other passive, the will and the resistance. The latter element, inactive and inert, becomes crystallized in the immobility of the material forms, in the World with its manifold phenomena. The separated poles reach in their separation a culminating point: the complete materialization and differentiation, the loss of any connection with the Deity. (In art -- a division of its branches, formerly united, and the development of each branch in itself.)

At this extreme point there arises a reaction in favour of a reunion: The World's love for the Spirit and vice versa -- a mystical Eros. The purpose of the separation is achieved: the creative substance has left its mark on the matter and there begins a process of dematerialization, reunion. (In art -- the union of separate arts, their synthesis.) This reunion is completed by means of the Mystery -- the mystical act of the caresses of the Spirit and the World. There will ensue a mystical union taking a form that cannot as yet be comprehended. This will be universal Death and new Life, a world cataclysm destroying physical life ...

The initial act of the Mystery, written in 1914, drew admiration for its text from both Vyacheslav Ivanov and Jurgis Baltrusaitis. Words, sounds, actions, colors, dance, and poetry would be blended in this monumental work which called for a roster of some 2,000 executants and no audience. It was to be performed in India.

When Koussevitzky paid Scriabin a visit in Lausanne

22Quoted in: Alfred Swan, Scriabin, pp. 90-91.
in 1908, the latter expounded to his completely bewildered
listener some aspects of his Mystery, and in summarizing
his statement, he explained to Koussevitzky that

... in science everything is divided ... as in
my Extase, on this last day of my Mystery, at this
last dance, I will fragment myself into millions of
tiny, tiny moths -- not only I, but all of us ....
Perhaps, by the end of the Mystery, we will cease to
be human but will become caresses, beasts, birds,
moths ... snakes. 23

Three great Russian poets were held very dear by
Scriabin. The first of these was Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev
(1803-1873), a precursor of the symbolists and the panthe­
istic orator of Chaos and Cosmos. The second was Vyache­
slav Ivanov, at whose "Wednesdays at Home" Anna Akhmatova
made her first public appearance before the literary elite.
Ivanov's mysticism and myth-making tendencies finally
brought him, several years after the Revolution, to settle
in Rome where he became a Roman Catholic convert. The
third was Balmont, whose Helios struck such a sympathetic
chord in Scriabin. All three of these "kindled his desire
to precipitate the Mystery, the ultimate goal of all his
defiant ventures in art." 24

Scriabin never set to music any of the verses of
his symbolist idols -- perhaps because of the realization
that he himself was vividly expressing an ineffable text
of his own at all times in his music.

Scriabin's concern with the Universal and the lib­
erated soul at play corresponds uncannily to similar ideas
expressed by the symbolists and in particular by Balmont
with his elevation of Helios. Scriabin too had his per­
sonal cult of Helios. But he differed from Balmont and

24Alfred Swan, Scriabin, p. 35.
Vyacheslav Ivanov and others of the mystical branch of the Russian symbolist movement in poetry who were attracted to Rome. Scriabin was more consistently devoted to his aesthetic than was Balmont who was also a compound of the most diverse spiritual and metaphysical convictions. This devotion of Scriabin obtained especially from about 1905 onward, at which period "he had just been initiated into the depths of Theosophy, and India began to form the object of his secret fancies."25

Balmont and Symbolism

The heralds of the Silver Age of Russian poetry were Nikolai Minsky (1885-1937), Dmitri Merezhkovsky (1865-1941), Vladimir Soloviev (1853-1900), Fyodor Sologub (1863-1927), Vyacheslav Ivanov (1866-1949), Zinaida Gippius (1869-1945), Konstantin Balmont (1867-1943), Valery Bryusov (1873-1924), Alexander Blok (1880-1921), and Andrei Bely (1880-1934). The leading movement was that of symbolism. In some of its earliest phases it evinced a strong mystical cast, chiefly inspired by Soloviev. Generally recognized as two leaders of symbolism are Balmont and Bryusov. Seeking to find a new significance and aim for Russian poetry, Bryusov availed himself of the best that French symbolism had to offer as well as the fantastic and the visionary in English poetry. The mysticism epitomized in the thinking of Soloviev was transmitted to Bely, Ivanov, and Blok.

The "child of the sun," as he termed himself, Konstantin Balmont, was fairly liberal in his youth. He was among many poets, including the Merezhkovskys, Blok, Bely, Sologub, and Ivanov, who were all opposed to the war of 1905 but favored the Revolution. For a short time he became a member of the Social Democratic Party, and was con-

25Alfred Swan, Scriabin, pp. 34-35.
stantly obliged to go abroad in order to evade more serious persecution than he had already experienced in younger days. In 1907 in Paris he published a series of political invectives written in verse that he entitled *Songs of an Avenger*.

A comprehensive study of the life and works of Balmont has not yet been written. This has been discouraged in Soviet Russia where Balmont, one of the most significant representatives of decadent poetry, remains *poeta non gratus*.

Ilya Ehrenburg (1891-1967), relates an incident vividly illustrating the role that Balmont played in life:

> Everything in life infuriated Balmont. One day we had to travel from Pokrovskie Gate to the Arbat. Getting on a streetcar was not easy: I jumped on the step and tried to force my way in, but Balmont began shouting: "Make way, you dogs! Make way for the child of the sun." This made not the slightest impression and Balmont announced that since neither he nor I had money for a cab we must walk: "I cannot let my body come in contact with these insensate amphibians." 26

This anecdote is illuminating for it confirms the excesses for which Balmont was criticized. While Bryusov, cold and reserved, classic and haughty by comparison to Balmont, remained aloof from active participation in the combat and contented himself with the strategy, it was Balmont who "became the Orpheus of modernism and fought many of its battles." 27 Because of his eccentricities and vagaries, he was not taken seriously by the critics even from


the start of his career. Most of his extravagant verses were considered nonsensical and, indeed, it must be confessed that many fail to leave a tangible impression. But it cannot be denied that his enormous linguistic ability, his imagination, and his ability to invent new cadences and rhymes, new poetical sonorities, were responsible for raising him to an elevation not equalled by any of his fellow decadents.

He attained an unrivalled popularity in the years just before and immediately following the war and revolution of 1905. He possessed an extraordinary feeling for words:

"Words are chameleons," he declared in one of his early poems. He assumed a hundred guises, but two of his self-characterizations seem not inappropriate: He often compared himself with the wind, or with a sun-shot cloud. The charm of his poetry melts away like a cloud, and only a few of his poems . . . have remained impervious to time.28

Along with the icy Bryusov, Balmont was one of the pioneers of the decadent movement. Diametrically opposed as two poets could be,

... it is largely due to their efforts that modern Russian poetry owed its recognition and its eventual respect. Balmont may pass over too much ground in his jumps from Lucifer to a snowflake, and from Russian folklore (in which he showed little penetration) to Mayan civilization (which he must have understood even less), but he took the Russian reader to corners which the latter never visited. Balmont's colors may be too garish and his melody too jingling, but he drove home to the audiences the fact that hue and sound are important aspects of poetry . . . he was a supreme master of the

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28Marc Slonim, Modern Russian Literature, p. 95.
sonnet . . . a singing bird and a child-poet were the parts that Balmont played to the end of his days . . . 29

This same writer feels that although Balmont fell into neglect and oblivion after his initial successes that, while continuing to write in more or less the same vein, he did improve and that his best works are those of the years 1914-17. Poggioli is of a different mind in the evaluation of Balmont's works. He considers his two books Let Us Be Like The Sun (1903) and Nothing But Love (1903) his best.30

Sergei Prokofiev confessed an attraction to the musical quality of Balmont's poetry. His choice for musical settings of Balmont fell several times upon Let Us Be Like The Sun. While admittedly unable to fathom the full significance of Balmont's poetry, Prokofiev was seemingly swept along in the torrent of this poet's melodious lines.

Balmont assigned a subtitle to Let Us Be Like The Sun that seems to epitomize his entire poetic school: A Book of Symbols.

The dedicatory page opens with the following statement that sheds light on the typically Russian expansiveness of Balmont's character as well as his estimation of his colleague Bryusov:

I dedicate this book woven from sunbeams to my friends to whose souls my soul is always open. To the brother of my dreams, to the poet and sorcerer, Valery Bryusov . . . 31


30Renato Poggioli, Poets of Modern Russia, p. 90.

31Konstantin Dmitrievič Bal'mont, Polnoe Sobranie Stișov (Moscow: Skorpion, 1907-14), t. 3, Budom kak solnce. Izd. 4, 1912.
In the introduction to the second volume of his complete works in the 1890 edition, Balmont proclaimed unabashedly:

I have shown what can be done for Russian verse by a poet who loves music . . . I affirm with calm assurance that before me no one knew how to write sonorous verses in Russian . . . In me there is a sense of eternal youth. People maintain that Let Us Be Like The Sun is the best of my books. This is absurd. I am in a state of perpetual motion: such is my nature.32

In the second part of Let Us Be Like The Sun, "Eye of a Serpent," appears a poem that at once exhibits his masterful technique and musicality and, above all, his exalted opinion of himself:33

Ja — izyskannost' russkoj medlitel'noj reci,
I am exquisiteness in the slow-paced Russian speech.
Predo mnoju drugie poèty — predteči;
Before me other poets were precursors;
Ja v pervyje otkryl v etoj reci uklony,
I first disclosed in this speech new facets,
Perepovnyc, gnevnyje, nežnyje zvony.
Resonant, wrathful, delicate sonorities.

Ja — vnezapnyj izlom,
I am the sudden shifting,
Ja — igrajusčij grom,
I am the playful thunder,
Ja — prozračnyj ručej,
I am the limpid stream,
Ja — dla vse i ničej,
I am for all and am no one's.

33In translating these texts the author has made no attempt to approximate the rhyme scheme or the metrics of the original Russian. Rather, accuracy, line by line, has been sought as well as a profound essay to convey the mood and the message of the Russian poetry.
Pereplesk mnogopennyj, razovanno-slitnyj,  
Frothing, foaming, explosively coalescent,  
Dragocennye kamni zemli samobytnoj,  
Precious stones of primordial earth,  
Pereklički lesnye zel'ñogo maja,  
Sylvan roll-calls of verdant May,  
Vsë pojmú, vsë voz'mu, u drugix otnimaja.  
I shall comprehend all, I shall seize all,  
taking freely from others.

Večno-junyj, kak son,  
Eternally youthful like a dream,  
Sil'nyj tom, čto vljublën  
Powerful in that I am enamored  
I v sobja i v drugix,  
Both of myself and of others,  
Ja — izyskannyj stix.  
I am the exquisite verse.

Shortly after the first appearance of Let Us Be Like The Sun, this poem appeared in the World of Art. The upper half of the page on which it is printed is occupied by a highly symbolic design by Leon Bakst. The figure of winged speech, erect but in a languorous, sensuous pose, nude save for strapped Hellenic thongs, flowing locks (Bakst may have had Balmont himself in mind), leaning with folded arms upon a garlanded pedestal situated under an arch that connects two Greek columns. In the background is a chain of mountains. The pinions, the mountain clefts, the garlands and the name "K. Balmont" in a flowing cursive are all rendered by Bakst in the sinuous technique typical of much of his work and so strikingly similar to certain characteristics of such Art Nouveau artists as Aubrey Beardsley.

"Balmont," said Maximilian Voloshin, "found the Russian verse weary and frozen. He softened it, and because of him, it will always ring with a new sound."34

34Renato Poggioli, Poets of Modern Russia, p. 92.
Renato Poggioli, by way of summarizing the "vocal prowess" of Balmont, has stated:

In the poem where he claimed to be born into this world to see the sun, Balmont asked the rhetorical question: "Who is my equal in singing power?" and answered it simply: "No one, no one." . . . Posternity may well take that definition literally, and view him as a maestro of bel canto, as the greatest tenor of Russian poetry.  

Valery Bryusov set three tenets for himself in his youth:

The first precept -- do not live in the present; only the future belongs to the poet. Remember the second -- do not sympathize with anybody, love yourself boundlessly. And keep up the third one -- adore Art -- and only Art -- and do it aimlessly, heedlessly.  

It is little wonder that Bryusov remained in Russia after the Revolution and even embraced Communism, although he was never able to divest himself completely of the symbolistic and decadent garb of his poetic school. The Soviets were to rend this garb with increasing fury with the onset of Socialist Realism. Balmont, on the other hand, chose the path of exile and, along with a host of others, never accepted the Revolution.

In determining the position of Valery Bryusov in the period of the Art Nouveau and that of Balmont, Aleksis Rannit has thus qualified them:

In poetry, the spokesman of the Zeitgeist was at first, although often only nominally a poet, Valery Bryusov. The true spokesman, however, became Konstantin Balmont, who exemplified the ascendancy of sensuous colorism . . . over spiritual imagery. The

35 Renato Poggioli, Poets of Modern Russia, p. 92.
36 Quoted in: Marc Slonim, Modern Russian Literature, p. 93.
shiny iridescent silks or softly glowing velvets of his musicalistic poems were products par excellence of the fin de siècle as well as of Art Nouveau. . . . Balmont's ideal was a refined voluptuousness, a sublimation of the senses. The pathos and darkness of the Russian soul . . . are, nonetheless, not excluded in his poetry. 37

In a recent article the escapist tendencies of Balmont's personality have been clearly illustrated by Tatyana Schmidt. 38 After composing verse primarily of a gloomy cast in the 1890's, in keeping with that aspect of the Art Nouveau, Balmont at the turn of the century progressed from sub-consciousness to what appeared to be total awareness in his first work of the twentieth century, Burning Buildings (1900). In the course of this book Balmont says: "I want to be daring, I want to be bold." Innokenty Annensky (1855-1909), commenting on this statement, felt that Balmont could not be either. 39 Balmont was not quite so thoroughly a "child of the sun" as he was wont to proclaim, nor were many of his most exaggerated claims nor many of his most exotic passages based on the most illuminated foundation. There is, unhappily, great unevenness in his poetry throughout his span of productivity. "In order to find and enjoy the best of Balmont the reader is obliged to wade through 'much that is not created but agonizingly cerebrated,' as Blok put it." 40

Gloom, melancholy, and taints of madness haunted


him all his life. He was totally fascinated by everything in life but avoided contact with much of it. Thus it was with love to a great extent: he was more fascinated by the idea of love than love itself. Balmont blinked, as it were, at the brilliant Helios that he so blatantly championed and we are often left with only a glimmer of light, a faint afterglow, rather than an enduring illumination of the soul. In essence, for Balmont the all important matter was the split second, the moment ("mig"). In fact, he wrote:

V každoj mimolětnosti vižu ja miry,
In every fugitive moment I see worlds
Polnye izmenčivoj, radužnoj igry.
Replete with inconstant, iridescent play.

The second word of these lines was to provide Prokofiev with a title for his piano pieces opus twenty-two, *Mimolětnosti*, known in the Western World as *Visions Fugitives*.

Balmont, to the end of his productive days, though evincing a modification of his exuberance, never altered his principles. In comparison with poets who submitted to the summons of progress or change, and especially with those who initiated those changes, Balmont outlived his time. He was one of the last of the series of symbolists and surely the last to cling to the tenets of the original movement in Russia. Balmont typifies that aspect of decadence so aptly qualified by the symbolist poet, Vyacheslav Ivanov, as "the sense, both oppressive and exalting, of being the last of a series."41

By way of summarizing the nature of decadence, Renato Poggioli has stated that it results "when the vision of the impending catastrophe merges with the expectation

that another culture will be built on its ruin."42

Decadence, then, in Russian poetry, may be qualified as a residue of previous accomplishments fused with the same expectancy of innovation that typified music, drama, and the graphic arts. It is a collision of primitivism with modernism, of paganism with mysticism.

The impending cataclysmic doom that hung low over Russian lands in the final decade before the Revolution provided an outlet for various literary movements springing up in Russia. In regard to the atmosphere reigning in the minds of symbolists and in the more youthful intellectuals generally, Alexander Blok stated in his article entitled Nature and Culture:

I think that there lay upon the hearts of the people of the last few generations a constant and wanton feeling of catastrophe, which was evoked by an impressive accumulation of indisputable facts, some of which have already passed into history and others still awaiting accomplishment... In us all is a feeling of sickness, of alarm, of catastrophe, of disruption.43

The Symbolist Press

From 1900 to 1916 it was the Scorpion Publishing House that proved to be the chief editorial firm and the stronghold of symbolism. The Scorpion Publishing House was founded by the Moscow symbolists under the leadership of Jurgis Baltrushaitis, Sergei Polyakov, and Valery Bryusov (whose important work The Russian Symbolists had appeared in 1894 -- this volume contained both original poems and translations from French symbolists).

The list of publications for a typical year, that

of 1906, displays an interesting selection of works not only by the Moscow symbolists but from St. Petersburg and foreign sources as well. In the poetry section are listed the complete (up to that time) works of Balmont; Urbi et Orbi and Stephanos of Bryusov; Listopad (Falling of Leaves) of Ivan Bunin (1870-1953), who was to be awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1933; Zoloto i lazuri (Gold and azure), the first collection of verse of Andrei Bely; a collection of verse by Zinaida Gippius (1869-1945); Prozračnost' (Limpidity) of Vyacheslav Ivanov (1866-1949), one of the most profound and intellectually and spiritually advanced members of the symbolist movement; a collection of verse of Dmitri Merezhkovsky (1865-1941); The Ballad of Reading Gaol of Oscar Wilde, in a translation by Balmont.

In the section for novels and tales figure works of Bely, Hamsun, Maeterlinck, Poe (translated by Balmont, and Sologub; dramas of D'Annunzio, Hamsun, Ibsen, and Schnitzler; historical literature and essays on Hauptmann, Pushkin, and Gogol by Merezhkovsky, Bryusov, and others.

The work of the symbolists appeared in the six following periodicals:

1. Severnyi Vestnik (The Northern Herald), 1885-1898, assumed particular importance for the symbolists after 1889 when A. L. Volynsky joined the staff and became co-editor with Lyubov Gurevich. This publication became the monthly organ of the St. Petersburg group which counted among its contributors Merezhkovsky. In 1893 he wrote an essay "On the Causes of the Decline and on the New Trends in Contemporary Russian Literature." This appears to have been mistaken by some as a manifesto of symbolism. It is nonetheless important for the history of Russian modernism. Other writers for Severnyj Vestnik included: (1) Zinaida Gippius, Merezhkovsky's wife, collaborator, and a significant poet in her own right; (2) Fyodor Sologub (1863-1927),
whose first complete volume of poetry appeared in 1897; (3) Nikolai Minsky (1855-1937), one of the early leaders of the symbolist movement, who became secretary of the journal in 1895.\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Severnyj Vestnik} was the first Russian journal to introduce Maeterlinck to its public. Bryusov, one of the writers considered too radical by this journal, summed up its significance in the Russian symbolist movement: "\textit{Severnyj Vestnik} . . . was the spearhead who gave his life to let the army through."\textsuperscript{45}

2. \textit{Mir Iskusstva} (The World of Art), 1899-1904. Although primarily devoted to the arts, this review accorded a prominent place to literature. Funded at first by the St. Petersburg Maecenas, Savva Mamontov, and the Countess M. K. Tenisheva, the publication eventually owed its lavish existence to governmental subvention that

. . . actually . . . came from the private purse of Nicholas II. The Tsar became interested in the journal while having his portrait painted by V. A. Serov, who belonged to the \textit{Mir Iskusstva} group.\textsuperscript{46}

Among the regular contributors in the literature section were the Kerezhkovskys, Minsky, and other adherents of the religious tendency in the Russian symbolist movement. Bryusov, Balmont, Bely, and Sologub also contributed but to a lesser extent.

3. \textit{Novyi Put'} (The New Path), 1903-04. Founded by P. Pertzov and Morozhkovsky and edited by Nerezhkovsky and Gippius. This was the monthly organ of the Godseekers. As

\textsuperscript{44}Georgette Donchin, \textit{The Influence of French Symbolism on Russian Poetry} (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1953), p. 34.  
\textsuperscript{46}Georgette Donchin, \textit{Op. cit.}, p. 36.
an outlet in print for the Religious-Philosophical Society, Herezhkovsky did not hesitate to advance his brand of mysticism. The Herezhkovskys at first sought the collaboration of Bryusov, but fearing his staunch decadent bent, they soon dispensed with this. Gippius, more tolerant than her husband, extended an invitation to Alexander Blok to contribute to this new review but qualified her request in this manner: "I hope you will give me some poems of yours (not decadent ones, but the mystic ones you have)."47

4. Vesv (The Scales), 1904-09. This monthly journal of literature and art was the leading and most representative journal of the mature period of symbolism in Russia. Its editorial staff was headed by Bryusov and Polyakov. Modelled after the Mercure de France, it also bore a certain kinship to La Jeune Belgique and to Blätter für die Kunst. Vesv was decidedly the most international in character and scope of the symbolist reviews. Among the foreign contributors who sent materials directly were Maeterlinck, Remy de Gourmont, Jean Moréas, Émile Verhaeren and René Ghil among many others. The Russians who were most fully represented in the review were Balmont, Bryusov, Bely, Vyacheslav Ivanov and Blok. Even the future acmeists Gumilëv, Kuzmin and Gorodetsky made contributions at the beginning of their careers. Vesv sought to acquaint its readers with the literary and artistic life of the entire world and was lavishly illustrated by drawings, vignettes and illuminations in black and white and in colors.

At the peak of its life span the review was also noted for its articles on foreign literature with the preference given to French. At the time the editorial staff of Vesv announced that it was ceasing publication, the sym-

bolist movement in Russia had reached its epitome and to Vesv and to its chief mentor, Bryusov, must be assigned the credit for this.

5. Zolotoe Runo (The Golden Fleece), 1906-09. This rival of Vesv was even more lavishly printed and illustrated than was Mir Iskusstva. The manifesto printed in the first issue of Zolotoe Runo in both Russian and French called attention to the "eternal, indivisible, symbolic, and free" nature of art:

L'Art est éternel, car il repose sur ce qui est immuable, sur ce qui ne peut être détruit.
L'Art est un, car il a une source unique,
1'âme. L'Art est symbolique, car il renferme un symbole -- le reflet de l'Immuable dans le temporaire.
L'Art est libre, car il est le produit d'un essai créateur spontané.43

Zolotoe Runo at first attracted all the most important Russian symbolists, but within a year many left its ranks. This was occasioned by a shift in its attitude toward decadence and its championing of local developments to the almost complete exclusion of the foreign element. Zolotoe Runo employed French poets on its own staff. By providing translations of Russian poetry it sought to introduce Russian art to Western Europe. This change in policy simultaneously caused a rift within the symbolist movement and brought down upon Zolotoe Runo the bitter opposition of Vesv. Among the leaders of the new opposing group in symbolism were Blok, Vyacheslav Ivanov, Gorodetsky and Chulkov -- espousing the cause of the mystical anarchists.

6. *Apollon* (Apollo), 1909-17. This St. Petersburg review was edited by Sergei Makovsky. Beginning as another symbolist publication, it was gradually converted into an important organ of acmeism and received significant contributions from Gumilëv, the founder of the acmeist movement, and from his wife, Anna Akhmatova. Although *Apollon* maintained an ideological link with France, it did not devote the space to French literature that any of its predecessors had done. By the time *Apollon* made its appearance on the literary scene, the symbolist movement had already begun to decline and this new review witnessed its disintegration.

Two articles of significance were published in *Apollon* in April of 1910. These were Vyacheslav Ivanov's "Zavety simvolizma" (The legacy of symbolism), and Blok's "O sovremennom sostojanii russkogo simvolizma" (On the present status of Russian symbolism). In his article Blok states that

... the actual condition of Russian artistic expression clearly indicates that we, the Russian symbolists, have travelled a certain portion of our road and stand before new tasks; in such circumstances, when a transitional moment is thus defined as in our days, we summon to our aid our recollection and, guiding its thread, we establish and indicate, -- perhaps more to ourselves than to others, -- our provenance, that page from which we issued.49

Of the six periodicals of the symbolists described above, three were profusely illustrated and, indeed, were in large measure devoted to the graphic arts. These three, *Mir Iskusstva*, *Vesy*, and *Zolotoe Runo*, demonstrate the manner in which the symbolist press shared in the synthesis of the arts.

49Aleksandr Blok, "O Sovremennom Sostojanii Russkogo Simvolizma", in Sočinenija v odnom tóne (Moscow Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Kudožestvennoj Literatury, 1946), p. 444. (My translation)
Anna Akhmatova and Acmeism

Born in an Odessa suburb as Anna Andreevna Gorenko, Akhmatova was taken as a child to Carskoe Selo and remained there until the age of sixteen. In the town where Pushkin had attended the czar's Lyceum for six years, Akhmatova experienced a continuing influence of Russia's poet laureate on her thinking. She in turn was to dedicate much concentrated effort to a profound study and criticism of his works.

With reactions typical of the far-sighted, youthful intelligentsia of her time against the well-entrenched symbolists and especially against their mystical and myth-making tendencies, Akhmatova was among those who were attracted to the new pathway of acmeism. She comments upon this act herself:

In the year 1910 a crisis in symbolism was clearly indicated, and the incipient poets were no longer adhering to this movement. Some went over to futurism, others — to acmeism. I became an "acmeist."50

It was also in the year 1910 that Apollon published a manifesto by Mikhail Kuzmin in which he announced a new direction in poetry, calling it clarism. This anticipated the publication of two other manifestoes, one by Nikolai Gumilëv and the other by Sergei Gorodetsky. Renato Poggioli has quoted this important definition of acmeism by Gumilëv:

50Anna Akhmatova, "Korotko o sobe", in Anna Akhmatova Sočinenija (Munich: Inter-Language Literary Associates, 1965), I, p. 40. (My translation)
To take symbolism's place there comes now a new movement, whatever its name might be, either acmeism (from the word ακμή, signifying the supreme degree which a thing may attain, its peak or bloom), or adamism (a firm and manly vision of life) -- but which at any rate demands a greater balance of powers and a more precise notion of the tie between subject and object than was the case with symbolism

Concerning the principal line of thinking of the acmeists, Slonim states: "... the most significant tenet... was a restoration of values, a bold statement of facts virtually divested of mystical or symbolic connotations."52 And then he quotes the observation of Sergei Gorodetsky:

For the acmeists the rose had newly become lovely for itself, for its petals, color, and scent, not because of its mysterious analogy with mystical love.53

In attempting to purge what had been bequeathed to them by the "modernists of the fin de siècle" there was a need experienced by the new poets "to replace the musical with the plastic. Yet... acmeists were unable to repudiate in full the heritage of symbolism."54

Slonim continues this line of thought when he states:

... the leaders of acmeism represented a generation of post-symbolists. Theirs was the last fruitful poetic movement in the tradition of patriotic and intellectual culture: in fact, theirs was the privilege of uttering the last songs of Imperial Russia.55

52Marc Slonim, Modern Russian Literature, p. 216.
53Ibid., p. 218. 54Ibid., p. 218. 55Ibid., p. 222.
Georgette Donchin, in summarizing some of her views regarding the tenets and the technique of the acmeists states:

Just as the French symbolists sought a newer, more pliable verse, the acmeists strove to break through the fetters of the metric system by omitting syllables. The acmeists' worship of form for form's sake made them turn toward the plastic art of the Parnassians rather than towards the fluid imprecision of the symbolists. Hence their interest in Théophile Gautier... for Gumilev, the true Gallic spirit was represented by Rabelais and Villon as well as by Gautier.56

Donchin then quotes the following important observation of Gumilev -- soldier, poet, adventurer and first husband of Anna Akhmatova:

In the circles close to the acmeist movement, the most frequently mentioned names are those of Shakespeare, Rabelais, Villon and Théophile Gautier. The choice of these names is not accidental. Each of them is a cornerstone of the acmeist edifice -- a high tension of one or another of its elements. Shakespeare has shown us the inner world of men; Rabelais -- the body and its joys, a wise physiology; Villon told us about life which doubts itself though knows everything -- God and vice and death, and eternity; Théophile Gautier found in art a worthy attire of unimpeachable forms for this life. To unite these four moments -- that is the dream which binds together those who so courageously call themselves -- the acmeists.57

It is perhaps ironical that of the three great poets of this new movement, -- Gumilev, Ossip Mandelstam, and Akhmatova herself, -- it was to be given to her alone to lead a long and productive life in which she would amply express all the ideals proclaimed by Gumilev.


Akhmatova achieved popularity so great that her only serious rivals as queen of Russian poetry have been Zinaida Gippius and Maria Tsvetaeva (1892-1941). As a woman, Akhmatova gives us a priceless insight into the feminine psyche. In consequence of a woman's special conception of and reaction to love, we have a rare array of amorous lyrics from her pen in her early years. The concept of fidelity in her writing in this period has been stressed by Poggioli:

The eternal theme of the poetry of love, when sung by a woman, is the fealty of a loving soul, the loyalty of a passionate heart. Thus the secret of Akhmatova's poetry could be summed up in a single word: fidelity. Fidelity to her man and to her passion, as well as to nature and life; above all, fidelity to the glories and the miseries of her sex.

It is not surprising that the themes of love, passion, and fidelity should appear repeatedly in Akhmatova's poetry when one recalls her early adventures in love-life. Her marriage to Gumilev, which lasted less than a decade, never left her memory and is strongly imprinted in many of her early lyrics. However it is frequently a difficult task to determine whether Akhmatova is actually referring to Gumilev, or to a lover -- real or imaginary -- in many of her poems dating from the period of their first acquaintance and their marriage.

In speaking of her "epigrammatic poems" Marc Slonim feels they stress "intonation and expressiveness rather than lulling musicality" and attributes their great success with the public to "their originality of form and their freshness of meter." After commenting upon the "emotional forcefulness" of their subject matter, he adds:

... they sounded like the confession of a

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58 Renato Poggioli, Poets of Modern Russia, p. 231.
passionate nun who had fled the convent and opened her heart to earthly love, yet still wore a hair shirt; Blok styled her a Christian gypsy.59

The clarity that one usually associates with neoclassicism, which is often reputed to best exemplify the stylistic tenor of Akhmatova's works, is oftentimes beclouded by certain ambiguities. Among these are the "symbolistic phrase" and the frequent semantic lacunae or abrupt transference of scene, thought, or action which the reader, without a priori instruction, is but ill-equipped to complete or comprehend.

Viktor Vinogradov provides a succinct explication of the term around which much of our discussion of poetry is concentrated -- the symbol:

A symbol is an aesthetically formed and artistically localised unit of speech in the composition of poetic production. In its external structure the symbol coincides occasionally with the "lexeme," containing in itself both the words in their own meanings and the phrase couplings.60

His description of Akhmatova's peculiar method of utilizing these couplings:

Akhmatova employs the customary combinations of words of conversational, cultivated speech and, enveloping them in a complex net of stylistic contrivances, gives them a new semantic characteristic. It is natural that in this method of artistic creation of Akhmatova, it was necessary to have recourse to such methods of neoplasms of meanings that alter not the signification of individual words, but of entire sentences or, even more frequently, of sentence couplings.61

60Viktor Vinogradov, O poezii Anny Akhmatovoj (Leningrad, 1925), p. 15. (My translation)
61Ibid., p. 21.
Finally, in regard to the specific type of symbols in Akhmatova's poetry and the system whereby they are transformed he explains:

The employment of the verbal stock of conversational speech is entirely motivated by those forms of intimate writing... and other such, in which the poems of Akhmatova abound, (it) determines the predominant type of symbols in her poetry. This is the symbol phrase, that is, a group of words restricted to a grammatical unity, corresponding to one, complex, indivisible presentation. The usual word couplings of conversational, cultivated speech appear here as intimately fused, indivisible semantic units latent in the foundation of verbal artistic structures. It is understandable that only in those cases where the phrase does not coincide with the sentence, is there possible a semantic transformation within the limits of the sentence. More frequently a brusque change in the semantic appearance of the phrase is determined by the architectonics of the statements linked by conjunctions and adverbs. Within the framework of the statement, the "symbol phrase" may be semantically altered in appearance only by means of an unexpected coupling of another "symbol," contrasting or in large measure dissonant with it in emotional timbre, substantial content, or even in grammatical form.62

In speaking of her ability to articulate with clarity, Strakhovsky states:

Akhmatova was an acmeist not only through her early association with the movement; the preciseness and selection of words in their true, fundamental and not transitory sense -- a basic characteristic of the acmeists -- are early traits of her poetry. Perhaps more so than was the case of other acmeists, hers is the language of objects, an extraordinary and intimate language.63

We should to underline the special intimacy afforded us in much of Akhmatova's poetry. This is perhaps most true in the case of her early love lyrics. There is a fascination in observing the pages of her autobiography unfold, as it were, in these lines written not only in this earliest period, but in her later productions as well. The most salient facts of the vicissitudes of her life, both in the youthful time of her unsatisfactory first marital bond as well as in the subsequent decades are well known. What is most rewarding is to witness the miracle of the emergence of the imposing major productions of her full maturity and, indeed, her "old age," after those periods of imposed silence. But what concerns us here is the candor and captivating qualities that pervade her first two books of poetry. Slonim, in voicing his opinion of the early manner of Akhmatova, states:

Akhmatova's style is decidedly colloquial, her phrasing neat and brief, her poetic speech articulate, sharp and expressive... her poetry... possesses an enchanting timbre and a penetrating intimacy of rendition. These lyrics have a moving, poignant quality, charged with emotional overtones, and it is little wonder that thousands of readers, regardless of official pronouncements, still respond to her lines. 64

In the first issue of the short-lived periodical edited by Vsevolod Meyerhold, Love for three oranges, appearing in St. Petersburg in 1914, figure side by side the two following portraits:

64Marc Slonim, Modern Russian Literature, p. 220.
Ja prisla k poètu v gosti.  
I came to the poet on a visit.

Rovno polden*.  
Precisely midday.  

Tixo v komnate prostornoj,  
Quiet in the spacious room,

A za oknami moroz  
And outside the windows frost

I malinovoe solnce  
And a raspberry sun

Nad loxmatym sizym dymom . . .  
Above the dishevelled gray smoke . . .

Kak xozjain molčalivyj  
How the taciturn host

Jasno smotrit na menjai  
Serenely gazes at me!

U nego glaza takie,  
His eyes are such

Čto zapomnit' každyj dolžen;  
That everyone must remember;

Mne že lučše, ostorošnoj,  
Better for me, cautious one,

V nix i vovse ne gljadet'.  
Not to look into them at all.

No zapomnitsja beseda,  
But the chat is recalled,

Dymnyj polden', voskresen'e  
Smoky midday, Sunday

V dome scrom i vysokom  
In the tall gray house

U morskix vorot Nevy.  
At the maritime gates of the Neva.
"Krasota strashna," Vam skazut --  
"Dreadful beauty," they will tell you --
Vy nakinetelenaivo
Lazily you will throw
Shal' ispanskuju napleci,
The Spanish shawl over your shoulders,
Krasnyj rozan -- v vosax.
A red rose -- in your hair.

"Krasota prosta," Vam skazut --  
"Simple beauty," they will tell you --
Pestroj shal'ju neumelo
Clumsily with the motley shawl
Vy ukroeterebenka,
You will cover the child,
Krasnyj rozan -- na polu.
A red rose -- on the floor.

No, rassejannovnimaja
But, distractedly heeding
Vsem slovam, krugom zvuca'shim,
All the words resounding around,
Vy zadumaetes' grustno
You will sadly begin to reflect
I tverdite pro sebja:
And you will reiterate to yourself:

"Ne strashna i ne prosta ja;
"Neither dreadful nor simple am I:
Ja ne tak strashna, chtob brosto
I am not so dreadful as to simply
Ubit'; ne tak prosta ja,
Kill; nor am I so simple
Chtob ne znat', kak zhizn' strashna."
As not to know that life is dreadful."

In reference to the poem of Blok dedicated to her, Akhmatova has made the following observation in her memoirs:

On one of the last Sundays in the year 1913, I brought to Blok his books so that he might inscribe them. On each he simply wrote: "To Akhmatova -- Blok" . . . But in the third volume the poet wrote the madrigal dedicated to me: "Dreadful beauty, they will
tell you . . . " I have never had a Spanish shawl, in which I was portrayed, but at that time Blok was delirious over Carmen and Hispanicized even me. And a red rose, naturally, I have never worn in my hair. It was not per chance that this poem was written in the Spanish strophe of a romancero. And at our last meeting, backstage at the Bolshoy Dramatic Theater in the spring of 1921 Blok approached me and asked: "And where is the Spanish shawl?" These were the last words that I heard from him.65

In her Recollections of A. Blok, Akhmatova provides considerable insight into his complex personality and especially his candor. She relates such priceless occurrences as the following:

On that solitary occasion when I was in Blok's home, I mentioned to him among other things that the poet Benedict Livshitz complained of the fact that he, Blok, by the very fact of his existence, interfered with his writing verses. Blok did not smile, but replied altogether seriously: "I understand that. Leo Tolstoy interferes with my writing."66

At the end of this interesting memoir, Akhmatova relates how an emaciated Blok with the eyes of an insane person had once said to her: "Here one encounters everyone, as one might expect in this world." She closes with the following:

. . . And then the three of us (Blok, Gumilëv and I) were dining (the fifth of August, 1914) at the railway station in Carskoe Selo in the first days of the war (Gumilëv was already in his military uniform). Blok at that time was travelling about giving aid to the families of those who had been mobilized. When

65Anna Axmatova, "Vospominanija ob Al. Bloke", in Anna Axmatova Sočinenija (Munich: Inter-Language Literary Associates, 1939), II, p. 192. (My translation)
66Ibid., p. 193.
the two of us were left alone, Kolya said: "Is it possible they are sending him to the front? That would be the same as roasting a nightingale."

But a quarter century later in the same Dramatic Theater — the evening devoted to the memory of Blok (1946), and I am reading verses just written by me:

He was right — again the street light, apothecary, The Neva, speechlessness, granite . . . Like a memorial to the beginning of the century, There stands that man —
While to Pushkin's house, Bidding farewell, he waved his hand And accepted the mortal lassitude Like an undeserved respite.

October, 1965

All five poems of Akhmatova set to music by Prokofiev are extracted from Akhmatova's two earliest books, Večer (Evening) (1909-1912), and Čēški (Rosary) (1912-1914). These volumes were written just at the time when the movement of acmeism was assuming a definite program. Conveniently, the composition of Prokofiev's songs to her texts, his opus 27, coincides chronologically with the temporal limits of acmeism.

By way of summary of the main direction of this poetic movement, the opinion of Gleb Struve is felt to be most appropriate both in his contrasting the general tendencies of the acmeists with those of the symbolists, as well as his estimation of Akhmatova's position in relation to the movement:

The symbolists had emphasized the hidden, associative, musical elements in poetry; the acmeists in reply asserted the elements of sense and logic in the art of words. The symbolists had tended to dis-embody words as a medium of poetry; the acmeists tried to clothe them with a new flesh. To the growing tendency of symbolism to regard the poet as

a craftsman ... developed the poetic diction in a different direction, by bringing it closer to the accents and intonations of everyday speech: this is particularly true of Anna Akhmatova.68

And Gumilev thus epitomized one of acmeism's most important aims:

To be always aware of the unknown without corrupting its image with likely or unlikely guesses: this is acmeism's tenet.69

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CHAPTER II

THE RUSSIAN ART SONG BEFORE PROKOFIEV

The Origins

The origins of the Russian Art Song remain clothed in the secrecy of its indigenous folk music. To this native song were added numerous influences of Ural-altaic, Turco-tatar, Mongol, and other Asiatic peoples. The Georgians above all, who settled in the Caucasus, provided Russian musicians and poets with a wealth of inspiration. Another influence was that of the Byzantine Chant, imported with the adoption of Christianity by Saint Vladimir in 988.

The long period of Mongol domination, the great Schism of Eastern Orthodoxy from Roman Catholicism, the subsequent church-state autocracy (which prevailed until the accession to the throne of the Romanov dynasty), prevented the Russian Art Song from blossoming and held in check all cultural developments.

Western European culture did not again begin to penetrate the steppes and dark forests of the Eastern Slavs until the reign of Alexei Mikhailovich. This czar had married the Scottish Princess Natalia who adored the theater. It had been during the reign of Alexei's father, Mikhail Fyodorovich (1613-1645), the first of the Romanov dynasty, that the earliest extant examples of Russian traditional poetry were recorded. This manuscript contains six historical and lyrical poems which were written down for Richard James, almoner to the English ambassador at Mikhail's court. It was toward the end of Alexei's reign,
around 1670, that the Russian drawing room songs arose. Their melodies were continuous, unconstrained, and were ruled by the rhythmic elements of the text and the singers' breathing. Many of these early melodies were variants of a basic motive.

The first two composers of original solo vocal music were Józef Kozłowski (1757-1831) and Fyodor Mikhailovich Dubyansky (1760-1796), both of whom were intimately associated with the development of the Russian Romance. They employed the sentimental verses of writers such as Dmitriev, Neledinsky, Neletsky and Kapnist.

Dubyansky is of interest in this study because of the text (by Dmitriev) of one of the six Russian Songs which were published anonymously in the Karmannye muzykal'nye knigi dlia 1795 (Pocket music books for 1795) by J. D. Gerstenberg, the founder of the first Russian music publishing firm in the 1790's.¹

This particular song of Dubyansky, which evidently was popular for several decades, has a text that Prokofiev was to draw upon for his "Romance" in his music for the film Lt. Kise in 1933 (See Ex. 2).

Example 1  Stonet sivoj goluboch  F. K. Dubyansky

Example 2  "Romance" from *Lt. Kiz*  Prokofiev, op. 60

The text of this verse of Ivan Ivanovich Dmitriev (1760-1837) translates: "The little grey dove is moaning, moaning night and day, his dear little friend has long since flown away, long since flown away."

Four composers were concerned with the development of the art song in Russia in the first half of the nineteenth century -- Alexander Alexandrovich Aliabiev (1787-1851), Alexander Lvovich Gurilëv (1802-1856), Alexander Egorovich Varlamov (1801-1848) and Alexei Nikolaevich
Verstovsky (1799-1862). Among these it is Aliabiev who is the most significant. In the music of these men can be seen the emergence of the Russian Art Song.

It took the genius of Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka (1804-1857) to achieve what Russians regard as the first nationalist music. Glinka's contribution to Russian song literature consists mainly of sentimental ballads generally concerned with love and passion. Stylistically they are a combination of Western influenced, nineteenth century musical techniques and Russian elements.

Particularly interesting is the setting of the Pushkin poem, Ne poj, krasavica, pri mne (Do not sing in my presence, oh beauteous one), dating from 1828. The melody is apparently of Caucasian origin and was transmitted to Glinka by the writer Alexander Sergeevich Griboedov (1795-1829), who had collected it. Glinka harmonized the melody and performed this first version of the song in the presence of Pushkin. The poet was so taken with it that he in turn was inspired to write a poem which Glinka combined with his harmonization of Griboedov's melody. The Pushkin poem has been subsequently set to music by Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov and Rakhmaninov.

Alexander Dargomyzhsky (1813-1869) was an innovator in Russian Art Song with his declamatory style of vocalization and his empirical harmonies dictated by the text. He bequeathed a strong tradition of faithfulness of expression that would be continued by the moguča kučka (mighty heap -- the name by which the group of five nationalist composers came to be known). His influence stemmed not so much from his songs as from his opera Kamennyj gost' (The Stone Guest). This almost verbatim setting of Pushkin's play exercised a profound influence especially on Mussorgsky who sang the part of Leporello in readings of the work in Dargomyzhsky's home.
The Five

The emancipation of the serfs was only the most significant of the reforms during the reign of Alexander II (1855-1881). Research in music and the rise of the nationalist school were given great impetus. In 1860, for example, Pyotr Rybnikov, a government official, collected 50,000 verses of byliny (literally: by-gones, things that were — generic name of the epic poetry of ancient Russia). The chief event of interest for the history of Russian Art Song was the appearance on the scene of the mocučaja kučka.

The first-born member of the group of five, Alexander Porfirovich Borodin (1834-1887), contributed but fourteen songs to the repertoire, but almost all of them are suffused with great lyricism in their melodic lines and directness of expression. In addition to well-known songs such as The Dissonance and The Sleeping Princess (both of which have texts by the composer), mention should be made of a lesser known song also with the composer's own text: Pesnia tēmnoco lesa (Song of the dark forest), dating from 1868. This song incorporates the style of both the folk song and folk poetry. The piece is simple and of stark construction. Cast for the voice in the same tessitura as the title role in Prince Igor, the entire composition consists of variants of the opening phrase. The vocal line is heard in the piano throughout. It is duplicated in unison and doubled in the lower octave in the first and third sections but at the higher octave, for variety, in the middle section. The irregular metrical scheme — 7/4, 6/4, 5/4, 3/4 — is significant for two reasons: (1) it is probably the very first occurrence of such an intricate pattern in a Russian art song; (2) it reflects both Borodin's awareness of the fluctuations possible in Russian folk music and poetry as well as his desire to capture this in an original composition.
Example 3  Песня темного леса  Borodin

Borodin's text for this song is almost as stark as his music. However extensive use is made of assonance, alliterative devices and rhymes and, most striking and similar to the folk element is his repetition of words. Two instances, both of which lend themselves with diffi-
ulty to translation and have effects of sonority impossible to capture in English, are the following:

Kak živala tam volja voljuška vol'na ja,
How there existed there freedom, enormous,
free, freedom,

Kak sbiralas' tam sila siluška sil'na ja.
How there was amassed there a force, a
huge force, forceful.

Both of Borodin's Russian phrases contain a noun followed by a hypocoristic form of the same noun which in turn is followed by an adjectival form of the same noun. This device provides at once a folk and an antique flavor.

Borodin's melodies and harmonies bear a definite Russian stamp interspersed with a superstratum of exotic textures. Borodin, with greater success than the eclectics Aliabiev and Glinka before him, incorporated musical influences of the various nations of the Caucasus as well as of the numerous peoples of Turco-tatar origin. It is known that his music in the second act of *Prince Igor* includes tunes borrowed from descendants in Hungary of the tribes of Polovetsians. Melodies such as those Borodin employed may very well have dated from the historical period of *Prince Igor*.

Mili Alexeevich Balakirev (1837-1910), the organizer of the mogučaja kučka, left some forty-five songs. *Dogoreet runjanji zakat* (The rosy sunset is fading), with a text by the minor poet, V. Kulchinsky, has some interesting features. The final number in a set of ten songs composed in 1895-96, this composition is a modified ABA form with exoticisms such as the lowered sixth in descending lines. Its accompaniment is rich in harmonic sonorities and is especially remarkable for its lushness at the return of A. At this point there is a lovely imitation superposed in the right hand of the piano, reminiscent of the intricacies of *Islamey*. 
Example 4  

**Docoraet rumianvi zakat**  

Balakirev

*Pesnja solotoj ryski* (The song of the goldfish), dating from 1860 and with a text excerpted from Lermontov's *Ecyrri* (The novice), along with *Pesnja Selima* (The song of Selim), dating from 1858, with a text taken from Lermontov's *Izmail-bev*, and the well-known *Gruzinskaia pesnja* (Georgian song), dating from 1863 and with the Pushkin text whose history was described above, all deserve mention.
The last of these clearly underlines the influence of the Caucasus. Balakirev orchestrated this song in 1884.

Example 5  Gruzinskaja pesnia  Balakirev

Noteworthy also is Balakirev's Sobranie russkix narodnyx pesen' (Collection of Russian Folk Songs) of 1866. V. V. Stasov (1824-1906), says of this work:
This collection is exemplary in both the choice and harmonic treatment of the material. It was the first collection of truly scholarly and national significance to be made in our country. The entire school subsequently made wide use of it.  

Stasov, an art critic and historian and, from 1872 until his death, director of the department of fine arts of the Imperial Public Library in St. Petersburg, published a set of monographs and articles on the Russian nationalist composers especially valuable because of personal observations.

In addition to his settings of Lermontov, Balakirev was particularly successful in his songs to texts of Alexei Vasilievich Koltsov (1809-1842), whose Russian Songs represent "one of the most interesting developments of the thirties . . . the culmination of the school of literary folk song."  

Also outstanding are Balakirev's songs to texts of Alexei Stepanovich Khomyakov (1804-1960), whom Prince Mirsky calls the greatest of the Slavophils.

Slavophilism, whose principal tenets were:

. . . the primacy of the moral and religious law, of ancestral tradition, and of the spontaneous sense of the right and just over the written laws and regulations of the state, and the primacy of the whole unreflecting reason over the lower logical and dissecting reason. . .

is reflected vividly in the philosophy of the circle of Russian nationalist composers.


4Ibid., p. 169.
The giant of this circle of composers and of all who ventured into the realm of song in Russia was Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky (1839-1881). Enough has been written concerning the lack of musical erudition and harmonic refinement that supposedly typify the writing of this composer. But not enough has been stated concerning the tremendous power and insight in his direct, faithful, psychological probing and portrayals.

The most Russian of nineteenth century composers, and the one in whose works the tenets of Slavophilism are most readily discernible, the methods of Mussorgsky were simple and straightforward. He had an aversion to musical scholasticism and artistic conventionalization. Himself possessed of a fine voice and able to sing quite acceptably, Mussorgsky had an infinite capacity for suggesting the physical aspect, the voice and the intonation of his highly diversified characters.

More acutely attuned to the accents of his native tongue and music than any of his predecessors, he exposed the vast world of Russian serfdom and peasantry with its varied personages, its multifarious activities and the want and misery of the intolerable burden of daily life of all the degraded and oppressed.

Mussorgsky's greatest distinction is that of having been the first in his country to sing unabashedly of the sorrows and joys of the true Russian. He was capable as perhaps no other composer has ever been of realizing his personal credo expressed in a letter of July, 1868:

"... My music must be an artistic reproduction of human speech in all its finest shades ... as the external manifestations of thought and feeling must, without exaggeration or violence, become true,
accurate music, and highly artistic.  

Mussorgsky rarely gives any conscious heed to form: for him the form of a song is dictated by the content of a poem and his concept of it.

Mussorgsky's letters make it clear that he was conscious of the correspondence between his role of psychological realism in music and the tendencies in the graphic arts. Perov and Repin in painting and Antokolsky in sculpture were striving toward the same goal in their art as was Mussorgsky in his. With them he shared a disdain for formal beauty and technical polish as well as every other manifestation of "art for art's sake." The difference was that the public was more able to accept the new tendencies in painting and sculpture than in music. Even Mussorgsky was somewhat puzzled over this circumstance and was known to have confessed to a superiority of the graphic arts in this respect.

An intellectual surge in all the arts, and in literature in particular, ensued after the reign of Nicholas I. It led to the exposure of the evils and shortcomings of the system of government. The indictment of society epitomized in the writings of the satirist Mikhail Evgrafovich Saltykov-Shchedrin (1826-1889), was costly for those who advanced it, but was highly beneficial in championing the freedom of the peasant. The portrayal of the life of the people began to assume a predominant place in Russian literature and the arts. An interest in village life and a feeling of pity and sympathy for all the outcasts of fortune ironically approached a level of

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"romantic" exaggeration. In a letter of Mussorgsky's, the expression "go to the people" (i.e., to devote oneself solely to the cause of the peasantry), became a rallying cry in Russia for the abolition of serfdom and freedom for all. This movement in the sixties gave new strength to Mussorgsky's creative spirit. It serves to illuminate Mussorgsky's position as a realist in terms of the creative atmosphere in which his art developed and in terms of the social and political influences by which he was surrounded. Mussorgsky was emphatically a "child of his age" who had the vision to apply the final conclusions of the intellectual movement of his time to the art of music.

An authoritative edition of the complete works of Mussorgsky is that of the Russian State Publishing House under the general editorship of Paul Lamm — a critical edition based on original manuscripts. 5

No attempt at a comprehensive survey of Mussorgsky's songs will be made -- rather, an illustration of the style of his early songs and of his mature, characteristic songs.

His very first song, Gde tv. zvëzdočka? (Where art thou, little star?), has a poignancy with its rather stark construction that raises Mussorgsky with one stroke into the realm of the art song. The introductory melodic figure with its plaintive minor cast and falling fourths might be described as a distillation of the Russian protiažnaia pesnja (protracted song). This type of Russian folk song, with its sustained, mournful, nostalgic air and pace, dates back to the earliest period of recorded Russian culture and has received sensitive literary description especially by Turgonyev in his tale Pevcy (The Singers), from Zapiski

6St. Musorgskij, Polnoe sobranie sočinenij, pod red. P. Lamma i B. Asaf'eva (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Muzykal'noe Izdatel'jstvo, 1956).
oxotnika (Sportsman’s sketches), and by Chekhov in his short story Stepp', (The Stepp).

This song, dating from 1857 and with a text by Nikolai Porfiryevich Grekov (1810-1866), was orchestrated by the composer in 1858, the first of eight songs to be so revised by Mussorgsky.

Γде ты, звездочка?

Example 6  Gde ty, zvezdoshka?  Mussorgsky

Car' Saul (King Saul), both piano and orchestral versions of which date from 1863, is a setting of a translation from Byron by the blind poet, Ivan Ivanovich Kozlov (1779-1840). Its first version gives a vivid foretaste of
both the harmonic boldness of the coronation scene (See ex. 8) as well as the rhythmic drive of the False Dmitri’s martial music (See ex. 9) in Boris Godunov.

Example 7 Car! Saul Mussorgsky

Example 8 Boris Godunov (Coronation scene) Mussorgsky
Example 9  **Boris Godunov (False Dmitri)**  Mussorgsky

Kalistratuška, both versions of which date from 1864, is the first of the mature songs of Mussorgsky. It is a setting of a poem of Nikolai Andreevich Nekrasov (1821-1878), who was akin to Mussorgsky in his ideology. Of him Prince Mirsky observes:

... So different in many respects from his contemporaries, Nekrasov shared with them a lack of conscious craftsmanship and of artistic culture.

... The main subject of Nekrasov's poetry was, in his own phrase, "the sufferings of the people."

... The social wrongs of contemporary Russia are for Nekrasov not so much an objective fact as a torturing subjective experience. Nekrasov's people were not only an object of compassion and worship. He could sympathize with their humor and their laughter as well as their sufferings, and of all Russian poets of the nineteenth century, he was the only one who was genuinely and creatively akin to the spirit of popular songs ... 7

As Nekrasov's poem is a faithful mirror of the folk idiom, Mussorgsky's Kalistratuška, in its rhythmic asymmetry and its melodic contour is equally faithful as a mirror of this in music. This sunny piece (See ex. 10) is also the first important song written after Mussorgsky had

become a member of a commune in St. Petersburg. Sharing a flat with five other young intellectuals, he exchanged thoughts on the arts, religion, politics, and philosophy. The views of this commune on the obligation for artistic truth and the need to subordinate artistic endeavors to life were the direct result of the radical writings of Nikolai Alexandrovich Dobroliubov (1836-1861) and of Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky (1828-1889), who had managed to smuggle out of prison his controversial, didactic novel of 1863, Čto delat'? (What's to be done?).

Beginning with Kalistratuška, Mussorgsky devoted himself to the ideals of realism and artistic truth with never abating enthusiasm.

Example 10 Kalistratuška (Second page) Mussorgsky
Seven of the mature, characteristic songs of Mussorgsky as well as the cycle Detskaja (The Nursery) and Račk (The Peep-show) have texts by the composer. These songs, which include Savišna (Savishna), Seminarist (The Seminarian), Kozál (The Me-goat), Klassik (The Classicist), and those of other poets such as Gopak (The Hopak), translated from the Ukrainian of Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) by Lev Alexandrovich Mey (1822-1862), and Kolybel'naia Erêmuški (Eremushka's Lullaby) of Nekrasov are all on a level that defies surpassing. No other Russian composer has probed more deeply into the inner nature of man nor has he depicted with more vivid colors the outward characteristics of man. It is precisely in this area that Mussorgsky demonstrates the most salient feature of realist art in Russia: his concern for the true qualities of humanity, with nature being relegated to a secondary position. Here a comparison with the great realist writers is suggested: with Dostoevsky above all who wasted no words on description of nature, but concentrated almost exclusively on the minds and actions and interactions of his characters.

In brief the beauty (ironically) and the power of Mussorgsky's music lie precisely in his indiscriminate employment of what seemed to his contemporaries as brash, crude, unpolished, even amateurish harmonic complexes or juxtapositions coupled with his incomparably penetrating grasp of the human psyche in any musical means that was suggested by the text at hand.

Mussorgsky's three great song cycles require no comment: they have earned for themselves a secure position in the topmost echelon of the solo vocal literature of the world.
Next in importance to Mussorgsky among the five was Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908). The 78 songs of Rimsky may be grouped into various categories:

1. Songs that bear a striking resemblance to Russian folk song. This category is represented by a limited number. One of the best of these is the Kolybel'naia pesnja (Cradle song), op. 2, no. 3, to a text of Mey. This piece has an interesting history. Originally composed in March, 1868, it was later, with certain modifications, inserted into the theatrical piece Bojarynya Vera Seloga, op. 54. The latter was originally conceived as a prologue to the second version of Rimsky's first opera, Pskovitjanka (The Maid of Pskov), then rewritten as a one-act opera in 1898. Gently undulating, this completely Russian piece has as its most salient feature, in addition to the graceful and touching folk-like melody, exotic harmonies dear to the nationalist composers: in the c# minor section particularly, for seven measures over a pedal we observe an exquisite mixture of harmonic sonorities.

Rimsky-Korsakov,

Example 11 Kolybel'naja pesnja (Page three) op. 2, no. 3
2. Songs that are lush and have full and often arpeggiated accompaniments. This is the largest category of Rimsky songs. In this group is his very first song, \( \text{Chekoju k cheke ty noe j polozin} \) (Lehn deine Wang an meine Wang), op. 2, no. 1, and a large number of nature studies among the poetic settings.

3. Songs that have an oriental flavor such as \( \text{Plonivsis' rocoi, solovej} \) (Enslaved by the rose, the nightingale), op. 2, no. 2, and the two Hebrew songs, op. 7, no. 2, and op. 8, no. 4, both of which have poetry of Moy. Also in this category should be mentioned two other songs of Rimsky. \( \text{V temnoj roo} \text{ca zamolok solovej} \) (In the dark grove the nightingale fell silent), op. 4, no. 3, to a poem of Ivan Savvich Hikitin (1824-1861), a minor realistic poet who was concerned mainly with the lot of the poor, and \( \text{Ha xolmax Gruzii} \) (On the hills of Georgia), to a poem of Pushkin, op. 3, no. 4. This song, in the section marked \( \text{poco meno mosso} \), is strongly reminiscent of the choral music in \text{Prince Igor}.

![Example 12 Na xolmax Gruzii Rimsky-Korsakov, op.3, no.4](image-url)
4. Songs of a serious nature and large in scope that can be compared to some of the ballads in the Western European repertoire. Such songs are the two great poems of Pushkin set by Rimsky in his op. 49: Ańčar — drovo smerti (Antiar — tree of death) and Prouok (The Prophet). These two poems, among the most powerful and imaginative of Russia's poet laureate, present a challenge that was not met by Rimsky, whose talent for dramatic conception was not on a level with his ability to portray the romantic, the fantastic, the folk and legendary element, and the exotic.

5. Songs that are inspired either musically or textually by Poland or Greece. Such are Cvetok zasočiž (The withered flower), op. 51, no. 3, to a poem of Pushkin, Moja balovnica (My spoiled darling), op. 42, no. 4, to a translation by Mey of a very popular poem of the poet laureate of Poland, Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855). In these two Rimsky displays his debt to Chopin and Poland. In the former he has composed a lovely mazurka which has just enough filigree to foreshadow the use of this by subsequent Russian composers such as Rachmaninov and Medtner. In the latter Rimsky has written a krakowiak with a typically Slavic, wild finish. Also in this fifth category belong the charming songs of op. 50 — four poems from the cycle Novogrečeskie pesni (New Greek Songs) by the most cele-
brated imagist poet of his time, Apollon Nikolaevich Maikov (1821-1897), for whom Dostoevsky "had more respect... than for any of his contemporaries and found... the most stimulating and responsive of correspondents."^8

Of considerable interest are some of Rimsky's own observations concerning his songs and the idiosyncrasies of his style as expressed in a letter dated 17 February 1897:^9

You see in the tendency of my present songs what seems to be on my part a conforming to the tastes of singers and of the public at large. But I view this otherwise, namely: I consider that in requirements of melodiousness, singability and breadth, singers and the public are correct. Do not forget that from the Berlioz-Liszt-Wagner tendency evolved the contemporary decadence of Bruneau, D'Indy, Sinding, Richard Strauss and others. The Russian school of the sixties and seventies has also been concerned in the begetting of decadence... Mediocre melodies, desultoriness, harmonic construction of music and the requirements of dissonances are things undesirable in themselves, and the public, demanding simpler harmonies and true melodies, is correct. It is not correct when it demands mediocrity and, seemingly, God has spared me in this respect from conforming to its taste, and if I have tried to be close to Glinka, it is because Glinka was always noble and refined, in addition to all his other genial qualities... 

Rimsky was as fascinated by Russian folk songs as was Mussorgsky, but with his more organized and methodical nature, he systematically collected and published them. He employed many of the ones he himself had thus amassed in various works and especially in operatic airs.

The only styles of song poorly represented in

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^8D. S. Mirsky, A History of Russian Literature, p. 231.


(My translation)
Rimsky are: (1) the dramatic (notwithstanding his stature as an operatic composer); (2) the purely recitative; (3) the comic-satirical. These are precisely the features that help to raise Mussorgsky songs to a level towering above all other Russians. These styles that are lacking in Rimsky's solo songs are to be observed abundantly in his operatic writing.

Rimsky's stature as a composer of art songs is based on a high level of musical craftsmanship, lush harmonics, lovely melodies of well-balanced proportions. All these features stand as in opposition to Mussorgsky, virtually antithetic — but, one should be all the more grateful to have both approaches to composition of song represented so poignantly by the two most important members of the mogučaja kučka.

The Western Influence

Among the Russian composers with Western European training was Anton Grigorevich Rubinstein (1829-1894). Both he and his brother, Nikolai (1835-1881), were students of Dehn in Berlin and both were founders of the Russian Musical Society in 1859. Nikolai founded the Moscow Conservatory in 1864 and remained its head until his death. Anton was founder of the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1862, retaining the post of principal from that year until 1867 and again from 1887 until 1890.

In these organizations the brothers Rubinstein promoted Western musical techniques and transmitted their tradition to Chaikovsky and others who were opposed to the ideology of the mogučaja kučka. The two brothers evinced little sympathy with the music of Glinka or any of the composers with Slavophile leanings.

Anton Rubinstein was renowned in his day not only for his compositions that enjoyed a tremendous vogue for
several decades, but perhaps more for virtuoso piano performances. The songs of Rubinstein are not at the same level as those of the mogučaja kučka. His compositional style shows a continuation of the Mendelssohn school, but he did not possess the self-criticism or the self-restraint of Mendelssohn. One of the best songs of this composer is his Nicht mit Engeln, op. 34, no. 1, a setting of Friedrich von Bodenstedt's translation of a poem of Mirza-Shaffy.

Example 14 Nicht mit Engeln Rubinstein, op. 34, no. 1
The 106 songs of Piotr Ilyich Chaikovsky (1840-1894), include a wider range of expression than has been observed in the works of any previously mentioned Russian composer. However they are far from uniform in quality of workmanship or inspiration. They may be categorized as follows:

1. Songs that are cast in the light-hearted and facile mood of his waltzes;
2. Songs that are in a folk style, whether a poignant lament or a simple peasant dance;
3. Songs that are inspired by the Russian Gypsies;
4. Songs that are quasi-dramatic and show the hand of the composer of several remarkable operas;
5. Songs that are attempts at non-Russian subjects and are inspired by Western Europe.

In this last category belongs one of his most ebullient songs, Serenade Don Juan (Don Juan's Serenade), op. 38, no. 1, dating from 1878 and with lines taken from a play of Count Alexei Konstantinovich Tolstoy (1817-1875). This piece is striking with its lilting rhythm, its melodic line so buoyant and filled with verve, and its accompaniment so aptly describing the ardent plucking of strings by the serenader. But even more striking is the uncanny proximity to a genuine Iberian flavor. Not a single one of the forty-four songs in Hugo Wolf's Spanisches Liederbuch can rival this proximity nor can Schumann's Der Hidalgo, op. 30, no. 3. Once again Chaikovsky, as Glinka and Aliabiev before him, proves himself an eclectic and a master in the assimilation of foreign mannerisms in music.
Example 15  *Serenata Don Juan*  Chaikovsky, op. 33, no. 1

Another style of writing may be observed in *Ni glose, o drug moj* (Not a word, oh my friend), a setting from the German of M. Hartmann by Alexei Nikolaevich Pleshcheyev (1825-1893), an exponent of civic poetry.

This song has some interesting and distinctive features. Both the introduction and the postlude of this ABA composition contain the second phrase of the B section. It is one of those soulful outbursts that are most often
associated with the composer of the Romeo and Juliet music. Also with the duplets in the vocal line vying with the triplets of the accompaniment, it cannot help but recall this same rhythmic trait frequently employed by Chaikovsky's contemporary, Johannes Brahms.

Similarly delightful is the Kolybel'naja pesnja (Lullaby), op. 16, no. 2, with a text by Maikov. This is one of several instances where Chaikovsky writes in a Russian folk vein. His accompaniment, with the two hands often interweaving, is quite artistically crafted.

Kanarejka (The Canary), op. 25, no. 4, with a poem of Mey, displays a sortie into the realm of the Oriental, whereas Govorili duraku (They were saying to the fool), op. 25, no. 6, with a poem also by Mey, is completely in the folk idiom -- especially the accompaniment which imitates the voice leading of Russian folk choral music. This song, while exhibiting a definite Russian cast, contains a cadential melodic figure in the third measure of the introduction as well as in the first measure of the vocal line, that may be observed abundantly in folk music in countries as widely dispersed as Sweden, Catalonia, Israel, Czechoslovakia (Smetana employs it as a cadence in his well-known The Moldau) and elsewhere:

Example 16  Govorili duraku  Chaikovsky, op. 25, no. 6

Another style of writing is seen in his Cyganskaja pesnja (Gypsy song), op. 60, no. 7, to a poem of Yakov Petrovich Polonsky (1819-1898). The melody employs a mode associated with Gypsy music and the meter is that of a mazurka. Sred sumnogo bala (Midst the noisy ball), op. 38, no. 3, to a poem of A. Tolstoy, is a fine example of Chaikovsky's ability to exploit the moderate triple-meter of
the waltz. *To bylo ranneju vesnoj* (It was in early spring), op. 38, no. 2, is a splendid setting of another poem of A. Tolstoy. This poem also received a setting by Rimsky in his cycle *Vesnoj* (In spring), op. 43.

*Kukuška* (The Cuckoo), op. 54, no. 8, set to a translation by Pleshcheyev from the German of Gellert, is a rare example of a Chaikovsky *song* in a light-hearted, quasi humorous vein.

Example 17  
*Kukuška*  
Chaikovsky, op. 54, no. 8
In Kukuška we are reminded of the wit of Gustav Mahler in similar instances as in his Lob des hohen Vorstands or of Hugo Wolf in his Lied des transferierten Zettels. Chaikovsky set a total of seventeen poems of Pleshcheyev of which all but three are part of his set of sixteen children's songs in op. 54 -- a work that does not approach the realism of Mussorgsky's Detskaja, except in a few scattered instances, but does compare favorably with the level of craftsmanship of works such as Schumann's op. 79, Liederalbum für die Jugend, and Max Reger's sixty songs of his op. 76, Schlichte Weisen.

Sergei Ivanovich Taneyev (1856-1915), who wrote thirty-nine songs, was more important as a teacher and moulder of thought than as a contributor to the repertoire. A fine pianist, Taneyev gave the first performance of Chaikovsky's B♭ minor Piano Concerto in Moscow in 1875. Despite his outspoken, but frank criticism or his teacher (which Chaikovsky himself appreciated), Taneyev had little sympathy for the composers of the nationalist school. On the contrary, he was greatly concerned with the masters of the classic era, as witnessed in his erudite work, Inverible Counterpoint in the Strict Style, published in 1909.

In his position as chief professor of pianoforte as well as that of professor of harmony and instrumentation at the Moscow Conservatory (posts in which he succeeded Klindworth and Chaikovsky respectively), he did not impose his own taste upon his pupils, but rather encouraged them to develop freely according to their own manner.

An astounding variety of styles is evident in the several illustrious pupils of Taneyev (who included Rakhmaninov, Medtner and Glière). He became the chief mentor of music in Moscow -- a position analogous to that held by Rimsky-Korsakov in St. Petersburg.

Taneyev, who has the distinction of being the first
Three more composers may be mentioned briefly. All three were members of the Taneyev tradition.

Sergei Mikhailovich Liapunov (1859-1924), who published a splendid collection of 300 folk songs collected in European Russia upon a commission by the Imperial Geographic Society in 1893, has left several fine solo songs.

Alexander Konstantinovich Glazunov (1865-1936) contributed generously to the repertoire. In his youth Glazunov had been a belated member of the močučaja kučka. It was Glazunov who performed the dazzling feat of reconstructing from memory the overture to Prince Igor, and who also, along with Rimsky-Korsakov, completed the orchestration of this work.

Alexander Tikhonovich Grechaninov (1864-1956) wrote some 250 songs that bear a strong personal stamp and many that have won for themselves a permanent niche in the concert repertory.

Contemporaries of Prokofiev

Sergei Vasilevich Rakhmaninov (1873-1943), whose songs number eighty-three in the definitive Soviet edition, was also a pupil of Taneyev. The sophisticated, cosmopolitan character of the cultivated Russian aristocrat reaches its musical epitome in the songs of Rakhmaninov. His melodic lines are apt to be extremely beautiful and he invariably expresses the poem with great sensitivity. His accompaniments, as can be expected from one who was one of

10 Rakhmaninov, Romancy (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Muzykal'noe Izdatel'stvo, 1963).
the world's great pianists, favor the keyboard at times, but they are always well constructed and frequently have an intricate texture. More songs of this composer have become well-known than those of any other Russian.

The first of three Balmont settings of Rakhmaninov is a translation from Shelley — *Ostrovok* (The Island). This song is characterized by extreme economy of means, great delicacy, and it is probably one of the most successful of this composer's songs in a laconic style. Every subtlety in the Russian text is pointed up by the composer with a sensitivity that matches that of the poet.

Example 18  *Ostrovok*  Rakhmaninov, op. 14, no. 2
Rakhmaninov's last set of songs, his op. 38, are among the least known and yet contain some of his most interesting writing in this medium. These six songs are all settings of symbolist poetry and all are through-composed. The first two, Noč'ju v sādu u menja (At night in my garden), a translation by Blok from the Armenian of Isaakian, and K nej (To her), a poem of Bely, are both conceived in a somewhat free manner in regard to phrase structure. This freedom is a continuation of a trait evident in many of the composer's previous songs. Marčaritki (The Daisies), a poem of Rakhmaninov's friend, Severyanin, is the only one of this opus to have gained "popularity." It is distinguished by its quasi declamatory vocal line in competition with a running commentary in the right hand of the piano. This predilection for an obligato melody is another feature that characterized many of the composer's earlier songs. Krysolov (The Rat Catcher), op. 38, no. 4, is a setting of a poem of Bryusov. It is unusual in the Rakhmaninov song literature with its altogether light-hearted, satirical, almost humorous atmosphere. Its complexities, both visually and aurally, remind one of the mature Max Reger. The harmonic restlessness in this composition is compounded with metrical irregularities to produce one of Rakhmaninov's most capricious songs.

Example 19  Krysolov  Rakhmaninov, op. 38, no. 4
Son (Sleep), op. 38, no. 5, with a poem of Fyodor Sologub, displays Rakhmaninov in an expansive mood. The accompaniment begins with simple, eighth-note movement. The texture thickens progressively until in the full-page postlude it would appear that the composer had orchestral sonorities in mind.

Example 20  Son  Rakhmaninov, op. 38, no. 5
Au! (А-оо!\), op. 38, no. 6, is the third of Rakhmaninov's Balmont settings and his last contribution to the solo vocal repertoire. The title of this song is the Russian expression employed when calling out to someone from a distance. One of the most "daring" ventures in this
medium for Rakhmaninov, it is characterized by frequent modulations involving several enharmonic changes. It has an unresolved ending — unique in the Rakhmaninov songs. There is considerable dramatic tension and expansiveness in this composition, along with extensive exploration of pianistic sonorities.

For his seven-measure coda, Rakhmaninov sets in motion a sextuplet sixteenth-note figure in the right hand, outlining a chord of the ninth (with a minor seventh) over a Db–Ab pedal. All this is but a backdrop for a soaring new melody. The song ends on this unresolved harmony with one, new, foreign harmony (a g major triad) introduced on the second beat of the last measure. This final harmonic admixture suggests that Rakhmaninov was seeking to portray the mixed reverberation that may result in an echo over mountain and valley.

Reinhold Koritzovich Glière (1875-1956), the composer of 123 songs, was another pupil of Taneyev. He too, in spite of the large output — of which not a few deserve to be heard in addition to the well-known, exquisite Sláčko pel duša solovuško (Sweetly sang the dear little nightingale) — is more important in the present survey for his teaching than for his enormous contribution to the repertoire. Among his pupils were Sergei Prokofiev, Nicholas Miaskovsky, Aram Khachaturian, and Boris Pasternak, in those early days of Pasternak's adolescence when he was passing from one science to another.

Nicholas Medtner (1880-1951) made a notable contribution to the repertoire. His 110 songs have among their features first and foremost a heavy Teutonic overlay. Stylistically his songs belong more to the Germanic tradition than to the Russian.

Medtner was more discriminating in his choice of
poetry than any other Russian composer. Medtner gave Pushkin first consideration with 32 settings; Goethe follows with 31 (Medtner set all his German poets in the original unlike Mussorgsky and Chaikovsky who set them in Russian translation); Tyutchev received 13 settings. Other poets employed by Medtner include Lermontov, Heine, Bely, Nietzsche, Fet, Bryusov, Eichendorff, and Chamisso.

Medtner delights in rhythmic complexities and frequently gives undue prominence to the piano. But in many songs there is a perfect balance between voice and keyboard.

Such a song is the charming Ispanskij Romans (Spanish Romance), no. 4 of a set of six in op. 36 to poems of Pushkin. Although this composition does not possess any identifiable Spanish stylistic traits, it is one of the finest and most uncluttered of the Medtner songs, with its lilting rhythms and syncopations. This song is the first of two Pushkin settings with the same title.

Example 22 Ispanskij Romans

Medtner, op. 36, no. 4
The second composition of Medtner entitled *Ispanski Romans*, no. 5, of his op. 52, does possess
discernible characteristics of the Iberian peninsula. Pushkin's original title for the poem employed by Medtner is simply the opening words which are: Pred ispankoj blagorodnoj (Before a noble Spanish lady). This song strives ardently in the direction of Spain but, in spite of frequent arabesques in the accompaniment that look and sound as though they had been dictated by Granados or Albeniz, this second Ispanskiy Romans does not succeed entirely in capturing an authentic Spanish flavor. In this case the fault lies in Medtner's preoccupation with cross rhythms. His accompanimental figuration becomes almost hopelessly entangled and the net result is a rhythmic effect of what might be called "Medtnerism," but certainly not Spanish.

Many songs of Medtner might be singled out for their wonderful atmosphere of lyricism and fantasy and for their sensitivity to text and treatment of the voice. Such compositions include the unusual Sonata-Vocalise, op. 41, no. 1, unique in the entire Russian repertoire. This composition is textless except for the opening section which he has provided with a "motto" as he terms it — Geweihter Platz (Consecrated Place), of Goethe.

The vocalise has been a favored type of composition among the modern Russian composers. Medtner himself wrote a Suite Vocalise, op. 41, no. 2, another extended, completely textless composition that loosely follows the baroque dance suites. Rakhmaninov wrote what is certainly the most gratifying composition in this genre in his Vocalise, op. 34, no. 14. Stravinsky produced his delightful, textless Pastorale in 1908. Prokofiev wrote five pieces in this idiom in his op. 35, entitling them Piat' pesen bez slov (Five songs without words) and Glière wrote his effective Concerto for Soprano in 1942.
Nicholas Miaskovsky (1881-1950) is important chiefly because of his close association with Sergei Prokofiev. This reserved, highly cultured, army officer exerted an intellectual influence over Prokofiev. The two friends maintained a candid attitude toward each other's works throughout their forty-five-year friendship.

In those of his 56 songs written prior to the Revolution of 1917, Miaskovsky favors the symbolist poets. He set 16 poems of Balmont and 27 of Gippius. It is to be regretted that not a single one of the settings of this last group, which include some of his most original and provocative songs, are included in the definitive Soviet edition of his works. Furthermore there is not even a reference to their existence in the preface to this sumptuously prepared volume.11

Miaskovsky passed through several phases in his compositional style before settling down, in the Soviet period, to a state approved norm. One sees by turns traces of Chaikovsky, Rakhmaninov, Prokofiev, Wagner, Mussorgsky, Scriabin and Schönberg.

Early in his career he did a considerable amount of critical writing for the press. From 1921 until his death in 1950, Miaskovsky was professor of composition at the Moscow Conservatory, in which capacity he wielded an influence similar to that of Taneyev before him.

Miaskovsky's song cycle, Madrigal, op. 7, contains five Balmont poems. In these and in other of his early writings he exhibits the imprint of Chaikovsky. Miaskovsky displays the lyric traits of that composer as well as those of Rakhmaninov (See ex. 24).

Example 24  Prélude  Miaskovsky, op. 7, no. 1

This music is replete with traditional harmonic concepts and a lush, effusive melodic translation of the eroticism of the decadent acolyte of Helios. Dalmont's obsession with light is apparent in all the songs of this cycle. The rhythmic and melodic material of the accompaniment in the second song of this set shows Miaskovsky's affinity for Rakhmaninov (See ex. 25).
2. Romance.

Example 25  Romance  Miaskovsky, op. 7, no. 2
Miaskovsky was capable of being somewhat more daring than in his op. 7 and was not entirely loathe to turn aside from traditionalism. He could write for the voice in a more disjunct manner. The following example is from his cycle op. 16 entitled Predčuvstvija (Forebodings), a set of six songs to texts of Zinaida Gippius.

Example 26  *Dol' (Pain)*  Miaskovsky, op. 16, no. 2
The strong rhythmic concept demonstrated in Miaskovsky's op. 16, no. 2 may be compared with an excerpt from Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No. 3 (Op. 28: "From old notebooks").

Example 27  Sonata No. 3  Prokofiev, op. 28

In his capacity as critic for Muzyka from 1911 to 1914, Miaskovsky was to champion and promote before the public the music of his friend and colleague. The two composers at the earliest stage of their acquaintance developed the custom of inspecting each other's scores and offering advice. This practice was interrupted only by Miaskovsky's death. Even when, in Prokofiev's adolescence, his summers were spent at Sontsovka, their correspondence flourished.

The letters of Nikolai Yakovlovich, written in a sparkling language and of solid content (he addressed me like an altogether mature person) were of great benefit to me and aided my development.12

It was Miaskovsky who introduced Prokofiev to the "moderns" -- Debussy, Richard Strauss and Reger. The two fellow students of the conservative Liadov's composition class supplied him with one type of writing, but for themselves, something of a far different order.

Igor Stravinsky's output for voice and piano was limited, but he contributed several songs for voice with the accompaniment of various instrumental ensembles. Stravinsky had the distinction of being the sole Russian composer of the twentieth century to compose such a variety of vocal chamber music. By far the most eclectic of Russian composers, he was also capable of being thoroughly Russian when the spirit moved him.

His earliest songs, two poems of the acmeist Goro­detsky, show the influence of his teacher, Rimsky, who was in the final year of his life when these two songs -- Monastyr' (The Cloister) and Rosjanka (The Heavy Dew) -- were written.

Example 28  

Rozjanka  

Stravinsky
Three years later, in 1911, when he composed the *Two Poems of Balmont*, there is no longer any trace of Rimsky or of any other Russian. Rather, we have in these compositions a Stravinsky who has shed the fetters of tradition and is experiencing an expressionistic vein.

Example 29  *Nezabudočka-cvetoček*  Stravinsky

The two Balmont settings of Stravinsky illustrate his freshness and originality of approach in a solo song. The first of these, *Nezabudočka-cvetoček* (The Forget-me-not), is cast in a modified ABA form. This outline of form together with the folk-like character of the melody in the
B section (as well as its regular four-measure phrase structure for each of the two lines of verse) are the only traditional features in this composition. The lack of key signature adduces conjecture as to the tonality of the opening section. Every phrase in the entire song with one exception comes to rest on either $b\natural'$ or $b\natural''$ for the voice, so that there is a temptation to select this pitch alternation as a final scale degree; however, there is nothing in the accompaniment to support such a desire. On the contrary, the trill on $g\natural' - d\natural''$ that accompanies the first two utterances of the voice in combination with the $b\natural'' - b\natural'$ of the voice, outline a $g\natural$ major/minor triad, root position.

Beginning with the second system, first measure, second beat, Stravinsky outlines, enharmonically, a minor seventh chord. With the exception of the word "ocen" (very), Stravinsky has given a syllabic setting to the text of the A section. He has managed, however, to place his stresses sympathetically, employing either pitch or timing to accomplish this.

The B section is equally unstable harmonically. The voice taken as an entity appears to be conceived in $b$ minor. The right hand of the piano gives an open fifth in $A$, but is complicated by the inclusion on the down beat of a $b$. Thus there are at least two interpretations possible for this. An alternation between $e$ minor and a minor; a minor with an added ninth. The left hand of the piano likewise presents a fluctuation and some ambiguity: (1) a major seventh over $C$; (2) an added ninth over an $f\natural$ minor triad; (3) the same over an $f$ major triad (at times enharmonically); (4) finally, a $b$ minor triad.

The text setting in this section resembles its treatment in a Russian folk song. Striking is the avoidance of stress placement on the down beat and a regular stress occurring on the second beat of each measure. This presents a slightly jarring effect when viewed visually,
but not so when hearing the effect of a live performance.

The C section of the song utilizes material from the two opening statements of the voice. But in this instance Stravinsky shifts his bar lines so that primary stresses come two beats earlier than they did in A. For the third phrase of the voice, Stravinsky leads us to a G♯ final and thus raises serious doubts as to the tonal center of the composition. This doubt is underscored by a G♯ trill in the piano right hand. The song ends with an unaccompanied seven-note, seven-syllable phrase for the voice. The text "Slyšiš' tonkij golosok ?" (Do you hear the delicate little voice ?) is qualified by a staccato for each note, an indication "pp," and, finally, by the instruction quasi parlando (ma in tempo).

The second of the two Balmont songs of Stravinsky, Golub (The Dove), is characterized by the same tonal ambiguity as the first. In addition three features may be indicated: (1) a thirty-second-note figure which, in its sevenfold appearance, depicts the approach of the dove; (2) an interweaving figuration beginning in the second measure of rehearsal B, favoring the interval of a major or minor second and depicting the cooing of the bird; (3) the folk-like character of the vocal line -- especially at rehearsal D where, incidentally, the composer brings the voice to a relatively high tessitura (b").

The accompanimental figuration here exhibits considerable variety. The entire first page of the song includes the rapid figure referred to above and sustained, syncopated minor sixths. Beginning the second measure of B for the ensuing three bars a chromatic triplet figure in the left hand and a slowly quickening figure in the right. At rehearsal C this becomes more involved as we have simultaneous eighth-note movement in the voice, sustained quarter-notes, sixteenth-note triplet figuration in the treble of the piano, and eighth-note triplets continuing in
the bass. There follows a measure that may be considered as intermediary or a bridge in which the rapidly ascending thirty-second note figure anticipates the text "uletel" (flew away). Something new is devised from rehearsal D onward. In the last measure of the vocal line, there is a clashing minor second on every eighth-note of the bar. The staccato chord with which the piano ends the song also contains such a dissonance.

Example 30  Golub  Stravinsky

Sergei Rakhmaninov, Nicholas Miaskovsky and Igor Stravinsky were to exert a considerable influence on the compositional technique as well as on the philosophical approach of Prokofiev in his early songs. Because of this influence and considering the stature of these three composers, their output in this category along with that of Sergei Prokofiev is outlined in a chronology embracing the period 1890-1921.
A Chronology of the Solo Songs of Four Russian Composers

1890-1921

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>RACHMANINOV</th>
<th>MIASKOVSKY</th>
<th>STRAVINSKY</th>
<th>PROKOFIEV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>9 early songs without opus set to texts of diverse poets</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>6 songs op. 4: texts of Pushkin, Merezhkovsky, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>6 songs op. 8: Translations from Heine, Goethe and Shevchenko</td>
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<td>1896</td>
<td>12 songs op. 14: Tyutchev, Fet, Balmont, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>12 songs op. 21: Zhukovsky, Nadson, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>6 songs of Balmont</td>
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<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>5 songs of Gippius</td>
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<td>1905</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faun and Sheppardess, 3 songs of Pushkin for voice and orchestra</td>
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<td>1906</td>
<td>15 songs op. 26: A. Tolstoy, Chekhov, Sunin, Khomyakov, etc.</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>RACHMANINOV</td>
<td>MIASKOVSKY</td>
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<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>5 songs of Balmont</td>
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<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td><em>Meditations,</em> 7 songs of Baratynsky, op. 1, and  <em>On the Threshold,</em> 9 songs of Gippius, op. 2</td>
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<td>1908</td>
<td>3 songs of Gippius, op. 4, and <em>Unseen,</em> 4 <em>Pastorale</em> songs of Gippius, op. 5</td>
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<td>1909</td>
<td>Letter to Stanislavsky <em>Madrigal,</em> 5 songs of Balmont, op. 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>2 poems of Verlaine</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>2 poems of Balmont</td>
<td>2 poems, op. 9: Balmont and Apukhtin</td>
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<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>14 songs op. 34: <em>Pushkin,</em> <em>Fet,</em> <em>Balmont,</em> <em>Tyutchev,</em> etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>3 Japanese lyrics and 3 Russian songs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td><em>Premonitions,</em> <em>Pribautki,</em> 6 songs of Gippius, op. 16, 4 <em>Pleasant</em> songs</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>The Ugly Duckling,</em> op. 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>RAKHMANINOV</td>
<td>NIAKSKOVSKY</td>
<td>STRAVINSKY</td>
<td>PROKOFIEV</td>
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<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>From St. John's Gospel</td>
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<td>5 songs op. 23, Balmont, Gippius, Goryansky, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>6 songs op. 38: symbolist poetry</td>
<td>The Cat's Cradle Songs, 4 poems for voice and clarinet</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 poems of Anna Akhmatova, op. 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 stories for children</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Russian songs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>op. 35, 5 vocalises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>6 songs of Blok, op. 20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 poems of Balmont, op. 36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 1910, when Prokofiev was first turning to the composition of songs, Sergei Rakhmaninov had paid his first visit to the United States to perform his Third Piano Concerto, and had settled down to live in Moscow as teacher, performer, and conductor until driven from there by the Revolution in 1917. By 1910 Rakhmaninov had composed and performed a large percentage of his total vocal output. Rakhmaninov was attracted to poetry of an older generation almost exclusively. The chief exception was his final set of songs for which he turned to poetry of Blok, Severyanin, Bryusov, Bely, Sologub and Balmont.

Nicholas Miaskovsky, after completing a three-year course at the Academy of Military Engineering, entered a
program of musical study in Moscow in 1908. Rimsky-Korsakov had proposed Taneyev as an instructor, but the young Miaskovsky pursued his studies with Taneyev's outstanding pupil, Reinhold Glière, just as Prokofiev had done. At the St. Petersburg Conservatory Miaskovsky was a classmate of Prokofiev under Liadov. By the year 1910 he had composed the first of his twenty-seven symphonies, his first string quartet, several piano pieces and numerous songs, employing primarily texts of the symbolists.

Prokofiev's first encounter with Igor Stravinsky was in 1910 when the latter performed his Fire-Bird on the piano for an open gathering of the Evenings of Contemporary Music in Moscow. Prokofiev was not taken with the music and made some scathing remarks to its composer. Some years later, in 1915, Diaghilev brought Prokofiev and Stravinsky together again in Rome. Prokofiev, whom Diaghilev had commissioned to write a ballet, was in Rome to perform his Second Piano Concerto. Stravinsky praised Prokofiev's music and the two composers performed a four-hand arrangement of Stravinsky's Petrushka for the Italian futurists.

In his early vocal compositions Stravinsky did not limit himself to Russian poetry. As seen from the table, he employed poetry of other nations and also experimented with new instrumental combinations to accompany the voice. Most striking, in keeping with his customarily inquisitive and exploratory nature, even in this early period he demonstrated an extremely wide range of expression and compositional types in the songs dating from these years.
CHAPTER III

THE EARLY SONGS OF PROKOFIEV

Sergei Prokofiev in the Years 1900-1922

In the year 1900 the nine year old Sergei, inspired by performances of Faust and of Prince Igor heard in Moscow, made his first excursion into the composition of vocal music with his opera, Velikan (The Giant). The young Sergei seems to have been endowed with a keen sense of his-trionics and evinced this by undertaking the production and direction of his Velikan in addition to its composition. The work is not an opera as the term is normally understood. It has a plot of Prokofiev's own contrivance, no vocal parts whatsoever (only spoken dialogue), and only a piano accompaniment. This score was completed about the time that Reinhold Glière arrived at the country estate of Sontsovka in the Ukraine (of which Sergei's father was the manager) to take over Prokofiev's musical training.

Glière had been recommended by Sergei Taneyev. Later Prokofiev was to write: "Glière's gentle manner and constant interest in my work made me aware of its importance and drove me to set it apart from other occupations."¹ And still later he was to add:

His influence did not consist simply in giving me a good grounding in harmony and introducing me to new fields of composition -- form and instrumentation, for example. The really important point was that instead of being tutored by my mother, who although a born teacher remained a dilettante in music, I found myself in the hands of a professional musician with an entirely different approach in music -- a man who, although unaware of it, was opening up new worlds to me.2

In 1904 Prokofiev entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory where he was to come into contact with Wihtol, Liadov, Glazunov, Nicholas Tcherepnin, Esipova and, of greatest significance, Rimsky-Korsakov. By far the most important instructor on the faculty of this institution, Rimsky was evidently also the most meticulous.

In 1906 the fifteen-year old Prokofiev began to attend Rimsky's four-hour sessions in counterpoint and instrumentation. Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev (1884-1949) describes these classes in his still unpublished sketch, Mysli i Dumy (Reflections and Thoughts):

For hours at a time, with exceptional attention, Nikolai Andreevich would discuss work after work . . . Here it was only necessary to seize upon the priceless instructions and remarks, advice and pointed judgments . . . In the "hours of survey" were concealed the engrossing force and very essence of our studies. To determine a dividing line between the utterances of the pedagogue and the observations from his own creative experience trustingly, affectionately and lavishly strewn before his pupils would have been unthinkable: pedagogical precepts were perpetually being transformed into a laboratory of art of a prominent master.3

2S. S. Prokof'ev, Materialy, dokumenty, vospominanija (Moscow: Muzgiz, 1961), p. 31

Too immature at fifteen to appreciate these master classes of Rimsky-Korsakov, the young Prokofiev was nevertheless wise enough to take advantage of the performances of Rimsky's music in Petersburg. He attended as many performances of his works as he could and was among the most enthusiastic with his applause. "Only later did I understand how much one could profit from contact with a man like Rimsky-Korsakov," Prokofiev confessed at a much later date.4

In 1905 Rimsky supported the student rebellion at the conservatory. This was followed by his dismissal and the temporary closing of that institution. With the reopening of the conservatory in 1906, the composer Nicholas Miaskovsky entered as a student. A forty-five year friendship with Prokofiev dates from that time. The two became mutual musical confidants. In that same year, Max Reger visited St. Petersburg and performed his G major Serenade and other works. The complexities of Reger's mature style with its restless melodies and complicated harmonic structures, and similar features in the works of Schoenberg and Strauss that were being performed in Russia about this time all left their mark on the young Prokofiev. The youthful composer and Miaskovsky spent many hours at the piano in the reading of four-hand arrangements of Reger's G major Serenade as well as tone poems of Richard Strauss.5 Prokofiev's introduction to the most modern trends in music dates from this period.

In 1907 Prokofiev began to attend the Evenings of Contemporary Music organized by the magazine, The World of Art. From 1901 to 1912 these concerts were important in introducing not only new Russian music, but new Western

4Quoted in: I. Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, p. 31.
5I. Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, p. 33.
European music as well. The two mentors of this series were Alfred Murok, an art critic, and Walter Nuvel, a wealthy patron of the arts. Both were intimately associated with Diaghilev and his World of Art artists. Besides introducing to the Russian musical world the music of Reger, Schoenberg and Strauss, they presented music of the French moderns: Roussel, D'Indy, Debussy, Dukas and Fauré. The latest works of Scriabin, Stravinsky and Tcherepnin were also heard. Prominent performers from the capitol participated in this series without remuneration including singers such as I. Alchevsky, M. Lunacharsky, I. Zabela, A. Zherebtsova, and pianists such as L. Nikolaev, M. Barinova and S. Polotskaya-Emtsova.  

Rimsky-Korsakov was among the prominent musicians who attended this series and gave it their strong support. V. F. Karatyghin (1875-1925), the critic whose chief contributions are his essays on the incompletely Mussorgsky manuscripts, was the ideologist of this circle. He championed the cause of advanced music in the press (particularly in the newspaper Rec' [Speech]) and at the same time he deplored the continued craze for Chaikovsky and Rakhmaninov as evidence of bad taste.  

On December 31, 1908, at the forty-fifth gathering of the Evenings of Contemporary Music, Prokofiev made his first appearance as a composer. He performed various piano pieces, including his Diabolic Suggestions. When this composition was played by the composer a few years later in the Poet's Café in Moscow, it evoked rapture from the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky and indignation from the critics. Mayakovsky, who by this time was allied with the movement of futurism, reported:  

... It seemed as if the hall was ablaze and we were

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6I. Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, p. 58.  
7Thid.
The young master burned ferociously at the grand piano with whose keys he tussled. He was playing with a captivating elemental ascent at full tilt. Something like this can be witnessed only once in a lifetime, when one sees and feels that the master has gone insane in a super-ecstasy, as if he were going into mortal combat and as if this attack can never again be repeated.8

It was on that same occasion that Mayakovsky sketched a portrait of Prokofiev and inscribed it: "Sergei Sergeevich playing on the tenderest nerves of Vladimir Vladimirovich."9

In connection with this event a threefold observation may be made. First, it is ironical that recognition of Prokofiev's music came first from the World of Art group and from the futurist movement in poetry. It was often the case of new music in Russia that the first recognition of avant-garde writing came not from musicians.

Second, it is ironical that Prokofiev failed to comprehend fully and to appreciate the newest and most avant-garde poetry of his time. He never employed the poetry of Mayakovsky or any of the more progressive poets in his vocal music.

Third, Mayakovsky was not, after all, fully equipped to evaluate properly the most progressive trends in music. He did not, for example, possess enough musical erudition to appreciate Stravinsky. On the contrary, in a dispatch from Berlin in 1922, after voicing his distaste for the music of Stravinsky, Mayakovskv wrote: "I much prefer Prokofiev in the pre-foreign period of his career,

8Quoted in: Victor Seroff, *Prokofiev*, p. 54.
Prokofiev of the crude, swift marches.\textsuperscript{10}

Prokofiev himself, with all his buoyant temperament, never evinced such flamboyance as did futurists such as Mayakovsky and his friend Kamensky, the aviator-poet who had an airplane painted on his cheek and their futurist colleague, the painter David Burliuk, who had a "dog that wiggled on his fat cheek."\textsuperscript{11}

Rimsky-Korsakov died in 1908 and the young Prokofiev completed his study of composition under Joseph Wihtol (1863-1948), the Latvian composer who had been appointed professor of theory at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1886 and had himself been a pupil of Rimsky.

In 1909 Prokofiev transferred from the class of Alexander Adolfovich Winkler (1865-1935), a pupil of Leschetizky, to that of Annette Nikolaevna Esipova (1851-1914), another pupil of Leschetizky and his wife from 1880 to 1892. There was considerable disagreement between them as a result of Prokofiev's tampering with scores and his disdain for Mozart and Chopin. The recalcitrance of the young Prokofiev to conform to such basic elements of pianistic technique as proper hand position and the disrespectful attitude toward the classics even prompted Esipova to threaten him with eviction from her class. Nevertheless Esipova must be in large measure accorded the credit of having moulded him into one of the great Russian piano virtuosi.\textsuperscript{12}

The first Prokofiev settings of the poet Balmont were two works for women's voices with orchestral accompaniment: \textit{Belyj lebed' (The White Swan)} and \textit{Volna (The Wave)}, op. 7. These two compositions date from the be-

\textsuperscript{10}Quoted in: I. Nest'ev, Prokof' ev, p. 217.


\textsuperscript{12}Victor Seroff, Prokofiev, pp. 61-62.
ginning of Prokofiev's conservatory days. He had hoped to have them performed at one of the conservatory evening concerts, but they were considered too unusual and difficult. Only one of them was performed in a closed rehearsal. Both remain unpublished and the mss. were lost. Shortly before his death Prokofiev reconstructed the Belyj Lebed' chorus from surviving voice parts and the ms. is in the Central State Archives in Moscow.

Nestyev feels compelled to apologize for Prokofiev having used Balmont's poetry in accordance with his duty as the official Soviet censor:

... Prokofiev did not turn to the mystical verses of the decadent Balmont as a result of fully formed aesthetic principles -- the decadence of Balmont's poetry was not really reflected in the sincere lyricism of the young composer. Balmont was a fashionable poet. His verses had been set to music by Tcherepnin, Miaskovsky, Stravinsky -- and Prokofiev too was attracted by the formal novelty of Balmont's poems ... 

Such views reflect the Socialist Realist conception of what is acceptable in art and Western readers must temper their interpretation with a less biased approach.

Although Prokofiev was not fully mature at the time of his early Balmont settings, the lyricism of his music reflects that of the poet. Nestyev may well be justified in his claim that Prokofiev's choice of Balmont in these early choruses was not prompted by a complete sympathy with this poetry. Yet Prokofiev was to utilize verses of Balmont in seven of his songs and in the Cantata, Seven, They are Seven, op. 30.

As early as 1906 Prokofiev was deciphering at the keyboard Scriabin's Divine Poem. It is likely that this

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13. S. Prokof'ev, Materialy, p. 144.
idiom, textless though it was, with its new regions of sonority, corresponded to that which the verses of Balmont accomplished in the sphere of poetry. But the admiration that the young Prokofiev felt so intensely for Scriabin, and which inspired him to arrange his Divine Poem for the piano and to dedicate his orchestral piece, Dreams, op. 6, to him in 1910, did not long endure. It was only the music of Scriabin itself that so fascinated Prokofiev in his early conservatory years.

The personalities of Prokofiev and Scriabin were, after all, diametrically opposed. This would be subsequently seen in Prokofiev's preference for clarity, epitomized in his neo-classical vein. In would be even more in drawing a parallel between the approach to the keyboard of the two composers, both of whom were first-rate pianists. Of Scriabin's voluptuous, suave and gentle playing, the poet Balmont most aptly said: "In fact when Scriabin plays, there is no piano, only a beautiful woman. He is making love to her."15 Prokofiev, on the other hand, played with such power and with such a manly approach that he eventually to earn for himself the reputation of one with muscles of steel.

Prokofiev could never ascribe to the philosophy of Scriabin any more than he could have endorsed the full intent of the ravings of Balmont, had he actually been capable of grasping them. On the contrary, Prokofiev admired both Scriabin and Balmont uniquely for their technique and their individual musicality. Even if Prokofiev had been able to comprehend the esoteric aesthetics of Scriabin, he would never have prostrated himself at the feet of this composer whom many revered as a prophet. When

Scriabin was carried off by a premature end, Prokofiev was not among those who displayed a belated admiration for this most extreme of Russian modernists of his day. He did not follow the example of Rakhmaninov, who immediately began to perform recitals consisting solely of the works of Scriabin.

Between 1910, when Prokofiev wrote his first song and 1914, the date of his Ugly Duckling, the young composer continued to attend and take an active part in the Evenings of Contemporary Music.

It was about this time that the leaders of the two major musical organizations began to take an interest in Prokofiev, having assured themselves that he was being acclaimed by both public and press. These were Serge Koussevitzky (1874-1951), who had established his own orchestra in Moscow and was to become a leading music publisher as well, and Alexander Siloti (1863-1945), the conductor of the St. Petersburg orchestra at that time.

In the year 1911 Prokofiev completed his First Piano Concerto, as well as the first version of his one-act opera, Maddalena. 1912 was the year of his Toccata, op. 11, and of his Second Piano Concerto. The latter work brought him huge success among the modernists and, most significant, the recognition of Diaghilev and Stravinsky. 1913 was the time of his first introduction to Diaghilev. Among his first impressions of him Prokofiev reported:

... His season in London was most interesting indeed. ... Chaliapin sang, Richard Strauss conducted, and there were many new productions. Diaghilev himself was a magnificent sight in his superbly cut frock coat, top hat, white gloves, and a monocle, which he constantly adjusted in his eye with the air of a blase aristocrat.16

16Quoted in: Victor Soroff, Prokofiev, p. 80.
The private performance of the Second Piano Concerto for Diaghilev led to the commissioning of a ballet with the collaboration of Sergei Gorodetsky, at that time an acmeist poet. Diaghilev obviously intended this work, which was to be known as Ala and Lolli, to be steeped in Russian prehistory. The impresario hoped to arouse excitement and enthusiasm for the sort of exotic Slavic sonorities and polyrhythms that had been so breathtakingly embodied in Stravinsky's Rite of Spring. But this was the first venture for both Prokofiev and Gorodetsky in the area of choreographic dramaturgy and each experienced difficulties in his own sphere. Diaghilev was not satisfied with the result and this first attempt at ballet failed. Prokofiev, with characteristic diligence, utilized the music for his Scythian Suite, op. 20.

It was during the time when Gorodetsky was laboring over the libretto of this work that Prokofiev found relaxation by turning to the composition of The Ugly Duckling. Nestyev, voicing the Soviet evaluation, has affirmed that the naivety, the radiant joy, and the lack of profundity in the text of The Ugly Duckling contrast strikingly with the decadent tendencies of bourgeois art in his time. His career began in a period of social stagnation. He was surrounded by an atmosphere of death, willlessness, and a cynical lack of faith in man. The modernist poets were glorifying ugliness and evil, extolling the "black plague, leprosy, gloom, murder and misfortune (Balmont)."

This author reassures us that Prokofiev transcended the unwholesome influences of decadence, and expressed himself with themes of strength and aspiration, of inspired young love, of life's ecstasy and nature's beauty. ... his humanistic tendencies, obscured

17I. Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, pp. 478-79.
in his earlier works by either grimaces or nervous distortions, triumphed completely in his music of the Soviet period.\textsuperscript{18}

The \textit{Ugly Duckling} reflects the reverence that Prokofiev felt for Mussorgsky particularly in its satire, although strongly lyrical passages may be observed as well. This composition, conceived in through-composed narrative style, is permeated by the composer's profound love of man and nature (a love that he was to retain all his life, even in the most trying experiences after his resettlement in Soviet Russia).

Prokofiev's first meeting with Maxim Gorky was on February 25, 1917, at a literary-musical evening held in conjunction with an exhibition of paintings at the studio of K. E. Debovchina. On this memorable evening Jascha Heifetz performed Chopin's Nocturne in E major and a Paganini \textit{Étude}; also on the first part of the program Gorky read for the first time in public portions of his \textit{Childhood}. The second half of the program, devoted to works of Prokofiev, included a performance of his \textit{Ugly Duckling}. This work prompted from Gorky, who listened attentively to it, the observation: "Why he has written this about himself, about himself!"\textsuperscript{19} This marked the beginning of a long friendship between writer and composer. Gorky assumed a profound interest in the career of the young composer and was to have a considerable influence both on the course of his actions in life and on his philosophy. It was that special empathy that two kindred souls are wont to feel for each other that attracted these two "ugly ducklings" and united them, in a spiritual bond. Besides the obvious common trait of physical unattractiveness, the most salient


\textsuperscript{19}Quoted in: I. Nest'ev, \textit{On. cit.}, p. 147
feature that these two Russians had in common was their humanism. This important trait assumed a different guise in each, in large measure due to their divergent backgrounds. Prokofiev, although descended from peasant stock just like Gorky, was brought up in an atmosphere that knew no hardships. This was quite different from the bitter childhood so vividly described by Gorky in his masterpiece dealing with his early life. Prokofiev, again perhaps because of his "easy" childhood (he was an only child and was sheltered from sorrow and misery), remained somewhat self-centered. It was to be many years before he would extend the sort of aid to his fellow artists that Gorky displayed toward young writers and, as will be seen, even toward Prokofiev at more than one critical time.

The songs of Prokofiev's op. 23, dating from 1915, were troublesome to Nestyev. After declaring that they were "an open concession to the vogue of decadence," the mouthpiece of Soviet officialdom continues, practically in the same breath, by asking a question which, once more, is a pitiful attempt to discredit this music solely on the grounds of its text, unacceptable to the era of Socialist realism. "Is it not strange that Prokofiev himself considered these songs more modern than the Duckling?"20 From a Western musician's vantage point it appears that Prokofiev was constantly striving to improve his technique, to keep abreast of new developments in his art insofar as possible, and consequently considered each successive work that he composed more "modern" than the last. For this is indeed what occurred in the case of Prokofiev not only in the category of works that are being presently considered, but broadly speaking, in his overall output up to the time of his forced concession to pressure from the Soviet hierarchy.

20I. Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, p. 121.
In the autumn of 1916 Prokofiev wrote the five songs of op. 27, Five Poems of Anna Akhmatova, in less than a week. More lyric and tender than anything he had written up to that time, they evoked from the critics warm praise for the young composer who was now displaying a new facet of his personality. This opus represented a softening of mood and a general relaxation from the stridency of compositions such as the ballet Ala and Lolli and the opera The Gambler, based on the Dostoevsky story. One surprised critic voiced his praise in the following terms:

One hardly expects to find tenderness, warmth, emotion, or, in short, lyrical charm in Prokofiev's music: some say that the young composer has none of it. But after hearing the songs set to Akhmatova's words, it is difficult to agree with this ... 21

Some time later the composer's colleague and friend, Miaskovsky, wrote of them:

These songs are so charmingly delicate, so transparently bright, and so completely expressive, that they leave an indelible impression. The harmonic style is finely polished, the melody infinitely tender and eloquent, and the exposition, utterly simple while nevertheless expressing each thought to the full. 22

Prokofiev himself provides information concerning the publication of his songs, op. 27:

In the latter part of 1916 I changed publishers, going over from Jurgenson to Koussevitzky. The judges of the Russian Music Publishers, with

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their mutually destructive opinions, did not satisfy Koussevitzky and he decided to do without them. He had taken over the publishing business from Gutheil, who being an Austrian citizen, had been forced to wind up his affairs when the war broke out. . . . Koussevitzky set a definite fee for each category of compositions and agreed to print everything. That is how I shifted to Gutheil (the name of the firm remained). The first things I published there were the songs op. 9, 23 and 27 and the *Fugitive Visions*.  

Between November of 1916 when the *Five Poems of Anna Akhmatova* were set to music and the fall of 1921 when he composed the last group of songs to be discussed in this paper, *Five Poems of Balmont*, op. 36, the chief compositions of Prokofiev were, in the order of their completion:

*Visions fugitives*, op. 22, begun in 1915;

Third *Sonata for piano*, Op. 28 (From old notebooks), dating back to 1907;

First *Violin Concerto*, op. 19, begun in 1914;

Fourth *Sonata for piano*, op. 29 (From old notebooks), dating back to 1908;

Classical *Symphony*, op. 25;

*Seven, They Are Seven*, op. 30, Cantata to Balmont's poem;

Old *Granny's Tales for piano*, op. 31;

Four *Pieces for piano*, op. 32;

The *Love for Three Oranges*, op. 33, Opera, with a libretto by the composer based on Gozzi's comedy;

*Overture on Jewish Themes*, op. 34, for clarinet, string quartet and piano;

The *Buffoon*, op. 21, Ballet;

Third *Piano Concerto*, op. 26, dating back to 1913.

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The most important political and social event in this period, indeed in all Russian history, was the Revolution of 1917. Nestyev finds it reprehensible that Prokofiev was seemingly not equipped to comprehend and welcome this momentous event to a degree commensurate with his great talent:

Like most others in his circle, Prokofiev greeted the February Revolution with joyous excitement. "During the Revolution, I was in the streets of Petrograd, hiding from time to time behind house corners when the shooting became hot. . . ." the composer recalls. He saw the Revolution as some kind of grandiose and elemental event, the expression of mighty but chaotic forces. . . . Is it not strange that so observant an artist, one so thirsty for impressions, was not stirred to the depths of his soul by the romantic revolutionary of 1917? How could it happen that he did not hear the true music of the Revolution, that his works bear no trace even of the fiery rhythms of the revolutionary songs which filled the air of Russian cities at that time? The primary reason for this was the political apathy of the bourgeois intellectual circles in which he had moved in recent years. In these groups the very possibility of a relationship between art and politics was considered unthinkable. At meetings of writers and artists in the spring and summer of 1917, many outstanding representatives of the arts stubbornly asserted art's independence from the influences of the Revolution. Most of Prokofiev's friends would have interpreted any attempt to respond directly to the events of the Revolution as a betrayal of the principles of pure art. 24

The events of 1917-18 in Russia led to the evolution and implementation of the tenets of Socialist Realism, which have been applied in all their ramifications to all branches of art no matter how minuscule. However, the philosophy of Socialist Realism had not yet been precisely formulated in the earliest days of the Revolution and we

24I. Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, p. 135
find Nestyev informing us of the following:

On July 26, 1917, the Social-Democratic newspaper Novaja Zarya, founded and edited by Gorky, published an article about Prokofiev entitled "The Road to Joy," written by Asafiev (under his usual pen name, "Igor Glebov"). It tried to prove a spiritual kinship between Prokofiev's music and Revolution. According to Asafiev, this article had been suggested by Gorky and Mayakovsky, who shared the idea of publishing a piece on the reflection of the Russian Revolution in contemporary music. Before the article appeared, there were long and heated discussions in the editorial offices of the newspaper, to which Mayakovsky was a regular contributor until August 1917. The poet was mistrustful of Asafiev, whom he regarded as a "dry-as-dust pedant." . . . "What do your Beethovens mean to us? I'd give up all the old music for one Prokofiev! . . . Only Prokofiev's music excites me now. No sooner do the first sounds ring out than life bursts in -- not a form of art, but life, a rushing mountain stream, such a torrent that you feel like jumping into it and shouting, Oh, how wonderful! More, More!" 25

The circumstances of the first meetings of Prokofiev with Gorky and with Mayakovsky have already been related. Prokofiev came to feel an enormous bond with the Poet of the Revolution, that absolutely unabashed egoist who was wont to associate himself so closely with the masses:

. . . Like his poetry, Mayakovsky was entirely unself-conscious. . . . Sergei Sergeevich may have laughed privately at his exaggerations and bombast, but in love of life, fundamental good nature and devotion to a cause he and Mayakovsky were blood brothers; . . . For the first time in his twenty-six years he met a man who matched him in restless energy and child-like candor. Like him, Mayakovsky made most people seem half dead. So with certain reservations on his part and none one Mayakovsky's they became good friends, and Mayakovsky's fiery faith in the Russia of the future did much to counteract in Sergei Sergeevich's mind the rather

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25. Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, p. 148
deplorable Russia of the present.26

Typical of the irrepressible verve and enthusiasm of the poet were his reactions to Prokofiev’s playing at the Poet’s Café on March 22, 1918 for Mayakovsky’s followers:

... Mayakovsky made a sketch of the pianist inscribed "Sergei Sergeevich playing on the tenderest nerves of Vladimir Vladimirovich," and presented him with a copy of his War and the Universe in which he had written on the fly-leaf: "To the World President of Music from the World President of Poetry."27

Some time after this event there was a reunion of the two young artists when Mayakovsky was serving as a correspondent in Berlin. In the presence of Diaghilev, Mayakovsky heatedly came to the staunch defense of Prokofiev against the inroads that Stravinsky had made on the musical scene:

"I much prefer you and your crude style!" cried Mayakovsky, more enthusiastic than tactful. The last thing in the world Prokofiev wanted was to be thought crude (the very point of Stravinsky’s criticisms)... Mayakovsky and Diaghilev delighted him by going at it hammer and tongs. Political agreement was out of the question; they were equally far apart on modern art, Mayakovsky condemning passionately the expressionist painters and the music of Stravinsky and his French imitators. ... (art) must, said Mayakovsky, be good for the people and free from Western decadence. He was to live to hear his own work condemned by the Soviet authorities and his suicide in 1930 was partly due to this, but if he could have foreseen the tragic future he would not have taken back one word.28

26Lawrence and Elizabeth Hanson, Prokofiev, p. 88
27Ibid., p. 89.
28Ibid., p. 120.
Prokofiev incurred a twofold debt of enormous proportions to Maxim Gorky, who never forgot that first indelible impression made upon him by the *Ugly Duckling* and the ingenuousness of its composer. It was the great humanitarian who, during the period of the Kerensky government, arranged for Prokofiev to be excused from military service, and said at that time: "We are not so rich . . . that we can shoe the soldiers' boots with gold nails." It was Gorky too, who, along with Benois, presented him to Lunacharsky, the People's Commissar of Education, shortly after the first performance of the *Classical Symphony*. Nestyev reports the event in the following terms:

At this meeting, Prokofiev told Lunacharsky of his desire to go abroad. Lunacharsky was astonished that Prokofiev should want to leave Russia in these tense, stirring days of historic change. The commissar asked Prokofiev the purpose of his trip. "I have been working very hard and I would like to get a breath of fresh air," Prokofiev replied. "And don't you find that we have enough fresh air here now?" "Yes," said Prokofiev, "but I would like to breathe the physical air of the seas and the oceans." Lunacharsky thought a bit and then replied amiably, "You are a revolutionary in music, we are revolutionaries in life. We ought to work together. But if you want to go to America, I will place no obstacles in your way." Apparently the commissar thought Prokofiev was filled with naïve dreams of a "foreign paradise," which would be dispelled as soon as the composer came into contact with the capitalist world.

Prokofiev's journey to the United States, his many experiences in this country, his first acquaintance with his future wife, Carolina Codina (Lina Llubera), the disappointments felt particularly over the postponement of the

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29I. *Nestyev, Prokofiev,* p. 147.
30Ibid., pp. 171-72.
production of his opera *Love for Three Oranges*, his meetings with Diaghilev and Koussevitzky in Paris, his acquaintance with Picasso, Ansermet and Ravel, his second trip to the United States and his subsequent return to Western Europe -- all these cannot be detailed in this study.

In the spring of 1921 we find the composer in London preparing the orchestra for the performance of his ballet *The Buffoon*, commissioned by Diaghilev. It is curious that this work, in which Prokofiev had been greatly aided by suggestions from Stravinsky, should have elicited precisely such a reaction from the French press as it did in its Paris premiere:

> Without any doubt *The Buffoon* places the young composer Prokofiev in the first rank among musicians of our time. One is amazed by the audacious élan and melodic character of this music, by its inexhaustible wealth of ingenuity and orchestral coloring. . . . *The Buffoon*, at least as far as its music is concerned, is the most important work the Russians have offered us besides Stravinsky's admirable *Huntingale*.

The English press did not receive the work as warmly -- on the contrary, such a tumult was caused that Prokofiev was only too delighted to be able to retreat for the summer to Étretat on the Atlantic seashore in Brittany. Here he completed his *Third Piano Concerto* and also paid frequent visits to the émigré poet, Konstantin Balmont, who was staying not far away.

The renewed acquaintance with Balmont soon inspired Prokofiev to set more of the poetry of the expatriated poet. Balmont in turn was inspired not only to provide the composer with new verses, but also, upon hearing Prokofiev in

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a private rendition of his Third Piano Concerto, to
dash off a sonnet which has been preserved in Prokofiev's papers:

Likujuščij požar bagrjanogo cvetka,
Triumphant conflagration of a scarlet flower,
Klaviatura slov igraet ogn'kami,
The keyboard of words plays with lights,
Čtob ognennymi vdrug zaprygat' jazykami.
In order to leap suddenly with fiery tongues.
Rasplaviennoj rudy vmetšennaja reka.
Seething river of molten ore.

Mgnoven'ja pljašut val's. Vedut gavot veka,
Moments dance a waltz. Centuries perform a gavotte.
Vnezapno dikiy byk, opugannyj vragami,
Unexpectedly a wild bull, frightened by its foes,
Vse puty razorval i stal, grozja rošami.
Broke all its fetters and stood, menacing with its horns.
No snova nešnyz zvuk zovet izdaleka.
But again a gentle sound summons from afar.

Iz malyž rakovin vozdvigli zamok deti.
From tiny conches children have erected a castle.
Balkon opalovyj utončen i krasiv,
An opal balcony, fine and beautiful.
No, bryznuy bešeno, vsě razmetal priliv.
But splashing furiously, the 'flood swept all away.

Prokof'ev! Muzyka i molodost' v rascvete,
Prokof'ev! Music and youth in bloom!
V tebe vostoskoval orchestr o zvonkom lete
In you the orchestra has yearned for a resonant summer.
I v buben solnca b'et nepodemyj skif.
And on the tambourine of the sun beats the invincible Scythian.

The renewed friendship and close association with
this émigré had to be severed lest Prokofiev himself wished
to incur the wrath of the Soviet. Prokofiev exposed him-

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32Quoted in: I. Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, p. 207.
self to critical attack by setting verses from the "decadent cult of symbolism," poetry which "might have been expected to be utterly alien to the healthy, realistic outlook of Prokofiev." Seroff, developing this line of thought so vital in a consideration of the Prokofiev vocal literature, states:

Since the quality of Prokofiev's music written in connection with Balmont's poetry must obviously be severely criticized, the critics concluded their analytical comments with "This 'illicit' liaison with poetry of a trend so alien to his nature was undoubtedly one manifestation of the conflicting tendencies in Prokofiev's musical language."

In his work on Prokofiev, Victor Seroff develops at length the full relationship between the composer and his wife, Carolina Codina, the circumstances of their first meeting, their marriage and their musical and professional relationship. Having, at the composer's suggestion, taken the professional name of Lina Llubera, she joined forces with her husband and, after persuading him to teach her some of his songs, she shared concert tours with him. She assisted him in preparing French translations of some of his vocal compositions for publication and even, as Nestyev reluctantly admits, bore him his two sons. The distasteful details of the fate of Lina, the two boys and Prokofiev himself are also fully developed by Seroff and by Seroff alone. They need not concern us here. In speaking of Prokofiev's appearances in Boston, New York and elsewhere and especially in reference to concerts organized by the Pro Musica, Inc., of New York, he states:

... At these Lina sang, in addition to Prokofiev's, the songs of Hiaskovsky and Taneyev. Judgements of Lina's talent vary, but the fact that she appeared in

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33 Victor Seroff, Prokofiev, p. 119.
joint programs with her husband — who was notoriously uncompromising in musical matters — amply testifies to her vocal ability. 34

Seroff reproduces the following interesting program: 35

PRO MUSICA, INC.

Recital of Modern Russian Music

Residence of Mrs. Charles Robinson Smith, 24 West 69 Street

January 26, 1926

Serge Prokofiev assisted by Lina Llubera Vocalist

I
Third Sonata Op. 28
Serge Prokofiev

II
Three Gavottes, Op. 12, 25, 32
Serge Prokofiev

III
Le hanneton
Berceuse
Menuet
"Think of me!"
(A Chaldean Incantation) Op. 36
Lina Llubera

IV
Four Bizarre Op. 25
Serge Prokofiev

V
Les Circles Op. 4
Myositis
Le Figeon
La Rosée Sainte Op. 6
Lina Llubera

VI
Two Marches Op. 12 and 33
Scherzo from
"Love for Three Oranges"
Prelude Op. 12
Toccata Op. 11
Serge Prokofiev

34 Victor Seroff, Prokofiev, p. 134. 35 Ibid.
Two Poems, Op. 9

No. 1 — "Est' drugie planety" (There are other planets)  
  — Konstantin Balmont

No. 2 — "Otčalila lodka" (The boat unmoored)  
  — Alexei Apukhtin

"Est' drugie planety" — Balmont's original title:

"Preryvistyj čelest'" (Intermittent murmur), from Budem kak solnce (Let us be like the sun).

"Est' drugie planety, gde vetry pevūcie tiše,  
There are other planets where the singing winds are quieter,

Gde nebo blednee, travy ton'še i vyše,  
Where the sky is paler, the grass finer and taller,

Gde preryvisto l'jutsja  
Where intermittently are diffused

Peremennye svety,  
Variable lights,

No svoej peremenoju tol'ko laskajut, smejutsja  
But in their variance they only caress, they smile.

"Est' inye planecy.  
There are different planets,

Gde my byli kogda-to,  
Where we were once,

Gde my budem potom,  
Where we will be anon,
Ne teper', a kogda, potcrjav --
* Not now, but when, having lost --
Sebja potcrjav bez vozvrata,
* Having lost ourselves irretrievably,
My, budem ljubit' istomlennye stebli sedyx šelestjaščix trav,
* We shall adore the exhausted blades of gray, rustling grass,
Bez aromata,
* Without fragrance,
Tonkix, vysokix, kak zvězdy -- pečal'nyx,
* Delicate, exalted, like stars — mournful,
Ljubjaščix sonnyj pokoj -- mest pogrebal'nyx,
* Adoring the creamy quiescence of funereal places,
Nad našoj mogiloju spjaščix:
* Slumbering above our grave,
I, tixo, tak tixo, tak sumračno-tixo, pod lunoj šelestjaščix.
* And quietly, so quietly, so murkily-quietly rustling beneath the moon.

Balmont's text in Prokofiev's first song exhibits profound melancholy, a salient characteristic of the Art Nouveau. The escapist tendencies of Balmont, "the child of the sun," are equally manifest in it. The "variable lights" longed for by the poet are symbolized by great variance in his metrical scheme. Equally varied is his palette of vowel shadings. As in so many other poems by this master of decadence, inner rhymes, assonance and musical shadings are the outstanding features. Balmont's opinion regarding the bringing of the poetry of words nearer to the poetry of sound may shed some light on this aspect of his works:
What is said — clearly said — is akin to painting. What is said, only half-said, is akin to music. Painting shows everything so clearly that he who is not blind and whose soul is not opaque, sees all. There is a richness in this, but one confined by precise limitations. Music, revealing its resonant, sonorous, fully sonorous and mysteriously resonant beauty says everything it wants to say and, suggesting — says a great deal more. The soul remains (thus) free and not subdued, unfettered by concise bounds. This richness is an endless span of the infinite.35

In discussing Balmont's approach to the inherent musical qualities in speech and the relationship of these to the semantic aspect, Georgette Donchin makes the following observation:

Balmont analysed the sounds of the Russian language in order to discover a direct link between the phonetic elements of speech and the significance of words, and to reveal the mythopoeic force of individual words, the dormant energy of sound-material, the magic music of speech.37

Among the interesting features in this poem may be cited the radical departure from the norm in the two words comprising line twelve, "bez aromata" (without fragrance). This would illustrate the seeming truth of Balmont's claim in the previously quoted poem from Budem kak solnce where he proudly vaunts: "Ja v pervye otkryl v etoj reci uklony" (I discovered the first new facets in this speech). The poet Bryusov obviously took a dim view of such conceit, for he summarized Balmont's essays in the realm of innovations in the following terms:


Bal'mont's verse is that of Puškin, Pet; perfected, more delicate, but in its essence always the same. The movement which in France and Germany created the vers libre, which sought new creative methods, new forms in poetry, a new instrument to express new feelings and thoughts -- hardly ever touched Bal'mont. Moreover, when Bal'mont tries his hand at reproducing certain peculiarities of the new poetry -- he does not succeed. His pravvyistine stroki, as he calls his verses deprived of metre, lose all the charm of Bal'mont's musicality and do not achieve the broad manner of poetry of Verhaeren, Dehmel, and d'Annunzio. Bal'mont remains himself only when he writes in classical metre and regularly alternates stanzas and rimes ... 38

The visual appearance of these lines of irregular length do not correspond with the characteristic trait evinced by a poet who, "when the futurists appeared, ... naively begged them not to hasten his overthrow."39 They seem rather to correspond to the Bal'mont who "behaved as if he were in some special realm, and read not to people, but to visions that surrounded him."40

The final quatrain of this poem presents an eerie effect that seems to underline in a literal as well as in a figurative sense both "sides" of the image painted by the poet: the murky twilight that pervades both the final resting place in the tomb and the uncanny rustling of the slender blades of grass reaching for the stars -- above.

The juxtaposition in the last line of the two adverbs "sumračno-tixo" (murkily-quietly) calls for special comment. This device is one of the most typical and provocative in the repertoire of technical apparatus of the


entire Russian symbolist school. Its usage is even continued by the acmeists, as will be observed in the poetry of Akhmatova. Donchin declares that

... in a judicious juxtaposition of words the symbolists saw a means to create their favourite correspondences: they often did so by an unexpected rapprochement of two components into a compound word and a consequent change of emphasis in those components.41

The same author in this same connection adduces a principle proclaimed by Bryusov in 1894:

The aim of symbolism is -- as it were -- to hypnotize the reader and to evoke in him a certain mood by the juxtaposition of a series of images.42

The vocal line in Prokofiev's op. 9, no. 1 can be viewed either as an embellishment, a variant, or a derivative of the material in the accompaniment. This material is skeletal in essence and consists of three related ideas, all appearing on the first page (See ex. 31).43

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43 S. Prokof'ev, Sobranie Sochinenij, Vol. XVII: Vokal'nye sochinenija dlja okeano i dlja dvukolosov s fortепиано (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Muzyki, 1963). Throughout our musical discussion of the songs of Prokofiev the page references are to this volume of the composer's collected works. Although numerous musical examples are provided from this edition, the reader will find that a greater appreciation of the works discussed as well as a more profound comprehension of our arguments may be had if he has the volume in hand. Specific references to page, system, and measures are abbreviated thus: 138:3:5-7 -- page 138, system 3, measures 5-7. For those examples that do not include entire pages or do not start from the beginning of the composition, the specific systems are indicated in each case.
The first of these ideas is the figure outlined in the uppermost voice in the introduction — a descending scale passage from the sixth degree of the scale to the first with a flatted supertonic. The passage is decorated with an augmented sixth chord on the flatted supertonic on the downbeat of 1:1:1-2-3. The German sixth resolves into the tonic only in 1:1:3, but even here the tonic chord on G
in root position is avoided (as indeed it is throughout the entire composition). The first idea is immediately reiterated in the accompaniment. The vocal line coincides with the upper voice in the accompaniment as it makes its entrance.

The second idea occupies 1:3. Its relationship to the first idea is twofold: identical rhythmic distribution in the outer voices of the accompaniment and a descending scale passage. In this case the descending figure outlines a perfect fourth in the lower voice of the right hand of 1:3:1-2 and a minor third, rising this time, in 1:3:3-4. Here too the vocal line is closely bound up with the accompaniment.

The third idea occupies 1:4 and consists of two subsections of two measures each. The melodic figure outlined in the uppermost voice of the accompaniment is transposed down a perfect fourth in the second subsection. The vocal line in the third idea is even more closely allied to the melodic outline of the accompaniment than it was in the previous instances.

The entire song is unified rhythmically by a constancy of eighth-note movement in the bass. This ternary figure is interrupted only at two brief points in the song—once in 3:2 and then two measures later at the beginning of 3:3.

Economy of means is the predominant feature of the musical structure of this song. The melodic outline of the voice is moderately disjunct, while that of the accompaniment is more conjunct. An important harmonic feature is the avoidance of the root of I throughout the song. There is a single exception to this where G appears on the first beat of 3:2:2. Even here, however, it does not function as the root of that harmonic complex. This absence of the tonic chord in root position may be considered as a reflection on the part of the composer of the transitory and
mystical atmosphere conjured up by the poet.

The smoothly flowing, three-note group of the piano, which is scarcely interrupted by an occasional arpeggio and by the two groups of four bass notes, aids the composer in conveying the striving for repose implied in the poem.

Certain words of the text have received special attention from the composer. The strange and mystical silence implied in the opening statement of text, especially "где ветры певучие тише" (where the singing winds are quieter), is portrayed by Prokofiev by means of (1) the "pp" in the first measure of the song, repeated when the voice enters; (2) the admonition to the singer sempre recitando a sotto voce; (3) the stepwise descent outlining a sixth in the right hand of the piano and the quasi-ostinato figure of the left hand; (4) the avoidance of strong musical accent in the voice. All this is assigned the indication andante misterioso.

For four words — "выше" (higher), in 1:3:3, "высокий" (high), in 4:2:2, "без аромата" (without fragrance), in 4:1:2), and "погребальный" (funereal), in 4:4:2-3 — Prokofiev employs one of the most obvious methods of word painting — extremes of tessitura (See ex. 32). The first, "выше", is preceded by two upward leaps of a minor sixth. The second, "высокий", contains an upward leap of a minor seventh. The third and fourth are closely related in that one brings the voice to c′ and the other to c′. This similarity in tessitura demonstrates Prokofiev's sensitivity to semantic overtones. The composer places the notion of "без аромата" in the same semantic category with "погребальный" — all the more striking in that each of these expressions falls at a phrase ending.

The concept of a caress, semantically associated with "любяшечий" (loving, adoring), in 4:3:2, is depicted by a series of arpeggios on page four. The only instance in the song where the performers are instructed to rise above
a "pp" occurs in 3:3:1-2 for the text "bez vozvrata" (irretrievably) (See ex. 34). For this statement of anguish and despair not only is the volume level raised to forte, but a retard is indicated as well.

Example 32 *Esti drugie planety* (p. 4) Prokofiev, op. 9, no. 1
Prokofiev elected to assign $g'$ to the vocalist for the final utterance (See ex. 33). These last three measures of the composition are as it were Prokofiev's manner of acknowledging a final resolution only in those ethereal realms referred to by Balmont. After the low tessitura for "pograbal'nyx" (funereal) in $4:\!:\!\!4:\!:\!\!3$ (See ex. 32), the high tessitura here, conditioned by the text "pod lunoj Želést-
jaščix" (rustling beneath the moon) is all the more salient. It is significant in more ways than meet the eye that Prokofiev should have assigned such a purposefully vague ending to his first song. Most evident is the sensitivity to text in bringing both voice and piano into the upper reaches of their respective ranges. But not so evident that this may be interpreted as representing a musical manifestation of that same philosophical notion that forms the basis of Scriabin’s mature thinking.

The sparseness of texture, the constant ascent and thinning out, the one and only resolution on the tonic -- and just because the tonic is assigned to the voice -- may be interpreted symbolistically: both the fragmentation of all being that Scriabin anticipated, the universality of the soul as preached by Solovič, as well as the notion of the liberated soul at play permeating much of Balmont -- all these appear to be united in Prokofiev’s own musical-philosophical synthesis. It is also significant that such a musical expression should occur at a time when the movement of Russian symbolism was attaining its apotheosis.

With only two minor exceptions, the text of Prokofiev’s op. 9, no. 1 as it appears in the published musical score accords with that of the original Balmont version. Prokofiev has altered the title as it was given by the poet, using for his title the opening hemistich of the poem. He has also allowed himself the liberty of repeating two words of text -- "ne teper'" (not now) -- in 3:1.

The degree of harmonic sophistication already in evidence in this early song as well as the chromatic ascent decorated by a chordal complex such as in 3"2-3, calls for comment. This propensity for dissonance and chromaticism (See ex. 34) which, incidentally, may be ascribed an origin not only in works of Reger, Schoenberg, Scriabin and other moderns heard and studied by the young
Example 34 *Est' druzie mlyoncy* (p.3) Prokofiev, op.9, no.1

Prokofiev, but also in a series of visits by Prokofiev in his pre-conservatory days to Taneyev, is in evidence in other writings of this period. Taneyev, when viewing the absolute lack of harmonic adventurousness in the first composition the youthful Prokofiev showed him, pointed this out to the child. But the elderly composer was not pre-
pared for the extreme to which his observation was to propel Prokofiev, finding already in the latter's Études, op. 2, what seemed to him a host of wrong notes.44

Prokofiev dedicated the first of the songs of op. 9 to Miaskovsky, some of whose settings of poems of Zinaida Gippius were given their first performance on that same occasion when Prokofiev appeared for the first time as a composer at the Evenings of Contemporary Music. For this first song Prokofiev declared much later that he continued to "... experience a paternal affection."45

Prokofiev's op. 9, no. 1 was first performed in St. Petersburg in March, 1914, by A. G. Zherebtsova-Ardreeva (one of those artists who gave generously of their services to the Evenings of Contemporary Music) and N. T. Dulov. Both of the songs of op. 9 were published by the firm of A. Guthcil in 1917.46

"Otčalila lodka" -- the second song of op. 9 -- is a setting of a poem by Alexei Nikolayevich Apukhtin (1841-1898) -- a friend and schoolmate of Chaikovsky. The verses of this poet, who catered to the fashionable circles of St. Petersburg, have received settings by Chaikovsky and Rakhmaninov. The translation of this poem, as set by Prokofiev, is as follows:

Otčalila lodka . . . Čut' brežněl рассвет . . .
The boat unmoored . . . It was barely dawn . . .
V ušax razdavalo poslednij privet,  
In his ears resounded the last greeting,
Dušal on neždannoju laskoj.  
He breathed with unexpected tenderness.

44I. Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, p. 21.
45S. Prokof'ev, Materialy, p. 145.
46S. Prokof'ev, Vokal'nye Sočinenija, p. v.
Svincovoe more sumelo krugom . . .
   The leaden sea roared all around . . .
Vsë êto mne kažetsja sladostnym snon,
   All this seems to me like a delightful dream,
Vol'sebnej, nesbytočnoj skazkoj!
   Like a magical, impossible fairy-tale!

O, net! To ne son byl, v dali goluboj
   Oh, no! That was no dream! In the blue distance
Dve belye čajki neslis' nad vodoj
   Two white gulls flew over the water
I serye tučki leteli
   And gray cloudlets sped by

I vse, cto skazat' ja ne mog, ne uspel,
   And all that I was unable, did not succeed
in telling
Kipelo v duše. I vostok cut' alel.
   Seethed in my soul And the east was tinged
with scarlet
T volny sumoli, sumeli . . .
   And the waves roared, roared . . .

Prokofiev's opus 9, no. 2 abounds in the use of
scale passages mostly diatonic but with a limited amount of
chromaticism that form the basis of most of the melodic
movement in both the vocal line and the accompaniment. The
composition may be divided into three major sections re-
calling song form. In the first of these the outstanding
features are reiterated or parallel fourths much of the
time and a series of scale figures. The first of these is
in 6:2:1 just before the voice is given a rising scale
passage outlining a perfect fifth.

The interesting interweaving of scales reaches
a musical climax (which the composer holds in check with an
indication of "pp"0 in 7:1:3 (See ex. 35). The first sec-
tion ends as Prokofiev reiterates material in 7:2-3 that he
originally presented on the previous page.
The second section, which begins with *più animato*, brings with it an abrupt change. In addition to the change of speed, the accompaniment now has sixteenth-note movement for the first four measures of this section. This figuration outlines an ascending chromatic scale passage. The voice initiates the section with three disjunct moves in
succession at the beginning of its first passage. This vocal line is freely initiated by the right hand of the piano, a major third higher (enharmonically). Several rather abrupt changes in rhythmic figuration occupy the remainder of this section.

The harmonic usage in the first and third sections of his composition enable the composer to maintain the nebulous atmosphere denoted by his original instruction, *andantino nebbioso*. The ambiguity of tonality (*f# minor / c# minor*) is achieved by the avoidance, in these two outside sections, of the root of I in the bass. Places such as at the indication *più animato*, show the exploratory harmonic probing of the developing composer. At this point there is a new harmonic complex on each successive eighth note and, in addition to this, there are not a few sixteenth-note passing tones. The text for this passage and for the first system of page eight: "*Vše čto mne kažetsja sladostnym snom, Volšebnoj, nesbytčnoj skazkoj!*" (All this seems to me like a delightful dream, Like a magical, impossible fairy-tale!) -- is well reflected in both the sinuous, intertwining chromatics of Prokofiev's voice leading and in the distant tonality of the lowered supertonic beneath the words "sladostnym" (delightful) and "skazkoj" (Fairy-tale). The figuration used here is heard again for the text "kipelo v duše" (seethed in my soul) in 9:4:1-2. Both of these displays of chromaticism are vehicles for Prokofiev's sensitivity to symbolistic overtones.
The Ugly Duckling, Op. 18

Prokofiev's Russian prose rendering of the well-known tale of Hans Christian Andersen reads as follows:

Как хорошо было в деревне!
How pleasant it was in the country!
Солнце вежливо сияло,
The sun shone merrily,
Рож' золотила;
The rye was golden,
Душистое сено лежало в стогах.
The fragrant hay lay in stacks.
В зеленом углеке, среди лопухов,
In a little green corner, midst the burdocks,
Утка сидела на яйцах.
A duck was sitting on her eggs.
Ей было скучно,
It was tedious for her,
Она утомилась от долгого сиденья.
She was exhausted from the long sitting.
Наконец, натрескали скорлупки
Finally, the little shells began to crack
Одна за другой.
One after the other.
Утята вылезли на свет.
The ducklings crawled out into the light.
"Как велик Бог!"
"How great is God's world!"
"Как велик Бог!"
"How great is God's world!"
Последний утенок
The last duckling
Был очень некрасив,
Was very unattractive,
Без перьев, на длинных ножках.
Without feathers, on spindly legs.
"Уж не инкубатор ли?"
"Isn't that a turkey poult?"
Испугался соседка утка.
A neighbor duck was frightened.
Пошел узнать, вородок
The duck's brood went out
На птичьи двор.
Into the poultry yard.
"Держитесь, дети, прямо,
"Hold yourselves erect, children,
Лапки врозь."
"Feet apart."
Poklopnite' nizko toj staroj utke,
Bow down low to that old duck,
Ona ispanskoj porody.
She is of Spanish breed.
Vidite u nej na lape
Do you see on her foot
Krasnuyu tesi'mku? Eto vysoy
The rod braid? That is the highest
Znak otklichaja dlja utki!""a
Sign of distinction for a duck!"
Utjata nizko klanjalis!
The ducklings bowed low
Ispanskoj utke i skoro
To the Spanish duck and soon
Osvoilis' so vsem
Familiarized themselves with the entire
Naseleniem pti'ch'ego dvora.
Population of the poultry yard.
Ploxo prislos' toloko
Only it went badly
Bednomu neskrasivomu utenku.
For the poor, unattractive duckling.
Nad nim vse smejalis',
They all laughed at him,
Gnali ego otovsjudu, zelali,
Chased him from everywhere, wished
Ctoby koska s'ela skoreego.
That the cat would quickly eat him up.
Kury klevali ego,
The hens pecked at him,
Utki 'zhipali,
The ducks nipped at him,
Ljudi tolkali nogoj,
People pushed him with their feet,
A indejskij petu; nauduvshis',
And the turkey-cock, puffing himself up
Kak korabl' na parusax,
Like a ship with (unfurled) sails,
Nasko'chil na nescastnogo utenka!
Flew at the unfortunate duckling!
Utewok sobral vse svoi sily
The duckling gathered up all his strength
I pereselal 'erez zabor.
And flew over the fence.
Pti'chki, sidovshie v kustax
The little birds, perched in the bushes,
Vspornulii s ispugu.
Flew up in fright.
Utewok podumal:
The duckling thought:
"Èto ottogo, èto ja takoj gadkij."
"That is because I am so ugly."

On zakryl glaza,
He closed his eyes,

No vse že prodolžal běžat',
But continued to flee,

Poka ne dostig bolota.
Until he reached the swamp.

Tam dikie utki nakinis' na nego:
There wild ducks fell upon him:
"Ty èto za ptica?!
"What kind of a bird are you?"

Utèñok povračivałsja na vse
The duckling turned in all

Storony. "Ty užasno gadok!"
Directions. "You are frightfully ugly!"

Utòñok klanjalsja
The duckling bowed down

Kak tol'ko mog nižè.
As low as he possibly could.

"Ne vzduñaj ženit'sjá
"Don't start thinking of marrying

Na kom-nibud' iz nas!"
Any one of us!

Mog lí podumat' ob ètom utòñok!
As if the duckling could think of that!

Tak načalis' ego stranствovanija.
Thus began his peregrinations.

Čego no vyterpel on
Only what did he not endure

Za èty strashnju ocen'!:
In that dreadful autumn!

Inogda on casami sidel v kamyšax,
At times he sat for hours in the reeds,

Zamirajà ot straxa,
Dying of fright,

Drozà ot ispuga,
Trembling from fear,

A vstreli oxotnikov
And the shots of the hunters

Razdañals' po vsemu lesu.
Resounded throughout the whole forest.

Stranствovał past' sobaki
A frightful mouth of a dog

Zijala nad ego golovoj,
Gaped above his head.

Stanovilos' xolodnej. Çzero
It grew colder. The lake

Postepennno zatjàçivałs' l'dom.
Was gradually covered with ice.
Утёнок должен был все время
   The duckling was constantly obliged
Плавать, чтоб вода не замерзла.
   To swim so that the water would not freeze.
Было бы слишком грустно
   It would be too sad
Рассказывать о таких притязаниях!
   To tell about those privations
Какие виньи он в эту зиму!
   That he suffered that winter!
Онка волны проплывало
   Once the dear little sun warmed up
Землю своими теплыми лучами,
   The earth with its warm rays,
Заворонки запели,
   The sky-larks began to sing,
Кусты вдруг зацвели --
   The bushes began to blossom --
Пришла весна.
   Spring had come.
Весело взмахнул утенок крыльями.
   Gaily the duckling flapped its wings.
За зиму он успел вырасти.
   In the winter they had succeeded in growing.
Поднялась на крыльях утенок.
   The duckling soared on its wings
И прилетел в большой цветущий сад.
   And flew into a large, blossoming garden.
Там было так хорошо!
   There it was so pleasant!
Вдруг из густого тростника
   Suddenly out of a thicket of reeds
Появились три прекрасных лебедя.
   Appeared three splendid swans.
Непонятная сила привлекала
   An incomprehensible force attracted
Утенка к этим королевским птицам.
   The duckling to these majestic birds.
Если он приближается к ним,
   If he should approach them,
Они, конечно, его убьют,
   They, of course, would kill him,
Потому что он такой гадкий...
   Because he was so ugly...
Но лучше умереть от их ударов,
   But better to die from their blows,
Чем терпеть все, что он пережил!
   Than to suffer all that he endured
В продолжение этой зимы!
   In the course of this winter!
"Убей меня..." сказал утенок.
   "Slay me..." said the duckling.
I opustil golovu, o'židaja smerti.
And lowered his head, awaiting death.
No čto on uvidel v čistoj vode?
But what did he see in the clear water?
Svoe otrčan'oe! No on byl teper'
His reflection! But now he was
Ne gadjkoj sacrij pticej,
Not an ugly gray bird,
A prekrasnym lebedom.
But a splendid swan.
Ne beda v gnadno
It is not a misfortune
Utincm rodit'sja,
To be born in a duck's nest
Bylo b jajco lebedinoc;
If the egg was a swan's!
Solnce laskalo ego,
The sun caressed him,
Siren' sklonjalk pred nim,
The lilac bowed down before him,
Lebedi nežno ego celovali;
The swans tenderly kissed him!
Kog li on močtat' o takom čast'c,
Could he dream of such happiness
Kogda byl gadjkim utčenkom?
When he was an ugly duckling?

After the settings of symbolistic and mystical poetry in the Two Poems, op. 9, another side of Prokofiev's nature is seen in his longest song, the Ugly Duckling, op. 18. The setting of Hans Christian Andersen's tale by Prokofiev exhibits his responsiveness to imagery. The writing in this lengthy composition is so highly characteristic in its portrayal of events, that it has prompted a detailed discussion. Our presentation of the structure of this composition refers to the first version, beginning on page 11 of the Soviet edition of Prokofiev's songs.

Prokofiev begins with a sprightly 6/8 allegretto with a C major triad as his first full chord appearing on the downbeat of measure two. This tonic harmony, preceded as it is by four completely different harmonic situations in measure one, can be viewed as symbolic of the arrival in the sunny countryside (See ex. 36).
The opening proclamation of the voice is marked *lento*, but the last two syllables are qualified by a return to *allegretto*, thus setting in motion a new mood that continues throughout the rest of this page. The declamation of the voice here, and in much of the song, follows the Dargomyzhsky tradition of direct expression of speech. The light-heartedness reflected in the accompaniment in the *allegretto* section is characteristic of much of the compo-
sition. The arpeggio-like figure in the right hand may be described as a tonal painting of the fragrant stalks of hay. This figure, consisting of three successive grace notes rising into the upbeat and descending into the downbeat, spoils the harmony in each instance. Resembling a brush stroke on the printed page and sounding like a gentle flourish, it helps to denote two important aspects of Prokofiev's approach in this composition: a certain casual, carefree quality and at the same time a satirical sophistication which is now discreet, now pointed.

Beginning with the second beat of 11:1:5, the quarter notes of the right hand outline a partially diatonic, partially chromatic ascending scale from f sharp to f sharp. The high point referred to is reached in 11:3:5, as the singer intones the stressed syllable of "duistoc," (Fragrant) on the same pitch. At this point Prokofiev gives the most "settled" cadential situation thus far. The C minor with added ninth in this measure alternates with a C major ninth chord in the accompaniment in 11:4:1-4.

The figuration that is predominant in this opening section will reappear in three subsequent instances. This unifying device always coincides with a reference to the warmth and blossoming of nature in the sunny countryside.

The new material with the instruction un poco sostenuto heralds a return to 6/8 and the movement is sustained until the mother duck has grown weary of sitting on her eggs. The allegro ma non troppo and the return to 2/4 in 12:3:5, accompanied by a sprightly staccato figuration aptly describe, with the aid of several rests, the pecking away at the shells by the ducklings and their emergence into the world in 12:4:7 — to the accompaniment of an effective harmonic device. This formula is characteristic of Prokofiev's neo-classic harmonic language, and its use here anticipates such a formula in works like the Classical Symphony (See ex. 37).
The word "svet" (light), with which page 13 begins, is depicted by a bright B major triad, a chord that makes its first appearance in the song at this point.

The satirical sophistication referred to above finds a point of reference in the text "Kak velik Božij mir!" (How great is God's world!) in 13:1 (See ex. 38). The musical setting of this statement calls for specific comment. This philosophical observation concerning the vastness of creation placed in the mouths of ducklings evokes from Prokofiev an outburst beginning in the upper middle register and descending by a series of four three-note figures. These outline a minor third and also contain a series of perfect fourths if one examines the sequence of initial and end notes in each case. The setting is completely syllabic with the piano in an identical rhythmic pattern of three eighth notes for each figure. The echo in the lower middle voice of this phrase with its repetition of text is strongly reminiscent of that device popular among actors and among Russians in particular wherein the voice is lowered considerably to underscore the rarity of the conception being voiced.

The next utterance of the voice are given an accompaniment with an identical rhythm. The exuberance of this passage is gradually dissipated as we approach the point where the first mention is made of the song's central
figure. For the description of the last of the brood to emerge from the shell, the singer is confined to the lower middle register of the voice.

After finally coming to rest on a c-sharp in 13:4:5, with slowly alternating eighth-notes reflecting the general opprobrium at the sight of the duckling, the composer presents the first scathing remark passed in the poultry yard. This is set syllabically in eighth-notes and is accompanied
by a chordal tremolo and, in 13:4:7, by two unaccentuated chords. After the pitch drops to e' for the narrator with the text "Ispugalas' soseda" (a neighbor duck was frightened), material from 12:1 is reiterated in 14:2. In 14:2:5 and continuing through 14:3, the right hand of the piano is devoted to characteristic "poultry music" (several staccato e' with a sudden cackle on e" preceded by a grace note d#") and the left hand to specific dressing up of the line of ducklings.

(first three systems)

Example 39 Gadkij utćok (p. 14) Prokofiev, op. 18
A definite martial feeling is provided by the four descending, staccato eighth-note chords with either two quarter-note stressed chords or a sustained half-note: the effect being drum-like. The imitation of sounds in nature such as the poultry sounds just described constitute an important feature in this composition. Prokofiev does not employ this device elsewhere in his early songs and only in one important case subsequently — namely, in his "Romance" ("Stonet sizyj goluboček" Moans the gray dove) from the film music for Lt. Kiže (See ex. 2).

As the singer proclaims in 15:1:4-6 that "red braid" is the "highest sign of distinction for a duck!" Prokofiev, with the instruction meno mosso and sustained muted chords, almost succeeds in making us take the narrator quite seriously: another example of his satirical sophistication. Once again in 15:2 the unifying material from 12:1 is brought back, but transposed down a half-step.

In 15:3 the smoothly flowing left hand figuration aptly depicts the ducklings as they "familiarized themselves with . . . the poultry yard." Detached chords separated by quarter-note rests in 15:4 appropriately suggest the ill that forebodes for the duckling over the page.

In 16:1 begins a series of violent attacks directed at the duckling (See ex. 40). The accentuated theme in the upper part of the accompaniment seems to be an inverted foretaste of another tale set by Prokofiev: Peter and the Wolf.

The vivid portrayal of the various assaults upon the unfortunate misfit that began on the top of page 16 ends in 17:3 with a rapidly descending and ascending flourish of sixteenth-note sextuplets in the piano (See ex. 41). Finally, a moment of harmonic repose comes with a C major chord (but with an added fourth) in 17:4:5, after the departure of the duckling from his tormentors.
Example 40  Gadkij utěnok (p. 16)  Prokofiev, op. 18

Example 41  Gadkij utěnok (p. 17)  Prokofiev, op. 18
With a temporary shift to 3/4 and the "pp" scherzando flourishes Prokofiev mirrors the duckling's fright at the sight of the first creatures encountered on the other side of the wall. 18:2:2-5 is the most important phrase in the song to this point. It contains the duckling's "leitmotif" with its minor descent. It begins like a piteous lament and finishes, for the last five notes "ja takoj gadkij" (I am so ugly), in sheer bawling.

Example 42 Gadkij utënok (p. 18) Prokofiev, op. 18
In 18:3-4 is described the flight of the duckling as far as the marshland. In 18:4:3-5 a bestial attack by wild ducks is represented by the sixteenth-note flourishes and the clarion call of rising sixteenth-note chords.

The entire page 19 is consecrated to the three statements of the wild ducks, all pitched in the upper middle register of the voice. The reactions of the duckling are set in the lower voice to the accompaniment of "pp" chords that aptly depict intimidation. In 19:4, as the duckling is frightened away, Prokofiev closes the page with three rising sixteenth-note passages.

The second appearance of the duckling's motive is in 20:1 for the text "As if the duckling could think of that!". In 20:2 the narrative of the duckling's peregrinations begins. The narration is characterized by the march-like chords of the left hand of the piano and an independently moving new melody in the right hand. Beginning in 20:4:2 can be seen the most threadbare construction of the composition with its long series of reiterated eighth-notes on d preceded by grace notes and interrupted only by the two fortissimo chordal outbursts in 21:2, representing the gunshots of the hunters. The dog's mouth gaping above the duckling's head is represented in 21:3-4 by the reiterated chords and the sixteenth-note figuration.

The descending chord stream over a pedal on F# (of reiterated eighth-notes) in 22:1 is probably intended by Prokofiev to depict the duckling's escape from this last peril with pounding heart. The pedal becomes reiterated quarter-notes in 22:2 and changes pitch to a b in 22:3:5. A mournful tone is preserved throughout this page. With the onset of winter, for the text "The duckling was constantly obliged to swim" in 22:4, the composer not only gives a pitch elevation for each of the stressed syllables but accentuates them as well.
Material that had served in 20:2 is restated in 23:1, but transposed down a diminished fifth. The duckling manages to survive the rigors of winter in 23:2-3-4, to a "pp" steadily throbbing left hand accompaniment and a lamenting, sobbing figuration in the right hand beginning in 23:2:2. In 23:4, at the indication allegretto, Prokofiev restates the accompanimental figuration first used in 11:1:5. Once again it serves to underline the concept of the sun's warmth.

In 24:3, "Spring" (ves-na), with the stressed syllable on a fortissimo g♯, melts the ice to the accompaniment of a pentatonic arpeggio. The duckling is depicted flapping its wings in 24:4 with a delightful metrical alternation 4/4 -- 3/4.

In 25:2 a descending scale in G major is used for the text "flew into a large blossoming garden" and it is accompanied by the material used in 11:3:5 -- with the addition of one beat per measure. The sudden appearance of the three splendid swans is heralded in 25:3:4 by a graceful broken octave eighth-note figuration in the right hand and the equally graceful arpeggiated figuration in the left -- forming a perfect decor for the "duckling's" kin.

The pitch in both voice and uppermost part of the accompaniment in 26:1 rises until a peak is attained for the stressed (final) syllable of "lebedja" (swans) on the downbeat of 26:1:3. The subdued yet dissonant sixteenth-note movement over an F♯ pedal in 26:2-3, and its serrated melodic line, aptly portray the strange attraction felt by the duckling for the regal creatures he now beholds. The varied rhythmic figures in 26:4 represent the duckling's hesitancy.

In 27:1:2-3 the duckling expresses remorse over his ugliness in the characteristic motive that recurs. The rest of this page is given to the portrayal of the duckling's resignation to his fate. In 27:3:2, the composer
reiterates material first used in 16:1 -- also to represent torment of the duckling.

In 28:1:2 he gives a completely declamatory text setting for "Slay me . . . his reflection!" This final note of resignation receives a plaintive, sparse accompaniment. However, the mood changes abruptly in 28:3 as the duckling is cast into raptures, having chanced to see his reflection in the water. He now realizes his true identity and his present and lasting beauteous state. This is sung to the essentially diatonic type of melody that was to become typical of Prokofiev when writing in a light-hearted mood -- a manner of writing in which he creates his own version of a folk-like tune, naive, but not altogether traditional.

(third and fourth systems)

Example 43  Gadkij utěnok (p. 28)  Prokofiev, op. 18
The ensuing section (30:3:2 through 31:2:1) has the most extended, genuinely lyrical phrase for the voice in the entire composition. The utmost gentleness is displayed for the text "the swans gently embraced him!" The two final sections both utilize old material and the postlude (31:4) musically reaffirms the blissful solution to the erstwhile duckling's plight.

In op. 18 we see a foretaste of much of the character portrayal in which Prokofiev will indulge in the opera Love for Three Oranges. In addition to the well-known march that so aptly typifies the penchant of Gozzi for the commedia dell'arte and the scherzo that delightfully sketches the interim adventures of the young prince and his companion, Truffaldino, such places in the opera as the music for the scurrying rat can be compared to the attacks by the wild ducks in 18:4:3.

Thus, Prokofiev's op. 18 constitutes a significant contribution to musical portraiture: it provides a favorable comparison with the sensitive text settings of his intuitively guided predecessor, Mussorgsky -- both in the Nursery cycle and in Mussorgsky's separate songs dealing with animals and unusual personalities.

The first version of the Ugly Duckling was published in 1917 by the firm of A. Gutheil and the second version by Muzgizom in 1947. The orchestral score of this song was issued by the publishing division Sovetski Kompozitor in 1962.

The first performance of this composition took place on January 30, 1915, and was sung by A. G. Zherebtsova-Andreeva, the same artist who first sang his song op. 9, no. 1. Prokofiev had made the acquaintance of this singer, a professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and the wife of a singer at the Mariinsky Theater, when he went abroad for the first time. Nikolai Andreev, the singer's husband, had been engaged by Diaghilev to appear in London,
and the couple was staying in the same pension in Paris that Prokofiev's mother had selected.

It was not until 1932 that Prokofiev made the orchestral version of his *Ugly Duckling*. This second version differs from the original in that several sections have been transposed up a minor third and one section up a perfect fourth. Much of the composition remains in its original tessitura and the tonality remains C major. This was done in order to render the song more accessible to the range of Prokofiev's wife, Lina Llubera, who performed it subsequently in the orchestral version that the composer made. Regarding this performance the composer wrote his friend A. M. Dianov in a letter dated Paris, May 24, 1932: "Lina Ivanovna recently sang my *Ugly Duckling* in Paris with orchestra -- it was a success."

It was Lina who also sang it in the orchestral version for the first time in Moscow on November 20, 1937, with her husband conducting.47

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Five Poems, op. 23

No. 1 — "Pod kryšej" (Under the roof)  
--- Vladimir Goryansky

No. 2 — "Sere plato'ice" (The little grey dress)  
--- Zinaida Gippius

No. 3 — "Dover'sja mne" (Trust me)  
--- Vladimir Verin

No. 4 — "V moём sadu" (In my garden)  
--- Konstantin Balmont

No. 5 — "Kudesnik" (The wizard)  
--- Agnivtsev

Prokofiev's Five Poems, op. 23 represent a special category in his contribution to song. The miscellaneous character of poetry and the music prompted by this has resulted in five songs of a highly diversified nature. They have in common only the constant striving of the composer to capture the underlying intent of each poem and, more specifically, that which is abstract and not literally implicit.

In speaking of Goryansky and of Agnivtsev, Prokofiev's official Soviet biographer makes the following pronouncement: especially important is the official approval of the Novy Satirikon poets and the censure of Balmont.

The authors of these poems were contributors to the popular humorous magazine Novy Satirikon. The prosaic lyricism in Goryansky's poem about city slums and the biting satirical tone of Agnivtsev's tale of the wizard contrasted sharply with the pretentious symbolist works of Balmont and Gippius. The young Prokofiev's interest in the works of the Satirikon poets is revealing. While Novy Satirikon was not distinguished for political daring, it was the most anti-government humorous magazine of that period. Together with the clever stories of A. Averchenko ... appeared the satirical "hymns" of the young Mayakovsky, which exposed the loathe-
someness and rottenness of bourgeois society. The caustic tone of *Novy Satirikon* seemingly corresponded completely to the views of Prokofiev, who liked to poke fun at all sorts of "old, used stuff" in life and art. The poetry of Goryansky and Agnitsev offered an opportunity for a kind of vocal lyricism unusual for that time and for a type of satirical song neglected since Mussorgsky's day. It also provided a basis for formal experiments very much related to the *Sarcasms*. In deliberately prosaic and unpoetic verse, Goryansky expresses a poet's sympathy for the common people of a capitalist city, who retain a touching love of nature despite oppressive poverty and toil. It may be that the sentiments in this poem were close to those of the young Prokofiev, who retained a genuine love for life and nature despite all the ugliness of surrounding reality.48

Regarding the songs of op. 23 Prokofiev, in retrospect, makes no reference either to political implications or to the quality of the poetry he is employing. He only stresses the affinity of this set of songs to his *Sarcasms*:

In between the larger forms I continued to write piano pieces and songs, primarily *Sarcastic Pieces* (1912-14) subsequently renamed *Sarcasms* on the advice of Nurok and Nuvel. The pieces were a big success with the "modernists," perhaps because the search for a new musical language was more strongly evident in them than in other works of the same period. Tcherepnin said: "All his life Nurok longed for new music and in his old age God sent him Prokofiev." I still have the program of one of the *Sarcasms* (No. 5): "We often indulge in malicious laughter at someone or something, but when we pause to look we see how pitiful and sad is the object of our ridicule; and then we grow ashamed, the mocking laughter rings in our ears, but it is we who are its object now." The other *Sarcasms* had no program. There is a certain affinity between the *Sarcasms* and the songs, op. 23; the very long one "Under the roof," "The little grey dress," "The wizard." But there were some with lyrical themes as well; "In my garden" and "Trust me." Incidentally, Karatyghin

48I. Nest'ev, *Prokof'ev*, p. 120.
discovered some lyrical touches in the Sarcasms too (in No. 3). Curiously enough, "Under the roof" was the only piece that Karatyghin did not understand. And although I had taken the greatest care to reflect in the music every nuance of thought and feeling contained in the text, Karatyghin said, "To my mind, while the voice sings words of definite meaning, the piano plays a scherzo having nothing whatever to do with it." 49

"Pod kryšej" (Under the roof) — V. Goryansky

Ja ne znaju, čto takoe osoka,
I do not know what sedge is,
Tixij bereg i plakučaja iva.
A quiet shore or a weeping willow.
Ja živu pod samoj kryšej, vysoko;
I live beneath the very roof, high up;
Žizn moja molčaliva.
My life is taciturn.

Ni polej ni lesov ja ne videl,
Neither fields nor forests have I seen,
A govorjat, oni est' v samom dele.
But they say they actually exist.
Mne kažctcja, menja kto-to obidel . . .
It seems to me, someone offended me . . .
Èto bylo . . . na prošloj nedele.
It was . . . last week.

Na prošloj nedele skazal mne kto-to,
Last week someone said to me
Čto ja slep, čto ja ne znaju prirody,
That I was blind, that I did not know nature,
Čto menja zadušila rabota
That work had stifled me
I čto deti moi takie urody . . .
And that my children were some sort of abortions . .

No èto neverno! Nu, pravda že, neverno . .
But that is not true! But really now, that is not true . .
Moi deti xoroši, xatja bedny.
My children are good, even though they are poor.
Ja beden, i odjet oni skverno,
I am poor, and they eat miserably,
Ottogo ličiki ix bescvetny i bledny.
That is why their little faces are colorless and pale.

49 s. S. Prokof'ev, Materialy, p. 43.
Ja mnogo vižu čerez malen’koe okonce,
   I see a great deal through my tiny little window.
I duša moja sovsem ne oslepla.
   And my soul has by no means gone blind.
O, ja vižu , kak podymaetsja solnce
   Oh, I see how the sun rises
Skвоз’ tući, dyma i melkogo pepla.
   Through the clouds, smoke and fine cinders.

Vižu, kak ono zolotit truby,
   I see how it gilds the chimneys,
Kak ono smečtsja nevnjatno,
   How it laughs inaudibly,
I prikladyvaju strastno sinie guby
   And passionately I apply my blue lips
K stene, gde igrajut solnecnye pjtana.
   To the wall where the blots of sunlight play.

A segodnja u menja den’ naslažden’ja,
   But today is a day of enjoyment for me,
Daže zabyl, čto obizen nedavno.
   I have even forgotten that not long ago I was
offended.
Segodnja ja zametil vesny probužden’e,
   Today I noticed the awakening of spring,
I sdelalos’ mne tak xorošo, tak slavno.
   And it made me feel so good, so glorious . . .

Den’ voskresnyj, na ulicax tiše,
   The day is Sunday, on the streets it is quiet,
Men’še dymu, solnce jarče, čem v buden.
   There is less smoke, the sun is brighter than on
a week day.
Ja smotrju na belye kryši,
   I look at the white roofs,
Prostor ix vsegda bezljuden.
   Their expanse is always desolate.

Dumaju, polja zimoju’ takie že točno.
   I think the fields in winter are just like that.
V golove rojatsja tixie mysli . . .
   Quiet thoughts swarm in my head . . .
Vižu pod kryšcj, u truby vodostočnoj,
   I see under the roof tops that from the gutter pipe
Sosul’ki ledjanye povisli.
   Icicles hanging.
Žel'taja stena polna byla sveta.
The yellow wall was full of light.
Moroz, no i luči jarki i bystry.
There was frost, but also bright and swift rays.
Odna sosul'ka, solncem sobreta,
One icicle, warmed by the sun,
Stala tajat' i brosala iskry.
Began to melt and cast sparks.

Iskry sijali, perclivalis' tonko,
The sparks glistened, dripped delicately,
I vdrug, ognjami novymi igraja,
And suddenly, playing with new fires,
Sorvalasja sosul'ka i radostno, zvonko
The icicle detached itself, and joyously, resoundingly
Razbilas' o kamni vnizu u saraja.
Smashed against the stones down below near the carriage-house.

I vesel ja, i smejeť'sja xoču ja!
And I am merry and I wish to laugh!
Razve ne vesny probuzden'e ja videl?
For have I not seen the awakening of spring?
Kto skazal, čto ja živu, prirody ne čuja,
Whoever said that I exist not understanding nature,
Tot menja naprasno obidel.
Has offended me unjustly.

Net, mne znakoma ulybka prirody!
No, the smile of nature is known to me!
Ničego, čto my v gorode i čto my bedny . . .
It matters not that we are in the city and that we are poor . . .
A deti moi sovsom ne urody,
But my children are by no means abortions,
Tol'ko slaby i bledny.
Only weak and pale.

Valentin Ivanovich Ivanov, who wrote under the pseudonym Goryansky, was born in 1888 near Petersburg. His first verses were published in 1906 in the Petersburg newspaper Slovo. The young poet appeared in these as a champion of liberty. Even in the year 1907, when the country was covered with hordes of gallows, Goryansky adamantly affirmed: "I am happy again! I am prepared to await with
patience the coming battle." Soon, however, the optimism was changed by motives of reconciliation. He attempted to place a philosophical basis under a homily of "little affairs" and "little gray people," to live without lofty demands, and to content himself with little. Happiness, in his opinion, was not in unlimited knowledge. Contact with real life was seemingly scorned by the flight of the writer for his fantasy obliged him to lower himself to earth, to touch it with his wing.

With a wing upon the earth -- the first collection of poems of Goryansky, appeared in 1915. In it are two central themes -- city and country, and one basic conflict -- poetic dream and monstrous, repulsive reality. The city street in his imagination -- was a symbol of deprivation, poverty and grief; the world of nature -- a splendid dream. From 1913 on the poet became a contributor to Satirikon, where he appeared under the guise of a naive provincial. He sketched for his readers the dreamy, dusty little world of provincial life with its uncomplicated cares and paltry "events." Transferring subsequently to Novyj Satirikon as a leading collaborator in the poetic section, Goryansky retained his satirical mask.

In 1915 he collected his works of a satirical nature in the book Ioi duraki (My fools), which had the characteristic subtitle "Liro-satire." In regard to the theme of war which in 1914 entered his works, Goryansky displays some points of contact with the early Mayakovsky. Mayakovsky's poem "War and Peace" was printed simultaneously with the poem of Goryansky on that same theme -- "Information concerning that which was" -- in Gorky's magazine Chronicle. This periodical assumed a consistent anti-war position.

The setting of Goryansky's poem, Under the roof, in Prokofiev's op. 23, no. 1, forcibly prompts comparison with the Ugly Duckling, another inordinately lengthy song.
From a harmonic standpoint, Under the roof and the Ugly Duckling are both replete with chromaticism, extended chords, unstable and frequently shifting tonal centers, polychordal writing, and clashing juxtapositions. They differ, however, in the manner in which these harmonic traits appear. In the Ugly Duckling chiefly external actions are reflected; in Under the roof abstract concepts and emotions are portrayed; the Ugly Duckling unfolds like the tale that it is and employs recurrent musical ideas sparingly: Under the roof is concerned principally with the development of a mental attitude and is united by three musical ideas: two of these recur frequently and depict two different facets of this attitude; the Ugly Duckling presents a series of concrete images sketched mainly by economical but highly effective means in the texture of its accompaniment: Under the roof, by the very nature of the poetry employed, contains but one rare instance of such a concrete illustration -- furthermore, in the depiction of its abstractions, the elements in the accompaniment become much more intense and frequently dense in texture.

The Ugly Duckling and Under the roof are both satirical compositions: they display the influence of the Dargomyzhsky-Mussorgsky approach to realism. The Ugly Duckling shows Prokofiev tending in the direction of neoclassicism, while Under the roof displays the strong imprint of Scriabin.

Both Goryansky and Prokofiev demonstrate their empathy with prototypes from Russian literature. The character in Under the roof, now underscored in its musical treatment, is clearly derived from that luckless level of society that was herded together into those crowded tenements of St. Petersburg. It relates back to Gogol's Akakij Akakevič -- a tradition that was brought to its apotheosis by Dostoevsky in his Makar Devuškin and Marmeladov.
The brief musical ideas shown below with their variants represent various aspects of the frame of mind of the narrator of the poem, Under the roof: they recur at various points throughout the composition and will be referred to in the course of our discussion.

Example 44 Pod kryšej Prokofiev, op. 23, no. 1

The pedal point D is the most salient feature in the introduction to Under the roof. Except for a slight relief afforded by the temporary modulation in 58:2:1-2 (See ex. 45), Prokofiev maintains this as his bass until 58:3:5. The fact that a significant percentage of the setting in this piece is of a declamatory nature is a reflection of the composer's intense striving to treat with utmost care the text. The four quarter-note rests in the opening sentence in the text setting aid in establishing from the outset the diffidence and psychological depression
of the narrator.

Example 45  *Pod kryšej* (p. 58)  Prokofiev, op. 23, no. 1

The descending figuration in the right hand of the piano outlining a fourth on the fourth beat of 58:1:2, and extending through 58:4:1, along with the vocal passage for the evocative text "plakučaja iva" (weeping willow) in 58:4 graphically depict the concept of weeping. The composer, not only follows the rhythmic undulation of the dactyl in the Russian "plakučaja" in his descending ideas, but sug-
gests the drooping form of the tree as well. In his vocal phrase terminating on the raised seventh he transmits the figurative despair of the narrator. In 58:4:4 can be cited only one of many instances in which Prokofiev indulges in harmonic complexes, essentially polychordal in nature. In 58:4:2-3, both hands of the piano play perfect fourths with the outer limits of C-a and converge on each other by a chromatic, contrary movement until a minor ninth is outlined on the downbeat of 58:4:4. The psychological implication of this is one of contraction, of a withdrawing into himself by the narrator. The right hand of the piano begins to outline in this last measure one of the characteristic figures that will recur as unifying devices (See figure 3a, ex. 44).

In 59:1:4 the accompaniment reuses the material that first appeared in 58:2:3 (Figure 2a). In 59:3:3 a polychordal harmonic complex begins with the right hand initiating I of b♭minor, which is assumed by the voice until 59:4:3. The open fifth F-c of the left hand in 59:3:3 is transferred to the right hand as a perfect fourth in the following measure, while the left hand goes on to new tonal adventures: an interesting succession of perfect fourths. The harmony and in particular the distribution of chordal members is significant at the beginning of 59:4:3: the voice is assigned a pianissimo on e" for the text "oni est' v samom dele" (they actually exist), while the left hand of the accompaniment rests tranquilly on the octave D-D'. The psychological effect of this rise for the voice is heightened by an even more interesting occurrence in the piano (See ex. 46). With a series of minor sixths beginning on g" in the uppermost voice and with eighth-note movement in the lower. It rises, thus, chromatically. The entire musical depiction underlines both the incredulity of the narrator as well as the inaccessibility to him of these commonplaces of nature.
Thus, in 59:4:3, Prokofiev returns to the same harmonic framework with which he began his composition - ninth in relation to the D pedal. In the same measure, there begins in the lower voice of the piano right hand a variant
of the figure introduced in 58:4:4 (Figure 3b).

The first four exclamations of the voice on page 60 are declamatory and are rendered with the piano either sustaining a chord or, as in the last case completely silent. Thus the singer is left free to "interpret" these diffident remarks, "Mne kažetsja ... na prošloj nedele" (It seems ... that some one offended me), unimpeded by a strict rhythmic accompaniment. In 60:3 there is a variant of the opening idea in the composition, figure 1a. Syncopated here, it provides a dissonant effect with no less than three minor seconds outlined.

In 61:1 through 61:2:1, for the text "menja zadušila rabota" (work has stifled me), Prokofiev employs two devices: an octave leap in the voice to a sustained note followed by an inner compression, so to speak, and blotting out depicted in the inner voices of the piano closing in upon each other by chromatic, stepwise, contrary motion ending on an E minor triad.

In 61:2:3 through 61:3:2, sensitive treatment is allotted to the text "takie urody" (some sort of abortions). With an interval of a major second on every beat of 61:2:4, the upper voice of the right hand outlines a diminished seventh. After a corona over the uppermost note of this chord in 61:3:1, the composer obliges the singer to intone "urody" (abortions) with the same figure that served for "takie," but dropped an octave: c'-g'-f#. This last remark of the narrator, uttered in a range that underlines total despair compounded with incredulity caused by this slanderous insinuation, is accompanied by a dissonant harmonic complex exhibiting the influence of Scriabin.

A driving new figure, probably derived from figure 2a, is introduced in 62:2 along with the instruction poco più mosso -- for the text "Ja beden ..." (I am poor). The right hand has a biting grace note attack from an octave above to two eighth-note staccato chords on the
downbeat. This is followed by a sixteenth-note figure with a chord of a third on the beat followed by three single notes: an example of Prokofiev's attraction to the toccata style. It is interrupted in 62:4:3 for the text "besvjetny i bledny" (colorless and pale). The singer is given the tritone f'-b⁴'-b⁷' on three consecutive eighth-notes, one for each word, and each pattern accompanied only by the hollow sound of staccato D♭-C'.

Another dramatic pause in the accompaniment occurs in 63:2:3 as the voice is unaccompanied for the last three words of the statement "duša moja sovsem ne oslepla" (my soul has by no means gone blind).

The rise of the sun, "podymaetsja solnce," in 63:4:1-2, received through the little window of the garret, is foreshadowed by the Lydian scale extending slightly over three octaves in 63:3 utilizing e♭ as its initial.

During the ensuing twelve measures the exuberance of the text is mirrored in the accompaniment by an eighth-note series of major ninth chords on the beat alternating with sixths, fifths, or fourths on the off-beat. This excitement continues in 64:1 with sixteenth-note chordal figuration. In 64:3:1, an extra beat is introduced to accommodate the text "i prikladyvaju strastn . . ." (and passionately I apply . . .). For this emotional statement the voice is held to a low tessitura and the piano underscores with muted staccato chords the rhythmic concision of the vocal scansion. In 64:4, for the text "gde igrajut solnečnye pjatna" (where the blots of sunlight play), the composer employs mixed scale passages for part of the uncanny decor (See ex. 47). The right hand of the piano, beginning in 64:4:2, outlines figure 3b.
Example 47  
Pod kryšej (p. 64)  
Prokofiev, op. 23, no. 1

Figure 2b and a variant of figure 3a reappear in 65:3 in succession in the accompaniment. The widely-spaced figuration of the left hand is given to the right in 65:4. Here the chromatic series of chords in the left hand in measured quarter-note movement produces a restraining ef-
fect that underscores the text "Segodnja ja zametil vesny probuždenie" (Today I noticed the awakening of spring).

Example 48  Pod kryščoj  (p. 65)  Prokofiev, op. 23, no. 1

In 66:1:1, the stressed syllable of "ves-ny" (of spring) is placed on a\textsuperscript{b}. Prokofiev succeeds admirably in his depiction of the state of mind of the narrator at this point: astonishment mixed with that glorious (text: "slavno", in 66:2:2) sensation of having shared in the enjoyment of one of divine nature's marvels -- a joy that cannot be withheld even from this miserable garret dweller.

A variant of the material that first appeared in 59:4:3 (Figure 3b), makes its third apparition in 67:2:2. As in the previous instances, it is marked tranquillo, sognando. In 67:3:3 and all of 67:4, Prokofiev accompanies the text "V golove rojatsja . . ." (In my head swarm quiet
thoughts) with a "buzzing" sixteenth-note figuration and the admonition molto tranquillo.

As the meter shifts in 68:2 to 12/8, a joyful, scherzando mood is initiated. The sunshine and the sparkling icicles melting occasion great joy. This gaiety continues throughout the next page, even as the meter returns to 4/4 and a toccata-like figuration is initiated in 69:3.

This scintillating effect ceases abruptly on the second beat of 70:1:1 and the piano is silent for the next measure and a half in order that the voice may cascade diatonically an octave and a half, unimpeded (save for a retard requested by the composer), for its delivery of the text "i radostno, zvonko, razbilas' o kamni" (and joyously, resoundingly, smashed against the stone).

71:2:3-4 is composed mainly of variants of figure 2b. This material is heard for the last time starting in 72:2:3. As the voice begins its last full statement: "A deti moi sovsem ne urody" (But my children are by no means abortions), in 72:3:5, -- it is accompanied by a further variant of the material in figure 1.

The two final pronouncements of the singer, the unaccompanied text "tol'ko slaby . . . i bledny" (only weak . . . and pale), reaffirm the essentially diffident character of the narrator and underline his indefensible but unalterable predicament.

"Seroe plat'ice" (The little gray dress)- Gippius

Devočka v seren'kom plat'ice . . .
A girl in a little gray dress . . .
Kosy kak budto iz vaty . . .
Plaits just like cotton . . .
-- Devočka, devočka, č'ja ty ?
"Little girl, whose little girl are you ?"
-- Mamina . . . ili nič'ja.
"Mama's . . . or no one's.
Xočeš', budu tvoja?
Do you want me to be yours?"

Devočka v seren'kom plat'ice . . .
A girl in a little gray dress . . .
-- Češ' li, devočka, laske?
"Do you believe, little girl, in affection?"
Milaja, gde tvoi glazki?
Darling, where are your little eyes?"
-- Vot oni, glazki. Pustye.
"Here they are, my little eyes. Empty."
U mamočki točno takie.
Mommy has some just like these."

Devočka s glazami pustymi,
"Tell me, what is your name?"
-- A po-svoemu zovút menja vsjak:
"But everyone calls me according to his own way:
Xočeš' édak, a xočeš' tak.
If you wish, this, if you wish, that."
Odin zovët Razdelen' em,
One calls me Severance,
A to Vraždoju, zovut i Somnen' em;
Another, Enmity, they even call me Doubt;
Ili Toskoju, inoj zovët Skukoju,
Or Yearning, another calls me Tedium,
Inoj Mukoju . . . a mama Smert' -- Razlukoju.
Still another, Torment . . . and mama Death
-- Parting."

Devočka v seren'kom plat'ice . . .

"Seroe plat'ice" is a highly symbolistic poem by
Zinaida Gippius, the "uncrowned queen of the literary life
of the capitol . . . not only the Sibyl but also . . . the
Sylphide of the philosophical and religious circle that
formed around her husband and herself."

There is an affinity between much of the writing of
Gippius and that of the early Akhmatova who also displayed
symptoms of decadence and who also struck a pose. Marc
Slonim has commented succinctly on this aspect of Gippius:

In order to escape her tiresome and routine
life, Gippius turned toward Dreams and Evil, both
of which held equal attraction for her. Satanism
. . . was nothing but a pose with Gippius. She
was coldly intellectual; her ambiguity was delib­
erate and held obvious overtones of malevolence,
almost of viciousness. Her intimate verse was
divested of eloquence; it crept along like a snake
and had the metallic sheen of certain reptiles.
The poetess took delight in abstract questionings,
in moral and psychological paradoxes framed in
mellow and verbally elusive lines. She affirmed that
"only that which cannot be explained or understood
gives joy," yet her own writings despite all their
complexity, were cerebral . . .

50 Renato Poggioli, Poets of Modern Russia, p. 111.
51 Marc Slonim, Modern Russian Literature, p. 99.
The pronouncement of Nestyev that "the unwholesome mysticism" of such poetry "could hardly have had any deep appeal for Prokofiev" 52, while in keeping with the official Soviet condemnation of this facet of poetry, seems totally unfounded.

Gippius' poem, *Seroe plat'ice*, provides a challenging new poetic formula met with technical dexterity and psychological responsiveness by Prokofiev. The composer took great pains to render justice to the three aspects of the poem: (1) refrain; (2) dialogue; (3) symbolistic overtones. The music of the two-measure introduction will itself recur as a refrain throughout the composition:

![Example 49 Seroe plat'ice Prokofiev, op. 23, no. 1](image)

Prokofiev repeats this introduction in 73:4:1. In 74:4:1, the vocal line which here takes up the refrain clearly utilizes the treble motive of the introduction while the treble of the accompaniment with its ascending chromatic scale will be seen, with the inclusion of the a\# in the right hand, to arrive on the same pitches on beats one and three of each measure as were sounded in the middle voice of the introduction. This material is again recapitulated in the final statement of the refrain (78:4) with both voice and treble of the accompaniment on a monotone e'. The first statement of the refrain (73:1:3) is reiterated in 73:4:3. The vocal phrase employed for the

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52 Nest'ev, *Prokofiev*, p. 119
question in 73:2:3 -- "Devočka, č'ja ty ?" (Whose little
girl are you ?") -- bears a striking resemblance to that of
the refrain and it is, furthermore, reused in 74:1:3.
Finally, the question posed in 73:3:3 -- "Xočeš' budu
rvoja ?" (Do you want me to be yours ?) -- provides the
melodic outline for the statement in 74:3:1, where there is
an obvious semantic relationship in text.

In matters of text setting and the mirroring of
semantic overtones in the accompaniment, Prokofiev, in his
Seroe plat'ice, op. 23, no. 2, comes even closer to the
ideal of Mussorgsky than previously. In fact a favorable
comparison may be drawn between this song and the "Lullaby"
in Mussorgsky's Songs and Dances of Death. Both songs dis­
play the same sensitive approach to the three aspects indi­
cated above. This is rendered all the more obvious by an
underlying similarity in subject matter. In Mussorgsky's
song, death herself addresses the mother directly, employ­
ing a refrain. In Prokofiey's song, it is the little
daughter of death who is being addressed and the refrain in
his song represents an abstraction.

The accompaniment up through 74:4:2 reflects only
the intimate and furtive character of questioned one and
interrogator. The active verbs employed by the poetess as
the daughter of death enumerates the strange and somewhat
morbid activities that comprise her urgent work, provide
the necessary spur for the composer's imagination:
"raskusu" (bite through), "podsusu" (dry out), "vyrezaju"
(tear out), "lomaju" (break). This now section -- meno
mosso -- (See ex. 50) -- is replete with decorative fi­
guration and metrical variety. Prokofiev included the
direction "tainstvenno" (mysteriously) for the voice at
the beginning of the meno mosso (75:2:1). He was also
careful to subdue the accompaniment with a "ppp" -- inter­
rupted twice before the verbs "vyrezaju" and "lomaju".
Example 50  *Serce plat'ice* (p. 75) Prokofiev, op. 23, no. 2

The note for note rhythmic coincidence of the vocal line in the accompaniment in the section marked *animato*, for the text "po-svoemu zovet menja vsjak" (everyone one calls me according to his own way), in 76:3:1-2, becomes a characteristic trait (perhaps borrowed from Mussorgsky),
usually with the effect of concision, as in this case. Prokofiev has already made use of this device in his *Ugly Duckling* as well as in *Under the roof*.

Immediately following the passage noted above, Prokofiev, for the citation of appelations so fraught with connotations of mysticism, has selected a buzzing, sixteenth-note figure centered about d' and a chromatic ascent and descent between each new semantic category. Each time he attains a higher pitch level. Finally, the harmonic setting for the text "Skukoju ... Razlukoju" (Tedium ... Parting), consists of highly evocative tonal clusters of an order not yet demonstrated by the composer in his solo songs.

(Second, third and fourth systems)

Example 51 *Seree plat'ice* (p. 78) Prokofiev, op. 23, no.2
"Dover'sja mne" (Trust me) — Verin

Dover'sja mne, tebja lesnoj tropoju
Trust me, along a sylvan pathway
Svedu ja v xram volšeboj krasoty,
I shall lead you into a temple of magical beauty,
Gde dremljut na stebljax, obryzganj rosoj,
Where doze on their stems, besprinkled with dew,
Toboj nevidannye cvety.
Strange flowers, unseen by you

Pred altarëm tainstvennogo boga,
Before the altar of a mysterious god,
Nedvižnye, kak budto v zabyt'i,
Immobile, as though in oblivion,
Oni cvetut v bezmolvii čertega,
They blossom in the speechlessness of the hall,
Na mramor plit ronjaja lepcestki.
On the marble slab shedding their petals.

"Verin" is the pen name of Boris Bashkirov, a
member of a wealthy family who, along with his brother,
Vladimir, on more than one occasion befriended Prokofiev.
He is styled by Nestyev a "dilettante . . . feebly aping
the symbolist poets." After criticizing the "instability
of the young Prokofiev's poetic tastes," he declares:

. . . In these songs, especially the meditative
Trust me and In my garden, one senses little of
Prokofiev's individuality. He is completely the
captive of this decadent poetry; hence the con­
trived quality of the harmonies and the unnatural
brokenness of the vocal declamation.53

Once more the young Prokofiev is the victim of
Soviet Socialist Realist criticism in retrospect. This
poem of Verin is not of a high literary calibre, but the
young composer was not deserving of such caustic treatment.
It is evident that Prokofiev was too absorbed in music

53Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, p. 119.
to have been concerned with literary values. In this connection Nestyev quotes a contemporary of the composer:

... His friend V. M. Morolev once said: "You begin to talk with him about literature and he shifts the conversation to music." Indeed, he took little interest in contemporary poetry, with all its modernist revelations and conflicting tendencies — which may explain why he turned his attention to Balmont and later to Akhmatova but failed to notice such a brilliant and powerful writer as Alexander Blok.54

In discussing this composition two comparisons may be made: (1) the poor quality of such a poem which nevertheless inspires the composer to produce thirty-seven measures of highly evocative and atmospheric music may readily be compared with such a composition as "De fleurs" from Proses ivriques of Debussy. In the latter case we also have poetry of dubious literary value (the text is by the composer) also providing the source for atmospheric music. We should like to propose that in the case of Prokofiev's op. 23, no. 3, there is an equally impressionistic aura. (2) In 80:2:1 through 81:2:2 there may be detected a striking similarity to the rhythmical propensities of Rakhmaninov in the accompaniment (See ex. 52).

A sensation of immobility is produced in all of 79:3 where the motives heard over a pedal on C in the bass are repeated four times: this is the backdrop Prokofiev provides for the text "gde dremljut na stebljajx (where doze on their stems). In 80:1:3 through 81:4:4 is an unusually extensive phrase for the voice: the first instance in his solo vocal writing where Prokofiev requires the singer to continue nearly twenty-one measures on a sustained line without a single written-in rest. Prokofiev has assigned a polytonal finish to the song: C treble, Db bass. (See ex. 53)

54 Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, p. 90.
Example 52 Dover'sja mne (p. 80) Prokofiev, op. 23, no. 3

(First two systems)

Example 53 Dover'sja mne (p. 81) Prokofiev, op. 23, no. 3

(Third and fourth systems)
"V moëm sadu" (In my garden) — Konstantin Balmont

V moëm sadu mercajut rozy belye,
In my garden shimmer white roses,
Mercajut rozy belye i krasnye.
Shimmer roses red and white.
V moej duše drožat mečty nesmelye,
In my soul tremble dreams, timid,
Stydlivye no strastnye.
Shy but passionate.

Tebja ja videl toľko raz, ljubimaja,
I saw you but once, beloved,
No toľko raz mečta s mečtoy vstrečaetsja.
But only once does a dream encounter a dream.
V moej duše ljubov' nepobedimaja
In my soul a love indomitable
Gorit i ne končaetsja.
Burns and does not extinguish itself.

Lico tvoë já vižu poblednevšee,
I see your face that has turned pale,
Volny volos, kak prjadi snov soglasnye,
Waves of hair, like strands of dreams harmonious,
V glazax tvoix prisnan'e potemnevšee
In your eyes a darkening confession
I guby, guby krasnye.
And lips, red lips.

S toboj poznal ja toľko raz, ljubimaja,
With you, beloved, only once was I acquainted
To jarkoe, čto scast'em nazyvaetsja.
With that luminous thing called happiness.
O ten' moja, besplotnaja, no zrimaja,
Oh my shadow, incorporeal but visible,
Ljubov' ne zabyvaetsja.
Love is not forgotten.

Moja ljubov' p'jana, kak grozdi spelye,
My love is intoxicated like clusters of ripe grapes,
V moej duše zvučat prizvy strastnye,
In my soul echo passionate appeals,
V moëm sadu mercajut rozy belye
In my garden shimmer white roses
I jarko, jarko krasnye...
And bright, bright red...
The structure of this song was conceived along traditional and orderly lines by a composer who, since early childhood, had been taught to utilize every waking moment with forethought and care. The structure of the poem itself dictated the form of the song outlined below. The large sections follow the five stanzas of the poem while the recurrent concepts of the poem itself are also reflected in the musical structure. The form is as follows:

Section A: 82:1:1 through 83:1:3
Section B: 83:1:4 through 84:1:4
Section C: 84:2:1 through 86:1:2
A subdivision is at 85:1:2
Section D: 86:1:3 through 87:1:4
Section E: 87:1:5 through 88:4:4
A subdivision is at 88:2:1

The two subdivisions noted correspond to the halfway point in each of the two stanzas concerned. The music of section D is largely modelled on that of section B. In section E, the first portion is taken from the music beginning in section C at 84:3:1, while section A, 82:4:1, provides the bass of 88:2:1. There are repetitions of 82:4:5 and 83:1:1 in 88:3:3 and 88:4:1, respectively. Only in section A do we observe four-measure segments for each line of poetry set — with the following scheme:

Line one -- 82:1:4 to 82:2:3
Line two -- 82"2"4 to 82:3:3
Line three -- 82:4:1 to 82:4:4
Line four -- 82:4:5 to 83:1:3

The comparatively strict form adhered to by Prokofiev in *V moём саду* has not prevented him from showing a sensitivity to the underlying concepts in this poem. Balmont plays with diametrically opposed hues and shades of passion. This is first evident in the four adjectives that
appear at the end of each line in the first quatrain: belye (white), krasnye (red), nesmelye (timid), and strastnye (passionate). Throughout the poem these concepts reappear with semantic variation. Balmont employs them not only in their most literal application, but in a more abstract manner as well – to underscore his perpetual attraction to light, his Helios, and at the same time, his escapist tendency in the opposite, darkening facet of this concept. It will now be seen how Prokofiev colors these concepts in his music.

The first instance is in 82:3:1-3, where "krasnye" (red) is preceded by "i" (and) on f♯ and the syllables of the word are spaced so that there will be no difficulty in either execution or reception. "Strastnye" (passionate), appearing first at the close of section A in 83:1:2, also receives such careful handling: the first syllable falls on g♭ (enharmonically identical with the case previously cited); the note values are not identical with those of "krasnye" but this is compensated for by the direction ritardando. The second appearance of "krasnye" (in 85:4:2) is pitched lower, but the spacing nevertheless assures it sufficient emphasis. the second appearance of "strastnye" (in 87:4:1) begins on g♯ and is assigned three quarter-notes. The final statement of the color "krasnye" (in 88:4:2-4) returns us to the pitch level g♭. In this instance, the very close of the composition, the syllables are spaced over three full measures.

The song opens and closes with the subdued dynamic level of pianissimo, but it is of interest to note that Prokofiev calls for considerably greater volume, intensity and excitement in three sections. The first is in 83:4:1 to 84"1"4 for the text "V moej duše . . . končaetsja" (In my soul a love indomitable / Burns and does not extinguish itself). Here the composer outlines a major ninth, bringing the vocalist to a peak on the stressed syllable of
"nepobedimaja" (indomitable). The second of these sections covers 85:1:2 to 85:4:3 for the text "V glazax tvoix . . . krasnye" (In your eyes a darkening confession / And lips, red lips). Noteworthy here is the a" assigned to the stressed syllable of "priznan'e" (confession), but even more significant, perhaps, are the rapidly descending chromatic scale passages in triplets for the repeated word "guby" (lips). This is the first instance of such a quasi coloratura passage in a solo song of Prokofiev.

The third section of great excitement values bears the direction con agitazione (as in fact was so with the previous section discussed). This agitation is achieved with the aid of a rising syncopated figure in the bass. The harmonic progression bb, a, B, bb, a, B, contributes to this as well. This section differs from the other two in that it begins pianissimo and calls for an almost constant increase in volume. This continues to increase (after the voice has uttered the last word in this section -- the key word "strastnye" passionate) reaching a peak with the piano alone sounding octave triplets on G#, as though the "passionate appeals" were "reechoing" with constantly increasing power. This "appeal" dies away by means of longer note values and diminishing dynamics.

One final observation regarding this composition: In the second half of section C (85:1:2 to 85:4:3), in which we have already called attention to the unusual writing for the voice, it is to be noticed that Prokofiev resorts to imitative writing -- also somewhat unusual in his songs to this point. The descending chromatic scale figuration is passed from hand to hand and finally culminates, in 85:3:4, with a more impetuous rhythmic distribution in both hands, as well as in the already discussed descending passage for the voice. Likewise noteworthy is the fact that Prokofiev called a halt to this cascading figuration precisely at the symbol "krasnye" (red).
"Kudesnik" (The wizard) -- N. Agnivtsev

V starom zamke, za goroju,  
In an old castle beyond the mountain
Odinokij zil kudesnik . . .  
Lived a solitary sorcerer . . .
Byl "na ty" on s satanoju --  
He was "on familiar terms" with Satan --
Tak poctsja v staroj pesne . . .  
As is sung in the old song . . .

Byl osoboj on zakvaski:  
He was of a peculiar disposition:
Ne ljubil on vkusa pudry  
He did not like the taste of powder
I ne veril zhenskoj laske,  
And did not trust a feminine caress,
Potomu ctoby byl on mudry:  
Because he was intelligent:

No bez zhenskoj laski, pravo,  
But without a feminine caress, really,
Zhizn' kak budto xromonoga . . .  
Life is rather lame . . .
Den'gi, pocesti i slava  
Money, distinctions and fame
Bez ljubvi? Da nu i: k bogui!  
Without love? Well, to the devil with them!

I sidel on vecher kaqdyj,  
And he would sit every evening,
O vzaimnosti toskuja.  
Yearning for affection.
I zadumal on odnazdy  
And once he conceived the idea of
Sdelat' zhenshcinu takuju,  
Fashioning a woman such

Ctob ona byla duqsoju  
That in her soul she would be
Na podobie kristalla,  
Like crystal,
Ne branilas' ezednevno  
That she wouldn't upbraid every day
I ne Igala! I ne Igala!  
And she wouldn't lie! And she wouldn't lie!
I, sklonjas' k svoim retortam,  
And leaning over his retorts,  
Sdelal ženščinu kudesnik,  
The sorcerer fashioned a woman,  
Ibo byl "na ty" on s čértom —  
For he was on familiar terms with the devil —  
Tak poëtsja v staroj pesne.  
As is sung in the old song.

I čista i neporočna  
Both pure and immaculate  
Iz retorty v rezultate  
From the retort as a result  
Vyšla ženščina . . .nu, točno  
Issued a woman . . . truly, just like  
Lotos Ganga v ženskom plat'el!  
A lotus of the Ganges in a woman's dress!

I s ulybkjo očen' miloj  
And with a very lovely smile  
Celyj den' ona nesmelo  
The entire day she timidly  
Za kudesnikom xodila  
Walked behind the sorcerer  
I v glaza emu smotrela.  
And gazed into his eyes.

I nemedlja, po prikazu  
And without delay according to his command  
Vse želenja ispolnjala  
Fulfilled all his desires  
I ne vskriknula ni razu,  
And did not scream even once,  
I ni razu ne solgala . . .  
And not once did she lie . . .  
Rovno čerez dve nedeli  
In precisely two weeks  
Vyšel iz domu kudesnik  
The sorcerer came out of his home  
I povesilja na eli . . .  
And hung himself on a fir-tree . . .  
Tak poëtsja v staroj pesnë!  
So it is sung in the old song!

Nestyev is slightly more approving of this last  
song of op. 23 than of those that preceded. Reading into  
Prokofiev's treatment of this subject perhaps more than the  
composer himself intended, he remarks that:
The poem tells the story of a strange hermit who creates for himself an "ideal" woman, dutiful, submissive, virtuous. But soon afterwards he hangs himself, unable to endure his unleavened "family happiness." With devastating sarcasm, Prokofiev's music draws the portrait of a dull, boring, "ideal" woman. Despite the deliberate harshness of its harmonies, the piece is a daring musical caricature, a challenge to Philistine notions of beauty and well-being. Such songs as the "Wizard" revealed not only the composer's formal innovation but also traces of a critical attitude toward contemporary bourgeois morality.

To counter the slanted view of this critic, we should like to propose that the piece succeeds in being a "daring musical caricature" because of the "deliberate harshness of its harmonies" and not despite this.

Two vocal passages recur with some frequency throughout the composition. The first of these is in the opening statement of the vocal line. It recurs unaltered five times subsequently and in an altered form twice. In each successive instance the satire becomes more caustic (See examples 54, 55, 56).

A comparison may be drawn between these opening statements and the opening statement of the astrologer in Rimsky-Korsakov's Golden Cockrel (See ex. 57). This opera, composed in 1906-07, did not receive its first production until the year 1909, soon after Rimsky's death. Between that time and the year 1915 when Prokofiev composed his Kudesnik, he had ample opportunity to hear and study this score. It is, therefore, entirely possible that Prokofiev associated his Kudesnik with the older composer's astrologer.

In coloration and interpretation of text, Prokofiev again meets several interesting challenges. He exhibits great imagination in his delineation of satire in every in-

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55 Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, p. 120.
stance. The first of these is the staccato bass note figure in the first measure of the song which helps to establish the grotesque character of the wizard.

Example 54 Kudersnik (p. 89) Prokofiev, op. 23, no. 5

This figure together with the effective counter melody given to the treble of the accompaniment in 89:2:2-4 provide the inspiration for much that is to ensue. The second phrase of the voice: "Tak poëtsja v staroj pesne" (As is sung in the old song) — is first sung to a note for note chordal accompaniment in 89:3:4-6 and recurs four times subsequently.

In 90:3:5 (See ex. 55), the declaration that a man's life is incomplete without a woman is characteris-
tically accompanied by a dissonant cluster on every strong beat.

Example 55 Kudesnik (p. 90) Prokofiev, op. 23, no. 5

The exclamation "Da nu ix k bogui" (To the devil with them!) in 91:1:4-5 is aptly aided by the veloce descending scale in the accompaniment, but only to applaud this notion, as it were, for the voice is left unaccompanied as it expresses that notion. It must be indicated that only in the recurrent phrase that originally serves the voice in 89:3:4-6 (See ex. 54) does Prokofiev employ consonance in his harmony. With only minor exceptions, the remainder of the composition is moderately and, at times, harshly dissonant. By this means Prokofiev underscores the satire. In having reserved a conventional harmonic approach only for the refrain, the contrast is all the more effective.

Concentrated thought and formulation of a plan to remedy his situation is reflected in 91:3:3 to 92:3:3.
Example 56 Kudesnik (p. 91) Prokofiev, op. 23, no. 5

The series of repeated f#' to convey this mental activity of the wizard is occasionally intruded upon by a flash of dissonance, as in 91:4:2-3.
Example 57  **The Golden Cockrel**  
Rimsky-Korsakov  
(From the prologue: Astrologer's entrance)

Example 58  **Kudesnik** (p. 94)  
Prokofiev, op. 23, no. 5
The vapors issuing from the alchemist's retorts are graphically portrayed in the accompaniment in the section marked *misterioso* (92:3:4 to 93:3:3). Once again dissonance seems to aid the composer in conjuring this image—irregular ascending scales and trills on the interval of a minor second predominate throughout.

One of the most salient passages not due to its "harshness" but because of its novelty for Prokofiev is the polytonal setting assigned the section in 94:1 to 96:4 (See ex. 58). Further in regard to this passage wherein the poet informs us of the result of the wizard's manipulations. Among the devices that aid in this portrayal are the setting of the accompaniment entirely in the treble clef and the numerous indications of *pianissimo*. An important exception to this volume level is at the down beat of 96:2:1 for the colorful and explosive accentuated first syllable of "vskriknula" (scream).

Example 59  
*Kudesnik* (p. 96) Prokofiev, op. 23, no. 5
In the final section of the composition, \textit{più lento del Tempo I}, among the things that supply the color for the morbid moral of this tale are the instructions to the pianist \textit{pesantissimo}, and to the vocalist "zlovesčće" (ominously). The voice is retained on or near \textit{c'}. The accompaniment is placed in the lower reaches of the keyboard until the final statement of the refrain. This is sung one fifth lower than in its first version.

It is highly probable that the composer may have had in mind, while composing this song, memories of some of the scathing and highly satirical designs and illustrations that formed an essential part of the publication \textit{Novyj Satirikon}, the literary organ that published some of the writings of Agniptsev as well as those of Goryansky. It should also be borne in mind that this was also the periodical in which some of the blistering "hymns" of the virulent, but mightily endowed poet Mayakovsky were appearing.

\textit{Kudesnik}, the last song of op. 23, represents the last instance in the solo vocal writing of Prokofiev where the grotesque will be exploited in a satirical vein.

The five songs of op. 23 are indeed unique among Prokofiev's contribution to the literature. This is the only set of songs in the modern Russian repertoire that includes such a wide variety of subject matter and such a wide range of expression. These five compositions, and in particular the two in satirical vein, \textit{Under the roof} and \textit{The Wizard}, compare favorably with Mussorgsky's satirical sketches as well as with songs of Hugo Wolf in the same vein. They form a striking contrast to the songs of the next group to be discussed.
Five Poems of Anna Akhmatova, op. 27

No. 1 — "Solnce komnatu napolnilo" (The sun has filled the room)

No. 2 — "Nastojaščuju nežnost'" (Genuine tenderness)

No. 3 — "Pamjat' o solnce" (Remembrance of sunshine)

No. 4 — "Zdravstvuj!" (Greetings!)

No. 5 — "Seroglazýj korol'" (The grey-eyed king)

In the Akhmatova songs more than elsewhere in the Prokofiev solo vocal output may be observed a genuine empathy between text and music. Here we have a rugged, masculine neoclassic genius bowing to the tenderness of a feminine genius. The resultant work of art merits a comparison with the Sieben Lieder of Schumann's op. 104, to the texts of the child poetess, Elisabeth Kullmann. In Schumann's work there is also to be observed the coupling of masculine strength and feminine sensitivity. In his five songs of op. 27, Prokofiev lays aside his futurist garb, his bent for the satirical, and his attraction for the mystical tendencies of the decadents in order to compose a tender cycle of love songs.

"Solnce komnatu napolnilo" (The sun has filled the room)

Solnce komnatu napolnilo
The sun has filled the room
Pyl'ju želtoj i skvoznoj,
With dust yellow and transparent.
Ja prosnujas' i pripomnila:
I awakened and remembered:
Milyj, nynče prazdnik tvoj.
Darling, today is your birthday
Ottogo i osnežennaja
And that is why the snow-covered
Dal' za oknami topla,
Distance beyond the windows is warm,
Ottogo i ja, bessonnaja,
And that is why I, wakeful,
Kak pricastnica spala.
Slept like a communicant.

Of the five songs of op. 27, Prokofiev's music for
the first is the most radiant and joyous. In this brief,
through-composed song, the sole instance where Prokofiev
departs from his 2/2 meter and inserts an extra beat occurs
in 98:2:2, significantly, for the stressed and the two un-
stressed syllables of "napolnilo" (filled). This device
expertly portrays musically the semantic connotations of
the sun's rays reaching into every corner of the poet's
study. It serves to assist the accompaniment which, up
through 98:3:3, with its rapidly alternating chords in the
right hand of the piano, almost shimmers with radiance. It
establishes, together with the sprightly left hand figure
in 98:2:3, the resplendent tableau in the music itself that
Akhmatova has depicted in the opening lines.

Example 60 Solnce komartu napolnilo (p. 98) Op. 27, no. 1
The vocal line is conceived in one uninterrupted phrase that corresponds perfectly to the enjambement between these two lines of verse. Prokofiev's extremely careful syllabification is also noteworthy and this, together with the carefully molded melodic outline, match in their almost perfect balance the same attention that the poetess has given to the architectonics of this couplet.

The next section of music, corresponding to the second couplet of the poem -- 99:1:1 through 99:4:1 -- continues the brilliance established and, in fact, surpasses it. The rising scale passages alternating with bell-like tremolo chords, in blocks of contrasting harmonies, culminate in the ingenious rising scale figuration in 99:3:1-2. This begins at the interval of a major ninth and terminates in the concise thirds marked fortissimo, reiterated in the upper reaches of the keyboard. In this section the lines of verse are divided among four segments which correspond perfectly to a sensitive declamation: the second downbeat of the first two contains the stressed syllable of each of the verbs and the peak of the entire section for the voice is situated on a g" whole note (in 99:2:2), for the accentuated syllable of the vocative "milyj" (darling). It is also to be observed that Prokofiev resolves the voice three times in the tonality of F# major.

The final portion of the song employs a separate ostinato figure for each hand of the accompaniment. This is varied in its harmonic structure every two measures until the meno mosso (in 100:3:4), where new material is introduced. The composer has cast both voice and piano in this section in the subdued realm of pianissimo. The vocal phrase for the text "ottogo . . . tepla" (and that is why the snow-covered distance beyond the window is warm) -- is a beautifully flowing example of the sort of lyricism that won for its composer the accolades of his contemporaries.
The delicate admixture of scale degrees that ever so gently disturb the otherwise calm "pool" of triads only serves to enhance the limpidity and neoclassic hue of the harmonic setting for this phrase. The melody is strongly reminiscent of the tenor of any number of Russian folk tunes. The voice when viewed as an entity in itself seems to resolve on a final e", but when considered together with the accompaniment, it is seen at once that a full cadence is by no means provided at this point.

The final measures of the vocal line adduce something still different. With the instruction poco a poco ritardando extended to include five measures for the text "ottogo i ja, bessonnaja," (and that is why I, wakeful) -- the voice hovers delicately between e' and c" -- as though reluctant to verbalize the reasoning at this point.

The passage in 100:3:4 and 100:4:1, which brings the singer for a third time back up into the highest tessitura reached in the song, is accompanied by an almost impressionistic rising figuration in the two hands of the piano. The misty quality of this is assured by an instruction from the composer to sustain from the mono mosso to the end of the composition in one unchanged pedal.

The final three measures of the song become at once clear and yet a little vague: clear in that the voice settles down to a two-measure-long sustained c" for the final syllable of "spala" (slept), while the piano, in contrary motion, reechoes this thought; vague in its absence of clearly established tonality which impression is further heightened by the turbid effect produced by the sustaining of the pedal. In this song, as in all previous instances, Prokofiev is careful not to misplace any stress and adheres diligently to sensitive declamation of the entire poem. This is only one of several factors that have aided in producing a musical composition on a par with the quality of the poem.
"Nastojashchui neznost'" (Genuine tenderness)

Nastojashchui neznost' ne sputaes'
Genuine tenderness one does not confuse

Ni s cem, i ona tixa.
With anything, and it is quiet.

Ty naprasno berezno kutaes'
In vain you sollicitously envelop

Mne pleci i grud' v mexa.
My shoulders and bosom in furs.

I naprasno slova pokornye
And in vain humble words

Govori's' o pervoj ljubvi.
You utter regarding first love.

Kak ja znaju eti upornoje,
How I know these obstinate,

Nesyte vzgljady tvoi!
Insatiable glances of yours!

Akhmatova establishes her peculiarly feminine insight in the opening couplet of this poem. In line three she adduces one of her frequent semantically discordant couplings. In this case there are two adverbs, "naprasno berezno" (in vain sollicitously), that Vinogradov has selected to illustrate his discussion of the stylistic role of what he terms the "open structure" of symbol words, declaring that in Akhmatova's poetry the following obtains:

... Special interest is presented by those that define the character of objects, signs, and actions, that is, forms of adverbs and adjectives... Adverbs, as a form of original prefixation of appellations, signs, and actions can... (1) create complex forms of adjectives and adverbs with contrastingly neutralizing or mutually stressing relations of their parts; (2) introduce unexpected...
emotional nuances into the presentation of the verbal action.\textsuperscript{56}

And in specific reference to lines three and four of this poem, he qualifies the pair of adverbs as

\ldots units (that are) also semantically syntactic manifestations of placing of adverbs side by side, of which one, if fused with the verb into one symbol, and the other, emotionally dissonant with the first, defines this entire symbol.\textsuperscript{57}

Upon comparison of the final words of lines two and three one is aware that in addition to the harmonious quality of the rhyme, a semantic harmony is equally apparent. In fact the first four lines taken as a whole offer an interesting outline and relationship of concepts. A direct line should be drawn from the gentleness of "genuine tenderness" to the softness of "fur." The parallel between the verbs "confuse" and "envelop" is not as apparent: the immediate affiliation comes through the harmonious rhyme of the Russian -- "sputaeš' - kutaes'."

Between the last two couplets, however, a decided semantic opposition exists in the concept of "humble" and "obstinate." What is striking here is the fact that from a purely phonic standpoint, these two modifiers are in strange accord: "pokornyè - upornye." When pronounced with equal stress, neither the one nor the other of these sounds more dulcet or harsh. By having selected these two semantically contrary but phonetically harmonious adjectives, Akhmatova may have been attempting to show the ambivalence of her relationship with her lover and the clash of emotions in him. Akhmatova was, however, careful to select two words in line eight whose phonetic aspect corresponds

\textsuperscript{56} Viktor Vinogradov, \textit{O poëzii Anny Axmatovoj}, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Ibid.} (My translation)
more closely to the semantic: "nesytye vzgljady" (insati­table glances). The second of these, due to the prefix "v(o)z," is endowed with a more insinuating sound than its distant English cognate: "glances."

Prokofiev's second song of op. 27 is chiefly remark­able for its text setting -- even more sensitive here than in the previous song. With extreme care, the composer assigns a vocal phrase unbroken by rests to the first line and one-half of text (up to the first comma), and similarly to the remaining three words in the second line that com­plete the first full statement. This phrase flows smoothly into the second (101:3:2 through 102:1:1-2), which contains lines three and four of the text with their enjambement. The passage in 102:1:3 through 102:2:3 accomodates lines five and six of the poem, also charactized by enjambement. The section entitled poco più mosso contains the final two lines of the poem -- again conceived by the composer as one uninterrupted musical entity.

The first phrase is accompanied with utter simplici­city: one unchanging harmonic block divided leisurely be­tween the chords in the two hands of the piano as far as the first stated concept of the text, "Nastojaščuju než­nost'"; from the appearance of the next idea, however, "ne­sputaeš' ni s čem" (one does not confuse with anything, the right hand of the piano begins a gentle figuration prompted by the notion contained in the verb. This figuration con­tinues through the next vocal phrase. The third vocal phrase inspires a completely new accompanimental figuration -- a constant eighth-note chordal movement frequently shifting in its harmonic coloration with a discreet quarter­note movement, except for one brief moment in the bass in 102:1:1. The fourth vocal phrase receives a new accompani­ment. Here Prokofiev brings the motion to a complete halt for the text "o pervoj ljubvi" (regarding first love). The entire structure of the final section, poco più mosso, de-
monstrates Prokofiev's profound indebtedness to Mussorgsky -- primarily in matters of declamation, but from a standpoint of harmonic ruggedness as well.

"Pamjat' o solnce" (Remembrance of sunshine)

Pamjat' o sonce v serdce slabeet,
Remembrance of sunshine grows faint in my heart.

Žoltej trava,
The grass is more yellow,

Veter snežinkami rannimi veet
The wind blows early snowflakes

Edva-edva.
Scarcey, scarcely.

V úzkix kanalax uže ne struitsja --
In the narrow canals there is no more rippling --

Stynet voda,
The water grows icy,

Zdes' nikogda ničego ne slučitsja, --
Here never shall anything transpire, --

O, nikogda!
Oh, never!

Iva na nebe pustom rasplastala
The willow in the empty sky spread out

Veer skvoznj.
Like a transparent fan.

Možet byt' lučše, čto ja ne stala
Perhaps it would be better for me not to become

Vašej ženoj.
Your wife.
Upon examination of the music for the third song of Prokofiev's op. 27, it will be seen that the second stanza of the poem is missing in Prokofiev's setting. It has been indicated by the editors of the scholarly edition of Akhmatova's works recently issued that the early works in which this poem first appeared did not, in fact, contain this missing quatrain. Apparently it was published for the first time in 1961. This, then, explains its absence in Prokofiev's musical setting.

The phonetic aspect of this poem was carefully projected by Akhmatova and deserves a detailed analysis in itself. The very first word is soft due to the palatalized consonants and serves the poetess well as a happy choice for a word in this semantic category. The symbolism of the word "solnce" (sun) was already employed by Akhmatova in the first poem of Prokofiev's op. 27. Its recurrence here prompts a further comparison.

In a poem dating from the winter of 1945-46, in that lull before the storm unleashed by the new inquisition in Soviet literature instigated by Zhdanov and in which Akhmatova was one of the first to suffer, there appears an interesting development of this symbol. This poem, comprised of five disparate sections under the collective title of Cinque, has for its third section the following lines:
Ja ne ljubila s davnih dnej,
Since time immemorial I have not desired
Ctoby menja žaleli,
That people should feel compassion for me,
A s kaplej žalosti tvoej
But with a drop of your compassion
Idu, kak s solncem v tele.
I move about as though with the sun in my body.

Vot otčego vokrug zarja.
That is why all around there is a glow.
Idu ja, čudesa tvorja,
I move about, creating miracles,
Vot otčego!
That is why!

The reference to the sun in the lines quoted above may be interpreted as a direct continuation of its earliest connotations in the vocabulary of Akhmatova. It is all the more impressive considering the long periods of silence to which the poetess was constrained.

To return to our discussion of the poem of Prokofiev's op. 27, no. 3. After the evocative initial word, "pamjat'," (remembrance) the remaining three words are significant for the alliterative aspect which affords the alternation: sol-ser-sla -- the first two of which are stressed and the last unstressed. The first word, "solnce" (sun), is comprised entirely of hard consonants and provides a profound weight and phonic effect. The following word, "serdce" (heart), is related phonetically to the first. The third word, "slabeet" (grows faint), begins with a combination of hard consonants, but the stress falls on a palatalized bi-labial plus front vowel (followed by another softened vowel), thus assuring the softening appropriate to the word "slabeet." The over-all effect of this line may perhaps be likened to a recoiling or withdrawing.

The second line presents a radical departure from the metrical structure. The first line is cast in dactylic
tetrameter, with minor exception of the second foot which is trochaic. The second line is in iambic dimeter. Akhmatova must have selected this abrupt reversal of metrics to underline all the more dramatically her abrupt semantic juxtaposition. In this connection Vinogradov remarks:

... The principle of the "destroyed" parallelism is a basic factor in the composition of her poems. In them there is hardly any movement of words on a single psychological plane. Strings of words do not run, linked one to another, in one level, but are dashed together in groups, at times included in an isolated ring of the sentence, at times linking into a more complex unity — symbols of differing and, most frequently, two levels.... Most frequently one chain of phrases depicts an emotionally spectacular background, or a succession of exterior, sensually perceptible manifestations and another — the expression of emotions in the form of direct address to the interlocutor. The system of their juxtaposition gives rise to a presentation of an intense emotional connection between the two rows. For this reason, descriptions of the exterior world are perceived not in themselves, but as objective reflections of the feelings of the heroine, as allusive symbolism of her emotions.... In reality it is necessary to understand all these phrases as original "emotional metaphors," albeit from a semantic point of view it is possible here to establish their various types. This "metaphorical nature" of theirs is occasionally denuded.52

For the sake of clarification he introduces the poem presently under discussion and states:

... The first lines might be unequivocally understood as a tale of late autumn, of the onset of winter, only as long as this verbal row, organically developed and only by means of a gloomy allusion to the recollection of the "heart" opening the curtain of metaphorical thought, has not been intersected

58Viktor Vinogradov, O poëzii Anny Axmatovoj, p. 70. (My translation)
with importunate unexpectedness by an exclamation that defines the entire poem as a speech directed to a former lover (to the former "sun": "ty — solnce moix pesnopenij" [you are the sun of my song-singing]): Možet byť' lučše, čto ja ne stala vašel ženoj . . . 59

The phonetic of the brief second line offers, in the two words of which it is composed, maximum contrast in the stressed syllables: palatalized dental, high vowel plus jot in the first, "-tej," and labio-dental plus low, back vowel, "-va" — thus the semantic chasm between these first two lines is further highlighted.

Line three, again essentially dactylic in character, is an assemblage of predominantly high, palatalized sounds lending great delicacy and clarity to the semantic notion conveyed by the text. The balanced structure of this line is particularly noteworthy and lovely. It must be stated, however, that certain characteristics of the Russian language have served the poetess well indeed in this instance. The two outside elements of subject and verb — "veter . . . veet" — are linked by no less than four categories: (1) an initial palatalized "v"; (2) a stressed "e"; (3) a secondary "e"; (4) a "t" which is palatalized in the first case and final and hard in the second. There is, consequently, a case of suspended alliteration and an inner alliteration with the same pair.

Line four continues the poetess' concept in the previous line, but rhythmically produces virtually the same effect as line two in relation to line one. The inner pair of words have a scintillating musicality provided chiefly by the diminutive form of the first word, "snežinkami" (snowflakes), and the instrumental case endings — particularly in the adjective "rannimi" (early), with the two

(My translation)
high vowels followed by the double, palatalized "n."

Regarding the repetition of a word in line four, a device termed "the most obvious of Akhmatova's melodic usages . . . which the poet herself characterizes as 'blaženstvo povtorenija' (blessedness of repetition)," Rannit further reminds us that:

. . . The oldest Russian religious and secular chants show repetition developing into cadence.
. . . Russian symbolists gave this rhythmical device new life. This is true of Brjusov, Vjačeslav Ivanov and especially of Bal'mont and Blok.60

The semantic concept of line five is dexterously sharpened by Akhmatova's threefold use of "narrow" vowels: ú . . . i - u . . . é - ui. The three "a" vowels of the word "kanalax" (canals) not only contrast vividly with these three pairs, but, metaphorically speaking, serve to pull the mind of the poetess downward like an anchor-magnet attracting her inexorably toward some dread fate. This theme appears not infrequently in the works of Akhmatova.

Line six, phonetically, is noteworthy for the alliterative "st" as well as for the final stressed "a." In line seven the concept of gloom and abject despair reaches its greatest depth. This concept will be observed in a similar context in the following poem selected by Prokofiev as well. Line seven achieves high tension both through its vowel scheme as well as through the unstressed threefold alliteration: ni-ni-ne, the last of which has a phonetic value identical with the first two. This vowel tension is somewhat relaxed in the brief imploration of line eight, which is tantamount to an entreaty by the poetess for the warding off of some dreadful blow of fate.

60 Aleksis Rannit, "Anna Akhmatova in a context of Art Nouveau", p. 31.
Lines nine and ten prompt a comparison with lines three and four for their scintillating clarity. Noteworthy here is the hissing effect of the alliterative series: st-sp-st-sk. Semantically, Akhmatova paints a picture that is similar in its descriptive technique. Here the lovely transparency of the willow forms a backdrop as delicate and sensitive as early snowflakes of lines three and four that are just barely being agitated. The keywords — veter — prompt a consideration of these four lines as a separate and auxiliary symbol or, at least, as a distinct and separate concept latent in the mind of the poetess like a point in time standing still.

Lines eleven and twelve return us abruptly to the somber, inner recesses of the poetess' psyche. A series of unpalatalized consonants followed by back, stressed vowels contributes to the overall aura of despair. Aleksis Rannit makes the following interesting observation:

... The willow tree ... is for Akhmatova, as for Far Eastern and Art Nouveau artists, a symbol of ease, grace and of the peculiar delicate line which is fluid and produces a subtle languor. In addition, the branch of the willow tree may be considered ... a mirror-image of a gliding, fleeting form. ... Czudowski sees this Japanese manner based on "the secret of synthetic perception." He specifically underlines the omission of the "filling in" details in Japanese art as well as in Akhmatova's poems. He calls it dramatically a "breaking of composition." ... The disregarding of a unified linear perspective, a method which is constantly applied in Japanese art ... is peculiar to Akhmatova's style throughout her work. The Japanese manner may also be seen in the presentation of isolated essential details as appear under some specific momentary light ... 61

Regarding the juxtaposition of images in these lines and elsewhere Denis Mickiewicz, in a letter dated Jul 16, 1967, to Aleksis Rannit concerning a much later poem, "Pust' golosa organa snova grjanut" (Let the sounds of the organ thunder again) -- number thirteen of Anno Domini 1919-1922, written in 1921 and noteworthy for its vitriolic invective and bold-faced anathema directed against her former spouse -- has the following to say, which, it is felt, may shed further light on this aspect of Akhmatova's poetic technique:

Akhmatova's manner of abruptly juxtaposing concrete images has already received general notice and acclaim. In this case, I submit that her omitting of sequences of actions is analogous to polyfunctional thinking, not merely because she too uses sonorities as commanding images, but more specifically (1) because her manipulations with time (omissions) destroy any line of events, just as polyfunctions render obsolete the concept of a sustained melodic line, (2) because the thus isolated compounds call for comparison and contrast and not for chromatic progression as the dynamic vehicle of expression, and finally, (3) because the very theme -- the demonstration of essential or harmonic incompatibility (the function of the first person) must, by definition, be based on clusters rather than on lines.62

After the chaotic upheaval in the poetess' psyche alternating with the serenity of images bearing the cast of Oriental prints, the repetition of line one in line thirteen seems to reecho quite faintly -- and now, as though her final caprice of the poem were to sally forth from its hermetic container, in line fourteen Akhmatova plunges us abruptly from the faint shimmer of sunlight that still seems to recall into abysmal darkness (t'ma). Even here the poetess cannot resist toying with phonetic variants.

In the first of the three words comprising this brief line -- "Čto êto ? -- T'ma ? " ("What is this ? Darkness?) she gives us, after the shock of "Č," a hard, stressed "t." This is followed by a slight softening of the same consonant by its appearance after a front vowel, but in unstressed position. Finally, after a dash, the third and most critical word begins with a palatalized "t," which by now sounds faint and hesitant -- dreaded by the poetess.

Lines fifteen and sixteen are uttered in a mood of resignation. Phonetically, Akhmatova gives us a crescendo followed by a virtual subito piano: ó - ė - ý - á - ď - ĭ - í - ŭ - ë - ĕ - ţ - á. The solitary word of line sixteen -- "zima" (winter), unites the concepts of lines three and six.

By far the most lyrical song of Prokofiev's op. 27, in the usual sense of this expression, is no. 3, "Pamjat' o solnce" (Remembrance of sunshine). With the sole exception of the vocal phrase that extends through section marked poco più mosso -- "Možet . . . ženoj" (Perhaps it would be better for me not to become your wife) -- Prokofiev assigns the vocalist the most delicate and lovely melodic writing that he has displayed to this point. As in the first two songs of this set, each phrase or portion of a phrase that is new in the text elicits new accompanimental figuration. The recurrence of line one as line thirteen of the poem receives a slight variation in the accompaniment when this recurs -- in tact in the vocal line (105:1). The composer has also repeated 103:2:3 through 103:4:3 for his final section, 105:3:2 through 105:4:5.

An examination of Prokofiev's vocal treatment with reference to the metrical scheme and linear division of Akhmatova's poem will reveal the following points of interest. The first line of text, translated now into musical note values, corresponds closely:
The comma after the first line is observed as a quarter rest. Similarly, the second line of text begins on the second beat. The mood conveyed by the combination of music and text at this opening section is one of great fragility and a restrained mournfulness at the thought of receding sunlight and warmth.

The next section of text occasions an entirely different accompaniment figuration and something noteworthy in the vocal line as well. A gently rising figure that outlines a minor third and a figure with identical note values but starting a perfect fifth lower and with opposite motion, descends to a major third, for the text at the beginning and close of line three of the poem. Just as the poetess has obtained a special harmony with her balanced vowel pattern — "Veter ... veet" (wind ... blows) — likewise the composer achieves his own special effect. The voice is seconded by the accompaniment in a concerted effort to portray in musical sonorities the notion of snowflakes: the pianissimo gently swaying chordal figuration in the right hand together with the left hand passage of descending and ascending fifths are halted abruptly for two beats as the voice next utters the reiterated adverb "edva-edva" (scarcely, scarcely). The figuration in 103:4:2 succeeds in producing the impression of a gentle gust of wind and perhaps even a temporary halt in the snowfall.

For the text "Iva na nebe ..." (the willow ...) the composer has devised a turn of melody equally as lovely and graceful as his opening statement for the voice. Here one feels in addition an affinity to those peculiarly plaintive tunes associated with Russian folk music and ingenuous art music. Once again the composer has taken the pains to provide new material for the keyboard. One of the two
principal accompanying figures is a slowly alternating broken octave, perhaps intended to depict the gracefully extended branches of the willow that resemble a "transparent fan."

The following section, poco più mosso, for the text "Možet . . . ženoj" (Perhaps . . . wife) occasions a shift in meter and reflects the despondency of the poetess with its twice repeated vocal utterance that resolves around a minor second and is accompanied by a suitably mournful quasi tremolo figure in the bass. The composer has heightened the agitation here with his increase in speed.

With the exception of the passage in 105:1:5 to 105"3"1, which utilizes one new idea reiterated three times and a rising scale passage serving as bridge to the musical section containing the last full sentence of the poem, there is no new material employed. Prokofiev, in 105:3:2 to 105:4:5 utilizes the same material that appeared for the text of lines three and four of the poem — an obvious reference to the sequence of concepts followed by the poetess. A distinction in the final section comes in 105:4:2-3, for the text "Edva-edva," in the first instance, on the second and third beat of each, now express the same plain-tive quality in the piano with the descent of a fifth.

In spite of the fact that the song ends on an a minor triad in root position, there is still an aura of doubt and harmonic uncertainty that pervades the closing section. This is created chiefly by the "cycle" of fifths in the bass of the piano as well as by an F present in every measure save 105:4:2 and 105:4:5 itself.

Once again it may be pointed out that Prokofiev took great pains not to misplace any stresses and to observe every caesura in the lines of verse. This third song of op. 27 perhaps more than the other four is most successful in capturing that peculiarly feminine psychology and sensitivity. It is the only one of the five that does not
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call for a volume level higher than piano. The vocal line has the most immediately appealing cast. It is the only one of the group that is not through-composed. It has a form roughly ABA (albeit the return of the A section is extended by some six measures in order to adequately accommodate the setting of the text "Čto ěto? — T'ma? Možet byt'?" (What is this? Darkness? Perhaps!). This concept of haziness is at once juxtaposed to that of the sun and at the same time placed in apposition to the enfeebled impression of solar radiance in the repetition of line one of the poem: "Pamjat' ..." (Remembrance ...). With the exception of this section, the song is a fine example of neoclassicism.

"Zdravstvuj!" (Greetings!)

Zdravstvuj! Lëgkij šelest' slyšiš'
Greetings! Do you hear a light rustle
Sprava ot stola?
To the right of the table?
Ètix stroček ne dopišes' —
These lines you will not finish writing —
Ja k tebe prišla.
I have come to you.

Neuzeli ty obidiš'
Is it possible that you will offend (me)
Tak, kak v prošlyj raz:
Just like the last time:
Govoriš', Čto ruk na višiš',
You say that you do not see my hands,
Ruk moix i glaz.
My hands and my eyes.

U tebja svetlo i prosto.
In your place it's bright and simple.
Ne goni menja tuda,
Do not banish me to that place,
Gde pod dušnym svodom mosta
Where, beneath the stifling arch of the bridge
Stynet grjaznaja voda.
The mucky water is cool.
Example 61  Zdravstvuj! (p. 106) Prokofiev, op. 27, no. 4

The thirty-one measures of the fourth song of op. 27 may be conveniently divided into four sections with a subdivision in the first. The first sections contains the greeting with which this brief poem begins, and to this Prokofiev assigns a 3/2 measure, placing it on beats 2 and 3. As an upbeat into the second measure of the song, there is a rapidly ascending arpeggio that continues the same harmonic cluster with which the song begins. This flourish
-- appearing in two subsequent instances -- can be said to depict preeminently what is implied in the next two words of text: "Lëgkij šelest'" (Light rustle). The question posed by the poetess is handled with great understanding by the composer: first let it be borne in mind that the direct object, "Lëgkij šelest'," is placed before the verb. The composer has chosen to emphasize this syntactical arrangement by setting off these two words with rests in both voice and piano. The verb itself -- "slyšiš'" (do you hear) is similarly detached and has a like rhythymical distribution. These two brief utterances as well as the last three words that comprise this question put to the poetess' lover are all accompanied with a well defined and matching rhythymical distribution in the piano.

After the singer informs the lover that his work is to be interrupted in 106:2:3 and 106:3:1, Prokofiev, as though manipulating his characters like a stage director, places the vocalist in full evidence with an f#' bearing the instructions forte and luminoso, for the text "ja k tebe prisla" (I have come to you). This statement, in which we can picture the poetess suddenly and decisively emerging from the shadow of her lover and placing herself in full view, is immediately followed by another swiftly ascending arpeggio passage, this time to be executed with an outburst of volume, and not delicately as in the first measure of the song. With this flourish the first section closes. It is nonetheless joined to the following by means of the octave on G# in the bass, which is held over into 107:1:1.

The new section, which contains lines five through eight of the poem, has a quasi ostinato figure in the treble of the accompaniment. The entire passage is held within a pianissimo. The vocal line is confined to a lower middle tessitura to portray the painful thought: "Neuzeli . . . raz: " (Is it possible that you will offend (me)
just like the last time: ).

Example 62 Zdravstvuj! (p. 108) Prokofiev, op. 27, no.4

Lines seven and eight receive meticulous syllabification in Prokofiev’s rhythmic distribution in 108:1:1 to 108:2:1. Especially noteworthy here is the 2/4 measure that
separates the recurrence of the word "ruk" (hands).

With the indication a tempo, the flourish heard at the outset of the song now in reintroduced to dramatize the juxtaposition presented in line nine: "U tebja svetlo i prosto" (In your place it's bright and simple). The sudden observation by the poetess of the cheerful atmosphere prevailing in her lover's study is literally and quite graphically ushered out by the piano by another statement of the flourish. In this instance it is in the upper reaches of the keyboard, but is forced to redescend in muted and slightly altered form (108:3:1). The measures enclosed by the last renditions of the arpeggio figuration comprise what may be termed the third section.

The final section is marked allegretto. With the exception of the word "stynet" (is cool), the morbid fear expressed in the last three lines of the poem is placed in the lower voice of the singer on c#' and e". Both voice and piano bear the epithet inquieto. The right hand of the piano is given repeated minor thirds alternating three times with a perfect fourth until the measure of "stynet" (108:4:3), where a particularly gloomy effect is attained by the sustained, slightly clashing harmonic complex.

This chord is sustained in the last measure of the composition, where the voice intones on five successive eighth-notes at the pitch level e' and at the volume level pianissimo the final utterance of the poetess: "grjaznaja voda" (mucky water).
"Seroglazyj korol'" (The gray-eyed king)

Slava tebe bezysxodnaja bol'!
Glory to thee, inconsolable grief!
Umer včera seroglazyj korol'.
Yesterday the gray-eyed king died.

Večer osennij byl dušen i al,
The autumnal evening was stifling and scarlet,
Muž moj, vernuvšis', spokojno skazal:
My husband, upon returning, calmly said:

"Znacš', s oxoty ego prinesli,
"You know, from the hunt they brought him,
Tolo u starogo duba nasli.
They found his body near the old oak.

Žal' korolevu. Takoj molodoj!
I feel sorry for the queen. She is so young!
Za noč' odnu ona stala sedoj.
Over night she turned gray.

Trubku svoju na kamine nasël
He found his pipe on the fireplace
I na rabotu nočnju ušel.
And went out to his night work.

Dočku moju ja sejčas razbužu,
I shall awaken my daughter at once,
V sercy glazki eć pogljažu.
I shall gaze into her little gray eyes.

A za oknom šeljestjat topolja:
But beyond the window the poplars murmur:
"Net na zemle tvoego korolja"...
"Your king is not on earth"...
The last song of Prokofiev's op. 27 -- the only one of the set originally assigned a title by the poetess herself, "Soroglazij korol'" (The gray-eyed king), is clearly divided into seven sections according to the seven couplets of the poem. The first and last of these sections have minor subdivisions for the individual lines of the couplets concerned. The second section has a clear-cut subdivision to set off the two distinct sentences of which the couplet is comprised.

Example 63 Soroglazij korol' (p. 109) Prokofiev, op. 27, no. 5

The opening exclamation of the poem has prompted the composer to provide a measured, mournful processional. The first word of the text "Slava" (Glory), receives a broad triplet setting. This along with the remaining notes
of the first four measures assigned to the vocalist are strongly reminiscent of liturgical chant. The sensation of immeasurable grief and anxiety associated with the event to be related -- particularly the expression selected by the poetess: "bezysxodnaja bol" (inconsolable grief) -- is underlined by the "hollow" sounding backdrop in the accompaniment. Unisons, open fifths, sixths, sevenths, followed by sixths -- move to open fifths a minor third below the original pitch levels. This new fifth, on B and F#, accepts a change in meter from 2/4 to 3/4 and also sets the mood for the dire announcement of the king's death in 109:2:1-5. Through the entire first section the piano sounds uninterruptedly eighth-notes.

The text setting of line two of the poem demonstrates careful consideration. The first two words, "Umer včera" (yesterday . . . died) are spaced on either side of each word by rests. They have their stresses on the third beat of 109:2:1 and 2, respectively. Prokofiev portrays in this manner the great pain occasioned by the mournful tiding announced with such hesitance.

At the beginning of the new section in 109:3:1, the funereal mood is modified somewhat with the description of the evening and the entrance of the husband. The setting of the first words of the husband, 110:1:1 through 110:2:1, presents a palpitating yet furtive impression as he, with many interruptions relates the unhappy event. The rests assigned to the voice are shared by the right hand of the piano which matches the rhythm of the vocal line with a chordal pattern. Stresses indicated on the two downbeats of 110:2:2-3, a single chord in the piano in each of these measures, and a drop of a minor third in each measure in the vocal line all aid the husband in his expression of pity for the young queen.

The plaintive quality continues through the next phrase. Staccato chords in the right hand of the piano and
and a grace-note figure rising chromatically on every beat in 110:3:3 through 111:1:2 form a setting for the action described in lines 9 and 10 and suggest the unhurried steps of the husband as he carries out these movements.

The next section provides a decided change in mood in voice and piano. The latter has an F# pedal in the bass for 111:1:6 through 111:3:5, and E# pedal in 111:4:2 through 112:1:3. There is an artfully designed pattern in the right hand that moves from E major to A and finally to B while F# pedal is in force, and from F# major to B to C3 over the E# pedal. These harmonies sounded in the upper half of the accompaniment agree largely with the movement of the vocal line. The singer here has been suddenly elevated to a high tessitura and, singing pianissimo, and without a single rest written in, utters, in 111:2:4 to 111:4:1, a melodic phrase altogether typical of that type of national song glorified by Glinka and Dargomyzhsky.

The voice continues in the same vein in its next phrase only beginning one whole step higher -- on an a#. The E# pedal that the left hand of the piano has been sounding all through this last phrase, continues into the next section as repeated eighth-notes, but with an enharmonic change to F#.

After an interlude in 112:1:4 and 112:2:1 with a trill in the right hand, the composer now indicates lugubre. For the next four measures he places even the right hand of the piano in the lower reaches of the keyboard as the voice, demoted once more to a low tessitura, intones "A za oknom šelestjat topolja" (And beyond the window the poplars murmur).

A skillful touch and one that assures unity to the composition is the soft return, in 112:3:1, of the material from the beginning of the song. At the end of the composition, Prokofiev uses augmentation of his vocal line, and
and continues his accompaniment as the briefest of codas. He employs the same harmonic modulation that served him in 109:2:1, save that in this instance the 2/4 meter is retained until the final sustained pair of open fifths in 112:4:5, bearing the instruction smorzando.

Thus the composer, in a sense, accomplished in unequivocable manner what the poetess left to conjecture. The reuse of his musical material that so intensely depicted the opening exclamation of the poetess for the outburst of grief voiced by the poplars, cements the bond between these two declarations, and assures a final impression of gloom and decadence.

All the songs of op. 27, although essentially lyric in nature, still exhibit (albeit more subtly than previously) the influence of Mussorgsky. In this regard the composer's official biographer states:

... Prokofiev had a special reverence for Mussorgsky, whom he admired above all as one of the greatest innovators, one who defied academic rules and blazed new trails ... What Prokofiev inherited from Mussorgsky was, above all, his gift for bold description, his interest in the typical and comic aspects of life, and his ability to portray a man's appearance with a few deft strokes. Prokofiev also fell heir to Mussorgsky's amazing command of declamatory recitative ... and his ability to construct forms freely on the basis of content rather than according to ready made academic formulas.63

The character of Prokofiev's music in the songs of op. 27 is fundamentally traditional. Soviet critics, discounting the harmonic experiments already observed in the songs of op. 23 and very much in evidence in works such as the cantata, Seven, They are Seven, would have us believe

63I. Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, p. 464.
that the composer was unequivocally opposed to atonality. They illustrate his unshakable belief in functional harmony with the following remark:

... Unlike the atonalists, who seek to destroy the tonal foundations of music, Prokofiev consistently advocated clear-cut, functional harmony. "The construction of a composition on a tonal basis may be compared to building on rock, whereas construction without a tonal basis is like building on sand." 64

It should be pointed out that the statement of Prokofiev quoted by Nestyev was taken from an article appearing in Sovetskaja Muzyka, No. 1 of 1948, and consequently must forcibly be viewed as a reflection of the official Soviet opinion on this vital point. It is interesting to conjecture what Prokofiev's unbiased view on the matter may have been had he, like his compatriot Stravinsky, emigrated. But his lot was to remain in the Soviet and any such conjecture is fruitless. One can only reaffirm that at this stage of Prokofiev's development, his harmonic structure is indeed functional and, in spite of numerous clashing dissonances, a great many of which can easily be accounted for as decorative or passing notes, he remains quite traditional.

64I. Nest'ev, Prokof'ev, p. 478.
Five Poems of Konstantin Balmont, op. 36

No. 1 -- "Zaklinanie vody i ognja" (Incantation of fire and water)

No. 2 -- "Golos ptic" (Voice of the birds)

No. 3 -- "Babočka" (The butterfly)

No. 4 -- "Pomni menja!" (Remember me!)

No. 5 -- "Stolby" (The pillars)

Although Prokofiev has set the poetry of Balmont on previous occasions (most outstandingly in his dramatic cantata Seven, They are Seven!), in the five poems that constitute his op. 36 he reached what would later prove to be his highest level in the sphere of the art song. By the time he wrote these five songs, Prokofiev had attained considerable maturity resulting from the many experiences in his life and, more important, from the vast and greatly varied amount of writing that he had done by 1921. Thus, Prokofiev was capable not only of a deeper understanding of the poetry, but was capable of transferring this understanding to the medium of the solo song. He reflected in his op. 36 the technical experience gained in related symbolistic works. The stylistic and harmonic sophistication of The Love for Three Oranges (especially the satirical and grotesque style of writing for characters such as Fata Morgana and The Cook) is continued in Prokofiev's final set of art songs -- the Five Poems of Konstantin Balmont, op. 36.

Three of the poems in this set are not to be found in any published collection of Balmont's poetry: they were seemingly either written on the spot, or, at any rate, suggested to Prokofiev, at the time of the latter's visits
to the poet in Brittany in late summer of 1921, when these songs were composed.

"Zaklinanie vody i ognja" (Incantation of fire and water)

Ja svet zažgu, ja svet zažgu
I'll light a flame, I'll light a flame

Na čtom beregu.
On this shore.

Idi tixon'ko.
Go very quietly.

Sledi, na kamne est' voda,
Take care, on the stone there is water,

Idi so mnoj, s ogněm tuda.
Come with me, with the fire, there.

Na belom kamne est' voda.
On the white stone there is water.

Idi tixon'ko.
Go very quietly.

Ruka s rukoj, ruka s rukoj,
Hand in hand, hand in hand,

Zdes' kto-to est' drugoj.
Here there is some one else.

Idi tixon'ko.
Go very quietly.
In the course of her discourse on the place of music in the aesthetics of the Russian and French symbolists, Georgette Donchin points out that:

... Bal'mont, who was generally considered a "musical" poet par excellence, in the same sense as Verlaine, understood "music" rather as a gamut of sounds than as the expressiveness of language.65

And in referring to the important part Prince Urusov had played in opening his eyes to the French poets, she quotes from Balmont's Gornye veršiny (Mountain peaks):

... Urusov was the first to make me aware of myself ... of what lived within me, but what I did not yet clearly understand: the love of the poetry of harmony (sounds), a worship of the musicality of sounds which attracted me, but to which at the same time I was afraid to give myself ... 66

And Balmont, echoing the eulogies of literary critics, blatantly announces:

... I have shown what a poet who loves music can do with the Russian verse. Here are rhythms and harmonies found for the first time. 67

The specific inherent lilting musical qualities in Zaklinanie vody i ognja will become quite obvious in the course of our discussion of Prokofiev's musical setting of this poem. Attention must be called to the regular iambic meter and the vowel patterns that the poet contrived to alternate quite regularly. In the three quatrains the finals are, line by line, without exception: a/a/a/o, and in the three tercets are varied sets — u/u/o, oj/oj/o, and ö/e/o, respectively. Another striking feature is the echeloned effect attained by the poet.

In the first stanza several points are noteworthy:
(1) the strong and regular contrast in the stressed vowels;
(2) the use of a velar before each back stressed vowel;
(3) the repetition of the first three words, closely related to the employment of the device of lexical acronogram, "very common in Russian folk poetry"; 68

67 Ibid.
the haunting refrain in line three — I'di tixon'ko (Go very quietly). The very meaning of this brief line is emphasized in a manner in which Balmont proclaimed that he excelled: two palatalized consonants between three "i's," a soft velar and, finally, a palatalized "n' " which in turn softens the velar "k." The adverb in this line is impossible to render in English by one word. It is a peculiarly Slavic diminutive form with a variety of subtle connotations, some of which are implicit even depending upon how it is enunciated.

The reduction in feet line by line in this tercet produces an effect quite inconsistent with the semantic content. The more hesitant, halting, cautious and wary the declaimer of the incantation becomes, the more this is reflected in the metrics.

The quatrain that follows continues with a great musical sensitivity the opposition in stressed vowels. An especially effective phonetic device of considerable delicacy in lines four, five and six are the consonants "mn" either side by side, as in "kamne/mnoj/kamne" or inverted and separated as in "ognëm" and "na belom." Balmont resorts again to the device of repetition in line six but substitutes one word with great effect. Line seven, a repetition of the refrain in line three, is here even more arresting since it follows a line of four full feet. The psychological effect of the fourfold appearance of "ruka" (hand), with its alternation of stressed "a" with stressed "oj," borders on the hypnotic.

Although a symbolistic interpretation of this first poem of Prokofiev's op. 36 might easily be formulated, it might also fall into the category of primitivism. In speaking of this aspect of Balmont, Donchin states that he:

... went through a wild pantheistic period which, in a way, also signified a distortion of nature
and a tribute to paganism... But all the successive phases of Balmont were only exercises in traversing the widest possible range of experiences and attitudes.69

Basic vocabulary elements both in the figurative and literal sense are all that the poet employs in this incantation. The grammatical elements to which the poet restricts himself in the first three stanzas are skeletal. The four verbs: ignite, go take heed, be; the four noun concepts: light-fire, river bank-water, stone, hand; the two adjectives and the one adverb complete this eerie, mysterious scene. An aura of veiled secrecy is conjured up by the expressive adverbial idea, "tixon'ko" (very quietly).

The pulsating rhythm of this weird incantation is further heightened by the quasi-galop conveyed by the almost constant vowel alternation and opposition.

The ultimate quatrain of the poem, with its selection of elements and phrases that have appeared previously, can be likened, in its quasi-kaleidoscopic array of symbols, to certain contemporary film techniques with simultaneous or rapid succession of shots -- a panorama of concepts.

Prokofiev's setting of Zaklinanie vody i ognja can be divided into six sections according to the stanzas of Balmont's poem with the following results:

Section A: 133:1:1 through 133:2:5
Section B: 133:3:1 through 134:3:4
Section C: 134:4:1 through 135:1:4
Section D: 135:2:1 through 136:1:4
Section E: 136:2:1 through 136:3:3
Section F: 136:3:4 through 137:4:5

The musical structure of the song may be further subdivided into sixteen segments of which nine are re-

69 Georgette Donchin, Op. cit., p. 69
petitions or derivations, as demonstrated in the following scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Measure:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a: 1-6</td>
<td>b: 7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a1: 44-48</td>
<td>c: 10-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b1: 20-22</td>
<td>d: 15-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b2: 28-29</td>
<td>d1: 51-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b3: 41-43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b4: 49-50</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b5: 59-60</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b6: 61-63</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b7: 64-67</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>e: 23-27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f: 30-35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g: 36-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prokofiev unifies his setting of this poem by a continual ternary figuration and by the repetitions of the segments as noted. The ternary figuration is interrupted only once in the course of the composition and comes to a full stop in the last two measures of the song.

The sophistication of harmonic modulations is one of the most salient features in this composition. The restless, furtive quality that permeates this song, corresponding so perfectly to the mood of the poem itself, is due principally to frequently shifting key centers.

The vocal line captures the lilting effect of the essentially iambic nature of Balmont's poem with the aid of 6/8 meter employed throughout the song. The sole exception is the insertion of one 3/8 measure at the beginning of section C.

Excitement is high at the very outset of the song due to the rhythmical concept and more so to the serrated but rising vocal line ("ae ex. 64"). This phrase, "Ja svet zažgu . . . na ètom beregu" (I'll light the flame on this shore), clearly calls attention to the light that illuminates this eerie scene. The effective musical refrain (segment b in the above scheme) is an appropriate setting.
of the command "Idi tixon'ko" (Go very quietly). The stressed syllable of the first word, although assigned to a lower pitch than the first, is nonetheless underlined by a distant harmony. However, the stressed syllable of the adverb "tixon'ko" is held to a muted state both by a drop in the vocal line as well as a downward flow of the chord stream — which is effective indeed after the high peak that is reached in 133:2:1. The silence implored by the performer of the incantation is achieved by a halt in activity in the treble of the piano, sustaining a hollow sounding chord over an octave on D in the bass.

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Example 64 Zaklinanie vody i ognja (p. 133) Op. 36, no.1
Section B (beginning 133:3) displays Prokofiev's ability to illustrate graphically his text. The undercurrent of anxiety and the actual hazard latent in the slippery stone is vividly portrayed in the series of three chromatic rising flourishes of four notes each. These lead into successive strong beats starting with the highest pitch reached in both voice and piano, g#, and coming immediately after the mention of the word "voda" (water).

In 133:1:2, the composer repeats, for his own purposes, the second half of line five of the poem as well as the sixth line in its entirety. This is the first instance in a solo song where Prokofiev has taken such a liberty in his handling of a poem.

In 133:1:3 to 133:3:1, the furtive sensation is underlined by the opposition of voice alternating on beats 1 and 4, c# and g#, respectively, and bass of the piano alternating g and c# on the same beats. The refrain "Iditixon'ko" in 133:3:2-4 is transposed a minor third lower than in its first appearance.

Genuine alarm begins to make an inroad in section C (133:4:1), with the placing of the first syllable of "kto-to" (some one) on g#, the highest point to be attained by the vocalist in the entire song, marked forte and accompanied by full sonorities in the piano, also at the level of forte. Great and sudden contrast is had by setting the refrain which follows closely upon the heels of the alarm in 134:1:3 (See ex. 65), a half-step lower than it was in bl. Section D (134:2:1) calls for pianissimo with the fear of being overheard expressed by the outline of a diminished seventh chord in the voice in the first two measures, and by a series of sinuous figurations in the right hand of the piano with a rising sixteenth-note triplet figure.

In 134:3:1 is another instance of repetition of text at the whim of the composer. This time he
does not repeat a line as such, but manipulates to suit his needs. He provides musical excitement values which may have been impossible to obtain without textual repetition. The effect produced seems to have justified the liberty that the composer has permitted himself. The series of thirds alternating with minor triads in root position (135:4:1-4) set against an octave F pedal in the treble brings the song to a new level of excitement.

Example 65 Zaklinanie vody i ognja (p. 135), op. 36, no.1
Section E (136:2:1), with its text of close semantic affinity with line one of the poem, utilizes, as might have been predicted, the music of segment a, transposed a minor third higher. The refrain, b⁴, is similarly transposed. This brings the climax of the song (136:3-4), with the fear of the wet stone expressed in line 19 of the poem. For this purpose the composer employs the flourishishes of segments c and f alternatively, thus providing the most active part of accompaniment in the composition.
As was the case in all previous sections a descent in the vocal line is observed prior to the intoning of $b^5$ (137:2:3 -- 137:3:1).

For the third and last time Prokofiev reiterates text, but again to very great advantage, as seen in the final statement of the refrain. The partial augmentation in rhythm, the hovering between $e'$ and $e''$, and the volume indication pianissimo -- assure for the composer an effect of utter secrecy and the aura of primitivism.

Example 67 Zaklinanie vody i ognja (p. 137) op. 36, no. 1
"Golos ptic" (The voice of the birds)

Ot lastočki do solov'ja
From the swallow to the nightingale
Vsa povest' malaja moja.
My entire tale is brief.
Vesnu kasatka načinaet,
The swallow-tail begins the spring,
A solovej konec ej znact.
And the nightingale knows its end.

S kasatkoj pervoj v pervyj grom
With the first swallow-tail at the first thunder
Parnym urnojsja molokom.
Wash yourself in new milk,
I budeš' bel, ne budeš' lišnij
And you'll be white, you'll not be in the way
Pred devoj, pod cvetuščej višnej.
For a maiden, beneath the blossoming cherry tree.

Gnezdo, v kotorom malyn raj,
The nest, in which there is a paradise for the little ones,
U lastočki, ne razorjaj,
Is the swallow's, do not destroy it.
Ne to pril'nut k tebe vesnuški
Otherwise freckles will cling to you,
Smejat'sja budut i durnuški.
Ugly girls will even laugh.
Kogda zasviščet solovej,
When the nightingale begins to whistle,
Vnikaj v tu pesnju, vver'sja ej.
Heed that song, place your trust in it,
No est' i lešego v nej dudka.
But there is also a goblin's fife in it.
Ne sleduj, ěto zlaja šutka.
Don't mind it, that is a nasty joke.

Julinaja est' stukotnja.
There is a wood-lark's clattering.
Ne sleduj ej, pojmi menja.
Don't mind it, listen to me.
No srcdcom slušajšja raskata,
But with your heart heed nature's sounds,
I sčast'e rascvetčt bogato.
And happiness will flower bounteously.

I est' kukuškin perelët
And there is the flight of a cuckoo
V toj pesne, čto ljubov' zovët.
In that song that summons love.
Ne sleduj mudrosti kukuški,
Heed not the cleverness of the cuckoo,
'I ne igraj v ljubvi v irškii.
And do not toy with love as with toys.

Po solov'innomu zapoj
Sing like the nightingale
Do samoj vysi goluboj.
To the very height of the blue.
I znaj, čto svjatost' gnëzd — doroga
And know that the sanctity of nests is the way
Do zvëzd, do solnca, i do Boga.
To the stars, to the sun, and to God.
As in the first poem of Prokofiev's op. 36, primitivism is greatly felt again in "Golos ptic" (The voice of the birds). However in addition there are strong symbolic overtones, which may be interpreted as follows.

The swallow may said to signify the advent of spring -- the beginning of life. The nightingale stands for fruition and melody. New milk represents the baptismal rite. The nest and its appositive, "paradise," might be interpreted as an exhortation to lead a pure life on earth -- to attempt to realise the "earthly paradise" while in life. The song of the nightingale in the last three stanzas culminates in the way to God. In this poem, in brief, Balmont affords us a communion with nature by means of the sweet-throated songstresses, the nightingales -- the embodiment of love and purity.

The structure of the poem is regular in two respects: (1) an equal number of lines in all seven stanzas and (2) a relentless rhyme scheme -- AA/bb. "Golos ptic" is in principle based on the metrical scheme of iambic tetrameter, however the strict iambus is observed only in lines 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18 and 27. Two different irregular patterns are (1) in lines 1, 10 and 17 and (2) in lines 2, 6, 13, 21 and 26.

Some fascinating semantic sidelights are provided by the unusual metrics employed by Balmont in this poem. For instance line one with its omission of stress on the fourth and sixth syllables and accentuating "lastočki" (swallow) in initial position and "solov'ja" (nightingale) in final, very neatly underlines the concept developed by Balmont in lines 3 and 4. In this semantic parallel the poet is likening the brevity of his tale to the transient, ephemeral quality of spring. Line seven, with its three successive stresses of the consonant "b," the second of which contrasts in that it is palatalized, produces easily a chant-like effect. Line eleven presents along with line
twelve, a lilting folkloric, rhythmic feeling thanks to the colorful expressions at the end of each of these lines. Later, in line fourteen: vn/v tu/vv; in line twenty-four the interesting combination: igraj v ljubvi v igruški; and finally the last two lines of the present a fluid rhyme internally with their semantic inseparability.

Two expressions used by Balmont in this poem — "mudrosti kukški" (the cleverness of the cuckoo) -- and -- "svjatost' gnězd" (the sanctity of nests) -- fall into the category of abstract suffixes termed by Donchin as having "a decidedly bookish character" and as being "alien to the spirit of the Russian language." After ascribing the predilection for the abundant use of this technical trait to the direct influence of the French symbolists, she goes on to declare that "this method of using abstract epithets (priem otvločenija epiteta) is characteristic of the entire symbolist school."70

The second song of op. 36, "Golos ptic" (The voice of the birds) represents an interesting challenge to its composer's descriptive abilities. We have already seen how he met such a challenge in his earlier composition, the Ugly Duckling. Once more, Prokofiev, with his zest for life, his great love of nature, and his indelible memories of childhood on the country estate at Sontsovka in the Ukraine, meets the test with great competence. Several thematic ideas are recurrent in this composition. The following scheme illustrates the musical structure of the song and the several appearances of these ideas:

70Georgette Donchin, The Influence of French Symbolism on Russian Poetry, p. 166.
Example 68 Golos ptic (p. 138) Prokofiev, op. 36, no. 2
The opening thematic idea of op. 36, no. 2 (See ex. 68), with its plaintive quality reminiscent of a Russian shepherd of the steppes, is one of numerous mournful melodies of Prokofiev, such as the moderato theme from his Third Sonata for piano, op. 23 (see ex. 69), or the mezzo-soprano solo from the cantata Alexander Nevsky, op. 78 (See ex. 70), or even more soulful and lamenting, the clarinet solo theme in the introduction to his Third Piano Concerto, op. 26 (See ex. 71).

Example 69 Third Piano Sonata (Moderato) Prokofiev, op. 28

Example 70 Alexander Nevsky (mezzo solo) Prokofiev, op. 78

Example 71 Third Piano Concerto Prokofiev, op. 26
The second measure of the solo clarinet passage seen in Example 71 should now be compared with 138:2:3-4 in the opening of "Golos ptic" (See ex. 68). This passage is derived from one of the most typical formulas in Russian folk music and its recurrence in the song will be frequent.

The bucolic introduction in the piano is followed by vocal introductory remarks in 138:2. Each thought of the poet is set apart by a rest and the entire phrase is well molded. The voice returns to the g♯ in 138:3:1, around which the start of the phrase pivoted. The sixteenth-note figuration, set in motion in 138:3:1, with one minor exception will chatter unceasingly until the last measure of the song. "Kasatka" (the swallow-tail), mentioned in 138:3:2, occasions a soaring phrase that aptly expresses the radiance of spring.

Example 72 Golos ptic (p. 139) Prokofiev, op. 36, no. 2
To represent the end of spring, Prokofiev selects the distant key of B♭, as opposed to B employed previously. The next section (See ex. 72) utilizes a new figuration in the right hand of the piano that sparkles brightly as both voice and piano constantly alternate between E major and e minor - not so much with indecisiveness over which mode to select as much as to reflect the shimmering light of the bath in new milk, the whiteness of clean skin, and the flowering cherry tree. In this entire section as well as in much of that which follows, the accompaniment employs the Prokofiev toccata-like style of writing.

In section al (139:4:2-3), the plaintive and quasi bucolic introductory theme is employed in the treble of the piano. The voice, with a much less immediately appealing phrase, enunciates the exhortation not to destroy the nest which is a paradise for the little ones:

Example 73 Golos ptic (p. 139) Prokofiev, op. 36, no. 2

The amusing punishment to be inflicted — "Ne to pril'nut k tebe vesnuški" (Otherwise freckles will cling to you) — upon the one who does not heed this exhortation is vivaciously captured in the staccato rising scale passage in voice and treble of piano in 140:2:1-2. The grace notes most graphically aid the composer in the depiction of this.

"Kogda zasviščet solovej" (When the nightingale begins to whistle), occasions a rather lyric soaring from the voice, employing material that had already served in 139:1
(section d), but in this instance the composer elongates certain notes to accommodate the incipient warbling of the songstress. The material of 140:2:1-2 (section e) now reappears and is used as effectively as before. Here it portrays the fifing of the wood goblin. A variant of 138:3:1 to 138:4:3 (section c) makes its appearance at 141:3:2. The lush character of this vocal phrase renders full justice to lines 19 and 20: "No serdcem slušajsja raskata, I sčast'e rascvetët bogato" (But with your heart heed nature's sounds, And happiness will flower bounteously).

A droning figure in 142:1:2-3 (section f -- See ex. 74) typifies the overhead flight of the cuckoo. In 142:2:1-2 is heard another statement of the opening motive of the composition in the treble of the piano. Once again the voice is relegated to a secondary position insofar as melodic interest is concerned. But its text "v toj pesne, čto ljubov' zovët" (in that song that summons love), is rendered by the bucolic theme. The admonition sung in 142:3:1, "I ne igraj v ljubvi v igruski" (And do not toy with love as with toys) is a variant of section e (140:2:1) in inversion.

The most lyrical outburst in the entire song comes in 142:4:2 to 143:2:1 for the text "Po solov'inomu zapoj" (Sing like the nightingale) (See ex. 74). Particularly noteworthy is 142:4:2, for once again the composer evokes his introductory theme. As the voice begins to sing a variant of section d, the piano withdraws to the background with its muted bird calls.

The voices return, in its final section, to a high tessitura for the text "do zvëzd, do solnca" (to the stars, to the sun), and redescends somewhat for the last words of the poem, "do Boga" (to God), and as the singer enunciates this final word, the piano, for the very last time, intones its pastoral theme (See ex. 75), this time in its entirety.
Example 74 Golos ptic (p. 142) Prokofiev, op. 36, no. 2

A final word that may point up Prokofiev's method of underscoring semantic relationships: in section a1, the text "raj" (paradise) appears; in section a2, the text "ljubov'" (love); in section a3, the singer just
begins to enunciate "Po solov'inomu" (Like the nightin-gale) and, finally, in section a^4, Prokofiev has given the singer the text "Boga" (God.).
"Babočka" (The butterfly)

The yellow-winged butterfly, familiar since childhood,

Pokačalas' po vetru i sela na mak. 
Tittered in the wind and alighted on a poppy.

Xobotkom govorit: Posmotrite, zdes' doma ja! 
Through its little snout it says: Look, here I am at home!

Vam privetstvennyj kryl'jami delaju znak. 
I make you a sign of greeting with my wings.

Pokivala, složila dva stjaga uzornye, 
It nodded, folded its two ornamented banners,

I zabylas' v dremotc pod žarkim lučom. 
And lapsed into somnolence beneath a warm ray.

O, kak tjagostny noči ljudskie i černye. 
Oh, how oppressive and black are the nights of men.

O, kak bol'no duše, rasseččennoj mečom. 
Oh, how painful for my soul, cleft by a sword.

The third song of op. 36, "Babočka" (The butterfly), may be conveniently divided into four major sections musically, each of which accommodates two lines of text.
This is illustrated in the following scheme:

Section A: 144:1:1 through 144:3:5
Section B: 144:4:1 through 145:2:5
Section C: 145:3:1 through 145:4:8
Section D: 146:1:1 through 146:4:8

For a more complete musical analysis, certain subdivisions seem necessary. These are indicated in the
following scheme, indicating the measures included in each of the subdivisions:

Section A
Subdivisions: a — 1-6; b — 7-12; c — 13-16.

Section B
Subdivisions: a — 17-20; b — 21-24;
   b1 — 25-28; b2 — 29-32.

Section C

Section D
Subdivisions: a — 49-60; b — 61-64;
   b1 — 65-69; c — 70-78.

The contrasting moods of the music of "Babočka" reflect similar changes in the poem itself. The extremely rich and varied vocabulary in the poem is mirrored in the equally varied figuration in the accompaniment of this composition.

Sections A and B represent the delicate flitting of the butterfly with the amply varied texture of the accompaniment. A notable instance of text graphically depicted is on the first beat of 144:4:1. A cadencing in figuration in both hands of the piano — a three-note arpeggiated figure in contrary motion — is followed by a trill for the ensuing three measures. This represents the decision of the butterfly to settle momentarily on a poppy.

In section C, a considerably more gentle movement together with the sole change of harmony on downbeats of 145:3:1-2-3 properly convey the next action, "Pokivala, složila dva stjaga uzornye" (It nodded, folded its two ornamented banners). The vocal line, rising to c'' in 145:4:7, is an interpretation on Prokofiev's part for the text "pod žarkim lučom" (beneath a warm ray).

The same, gently swaying eighth-note figuration continues throughout most of section D, but the composer
clearly establishes the alter ego of the butterfly's character by anticipating in the bass of 146:1:2 (with a b♭ minor tonic triad) the text that begins in the following measure, "O, kak tjagostny . . ." (Oh, how oppressive . .) (See ex. 76). In 146:1:3 to 146:2:4, Prokofiev gives his vocalist a soulful, soaring line of an essentially lyric nature that reaches its culmination with the text "černye" (black) on g♭", in 146:2:3. This phrase, which bears the indication doloroso, is the first instance in the song where the singer settles down with a cantabile passage, as opposed to the predominantly parlando style utilized up to this point.

The vocal setting of the final line of the poem occasions a most poignant outburst with its climax attained on the downbeat of 146:4:1, with the second syllable of the text "mečom" (-by a- sword).

The harmony at this crucial point is a cluster centering around b♭ minor and thins out gradually. The b♭ minor chord without added notes is displayed only in the last two measures of the song, after the voice has expired. The tonality of b♭ minor ending the composition may be said to demonstrate the alter ego in the poet's thinking -- the most salient manner of contrasting the bright tonal sensation of the first sections of the song which have a predominantly major cast.

Example 76 Babočka (p. 146) Prokofiev, op. 36, no. 3
"Pomni menja!" (Malajskij zagovor dlja pamjati)
(Think of me! Malaysian exorcism for memory)

Ja prinês tebe vkradčivyj list,
I have brought you a penetrating leaf,

Ja prinês tebe prjanyj betel'.
I have brought you the gingery betel.

Položi ego v rot, nasladis',
Place it in your mouth, relish it.

Poljubiv menja, pomni menja.
Having fallen in love with me, remember me.

Solnce vstanet li, pomni menja,
If the sun rises, remember me,

Solnce Ijazet li, pomni menja,
If the sun sets, remember me,

Kak ty pomniš' otca ili mat',
As you remember your father or mother,

Kak ty pomniš' rodimyj svoj dom,
As you remember the house of your birth,

Pomniš' dveri i lestnicu v nčm,
You remember the doors and staircase in it,

Dněm li, noč'ju, pomni menja.
Day or night, remember me.

Esli grom zagremel, vspomjani,
If the thunder has roared, recollect,

Esli veter svistit, vspomjani,
If the wind should whistle, recollect,

Esli v nebe sverkajut ogni, vspomjani,
If flames should flash in the sky, recollect, recollect, recollect.
Esli zvonko petux propoet,
If the cock should crow clearly,
Esli slyshi' kak vremja idet,
If you hear how time flies,
Esli ces ubegaet za ces,
If hour after hour escapes,
I bezit, i vedet svoj rasskaz,
And flees, and continues its tale,
Esli solnce idet za lunoj,
If the sun should go behind the moon,
Bud' vsej pamjat'ju vimeste so mnoj.
Be together with me in all your memory.

Stuk, stuk, stuk. Éto ja prixoju.
Knock, knock, knock. It is I who am coming.
Stuk, stuk, stuk. Ja v okoško gljažu.
Knock, knock, knock. I peer into your little window.
Slyšiš' serdce? 'V něm stol'ko ognja.
Do you hear the heart? There is just as much fire in it.
Dušu čuvstvuješ? 'Pomni menja!
Do you feel the soul? Remember me!

"Zagovor dlja pamjati" (Exorcism for memory) is the title that Balmont assigned to the fourth and last of the "Malayskije zagovory" (Malaysian exorcisms) in the section entitled "Okeanija" (Oceania) in his book Zovy drevnosti (Evocations of antiquity).

The South Pacific, one of several exotic areas visited by Balmont in his years of peregrination, contributed to the enrichment of his already colorful palette.

The primitivism rampant in this incantation is related to Stravinsky's Rite of Spring and to Prokofiev's Scythian Suite, based on his ballet music, Ala and Lolli.
There is a certain symbolic, mystical correspondence between those two compositions and this poetry -- both in the paganism and primitivism that pervades the basic conception of all these works and, more specifically, in the strong, shifting rhythmic patterns and violent contrasts in orchestral coloration in them.

"Zagovor dlja pamjati" (or, as Prokofiev entitled his musical setting -- Pomni menja!) is the most intriguing of all the Balmont poems set by Prokofiev from a standpoint of metrics. The opening four lines represent a unity in the spacing of stresses, but each of the four lines contains a variation in syllabic distribution. What must be underlined is that all four begin with an anacrusis. Lines one and two differ in the epithets employed. Lines three and four, with commas, display a caesura, but differ in the number of syllables before the caesura.

Also in this quatrain one experiences a feeling of eerie insinuation in the invitation to partake of the pagan rite, expressed at the outset in an extremely smooth and regularly flowing ternary (in a double sense, as can be observed) anapest. If one draws a diagonal line from the initial "Ja" (I) to the final "menja" (me) of this opening stanza, one senses both the perfection of unity and the power of the incantation. A certain naïveté in the repetitions of lines 1, 2 and 3, 4, respectively, also underline the primitive aspect and add to the structural unity of the stanza.

In the next five lines an abrupt shift in the rhythmic structure is seen. Lines five and six must be considered separately. Beginning the incantation, these two lines invoke the sun: the pause occasioned by the command "pomni menja!" (remember me!), is dramatic and prevents too rapid an acceleration. Lines seven and eight are uplifting and call for acceleration, especially if the
first two words of each are taken as an anacrusis. The series of increasingly more frenetic proclamations that begin with "Esli . . ." (If), and reaching their culmination in line nineteen with the final magical statement of the incantation call for a tremendous rise in pitch and volume. Also somewhat unusual are the three successive stressed syllables in this line.

In the last four lines a drop in intensity in all levels is felt only to rise once again to a powerful climax -- for the Malayan memory potion has now taken complete hold and, incapable of being eradicated, all that one is conscious of is the refrain, "vspomjani" (recollect). Very definite in these last four lines are the caesuras.

The phonetics in this poem exhibit a lavish and quite unrestrained display of Balmont's rich imagination and technique. Examining the lines chiefly by couplets, in the first four pairs of lines is seen the device of repetition of a word (or words) or only a syllable, as in the second couplet. The fifth couplet, lines nine and ten, while not continuing the repetitive device, display an equally effective one. Forming a type of phonetic enjambement, the last word of line eight, the first of line nine, the last of nine and the first of ten give this interesting sequence: dom-pom-v nöm-dnöm. The initial of lines eleven through sixteen together with that of line eighteen are a salient example of anaphora. Finally, the couplet of lines twenty and twenty-one again resort to repetition and, in fact, threefold.

The vowel pattern in the first quatrain is ternary in that three pivotal points are strongly felt. There is imitation, with only the final vowels showing deviation. But even here it will be observed that the poet manages to achieve harmony between his final stresses of lines one and three: o-a-i; o-a-e; i-o-i; i-o-a.
The consonants contribute greatly to the orchestra-
tion of lines eleven through seventeen. Line eleven,
besides the spirant in the opening and closing words, shows
Balmont availing himself of two features of the Russian
language employed in a single device dating back to the
earliest recorded byliny: "grom zagremel" (literally --
the thunder has begun to thunder). As can be seen, this
ancient poetic formula also provides Balmont with a mor-
pheme which is perhaps more sonorous than its English
counterpart. The melopoeia of the Russian with its initial
velar, the strongly rolled "r," and finally the voiced
bi-labial, is brought into relief even further by the
morphophonemic vowel alternation o/e. The entire line
eleven presents the following effective rhythmic scheme:

\[
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
& & \hat{e} & \hat{e} & \hat{e} & \hat{e} & \hat{e} & \hat{e} & \hat{e} & \hat{e} \\
& \hat{o} & \hat{e} & \hat{o} & \hat{e} & \hat{o} & \hat{e} & \hat{o} & \hat{e} & \hat{o} \\
& \hat{e} & \hat{o} & \hat{e} & \hat{o} & \hat{e} & \hat{o} & \hat{e} & \hat{o} & \hat{e} \\
\end{array}
\end{array}
\]

Lines 12, 13 and 14 all have at least one instance
of melopoeia gratuitously provided by the language:
"svistit" (whistle), "sverkajut" (flash), "petux propoët"
(the cock will crow). Finally, in line twenty-three, the
query "Dušu čuvstvueš?" (Do you feel your soul?), is
swathed in intimacy, almost secrecy - due to the vowel
sequence: ú - ũ - ú - ũ - ě.

"Pomni menja!", Prokofiev's op. 36, no. 4, is the
most organic and at once the most dramatic of all the songs
of this composer. The term organic is used in speaking of
this composition, for it can be clearly demonstrated how
the entire song is built around, is derived from, or other-
wise utilizes the leading motive present in the first
measure (See ex. 77).
The scheme provided below shows the main divisions in the musical structure of "Pomni menja!" , op. 36, no.4:

Section A: 147:1:1 through 148:2:2
Section B: 148:2:3 through 148:3:3
Section C: 148:4:1 through 149:3:2
Section D: 149:3:3 through 150:3:1
Section E: 150:3:2 through 151:3:3
Section F: 152:1:1 through 152:3:3
Section G: 153:1:1 through 153:3:3

Subdivisions are again necessary here not only for a better understanding of the musical structure, but to indicate the correspondence with lines of text:

Section A
The piano and voice must be considered separately in this first section:

For the piano:  a — 8-11; b — 12-15;  c —16-19
For the voice:  a — 4-7;  a^1 — 8-11;  a^2 —12-15;  a^3 — 16-19.

Section B
In this section voice and piano join forces to repeat the two measure phrase 20-21 in 22-23.

Section C
Subdivisions:  a — 24-25;  b — 26-27;  c — 28-29;
     d — 30-31.

Section D
Subdivisions:  a — 32-36; b — 37-40;  c — 41-44.

Section E
Subdivisions:  a — 45-46; b — 47-48;  c — 49-50;
     d — 51-56. (This last subdivision properly speaking should be further divided into two parts to accomodate the text with the musical division coming precisely in the middle of measure 52)
Section F
Subdivisions: a -- 57-63; b -- 64-67.

Section G
Subdivisions: a -- 65-71; b -- 72-76.

With only two exceptions, the subdivisions noted above each accommodate one line of text. These exceptions both occur in Section E: (1) at subdivision b (47-48), which contains lines 15 and 16, and (2) at subdivision d (51-56), for lines 18 and 19.

Example 77 Pomni menja! (p.147) Prokofiev, op. 36, no. 4
The composer communicates at once the atmosphere created by the poet in his incantation. The text "vkradčivyj" (penetrating) is imparted with the aid of the essentially conjunct ostinato figure together with almost equally smooth flowing vocal phrase with which the exorciser initiates the charm — a minor triad outlined in descent as well as in ascent. The composition begins as a virtual duet with the ostinato figure of the piano providing an almost unvaried accompaniment for the sinuous phrase of the

Example 78 *Pomni menja!* (p. 148) Prokofiev, op. 36, no. 4
voice. The ensuing phrase for the voice is clearly derived from the first. The first musical alteration occurs in 147:3:2 (See ex. 77) as the ostinato figure is inflected to accommodate the new tonality occasioned by the text "nasladis" (relish it). The first note of the ostinato functions here as a ninth over the b♭ chord of the seventh.

This dulcet harmony does not endure, for in 148:1:1 to 148:2:2 (See ex. 78) the exorcism at once goes into effect with both vocalist and accompanying harmonies becoming suddenly much more outspoken.

The rhythmic idea introduced in 148:2:3 and 148:3:1 forms an entity. Save for its immediate repetition, it does not recur. It is as if the exorciser were performing a minuscule ritual dance during the course of these measures.

A new metrical idea is introduced in section C (148:4:1). In its smooth flowing figuration, it connotes a certain mollification as the victim has his parents, his place of birth, and the main features of his home brought to mind. But we are again disillusioned when the exorciser reminds us with four heavily accentuated syllables in 149:3:2, that we are to think only of him. The vocal line throughout section C is derived from the first vocal phrase in the song. Once again Prokofiev employs imitation, though somewhat disguised. He utilizes in 148:4:2, for the treble of the piano, the identical thematic material begun by the singer in the previous measure. Furthermore, he continues this device throughout the section, compelling voice and piano to join forces only for the climax in 149:3:1-2.

A return to 3/4 meter appears in section D. This begins tranquillo, with the ostinato figure now transposed a sixth below its original pitch level. Now begins the
series of nine circumstances, covering lines 11-19 of the text, during any and all of which the victim is obliged to recollect. It is interesting to observe the manner in which Prokofiev increases his excitement values throughout this section (149:3:2 through 151:3:3):

1. a rise in pitch, by degrees, of the ostinato figure as well as of the vocal phrases, one by one;
2. a gradual increase in chromaticism and chordal complexity that clash with increasing fury;
3. a quickening in note values for the singer;
4. a measure of only one beat in 150:1:4;
5. a clarion trumpet-like proclamation for the singer as she nears the climax — reaching a culmination on a b♯", on the first beat of 151:2:3;
6. a constantly more demanding chordal figuration for the right hand of the piano until a climax is reached — in the same place as the vocal climax — and at the same time a clearly polytonal usage in 151:2:3 to 151:3:2;
7. a strong, syncopated setting of the imperative text word "Bud!" (Bē), in 151:2:2.

Prokofiev resorts to an interesting, interpretive notational device for the singer in 151:2:2. Since the imperative "Bud!" comes on a syncopation (See ex. 79), and the composer has not provided a written-in rest for the voice since 150:3:3 — to ensure maximum power for the climax now at hand, and to take the place of a rest which he was obviously reluctant to supply — the composer has employed the sign "v" interpreted as an indication of marcato, as well as a Luftpause.

The voice shares the tonality of the right hand of the piano in 151:2:3 and the first two beats of 151:3:1. On the third beat of 151:3:1, it begins to waiver and ends, in 151:3:2, by partaking of the harmonic complex, albeit enharmonically, of the piano's left hand (See ex. 79).
Example 79 Pomni menjal (p. 151) Prokofiev, op. 35, no. 4

The beginning of section F (152:1:1 is cast in a veiled pianissimo and with the instruction misterioso -- a wise choice that contains the insidious knocking of the exorciser within a quasi mystical framework. The ostinato figure rises slowly in pitch until, accompanied all the
while by a broken octave pedal on D-D', it attains a culminating point. At the beginning of the very last section of the song, one octave higher, C", than the beginning of section G, a flourishing arpeggio figure ushers in the final section with tones of a dulcet nature once more. The voice, as it asks the question "Slyšiš' serdce?" (Do you hear the heart?), is cast in this same, rich, harmonic and melodic situation as was employed in 147:3:7-5. This harmony is repeated on every upbeat in this subsection.

Example 80 Pomni menja! (p. 153) Prokofiev, op. 36, no.4
Hopes of escape from the effects of the incanta-
tion or at least a hope of prolongation of the more
gentle hold seen in 153:1, are rudely shattered by the har-
monic clashing of the last line of text.

In 153:2:2-3, the ostinato figure, for its final
statement and variant, receives a shrieking chordal setting
to the accompaniment of the flourish which by now is also
altogether dissonant. The final outburst of the voice,
"Pomni menja!" (Remember me!), elicits a cascading, four-
fold reverberation in the bass of the piano as the treble
attempts one last time (in chords covering a ninth) to etch
out a variant of the ostinato, "spell," figure.

A final observation regarding op. 36, no. 4.
A comparison of Prokofiev's setting of the text with
Balmont's original will exhibit a few liberties taken by
the composer in the matter of repetition of the text word
"vspomjani" (recollect).

A further comparison of the highly irregular
structure of the poem will, if anything, show Prokofiev's
musical composition to be more closely knit than Balmont's
poem. The poet has employed as his chief unifying device
the motto referred to above, "vspomjani," coupled with the
exhortation "Pomni menja!". Prokofiev has seized upon this
repetition of the poet and by providing his own basic
ostinato as an overall unifying device has produced a
powerful and quite organic composition.
Pri more černom stojat stolby.
By the black sea stand pillars.

*Stolby* iz kamenja. Čislo ix vosem'.
Pillars of stone. Their number is eight.
Prijodjet često suda raby.
Often slaves come there.
I sonny junyx nesut groby.
And multitudes of youths bear coffins.
Blednejut zimy i šepčet osen'.
The winters are pale and autumn whispers.

**Poroj i zveri suda dojдут.**
At times even beasts approach this place.

Poroj primčitsja suda i ptica.
At times even a bird wings its way here.
I zatoskujut. Čto delat' tut?
And they begin to feel melancholy. What is there to do here?

Pojdut, zabrodjat i upadut,
They come, they hover about, and they fall.

Ustav stremit'sja, ustav kružit'sja.
Having grown weary of striving, having grown weary of circling overhead.

Pri more černom stojat stolby.
By the black sea stand pillars.

Ot dnej dodnevnix. Čislo ix grozno.
From time immemorial. Their number is terrible.
Čislo ix vešče sred' čisl sud'by.
Their number is prophetic amid the numbers of fate.
I ix značen'e na krik mol'by:
And their significance is in the voicing of the supplication:


By 1905 Balmont had translated the two volumes of works of Edgar Allen Poe for the *Scorpion Publishing House*. It is consequently easy to detect the influence of that master of the decadent in the true sense of the word. Such poems of Poe as "Silence" and "Dreamland" and prose works
such as his "Narrative of A. Gordon Pym" show their imprint especially in this poem of Balmont set by Prokofiev in his op. 36. In fact, it is possible that there is, so to speak, a double etymology to this influence: direct, through Balmont's first-hand acquaintance with his works; indirect through Poe's influence on Baudelaire and the French symbolists who by this time had long since contaminated the Russian atmosphere with the aroma of their Fleurs du Mal and their Paradis Artificialis. Concerning Balmont's awakening to French symbolism, kindled by Prince Alexander Urusov, Donchin states that:

... Balmont was compelled to admit the important influence Urusov had exercised on the development of his poetry in the early stages of his literary career.71

She illustrates this point by quoting Balmont's own confession of his indebtedness to Urusov:

... I felt at that time (1890's) ... a biased dislike of French literature. Urusov forced me, just as he had forced dozens of other Russians, to become familiar with two great French writers (Flaubert and Baudelaire).72

The feeling of decay which is predominant in Stolby is one of the water-marks of decadence and a salient feature of the entire period. But desolation and decay are by no means subject matter introduced by decadents in Russian poetry. This particular poem can claim as one of its spiritual ancestors the verses of Pushkin entitled Ančar (The Upas-tree). In Pushkin's poignant poem, the wild beasts and the birds are held at a distance from the the toxic verdure of this odious tree by their intuition,

72Ibid.
whereas in Balmont's poem they are not endowed with such wisdom, but rather fall victims to the deadly atmosphere.

"Stolby" (The pillars), op. 36, no. 5, rivals "Pomni menja!" in dramatic power. But it has no peers among any of the previous songs of Prokofiev in the realm of lugubrious decadence, morbidity of text aptly portrayed, and in its abundant use of dissonance.

The last song of Prokofiev's op. 36 may be divided into three large but disparate musical sections. These will be further divided into an equally disparate number of subdivisions. The three large sections in the musical structure correspond conveniently to each of the five-line stanzas of Balmont's poem:

Section A: 154:1:1 through 156:1:3
Section B: 156:2:1 through 157:4:2
Section C: 158:1:1 through 159:4:4

The subdivisions shown below demonstrate the lines of the poem in relation to the musical structure:

Section A
Subdivisions: a -- 1-8 (introduction);
              b -- 9-14 (lines 1-2);
              c -- 15-22 (lines 3-4);
              d -- 23-25 (line 5).

Section B
Subdivisions: a -- 26-27;
              b -- 28-33 (lines 6-7-8);
              c -- 34-39 (lines 9-10).

Section C
Subdivisions: a -- 40-47 (line 11 and up to the full caesura in line 12);
              b -- 48-51 (second half of line 12 and all of 13);
              c -- 52-53 (line 14);
              d -- 54-64 (line 15).
A further subdivision of measures 54-64 (line 15) is possible for a more complete musical description:

- a -- 54-54 (which we see possibly derived from material in measures 6-7);
- a1 -- 56-57;
- a2 -- 58-59;
- a3 -- 60-62;
- b -- 63-64

For the accompaniment, a1 and a2 of the above are identical repetitions of "a" and we do not label them "a" only because of variants in the vocal portion.
Prokofiev insures the weighty character of the opening of the poem Stolby as much by the stately quarter-note movement bearing the indication *andante lugubre*, as well as by the additional instruction over his moving bass notes *pesante*. As though the listener had been out of earshot of the sullen sound of the slowly splashing surf during the piano introduction, Prokofiev now brings him in for a closer view and sets in motion for the next six measures a gloomy sixteenth note figuration in the right hand of the piano. But this *ostinato* is also confined to the lower half of the keyboard.

Every caesura in the first two lines of Balmont's poem is studiously observed by Prokofiev by means of rests. The inexorable nature of the fate that hangs over this desolate clime is established by means of the *ostinato* figure — the whole note assigned to the stressed syllable of "sto\[by" (the pillars) in 154:3:2 (Sec ex. 81), also contributes to this. A rise in pitch of an octave followed by a drop of a minor second plus another drop of a fourth completes the outline of the tritone for the text "iz kamnja" (of stone).

In 155:2-3-4 the composer portrays well indeed with a staggering rhythmic figuration the labored steps of the procession of slaves and youths bearing coffins.

The whispering of autumn ushers in the B section of the composition together with its metrical change to 6/8. Although the generally mournful cast of the song is not altered in the least, there is nonetheless a slight mollification in the otherwise severe, processional rhythm by this metrical change. A lulling, ternary figuration in the accompaniment and vocal phrases up through 156:4:2 help to dispel the severity.

Next come two statements of a vocal phrase (beginning half way through 156:4:2) which are altogether like a
piteous lament with the rising portion of the phrase outlining the tritone and the descending portion accomplished chromatically to outline a fourth. The birds, who occasioned this wailing, are now seen, by means of the sixteenth-note figuration set in motion, in the treble of the piano. Staring with the upbeat to 157:2:1, to approach, hover in mid-air for a moment, then drop exhausted to the earth.

Example 32 Stolby (p. 157) Prokofiev, op. 36, no. 5
Every principal verb in the text in this section is set widely apart by Prokofiev, who closes the section for the text "устав стремят'ся, устав крушит'ся" (having grown weary of striving . . . of circling about) with what is probably his most sensitively poignant text setting in all his songs (See ex. 82) -- wherein it is easy to imagine the slow circling of large birds being drawn inexorably earthward and finally succumbing to the pestilence that is exuded by this baleful scene.

(First three systems)

Example 83 *Stolby* (p. 159) Prokofiev, op. 36, no. 5
The opening of the C section reiterates 154:1:2 in the accompaniment and returns us to a volume level of forte (subito!) as the vocalist intones a repeat of the first line of text: "Pri more černom stojat stolby" (By the black sea stand pillars. The volume level is relieved somewhat for the second half of line 12 in the text, but for the dread statement contained in line 13 — "Čislo ix vešče sred' čisl sud'by" (Their number is prophetic amid the numbers of fate) -- Prokofiev returns us abruptly to the clamoring volume and gives the voice an outburst primarily disjunct. The brief subsection in 158:4:3 to 159:1:1 is another example of vivid text portrayal with the grumbling chordal sixteenth-note figuration in the lower reaches of the piano, the two powerful chords at the start of the passage, the series of broken, descending augmented fifth chords and, finally, the first four notes of the descending vocal line in 158:4:3 with their marcato markings.

Powerful, clashing harmonic complexes in 159:1:2 to 159:2:1 (See ex. 83), begin the last series of reiterations intended to underscore the very last time the unremitting, unyielding and implacable character of the implications of the text with its fourfold motto: "Navek. Bezglasnost'. Vraždebnost'. Pozdno." (Forever. Voicelessness. Hostility. Too late).

The two final outbursts of the voice are particularly dramatic with their octave drop after a sustained e" and the two stressed quarter-notes on beats 1 and 2 of the very last measure on e' and d'. And, as though impressing us with the probability that the morbid scene concocted by Balmont still exists, if only in the imagination of poets with a decadent bent of mind, Prokofiev fills out even his last measure with an event on each beat and indicates neither diminuendo nor ritardando.
The first performance of three of the songs of op. 36 took place in Moscow on 24 October 1923 at a musical presentation of the society Meždunarodnaja kniga (International book). On this occasion were heard the first, third and fifth of the set of Balmont poems. The performers were E. V. Koposova-Derzhanovskaya and P. A. Lamm. In Leningrad the cycle was performed in its entirety on 16 May 1924 by K. N. Dorliak and V. V. Shcherbachev in a concert devoted to the works of Prokofiev in the series New Music. The five poems of Balmont were first published by the firm of A. Gutheil in 1923.

For the sake of completeness we should like to mention three more poems of Balmont (already referred to) set to music by Prokofiev which are not discussed in this paper since they were conceived for a medium other than for solo voice: the two poems: "The White Swan" and "The Wave," which the composer set for women's chorus, and the poem which appears in Balmont's book, Evocations of Antiquity as the "second reading" of "Akkadian Incantations" in the section entitled "Chaldea."

This poem, "based on an engraved inscription in cuneiform on the walls of an ancient Akkadian temple which had been deciphered by the German archeologist Hugo Winkler (1863-1913)," was utilized by Prokofiev for a major composition: Seven, they are seven! — a cantata for dramatic tenor solo, mixed chorus and full orchestra with enlarged percussion section.

Prokofiev's Soviet biographer, in chiding him for wasting his time on this poetry at a time when his country was in the throes of the most cataclysmic upheaval, managed to censor both the composer and the poet:

73 Victor Seroff, Prokofiev, p. 95.
What had the composer to oppose to this colossal force that held the world in thrall? Naught but savage, heathen invocations, the witch doctor's mumblings, the mystic malediction: "Tetal, tetal, curse, curse, curse!" The cantata ends on this despairing note to the furious glissando shriekings of the horns and trombones, the thunder of kettledrums and tomtoms. Such music would only leave the annihilating and morbid impression of some incredible nightmare. 74

And for a coup de grâce (the work has been purportedly never performed in the Soviet Union), Nestyev declares:

... Thus, while striving intuitively to give musical expression to the presentiment of the titanic social upheavals that were about to shake the world, the composer became entangled in the ugly web of symbolic mysticism. 75

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75 Ibid.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

Prokofiev clarified four major characteristics in his music:

... The first was the classical ... it took a neoclassical turn in my gavottes and sonatas ... the second -- innovation ... at first it led to a search for harmonies to suit my own language, and later to a search for a language to express strong emotions ... Although mainly concerned with harmonization, it was also influential in the intonation of melodies ... the third -- toccata-like character, or if you prefer to call it so, machine or motorlike ... the fourth -- a lyric principle. For a long time my critics denied me any lyricism, and without any encouragement, it developed very slowly ... I would like to limit the characteristics in the development of my creative ability to these four ... and to consider the fifth, the so-called "grotesque," as a sideline of the four ... In referring to my work I would prefer to use "scherzando," meaning simply an effort to express a joke, laughter or mockery. 1

The songs of Prokofiev are apt to fall into one of three broad categories closely connected with the four major characteristics that the composer ascribed to him-

1Quoted in: Victor Seroff, Prokofiev, p. 75.

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The lyrical facet of Prokofiev’s personality is most in evidence in his settings of the Five Poems of Anna Akhmatova, op. 27. It is to be found also in scattered instances in some of his other songs, as in the opening section of "V moём sadu" (In my garden), op. 23, no. 4; in the lamenting leading motive in "Gadkij utënok" (The Ugly Duckling), op. 18, and in the opening section of "Pomni menja!" (Think of me!), op. 36, no. 4.

The second and third classification of Prokofiev songs best describe pieces of humorous satire, as "The Ugly Duckling," pieces with morbid or decadent overtones, notably "Seroe plat'ice" (The little gray dress), op. 23, no. 3, or "Stolby" (The pillars), op. 36, no. 5, or those with great pictorialism in their texts, such as "Kudesnik" (The Wizard), op. 23, no. 5, and "Golos ptic" (The voice of the birds), op. 36, no. 3.

It is in his "Ugly Duckling" where Prokofiev demonstrates that he is the heir of Mussorgsky in the realm of caricature and satire. In this composition there is a combination of inventiveness for the piano accompaniment and vocal subtleties appropriate to the rapidly changing moods of the tale.

The three types of songs show influences of other Russian composers. For the lyric category, Prokofiev had the examples of Chaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Rakhmaninov upon which to draw. On more than one occasion Prokofiev expressed his admiration for the beauty of Rakhmaninov's
melodies. For the declamatory and satirical trait in his melodic usage, the best example before him was Mussorgsky. Here again Prokofiev expressed admiration as well as indebtedness. For the naive kind of melodic writing, Prokofiev could thank himself, for it was relatively late in his development that he began to pay attention to Russian folk song. The ingenuous melodic fragments that one hears in some of his early songs are a frank expression of the congenital good nature of the composer.

The influence of other composers is more strongly felt in his accompaniments and, in particular, in much of his harmonic usage. Here one can detect his indebtedness to Rakhmaninov, Scriabin, Reger, Strauss, Mussorgsky, Chaikovsky and, through exchange of ideas, to Miaskovsky.

Prokofiev throughout his entire period of creativity was essentially a tonalist and traditionalist. His modernism consisted primarily in avoiding the extremely banal and saccharine harmonic usage that had characterized certain of his immediate predecessors. He employed greatly contrasting tonalities in rapid succession, occasionally in chord streams. He frequently juxtaposed the most violently disparate harmonic complexes, as in op. 36, no. 3, 4, and 5. He made considerable use of polychords and chromaticism -- less frequently polytonality.

After his first essays in composition, he made rapid strides towards one of his avowed characteristics -- neoclassicism. This was exemplified mainly by conciseness, clarity and directness of expression, and unencumbered harmonic usage -- best seen in his Five Poems of Anna Akhmatova, op. 27.

In the Five Poems, op. 23, Prokofiev selected a wide range of texts and met the challenge of each. In the first song, "Under the roof," the many moods were reflected not only in the highly imaginative accompaniment, but in numerous changes of tempo required. Every one of the
striking images in the text were portrayed in the music. Concrete images such as the shattering of an icicle as it dropped on the flagstones of the court yard below, or the sun gilding the metal pipes are depicted with great dexterity. Abstract concepts such as the buzzing of quiet thoughts in one's head or the accusation that one's children are nothing but abortions were assigned a figurative or literal musical translation as most fitting. The last poem of op. 23, "The Wizard," also provided Prokofiev with the opportunity to convey satire by musical means. Particularly effective in "The Wizard" is the polytonal, perpetual motion to accompany the issue of a woman who was like a "lotus of the Ganges" from the alchemist's retorts.

In the Five Poems of Anna Akhmatova, op. 27, Prokofiev, in his approach to text setting, accepted a type of poetry that he had not yet explored in song. This was the intensely lyrical type of poetry (albeit with some symbolistic overtones). Once more Prokofiev succeeded in handling this new domain with mastery. These intimate love-lyrics of Akhmatova were accorded a setting on a par with the intrinsic value of the poetry itself. In these songs the composer shows at will his ability to create an atmosphere essentially delicate and amorous in nature, but withheld never overdone — always restrained.

The musical qualities of poetry as understood by a musician are seized upon by Prokofiev from the first to the last in all the compositions studied in this paper. But he also comprehended admirably every nuance and symbolistic overtone in the poetry he employed and expressed this understanding in his musical phrasing and pictorialism.

The climax to Prokofiev's demonstration to sensitivity to text and at the same time the climax in decadence in the Russian Art Song comes in the final set of songs,
the *Five Poems of Balmont*, op. 36. Here the composer is at the peak of his powers. He set these five decadent, highly evocative, musical, exotic poems of Balmont with great insight and responsiveness to the rhythmic aspects as well as the symbolistic overtones in them. Slippery stones, a nest of birds, the fluttering of a butterfly, the flash of lightning, and the baleful and morbid image of birds of prey hovering over the poison tree and succumbing to its venom — all these and countless other vivid concepts in the poetry are sketched by Prokofiev with greater penetration of the poet's intent than in his previous songs.

All five Balmont poems of op. 36 are permeated with three of the elements typical of the *fin de siècle*: symbolism, primitivism, and decadence. Because of this we find ourselves transported into a realm that lies beyond time and practically beyond tangibility. The condemnation of this by the ideology of Socialist Realism prompts an observation. It is our considered judgement that in all forms of art there must always exist the possibility of divergent philosophies and, consequently, as many manners of manifesting these as possible. Our perspective would be severely hampered if art forms did not possess this vitality of divergence. Thus it must be with Balmont. His poetry provides us with a valid artistic concept tinged with overtones objectionable to Socialist Realism. But it enables unbiased readers to formulate a more perfect image of this complex period in history. Balmont seems, thus far, doomed to suffer a fate shared in large measure by a compatriot of his, also a symbolist, also possessed of great subtleties and shades of primitivism, Zinaida Gippius. Balmont is highly endowed with a great sensitivity to the most subtle innate rhythmic and harmonic possibilities latent in the Russian language.
Because this poet, one of the first to attain great popularity among the decadents, was not gifted with that insight that enables a poet to transcend the ephemeral, and because he chose not to adopt the will of the Revolution but chose rather the path of exile, he soon became and remains to this day, persona non grata.

Sergei Prokofiev was always close to the mainstream of Russian song. One cannot help conjecture what direction he might have taken had he not returned to the Soviet Union and had he continued to compose other sets of art songs. His compositions in this category are of a merit that makes their neglect ironic, indeed, tragic. Events in the Soviet Union stifled him as a song writer.

Prokofiev's importance and place in Russian song literature, in spite of his comparatively small output in this category, should not be minimized. On the contrary, he represents a culmination in this art in his native land -- both as far as his temporal position and as far as the actual worth and import of his songs are concerned. His friend and colleague, Miaskovsky, cannot hope to stand comparison because of his vastly inferior powers of perception and his much more limited imagination and inventiveness.

There are two principal reasons for concluding this study of the solo songs of Prokofiev precisely at the year 1921. The first is simply that he did not produce any more major songs for a great many years after that. The second is also simple though unpleasant. Unpleasant in that it is conditioned by political ideology which normally would not deserve a place in a discussion of this nature. Composers in the Soviet have been discouraged from engaging in the composition of the solo art song -- or at least the art song as we understand it. The rationale for this is that in the Socialist society, all expression of an entirely personal
nature has been suppressed. Only that which benefits the society is tolerated. The solo art song as conceived in the West, especially that art song which employs poetry of a strong personal expression or bias, therefore, does not serve the State or the people of the Soviet society.

What was favored in the Stalin period was the so-called "massovaja pesnja" (mass song). As the name implies, this was a composition that genuinely appealed to the masses. Prokofiev, too, wrote such compositions. In fact, the first two of the six songs that comprise his op. 66, written in 1935 (the first songs written by the composer since his set of Balmont songs, op. 36 -- fourteen years earlier!), bear that very sobriquet.

Example 84  Partizan železnjak  Prokofiev, op. 66, no. 1
Prokofiev's *Dve massovye pesni*, op. 66 (Two mass songs), are "rousing" melodies and the first of them, shown in Example 84, "Partizan železnjak" (Iron-stone partisan), is patently of a popular cast. With a text of a popular nature as well, it is characterized by that stirring, typically Russian type of melody calculated to incite patriotism, but at the same time inartistic and almost totally lacking in inventiveness.

The shameful but powerful condemnation of the decadent and symbolistic in artistic expression was epitomized in 1946 by Andrei Zhdanov, the self-styled critic and lackey of the Stalin regime who was also responsible for the editorial in Pravda condemning Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth* (January 29, 1936). He voiced the official attitude toward the poetry of the pre-revolutionary period thus:

> Symbolism, acmeism and futurism reflected the ideological disintegration, the panicky fear of imminent revolution which had gripped the ruling classes and the bourgeois intelligentsia. All these schools, despite their different colorations, were connected with the ideology of the bourgeoisie and the nobility. . . . Gorky has called the decade of 1907-1917 "the most shameful and impudent decade in Russian literature."2

To recapitulate what has been stated in this regard, even such works as Prokofiev's last great contribution to the area with which we are concerned, is under ban because of the poetry. Nor is there much prospect of any appreciable degree of improvement in this situation.

The relaxation in the cold war and the "thaw" that set in, or more accurately, began to set in, after the death of Stalin have contributed to certain freedoms assumed in the arts: we say "assumed," for, insofar as we have been

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2Marc Slonim, *Modern Russian Literature*, p. 227
able to determine, the authorities themselves have not granted such freedoms, nor have they relaxed any of the restrictions.

Thus it is that with Prokofiev ends a chapter in the history of the Russian Art Song — a termination occasioned by ignominy. Needless to say, the other branches of the vocal arts — cantata, oratorio, incidental music for plays and films, and, most important, the opera, have all been subjected in greater or lesser degree to similarly ignominious treatment and their present hope for recovery is equally dim.
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