THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIAN OPERATIC ROOTS OF PROKOFYEV'S

WAR AND PEACE

by

TERRY LYNN DEAN, JR.

(Under the Direction of David Edwin Haas)

ABSTRACT

More than fifty years after Prokofyev's death, *War and Peace* remains a misunderstood composition. While there are many reasons why the opera remains misunderstood, the primary reason for this is the opera's genesis in Stalinist Russia and his obligation to uphold the "life-affirming" principles of the pro-Soviet aesthetic, Socialist Realism, by drawing inspiration from the rich heritage "Russian classical" opera—specifically the works of Glinka, Chaikovsky, and Musorgsky. The primary intent of this dissertation is to provide new perspectives on *War and Peace* by examining the relationship between the opera and the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition. By exploring such a relationship, one can more clearly understand how nineteenth-century Russian operas had a formative effect on Prokofyev's opera aesthetic. An analysis of the impact of the Russian operatic tradition on *War and Peace* will also provide insights into the ways in which Prokofyev responded to official Soviet demands to uphold the canon of nineteenth-century Russian opera as models for contemporary composition and to implement aspects of 19th-century compositional practice into 20th-century compositions. Drawing upon the critical theories of Soviet musicologist Boris Asafyev, this study demonstrates that while Prokofyev maintained his distinct compositional voice, he

successfully aligned his work with the nineteenth-century tradition. Moreover, the study suggests that Prokofyev's solution to rendering Tolstoy's novel as an opera required him to utilize a variety of traits characteristic of the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition, resulting in a work that is both eclectic in musical style and dramaturgically effective.

INDEX WORDS: Sergei Prokofyev, Prokofiev, Opera, Russian music, Soviet music, Rimsky-Korsakov, Chaikovsky, Tchaikovsky, Musorgsky, Mussorgsky, Boris Asafyev, Boris Asafiev, Intonatsiya, *War and Peace*, Socialist Realism, Psychology and Music

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to two men who profoundly shaped me into the musician and scholar I am today. My grandfather, Woodrow Perkins, instilled within me a love for learning as a child. His value of education, second only to family, has remained with me beyond my childhood and continues to influence today. My uncle, Roger Dean, introduced me to opera and the world of music in general. Much of who today is due to the two of you.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: CONTEXTS AND CONCERNS FOR
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Sergei Prokofyev (1891-1953) confessed to Dmitri Kabalevsky shortly before his

death that "I'm ready to put up with the failure of any of my works, but if you could only

know how I want *War and Peace* [*Voina i mir*] (1941-43; rev. 1946-1952) to see the light

of day!"[1] After nearly twelve years and more than four sets of revisions, only the first

eight tableaux of the opera were ever produced in a staged version during the composer's

lifetime. Not since *Love for Three Oranges* [*Lyubov' k tryom apel'sinam*] (1919) had

Prokofyev written a successful opera. The reception of his earlier Soviet opera *Semyon*

Kotko (1939) had been lackluster at best; a year later, the premiere of *Betrothal in a*

Monastery [*Obrucheniye v monastyre*] (1940) was cancelled. However, when Prokofyev

started work on *War and Peace*, it must have seemed he had selected a promising subject

for a successful Soviet opera. What could be a better source for an opera than a novel

written by an iconic figure of nineteenth-century Russian literature, which was officially

sanctioned by the Soviet Party? Moreover, Prokofyev's timing seemed grimly fortuitous.

In 1941, Tolstoy's account of the invasion of Russia by Napoleon in 1812 offered

obvious parallels to the invasion of the Soviet Union by Nazi forces that had occurred

only two months after Prokofyev commenced work on the project. Despite his constant

efforts, however, to meet the demands of the Committee on Art Affairs, a Party-governed

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[1] Kabalevsky, quoted in Malcolm Brown, "Prokofiev's *War and Peace*: A Chronicle," *The Musical Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (July 1977): 297.

organization that monitored, reviewed, and approved all artistic projects, as well as to incorporate suggestions provided by collaborators such as filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein and conductor Samuil Samosud, Prokofyev never experienced a full-scale production of *War and Peace*. All planned productions of the complete opera succumbed to Soviet censorship and were thwarted.

More than fifty years after Prokofyev's death, *War and Peace* remains a misunderstood composition. While there are many reasons why the opera remains misunderstood, the primary reason for this is the opera's genesis in Stalinist Russia. As a Soviet composer, Prokofyev was bound to the demands of the Soviet cultural watchdogs to uphold the principles of Socialist Realism. Consequently, his music was expected to espouse the conservative and "life-affirming" principles of the pro-Soviet aesthetic. Unfortunately, little specific was available to composers regarding how this was to be accomplished. Official descriptions of and commentary on Socialist Realism were considerably vague—possibly to allow the Party greater control of the arts at any given time. All that was clearly known was that Prokofyev and his fellow Soviet composers were expected to seek models and inspiration from the rich heritage of "Russian classical" tradition—specifically the works of Glinka, Chaikovsky, and Musorgsky.

The primary intent of this dissertation is to provide new perspectives on *War and Peace* by examining the relationship between the opera and the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition. By exploring such a relationship, one can more clearly understand how nineteenth-century Russian operas had a formative effect on Prokofyev's opera aesthetic. An analysis of the impact of the Russian operatic tradition on *War and Peace* will also provide insights into the ways in which Prokofyev responded to official

Soviet demands to uphold the canon of nineteenth-century Russian opera as models for contemporary composition and to implement aspects of 19th-century compositional practice into 20th-century compositions. To accomplish this, I will quote from and comment on authoritative documents of Socialist Realism written during Prokofyev's lifetime (official decrees, committee transcripts, and reviews of Soviet operas, as well as often-cited theoretical writings of Lenin, Marx, Gorky, and others), which helped define the aesthetic during that time period. To this end, Regine Robin's assessment of Socialist Realism in literature provides useful information on parallels between the two art forms.[2] Relevant statements by Prokofyev will be incorporated to provide insights into where and how his personal aesthetic differed.

Ultimately, this study is intended to promote a better understanding of how Prokofyev found answers to the problem of setting a nineteenth-century Russian novel as an opera by drawing upon the techniques implemented by Russian composers of the previous century. The opera exhibits a complex and interesting relationship with the nineteenth-century Russian precedents. Any attempt to understand the complexity of *War and Peace* is complicated not only by the eclecticism of Prokofyev's compositional style and the problems of interpreting Socialist Realism as an aesthetic, but also by the eclecticism of the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition.[3] It is the purpose of this study to show that Prokofyev's compositional strategy for *War and Peace* involved a

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[2] Régine Robin, *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

[3] *Symphonic Etudes* proves to be a useful tool for navigating the eclecticism of nineteenth-century Russian opera because it is free of the politically motivated biases often associated with Soviet-era writings; despite the fact that it is a Soviet-era text, *Symphonic Etudes* is uncharacteristically free of references to Marx and Marxist thought. Boris Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes: Portraits of Russian Operas and Ballets*, trans. David Haas (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2008).

selective appropriation and synthesis of the stylistic elements of significant works by his nineteenth-century predecessors. Additionally, the study aims to demonstrate that, while consciously referencing nineteenth-century pluralism, Prokofyev maintained his distinctive compositional voice by adapting these various style elements to fit his own compositional style rather than simply imitating the achievements of the canonic composers of the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition.

As it has been developed for this study, the concept of a nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition focuses on those works attributed to major composers of opera in Russia during the middle and end of the nineteenth century. This group includes such prominent composers as Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857), Alexander Borodin (1833-1887), Modest Musorgsky (1838-1881), Pyotr Chaikovsky (1840-1893), and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908). Collectively, the operas of these composers function as a canon of works regularly produced in the major opera houses of Russia prior to and during the life of Sergei Prokofyev. Included as part of this tradition are operas by composers whose works remain relatively unknown in the West, but which were nonetheless influential on other Russian composers. For example, the opera *The Stone Guest* (1866-9) by Alexander Dargomizhsky (1813-1869) represents an early and significant model of Russian dialogue opera, which was rooted in the nineteenth century. While not necessarily a canonic work (as it was not performed regularly), Dargomizhsky's opera nonetheless greatly influenced Musorgsky's operas *The Marriage* (incomplete; 1868) and the first version of *Boris Godunov* (1868-9).

History of the Work

War and Peace was Prokofyev's penultimate opera, followed by the Soviet-themed *Story of a Real Man* of 1948. Composed in part as a response to Nazi Germany's invasion of Russia in July 1941, War and Peace was both the longest and the richest operatic work of his Soviet period.[4] However, the history of the opera's composition and subsequent revision reveals a work marred by heavy criticism—official and "collegial" alike. In the end, Prokofyev's efforts to see the complete opera staged resulted in approximately four distinct versions of the work. Beyond Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, no other opera underwent such extensive revision. Nevertheless, Prokofyev's opera experienced only limited success.

The composer began constructing the libretto for the opera in July 1941. By that time, Prokofyev had developed two outlines for the opera's libretto in conjunction with Mira Mendelsohn, the young Soviet woman who would eventually replace Carolina Codina as his wife. As he entered into the composition phase of the project, Prokofyev had a plan that included twelve tableaux based from Tolstoy's novel:

1. Night at the Rostov estate, "Otradnoe"
2. Visit to the elder Prince Bolkonsky.
3. An evening at Helene Bezukhov's.
4. In Dolokhov's study.
5. At Akhrosimova's.
6. Scene between Pierre and Anatole in the study.
7. An outpost of Russian troops.
8. At Napoleon's headquarters.
9. On the Borodino field before the battle.
10. hdoscow aflame occupied by the enemy.

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[4] The discussion of *War and Peace's* history is based on Malcolm Brown's detailed account of the opera's composition and revision, Malcolm Brown, "Prokofiev's *War and Peace*: A Chronicle," *The Musical Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (July 1977): 293-326. A similarly detailed report of the opera's compositional history is available in Anatoli Volkov, *'Voina i Mir' Prokof'eva: Opyt analiza variantov opery* (Moscow: Muzyka, 1976), which largely informed Brown's article.

11. In a peasant hut in Mytishchi [Natasha with the wounded Andrei].
12. The Smolensk Road [the French retreat].[5]

Armed with his outline, Prokofyev began composing the music for Tableau 1 of the opera on August 15, 1941, after being evacuated from Moscow to the Caucasus region of southeast Russia due to advancing Nazi forces. Ultimately, after eight months of work, Prokofyev's twelve-tableau plan for the opera yielded eleven tableaux and an overture. He completed the last revisions to the piano score on April 13, 1942 and sent it to the Committee on Arts Affairs in Moscow to get the opera approved for production.

Following a hearing by a small jury of musicians in May 1942, Prokofyev's opera was approved in principle. However, members of the Committee issued specific suggestions for revision regarding the musical and dramatic elements of the score. Among these was the suggestion that Prokofyev increase the heroic-patriotic element of the opera to more fully represent the Russian people and their role in the Napoleonic war. The Committee also suggested that he provide a rationale for including so many tableaux involving the Russian aristocracy. With regard to concerns of the actual music, Prokofyev's lyrical gifts were praised, but it was suggested that the lyrical quality be made more prominent, particularly in the vocal lines, which displayed the composer's preference for setting prose texts instead of rhyming poetry. The official report from the Committee on Arts Affairs did not reach Prokofyev, however, until July 1942. Nevertheless, he began the process of orchestrating the opera starting on May 3, 1942.

Later that year, Prokofyev entered into a collaborative relationship with conductor Samuil Samosud and filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein to produce *War and Peace*. Samosud first became aware of the project during its evaluation by the Committee on Arts Affairs

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[5] Brown, "'War and Peace': A Chronicle," 300.

and expressed interest in staging the opera. Eisenstein and Prokofyev had worked together earlier on the successful film *Alexander Nevsky* (1939). Together Prokofyev and Samosud felt that Eisenstein's skills as a filmmaker would effectively transfer to the stage as the opera's stage director. Eisenstein in particular proved to be a valuable resource as Prokofyev began to implement the newly received revision suggestions. Eisenstein suggested specific musical and textual changes that not only increased the opera's emphasis on the Russian patriotic and nationalistic episodes, but also to increase the prominence of the chorus as well as reduce Prokofyev's reliance on extended prose monologues. In the end, Prokofyev informed the Committee on Arts Affairs that he had finished the suggested revisions in November 1942.

Following a second hearing of the opera in December 1942 by the Union of Soviet Composers and another round of revisions, preliminary plans to stage the work at the Bolshoi Theater were made by Samosud. Meanwhile, during the months following the hearing, Prokofyev fought objects surrounding his decision to maintain Tolstoy's title as that for the opera. Some of the composer's peers felt that the title *Natasha Rostov* was more fitting due to the absence of the breadth of the original novel.[6] Others, including officials at the Bolshoi Theater, began to refer to the opera by the title *The Year 1812* for much the same reason.[7] Prokofyev, however, successfully defended his decisions to retain the title *War and Peace*, but agreed to the subtitle "Lyric-Dramatic Scenes" aligning his opera with Chaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, which was also a distillation of a

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[6] Ibid., 305.

[7] Ibid., 306.

novel into a series of portraits.[8] Plans to produce the opera at the Bolshoi were eventually cancelled, however, due to the evacuation of musicians and singers from Moscow as well as Samosud being released from his duties with the theater.

The premiere of *War and Peace* occurred in a concert performance with piano accompaniment at the Moscow Actors Club on October 16, 1944. At this first performance, the audience heard only a selection of tableaux: Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, and 11 A second concert performance with fewer cuts was given under the direction of Samosud on June 7, 1945 with the State Symphony Orchestra of the U.S.S.R. and the Chorus of the Republic, as well as soloists from the Bolshoi and the Stanislavsky/Nemirovich-Danchenko Theaters.[9] The first staged performance of the opera was given on June 12, 1946, nearly five years after Prokofyev began the project. The performance was again conducted by Samosud, but with musicians from the Maly Opera Theater instead of those from the Bolshoi Theater. Despite the fact that the production was condensed, consisting of only the first eight tableaux, the production was positively received. By the end of the 1946–47 opera season, *War and Peace* had been produced 105 times.

Producing the second half of the opera proved to be more problematic for the composer. Prokofyev was approached in February 1947 with suggestions to incorporate a new tableau depicting General Kutuzov and his advisory council discussing the decision to abandon Moscow following the Battle of Borodino. The suggestion was rooted in what Samosud saw as an opportunity to create a tableau that, in the words of Malcolm Brown,

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[8] Ibid., 305.

[9] Ibid., 311.

"epitomize[d] the spirit of Russian patriotism."[10] With the addition of that tableau, the opera had expanded to consist of thirteen tableaux as well as an overture and a choral epigraph; a tableau depicting the meeting of Natasha Rostov and Prince Andrei Bolkonsky at the New Year's Eve Ball was added for the staged production of the "peace" tableaux a year earlier. In July 1947, a closed presentation of the "war" tableaux was finally authorized and included members from the Committee on Arts Affairs as well as officials from the Union of Soviet Composers. While this performance was received coldly by the audience of bureaucrats a second closed performance in October 1947 proved to be disastrous for the composer. On February 11, 1948, an official Party decree on the arts was issued in *Pravda*. While the main criticism was targeted at a new opera by Vano Muradeli entitled *The Great Friendship*, Prokofyev's music also came under attack. In the weeks that followed, he was labeled a "formalist" by Andrei Zhdanov, Stalin's regulator in the arts.

Prokofyev was unable to relinquish the label of "formalist" for the rest of his career. Additional attempts to stage *War and Peace* were planned; however, each production was eventually cancelled. Following the closed hearing of the newly revised "war" tableaux, officials continued to question the ideological foundation of Prokofyev's opera. Despite the support of the singers and such prominent composers as Kabalevsky, the public premiere of the opera was cancelled. Prokofyev continued to revise the work over the remainder of his life. In the final weeks of his life, Prokofyev continued to revise the opera, adding a duet for Natasha and her cousin Sonya for Tableau 1 as well as a reworked version of Kutuzov's aria. In the end, at the time of his death on March 5, 1953,

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[10] Ibid., 315.

Prokofyev left a final version of the opera for production over a single evening consisting of thirteen tableaux, an overture, and a choral epigraph.

Literature Review

The current study examines both English- and Russian-language resources about *War and Peace*. The English-language secondary literature specific to *War and Peace* falls into four board categories: 1) discussions of the opera's composition and various revisions; 2) libretto studies; 3) discussions of Prokofyev's operas in general; and 4) discussions of the opera as a Soviet composition and its connection to Socialist Realism. Beyond a few biographies on Prokofyev and his music, only seven studies deal with the *War and Peace* in any significant detail. Of these, only three deal exclusively with the opera.[11] The remaining texts focus on either Prokofyev's entire operatic output or his Soviet-era compositions within the genre in general.[12] Additionally, there are a few accounts of the opera and its composition in primary resources, such as various collections of letters, interviews, and reminiscences of the composer's life. The secondary literature in Russian falls into the same four categories indicated above; however, the Russian-language research also includes a fifth category of analytical studies dedicated specifically to understanding the musical language of the opera. It is important, however,

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[11] These two *War and Peace*-specific articles are Malcolm Brown, "Prokofiev's *War and Peace*: A Chronicle," *The Musical Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (July 1977): 293–326; and Rita McAllister, "Prokofiev's Tolstoy Epic," *The Musical Times* 113, no. 1555 (September 1972): 851

[12] Articles which fall into this category include, Andrew Porter, "Prokofiev's Late Operas," *The Musical Times* 108, no. 1490 (April 1967): 312–4; Rita McAllister, "The Operas of Sergei Prokofiev" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1970); Harlow Loomis Robinson, "The Operas of Sergei Prokofiev and Their Russian Literary Sources" (Ph.D. diss., University of California—Berkeley, 1980); and Richard Taruskin, "Tone, Style, and Form in Prokofiev's Soviet Operas: Some Preliminary Observations," in *Studies in the History of Music*, vol. 2, *Music and Drama* (New York: Broude Brothers Limited, 1988), 215-39.

to understand that while there are parallels with regard to the issues represented in the English- and Russian-language resources, there are, nevertheless, differences based rooted in "insider-outsider" perspectives. This is most noticeable in the references to nineteenth-century Russian operas found in the literature. In particular, Russian scholars offer significant allusions to a relationship between *War and Peace* and the operas of Rimsky-Korsakov.

English-Language Literature

At the foundation of the work of English-speaking musicologists working in the field of Russian opera studies are the writings of Gerald Abraham. In 1936, when Abraham wrote that, "for a real intellectual understanding of Russian music, one almost needs an entirely new set of postulates," he was referring to a much needed change in the approach to discussing Russian music.[13] This statement clearly indicates his awareness of the special demands that accompany Russian opera studies. He knew all too well that while Russian operas may in many ways resemble the operatic works of other traditions, there are a number of characteristics that clearly differentiate them from their Western counterparts. Abraham's writings on Russian opera are laden with comments that support the notion that Russian opera is a unique musical phenomenon.

With regard to the *War and Peace* scholarship, Andrew Porter's short article "Prokofiev's Late Operas" approaches the composer's Soviet-era operas from the stance that Prokofyev suffered from creative restrictions stemming from official Soviet policy

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[13] Gerald Abraham, *Studies in Russian Music: Critical Essays on the Most Important of Rimsky-Korsakov's Operas, Borodin's "Prince Igor," Dargomizhsky's "Stone Guest", Etc.; With Chapters on Glinka, Mussorgsky, Balakirev, and Chaikovsky* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, Inc., 1936), 9.

on the arts.[14] In his discussion of *War and Peace*, Porter focuses primarily on Prokofyev's complicated revision process for the opera. Written in preparation for the British premiere of the opera, he presents *War and Peace* as a work that

> fittingly crowns Prokofyev's Soviet period. It is probably as *satisfactory a compromise* as could ever be achieved between Prokofyev's various aims: lyrical outpouring of song, exciting theatrical music, warm characters who live and breathe—and after 1932 united to edifying subject-matter, and to a musical idiom which presented the people with no problems.[15]

Porter's statement represents the common belief that Prokofyev's Soviet operas were strongly influenced by Socialist realist aesthetics and, therefore, do not represent the composer's true musical intentions. However, there is no attempt to discuss the musical content of the opera; rather the opera is approached from a strictly historical standpoint.

In her dissertation on all of Prokofyev's operas, Rita McAllister attempts to accomplish two principal tasks.[16] First, as Prokofyev served as his own librettist for all of his operas except *Semyon Kotko* (1939), the dissertation traces the construction of his libretti in order to determine how they influenced the musical structure and content of their respective operas. Second, through her access to and interaction with manuscripts materials, McAllister also traces Prokofyev's compositional process for each work. Throughout the dissertation, McAllister attempts to relate Prokofyev's operas to more well-known works of both the Russian and Western opera traditions; nevertheless, as shared stylistic affinities are not the main focus of her research, the discussion of such connections is not systematic and frequently only superficial in nature. However, in her

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[14] Andrew Porter, "Prokofiev's Late Operas," *The Musical Times* 108, no. 1490 (April 1967): 312–4.

[15] Ibid., 314. Italics mine.

[16] Rita McAllister, "The Operas of Sergei Prokofiev" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1970).

later article, "Prokofiev's Tolstoy Epic," McAllister not only retells the story of *War and Peace*'s complex composition and revision, but also provides some more clues to its "musical allegiance to the 19th-century Russian operatic tradition."[17] Here she hints at connections to masterworks of Russian opera, such as Chaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and *The Queen of Spades*, Borodin's *Prince Igor*, and Musorgsky's *Khovanshchina*. Unfortunately, the article is short and she is unable to systematically explore these relationships in any significant detail.

Shortly after McAllister's dissertation and article appeared, Malcolm Brown published his own comprehensive account of the conception and composition of Prokofyev's *War and Peace* as well as the multiple revisions that resulted from the composer's considerable efforts to have the work produced on stage.[18] Based almost entirely on primary accounts of the opera's development, it provides significant insight into the opera through the inclusion of numerous quotations from individuals involved in various attempts to produce *War and Peace* as well as information from the composer himself. As Brown's article is mainly concerned with libretto revisions and the result on length and scenic structure, no space is given to musical description.

Similar to McAllister's dissertation, Harlow Loomis Robinson's dissertation, "The Operas of Sergei Prokofiev and Their Russian Literary Sources," explores the relationship that each of Prokofyev's operas has with its libretto source.[19] In the chapter dealing with *War and Peace* specifically, he attempts to trace how the novel's thousand

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[17] Rita McAllister, "Prokofiev's Tolstoy Epic," *The Musical Times* 113, no. 1555 (September 1972): 851.

[18] Malcolm Brown, "Prokofiev's *War and Peace*: A Chronicle," *The Musical Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (July 1977), 293-326.

[19] Harlow Loomis Robinson, "The Operas of Sergei Prokofiev and Their Russian Literary Sources" (Ph.D. diss., University of California—Berkeley, 1980).

and more pages were used to construct the libretto for the opera. For each tableau of the opera, Robinson identifies from which section of the novel the text came as well as whether the transfer of text was directly from the novel or exhibits some change. Surveying all thirteen tableaux, Robinson also points out connections with various nineteenth-century Russian operas as well as other works from Prokofyev's oeuvre. Associations made by Robinson include those with operas by Chaikovsky (*Eugene Onegin* and *Queen of Spades*), Musorgsky (*Boris Godunov* and *Khovanshchina*), and Borodin (*Prince Igor)*. Nonetheless, many of the connections are based on dramatic similarities and Robinson often does not explore the musical connections between *War and Peace* and the other works. Moreover, relationships are cited with operas that have experienced more exposure in the West; no mention is made of any of Rimsky-Korsakov's eighteen operas, many of which were highly regarded by Prokofyev.

The most detailed English-language study of *War and Peace* is an article by Richard Taruskin.[20] Like most of the aforementioned literature, this article too explores multiple works from Prokofyev's operatic output. Beginning with a short history of Prokofyev's career as an opera composer in the West, Taruskin discusses the composer's pseudo-radical approach to opera composition and how it changed upon his return to the Soviet Union.[21] He reveals the process by which Prokofyev's style of composition moved away from the strict adherence to original texts (a characteristic of his earliest operas) toward a more relaxed approach to libretto construction and manipulation. In discussing

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[20] Richard Taruskin, "Tone, Style, and Form in Prokofiev's Soviet Operas: Some Preliminary Observations," in *Studies in the History of Music*, vol. 2, *Music and Drama* (New York: Broude Brothers Limited, 1988), 215-39.

[21] Although he reclaimed his citizenship in the Soviet Union in 1933, Prokofyev maintained various apartments in the West (particularly in and around Paris) until 1935. In December of this year, Prokofyev moved permanently back to Soviet Russia.

this as it relates to *War and Peace*, Taruskin focuses on a single aria sung by General Kutuzov, citing "striking parallels" with Musorgsky's composition and revision of Boris's Act II monologue.[22] According to Taruskin, "In both instances declamation over a texture of leitmotivs was replaced by a lyrical melody borrowed from a previously composed work…, and for the identical purpose: exaltation of monumentalization of form."[23] In response to harsh criticism, both composers reverted to more conventional compositional processes resulting in a departure from previously held ideas about composition that were of a somewhat radical nature. However, beyond those of this single aria, Taruskin does not provide any other musical connections to the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition.

The most recent English-language text to examine *War and Peace* is Stella Baty Landis's dissertation "The Soviet Operas of Sergei Prokofiev: In Search of Socialist Realism."[24] In her chapter on *War and Peace*, Landis explores the opera from a variety of perspectives, including extensive discussions of the relationship between the opera and Socialist realist literature, film, and art of the time. As Soviet art policy is at the center of her dissertation, Landis explores *War and Peace* as a Socialist Realism composition arguing that, in part, the problems Prokofyev experienced while trying to have his opera staged were the result of changing interpretations of the aesthetic. She contends that definitions of Socialist Realism, official and unofficial alike were in a state of constant flux in response to an ever evolving political climate. With regard to nineteenth-century

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[22] Taruskin, "Tone, Style, and Form," 232–3.

[23] Ibid., 233.

[24] Stella Baty Landis, "The Soviet Operas of Sergei Prokofiev: In Search of Socialist Realism" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2007).

Russian opera, Landis recalls Taruskin's discussion of parallels that exist between Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov* and Prokofyev's opera. Beyond this single reiteration of Taruskin's article, however, no other references to the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition in *War and Peace* are found in the dissertation.

Russian-Language Literature

Much more attention has been given to Prokofyev's *War and Peace* in Russian scholarship. In addition to a number of articles and books specifically dedicated to the subject of *War and Peace* and Prokofyev's operas in general, there are numerous first-hand accounts relating to *War and Peace* and the history of its composition and production in various collections of articles, interviews, and reminiscences of the composer and his music.[25] What is particularly important about this body of literature is that it provides a distinctly Russian perspective on the work, often referencing the work in connection with operas of the Russian tradition rather that with works of Western operatic traditions. Most notable are the frequent references to the operas of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, works which are largely ignored by Western writers.

Russian scholars have produced a number of writings that provide a basic chronology of the opera's composition as well as summarize its plot.[26] Scattered

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[25] Among these first-hand accounts of the opera are those left by his first wife, Lina Prokofyev; his common-law wife, Mira Mendelsohn-Prokofyev; and the conductor of the first public performance of the opera's "Peace" tableaux, Samuil Samosud. All three accounts of the opera can be found in *Sergei Prokof'ev: Stat'i i materialy*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Muzyka, 1965).

[26] Included in this category of writings are: Aleksandr Alekseev, ed., *Istoriya russkoi sovetskoi muzyki*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Muzykal'noe Isdatel'stvo, 1959); Vladimir Blok, comp., *Sergei Prokofiev: Materials, Articles, Interviews* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978); Yuri Keldysh, "Yeshchyo ob opere 'Voina i mir,'" *Sovetskaya muzyka*, no. 7 (1955): 33–40; Elizaveta Mnatsakanova, *Opera S.S. Prokof'eva Voina i Mir* (Moscow: Sovetskii Kompozitor, 1959); Boris Pokrovskii, "V rabote nad 'Voinoi i mirom,'" *Sovetskaya muzyka*, no. 4 (1966): 52–6; Semen Shlifstein, "'Voina i mir' v Malom opernom teatre,"

throughout these writings are a number of references connecting *War and Peace* with works of the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition, each of which provides revealing information about Prokofyev's opera aesthetic and compositional style. Additionally, there are frequent references to earlier compositions by Prokofyev. These references supply useful insights into how Prokofyev's absorption of the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition manifests throughout his career.

One of the most valuable studies in this category is Larisa Dan'ko's *Opery S. Prokof'eva*.[27] This short monograph provides a good introduction to *War and Peace* as well as his other Soviet-era operas and *Love for Three Oranges* (1921). Intended to serve as an introduction to Prokofyev's operas, Dan'ko's text provides a basic history of each work's composition and a synopsis of each tableau. There are, additionally, a few references to the operas of Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin's *Prince Igor*, and the lyricism of Chaikovsky and Rachmaninov. Nevertheless, these allusions are brief and do not provide any detailed information about the stylistic similarities between *War and Peace* and the named works. Similarly, Alexander Uteshev's *Opera S. S. Prokof'eva 'Voyna i mir'* presents a brief chronology of the events surrounding the opera's composition as well as a synopsis of each tableaux.[28] Only a single reference to nineteenth-century Russian

Izbrannye stat'i (Moscow, 1977), 91–100; and Semen Shlifstein, "Zametki o 'Voine i mire,'" *Izbrannye stat'i* (Moscow, 1977), 60–90.

[27] Larisa Dan'ko, *Opery S. Prokof'eva* (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Muzykal'noe Izdatel'stvo, 1963).

[28] Alexander Uteshev, *Opera S. S. Prokof'eva 'Voina i mir'* (Moscow: Sovetskii Kompozitor, 1960). Uteshev's "Istoriya sozdaniya opery S. Prokof'eva 'Voina i mir'" in *Cherty stilya S. Prokof'eva: Sbornik teoreticheskikh statey*, ed. L. Berger, (Moscow, 1962), 58–81, provides a much more detailed account of the composition of *War and Peace*; unfortunately, the article does not discuss the opera in connection with any opera of the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition.

opera is found in which the author suggests a relationship between the choral writing of *War and Peace* and "the tradition of the 'nationalistic dramas' of Musorgsky."[29]

Included in the Russian-language literature are two texts dedicated to an explanation of nationalism in the music of Prokofyev. Elizaveta Mnatsakanova's article deals exclusively with nationalism as it pertains to *War and Peace*.[30] The text is focused on the relationship between the opera and the novel and on how the two portray the historical events surrounding Napoleon's invasion of Russia. Unfortunately, there are no references to any operas of the nineteenth century or to any of Prokofyev's own nationalistic compositions. In contrast, Tatyana Vasil'evna Boganova's book *Natsional'no-russkie traditsii v muzike S. S. Prokof'eva* is much more extensive in regard to references to the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition.[31] In addition to numerous references to Prokofyev's own compositions based on Russian themes, *War and Peace* is discussed in connection with operas by Rimsky-Korsakov (*Sadko, The Invisible City of Kitezh, The Tsar's Bride,* and *Maid of Pskov*) and Chaikovsky (*Eugene Onegin* and *Queen of Spades*) as well as Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov* and Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar*.[32]

Most useful of the Russian-language writings to this study, due to an emphasis on score study, is a small body of analytical texts on *War and Peace*. Among these is an

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[29] Uteshev, *Opera S. S. Prokof'eva*, 19.

[30] Elizaveta Mnatsakanova, "Prokof'ev i Tolstoi: Narodnaya ideya opery '*Voina i mir*,'" *Muzyka i sovremennost: Sbornik stat'i* 4 (1966): 162–85.

[31] Tatyana Boganova, *Natsional'no-russkie traditsii v muzyke S. S. Prokof'eva* (Moscow: Sovetskii Kompozitor, 1961).

[32] Boganova, *Natsional'no-russkie traditsii*, 84-6, 100-1, 104-6, 116, 120, 149-50, and 159-60.

analysis of the first tableau by Alfred Schnittke.[33] Schnittke's experience as a composer proves useful as it provides him with additional insights into Prokofyev's style. Throughout the article he acknowledges a number of allusions to other works by Prokofyev as well as a number of compositions by nineteenth-century Russian composers; however, Schnittke's analysis includes references to both operatic and non-operatic works. Schnittke's focus on the first tableau unfortunately limits the applicability of his analysis.

Two more comprehensive discussions of *War and Peace*'s style are provided by Lyudmila Polyakova[34] and Elizaveta Mnatsakanova.[35] Both authors present a tableau-by-tableau analysis of the opera as well as a discussion of *War and Peace*'s position in the development of Prokofyev's operatic style. Polyakova provides an especially detailed description of the principal melodic themes of the opera and their function in the communication of the drama. Like most of the texts already discussed, however, references to the nineteenth-century are limited as they more frequently discuss *War and Peace* and its connection with other works of Prokofyev's oeuvre. Nevertheless, Polyakova demonstrates an awareness of Boris Asafyev's writings on Russian opera, which are at the foundation of the concept of a nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition implemented by the current study.

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[33] Alfred Schnittke, "Zametki o dramaturgii pervoi kartiny o muzikal'nom tematizme opery S. Prokof'eva 'Voina i mir,'" in *Cherty stilya S. Prokof'eva: Sbornik teoreticheskikh statey*, ed. L. Berger (Moscow, 1962), 32–57.

[34] Lyudmila Polyakova, '*Voina i Mir' S.S. Prokof'eva,* 2nd ed. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Muzyka, 1971).

[35] Elizaveta Mnatsakanova, *Opera S.S. Prokof'eva 'Voina i Mir'* (Moscow: Sovetskii Kompozitor, 1959).

The most thorough study of *War and Peace* in Russian is an analysis of the opera and its revisions by Anatoli Volkov.[36] His book remains the most comprehensive analytical text on Prokofyev's music for the opera to date. In addition to tracing the development of Prokofyev's style as an operatic composer and the history of *War and Peace* itself, Volkov includes a number of references to nineteenth-century works, including references to the operas of Prokofyev's former teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov. Additionally, Volkov expends considerable effort on discussing issues of unity in the opera and the use of leitmotifs and other cyclic materials as well as possible labels for the opera's genre. Much like Polyakova and Mnatsakanova, Volkov demonstrates an awareness of Asafyev's writings on Russian opera. Nonetheless, Volkov's use of Asafyev is limited to his concept of *intonatsii*, omitting other compositional strategies and devices communicated by Asafyev in *Symphonic Etudes*. Moreover, references to nineteenth-century operas still remain in passing and no large-scale discussion of stylistic similarities between Prokofyev's opera and these works is attempted.

Based on the review of the secondary literature above, it becomes apparent that most scholars do indeed acknowledge that a relationship between *War and Peace* and the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition exists. The frequent references to nineteenth-century Russian operas which Prokofyev's opera recalls readily support this fact. However, beyond the presentation of a few examples or momentary references to the tradition, the nature of the relationship is not elucidated. To address this issue, the present study aims to provide a more systematic discussion of the ways in which Prokofyev's

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[36] Anatoli Volkov, '*Voina i Mir*' *Prokof'eva: Opyt analiza variantov opery* (Moscow: Muzyka, 1976).

War and Peace exhibits a significant influence from the nineteenth-century tradition which extends beyond the current practice of briefly acknowledging similarities in style.

Scope and Methodology

As it is not concerned with the development of Prokofyev's libretto or the numerous revisions to the score for the opera, this study is not archival in nature and does not take into account the large collection of manuscript documents housed in the Glinka Museum of Musical Culture in Moscow. Rita McAllister has already examined this material and presented it in detail as part of her dissertation. Similarly, the current study will not explore the relationships between *War and Peace* and Prokofyev's other operas, due to the ample coverage of these issues in the secondary literature. In part, this study will revisit the issue of *War and Peace* as a Soviet composition. Doing so will clarify the nature of the relationship between Prokofyev's ever-evolving opera aesthetic and the demands of Soviet music policies—both of which are strongly rooted in the nineteenth-century Russian traditions.

The importance of the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition to Prokofyev was determined by examining the secondary literature not only on *War and Peace*, but also those writings dedicated to his operas in general. Throughout this body of literature, frequent references to specific nineteenth-century Russian composers and operas appear, some of which have been presented above. As some of these allusions to the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition are short and do not provide significant commentary about how a specific work or composer's style manifests in the opera, it was imperative

to launch an investigation of nineteenth-century Russian opera and its relationship with *War and Peace*—hence the current study.

Considerable evidence of Prokofyev's interaction with the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition is found throughout the biographical literature on the composer. In addition to further mention of nineteenth-century Russian composers and operas of influence to Prokofyev, these biographical writings contain lists of opera performances attended by the composer as well as references to scores of nineteenth-century Russian operas owned and studied by him. This in turn reinforced the notion that the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition played a shaping role in the development of Prokofyev as an opera composer. More informative, however, were the composer's own writings on opera and opera aesthetics. Beyond indicating in his diaries which Russian operas were his favorites, Prokofyev also wrote a number of Soviet-era articles providing insightful comments about how his operas related to those of the nineteenth-century.

As *War and Peace* is a Soviet-era composition it is necessary to examine primary and secondary writings on the party-sanctioned aesthetic of Socialist Realism and to compare these documents with Prokofyev's own writings. Doing so indicates where Prokofyev aligned himself with Socialist Realism and where he deviated from the demands of the aesthetic. In part, it is revealed that Prokofyev was something of a "fellow traveler," associating himself with and relating his music to Socialist Realism without entirely surrendering his compositional voice to the demands of the aesthetic. Essentially, Prokofyev attempted to indicate precisely in what ways his music upheld the tenet of Socialist Realism and to justify those musical and dramaturgical traits that did not clearly reflect the aesthetic by addressing how his operas related to those of the

nineteenth century. Consequently, this comparison also revealed that Prokofyev possessed a more complex understanding of the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition than party officials as well as that he held a less "black-and-white" view of conservative versus modernist compositional styles.

This study looks specifically to Russian-language scholarship for a culturally-informed understanding of the tradition. In particular, the writings of Boris Asafyev are used to inform the conceptualization of a nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition offered as part of this study. Asafyev's *Symphonic Etudes* (1922), a pioneering collection of critical essays from the early 1920s, offers a twentieth-century perspective on nineteenth-century Russian opera as well as defining characteristics of the tradition—a perspective contemporaneous with Prokofyev's own understanding of the tradition. Typical of Asafyev's richly allusive style of music criticism, *Symphonic Etudes* is a challenging, yet necessary reading for anyone interested in understanding the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition. In its original form, the text lacked a preface discussing the author's intent; consequently, the text immediately launches into its individual chapters, which consist primarily of program notes written for the 1921–22 season of the Mariinsky Theater.[37] Therefore, Asafyev does not provide a typical survey of the Russian opera tradition. Instead, *Symphonic Etudes* serves as Asafyev's attempt to "define and explicate a core repertory" of operas through a discussion of individual works.[38] Included are sections discussing Rimsky-Korsakov, Chaikovsky, and Musorgsky, as well as

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[37] David Haas's recent translation of *Symphonic Etudes* addresses this issue by including a preface in which he meticulously analyzes the text providing readers with insights into the central themes of the Asafyev's monograph.

[38] David Haas, "Igor Glebov and the Audiences of *Symphonic Etudes*," in Boris Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes: Portraits of Russian Operas and Ballets*, trans. David Haas (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2008), xiv.

chapters clearly dedicated to operas by these composers (*The Maid of Pskov, The Snow Maiden, Christmas Eve,* and *Queen of Spades*, among others). Throughout *Symphonic Etudes*, Asafyev argues that Russian opera composers used different compositional goals and habits than their Western counterparts. This idea is reinforced through Asafyev's presentation of several fundamental principles that define the operas of nineteenth-century Russia. From Asafyev's discussion of various nineteenth-century Russian operas, a set of defining characteristics emerges, which can be used to explicate the relationship between Prokofyev's opera and the Russian opera tradition at large.

Inspired by David Haas's preface to *Symphonic Etudes*, five defining traits of the Russian opera tradition were extracted, upon which Asafyev relied in creating his "psychological and stylistic portraits" of the operas and ballets he chose for inclusion in the book. These five traits are: 1) the creation of operatic (musical) personae through the assemblage of discrete melodic *intonatsii* (i.e., units of musical speech that can be identified and, by one means or another, categorized); 2) a focus on internal psychological conflict as a source of drama; 3) the depiction of various realms of existence (e.g., diatonic collections to represent the natural world juxtaposed against whole-tone and octatonic collections to represent the supernatural world); 4) the exploration of the relationship between individuals and their communities; and 5) the development of formal unity within an opera through the symphonic development of themes, motives, or other cyclic material. After noting the significance of these five defining traits for *Symphonic Etudes*, the traits were then reformulated into an inventory of standard compositional techniques and practices of nineteenth-century Russian opera composers. It is my contention that the approach to style analysis using the guidelines set

forth in *Symphonic Etudes* provides a practical methodology that can lead to a deeper knowledge of a twentieth-century work like *War and Peace* than mere formal analysis, coupled with the identification of isolated borrowings from folk songs or art music, as found in certain previous studies.

With Asafyev's principles identified and explicated further, this study explores their applicability to *War and Peace* as a practical means for determining the specific implementation of sophisticated nineteenth-century traits into Prokofyev's opera. The current study will demonstrate how the first three traits identified above manifest in *War and Peace*. Points four and five are not applicable to the study. With regard to the exploration of the relationship between individuals and their communities, Prokofyev's opera does not include any of the scenes from Tolstoy's novel detailing the relationship between the principal characters and their various communities (e.g., Prince Andrei's and the Russian army, Pierre Bezukhov and the Freemasons, Natasha and the Russian aristocracy). Likewise, the compositional style utilized by Prokofyev is not symphonic in nature. Instead, the composer constructs his opera as a montage of scenes taken from the novel; shifts from one scene to another often occur suddenly and motivic materials are not treated developmentally. Nevertheless, even though all five of Asafyev's characteristics were not put to equal use in *War and Peace*, this selective use of traits is consistent with Russian operas of the previous century.

This study will be divided into five chapters. Following the current introductory chapter, Chapter 2 explores Prokofyev's interaction with the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition and how this interaction informed his aesthetic as an opera composer. In part, this chapter will also examine the development of Socialist Realism specifically as a

music aesthetic as well as the problems associated with interpreting the tenuous body of documents that explicate the aesthetic. Chapter 3 will examine Asafyev's concept of the *intonatsii* as well as how Prokofyev uses *intonatsii* in *War and Peace* as a means of communicating information about secondary and minor characters. Prokofyev's use of internal psychology as a source of dramatic and musical conflict is discussed in Chapter 4. As used in the present study, the expression "internal psychology" will refer to any inner psychological conflict for which there is no externalized resolution. Moreover, it will be shown that, drawing upon the operas of Chaikovsky and Musorgsky, the exploration of characters' inner psychology is used as a technique for constructing principal characters. Finally, Chapter 5 will examine how Prokofyev constructs two opposing sound complexes by adapting compositional techniques used by Rimsky-Korsakov to portray different realms of existence musically—one to convey the life of the characters prior to Napoleon's invasion and one representative of Russia at war.

A Note on Transliteration

The transliteration of Russian-language titles and names remains a standard problem for those writing in English. The system used by the Library of Congress can be problematic due to the inclusion of special diacritical marks to represent elided vowel and consonant sounds. To avoid these complications associated with such markings, the transliteration system used in this study is not based on that of the Library of Congress, but rather the system used by the *Slavic and East European Journal*. All Russian titles in the bibliography are transliterated using the following schema:

А	а	a	К	к	k	Х	х	kh
Б	б	b	Л	л	l	Ц	ц	ts
В	в	v	М	м	m	Ч	ч	ch
Г	г	g	Н	н	n	Ш	ш	sh
Д	д	d	О	о	o	Щ	щ	shch
Е	е	e	П	п	p	Ъ	ъ	"
Ё	ё	yo	Р	р	r	Ы	ы	y
Ж	ж	zh	С	с	s	Ь	ь	'
З	з	z	Т	т	t	Э	э	e
И	и	i	У	у	u	Ю	ю	yu
Й	й	i	Ф	ф	f	Я	я	ya

Proper names are not transliterated according to the system above. Instead, composer names appear throughout this study as they appear in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition. Following recent trends established by Richard Taruskin, David Haas, and Simon Morrison, the only exceptions to this rule are the surnames Asafyev, Prokofyev, and Chaikovsky. These alternate spellings are used to more accurately reflect pronunciation of the names. The only exception to this is the spelling of Prokofyev; in order to facilitate the location of sources, the various spellings of the composer's name remain as they appear in the original bibliographic entries.

CHAPTER II

RECONCILING PROKOFYEV'S OPERA AESTHETIC
WITH SOCIALIST REALISM

More than any other influence, it was the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition that had the greatest impact on Prokofyev as an opera composer. Even in his most "radical" of compositions from the 1910s and 20s, Prokofyev sought to adapt the nineteenth-century ideas about operatic composition to his own twentieth-century works. The influence of this tradition, however, is most clearly evident in the composer's Soviet-era operas. In the years just prior to his move back to the Soviet Union, Prokofyev began to develop a more accessible style of composition that embraced clearer, melody-dominated textures and more straightforward harmonies. Nevertheless, Prokofyev would undergo constant criticism by Party officials regarding the inaccessibility of his music. This criticism would culminate during the First Congress of Musicians at the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party in 1948. By the end of the three days of meetings that comprised the Congress, Prokofyev was officially branded a "formalist" by Stalin's political watchdog, Andrei Zhdanov. With Zhdanov's decree came the accusation that the composer intentionally rejected Socialist Realism and with it the "the full recognition of the importance of our classical heritage, particularly of the Russian classical school."[1]

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[1] Andrei Zhdanov, quoted in Alexander Werth, *Musical Uproar in Moscow* (London: Turnstile Press, 1949), 80.

In this chapter, I will challenge this claim by arguing that the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition was fundamental to Prokofyev's own opera aesthetic and that the intimacy of his interactions with nineteenth-century Russian opera resulted in an understanding of the tradition that was more sophisticated than that of Party officials who simply wanted imitations of nineteenth-century musical "classics" of the Chaikovsky and Glinka variety. I will substantiate this claim by examining Prokofyev's Soviet writings, demonstrating that he clearly understood the tenet of Socialist Realism and tried to articulate clearly the ways in which his operatic style intersected with that of Russia's nineteenth-century masters. Furthermore, I will maintain the contention that changes in the political environment coupled with ambiguities in the definition of Socialist Realism prompted a culture in which Prokofyev's music would have been rejected regardless of musical style.

Prokofyev and Nineteenth-Century Russian Opera

Prokofyev's engagement with nineteenth-century Russian opera began in 1900 when his parents took him on his first trip to Moscow to celebrate the arrival of the new century. As part of the celebrations, his parents took him to see productions of Gounod's *Faust* and Borodin's *Prince Igor* at the Bolshoi Theater as well as a production of Chaikovsky's *The Sleeping Beauty*.[2] While he probably found the supernatural themes of *Faust* more exciting then the story of *Prince Igor*, Prokofyev developed a fascination with opera, nonetheless. Upon returning to his home in Sontsovka, the young composer of merely a few short piano pieces announced to his family that he intended to write his

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[2] Israel Nestyev, *Prokofiev*, trans. Florence Jonas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960), 5.

own opera. By summer's end, Prokofyev had completed an entire act of *The Giant*—thus marking his entry into the tradition of Russian opera initiated by Glinka nearly seventy years earlier. [3] Before enrolling in the conservatory, the composer would had two more operas—*Desert Islands* (1901) and *A Feast in Time of Plague* (1903).

Prokofyev's interaction with Russia's nineteenth-century opera tradition continued over the next few years through attending performances; however, his exposure to the tradition increased dramatically after moving to St. Petersburg with his mother in 1904 to enroll in the Conservatory. Thanks to his obsessive habit of counting items and constructing lists, we know that he attended performances of 45 operas between February 1904 and the end of his first year at the Conservatory in June 1905. [4] Moreover, he attended many of the productions numerous times. In a revealing passage from his early diaries, Prokofyev recalls attending four performances of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maiden Fevroniya*. The composer was particular pleased with the fact that his father had instructed him "to get the best seats I could, so I was able to relish the opera to the fullest." [5] In turn, this allowed Prokofyev to point out to his father "those bits that merited special attention." [6] Perhaps more important to Prokofyev's development as an opera composer was the access to Mariinsky Theater rehearsals that also came with his student status. Attending

[3] *The Giant* was long believed lost; however, the vocal score was recently found and orchestrated by Sergei Sapozhnikov. The "premiere" performance was given on April 21, 2001, on the New Opera theater's small stage in Moscow by a cast of children ranging from 3.5 to 15 years of age.

[4] Harlow Robinson, *Sergei Prokofiev: A Biography* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 40–1.

[5] Sergei Prokofyev, *Prokofiev by Prokofiev: A Composer's Memoir*, ed. and trans. David H. Appel (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Press, 1979), 195.

[6] Ibid., 195.

these rehearsals was a particularly favorite pastime for Prokofyev as he could more easily

take scores from the Conservatory library with him and follow along as the opera

company rehearsed. As Harlow Robinson points out, Prokofyev frequently obtained

copies of scores before older students had an opportunity to do so; this undoubtedly

delighted the young composer who must certainly have been suddenly popular among his

older peers, at least those who wanted to use the score as well.[7]

  Prokofyev's intensive study of opera scores increased when he entered the

conducting class of Nikolay Tcherepnin (1873-1945) during the fall of 1907. Although

his study of conducting included orchestral music as well, a large portion of his time

working with Tcherepnin was spent studying opera scores. The experience of studying

opera scores from a conductor's standpoint must have proved satisfying for Prokofyev, as

by November 3, 1910, the composer confided in his diary that "I have to be virtually full

time in the opera class; this is absolutely necessary seeing that I have decided to study

opera conducting technique."[8] Within two years, Prokofyev's study of opera conducting

was going well enough that he was featured as part of the study Jubilee conducting

excerpts from Rimsky-Korsakov's first opera, *Pskovityanka* (1868-72; rev. 1876-7; 1891-

2). By the time Prokofyev finished his studies with Tcherepnin, he had worked with a

number of important Russian operas, at least in part; in addition to *Pskovityanka*, he

studied Chaikovsky's *Maid of Orleans* (1878-9; rev. 1882) and *Queen of Spades* (1890),

Rimsky-Korsakov's *Snow Maiden* (1880-1; rev. 1895), and Musorgsky's *The Wedding*

(1868). This last opera was of particular importance to Prokofyev as the prose setting of

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[7] Robinson, *Sergei Prokofiev*, 40.

[8] Sergei Prokofyev, *Diaries 1907-1914: Prodigious Youth*, trans. Anthony Phillips (Ithaca, NY: Cornell
University Press, 2006), 185.

Musorgsky's dialogue opera served as the inspiration for his first complete opera, *The Gambler* (1915-7).

After leaving Russia in 1918, Prokofyev was unable to interact with the Russian opera tradition as frequently as he was during his time at the Conservatory. The availability of scores as well as performances of Russian operas was quite minimal. Nevertheless, Prokofyev maintain ties with former classmates from the Conservatory such as Boris Asafyev; through his correspondence with Asafyev and others, Prokofyev remained informed of the state of new music in Russia. Regarding the nineteenth-century tradition, however, Prokofyev received a copy of Asafyev's recently published volume of opera criticism, *Symphonic Etudes*, in November of 1922. In a letter dated November 7, 1922, Prokofiev wrote to Asafyev that he "greatly enjoyed reading your new book."[9] Although he does not provide any specific information about his opinion of the book, the fact remains that he was familiar with the text and Asafyev's ideas on Russian opera.

Implementation of Socialist Realism in Literature

Like every other Soviet composer of the time, Prokofyev was obligated to employ the aesthetic of Socialist Realism upon his return to the Soviet Union in 1935. However, all composers and scholars found it challenging to translate the complicated rhetoric used to discuss Socialist Realism in literature into musical terms, to say nothing of compositional practice. Occasionally this challenge was met successfully; Ivan Dzerzhinsky's opera *Quiet Flows the Don* (1932-4), for example, was praised by Stalin

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[9] Sergei Prokofyev, *Selected Letters of Sergei Prokofiev*, trans. Harlow Robinson (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 91.

himself for its "considerable ideological and political merits."[10] Nevertheless, a considerable number of works were officially condemned and banned from performance. Countless other compositions and proposed projects never made it past the Committee on Art Affairs. The most unlucky of composers were those labeled "formalists" for their inability to render in musical terms the ambiguously articulated expectations of Party officials; this unfortunate fate had the potential for the most of dire of consequences.

Although socialist themes were being explored in the arts around the time of the 1917 Revolution, Socialist Realism was not officially introduced until the early 1930s. Shortly after the revolution, a number of independent associations emerged in all of the arts, each with opposing ideas regarding aesthetics and the role of the arts in society. At one extreme were groups such as the Association for Contemporary Music (ACM), which were invested in exploring and advancing the most recent compositional practices by Russian and Western composers alike. This faction of composers reacted to the new Soviet culture by exploring experimental compositional practices; what they sought was a revolutionary style of music to reflect the revolutionary new society. In essence, there was an attempt to detach themselves from the music and culture of imperial Russia of the nineteenth-century.

At the other extreme were a number of proletarian groups like the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM); these groups were devoted to making music, literature, and other arts more accessible to the working class. Their primary focus was often on texts and the mass comprehension of musical style. At the heart of their output were folk music, short vocal works exploring revolutionary and patriotic themes,

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[10] Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 507.

and the highly coveted mass song. Over time, through their Party connections, RAPM and its sister organizations slowly gained power during the 1920s, ultimately peaking in December 1928 when the Central Committee of the Communist Party gave them control of the conservatories, radio stations, the State Music Press, and various other cultural outlets.[11]

To remedy the schism between the proletarian and progressive factions (and establish a mechanism for direct Party oversight), the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a decree on April 23, 1932 announcing a restructuring of Soviet literary associations. The decree specifically referenced the Party's concern that proletarian groups, while having made significant strides in the advancement of literature in the name of socialism, could potentially become "instruments of clubbish exclusiveness, of isolation from the political tasks of the present day and from the considerable groups of writers and artists who are sympathetic to socialist construction."[12] To address this concern, the decree established four goals:

1. The Association of Proletarian Writers (VOAPP, RAPP) is liquidated;
2. All writers upholding the platform of the Soviet power and aspiring to participate in socialist construction are amalgamated in a single union of Soviet writers with its own communist faction;
3. An analogous change is to be made with respect to other types of art;
4. The Orgburo is to work out practical measures for implementing this decision.[13]

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[11] Francis Maes, *A History of Russian Music: From Kamarinskaya to Babi Yar*, trans. Arnold J. Pomerans and Erica Pomerans (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 252–3.

[12] "On the Reconstruction of Literary-Artistic Organizations," in *Resolutions and Decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, vol 3, *The Stalin Years, 1929-1953*, ed. Robert H. McNeal (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 116.

[13] Ibid., 116.

This *perestroika* [restructuring] essentially ended the reign of proletarian groups and instead placed the arts under the control of the Party. The resolution, however, did more than simply liquidate all independent arts associations and replace them with a system of Party-controlled unions. In part, the Party initiated this restructuring also as a way of regaining the support of the intelligentsia, which had slowly deteriorated as a result of the empowerment and influence of proletarian groups.[14] Individuals such as Asafyev and Vladimir Shcherbachyov were able to return to the teaching positions they had lost as a result of the proletarians' ascent to power.

In conjunction with the newly established artists Unions, there was a need for a new creative ideology that could serve proletarians and non-proletarians equally; this need was met by the new aesthetic of Socialist Realism. Although first introduced in print as part of the May 23, 1932 edition of *Literaturnaya gazeta*, Socialist Realism was not implemented as the official Party-sanctioned aesthetic for the arts until the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. As described in the statute of the Writers' Union, Socialist Realism,

> the basic method of Soviet literature and literary criticism, demands of the sincere writer a historically concrete presentation of reality in its revolutionary development. Thus the veracity and the historically concrete aspect of the artistic representation of reality have to be allied to the task of ideological change and the education of workers in the spirit of socialism. Socialist Realism guarantees to creative art an extraordinary opportunity to manifest any artistic initiative and a choice of various forms, styles, and genres. The victory of socialism, the rapid growth of productive forces unprecedented in the history of humanity, the burgeoning process of the liquidation of classes, the elimination of all possibilities of exploitation of man by man and the elimination of the contrasts between city and countryside, and, finally, the progress of science and culture, create limitless

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[14] Maes, *History of Russian Music*, 254.

possibilities for a qualitative and quantitative increase in creative forces and for the expansion of all types of art and literature.[15]

Embedded in this passage are a number of important ideas associated with Socialist Realism. Among these is the indication that Soviet literature should promote the "education of workers" as well as the "liquidation of classes." These phrases are related not only to advancement of socialism and the development of a Communist society, but also to the accessibility of the arts. Literature and, subsequently, the performing and visual arts were to embrace styles of expression that were easily understood by the masses, not only the musically educated. Additionally, the appearance of the term "Socialist Realism" within the statute is in itself important as it specifically identifies Socialist Realism as the official aesthetic of the Soviet party. Most importantly, however, is the indication that Socialist Realism provides "a choice of various forms, styles, and genres," which reinforces the idea that the aesthetic was intended for all creative parties, whether in literature, music, the visual arts, or theater. Moreover, it suggests that the new aesthetic did not require the invention of new genres or other creative outlets; nor did it advocate any particular pre-existing genre. Rather writers, musicians, and the like were expected to incorporate Socialist realist ideas into existing art forms.

Although this definition of Socialist Realism was intended to be comprehensive, it provided little guidance for writers regarding the realization of the aesthetic. There was essentially no rhetoric dedicated to discussing what a realistic presentation of socialist society in literature entailed. Therefore, during the Congress, which extended over 26 sessions between August 17 and September 1, the discussion attempted to move beyond

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[15] Quoted in Régine Robin, *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 11.

the realm of ideology and to clarify the implications of Socialist Realism as an actual aesthetic.[16]

The problem of clearly defining Socialist Realism was not new. The definition of the aesthetic evolved significantly during the two years between the liquidation of proletarian organizations and the Writers' Union Congress. However, as Robin points out, "no clear consensus was reached as to the meaning to be attributed to the notion of Socialist Realism."[17] As a result, some writers approached the aesthetic with skepticism. Lev Nikulin, for example, stated that the lack of clear direction from the government regarding Socialist Realism would appear in literature would result in the aesthetic being "applied inappropriately."[18] He believed that without specific guidance the same problems that the Party identified in the writings of RAPP members, and which subsequently resulted in the liquidation of all organizations in the arts, would occur again. Others shared Nikulin's discomfort with Socialist Realism. Some went as far as to say that the way a writer portrays life "realistic or symbolic, [is] entirely his own business."[19]

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[16] Although it is commonly believed that the Writers' Union Congress was concerned almost exclusively with the intent of defining and establishing Socialist Realism, Robin's analysis of the Congress transcripts reveals this not to be true. Socialist Realism was indeed a principal issue of discussion; however, it was only one of several issues explored during the meetings. Of the 228 references to Socialist Realism, few were concerned with the nature of the aesthetic itself. Rather Socialist Realism was more frequently referenced in connection with what officials thought Soviet literature should be, or how Socialist Realism differed from nineteenth-century "Romantic" realism. Additionally, Robin establishes that the meetings neither progressed toward a discussion of Socialist Realism, nor did they demonstrate a concentration on the aesthetic. Instead, she found that the phrase "Socialist Realism" appears in the transcripts inconsistently with some days having as many as 31 references to the aesthetic and others having none at all.

[17] Ibid., 41.

[18] Quoted in ibid., 40.

[19] Vsevolod Vishnevskii (poet), quoted in Robin, *Socialist Realism*, 41.

Implementation of Socialist Realism in Music

For composers, understanding the implications of Socialist Realism in music was much more complicated and problematic. While there were many attempts to explain Socialist Realism as it pertains to literature, the same did not occur in music. In fact, the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Composers would not transpire until nearly a decade and a half after that of the Writers' Union Conference In the meantime, composers and musicologists were expected to interpret the available writings on Socialist Realism in literature and translate them into a vocabulary of expression suitable to the field of music. The first major attempt to discuss Socialist Realism in music was an aptly titled article by music critic Victor Gorodinsky "On the Problem of Socialist Realism in Music," which was printed in the first edition of *Sovetskaya Muzyka* in 1934. Gorodinsky stated that

> the main attention of the Soviet composer must be directed towards the victorious progressive principles of reality, towards all that is heroic, bright, and beautiful. This distinguishes the spiritual world of Soviet man and must be embodied in musical images full of beauty and strength. Socialist Realism demands an implacable struggle against folk-negating modernistic directions that are typical of the decay of contemporary bourgeois art, against subservience and servility towards modern bourgeois culture.[20]

Like the passage from the statute of the Writers' Union Conference, Gorodinsky's direct reference to Socialist Realism reinforced the notion that it was the official aesthetic for Soviet composers. However, it is the assertion that "Socialist Realism demands an implacable struggle against folk-negating modernistic directions" which is most striking. This statement reveals the degree to which folk culture was upheld as well as the negative attitudes held by Soviet officials during the time toward modernistic compositional styles.

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[20] Gorodinsky, quoted in Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia: 1917-1970* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1972), 114.

While Soviet composers were beginning to process the implications of Socialist Realism on music composition, Prokofyev was preparing to return permanently to the Soviet Union. With his decision, however, came an obligation to embrace the new aesthetic of Socialist Realism. This was particularly important because he had earned a reputation for composing excessively modernistic music during his nearly fifteen-year period abroad. Over the three-year period, from November 1932 to December 1935, during which he gradually established his Soviet citizenship, Prokofyev increased his activity within the Soviet music community. In addition to concertizing for extended periods of time, he agreed to teach composition to a small group of students at the Moscow Conservatory. He also accepted a number of composition projects, such as writing the music for the film *Lieutenant Kizhe* as well as a commission for the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. More importantly, though, Prokofyev started to communicate his understanding of Socialist Realism through a series of articles and editorials on Soviet aesthetics, Soviet music, and his own composition projects. These articles, however, were more than an outlet for expressing his views on music. They also served as a vehicle for reconciling his own compositional aesthetic with that of Socialist Realism.

The first communiqué in which Prokofyev addresses Soviet aesthetics was an article titled "The Path of Soviet Music," which was published in *Izvestia* in November 1934. As he presents the notion that, "what is needed above all is *great* music, i.e., music that would correspond both in form and content to the grandeur of the epoch," the article appears to be an attempt by Prokofyev to express his ideas about the type of music that

Soviet composers should aim to write.[21] This statement is particularly important as it communicates his awareness of the Soviet catchphrase "Socialist in form, nationalist in content," which was frequently used in conjunction with the arts. Nevertheless, as the article continues, Prokofyev begins to communicate the belief that this music must

> be primarily melodious, and the melody should be clear and simple without however becoming repetitive or trivial. Many composers find it difficult enough to compose any sort of melody, let alone a melody having some definite function to perform. The same applies to the technique, the form—it too must be clear and simple, but not stereotyped. It is not the old simplicity that is needed by a new kind of simplicity.[22]

The new simplicity to which Prokofyev referred is characterized by Harlow Robinson as being, in addition to melody-dominated, less harmonically complex, less dissonant, and predominantly homophonic.[23] As he had already shifted his compositional style to embrace these same characteristics, Prokofyev, therefore, projects himself as the ideal Soviet composer.

Although Soviet composers had to wait until 1948 for their first Congress, the Composers' Union did hold a three-day conference in February 1935 dedicated to the discussion of Soviet symphonism.[24] Even though the conference did not concern the topic

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[21] Sergei Prokofyev, "The Path of Soviet Music," in *S. Prokofiev: Autobiography, Articles, Reminiscences*, compiled, edited, and with notes by S. Shlifstein, translated by Rose Prokofieva (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960), 99.

[22] Ibid., 100.

[23] Robinson, *Prokofiev*, 295.

[24] Coined by Asafyev during the 1920s, the term *simfonizm* was used to large-scale instrumental musical works that demonstrated a particular approach to the development of musical themes. These works did not have to be for symphony orchestra or of the symphony genre. Perhaps the composer and music critic Bogdanov-Berezovsky best paraphrased Asafyev's intentions when he stated, "Symphony as a genre is nothing but a sonata for orchestra…Symphonism, on the other hand, is the definition of a creative method, a definite procedure for the development of musical material…Symphonism as a principle, as a means of musical representation and of concrete reality in the highest philosophical categories, is becoming the leading and dominant method of the Soviet composer, independent of the genres and forms he uses." Quoted in Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life,* 159.

of Socialist Realism specifically, the conference was attended by critics and composers alike who delivered speeches on the state of Soviet symphonic music as well as offered responses to speeches presented by others. Some composers spoke positively about recent developments in Soviet symphonic writing. One such figure was Gavriil Popov, who stated that

> Soviet symphonism is a new category of musical work which ought to permeate the creative practice of the composer…Soviet symphonism must spread its influence into the forgotten, backward segments of instrumental and vocal music…in terms of genuine emotional exposure and intensification of socio-political ideas embedded in the literary part of vocal compositions.[25]

Popov's comment, although confident in tone, is surprisingly vague. The statement is also symptomatic of the same reliance on catchphrases for legitimacy exhibited in much of the writing on Soviet literature. The "socio-political ideas" of Socialist Realism are clearly referenced, but Popov provides little insight on how this might be rendered musically.

Although other composers and critics shared Popov's positive outlook on the Soviet symphony, there were a number of influential composers who expressed their concerns about the topic. One major concern was the problem of conveying Socialist content in large-scale symphonic music. Dmitri Shostakovich contended that "there was a time when the problem of content was simple: put in some verses, there's content; no verses—formalism. Now there is serious talk that the question is not one of text but of music…There is no shortcut to content in music."[26] Shostakovich's comment is quite revealing. At the time it was a popular strategy for composers to suggest Socialist content

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[25] Popov, quoted in Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life*, 158.

[26] Shostakovich, quoted in ibid., 158.

by incorporating Soviet texts or by applying programmatic titles or storylines based on Soviet themes. However, the greater problem was not with what was being expressed; rather it was related to *how* the content was expressed musically. There was still a need for a musical style that upheld the basic tenets of Socialism. Dmitri Kabalevsky was not convinced that it was possible to accomplish such a feat through music. He commented that it was not necessary "that all Soviet music must 'depict' and 'portray' concrete facts and occurrences" and that it was likely that "music is not even capable [of doing so]."[27]

While no consensus was reached as to how to develop a Soviet symphonic style, Boris Schwarz points out that most in attendance agreed that the traditional, non-programmatic symphony had grown to be obsolete.[28] Many composers began to develop new methods for composing symphonic music embodying Soviet themes. Such tactics included the use of folk music from the various Soviet republics as well as the arrangement of stage and film music based on Soviet themes into suites. Some composers explored the depiction of noteworthy battles and other events associated with the revolution as well as composed stage and symphonic works about important national heroes, such as Lenin and Stalin.[29] Essentially, the solution to the problem of symphonism in Soviet music was in part a return to distinguished genres of the nineteenth century—the symphonic poem, program symphony, cantata, opera, and oratorio—genres that Taruskin describes as "the mammoths and mastodons of the Western classical tradition."[30]

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[27] Kabalevsky, quoted in ibid., 158.

[28] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life*, 159.

[29] Ibid., 159.

[30] Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 517–8.

Among the first documents to provide specific information regarding the expected musical style for Socialist realist music was the infamous *Pravda* editorial, "Muddle Instead of Music: Concerning the Opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*."[31] Printed on January 28, 1936, "Muddle Instead of Music" was arguably the first effort by the Party to exercise direct aesthetic control over the compositional style of Soviet composers . The printing of the article was an especially effective act because it targeted one of the most promising of Soviet composers. If a composer with as much stature as Shostakovich was not safe from attack, then perhaps no one was. More importantly, however, was the fact that the editorial finally named a work of music that did not uphold the principles of Socialist Realism. With *Lady Macbeth* labeled a formalistic composition informed by "leftish ugliness" and "petty bourgeois 'innovation'" composers now had specific information regarding the expected musical style of Socialist Realism.[32]

At the heart of the editorial were the many ways in which *Lady Macbeth* had "no resemblance to classical [Russian] operatic music or symphonic tonality" which Party officials considered to be "the simple commonly accessible language of music."[33] As a result of this, most of the information regarding musical style is communicated by means of a negative rhetorical strategy outlining what Soviet music was not to be. Among the inventory of criticisms expressed in "Muddle Instead of Music" were Shostakovich's use

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[31] Although a number of individuals have been suggested as the authors of "Muddle Instead of Music," recent scholarship now suggests that the person who penned the article was P.M. Kerzhentsev. See Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger, eds., *Epic Revisionism*: *Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 138n2.

[32] Ibid., 137.

[33] Ibid.

of atonality, jazz, complicated rhythmic devices, the substitution of screaming in place

singing, and an avoidance of "the natural intonations of words themselves."[34]

The principal criticism expressed in "Muddle Instead of Music," however, was

the opera's "melodic poverty," which is referenced more frequently throughout the

editorial than any other musical element.[35] The author of the editorial contends that "the

listener is flabbergasted by an intentionally dissonant, confused stream of noise.

Fragments of melody and the bare beginnings of musical phrases seem to submerge, then

burst forth, then disappear again amidst crashes, scraping and squeals… [making it]

impossible to commit it to memory."[36] He continues by stating "whenever the composer

happens to stumble upon a simple and comprehensible melody, he immediately—as if

frightened by this unfortunate turn of events—plunges back into the debris of his musical

muddle."[37] These passages clearly indicate that the accessibility expected on the part of

Soviet composers had much to do with the concept of melody and the tunefulness of a

piece of music.

Following the *Pravda* attack on *Lady Macbeth*, the attention of Party officials

shifted away from symphonic music and settled specifically on Soviet opera. During a

1937 conference dedicated to the subject of Soviet opera, Stalin presented a speech in

which he identified three important traits for Soviet opera: the subject matter was to be

socialist, a realist musical language bearing the imprint of its national origins was to be

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 138.

[36] Ibid., 136–7.

[37] Ibid., 137.

adopted, and a new breed of hero was to be drawn from contemporary Soviet life.[38] Once

again, Stalin's words provide no significant information about what this new "realist

musical language" should sound like; he does, however, indicate that it should have "the

imprint of its national origins," which suggests that he and other Soviet officials

anticipated that the musical style they demanded would be similar to that employed by

nineteenth-century Russian nationalist composers.

The following year, Party music critic Georgiy Khubov paraphrased Stalin's

assertion about Soviet opera by stating, "our new operas must above all include these

four elements: Soviet subject matter, *narodnost'* ["nationality," or "people-ness"],

realism, and the mastery of symphonic development."[39] Khubov's statement reveals two

important ideas that were new to the discourse on Soviet music. First he makes use of the

expression *narodnost'*, which had acquired a motto-like status for Party officials

concerned with the literary and creative arts. More significantly, however, was his claim

that Soviet opera composers needed to develop a "mastery of symphonic development."

This statement demonstrates that the concept of Soviet *simfonizm*, which had occupied

the minds of composers, musicologists, and critics alike for nearly three years, had

officially extended beyond the realm of the Soviet symphony. Having been realized in

such instrumental works as Shostakovich's Symphony no. 5 in D minor, composers were

now expected to transfer the achievements of the Soviet symphony into Soviet operatic

composition.

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[38] Stalin, paraphrased in Marina Frolova-Walker, "'National in Form, Socialist in Content': Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 363.

[39] Khubov, quoted in ibid.

Prokofyev's Response to "Muddle Instead of Music"

After nearly three years of relative silence regarding the issue of Soviet aesthetics, Prokofyev published an article in *Pravda* near the end of 1937 titled "Flourishing of Art." Having spent the previous two years quietly composing and processing the implications of Socialist Realism and Shostakovich's denunciation for *Lady Macbeth*, "Flourishing of Art" marks a shift in Prokofyev's strategy for discussing Soviet aesthetics. Rather than focusing on his achievements in upholding the demands of Socialist Realism, Prokofyev emphasizes the needs of the people instead. In the article, he presents the idea that the Soviet people's "artistic taste and demands are growing with amazing speed" and, therefore, that

> only by aiming ahead, at tomorrow, will you avoid being left behind at the level of yesterday's needs. That is why I consider it a mistake for a composer to strive for simplification. Any attempt to 'play down' to the listener is a subconscious underestimation of his cultural maturity and the development of his tastes; such an attempt has an element of insincerity. And music that is insincere cannot be enduring.[40]

Earlier during that same year, Prokofyev wrote in his personal notebooks that Soviet audiences "understand far more than some composers think and they want to deepen their understanding."[41] Prokofyev's statement points to his belief that Soviet audiences not only crave new music, but that the music must challenge them as listeners. He believed that Soviet audiences were ready for music that was more complex than that exhibited in the works of many Party endorsed composers.

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[40] Sergei Prokofyev, "Flourishing of Art," in *S. Prokofiev: Autobiography, Articles, Reminiscences*, compiled, edited, and notes by S. Shlifstein, translated by Rose Prokofieva (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960), 106.

[41] Sergei Prokofyev, "The Masses Want Great Music," ibid., 106.

In 1939, Prokofyev started working on his first opera since returning to the Soviet Union, *Semyon Kotko*. The reason why he waited nearly four years to revisit the genre to which he had dedicated so much time and energy is unknown; however, the delay is undoubtedly linked to the attack on *Lady Macbeth*. Prokofyev needed time to process what had happened to his colleague as well as to determine what Party officials wanted in terms of a new Soviet operatic style. In 1940, in an article written for a symposium on *Semyon Kotko*, Prokofyev explained the prolonged wait by stating "I had long wanted to write a Soviet opera, but I hesitated to undertake the job until I had a clear idea of how to approach the task."[42] Indeed he had much to consider with both the appearance of "Muddle Instead of Music" and the 1937 conference on Soviet opera. Prokofyev shared his views on the challenges of writing Soviet operas stating "to write an opera on a Soviet theme is by no means a simple task. One deals here with new people, new emotions, a new way of life and hence many of the forms applicable to classical opera might prove unsuitable."[43] In particular, Prokofyev was referring to the use of rhymed poetry and closed musical forms, conventions which he had referred to as "completely absurd" while working on his first mature opera, *The Gambler* (1915-6).[44]

Inspired by Musorgsky's *The Marriage*, Prokofyev preferred setting passages of prose in a declamatory style believing prose to be more realistic and dramatically effective. To help make his preference for setting prose passages seem less radical, Prokofyev attempted to link his compositional style with that of Chaikovsky. He

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[42] Sergei Prokofyev, "Semyon Kotko," ibid., 118.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Sergei Prokofyev, "On The Gambler," in *Sergei Prokofiev: Materials, Articles, Interviews*, compiled by Vladimir Blok (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), 28.

proclaimed that "a person goes to a concert to listen to music. When he goes to an opera he wants not only to hear but to see. Hence the action must be dynamic, indeed that is why it is called action."[45] He continued saying

> in composing my opera, I have tried not to let the action on the stage lapse for a single moment. But what about the arias? The aria has a legitimate place in opera; it enables the composer to develop a broad melody and gives the singer an opportunity to display his vocal talents. What can one do if for five minutes (and five minutes on the stage is an eternity) while the aria is being sung nothing happens except that the singer raises his arms now and again.[46]

Prokofyev connected *Semyon Kotko* with Chaikovsky by identifying two different kinds of arias found in *Eugene Onegin*—one of which he hoped to emulate in his own operas. He explained his desire to emulate Chaikovsky stating

> I divide arias into two types: the Lensky type aria during which nothing happens, and that of the letter scene in the same opera. The latter is actually nothing more than a very long aria running for almost the entire scene. But in spite of the fact that there is very little physical movement during the scene, the drama is so tense that we cannot tear our eyes away from the stage and we do not notice the length of the aria. My opera will have the second type of the arias.[47]

Despite his desire to emulate Chaikovsky, however, Prokofyev was not entirely confident that his work would be understood. Therefore, he pointed out that "When *Eugene Onegin* was first performed the only arias the audience liked were Gremin's aria and Triquet's couplets" and that since "new life, new subject matter demand new forms of expression…the listener must not complain if he has to exert a little effort to grasp these forms."[48] Unfortunately, *Semyon Kotko* did not prove to be the successful opera Prokofyev had hoped it would be.

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[45] Prokofyev, "Semyon Kotko," 118.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Prokofyev, ibid., 119–20.

More than a decade after his return to the Soviet Union, Prokofyev achieved the operatic success he so long desired with the opera *War and Peace*. Following two years of intense work developing the libretto, composing the music, and incorporating the critical feedback of the Committee on Artistic Affairs, the first half of *War and Peace* premiered at the Maly Theater under the direction of Samuil Samosud on June 12, 1946. The reception of the opera was overwhelmingly positive resulting in 105 performances of the opera during the 1946-7 season.[49] Regrettably, the premiere of the second half of the opera, which was scheduled for the 1947-8 season, was cancelled due to the criticism of the Committee on Artistic Affairs who found some of the tableaux to be "insufficiently heroic and nationalistic."[50]

The Resolution of 1948

The rejection of Part II of *War and Peace* was an early symptom of the "crackdown" on music that ultimately culminated in the February 10, 1948 Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party. Like the attack on *Lady Macbeth*, the 1948 Resolution was once again a reaction to an operatic work. The young composer Vano Muradeli's *Great Friendship*, which had been performed at the Bolshoi Theater as part of a thirtieth anniversary celebration of the October Revolution, was declared "a defective anti-artistic work, in its music and its libretto."[51] According to the Resolution, the opera had

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[49] Malcolm Brown, "Prokofiev's *War and Peace*: A Chronicle," *The Musical Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (July 1977): 314.

[50] Robinson, *Prokofiev*, 457.

[51] "Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of 10 February 1948" in *Music Since 1900*, ed. Nicolas Slominsky (New York: Schirmer Books, 1994), 1055.

not a single memorable melody or aria. It is confused and discordant; it is built on continuous dissonances, and ear-splitting combinations of sounds. Occasional lines and scenes, making a pretense of melodiousness, are suddenly interrupted by discordant noises, alien to a normal human ear, which produce a depressing effect on the listener.[52]

Again, like that of *Lady Macbeth* more than a decade earlier, the condemnation of Muradeli's opera was rooted in what Party officials perceived to be an absence of melody as well as an exceedingly dissonant harmonic language.

The Resolution also identified what Party officials believed to be poor or inappropriate use of compositional resources by Muradeli. In part, this criticism concerned his lack of use of pre-existing melodic materials, specifically the folk music traditions of the Soviet Union. The Resolution indicates that Muradeli "did not take advantage of the richness of folk melodies, songs, refrains and dance airs, so abundant in the art of the nations of the USSR, and especially in the art of the nations of North Caucasus."[53] As suggested in Gorodinsky's 1934 article, "On the Problem of Socialist Realism in Music," Soviet composers were expected to exploit the folk music traditions of the various regions of the Soviet Union. Presumably to do so would not only have made Muradeli's music more accessible to the Soviet people, but it would have also instilled a greater sense of realism due to the setting of the opera in the North Caucasus.

Most importantly, however, the Resolution once again presented specific language upholding the importance of nineteenth-century Russian opera. Soviet composers were expected to model their work on the canonic works of the nineteenth-century tradition. According to the Resolution,

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[52] Ibid., 1055.

[53] Ibid.

in pursuit of false "originality" in his music, the composer Muradeli ignored the best traditions of classical opera in general, and particularly of Russian classical opera distinguished by inner substantiality, melodic richness, breadth of range, national spirit, and elegant, attractive and clear musical form, the qualities which made Russian operas the best in the world, an art beloved by and accessible to broad strata of the people.[54]

This specific criticism, however, proved to be disastrous not only for Muradeli, but also for Prokofyev and many of his comrades—Shostakovich, Myaskovsky, Popov, Khachaturian, Shebalin, and others—who were identified in the Resolution to be the main proprietors of formalism in Soviet music. The Resolution identified

the characteristic features of this music [to be]…the negation of basic principles of classical music; the preachment of atonality, dissonances and disharmony, supposedly representative of "progress" and "modernism" in the development of musical forms; the rejection of such all-important concepts of musical composition as melody, and the infatuation with the confused, neuropathological combinations which transform music into cacophony, into a chaotic agglomeration of sounds. This music is strongly reminiscent of the spirit of contemporary modernistic bourgeois music of Europe and America, reflecting the dissolution of bourgeois culture, a complete negation of musical art, its impasse.[55]

Prokofyev and his colleagues were thus accused of "trampling upon the best traditions of Russian and western classical music, rejecting these traditions as supposedly 'obsolete,' 'old-fashioned,' and 'conservative.'"[56]

Prokofyev and the Resolution of 1948

Ultimately, much of the blame for the so-called "formalist" tendencies of Prokofyev and his colleagues fell to organizations such as the Committee of the Fine Arts

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., 1056.

[56] Ibid.

of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Organizational Committee of the Union

of Soviet Composers. Party officials believed that these groups specifically failed to

> propagandize realistic concepts in Soviet music, the basis of which is the
> recognition of the tremendous progressive role of classical heritage, and
> especially of traditions of the Russian musical school, the utilization of this
> heritage and promotion of its further development.[57]

Similarly, the Moscow Conservatory was criticized for not instilling students with a

"respect for the best traditions of Russian and western classical music" as well as a "love

[for] national art and democratic musical forms."[58] Moreover, music critics were charged

with not "combating the harmful views and theories alien to the principles of Socialist

Realism."[59] As a result, Party officials charged those responsible for fostering the

advancement of Socialist realist aesthetics with cultivating an environment in which

formalist composers supported and encouraged one another, and in which those who

embraced the Russian classical tradition were considered to be antiquated and

insignificant. Therefore, to address these concerns, the Resolution accomplished four

tasks:

1. To condemn the formalistic movement in Soviet music as anti-national and
   leading to liquidation of music;
2. To urge the Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central
   Committee and the Committee of the Fine Arts to correct the situation in
   Soviet music, to liquidate the defects pointed out in the present Resolution of
   the Central Committee, and to secure the development of Soviet music in the
   realistic direction;
3. To call upon Soviet composers to realize fully the lofty requirements of the
   Soviet people upon musical art, to sweep from their path all that weakens our
   music and hinders its development, and assure the upsurge of creative work

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[57] Ibid., 1057.

[58] Ibid., 1056.

[59] Ibid., 1057.

that will advance Soviet musical culture so as to lead to the creation in all fields of music of high-quality works worthy of the Soviet people; and

4. To approve organizational measures of the corresponding Party and Soviet organs, designed to improve the state of musical affairs.[60]

Sadly, however, the Resolution provided nothing new in terms of clear rhetoric on Party expectations for the musical realization of Socialist Realism. Despite the extensive nature of the decree, composers were left with the same negative rhetoric that was presented twelve years earlier in "Muddle Instead of Music."

In response to the condemnation of *Great Friendship* and the resulting Resolution, the Union of Soviet Composers held its first Congress on the issue of Soviet music since the adoption of Socialist Realism as the official aesthetic for the arts in 1932. During the Congress, Andrei Zhdanov and his supporters continued to criticize Muradeli's opera for its aesthetic flaws. Zhdanov in particular dedicated most of his opening speech to expound upon the reasons *Great Friendship* was labeled a "defective anti-artistic work." In addition to the aforementioned issues relating to melody, harmony, and folk resources, he added "a lack of correspondence between the music and the actions, moods, and events, represented on the stage" to the list of offenses committed by Muradeli.[61] Andrei Zhdanov and his supporters also demanded that Soviet composers emulate the canonic works of Russia's nineteenth-century tradition, that composers should write "like Glinka and Chaikovsky," and to imitate such works as Glinka's *Kamarinskaya*, Chaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, and Musorgsky's *Gopak*. An examination of the speeches of Zhdanov and others reveals a desire for a musical style that was

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Andrei Zhdavnov, quoted in "Discussion at a General Assembly of Soviet Composers, Moscow, 17–26 February 1948" in *Music Since 1900*, ed. Nicolas Slominsky (New York: Schirmer Books, 1994), 1058.

essentially static, and which arguably required a regression in musical practices. Zhdanov ignored assertions by composers such as Lev Knipper that "we must not simply start imitating [the work of nineteenth-century composers] and repeating what they already said. Everything is movement. Inside the work of a single composer, there is change. The Tchaikovsky of the First Symphony is a different man from the Tchaikovsky of the Sixth."[62] Nevertheless, Zhdanov believed that imitating the master composers of the nineteenth century would result in an "even mightier 'Soviet Kuchka [handful]'" that would "amaze the world" just as the Mighty Five of the Russian Kuchka had done the century before.[63]

It was Tikhon Khrennikov's Declaration, however, that had the most negative impact on Prokofyev's reputation as a composer. A former student of Prokofyev's during his brief tenure as a professor at the Moscow Conservatory, Khrennikov focused much of his document on the issues of Socialist Realism and formalism. Specifically, Khrennikov declared that instead of "leading to the development and integration of the best traditions of musical classicism and musical art of the nations of the USSR, the path of truly democratic art, the creation of which the Soviet people expects from its composers."[64] Prokofyev and other formalists, he stated, had indulged in an "abstractness of the musical language," which "often reflected images and emotions alien to Soviet realistic art—expressionistic tenseness, neuroticism, escape into a region of abnormal, repulsive, and pathological phenomena."[65] Ultimately, he demanded that these composers "must

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[62] Knipper, quoted in Werth, *Musical Uproar*, 73.

[63] Zhdanov, quoted in Ibid., 83.

[64] Khrennikov, quoted in "Discussion at a General Assembly of Soviet Composers," 1059.

[65] Ibid.

understand that the creation of high-quality works in the domain of opera, symphonic music, song-writing, choral and dance music, is possible only by following the principles of Socialist Realism."[66] Once again, Prokofyev and his fellow "formalists" were criticized for what Khrennikov believed to be a blatant disregard for the nineteenth-century Russian classical music tradition as well as an intentional display of modernistic compositional practices on the part of the named composers. Moreover, Khrennikov's speech reveals that the only acceptable path for Soviet music remained that of Socialist Realism, but only as the tenuous aesthetic was interpreted by Party officials.

Over the remaining years of his life, Prokofyev worked diligently to regain the reputation he once held or at least gain a reputation as a well-intentioned composer for the Soviet audience. He constantly revised *War and Peace* to address the harsh criticisms rendered upon it by the Committee on Artistic Affairs as well as those who negatively spoke about the work during the 1948 Composers Congress. He incorporated new closed-form arias, new choral episodes, considerably expanded the aria for General Kutuzov, and eliminated sections of declamatory recitative substituting instead passages in a more lyrical style. Nevertheless, even with Zhdanov's death late in 1948, Prokofyev was unable to salvage the successful career as a composer that he had enjoyed prior to the 1948 Resolution. Due to a less sophisticated understanding of the Russian classical tradition than was held by Prokofyev, Party officials were unable to see that Prokofyev had done exactly what had been asked of him. He had gone to great lengths to align his work with the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition—demonstrating influences and synthesizing compositional techniques learned from by means of his encyclopedic

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[66] Ibid., 1062.

knowledge of the operas of Chaikovsky, Musorgsky, Borodin, and the most prolific

composer of opera from nineteenth-century Russia—Rimsky-Korsakov.

CHAPTER III

PROKOFYEV'S USE OF *INTONATSII*
IN *WAR AND PEACE*

War and Peace presented Prokofyev with a number of unique challenges with regard to setting a novel as an opera. Given the sheer number of characters, their psychological complexity, and the novel's frequent shifts in character perspective from the personal and private to moments of epic grandeur, Tolstoy's hybrid novel was unlike any libretto source of the Russian operatic tradition—and most likely any other opera tradition. In order to effectively capture and preserve the essence of Tolstoy's text, Prokofyev was compelled to employ compositional strategies drawn from a variety of Russian operas. Fortunately, as a result of his lifelong interest in nineteenth-century Russian opera, Prokofyev developed an encyclopedic knowledge of the individual compositional efforts that brought the tradition into being. Among the techniques used by Prokofyev are *intonatsii*, which Asafyev loosely identifies in *Symphonic Etudes* as a primary resource for characterization used by a number of nineteenth-century Russian opera composers.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that Prokofyev incorporated vocal *intonatsii* in *War and Peace* as a key strategy for communicating vital information about characters and character groups. I will support this claim first by explicating Asafyev's concept of the *intonatsiya* in an attempt to provide a practical understanding of intonational analysis as a tool for studying Russian opera. After developing a methodology for distinguishing

intonatsii, I will expand upon Asafyev's own intonational analysis of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve* from *Symphonic Etudes* by examining representative examples of *intonatsii*. I will then illustrate through a case study of *War and Peace* that Prokofyev similarly employs *intonatsii* as a means of distinguishing minor and secondary characters in the opera.

Among the most innovative methodological tools in *Symphonic Etudes* is the concept of the *intonatsiya,* which Malcolm Brown describes as one of the "basic theoretical principles from which evolved contemporary socialist-realist musical methodology."[1] Unfortunately, however, the theory has proven to be historically problematic since Asafyev defined the *intonatsiya* more often through example rather than in prose. Therefore, it is necessary to seek a workable definition of the *intonatsiya* beyond Asafyev's own writings. To date, the clearest definition is provided by Brown, who defines an *intonatsiya* as

> any phonic manifestation of life or reality, perceived or understood (directly or metaphorically) as a carrier of meaning. In other words, and *intonatsiya* in its simplest form is a real sound produced by something, be it creature of natural phenomenon (the moaning of a sick child, the ululation of the wind, a bugle call) with which meaning is associated or to which meaning is ascribed. Thus a musical *intonatsiya* results when some *intonatsiya* from life experience is transmuted into a musical phrase; as such, it retains from the original intonational source that quality, property, or characteristic essence which expresses meaning and therefore possesses the power to quicken man's emotions and touch his sensibilities.[2]

From Brown's definition, one can readily discern that an *intonatsiya* is any musical representation of a real world sound (or what Brown goes on to call a phenomenal world sound) used in composition in order to consciously communicate an extramusical

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[1] Malcolm H. Brown, "The Soviet Russian Concepts of 'Intonazia' and 'Musical Imagery'," *The Musical Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (October 1974): 557.

[2] Ibid., 558.

association with its real world equivalent. Despite the clarity of Brown's definition, however, it nevertheless overlooks one essential element regarding the *intonatsiya* as a tool for understanding operatic compositions. Due to its origins in *Symphonic Etudes*, Asafyev's most substantive and sustained contribution to the aesthetics of Russian opera, the concept of the *intonatsiya* is presented as an inherently vocal manifestation. Indeed, as will be discussed in greater detail below, the world *intonatsiya* itself is derived from the linguistic concept of intonation. Consequently, as a tool for studying operatic composition, *intonatsii* are understood to be vocal melodic elements intrinsically tied to preexisting types of vocal music.

In the absence of a definition of the *intonatsiya* from Asafyev himself, we are fortunate to have Brown's assessment to understand the concept. Nevertheless, one must keep in mind that defining the *intonatsiya* is further complicated by the fact that Asafyev's own conceptualization of the theory gradually evolved over the course of his career.[3] By the end of Asafyev's life, the concept had advanced such that a single pitch could function as an *intonatsiya* to an audience with the appropriate referential base knowledge. As a result of the relative elasticity of the definition of the *intonatsiya* over time, David Haas asserts that "appearances of the term in Asafyev's prose are most comprehensible when they are confined to their immediate context, where they can

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[3] A number of musicologists have attempted to explain Asafyev's idea of the *intonatsiya*. Most notable are: Malcolm H. Brown, "The Soviet Concepts of 'Intonazia' and 'Musical Imagery,'" *The Musical Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (October 1974): 557–67; David Haas, *Leningrad's Modernists: Studies in Composition and Musical Thought, 1917–1932* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1998), 60–2, 68, 237n17, 20; Haas, "Introduction: Igor Glebov and the Audiences of *Symphonic Etudes*" in Boris Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes*, trans. David Haas (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2007), xxiv-xxv; and Gordon D. McQuere, "Boris Asafiev and *Musical Form as a Process*," *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1983), 109–64.

function in tandem with his ideas on form, melody, and perception."[4] With this cautionary note in mind, the present study relies on Asafyev's concept of the *intonatsiya* as conveyed in *Symphonic Etudes*.

In this monograph, Asafyev defines *intonatsii* as the "acoustical speech of the *dramatis personae* [presented] within a predetermined vocal-instrumental channel."[5] The implication that he proceeds to develop is that Rimsky-Korsakov composed sung discourse for operatic characters modeled on acoustic aspects (i.e. intonations) of the speech and song of equivalent individuals from the real world. As a result, a connection between *intonatsii* and the linguistic term intonation, which "would refer to the musical or acoustical aspect of speech," is more clearly discernable.[6] Through its relationship with the linguistic concept of intonation, *intonatsii* are then understood to be musical analogues to the natural speech idioms and speech inflections that can distinguish one character and his community from others. While some *intonatsii* are shared and thus identify on a musical level an entire community, other *intonatsii* are unique to a particular character and aid in distinguishing him from the community at large. Moreover, some characters possess a vocabulary consisting of multiple *intonatsii*, thus identifying them with multiple groups or communities.

Intonatsii are valuable due to their potential to quickly communicate information about the characters of an opera. Since Russian opera often explores the connection between individuals and the various communities to which they belong, *intonatsii* are

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[4] Haas, *Leningrad's Modernists*, 62.

[5] Boris Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes Portraits of Russian Operas and Ballets*, trans. David Haas (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2007), 82.

[6] Ibid., 55.

capable of communicating such ideas as social class, occupation, and nation/region of origin. Elsewhere in *Symphonic Etudes*, Asafyev indicates that *intonatsii* are stylizations of spoken communication in which "each person in the drama is expressed within the confines of a manner of speech characteristic of the particular personality type."[7] Since Asafyev holds that musical *intonatsii* are influenced by the acoustical aspects of spoken language, they can and do appear in multiple operas. For example, folk-song derived *intonatsii* are found in many of the operas of Rimsky-Korsakov (e.g., *Sadko*, *May Night*, *Tale of the Tsar Sultan*), Chaikovsky (*Eugene Onegin*, *The Slippers*), and Musorgsky (*Boris Godunov*). In other words, *intonatsii* can easily function beyond the confines of a single opera. Based on these traits alone, they should be distinguishable from such musical devices as leitmotifs, which communicate meaning determined exclusively through dramatic context and which are not transferable to another operatic work.

However, as both the Russian *intonatsiya* and the German leitmotif are musical gestures that convey meaning and that are used cyclically, it is important to clarify the distinctions further. Arnold Whittall defines the leitmotif in the *New Grove Dictionary of Opera* as

> a theme, or other coherent musical idea, clearly defined so as to retain its identity if modified on subsequent appearances, whose purpose is to represent or symbolize a person, object, place, idea, state of mind, supernatural force or any other ingredient in a dramatic work. The leitmotif may be musically unaltered on its return, or altered in rhythm, intervallic structure, harmony, orchestration or accompaniment, and may also be combined with other leitmotifs in order to suggest a new dramatic situation.[8]

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[7] Ibid., 82.

[8] Arnold Whittall, "Leitmotif," in *Grove Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed December 11, 2008).

As indicated by this definition, leitmotifs are used to identify individual characters or objects with a considerable level of specificity. However, the concept of the leitmotif is also versatile such that leitmotifs can also be used to represent or symbolize items within the drama that are not persons; played by the orchestra, leitmotifs can be associated with any living or non-living thing associated within the dramatic framework of the opera. In contrast, *intonatsii* are typically extracted from the sung or vocal discourse of the *dramatis personae*. Additionally, they do not represent individual characters; rather *intonatsii* serve a more general semiotic function, supplying an additional layer of meaning to a specific situation. As such, *intonatsii* can identify individual as well as groups of characters through connotations of social class and occupation in addition to regional associations.

Intonatsii and leitmotifs are further distinguished based on the means by which they achieve their dramatic associations. Most leitmotifs do not attain their significance through the use of previously established musical tropes; in other words, leitmotifs are not based on music that exists outside of the opera itself. The dramatic associations for leitmotifs are created at their initial presentation as part of the texture of the orchestral accompaniment in combination with text sung at a particular dramatic moment; without the presentation of text, the leitmotif would lack meaning. While they may relate in a general way to preexistent music, leitmotifs acquire specific meaning in the music and dramatic context of an individual opera. Consequently, leitmotifs cannot function in another opera without first establishing musical-dramatic associations within the new musical context. The majority of *intonatsii*, on the other hand, are vocal in nature due to their function as musical representations of a character's speech. Their association with

particular character types is achieved through the use of previously established and well-known musical signs (e.g., recognizable folk song styles used to signify folk characters). As previously stated, therefore, *intonatsii* are able to function effectively outside of a particular opera and are often appropriated for use in other operas.

Intonatsii and leitmotifs also differ in their function as thematic material within an opera. In essence, leitmotifs function as the principal themes of an operatic composition and "form a dense web spread over the whole of the orchestral setting, determining its structure at any given moment."[9] In contrast, *intonatsii* do not always function as primary themes. They can be treated developmentally by the orchestra through the extraction and manipulation of pitch or rhythmic motives. More often *intonatsii* remain strictly vocal phenomena, never making an appearance in the accompanimental fabric of the orchestra and perhaps confined to a single scene. When *intonatsii* do appear in the orchestra, they are generally doubling and, as a result, reinforcing the vocal lines from which they originated.

Even though song characteristics in the form of *intonatsii* are used as substitutes for characters' speech styles, *intonatsii* are not necessarily reproductions or representations of songs in their entirety. Instead, *intonatsii* are highly stylized and can draw upon various speech idioms and the region-specific folk song categories available to the respective *dramatis personae*. Song elements are not bound to a particular location, however; nor are they bound to a specific performance context. For example, as will be discussed in greater detail below, the performance of Russian Orthodox chant is not limited to scenes involving religious worship. Characters associated with the church can

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[9] Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 196–7.

utilize *intonatsii* based on chant as a means of communication due to the fact that the chant is part of the repertory associated with their profession. Hence, the use of folk song or folk song-like materials to identify a rural or peasant character is not restricted to a country or village setting. These folk materials could just as likely materialize in an urban setting such as Moscow or St. Petersburg. Such an appearance simply implies that folk song is a natural manifestation of music for the character and, consequently, a natural means of communicating his or her identify from a musical perspective. Asafyev asserts that "such an attachment of *dramatis personae* and dramatic moments to a general channel, according to categories of vocal style, brings about a well-determined outcome, when the method of characterization is persistently followed."[10] Therefore, when used consistently, *intonatsii* play a semiotic role within an opera by communicating information about *dramatis personae* by means of musical signs, which are informed by the association an audience will make with the speech and song traits of a particular region.

The significance given to *intonatsii* may well be a function of the importance of song as an aspect of Russian and Slavic cultures in general. Asafyev maintains that through the Europeanization of Russian folk music in the cities during the eighteenth century, there "arose the entirety of Russian music in the nineteenth-century."[11] While Asafyev's assertion that the entirety of nineteenth-century Russian music is "wholly" rooted in folk music in many ways perpetuates a stereotype about Russian music in general, the significance of the song tradition is, nevertheless, clearly reinforced by the

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[10] Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes*, 84.

[11] Boris Asafyev, *Russian Music from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Alfred J. Swan (Ann Arbor, MI: J.W. Edwards, Publisher, 1953), 91.

statement. This is especially true when one considers the sheer number of distinct song types present throughout Russia. The *New Grove Dictionary* article on the music of the Russian Republics includes discussions of a wide range of individual folk song types, which, in turn, occupy positions in just about every aspect of Russian life. Song types discussed include work songs associated with different occupational groups (e.g., log rafters, carpenters, builders, skippers), and calls; calendar songs associated with the various seasons and their coinciding festivals (e.g., winter carols [*kolyadki*], calls for spring, Easter carols, songs for the summer and harvest); wedding songs (e.g., wedding laments, ritual songs); various songs associated with the family (e.g., christening songs, lullabies, game songs, sung tales, funeral laments); lyric songs; and epic songs (e.g., *byliny*, songs of medieval buffoons [*skomoroshiny*], historical songs, ballads).[12] Each of these distinct categories of folk song could easily provide a well-versed nineteenth-century Russian opera composer with a variety of disparate *intonatsii*. Moreover, the vocabulary of potential *intonatsii* could be expanded by means of an exploration of Russian romance and art song as well as Russia's rich tradition of dance.

Intonatsii in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve*

In his chapter on Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve*, Asafyev provides an extensive list of representative examples of *intonatsii* taken from the opera organized into three categories. Consisting of *intonatsii* associated with Ukrainian characterizations appropriate to the opera's setting, the list includes:

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[12] Izaly Zemtsovsky, "Russian Federation," in *Grove Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed December 11, 2008).

Categories of song and lyric include the following: the pure lyricism of song; lyricism with instrumental nuances (rhythms of Polish dances: polonaise and krakowiak; the Ukrainian national rhythm of the hopak); the lyricism of the romance (song transmitted through urban culture); lyricism of everyday life and ritual, including arioso laments that are not in the character of recitative; expressive lyricism (songs of particular strata of the population and the estates; comic and satirical songs; Cossack songs).

Categories related to the epic: sacred verse, epic folk ballads (*dumy*), ecclesiastical recitative, partly historical songs, recitative from ordinary life (of bazaars and streets), the musical stylization of folk discourse; and in the dramatic sphere: incantations, games, and *khorovody*.

The instrumental element is found in: riffs, improvisations, every manner of instrumental ornaments (figurations), dance incipits, and finally, bell peals.[13]

While Asafyev's list is certainly not exhaustive with regard to the intonational devices used throughout the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition as a whole, it does provide lucid examples of *intonatsii* as well as demonstrates the variety of *intonatsii* used to differentiate *dramatis personae* within a single opera. Moreover, Asafyev's focus on categories of distinct vocal types helps to reinforce the distinctions between his concept of the *intonatsiya* and that of the Wagnerian leitmotif.

Although Asafyev provides an extensive list of *intonatsii* found in *Christmas Eve*, he does not provide any information about how to identify *intonatsii*, or how they might differ from other melodic materials used in an opera. This makes it potentially difficult for Western analysts to identify and track the use of *intonatsii* in other Russian operas. This problem is compounded by the relative unfamiliarity of Russian indigenous music to Western scholars and musicians. Before attempting to identify *intonatsii* used by Prokofyev in *War and Peace*, it is first necessary to demonstrate how *intonatsii* from Asafyev's list manifest and function in *Christmas Eve*.

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[13] Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes*, 83.

Among the *intonatsii* discussed by Asafyev are those associated with the character of the Deacon. Consequently, an analysis of his vocal line reveals two distinct *intonatsii*, which appear in alternation and are rooted in Russia's Orthodox chant tradition. Throughout Act II, Scene 2, the Deacon alternates between a form of stylized recitative and ecclesiastical chant. Similar to Ukrainian folk song, this quality of alternating between recitative and chant is typical of Kievan chant, which flourished in Ukrainian churches near the end of the seventeenth century.[14] Both styles of song would be fundamental to the Deacon's music vocabulary as a member of the church community and be indicative of his occupation. In *Christmas Eve*, Rimsky-Korsakov exploits the different *intonatsii* such that they correspond to two discrete manners of communication—one for dialogue and the other to function as actual song.

Initially appearing in the middle of Act II, Scene 2, the Deacon's first *intonatsiya* is characterized by a near constant repetition of a single pitch. As illustrated in Example 3-1, the Deacon intones his arrival to the witch Solokha to a passage centered on the pitch D in a fashion similar to the use of a reciting tone in Western plainchant.

Chud-naya, dos-to-lyu - bez - na ya So-lo-kha,   dazhd' vni-ti   mi v,cher - tog!

Example 3-1 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve* Act II, Scene 2, mm. 52-56

The only deviations in pitch are the incorporation of a single upper neighbor in the second bar and the simple cadential figuration that closes the phrase. Although stylized in nature, this *intonatsiya* is informed by the category of Russian chants known as "little

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[14] Miloš Velimirović, "Russian and Slavonic Church Music," in *Grove Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed December 11, 2008).

chants" (*maliy raspev*)[15], which emerged about the same time as Kievan chant during the seventeenth century.[16] As Miloš Velimirović points out, the little chants are typically constructed of contrasting sections. Most often sections of melodic chant alternate with segments of recitative that tend to linger on a single pitch.[17] With regard to function, this *intonatsiya* is used by the Deacon as his general mode of conversation, much like the use of recitative in to replace natural speech in Western opera. The *intonatsiya* emerges whenever he engages in dialogue with other characters, such as when he discusses the events of his evening with Solokha in the third tableau and as when he is discovered in a sack by the town's people in the following tableau.

Later in Scene 3, when the Deacon shifts his attention to the seduction of Solokha, Rimsky-Korsakov shifts to the use of a different, contrasting *intonatsiya*. In contrast to the recitative-like *intonatsiya*, this second *intonatsiya* is more clearly rooted in the Russian Orthodox chant tradition. Shown in Example 3-2, the Deacon's chant *intonatsiya* is more melodically complex and possesses a striking, non-metrical quality. In line with the aforementioned small chant tradition, the melodic line is also relatively short and predominantly syllabic in nature. Appearing a total of three times throughout Scene 3, the chant *intonatsiya* evolves in each subsequent occurrence becoming more extended and melismatic. Consequently, each elaboration moves the *intonatsiya* away from the small chant tradition and aligns it more with the "large chant" (*bolshoy raspev*) tradition.

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[15] Olga Dolskaya-Ackerly, Nicolas Schidlovsky, Miloš Velimirović, and I. Yefimova, "One Thousand Years of Russian Church Music: An Introduction" in *Monuments of Russian Sacred Music: One Thousand Years of Russian Church Music, 988-1988*, ed. Vladimir Morosan (Washington, D.C.: Musica Russica, 1991), xlv.

[16] Velimirović, "Russian and Slavonic Church Music," in *Grove Music, Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed December 11, 2008).
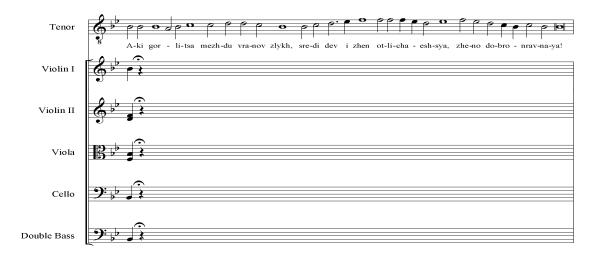
[17] Ibid.

Example 3-2 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve* Act II, Scene 3, m. 89

Characterized by what Velimirović describes as a "process of melismatic elaboration," the large chant tradition makes use of "extensive melodic formulae."[18] As seen in Example 3-3, the final statement of the Deacon's chant *intonatsiya* is constructed using two discrete melodic motives (*X* and *Y*), which are developed both rhythmically and transpositionally to communicate the mounting intensity of the Deacon's efforts to seduce Solokha.

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[18] Velimirović, "Russian and Slavonic Church Music," in *Grove Music, Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed December 11, 2008).
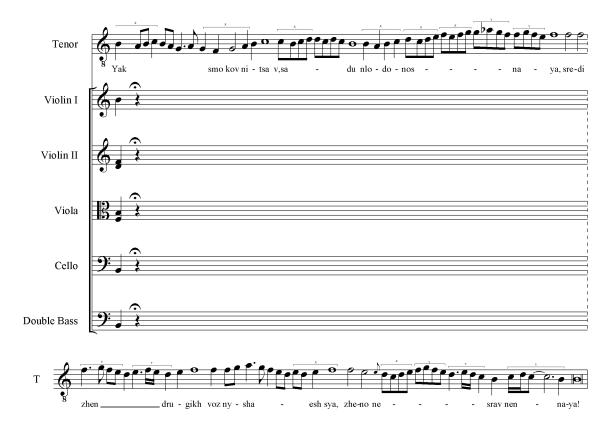
Example 3-3 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve* Act II, Scene 3, m. 176

In combination, the two *intonatsii* work to reinforce not only the Deacon's position within the Russian Orthodox Church, but more precisely as a Ukrainian priest. While either *intonatsiya* alone would effectively communicate his occupational standing, together they are capable of communicating not only occupation, but national or regional association as well.

Of particular importance in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve* are *intonatsii* derived from the category of Russian calendar songs known as *kolyadki*. A tradition of winter carols sung under windows on Christmas Eve throughout the various Slavic nations of Europe, *kolyadki* are directly referenced by Nikolai Gogol, who describes the folk song tradition in an annotation to one of his short stories stating,

> Among us, to go caroling [*koliadovat*] means to sing songs called *kolyadki* under the windows on Christmas Eve. The master or mistress of the house, or anyone

staying at home, always drops into the carolers' sack some sausage or bread or a copper coin, whatever bounty they have. They say there used to be an idol named Koliada who was thought to be a god, and that is where the kolyadki came from. Who knows? It's not for us simple people to discuss it. Last year Father Osip forbade going caroling around the farmsteads, saying folk were pleasing Satan by it. However, to tell the truth, there's not a word in the kolyadki about Koliada. They often sing of the nativity of Christ; and in the end they wish health to the master, the mistress, the children, and the whole household.[19]

Indeed Gogol's lines likely inspired Rimsky-Korsakov to explore the *kolyadki* tradition as a viable source of folk materials for his opera. As indicated in the composer's preface to the score, Rimsky adapted a number of *kolyadki* and other traditional songs from A.I. Rubets's 1872 collection of Ukrainian folk songs.[20] This type of careful research, planning, and incorporation of actual folk songs undoubtedly explains the presence of *intonatsii* in many of Rimsky-Korsakov's operas.[21] Rimsky-Korsakov appropriated three different *kolyadki* from Rubets's collection specifically for use in the caroling scenes of the second and fourth tableaux.[22] Additionally, he incorporated a number of Ukrainian melodies that he recalled from memory, as well as included some music that he composed on his own in the style of Ukrainian folk music.

Unfortunately, identifying *kolyadki*-based *intonatsii* is fairly difficult due to the fact that Slavic calendar songs developed out of what Mirosław Perz describes as "an

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[19] Nikolai Gogol, *The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol*, trans. and ann. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage Classics, 1998), 19.

[20] "Forward to *Christmas Eve: An Opera in Four Acts*," in *The Complete Works of Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov*, 5, pt. 1, trans. Olga Browning (Melville, NY: Belwin Mills Publishing Corp., 1979), n.p.

[21] Asafyev indicates that, in addition to those found in *Christmas Eve*, various *intonatsii* can be identified in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Mlada, Kashchei the Immortal, The Tale of the Tsar Sultan, Sadko,* and *The Invisible City of Kitezh* as well as in the vocal lines of Mozart in *Mozart and Salieri*. See Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes*, 85.

[22] Ibid.

international repertory of medieval songs."[23] Consequently, *kolyadki* and other calendar song traditions do not have many distinctive musical characteristics.[24] Rimsky-Korsakov's development of the *kolyada intonatsiya* into a complete choral episode in *Christmas Eve* increases the difficulty of identifying *kolyadki intonatsii*. Indeed identifying a number of the distinctly Ukrainian music types mentioned by Asafyev is difficult without a direct knowledge of the repertory; the distinguishing musical characteristics of the Ukrainian folk song traditions have not been widely documented and are more likely identified by individuals from within the culture than cultural outsiders. Luckily, however, most calendar songs are identifiable by means of their texts, which frequently contain textual references to their associated seasons or festivities. With regard to the *kolyadki* tradition specifically, texts generally blend sacred elements associated with the Christmas holiday with references to pastoral themes derived from the pagan heritage of the tradition, as is indicated by Gogol's annotation.[25] In Rimsky-Korsakov's *kolyada* from *Christmas Eve*, Christian references are limited to the refrain ("Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas!") while pastoral elements are found throughout the multiple verses. In addition to the blending of Christian and pagan, Ukrainian carols contain a predictable arrangement of sections, which Rimsky-Korsakov maintains as well: an opening praising the audience or host, a middle section with requisite demands for food and drink, and a closing section in which the carolers either resume their praises,

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[23] Mirosław Perz, "Kolęda," in *Grove Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed December 11, 2008).

[24] Perz, "Kolęda," in *Grove Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed December 11, 2008).

[25] Alfred J. Swan, *Russian Music and its Sources in Chant and Folk-Song* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1973), 23–4.

or, if the gifts of food and drink are denied or deemed inadequate, mock their host for being stingy.[26]

Although most of the defining characteristics of the *kolyada* tradition are textual in nature, there are a few emblematic, though not requisite, musical traits which Rimsky-Korsakov retains in *Christmas Eve*. As exhibited in Example 3-4, *kolyada* melodies are clearly diatonic, have a narrow range that rarely extends beyond a fifth, and typically involve the use of two to five different pitches. Rimsky-Korsakov's use of unison is also typical as *kolyadki* are most frequently sung either monophonically or heterophonically.

Example 3-4 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve* Tableau IV, mm. 32–9

Although the opening *kolyada intonatsiya* develops into a complete choral episode for four-part chorus, each section generally performs in isolation, thereby maintaining the characteristic unison realization of *kolyadki* melodies; moreover, the passing of the

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[26] Vadim Prokhorov, *Russian Folk Songs: Musical Genres and History* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002), 19.

melodic line from section to section also creates a pseudo-antiphonal style, which is also typical of the tradition.

Of greater significance, however, is the nature of the *kolyada's* construction. Vadim Prokhorov states that, "the melodies of *kolyadas*…unfold through the rhythmic modifications of a short motive, recitative and declamatory in its nature and containing two to five tones."[27] Consisting primarily of quarter and eighth notes, Izaly Zemtsovsky indicates that there are ten distinct rhythmic motives at the foundation of the Russian calendar song tradition.[28] Shown in Figure 3-1, these rhythmic motives often saturate *kolyadki* melodies. For instance, in Example 3-4 above, rhythmic structure 'H' is easily identifiable as the fundamental rhythmic motive of the *kolyada* melody. Additionally, a variation of motive 'H' with a quarter note rather than two eighth notes on the third beat is featured in the example as well.

Figure 3-1 – Rhythmic structures of Russian calendar songs

The best example of a *kolyada*-based *intonatsiya* is found in the fourth tableau of *Christmas Eve* when Oksana and a group of village youths sing carols while walking along the streets. Unlike the Deacon's *intonatsii*, the *kolyada*-based *intonatsiya* is

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[27] Ibid., 20.

[28] Zemtsovsky, "Russian traditional music," in *Grove Music, Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed December 11, 2008).

developed into a full-scale choral episode rather than functioning exclusively as a musical stylization of speech. In doing so, Rimsky-Korsakov effectively expands the semiotic function of the *intonatsiya* to communicate information beyond those qualities of the associated characters alone. Whereas the Deacon's pair of *intonatsii* functioned primarily as a means of communicating his occupation as a clergyman and member of the church community, the *kolyada*-based *intonatsiya* provides character information related to age. Nevertheless, the *kolyada intonatsiya* provides information related to setting as well. Described by Asafyev as part of "the dramatic sphere [assuming] pride of place," the *kolyada intonatsiya* reinforces the village setting as well as the Christmas season in and during which the story takes place.[29] As a result, it reinforces the feelings of respect that Oksana and the village youths have for their folk customs, specifically the ritualistic performance of *kolyadki*.

With regard to Oksana, however, the *intonatsiya* plays a more important role of communicating her connection with the community of village youths. Asafyev indicates that Rimsky-Korsakov's use of stylized song in the form of *intonatsii* "connects [each] personality with the world."[30] He clarifies this assertion through example, stating

> no matter how she *personally* senses the approaching moment of her wedding, every village girl will "lament" like all others, as is customary, based on the long since established motive, regardless of whether she marries out of love or by force. Such is Oksana in Rimsky-Korsakov: distinguished from among her friends, she still remains connected to them and "speaks" as do they all in the "style of Dikanka girls."[31]

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[29] Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes*, 83.

[30] Ibid., 84.

[31] Ibid.

Such is the case in the fourth tableau of the opera. Shown in Example 3-5, Oksana successfully appropriates the *kolyada intonatsiya* by joining the remaining village youths in performance. Although her vocal line is slightly different and continues to distinguish her from her peers, it nevertheless possesses the principal musical characteristics of the *kolyada*. As a result, it successfully reaffirms her position within the village youth community.

Example 3-5 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve* Tableau IV, mm. 159–166

As demonstrated by the examples above, the versatility of *intonatsii* made them a useful tool for Russian opera composers during the nineteenth century. In particular, the short length of most *intonatsii* made them extraordinarily easy to employ. Whether adopting the musical characteristics of a folk lament, a calendar song, or some regional folk dance style, composers could easily construct *intonatsii* that accurately mimicked the natural speech or song appropriate to the *dramatis personae* of their operas. Consequently, *intonatsii* provide information about the characters with whom they are associated. On a more superficial level, they can simply reinforce information that is

often readily accessible through available visual and/or textual clues, such as age, class association, gender/sex, or occupation of an individual or group.

Prokofyev's Use of *Intonatsii* in *War and Peace*

Evidence suggests Prokofyev's use of *intonatsii* in *War and Peace* is based on a similar need to communicate information about his characters quickly and efficiently.[32] As discussed in Chapter 2, Prokofyev owned a copy of *Symphonic Etudes* and was certainly familiar with Asafyev's ideas about nineteenth-century Russian opera and the concept of *intonatsii*. The presence of *intonatsii* is undoubtedly a direct reflection of his exposure to and understanding of the nineteenth-century tradition. By using *intonatsii*, Prokofyev achieved precisely what his nineteenth-century predecessors did—a greater degree of realism by having his characters "sing" in the manner accustomed to their positions within their respective cultures. There are, however, differences that distinguish Prokofyev's twentieth-century conception of the *intonatsiya* from that demonstrated above in the analysis of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve*. Although the following analysis does not attempt to comprehensively discuss all *intonatsii* used in *War and Peace*, it does aim to communicate the ways in which Prokofyev's *intonatsiya* use coincides with that of nineteenth-century composers, while illuminating the ways in which the *intonatsii* of *War and Peace* are different.

Prokofyev's use of *intonatsii* is perhaps rooted in his understanding of Rimsky-Korsakov's compositional process. As mentioned above, Rimsky-Korsakov's approach to composition involved a careful study of musical and non-musical source materials alike.

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[32] The importance of *intonatsii* in *War and Peace* is reinforced by the prominence of references to the concept in the writings of Russian scholars. The idea of the *intonatsiya* is frequently cited in the writings of Anatolii Volkov, who indicates that Prokofyev's opera is unified by a series of intonational gestures.

Rimsky-Korsakov's use of Rubets's collection of Ukrainian folk songs to construct *intonatsii* for *Christmas Eve* is paralleled by his use of documented folk songs to construct *intonatsii* for *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maiden Fevroniya* and *The Snow Maiden* as well as his exploration of the medieval Russian *bylina* tradition while preparing *intonatsii* for *Sadko*. Similar to the careful research Rimsky-Korsakov conducted while composing his operas, Prokofyev prepared his libretto for *War and Peace* by consulting many of the same texts that Tolstoy reviewed while writing his novel. According to Mira Mendelson-Prokofyeva, she and Prokofyev

> read Tarle, a guidebook to the places where the Battle of Borodino was fought, collections of Russian folk songs, proverbs and sayings of the period, notes by the poet and partisan Denis Davydov (which provided the text for Denisov's aria and, in part, for the Epigraph). In the collection *The Expulsion of Napoleon from Moscow* we found a suitable text for the choral episodes.[33]

Although he only studied orchestration with Rimsky-Korsakov, Prokofyev's familiarity with his teacher's *My Musical Life* and his operas undoubtedly influenced his compositional process.

Prokofyev's incorporation of *intonatsii* in *War and Peace* differs from that of nineteenth-century composers in two ways. It is possible that these differences are attributable to the nature of *War and Peace* as a novel and thus its realization as an opera. First, Prokofyev uses *intonatsii* almost exclusively in conjunction with minor characters and groups of characters. As Tolstoy's novel is an exploration of the effects of war, it is mostly concerned with the psychology of the main protagonists. As a result, each character's reactions to the realities of war are quite individualized, the stylization often attributable to *intonatsii* does not easily allow for an accurate expression of these

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[33] Myra Prokofieva, "From my Reminiscences" in *Sergei Prokofiev: Materials, Articles, Interviews*, comp. Vladimir Blok (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), 170.

psychological states. This is not to say, however, that it would have been impossible for Prokofyev to communicate the nuances of the emotions of his individual characters through a use of *intonatsii*; rather he used different compositional techniques when composing music for his principal characters, which will be discussed in the following chapter. Second, due to their general association with minor characters, *intonatsii* are less plentiful in *War and Peace* than in many Rimsky-Korsakov operas. Consequently, as shown in Figure 3-2, any list of *intonatsii* in *War and Peace* would be less extensive and diverse when compared to that provided by Asafyev for *Christmas Eve*.

Intonatsiya	Tableau No.	Rehearsal No.	Character Association
Russian Romance *	1	31	Natasha & Sonya Rostov
Gypsy Song *	5	177 + 5	Matryosha
Soldier Song	8	304 + 4	Russian Soldiers
Cossack Song *	8	323 + 6	Cossack Soldiers
Soldier Song	8	333 + 12	Russian Soldiers
Soldier Song	11	400	French Soldiers
Folk Song *	11	405	Matveyev & Dunyasha (Russian Peasants)
Folk Song	11	413	Russian Peasants
Folk Song	11	470 + 3	Russian Peasants

Figure 3-2 – *Intonatsii* found in *War and Peace*[34]

Some of the most easily recognizable *intonatsii* in *War and Peace* are those associated with groups of characters. In particular, his *intonatsii* for scenes featuring the Russian peasantry are especially effective. Prokofyev dedicated much energy to presenting these characters as three-dimensionally as possible. When presented with Prokofyev's drafted plan for *War and* Peace, the Committee on Arts Affairs demanded that he give greater emphasis to the heroic-patriotic portions of the opera and specifically the role of the Russian people in defeating Napoleon's army. Unfortunately, however, the Russian folk do not play as significant a role in Prokofyev's aristocracy-centered

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[34] *Intonatsii* marked with an asterisk (*) are discussed in greater detail below.

adaptation of *War and Peace* as they do in Rimsky-Korsakov's setting of *Christmas Eve*. As a result, their presence on the stage is somewhat limited. Nevertheless, by utilizing *intonatsii*, Prokofyev is able to communicate information about the Russian people more efficiently despite the relatively limited amount of time they appear on stage.

Of the folk *intonatsii* in *War and Peace*, the best example appears in the middle of Tableau 11 and is linked to a group of Russian peasants who come upon a littering of leaflets printed in response to the burning buildings in Moscow. Like Rimsky-Korsakov's folk-oriented *kolyada intonatsiya*, Prokofyev's folk *intonatsiya* draws upon an inventory of musical characteristics typical of Russian folk song traditions. Illustrated in Example 3-6, Prokofyev's *intonatsiya* is exemplified by two hallmark musical characteristics of Russian folk song, especially songs of the fifteenth century through the seventeenth centuries.[35]

Example 3-6 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace* Tableau XI, Rehearsal 407

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[35] Prokhorov, *Russian Folk Songs*, 6–9.

First, Prokofyev's selection of diatonic modes is consistent with the Russian folk song tradition.[36] Secondly, the use of irregular metric patters is typical of Russian folk. According to Prokhorov,

> in some songs, a poetic text is formed by a free sequence of poetic lines, whose narrative is not organized into symmetrically equal patterns or groups....As a result, the syllabic rhythm of poetic lines in this kind of song is irregular and asymmetrical, with various numbers of stressed syllables per line and a constantly changing number of unstressed syllables between the stressed ones.[37]

Even though the text of the leaflets is not a poetic text, there are expected changes in the length of individual sentences, which impart a constant change in the number of syllables per line. Ultimately, Prokofyev is required to change the metric pattern to fit the differing number of stressed and unstressed syllables. Unlike Rimsky-Korsakov, however, Prokofyev does not aim to replicate the style of any specific Russian folk song genre; his conception of a folk-oriented *intonatsiya* is more ambiguous than that of his former teacher's. Nevertheless, through his combination of musical traits, Prokofyev effectively reinforces the identities of those characters associated with the *intonatsiya* as part of the Russian peasant class.

Prokofyev's use of general musical characteristics is also demonstrated in his construction of *intonatsii* for single characters as well. He does not reserve this technique for the *intonatsii* of groups alone. This is perhaps best exemplified in the *intonatsiya* of the gypsy woman, Matryosha, in Tableau V of *War and Peace*. Appearing alongside Anatol Kuragin, his friend Dolokhov, and the coachman Balaga, Matryosha is seen helping the men prepare for Anatol's planned elopement with Natasha Rostova. While

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[36] Ibid., 9.

[37] Ibid., 6.

the three men engage in extensive conversation over the course of the tableau, Matryosha speaks only in the final moments of the scene and receiving only ten bars of music to sing. As shown in Example 3-7, Prokofyev incorporates two musical exoticisms into Matryosha's vocal line that are associated with the gypsies of Eastern Europe.

Example 3-7 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace* Tableau V, Rehearsal 177 + 5

First, Prokofyev includes a brief vocal ornament in the opening bar of Matryosha's vocal line. Although this embellishment may seem insignificant at first, it remains the only vocal ornament in the opera. As Jonathan Bellman indicates, "the profusion of small, jangling ornaments" was a classic exoticism employed by composers during the nineteenth century to conjure aural images of gypsies.[38] Secondly, the *intonatsiya* includes a noteworthy timbral component rooted in the Turkish ancestry of gypsy music. By using the oboe to double the vocal line, Prokofyev closely imitates the sound of the Turkish *zurna*, a prominent shawm-like instrument retained by a number of gypsy cultures.[39]

Unlike the examples discussed above, which show how Prokofyev used *intonatsii* to substitute for character speech, some *intonatsii* in *War and Peace* manifest as passages

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[38] Jonathan Bellman, "The Hungarian Gypsies and the Poetics of Exclusion" in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 83.
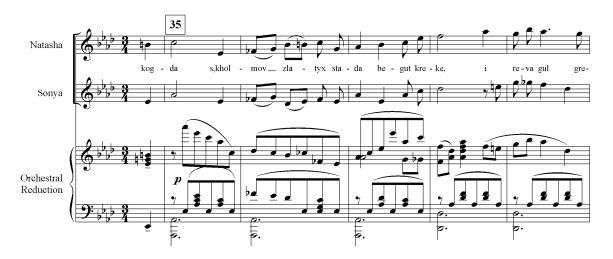
[39] Ibid., 91.

of actual song. *Intonatsii* of this type occur with slightly greater frequency than those used exclusively to substitute for character speech. However, the function of song-*intonatsii* remains the same. They are used to efficiently provide information of class, regional/national origin, and occupation about the associated characters. Such is demonstrated in the Cossack song *intonatsiya* which appears in the eighth tableau. Having come to join the Russian soldiers in their battle against Napoleon's army, a group of Cossacks arrive singing what appears to be a Cossack folk song detailing the heroic nature of their people ("Our horses speed like arrows, bravely racing forward in pursuit of the foe. Like a whirlwind, the Cossacks fly into glorious combat."). Shown in Example 3-8, the song-*intonatsiya* exhibits the same relative simplicity of the folk *intonatsiya* sung by Dunyasha and Matveyev. Although the mode differs from that of the earlier example, the Cossack song is similarly diatonic, devoid of any chromatic alterations. Moreover, the triple meter of the *intonatsiya* helps to differentiate the Cossack soldiers from their Russian counterparts.

Example 3-8 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace* Tableau VIII, Rehearsal 323 + 6

The jaunty, dance-like rhythms of the Cossack songs are in direct contrast to the simple, march-like rhythms and military drum and pipe accompaniments of the Russian soldier songs heard thus far in the opera.

One song-*intonatsiya* in *War and Peace* stands out from the rest, however, due to its unique association with a primary character rather than one of the secondary characters of the opera. In the opening tableau of the opera, while Prince Andrei is contemplating his renewed interest in life, Natasha Rostov and her cousin Sonya appear in one of the windows above him. Unaware of his presence, the young girls chatter about not being able to sleep and the beauty of the world outside their windows. Shortly thereafter, the two girls launch into momentary song. Shown in Example 3-9, the *intonatsiya* is offset by a change in key to A-flat major and performed over a simple accompanimental pattern comprised of sustained bass pedals and chordal harmonies performed in broken figurations, much like they might appear in the left-hand of a piano accompaniment.

Example 3-9 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace* Tableau I, pickup to Rehearsal 35

Coupled with the lyrical singing style of the vocal line and the abbreviated ternary structure of the song, the song-*intonatsiya* exhibits many of the musical traits associated with the early nineteenth-century Russian romance tradition. By appropriating characteristics of this song tradition and associating them with Natasha and Sonya,

Prokofyev effectively communicates the aristocratic social status of the two young women.

Even though it is possible to interpret Prokofyev's use of *intonatsii* in *War and Peace* as an attempt, consciously or otherwise, to connect his work with operas of the nineteenth-century Russian tradition, it is important to note that analyzing the *intonatsii* in *War and Peace* can be problematic. Unlike Rimsky-Korsakov, Prokofyev did not painstakingly document where he originally found some of the source materials he used in the opera. For example, although we know that he did research folk melodies of the early nineteenth century, it is not clear when, if ever, he came into contact with gypsy song. Similarly, the music used in conjunction with the French soldiers clearly sound different from that of the Russian army, but it is not clear what source materials Prokofyev drew upon to construct their *intonatsiya*. Regardless of the authenticity of the *intonatsii* he used in *War and Peace*, however, the influence of Rimsky-Korsakov's music on Prokofyev is abundantly clear. Although he chooses not to directly quote the *intonatsii* used by his former teacher, the technique is clearly at work in Prokofyev's opera, allowing him to render the more incidental characters in a more realistic and more vivid manner.

CHAPTER IV

PROKOFYEV'S USE OF INTERNAL PSYCHOLOGY AS
DRAMATIC CONFLICT

Contrary to what the title suggests, *War and Peace* does not focus exclusively on the Napoleonic war and its various battles. Only the Battle of Borodino is described in any great detail and, even then, its serve as the background against other events occur. While the war remains a constant theme throughout the novel, the main focus is on the experience of war. As such, much of the novel involves the exploration of the various characters' psychologies as they experience love and loss; there is little interest in matters of external conflict. In setting the novel as an opera, the lack of a clearly identifiable source of dramatic conflict is a potential obstacle. Fortunately for Prokofyev, however, the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition offered a number of strategies for musically representing protagonists' inner psychology. The operas of both Chaikovsky and Musorgsky involve characters whose portrayal is psychological in nature.

In this chapter, I will argue that Prokofyev's the dramatic conflict that serves as the basis for his opera is psychological in nature and that his strategy for developing the principal characters of *War and Peace* involves a musical portrayal of their internal psychology. I will support this claim by examining Asafyev's analysis of *Boris Godunov* as a psychological drama and determining Musorgsky's compositional approach to communicating Boris's psychological pathology. After developing a methodology for identifying musical techniques associated with the representation of character

psychology, I will apply the technique to a scene from Chaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* that Prokofyev cites as a model for the types of arias he composed; it will be demonstrate that while the nature of the psychological conflict is different in Chaikovsky's opera, the techniques for portraying that psychology is consistent with that exercised by Musorgsky. Finally, I will illustrate how Prokofyev represents the psychologies of two characters from *War and Peace* by calling upon the same techniques used by Chaikovsky and Musorgsky.

Inner Psychology as a Source of Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Russian Opera

While Prokofyev's musical enhancement of secondary characters draws mostly upon his knowledge and understanding of Rimsky-Korsakov's operas, the techniques used to create his primary characters are more closely related to those used by Chaikovsky and Musorgsky. The operas of both composers are marked by an emphasis on the internal psychology of the characters, especially the psychology of the main protagonists. *Boris Godunov, Khovanshchina, Eugene Onegin,* and *Queen of Spades* all feature principal characters who undergo some type of psychological transformation over the course of the opera. In many ways this fascination with psychology is rooted in Russia's literary tradition of the nineteenth century. Russian composers gravitated toward the novel and similarly complex literary works as the basis of their operas. David Haas points out that, "while Chaikovsky's *Onegin* counts as the only successful attempt by a 19th-century Russian composer to turn a major novel into opera, he was not alone in

bringing a novelist's concerns to the craft of operatic composition."[1] Russian opera composers have harvested the novels of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky as well as the shorter works of Pushkin and Gogol as operatic source materials from the nineteenth-century forward. As Andrew Wachtel states, "it is by now a commonplace that the classic Russian novelists…are distinguished by an unparalleled ability to portray the complex inner mental states of their characters."[2] In using these novels as sources for their operas, nineteenth-century Russian composers accepted the challenge of creating a range of characters that also undergo a process of psychological growth.

The same holds true for Prokofyev's operatic adaptation of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Those unfamiliar with the novel might be under the impression that Tolstoy's intention was to create a vivid account of Napoleon's invasion of Russia, replete with pages describing famous battles; this could be no further from the truth. While there are a few passages dedicated to describing actual acts of war, the novel is first and foremost an exploration of the psychological impact of war on a small group of families. In his operatic adaptation of the novel, Prokofyev maintains the integrity of Tolstoy's work by retaining the emphasis on the psychology of the *dramatis personae*. Specifically, Prokofyev focuses on the psychological transformation of two principal characters: Natasha Rostova and Pierre Bezukhova.

Due to this focus on the inner workings of the human psyche, some scholars and critics have criticized Russian opera based on what they perceive to be a lack of external

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[1] David Haas, "Igor Glebov and the Audiences of *Symphonic Etudes*," in Boris Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes: Portraits of Russian Operas and Ballets*, trans. David Haas (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2008), xxii.

[2] Andrew Wachtel, "Psychology and Society" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Classic Russian Novel*, ed. by Malcolm V. Jones and Robin Feuer Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 130.

(i.e., visible) conflict between characters on the stage. However, Russian operas do not externalize conflict the same way non-Russian operas do. Instead, the misery afflicting individual characters is held inside without any action to resolve the conflict. It is true that Russian operas do not always focus on the same types of interpersonal relationships that are seen in the operas of Meyerbeer, Wagner, Verdi, or Bizet. Often Russian opera composers do not present us with the same fearless heroes or tragic heroines of their Western counterparts. Instead Russian opera composers present audiences with something decidedly different. Concerning this idiosyncrasy, Asafyev poses the question: "Wherein lies the main distinction?" He responds stating,

> in the absence of action, or so it is said. Yes and no. If action means the appearance of the actual will of a hero, directed towards overcoming externally presented obstacles, then no….But internalized action, an intimate musical dramatism, unquestionably exists…[3]

In essence, Russian composers prefer to compose operas based on the psychological processes of everyday characters as they engage in everyday events. Consequently, these works appear to have little, or even no, apparent external conflict.

Since numerous passages in Richard Wagner's operas can be construed easily as dramatically (scenically) static as well, it is important to differentiate his approach to dramaturgy from that of Russian composers. To be sure, Wagner's operas are also characterized by an internalization of conflict; the pacing of the psychological progression, however, is different. The dramatically static tableaux of a Wagner opera are typically those involving a single character, or others in which one character "speaks" to another who remains silent throughout the scene. In both types of passages, the characters are generally concerned with the expression of a single psychological state. No major

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[3] Boris Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes: Portraits of Russian Operas and Ballets*, trans. David Haas (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2008), 52.

shift in emotion occurs. In response, the musical style remains quite uniform throughout the passage; the orchestral accompaniment may change slightly, but overall there is not a perceivable shift in musical style. In the psychological dramas of Chaikovsky, on the other hand, the music reflects an almost physiological quality, speeding up and changing as the characters evolve through a variety of thoughts and emotions. Nevertheless, the fact that Wagner internalizes his drama renders him as a kindred spirit to Russian opera composers.

This type of dramatic stasis is seen in *Die Walküre*. In the final moments of the last act, Wotan sings two extended solo passage uninterrupted; extending for a duration of about 13 minutes, the solos concern his feelings about transforming Brünnhilde into a mortal and placing her to rest in the ring of fire. Throughout the passage, Wotan bids his daughter farewell, "speaking" to her uninterruptedly. At the very end of the scene, Brünnhilde enters into her magic sleep leaving Wotan alone; little to no physical interaction between the two takes place. Consequently, the musical style of these closing moments of the opera remains consistent, even as leitmotifs emerge and disappear again into the orchestral fabric.

Like those by Wagner, Russian operas can be correspondingly static with regard to the physical action on stage. The characters of Russian operas are also frequently alone, or are seen singing extended solo passages to another silent character, resulting in little or no tangible interaction. There is, however, one major distinction. In Russian operas, there is a transfer of the dramatic conflict from the external world to the internal sphere of a character's psyche. Little may appear to be happening on stage, but the *dramatis personae* are experiencing intense psychological activity. As a result, the

extended soliloquy-like passages of a Russian opera involve a rapid progression through a range of emotional states as the character undergoes his or her psychological growth. Sometimes, these emotional stages change contrastingly, moving from one emotion to another that is very different. At other times, the emotional changes are progressive, such that the character moves from one emotion to an intensified version of the same emotion.

In the Russian tradition, the source of the internal dramatic conflict varies from work to work. In some Russian operas, the principal protagonist and antagonist characters never directly interact on stage. Such is the case in Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov*: at no point during the course of the opera do Boris and Grigory (the False Dmitri) share the stage. In fact, the two are only in the same location during the final moments of the last act and only following Boris's death. Some then might ask: if the two never directly interact, where is the dramatic conflict? It is in Boris's own mind; the drama is rooted in Boris's inner torment as he wrestles with his guilt over murdering the rightful heir to the throne and with his dread over rumors about a "risen" Dmitri. As the opera progresses, Boris appears increasingly crazed as he moves from one psychological state to another.

In other operas, the protagonist and antagonist do share the stage, but only one character actively communicates his or her thoughts. For example, in *Eugene Onegin* the exchanges between Tatyana and Onegin are very much one-sided until the final scene of the opera. Most notable of these is Tatyana's famous "Letter Scene," during which she pours forth her confession of love for Onegin. Over the course of the aria, Tatyana demonstrates a kaleidoscopic range of conflicting emotions encompassing fear, love, uncertainty, desire, shame, hope, and doubt. Onegin's response to the letter is not heard until the following scene, in which he practically lectures Tatyana about how he will soon

grow tired of marriage and advises her to gain greater control over her emotions; devastated, Tatyana flees the scene without a rebuttal. As a result of these separate revealing exchanges, the sense of conflict is masked and can potentially leave audiences who are unfamiliar with the idiosyncrasies of Russian opera feeling unfulfilled and confused. This feeling of bewilderment is in turn potentially heightened by the constant thwarting of opportunities for a traditional love duet, arguably a defining characteristic of so many Western operas.

Inner Psychology as Drama in *Boris Godunov* and *Eugene Onegin*

Boris Godunov and *Eugene Onegin* embody two different trends in the exploration of internal psychology as a source of dramatic conflict by Russian opera composers. On one hand, Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov* is representative of an interest in pathological states of the mind. This fascination is similarly explored in Germann of Chaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* as well as in the character of Grishka in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Invisible City of Kitezh*. In all three examples, the mental states of the characters gradually deteriorate eventually resulting in a total psychological collapse and a lost grasp on reality. At the other end of the spectrum is *Eugene Onegin*, which exemplifies the psychological responses of everyday characters as they engage in everyday situations. Chaikovsky freely admitted that he would

> gladly tackle any opera where the characters are like me and have feelings which I too have experienced and can understand. I neither know nor do I understand the feelings of an Egyptian princess, of a Pharaoh, or of a demented Nubian. Some instinct suggests to me that these people must love and speak and, in consequence, express their feelings in some altogether special way, not as we do.[4]

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[4] Chaikovsky, quoted in Alexandra Orlova, *Tchaikovsky: A Self-Portrait*, trans. R. M. Davison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 96.

In setting *Eugene Onegin*, Chaikovsky focused on portraying the individual characters as naturally as possible. This is particularly true of Tatyana, whose "actions" he believed to be "very simple, ordinary, and untheatrical."[5] More than anything else, *Eugene Onegin* is concerned with Tatyana's emotional progression from a naïve, teenage girl who falls in love for the first time to a mature, adult woman bound by the honor of her marriage.

Psychological Portrayal in *Boris Godunov*

As indicated above, *Boris Godunov* represents one approach taken by Russian opera composers to present the pathological psychology of characters musically. As Boris Asafyev states,

> the psychological aspect of the harmonies, or rather the psychological parallelism than can be discerned between the tonal and harmonic changes on the one hand and the ever-changing stream of spiritual experiences on the other, can be followed over the course of nearly all the scenes of *Boris*.[6]

In the passage, Asafyev is referencing Musorgsky's constant shifts in style throughout the opera in order to best communicate Boris's ever evolving pathology. In part these constant changes in style are the result of Musorgsky's careful treatment of Pushkin's prose text. Often described as a Russian realist, Musorgsky struggled to maintain the appropriate accentuation and intonation of the Russian language in his setting of the libretto. More importantly, as a result of this sensitivity to the text, he developed a compositional technique designed to heighten the listener's understanding of the text, a

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[5] Ibid., 97.

[6] Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes*, 242.

practice described by Asafyev as "an indivisible union of words and sound."[7] Consequently, Musorgsky composed *Boris Godunov* such that "the poetic text is permeated with musical content."[8] He provided everything musically possible to assure that each word's corresponding meaning and affect is communicated clearly to the audience, often requiring multiple of changes in musical style.

In his treatment of the texts associated with Tsar Boris's psychological pathology, the style of Musorgsky's music is often disproportionately intense compared to the physical activity occurring on stage. Again, as described by Asafyev, "the musical-psychological characterization of individual moments, phrases, words, and situations reaches a strange and terrible level of saturation and intensity in their expressive and representational 'veracity'."[9] Such a level of musical intensity is distinguishable in Musorgsky's setting of Boris's Act II closing aria. At this point in the drama, Boris hallucinates for the first time the bloody apparition of the murdered tsarevich, Dmitri, while standing at the chiming clock. Although he appears alone for the entire scene and engages in no physical activity, the music suggests a high level of emotional activity. Asafyev describes the music associated with these highly introverted and psychological sections of the opera stating, "in such moments, the attention is *tightly* focused: nothing can divert it. Not a single harmony, not one passage exists that is not the result of a psychological dictate."[10] Throughout the aria, Musorgsky's music is composed in such a

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 244.

[9] Ibid., 242.

[10] Ibid.

way that essentially each gesture serves as a calculated response to the meaning and affect of the text.

In order to demonstrate how Musorgsky composes music to enhance the psychological content of the text, it is useful to explore the musical style and structure of one of these psychology-driven arias. The "Hallucination" aria referenced above consists of four distinct sections, each communicating a different degree of anxiety through changes in texture, instrumentation, rhythmic activity, and key. Shown in Example 4-1, the opening of the aria is relatively sparse in terms of the accompaniment. Beyond a few sustained chords in the brasses and woodwinds, very little motion occurs in the orchestra to support Boris as he suffocates and experiences a general sense of foreboding; only a couple of chromatic triplet figurations are found in the upper brass and winds. Nevertheless, the combination of low brasses and increasing levels of chromaticism in the moving lines contribute to a general feeling of angst.

Example 4-1 – Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov* Act 2, (Clock Scene) mm. 6-10

In the second section of the aria, Boris's feelings of anxiety escalate leaving him feeling disoriented. Exclaiming "I think that death approaches, for in my ear the pulses beat like hammers…the world is spinning around me," Boris's vocal line becomes increasingly fragmented as it moves into the uppermost register of his voice; as he

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approaches the final bars of the section, Boris's vocal line gives way to a series of howls as the ghostly apparition of his hallucination materializes before his eyes. Shown in Example 4-2, Boris's increasing agitation is further communicated through the presence of a highly chromatic, winding violin figuration over tremolo low strings.

Example 4-2 – Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov* Act 2, "Clock Scene," mm. 15-16

Most effective, however, is the chiming of the clock, which grows louder and more dissonant as more and more instruments are added to the accompaniment.

Boris's attempts to ward off the hallucinatory specter of Dmitri are encompassed by the third section of the aria. Composed over a sustained E-flat pedal in the double basses in a chromatically enhanced E-flat major key, Boris's vocal line shown in Example 4-3 remains broken as if the Tsar is gasping for breath every few moments; occasionally the pitch content of the aria gives way to declamatory shouts in which Boris

orders the ghost to be gone. As he declares his guiltlessness for the murder of Dmitri, the violins play a series of descending, chromatic tremolos that surge in volume and then taper off as each bar comes to a close. Below the upper strings, winds and brasses contribute the dense orchestral mass spawned by his terror of the tsarevich's phantom presence.

Example 4-3 – Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov* Act 2, (Clock Scene) mm. 35-41

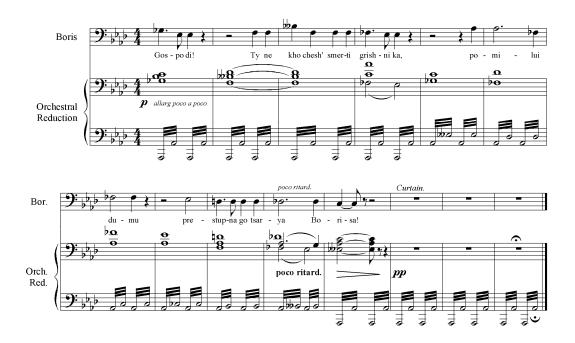The aria comes to a close in the fourth section as Dmitri's ghost vanishes before his eyes and Boris regains his grasp on reality. Shown in Example 4-4, the return to reality is signaled by a change in key and a thinning of the orchestral texture as well as a reduction in chromatic writing and dissonance. Additionally, Boris's vocal line chromatically descends back into the lower register of his voice. Nevertheless, the orchestra continues to suggest an atmosphere of dread as the texture grows continuously thinner, fading to a grumbling tremolo whisper in the double basses.

Example 4-4 – Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov* Act 2, (Clock Scene) mm. 52-end

As demonstrated by the examples above, Musorgsky's malleable approach to composition helps to communicate the nuances of his character's individual psychologies. He takes absolute freedom when composing so as to allow him to guarantee that each statement is communicated as effectively as possible. Explained by Asafyev,

> Musorgsky's music is characterized by an almost complete lack of the customary formulas, structures, and devices that allow a work to be mechanically connected whenever the imagination requires respite. The artificial joints, continuations, passages dictated by form, cadences, stereotypical periods, and even sequences that make possible a motion by inertia are rare, practically nonexistent among Musorgsky's compositional devices.[11]

At no point during these psychology-motivated passages does Musorgsky concern himself with upholding a body of culturally-prescribed compositional standards. Instead, the music is dictated by the expressive needs of the text; he takes an innovative approach to music composition to heighten the communicative properties of the text. Nevertheless,

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[11] Ibid., 244.

Asafyev asserts that "beyond the purely musical brilliance, freshness, and originality, [*Boris Godunov's*] significance can be traced to a solid psychological foundation."[12]

Psychological Portrayal in *Eugene Onegin*

A contrasting related, yet distinct, approach to the musical treatment of psychological dramas is demonstrated in Chaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. Once again, the dramatic content of the opera is rooted in the inner psychology of a single protagonist—Tatyana Larina. In this opera, however, the psychology of the character is not pathological in nature. Instead, Chaikovsky explores the emotional processes Tatyana experiences as she meets and falls in love with the title character Onegin. Most striking, however, are the musical consequences of the Russian preoccupation with psychology on the opera. This is perhaps most clearly demonstrated in the aforementioned "Letter Scene." Due to the nearly constant shift in Tatyana's emotional state, Chaikovsky's aria not only occupies the majority of the scene, but also requires the presentation of a variety of musical ideas; each new emotion is accompanied by correspondingly appropriate melodic material. This rapid juxtaposition of contrasting musical styles occurs in order to depict the change from one psychological state to another.

Although *Eugene Onegin* is not analyzed by Asafyev in *Symphonic Etudes* and is only discussed minimally throughout the tome, it nonetheless exhibits a number of the same musical characteristics seen in *Boris Godunov*. There are, however, some important distinctions that must be made. Whereas the sections of Boris's aria are dictated by increases in the degree of his anxieties as related to his hallucination, the sections of Tatyana's aria correspond to contrasting shifts in her emotional state. Moreover, although

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[12] Ibid., 250.

Boris's escalating anxieties result in sections of strongly contrasting musical style, the overall musical style of Tatyana's "Letter Scene" is relatively consistent. Described by Richard Taruskin, Tatyana's aria is actually a "string of romances linked by recitatives."[13] While fundamentally this statement is true, it is also potentially an oversimplification of Chaikovsky's compositional intent. The use of the romance is simply an intonational vehicle (i.e., from the term *intonatsiya*) meant to reinforce Tatyana's identity as an aristocratic Russian girl; the romance is naturally part of her music vocabulary having grown up on her family's country estate. More important than Taruskin's reference to Chaikovsky's use of romances is the idea of the "stringing" together of different sections of music. The various changes in tempo, meter, key, melodic structure, orchestration, etc. collectively function as a channel through which to heighten the audience's perception of Tatyana's different emotional or psychological states.

Although it is unnecessary to analyze the entire complex of romances that comprise the scene, it is useful to discuss some of the musical differences to illustrate the means by which Chaikovsky presented Tatyana's different psychological states. In this analysis of the aria, Taruskin isolates four distinct romances based on changes in tempo, key, meter, and form.[14] Following a lush orchestral introduction dominated by string tremolos and upper register cellos, the first section of the aria is a D-flat major romance in common time marked with a tempo of Allegro non troppo. Shown in Example 4-5, the

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[13] Richard Taruskin, "Yevgeny Onegin," in *Grove Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed December 11, 2008).

[14] Ibid.

vocal line of the romance is characterized by a dominance of half-step motion over an abundance of throbbing syncopations in the orchestra.

Example 4-5 – Chaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* Act 1, Scene 2 mm. 15-20

In combination with constant surges of dynamics, the passage is associated with the feelings of desire that compel Tatyana to write her love letter to Onegin.

In contrast to the first, the second romance is composed in F major to a Moderato assai, quasi andante tempo. Shown in Example 4-6, the lunging syncopations of Tatyana's desire have given way to a more active form of syncopation combining eighth and sixteenth notes.

Example 4-6 – Chaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* Act 1, Scene 2 mm. 58-62

Brought on by thoughts of uncertainty, these syncopations help to communicate Tatyana's anxieties as she begins to write her letter. With each question about why Onegin makes her feel as she does, the orchestra announces her frustrations with a series

of descending sigh-like gestures—first by solo flute, then clarinet, and finally by solo horn.

Similar changes in tempo, key, and meter occur throughout the remainder of the aria as Tatyana continues to experience her barrage of new emotions. The third romance is composed in C major and duple meter before returning to the opening key of D-flat major for the final romance. Once again, each musical change brings with it a new body of emotions and corresponding affectual gestures in the orchestra. Even the recitatives play a role in the portrayal of Tatyana's emotions by allowing her to detach momentarily from the feelings of love embodied in the romance as a genre, and instead consider her actions and their possible consequences.

Inner Psychology as Drama in *War and Peace*

Of the two operas discussed above, *Eugene Onegin* most strongly influenced Prokofyev and the composition of *War and Peace*. The key to understanding the significance of Chaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* for Prokofyev lies in a 1940 article written by the composer about his then current opera project, *Semyon Kotko*. In this article, as already discussed, Prokofyev presented the idea that opera arias are divided into two types, "the Lensky type aria during which nothing happens, and that of Tatyana's Letter scene in the same opera."[15] The composer differentiated the two *Onegin* arias on the basis of their dramatic action. First, Lensky's aria is in essence an emotionally static moment in the opera. Sung just prior to his duel with the title character, Lensky concerns himself almost exclusively with thoughts of loss—both the loss of his own youth as well as the

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[15] Sergei Prokofyev, "Semyon Kotko" in *Sergei Prokofiev: Materials, Articles, Interviews*, trans. Rose Prokofieva, compiled by Vladimir Blok (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), 37.

potential loss in death of his beloved Olga. This quiescent aria is appropriately accompanied by a correspondingly minimal degree of physical activity of stage.

Tatyana's "Letter Scene" aria is similarly minimal in terms of the physical movement that occurs during its course. Nonetheless, as Prokofyev stated, "the drama is so tense that we cannot tear our eyes from the stage and we do not notice the length of the aria." This comment suggests Prokofyev's awareness of the distinguishing characteristic of Russian operas as having a strong psychological basis. It is precisely this aesthetic concept that Prokofyev had in mind when he proclaimed, "I want my opera to have the second type of the arias."[16] Although Prokofyev's words were in reference to an opera composed before his Tolstoy opera, we can, nonetheless, observe the aesthetic at work in *War and Peace*. Having sensed the emotional intensity of the aria despite the apparent lack of physical activity on the stage, it became fundamental to his conception of opera.

Psychological Portrayal of Natasha Rostov

The Tatyana "Letter Scene" style aria is best exhibited in the fourth tableau of *War and Peace*. In this scene, the recently betrothed Natasha attends a ball in the home of Hélène Bezukhova, where she meets Anatol Kuragin, brother of the party's hostess. During the course of their meeting, Anatol presents Natasha with a letter in which he confesses his love for her. Upon reading the letter, Natasha experiences her own series of conflicting emotions. The very presence of this moment in the plot provided Prokofyev with the perfect opportunity to react to Chaikovsky and compose his own "letter" aria, an opportunity which he gladly seized. Prokofyev, however, used the letter itself not as a

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[16] Ibid., 37.

vehicle through which Natasha expresses herself, but rather as the catalyst that ignites her succession of conflicting emotions.

Just as Chaikovsky accompanied each of Tatyana's emotions with appropriately different music, so too did Prokofyev in his music for Natasha. At the onset of her aria, Natasha reads the letter written by Anatoli Kuragin confessing his love for her. Consequently, she immediately finds herself completely enamored by the thought of her admirer. Given in Example 4-7, Natasha's preliminary reading of the letter is accompanied by the orchestral waltz theme that has served as the musical foundation for the scene to this point.

Example 4-7 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, Tableau 4, Rehearsal 135 + 5
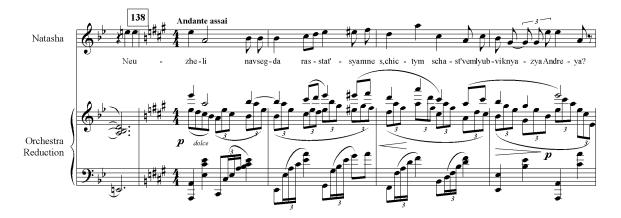
Accompanied by the tumult of the party, Natasha's developing infatuation becomes linked to a waltz melody paralleling the fateful first encounter with her fiancé, Prince Andrei. As Natasha finishes the letter and realizes the horror of her situation—she is a young, betrothed woman who has become involved with another man—the music

displays a significant change in style. Seen in Example 4-8, the opening waltz gives way

to a stormy passage of chromatic string tremolos signaling a shift in the drama from the

external world of the party to the inner world of Natasha's mind.

Example 4-8 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, Tableau 4, Rehearsal 137

In the next section of Natasha's aria, her psychological state shifts away from the

negative thoughts tied to her betrayal of Andrei and to one inspired by their love. After

only eight bars, the preceding section gives way to a diatonic melody in A major, which

first appeared in the opening tableau of the opera. Shown in Example 4-9, the melody is

associated with Prince Andrei's emotional rebirth and developing love for Natasha; here

it reflects memories of the first night Natasha saw the young Prince as she recalls his love

for her.

Example 4-9 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, Tableau 4, Rehearsal 138

Before the melody can fully cadence, however, Natasha recalls her own love for Prince Andrei. Ultimately, the melody of Prince Andrei's love for Natasha succumbs to the recurring melody allied with Natasha's love for Prince Andrei. Presented in Example 4-10, this meandering chromatic melody is connected to the feelings of uncertainty which are a consequence of Natasha's first real love.

Example 4-10 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, Tableau 4, Rehearsal 139 + 1

Finally, after modulating twice, Natasha's aria comes to a close as the melody surrenders once again to the waltz which initiated the aria.

As illustrated by the examples above, the techniques used by Prokofyev are strikingly similar to those used by Chaikovsky. There is, however, one major difference that lies in the amount of time dedicated to the musical portrayal of the psychological explorations. While Prokofyev's "Letter" aria for Natasha is considerably shorter than Chaikovsky's aria for Tatyana (less than three minutes compared to Chaikovsky's sixteen minutes), the shorter length was a necessity of *War and Peace's* complex plot. Still, the

connection between the two works is clear. Both operas are designed such that primary dramatic action is based on the inner psychology of the main protagonists. Moreover, both composers communicated their respective character's changing emotional states through changes of key, melodic associations, and variations in texture and orchestration.

Although Natasha's psychological episode is relatively short considering the overall length of the opera as a whole, it is important to take note that other psychological episodes occur over the course of the rest of the opera. We never fully experience the entire range of a character's inner psychology during any single moment in the opera. However, the design of Prokofyev's libretto allowed for character development of other protagonists as well. This is a particularly important detail since with the exception of the twelfth tableau, Natasha's presence is restricted to the opening "peace" tableaux of the opera (i.e., the first seven tableaus that comprise Part I of the whole). However, the relative absence of Natasha during the second half of the opera does not result in a period of dramatic stasis. Instead, the inner conflict that fuels the dramatic situations and Prokofyev's music are linked to other characters, such as when the psychological exploration shifts to focus on the character of Pierre Bezukhov during the war tableaux of the opera, none more so than the eleventh tableau of Part II

Psychological Portray of Pierre Bezukhov

The longest in the opera, the eleventh tableau is essentially a montage of scenes depicting the occupation and burning of Moscow as well as the ensuing chaos resulting from the city's near destruction. Over the course of the tableau, which is greater than thirty minutes in length, we encounter a variety of scenes from Tolstoy's novel. These

include an episode portraying groups of French soldiers attacking Muscovite women, their hoarding of stolen goods, and stripping Church icons of their gold; groups of Russian peasants being informed of an edict from Napoleon detailing the policies of the newly declared French principality; Pierre meeting the Rostov servants and learning of the family's departure from Moscow; Pierre's declaration to avenge the Russian people by killing Napoleon; various groups of Muscovites acting in defiance of the French invaders; Pierre's trial and subsequent appearance at the execution grounds; the soldier Karatayev as he calms Pierre; Moscow ablaze as soldiers, actresses, and asylum escapees flee the flames; Pierre in a state of hysteria as he is escorted to prison; and Napoleon as he surveys the damage of the fire around him. Each of the scenes presented during the tableau either directly involve Pierre as he undergoes his psychological transformation, or provide some event to which Pierre then responses. Consequently, the tableau provides the foundation for Prokofyev's exploration of Pierre's psychology.

By the time Pierre makes his first appearance in Tableau 11, he already shows signs of a change in psychological state compared to that of his appearance in the eighth tableau. When first seen in Tableau 8, Pierre displays a highly romanticized impression of the war, one of an almost child-like fascination; he speaks of the soldiers in a generally idolizing tone, stating,

> Oh, to give no thought of one's own life, to face everything alongside the men, to be a soldier, an ordinary soldier! To embrace the communal life, to throw oneself into it wholeheartedly, and to be filled with the spirit that makes them what they are. They are forthright and strong. They are men, not of words, but of deeds. The spoken word is silver, but that which is unspoken is gold! They are strong and calm. A man can master nothing if he fears death. But he who has no fear of death can do anything.[17]

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[17] Jane Iles, trans., liner notes for CD recording of Sergei Prokofyev, *War and Peace*, Conducted by Valery Gergiev with the Kirov Opera and Orchestra, Philips 434 097-2, 1992.

Shown in Example 4-11, Pierre's ruminations occur to a lyrical melodic line doubled by string timbres.

Example 4-11 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace* Tableau 8, Rehearsal 307

Marked *piano* and *espressivo*, the passage is similar in style to the melody of his love for Natasha, initially heard at the end of the sixth tableau. More importantly, this bewilderingly lyrical style shows that Pierre's impression of the war is considerably different than that of the soldiers surrounding him.

In contrast, Pierre's impression of the war in the eleventh tableau is one of anger and disgust. Having witnessed the atrocities committed by Napoleon's soldiers, Pierre vows that the invading emperor must die ("I must do the deed, or die"). However, before he is able to further entertain his murderous thoughts, Pierre encounters two servants from the Rostov household. They tell him that the family has fled Moscow, leaving all of their valuables behind, but that the family was able to take all of the wounded soldiers

with them. They continue by informing him that a mortally wounded Prince Andrei is among the soldiers accompanying the family, but that Natasha is unaware of the situation. Upon their exit, Pierre once again retreats into his thoughts. Initially displaying a concern for his friend, the music returns to the lyrical, string-dominated style of the pre-war tableaux; the orchestra sings the first few bars of the motive associated with Andrei's renewed interest in life and his emerging love for Natasha. However, as Pierre's thoughts quickly turn to how the war has denied the lovers any opportunity for happiness, the style of the music suddenly shifts to include an ostinato figure realized by cello and viola tremolos over a sustained bass pedal in the low brass and contrabassoon. This change in style helps to communicate the return of his initial oath—to kill Napoleon, or die in the process.

Following an extended episode earlier in Tableau 11 in which Pierre, having been captured and accused of arson, pleads his innocence to General Davout, Pierre appears later during the eleventh tableau as he and his fellow prisoners are taken to the execution grounds. The peasant Matveyev is selected to die first and is escorted offstage. Realizing what is about to happen, Pierre pleads for a quick death: "Execute, kill, deprive me, Pierre Bezukhov, with all my thoughts, hope, aspirations, and memories." Shown in Example 4-12, Pierre's vocal line is strikingly lyrical considering his stream of thought as well as the events around him.

Example 4-12 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace* Tableau 11, Rehearsal 442

Marked *espressivo* and *legato*, the vocal line is supported by an equally lyrical orchestral accompaniment. Nonetheless, the severity of Pierre's situation is communicated through the presence of heavy, lunging syncopations in the low strings. The coexistence of conflicting styles perhaps communicates that Pierre does not yet fully grasp the severity of the situation; in the same way, the simultaneously sounding of the lyrical melodic material over the lunging accompaniment might suggest that Pierre has not yet come to terms with his impending death. Nevertheless, the rapid juxtaposition of styles as well as the concurrent sounding of opposing styles effectively reflects the abrupt changes of Pierre's emotional state as he awaits what he now believes to be his execution.

In spite of this, the overall affect of the music quickly changes as Pierre hears the first round of gun shots, which take the life of the peasant Matveyev. Shown in Example 4-13, the orchestral accompaniment becomes increasingly agitated and disturbed as the gunshots sound; the lyricism of the upper strings and winds gives way to sudden dissonant chords in the brasses reinforced by *fortissimo* accents by the percussion as well as series of descending tremolos in the low strings, which one might easily associate with Pierre's own trembling.

Example 4-13 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace* Tableau 11, Rehearsal 443

Before the end of the episode, Pierre's trembling theme is repeated once more as Ivanov is executed next, despite his cries of "No!" in resistance. After this second death, Pierre's level of anxiety reaches its climax as the orchestra roars at a *fortissimo* dynamic level as Pierre exclaims in the uppermost extreme of his vocal register (Example 4-14), "What cold-blooded murder! Suddenly, it's as though the spring in my soul, which held everything in place and gave meaning to life, has been ripped out, and everything has fallen into a worthless heap. Ah, let this dreadful deed, which is to be done, be done with haste."

Example 4-14 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace* Tableau 11, Rehearsal 446 + 4

Following the executions of Matveyev and Ivanov, Pierre undergoes yet another psychological change. Unlike those Pierre experienced up to the execution of the two peasants, this new psychological state is not characterized by progressively increasing

levels of anxiety and fear. Instead, his mental state is practically one of acceptance, as though he has succumbed to the realities of his impending death. Pierre's psychology, however, is one of disassociation rather than of actual acceptance; he simply disengages from the present situation and retreats into his own subconscious as a means of escaping his present situation. The music accompanying Pierre's new psychological state is also unlike the music previously associated with Pierre's angst. Shown in Example 4-15, the dominant timbres of the brass and percussion instruments give way to a light, ethereal string melody accompanied by low string tremolos doubled by bassoons.

Example 4-15 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace* Tableau 11, Rehearsal 447 + 13

In addition to the changes in principal timbres, the *fortissimo* wails of the orchestra give in to the more subdued *piano* and *mezzo-forte* ranges of the dynamic spectrum while the prominent dissonances heard earlier yield to a more consonant harmonic framework. Ultimately, however, Pierre's life is spared and he experiences a psychological state of near madness, laughing hysterically as he exits the stage. Shown in Example 4-16, the

music of Pierre's is characterized by a grotesque, dance-like quality, replete with fits of laughter ("Ha, ha, ha, ha!").

Example 4-16 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace* Tableau 11, Rehearsal 453

As these examples attest, Prokofyev preferred to use the exploration of individual psychology in isolation as the primary means of character development. By approaching his characters not merely through interactive dialogue, but from the standpoint of internal psychology, he was able to present them more three-dimensionally and in such a way that audiences would view them as they truly remember them from Tolstoy's well-known novel. Unfortunately, in an opera as epic in proportions as *War and Peace*, it was virtually impossible to present every character fully; inevitably something had to be omitted with the hope that audiences would provide the missing information on their own. Only by relying on audiences to do their part by drawing upon their knowledge of Tolstoy's novel was Prokofyev, no less than Chaikovsky in *Eugene Onegin* able to exercise this psychological approach to dramatic conflict effectively. Nevertheless, in doing so, he was able to remain true to Tolstoy's authorial intent and to align the opera within the Russian operatic tradition.

CHAPTER V

PROKOFYEV'S EVOCATION OF REALMS OF EXPERIENCE

In describing Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, Asafyev said that the opera "lacks a central musical-dramatic idea. It seems like an opera of Natasha's fate, a 'chronicle of events,' and a representation of popular and patriotic enthusiasms during the war with Napoleon. Love and war follow each other."[1] Asafyev's assessment represents one of the common criticisms Prokofyev received in connection with the work, i.e., that the opera exhibits a marked change in style during its second half, which ultimately resulted in its being censored. Party officials did not approve of the composer's use of dissonant, modern-sounding music to portray the events of the war. Nevertheless, Asafyev's comment also hints at one of the key strategies adapted from nineteenth-century opera in order to preserve as much of Tolstoy's novel as possible. Prokofyev's greatest challenge in setting *War and Peace* as an opera was that of developing contrasts in style sufficient to express the experiential extremes of a nation at relative peace and a nation at war. This opposition is central to the novel and is clearly communicated by the juxtaposition of the themes in its title. Fortunately for Prokofyev, his nineteenth-century predecessors had similar needs for large-scale contrast and offered techniques to address this challenge.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that Prokofyev developed two contrasting sound complexes to musically differentiate the tableaux of Russia at peace from those of

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[1] Asafyev, quoted in James Bakst, *A History of Russian-Soviet Music* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1966), 370.

Russian at war. In order to substantiate this claim, I will first explore a significant nineteenth-century precedent: Rimsky-Korsakov's establishment of a large-scale contrast of harmonic language in his *Sadko* as a means of distinguishing the magical and non-magical worlds which serve as the settings for the opera. The discussion will rely, in part on Asafyev's analysis of the opera in *Symphonic Etudes.* After elaborating on Asafyev's discussion, I will draw in pertinent aspects of Neil Minturn's interpretation of Prokofyev's identification of five discrete stylistic foundations to his musical language.[2] On this basis, I will then illustrate how the contrast between two of the five stylistic foundations enabled Prokofyev to create two divergent sound complexes whose use in *War and Peace* represent a parallel solution to that used by Rimsky-Korsakov.

Evoking Opposing Realms of Existence in *Sadko*

Of the operas that exhibit large-scale contrasts, it is perhaps Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko* that best demonstrates the means by which Russian composers constructed opposing realms and their respective characters. The opera was a particular favorite of Prokofyev, who had first encountered the opera shortly after he entered the Conservatory.[3] Situated in the merchant town of Novgorod during the twelfth century, the story focuses on Sadko (a gusli player) and his quest for riches and fame. Over the course of the opera, Sadko encounters Volkhova, the enchanted sea princess, who has come to the surface world from her underwater kingdom. In order to differentiate musically these

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[2] Neil Minturn, *The Music of Sergei Prokofiev* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

[3] Israel V. Nestyev, *Prokofiev*, trans. Florence Jonas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), 21.

two very distinct realms as well as their occupants, Rimsky-Korsakov employed a wide

variety of contrasting harmonic devices. According to Asafyev,

> the interrelationship of the real world and the fantastic world, contrasting between themselves, gave Rimsky-Korsakov the opportunity to introduce two sound worlds into the opera, proceeding in *parallel* motion. One abides in the plane of diatonicism with all of its splendid ramifications, from the depths of folk song to reminiscences of Beethovenian themes.[4]

In contrast, Asafyev indicates that Rimsky-Korsakov evokes the supernatural world

through the use of

> refined chromaticism, with structures emerging out of sequential motions, elisions, juxtapositions, and concatenations of diminished-seventh chords, augmented triads, second-inversion chords, etc., in a word, the full arsenal of dissonant harmonies, producing and provoking unsteady and unstable, perhaps disembodied sounds. Their coloration, truly unique and sweetly seductive in moments of enchantment, but sinister in moments wherein the elemental powers are revealed, depicts in sound, more expressively than ever before, the illusory reality of the underwater kingdom.[5]

By combining these harmonic resources with imaginative orchestration, Rimsky-

Korsakov was capable of more clearly distinguishing the natural and supernatural realms

than through the use of melodic materials alone. This was particularly necessary for his

depiction of occupants of supernatural realms, for whom no historically established

intonatsii would exist.

Rimsky-Korsakov's representation of the natural world through the use of

diatonic harmonies is best seen in the opening tableau of *Sadko*. Following a *bylina*

performed by the bard Nezhata detailing the exploits of the hero Volkh, the people of

Novgorod sing a lively folk chorus. Shown in Example 5-1, the chorus is characterized

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[4] Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes: Portraits of Russian Operas and Ballets*, trans. David Haas (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2008), 101.

[5] Ibid., 101.

by an exclusive reliance on modal harmonies that remain within the diatonic collection communicated by the key signature.

Example 5-1 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*, Tableau I, Rehearsal 37

Also associated with the passage is the use of what Pavel Karasyov (1879-1958) describes as folk meters.[6] Together these harmonic and metrical devices used by Rimsky-Korsakov function as an *intonatsiya*. More importantly, however, the diatonicism represents the attachment of the residents of Novgorod to the natural world.

As with *intonatsii*, the association of a particular harmonic language can occur with individuals as well as groups. This is clearly seen in Rimsky-Korsakov's musical representation of the title character, Sadko. Following Nezhata's *bylina* and the

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[6] Karasyov, quoted in Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works Through Mavra* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 722.

aforementioned chorus by the Novgorod citizens, Sadko sings a recitative and aria of challenge to the merchants of Novgorod. Shown in Example 5-2, Sadko's recitative is an *intonatsiya* based on what Richard Taruskin describes as an "authentic *bylina* formula."[7]

Example 5-2 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*, Tableau I, Rehearsal 40

The opening of the recitative maintains the strict diatonicism exhibited in the chorus of the Novgorod citizens shown above, thus connecting Sadko to the natural world as well.

Although the two diatonic passages above are rather strictly maintained, it is important to understand that the presentation of the natural world is not completely devoid of chromaticism. In fact, as has already been stated, chromatic alterations are naturally encountered in modulatory passages as well as in conjunction with secondary dominants. However, chromatic alterations are also found in passages in which Sadko steps outside of his role as affirmed citizen. According to Asafyev, such contrasts of

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[7] Richard Taruskin, "Sadko," in *Grove Music Online*, 2001, ed. L. Macy., www.grovemusic.com.

individual and group provide a second layer of musical and dramatic contrast that extends

beyond that of the natural and supernatural realms. He continues stating,

> this fundamental opposition is revealed in the music by means of an entire series
> of clever contrasting architectonic structures in sound….The musical discourse or
> languages of the speeches of Sadko himself is differentiated depending on
> whether he uses the intonations of a law-abiding Novgorod citizen (the *bylina*
> character of his recitatives) or else of a loving, hating, suffering, admiring, or ill-
> fated human being.[8]

These contrasts in speech style are more clearly visible when comparing Sadko's *bylina*

intonatsiya above with his vocal *intonatsii* of the final tableau. Shown in Example 5-3,

Sadko's singing exhibits not only a series of "new disjunctive leaps," which Haas

indicates "match the exuberant mood of the final tableau," but also frequent chromatic
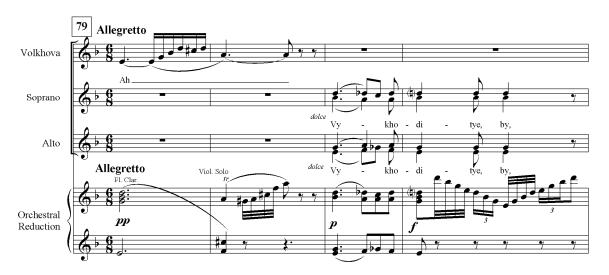
alterations as well.

Example 5-3 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*, Tableau VII, Rehearsal 332

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[8] Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes*, 99.

On one level, the increased presence of chromatic tones reflects the influence of Sadko's experiences with the Sea Princess Volkhova and the underwater kingdom. More importantly, however, the appearance of chromatic tones communicates Sadko's greater psychological independence following his underwater encounters.

In direct contrast to the diatonic presentation of Sadko, Novgorod, and the natural world in general is Rimsky-Korsakov's musical depiction of the kingdom below the waters of Lake Ilmen. In many ways, the arsenal of sound complexes he employed is more diverse than that associated with Sadko and his fellow citizens of Novgorod. As described by Asafyev above, Rimsky-Korsakov relied on a series of refined chromatic harmonic devices characterized by high levels of dissonance to signify the supernatural world. We first encounter this music at the beginning of Tableau II with the initial appearance of the Sea Princess and her sisters, who have come to the surface world upon hearing Sadko sing. Shown in Example 5-4, the underlying harmonies of Princess Volkhova's aria consist of both diminished seventh chords and augmented triads.

Example 5-4 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*, Tableau II, Rehearsal 79

Described by Viktor Zuckerman in his discussion of the musical language of *Sadko* as "unstable modes," the example also illustrates Rimsky-Korsakov's use of chromatic half-step voice leading in the music of Volkhova's accompanying sea maidens.[9]

In addition to the use of diminished and augmented triads, Rimsky-Korsakov also implements two symmetrical scales to represent the supernatural. Described by Gerald Abraham as music intended for "tickling the ear with [their] pungency and unusualness," the whole tone and octatonic scales also result in the appearance of successive augmented and diminished harmonies.[10] As illustrated in Example 5-5 and the first appearance of the Sea King, who has come to transport his daughters back to his underwater kingdom, Rimsky-Korsakov first uses an ascending octatonic pattern on E-natural before moving to a whole-tone collection beginning on the same pitch of E-natural.

Example 5-5 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*, Tableau II, Rehearsal 121

The resultant harmonies of the orchestra are thus overflowing with diminished and augmented intervals and display subsequent related dissonances.

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[9] Zuckermann, quoted in Ellon D. Carpenter, "Russian Music Theory: A Conspectus" from *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music,* ed. Gordon D. McQuere (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Research Press, 1983), 53.

[10] Gerald Abraham, *Studies in Russian Music: Critical Essays on the Most Important of Rimsky-Korsakov's Operas, Borodin's "Prince Igor," Dargomizhsky's "Stone Guest," Etc., with Chapters on Glinka, Mussorgsky, Balakirev, and Tchaikovsky* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, Inc., 1968), 241.

The final musical idea used by Rimsky-Korsakov (and previously referenced by Asafyev) to aid in creating the artificial world of the sea kingdom is that of sequential motion of a musical phrase. Unlike Beethoven, Rimsky-Korsakov does not create sound complexes through the developmental treatment of a motive or phrase. Instead, as seen in Example 5-6, he simply transposes the two-measure unit of material a perfect fourth higher than in its original appearance.

Example 5-6 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*, Tableau VI, Rehearsal 261 + 12

Thus, Rimsky-Korsakov achieves what Abraham describes as a "cold sensuousness and glittering emptiness [to] match the world of unreal beings in which Sadko finds himself."[11]

Throughout *Sadko*, Rimsky-Korsakov keeps the two musical languages separate from one another. The characters of the opera continue to express themselves through their own musical language, never truly shifting to a musical language foreign to them. Yet, at the onset of Tableau VII, the Sea Princess, having married Sadko in the underwater kingdom, appears to have been humanized and thus attempts to "speak" the

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[11] Abraham, *Studies in Russian Music*, 242.

diatonic language of the natural world. However, this is indeed not the case. In her final

aria, the Sea Princess exhibits a degree of harmonic instability shifting between moments

of pure diatonicism to moments of dissonant chromaticism. Shown in Example 5-7,

Volkhova's aria exhibits free motion between the tonal centers of F-sharp Minor and C-

sharp Minor.

Example 5-7 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*, Tableau VII, Rehearsal 309

Her appropriation of a diatonic language, however, does not continue; rather she quickly

shifts back to the refined chromaticism associated with her supernatural origins. As seen

in Example 5-8, the orchestral accompaniment to Volkhova's aria sheds its diatonic guise

and replaces it with an octatonic scale in the cellos and double basses that extends over

the course of an octave.

Example 5-8 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*, Tableau VII, Rehearsal 309 + 15

Subsequently, this pattern of activity continues for a total of three strophes of text before succumbing to even greater levels of dissonance and harmonic instability through heightened chromaticism and sequential development, given in Example 5-9.

Example 5-9 – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*, Tableau VII, Rehearsal 313 + 10

This constant fluctuation between the two conflicting harmonic languages of the opera is indicative of Volkhova's inability to escape her true nature. Her humanization did not occur on a physical level; rather her transformation is perhaps more accurately described

as a humanization of the heart, for "when it is necessary to aid her beloved man [the] Queen Volkhova make[s] use of [her charms]" confirming that she is indeed not human.[12]

Evoking Opposing Realms in *War and Peace*

The preceding survey of compositional choices reveals specific means employed by Rimsky-Korsakov to achieve the large-scale contrast between the natural and supernatural realms, a contrast that is fundamental to the musical and narrative structure of *Sadko*. They also served to emphasize a second large-scale "geographical" distinction existing between Novgorod and the Sea Kingdom. At first glance, Prokofyev's expressive needs appear quite dissimilar, especially since *War and Peace* is not a magic-based opera. Nevertheless, Prokofyev had a need for large-scale musical contrast similar to that of Rimsky-Korsakov. However, instead of presenting these contrasts through opposing harmonic languages, he adapted Rimsky-Korsakov's technique by juxtaposing two distinct and contrasting sound complexes for use in *War and Peace*—one based on traditional compositional practices and another that exploits the full stock of the composer's modernistic tendencies of the 1920s.

Whereas Rimsky-Korsakov's need for large-scale contrast was tied to his desire to represent opposing realms of existence in *Sadko*, Prokofyev's need for contrast was to differentiate between individuals in a state of peace and an entire nation at war. As such there is no musical differentiation based on geography; instead the large-scale musical contrasts of the opera are established between the time periods before and after Napoleon's invasion of Russia. In response to this cataclysmic series of events, the second half of the opera, therefore, functions as a chronicle of an unfolding series of

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[12] Asafyev, *Symphonic Etudes*, 103.

reactions that the characters of the opera experience in response to the atrocities around them. As has already been established, Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is not merely a fictionalized account of military history, but also an extended mediation on the nature of war and its effects on individuals and on Russia as a whole. Lydia Ginzberg expands upon this idea stating, "the truest expressions of Tolstoi's genius [in *War and Peace*] are his depictions of certain general psychic states that transcend the limits of individual consciousness and unite the people in a shared experience of life."[13] It is precisely this "shared experience of life" that Prokofyev wished to retain in his adaptation of the novel. Therefore, using contrasting musical styles or sound complexes enabled Prokofyev to create two independent realms of *experience* rather than two independent realms of *existence*—one that embraces the day-to-day events of life and one concerned with how life is affected by the phenomenon of war.

Prokofyev's Five Style Lines

The usual starting point for discussions of Prokofyev's stylistic diversity is his own assessment of his music. In a self-analysis written in 1941, Prokofyev identifies five distinct style traits, or "lines," that appear throughout his oeuvre—the classical, the lyrical, the grotesque (or "scherzo-ish"), the toccata, and the modern. According to the composer,

> the first was the classical line, which could be traced back to my early childhood and the Beethoven sonatas I heard my mother play. This line takes sometimes a neo-classical form (sonatas, concertos), sometimes imitates the 18th century (gavottes, the "Classical" Symphony, partly the Sinfonietta). The second line, the modern trend, begins with that meeting with Taneev when he reproached me for

[13] Lydia Ginzburg, *On Psychological Prose*, trans. and ed. Judson Rosengrant (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 247.

the "crudeness" of my harmonies. At first this took the form of a search for my own harmonic language, developing later into a search for a language in which to express powerful emotions ("The Phantom" in the Piano Pieces op. 3, "Despair" and "Suggestion Diabolique" in the op. 4 Piano Pieces, the *Sarcasmes*, the *Scythian Suite*, a few of the songs op. 23, *The Gambler, Seven, They Are Seven*, the Quintet and the Second Symphony). Although this line covers harmonic language mainly, it also includes new departures in melody, orchestration, and drama. The third line is the toccata, or "motor" line, traceable perhaps to Schumann's Toccata which made a powerful impression on me when I first heard it (*Etudes* op. 2, Toccata op. 11, the "Scherzo" in the Piano Pieces op. 12, the Scherzo of the Second Concerto, the Toccata in the Fifth Concerto, and also the repetitive intensity of the melodic figures in the *Scythian Suite*, *Le pas d'acier* [*The Age of Steel*], and passages in the Third Concerto). This line is perhaps the least important. The fourth line is lyrical: it appears first as a thoughtful and meditative mood, not always associated with the melody, or at any rate, with the long melody ("Fairy Tale" in the Four Pieces for Piano op. 3, *Dreams, Autumnal*, the songs op. 9, the "Legend" op. 12), sometimes partly contained in long melody (the two Balmont choruses, the beginning of the First Violin Concerto, the songs to Akhmatova's poems, *Grandmother's Tales*). This line was not noticed until much later. For a long time I was given no credit for any lyrical gift whatever, and for want of encouragement it developed slowly. But as time went on I gave more and more attention to this aspect of my work.

I should like to limit myself to these four "lines," and to regard the fifth, "grotesque," line which some wish to ascribe to me as simply a deviation from the other lines. In any case I strenuously object to the very word "grotesque" which has become hackneyed to the point of nausea. As a matter of fact the use of the French word "grotesque" in this sense is a distortion of the meaning. I would prefer my music to be described as "scherzo-ish" in quality, or else by three words describing various degrees of the scherzo—whimsicality, laughter, mockery.[14]

Beyond identifying the various facets of his compositional style, Prokofyev's self-analysis demonstrates his concern for how his music is interpreted and categorized by others. On one hand, he attempts to downplay the significance of some of his style lines, specifically the modern, toccata, and grotesque. In part, his tentativeness in applying these particular labels is due to the pressures he experienced as a Soviet composer as well as the implications of Socialist Realism. Prokofyev certainly understood the dangers of a

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[14] Sergei Prokofyev, *Soviet Diary 1927 and Other Writings*, trans. and ed. Oleg Prokofyev (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 248–9. Quoted in Minturn, *The Music of Sergei Prokofiev*, 24–5.

Soviet composer writing music that too strongly embraced the qualities that defined these particular lines. Conversely, his attempts to emphasize the classical and lyrical lines do not necessarily correspond to a demonstrably greater prominence in his music.

Neil Minturn's *The Music of Sergei Prokofiev* provides a number of useful aids to understanding the stylistic diversity of the composer's music. According to Minturn, Prokofyev's music exhibits "the influences of a traditional force" while simultaneously displaying "a concern with novelty and innovation."[15] Certainly the ties with the "traditional" to which Minturn refers are linked to Prokofyev's education at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He was trained as a composer under the rigorous curricular plan developed by Rimsky-Korsakov, receiving an extensive and systematic training in harmony, ear training, counterpoint, and orchestration, as well as piano and conducting. Rimsky-Korsakov underwent a similar self-imposed regiment of study as an adult after he was offered a teaching position at the Conservatory. For the nineteenth-century master, these areas of study represented deficiencies that needed to be fulfilled in order to effectively work as a teacher. However, as Prokofyev began his systematic study of music as a child under the supervision of Reinhold Glière, his conservatory training represented a core body of fundamental skills upon which to build and develop a distinct compositional voice. Consequently, it was his quest for new sounds and a distinct voice that fueled his interest in progressive and provocative compositional techniques.

It is precisely this amalgamation of old and new that many have argued defines Prokofyev's style as a "wrong note" composer. Through his assessment of Prokofyev's style lines, Minturn suggests that "the five lines are best understood as characteristics

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[15] Ibid., 12.

whose presence in most of Prokofyev's music is a matter of degree rather than a presence or absence."[16] Moreover, he establishes that the composer was fully aware of the interplay between tradition and modernism in his music, stating "Prokofyev self-consciously strove for originality while simultaneously clinging to a musical rhetoric deeply indebted to common-practice tonality."[17] The current study, however, is not concerned with the specific details of Prokofyev's use of harmonic language; therefore, an approach that combines the use of pitch-class set and Schenkerian analysis exhibited in the recent work of theorists such as Andrew Zimmerman and Deborah Rifkin will not be used.[18] Instead, a broader assessment of the idiosyncrasies of Prokofyev's music based on Minturn's elucidation of his five style lines will be used to postulate a dichotomy of styles that parallels that of Rimsky-Korsakov in *Sadko*.

Throughout his monograph, Minturn argues that Prokofyev's classical and modern lines represent the stylistic extremes of the composer's output. In his discussion of the classical line, Minturn states that the trend "is strongly represented by Prokofyev's firm attachment to tradition even when he was striving to compose original and modern pieces [of music].[19] In addition to the emphasis on standard forms and genres indicated by the composer, Minturn adds a number of musical characteristics tied to the use of harmonic language, including "signs or elements of tonality, such as triads, diatonic scale

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[16] Ibid., 28.

[17] Ibid., 18.

[18] Deborah Anne Rifkin, "Tonal Coherence in Prokofiev's Music: A Study of the Interrelationships of Structure, Motives, and Design (Ph.D. diss., University of Rochester, 2000); and Daniel J. Zimmerman, "Families without Clusters in the Early Works of Sergei Prokofiev" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2002).

[19] Minturn, *Music of Sergei Prokofiev*, 27.

fragments, and familiar bass progressions," as well as signs of "tonal function, such as the tendency of a dominant chord to progress to a tonic."[20] Moreover, the classical line is characterized by melody-dominated textures marked by conventional voice-leading techniques.[21] Quite expectedly, all of these traits are in accordance with the label of "neo-classical" invoked by the composer in his self-analysis. As such, the traits of Prokofyev's classical line represented "a metaphorical mantle of protection, a sanctioning by tradition, rather than a symbol of aesthetic ossification."[22] In turn, this "sanctioning by tradition" helped Prokofyev to more successfully uphold the tenet of Socialist Realism to which he was essentially bound as a Soviet composer.

In contrast to the neo-classical, Prokofyev's modern line represents a near departure from traditional compositional values. According to the composer, the modern line was linked primarily to his quest for his own distinct harmonic language.[23] Prokofyev was most certainly referring to music that particularly favored high levels of dissonance, such as exhibited in some of his more cacophonous compositions of the 1920s. Expanding upon this idea, Minturn correlates Prokofyev's "nontraditional harmonic vocabulary," his use of "daring and unresolved dissonances," and his "harmonic experimentation" in general with the modern line.[24] However, the modern line as presented in Prokofyev's self-analysis also involved "new departures in melody,

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[20] Ibid., 18.

[21] Ibid., 33.

[22] Ibid., 27.

[23] Ibid., 24.

[24] Ibid., 28.

orchestration, and drama."[25] Minturn reiterates this ideas stating "the epithet 'modern'…applies not only to harmonic experimentation but also to any challenge to tradition."[26] Most importantly, however, Prokofyev indicates that the modern reflects a need "to express powerful emotions."[27] The correlation of his modern idiom with emotionally intensive moments within the drama helps to explain the seemingly sudden revival and incorporation of 1920s compositional practices in *War and Peace*.

The trend that Prokofyev labeled "grotesque" involves a pointed interaction between the classical and modern components. Although the composer wished to distance himself from the label of "grotesque," Minturn asserts that it is an essential component of Prokofyev's mature style, "signaling the influence of tradition and innovation."[28] Unfortunately, the grotesque line is difficult to substantiate by a consistent and discrete set of musical characteristics. Passages of music associated with the grotesque exhibit a combination of characteristics that can be assigned either to the traditional or the innovative categories. Minturn resolves the dilemma, but suggesting that the grotesque quality of Prokofyev's music is communicated not by the independent manifestation of specific musical traits, but rather by the ways in which modern elements distort or caricaturize traditional musical traits, such as form, genre, or harmonic expectations. [29] As such, the grotesque is best understood as a hybrid style that combines aspects of the other two lines.

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[25] Ibid., 24-25

[26] Ibid., 28.

[27] Ibid., 24.

[28] Ibid., 27.

[29] Ibid., 31.

The remaining two lines—the lyrical and the toccata—are in many ways more difficult to assess than the aforementioned three. With regard to the toccata line, Prokofyev indicated that it "is perhaps the least important."[30] In terms of its defining musical characteristics, the toccata line refers almost exclusively to the rhythmic component of Prokofyev's music. Minturn indicates that the toccata line is rooted in the "disproportionately strong role which rhythmic aggressiveness played in shaping his reputation" in the West.[31] Although Prokofyev did not take pleasure in the reputation that his music was mechanical or motoristic, this was, nonetheless, a prevailing assessment of his style. Minturn also suggests that "the toccata might best be described…as a musical surface which consists of even, rapid, running figurations," as well as by "a masterful instance of rhythmic drive, manipulation, and control."[32] Accordingly, the toccata aspect of Prokofyev's music is generally represented by the presence of motor-like rhythmic ostinatos reminiscent machines.

In contrast to the easily defined toccata line, Minturn indicates that the lyrical trend "is the most difficult to define with precision."[33] To Prokofyev this line was quite possibly the most important and generally connected with music of "a thoughtful and meditative mood."[34] This significance is suggested by his defensive response in his self-analysis to the delayed recognition of his skills as a melodist. Nevertheless, it was the lyrical aspect of Prokofyev's music that was praised during the 1948 First Congress of

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[30] Ibid., 25.

[31] Ibid., 26.

[32] Ibid., 40.

[33] Ibid., 32

[34] Ibid., 25.

Musicians, the same meeting during which he was also officially labeled a formalist. Political sensitivities aside, Minturn does provide an inventory of musical characteristics that define the lyrical line, despite the difficulties in doing so. Among those are "long melodies, slow to moderate tempos, carefully controlled chromaticism, and a reliance on quintessentially tonal harmonic structures, especially those that feature perfect fourths and fifths."[35] The emphasis on perfect fourths and fifths, however, links the lyrical line with the classical trend of the composer's music. The implied tonal function of such intervals communicates a quality of tradition, which, as noted above, Minturn identifies as a significant component of the classical line. Consequently, it is this sharing of definitive musical characteristics with the classical line that accounts for the aforementioned difficulties defining the lyrical trend referenced by Minturn.

Examining the interactions between Prokofyev's various lines leads to an understanding of how the composer constructed two contrasting sound complexes to signify the opposing experiential realms of war and peace for his opera. As discussed earlier in the chapter, Minturn asserts that the five lines are best understood as occurring in Prokofyev's music by "a matter of degree rather than a presence or absence."[36] For example, the grotesque line exists as a result of the interaction of the classical and modern lines. Accordingly, it is to be expected that other lines can interact as well. Such an interaction is described by Harlow Robinson as constituting Prokofyev's "new simplicity" of the Soviet era. According to Robinson,

> musically, [the new simplicity] meant a more homophonic, transparent and emotionally lyrical style; less dissonance; an increased emphasis on melody; a

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[35] Ibid., 32.

[36] Ibid., 28.

preference for programmatic and 'public genres; an avoidance of the avant-garde extremism of the 1920s; and an emulation of the ideals, subject matter and techniques of the leading "classical" composers (particularly Mussorgsky and Tchaikovsky) of nineteenth-century Russian music.[37]

Robinson's list reveals that the aesthetic of Prokofyev's "new simplicity" accesses musical traits derived from both his classical line and the lyrical. In doing so, Prokofyev reinforces the relationship implied by the shared value of perfect fourth and fifth sonorities referenced above.

Similarly, Malcolm Brown provides a list of compositional traits analogous to Robinson's list describing Prokofyev's new simplicity. Brown's list, however, is presented in association with a number of the composer's works the 1910s and 20s. In his discussion of Prokofyev's Second Symphony, Brown indicates that these traits include

massive instrumental resources; repetitive, elemental rhythms; themes constructed of short, reiterated motifs in the manner of primitive exhortations or chants; arbitrary union of vertical sonorities, often in polyharmonies; free dissonances between a multilayered texture; simultaneous ostinatos in different registers; and lines thickened by parallelism to produce a ponderous, dense orchestral mass. The imaginative fund of techniques and devices is completed by coloristic orchestration, which involves extremes of instrumental range and special effects in articulation, and exploitation of vivid dynamic pranks. A striving for almost graphic imagery seems to frequently override purely musical considerations.[38]

Like Robinson's list above, Brown's reveals that the characteristic sound of Prokofyev's pre-Soviet period draws heavily upon elements associated with the modern and toccata trends. As is expected, his use of ostinato patterns and repeating motives is a manifestation of the toccata with the remaining elements derived from the modern line.

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[37] Robinson, *Sergei Prokofiev*, 295.

[38] Brown, "The Symphonies of Sergei Prokofiev," 73–4.

Constructing Contrasting Sound Complexes for *War and Peace*

Through his analysis of Prokofyev's style lines, Minturn establishes that the composer was fully aware of the interplay of tradition and modernism in his music. By presenting these two lines as existing in a state of constant interaction, or a state of competition, he insinuates that the classical and modern tendencies are polarized opposites and, hence, positioned at the opposite ends of a style continuum. Consequently, this suggests that the remaining style lines lie along the continuum between them. While Minturn states that the "grotesque…epitomizes the interaction of tradition and innovation," I suggest that Prokofyev's line of the grotesque lies at the center of the continuum.[39] The positions of the remaining style traits are then informed by Prokofyev's attempts to emphasize and negate their importance. Based on the sharing of characteristics suggested by Robinson's list, Prokofyev's lyrical line lies in close proximity to that of the classical line. This position is also reinforced by the composer's wish to highlight in his self-analysis not only the significance of his classical line, but also the lyrical qualities of his music. Similarly, Brown's list and the connections between the modern and toccata lines suggest that the two lie adjacent to one another. As such, this relegates the line of toccata, with its rhythmic and metric basis to the final available position adjacent to the modern thus resulting in the continuum presented in Figure 5-1.

← Classical — Lyrical — Grotesque — Toccata — Modern →

Figure 5-1 – Continuum of Prokofyev's Five Style Lines

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[39] Minturn, *Music of Prokofiev*, 27.

The opposite ends of the style continuum above represent the contrasting sound complexes used by Prokofyev in *War and Peace*. At one extreme lie the lines of classical and lyrical composition, which the composer emphasized as being most important during his career as a Soviet composer. Described by Minturn as "Prokofyev's musical version of Socialist Realism," the musical characteristics of his lyrical and classical trends are most consistently associated with the first seven "peace" tableaux of *War and Peace*.[40] At the other end of the continuum is the basic musical vocabulary of Prokofyev's pre-Soviet period. Based on his modern and toccata lines, this contrasting sound complex is used in association with the "war" tableaux of the opera.

Musical Style of Prokofyev's Tableaux of Peace

Perhaps the best of the peace tableaux to exemplify Prokofyev's use of musical characteristics associated with the "new simplicity" is the second, during which Natasha attends her first ball and experiences her first significant encounter with Prince Andrei. The large-scale structure of the tableau consists of four distinct ballroom dances (a polonaise, a mazurka, a waltz, and an ecossaise respectively). Interspersed within the tableaux are a brief choral cantata and a short song in praise of the tsar sung upon his arrival at the party, both of which occur as interruptions to the opening polonaise. In accordance with Prokofyev's classical line, each of the six major divisions of the tableau is clearly constructed around a tonal center and employs traditional formal structures (e.g., ternary, strophic). As illustrated in Example 5-10, the various dance segments consist of predominantly triadic harmonies, in this case outlining the key of A-flat major.

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[40] Ibid., 10.

Example 5-10 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, Tableau II, Rehearsal 44 + 7

The presence of the key signature, the prominence of A-flat major sonorities, and frequent arrivals in the melodic line on the dominant pitch of E-flat all support this notion. More important, however, are the nearly constant triadic harmonies that provide a sense of tonal stability. Moreover, the lyrical and slurred quality of the melodic line is also consistent with the new simplicities developed by Prokofyev.

It is not only the ball or social genre scenes, however, that are governed by the classical and lyrical lines of Prokofyev's new simplicity. The same body of musical characteristics is found throughout the more intimate solo and small group scenes. Although generally characterized by an increase in chromatic inflections, tableaux involving single and small ensembles of characters are similarly tonal in construction and exhibit a carefully controlled level of chromatic alteration. This is evident from as early as the opening of the opera. At the beginning of the first tableau, while staying at the Rostov family's country estate, Prince Andrei contemplates the arrival of springtime, which he equates with happiness. This is in accordance with Prokofyev's indication that the lyrical trend is connected with moments of introspection. Given in Example 5-11,

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Andrei's vocal line consists of a highly expressive diatonic melody. Moreover, it is supported by an orchestral accompaniment of strings and woodwinds that is predominantly diatonic as well; only a few chromatic inflections occur throughout the passage.

Example 5-11 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, Tableau I, Rehearsal 23

The E-flat pedal helps to situate the passage in the key of E-flat, which in turn is dictated by the key signature. In conjunction with the sustained lyricism of the vocal line and the presence of tonal markers in the vocal melody is again consistent with Prokofyev's new simplicity.

The Musical Style of Prokofyev's Tableaux of War

From the onset of the eighth tableau the musical style of Prokofyev's *War and Peace* exhibits a remarkable change on the broadest scale that will dominates the opera for the duration of war tableaux. This shift in style is linked to the opera's concern with

the nation at war. Unlike the first half of the opera, which was focused primarily on the life and relationships of Natasha, the second half of Prokofyev's opera explores the nature of war and the shared or communal experience of being attacked. While there are moments of lyricism in the war tableaux, some of considerable length, they are regularly interrupted to maintain an awareness of events in the ongoing war. With the exception of a few brief passages in which Russian soldiers sing military songs of hope and the chance reunion of Natasha and Prince Andrei, not until the final moments of the opera that the style changes to reflect Russia's ability to endure Napoleon's invasion and bring an end of the war. The change in style, however, is not limited to the style markers associated with Prokofyev's pre-Soviet era music. At the operatic onset of the war, the entire scale of the opera changes as well. In order to convey the impact of the war, Prokofyev incorporates extended choral episodes and significantly increases the number of named characters for the second half of the opera. Of the 68 named characters of the opera, more than two-thirds appear in the second half of the opera alone; this is in addition to ten other characters which had also appeared in the "peace" tableaux. Moreover, Prokofyev calls upon a significantly larger orchestra featuring large brass and percussion resources as well as increases the length of the individual tableaux during the "war" tableaux, causing the eighth and eleventh tableaux to be greater than thirty minutes in length. All of these separate choices bring into being an epic style to communicate the far-reaching effects of the war.

Over the course of the six tableaux concerned with the war, we see a range of scenes from Tolstoy's novel. These include the Russian army's preparation for the famed Battle of Borodino (opening of Tableau 8); the arrival of General Kutuzov to lead the

battle (Tableau 8, Rehearsal No. 312); Napoleon during the Battle of Borodino (Tableau 9); Kutuzov's meeting with his council at Fili (Tableau 10); various groups of Muscovites acting in defiance of their French invaders (Tableau 11, Rehearsal Nos. 413, 434, 452, and 470); and Moscow ablaze (Tableau 11, Rehearsal 463). More importantly, through Prokofyev's music we are able to experience the range of the characters' emotions as they live through these events—the angst of the soldiers preparing for battle, Kutuzov's distress as he plans to retreat from Moscow, and the anger of Moscow's citizens. Using musical characteristics drawn from the modern and toccata lines, Prokofyev developed a broad stylistic vocabulary that was in direct contrast to the string and woodwind-dominated style used to denote Russia at peace. The style of composition used for the war tableaux parallels with the style of such primitivist works as the *Scythian Suite* (1914–15) from the unfinished ballet *Ala and Lolli* (1914–15) and *Seven, They Are Seven* (1917–18), as well as his compositions "made of iron and steel," namely the Second Symphony in D minor (1924–25) and the Diaghilev ballet *The Steel Step* (1925–26).[41] Before examining specific examples of how Prokofyev used the modern and toccata lines of his style to construct the war tableaux of *War and Peace*, however, it is important to realize that the composer does not exploit all of the techniques found in Brown's list. For example, Prokofyev's opera utilizes forcefully articulated rhythms and metric devices more so than true ostinato patterns of the sort that occur frequently in his works of the 1910s and '20s. While the music of the war tableaux retains a prevailing sense of tonality, the level of dissonance is high and resolution of dissonant harmonies does not always occur. Moreover, the number of modern and toccata elements as well as

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[41] Prokofyev, quoted in Malcolm Brown, "The Symphonies of Sergey Prokofiev" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1967), 67.

the extent to which they are used varies drastically based on the needs of the dramatic situation. The music of *War and Peace* is not relentlessly chromatic or dissonant from the eighth tableau onward; nor is the music of these tableaux insistently rhythmic and metrical.

As is evident from the list of scenes of the opera's final tableaux above, the depiction of a nation at war on an epic scale generates a wide variety of dramatic situations. Prokofyev only exploits the full inventory of modernistic and mechanistic tendencies at moments of violent crisis (e.g., the violent anger of the Muscovite peasants throughout Tableau 11, the burning of Moscow at the close of Tableau 11). At other times the situation seems more neutral due to the building toward (e.g., the preparation for the Battle of Borodino at the onset of Tableau 8) or the pulling away from a crisis, such as Kutuzov's decision to retreat from Moscow so the Russian army could fight again another day (end of Tableau 10) or the tableau of Natasha's reunion with Prince Andrei at his deathbed (Tableau 12). In these situations, Prokofyev's use of modernistic and toccata-like elements is considerably reduced; only a few musical elements from these style lines may be present.

As already stated, Prokofyev's reliance on modernistic compositional techniques occurs from the first tableau of war, which occurs at the onset of the eighth tableau. Here the Russian army is preparing for the Battle of Borodino; Prince Andrei has arrived and sees the various groups of young soldiers, Smolensk peasants, and Cossack fighters that make up the Russian army. To convey the angst of the soldiers, Prokofyev accompanies their actions with a highly forcefully played melody in B minor, shown in Example 5-12. Consistent with Brown's list, the composer places the melody in multiple octaves

considerably thickening the overall texture of the initial tableau of war. Coupled with the accompanying low woodwind, brass, and percussion chords and the abundance of chromatic alterations throughout the passage, this multi-layered melodic line creates a mass of sound. Perhaps most striking compared to the music of the earlier tableaux, however, is the sudden prominence of brass and percussion sounds; the increased emphasis on these timbres at *forte* and *fortissimo* dynamic levels generates a startling contrast to Prokofyev's aural presentation of Russia at peace.

Example 5-12 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, Tableau VIII, Rehearsal 262[42]

In contrast with the style of the opening of Tableau 8, an even greater

concentration of modernist composition traits is found in the tableau of Moscow's
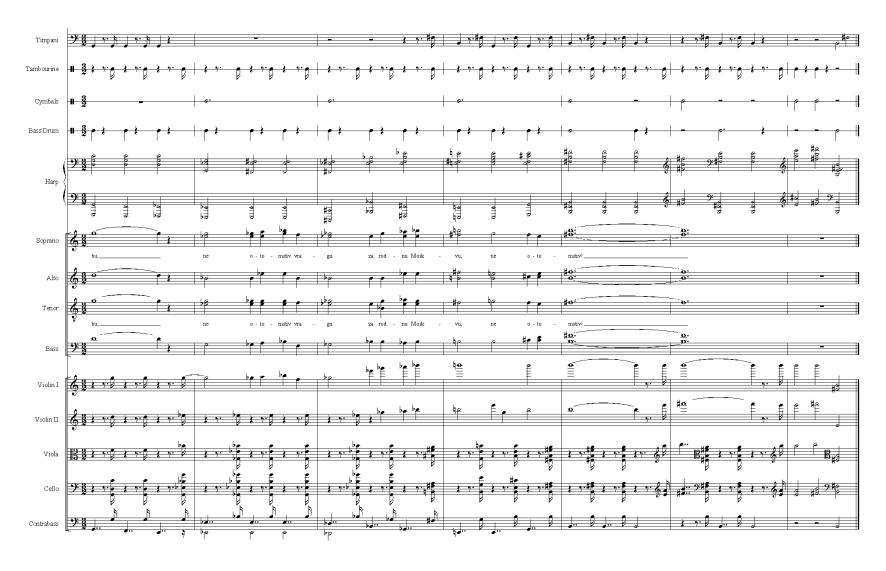
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[42] Orchestral scores are notated at sounding pitch.

burning at the end of Tableau 11. Furious due to the pillaging of the city by French soldiers, the people of Moscow defiantly set fire to the city, consequently destroying food, supplies, and buildings being used by the French for shelter. Ultimately, the fire results in a general state of chaos as French and Russians alike attempt to flee the burning city. As the tableau move towards its close, Napoleon surveys the damage singing: "What a dreadful scene! They have set their own city alight. What determination! They're savages." Finally, a chorus of Muscovites sings a violent closing chorale number.

At this point in the opera, Prokofyev's musical language is once again consistent with that outlined in Brown's list of traits. Like the passage in the previous example, Example 5-13 shows a dense orchestral texture extending over a range greater than 5 ½ octaves realized by the use of the full resources of Prokofyev's orchestra. Often in the upper-most extremes of their registers, the instruments and chorus proceed toward the final bars of the tableaux via a series of interlocking rhythmic ostinatos. The most prominent of the ostinatos is coordinated to move on the accented downbeats of each measure and with the vengeful wails of the Muscovite chorus. The remaining ostinato figure complements the primary ostinato (and choral declamation) through an anticipatory articulation of each major pulse; the woodwinds, horns, and low strings all work together to provide a strongly accented sixteenth-note "pick-up" to each of the major downbeats for the passage. Finally, what appears to be an arbitrary stacking of pitches results in a dense mass of free dissonances. The result is an episode that rivals the ferocity of two of Prokofyev's most unrestrained and violent of works from the 1910s—*The Scythian Suite* and *Seven, They Are Seven*.

Example 5-13 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, end of Tableau 11 (orchestral version)

Example 5-13, cont. – Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, end of Tableau 11 (orchestral version)

Throughout the war tableaux of the opera, there are many passages that exhibit the same group of modernistic musical traits shown in the examples above, but which are not necessarily tied to moments of dramatic intensity or chaos. These episodes are typically progressing toward moments of crisis, or are in reaction to them. Consequently, the decrease in dramatic intensity results in a decrease in the number of modern compositional elements employed by Prokofyev. Nevertheless, the fact that fewer musical elements associated with the war tableaux are used does not imply a regression of the musical style back to that of the first half of the opera. The presence of elements from Brown's list still implies the music is an expression of the state of war experienced (or prepare to experience) by the Russian people.

For example, following the opening passage of the eighth tableau provided in Example 5-14, the soldiers of the Russian army continue to prepare for battle. Among these men are two officers, Tikhon and Fyodor, who provide words of encouragement as lower-ranking soldiers and volunteers work to build a bastion. Amidst these activities, Prokofyev accompanies the men using a simple ostinato figure. Shown in Example 5-14, the ostinato consists of an E-flat minor chord moving in quarter notes in the lowest register of the orchestra.

Insert Example 5-14 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, Tableau 8, Rehearsal 265

Although the men are attempting to establish and maintain a positive outlook for the upcoming battle, the presence of the ostinato serves as an ominous reminder of the events to come and of the general psychic state of the soldiers.

Much like the example above which represents the impending threat of battle, Prokofyev provides music that directly contrasts the hopeful and uplifting opening of Kutuzov's aria in Tableau 10 with music that more ominously points to the loss of Moscow to Napoleon's army. Having considered the recommendations of his advisory council, Kutuzov states that he believes it best for the Russian army to retreat. Presented to his soldiers as an act of hope, the opening verses of the aria are sung in a highly lyrical and diatonic style, similar to that of the opening tableau. However, as Kutuzov completes his declaration of hope and suggests images of Moscow under siege to the soldiers present, Prokofyev abandons the lyrical style of the aria, providing another pair of rhythmic ostinato figures instead. Shown in Example 5-15, both ostinatos are presented by the lowest instruments of the orchestra.

Example 5-15 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, Tableau X, Rehearsal 386 + 1

The first is a simple eighth-note chord articulating every other beat of the measure. The second ostinato is a progression of four eighth note chords that interlock with the first ostinato. Once again, Prokofyev's use of ostinatos serves as an omen of the events to come in the following tableau.

As indicated above, there are a number of moments throughout the war tableaux during which Prokofyev incorporates passages of music that draw upon the more lyrical and traditional compositional techniques of his new simplicity, which had prevailed during the peace tableaux of the opera. In the second half of the opera, the appearance of such passages is always associated with a single character. Moreover, the passages are generally quite short, succumbing to the prevailing style of the war tableaux rather quickly. For example, as he awaits the Battle of Borodino, Prince Andrei recalls the spring day when he made his journey to the Rostov estate where he first encountered Natasha. Shown in Example 5-16, Andrei's momentary rumination is set to melodic

material that precedes his thoughts of the withered oak tree in the first tableau, which

occurs just following the passage given in Example 5-11.

Example 5-16 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, Tableau VIII, Rehearsal 285 + 2

Characterized by the same lyricism and melody-dominated textures of the original

passage, this melody quickly gives way to the waltz melody in Example 5-17.

Example 5-17 – Prokofyev's *War and Peace*, Tableau VIII, Rehearsal 286

As the waltz melody associated with his first dance with Natasha plays, Andrei recalls the life that he had intended to share with Natasha. However, as his affections for Natasha cannot overpower the prevailing sense of angst of the soldiers around him, the tableau gives way once again to the images of war around him and Prokofyev's modernistic musical language.

In the final tableau, Prokofyev provides the opera with musical and dramatic closure by returning one final time to the lyrical style of the opening tableaux of the opera. Having freed Pierre and his fellow Russian prisoners from the French army, Colonel Denisov and his battalion celebrate their victory over the French invaders. Following the celebration, General Kutuzov enters the stage one final time to a chorale rendition of his aria from the tenth tableau. Prokofyev's decision to reprise this aria as a chorale epilogue was not only to provide the dramatic and musical closure necessary for an opera of such length. It was also a strategic decision to increase the odds that the work

would actually be performed. Regardless of the fact that the war tableaux demanded evocative music, the modernistic style that Prokofyev employed for them was not likely to please the Party officials; as such, Prokofyev's use of such compositional traits put him at risk for being labeled a dissident. However, the prominent placement of a lyrical choral number at the end of the opera would draw attention away from the modernistic style of the war tableaux. The reprise of Kutuzov's aria also provided Prokofyev with the perfect opportunity to present a grand chorus praising the national hero, and an obvious operatic analogue to Stalin.

Concluding Remarks

Looking beyond Prokofyev's self-analysis, it is easy to see that the opposing sound complexes used in *War and Peace* also represent divergent trends within the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition in general. In many ways, the eclectic nature of Prokofyev's style, as presented by his five lines, is a byproduct of nineteenth-century pluralism, which is clearly exhibited in nineteenth-century Russian opera. On one hand, the opening "peace" tableaux of Prokofyev's opera reveal a strong influence from Chaikovsky. The emphasis on closed forms, incorporation of ball scenes, and overall lyrical style of the music are strongly reminiscent of the style Chaikovsky's operas, above all *Eugene Onegin*. In contrast, Prokofyev's "war" tableaux suggest an influence of operas by Borodin, Musorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov. In particular the epic proportions of the second half of Prokofyev's opera recall the grandeur of historical operas, such as Borodin's *Prince Igor* and Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, as well as epics like Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Invisible City of Kitezh*. It is precisely this type of diversity found within

Russian opera that enabled Prokofyev to transform Tolstoy's novel into an opera. However, this variety also proved problematic because Party officials and critics alike had difficulty categorizing the opera. Likewise, the plurality of the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition makes it difficult for scholars to clearly define the tradition.

The trouble of defining Russian cultural traditions is a problem that extends well into the nineteenth century during which the traditions originated. In reference to describing his novel, Tolstoy wrote, "What is *War and Peace*? It is not a novel, even less is it an epic poem, and still less a historical chronicle. *War and Peace* is what the author wished and was able to express in the form in which it is expressed."[43] Tolstoy's difficulty in classifying his novel is a consequence of the complexities of his story and the literary devices he called upon to communicate it. Like many other works of the nineteenth-century, Tolstoy's novel is a literary amalgamation, drawing upon numerous literary genres. The novel embodies traits common to the Russian romantic, historical, and war novel traditions. Regardless, Tolstoy felt justified stating, "the history of Russian literature since the time of Pushkin not merely affords many examples of such deviation from European forms, but does not offer a single example to the contrary."[44] Such examples of formal departure from the standard (i.e. defining) characteristics can be seen throughout the Russian literary tradition.

The same can be said of Russian composers and their music. Each new opera by Rimsky-Korsakov, Chaikovsky, Musorgsky, and other nineteenth-century Russian composers displayed musical and dramatic innovations such that they clearly

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[43] Tolstoy, quoted in Harlow Robinson, *Sergei Prokofiev: A Biography* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 396.

[44] Ibid., 396.

differentiated themselves from Western operas. Alone Rimsky-Korsakov's impressive list of works includes such self-proclaimed genres as opera-*bylina* (*Sadko*), magical opera-ballet (*Mlada*), carol-come-to-life (*Christmas Eve*), springtime tale (*Snow Maiden*), and autumnal parable (*Kashchey the Deathless*) to name but a few. This tradition of generic innovation continued well into the twentieth century influencing such composers as Igor Stravinsky and Prokofyev as early as the 1910s and '20s.

For that reason, it should be no surprise that when Prokofyev decided to set Tolstoy's masterpiece of a novel, his resulting opera would be something of a "loose, baggy monster" as well.[45] The unusual amalgamation of intimate family scenes and the epic grandeur of war called for nothing less than a blending of traits that defined the Russia opera tradition, ultimately resulting in an opera arguably unlike anything seen before it. Prokofyev had to draw upon a wide range of Russian opera traits to realize the work fully. Having immersed himself in the tradition during his youth, Prokofyev was perfectly equipped to accomplish just that.

The mark of the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition is clearly seen throughout the entirety of *War and Peace*. It is important to realize, however, that Prokofyev's treatment of the nineteenth-century tradition is strictly referential in nature. Prokofyev does not quote the music of other operatic works. Nor does he imitate the style of nineteenth-century Russian composers. Instead, Prokofyev's compositional reflection of the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition is more general and sophisticated. Rather than quote music written by others, his encyclopedic knowledge of Russia's canonic works provided him with an ability to introduce the tradition's stylistic intricacies while maintaining his own independent compositional voice.

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[45] Henry James, "Preface," in *The Tragic Muse* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), x.

Unfortunately, the level of sophistication exhibited in *War and Peace* extended beyond that of Party officials. When Party officials sanctioned that Soviet composers should model their compositions on the classical Russian works of the nineteenth century, it seems what they wanted were imitations of these works. Concerned with the accessibility of new music to the masses, they wanted new music to sound familiar to audiences. Consequently, Prokofyev's individuality was not well-received by Party officials who interpreted his compositional efforts as a mark of musical dissidence.

In order to better understand the relationship between *War and Peace* and the nineteenth-century Russian opera tradition, one must search for connections other than the musical quotation of other operas. Instead, an understanding of the Russian opera as a tradition separate from those in the West. To do so, however, requires that we move beyond discussions of the superficial features of the opera such as text sources, key area, and pitch content. Instead we must look beyond the surface at issues of dramaturgy, character development, and motivic source materials. Only then will we begin to understand the multiple facets of *War and Peace* and the essence of Prokofyev's compositional style in general.

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APPENDIX A

TABLEAU-BY-TABLEAU SYNOPSIS OF WAR AND PEACE

NOTE: The following synopsis is not intended to be a complete reduction of the plot of *War and Peace*. The information contained focuses on the events that directly impact the main characters of the opera. Likewise, those tableaux discussed in the body of the study are described in greater detail in the synopsis. Regarding the organization of information below, each tableau number is accompanied by translations of subtitles as they appear in the score for the opera. A more detailed description of the setting follows each subtitle. Voice types are indicated throughout as characters are introduced.

Tableau I – Otradnoye

Time and Place: May 1809, the estate of Count Ilya Rostov, Otradnoye.

Prince Andrei Bolkonsky (baritone) on a visit to Count Rostov, is despairing over life. Reflecting on an old oak tree that he saw earlier in the day, Prince Andrei feels that he will no longer feel happiness. He suddenly hears voices coming from a window above him. The Count's daughter, Natasha (lyric-dramatic soprano), is excited by the beauty and stillness of the night. Her cousin, Sonya (mezzo-soprano), begs her to return to bed, but Natasha says she cannot sleep on such a night. Andrei recognizes Natasha's voice and listens to their chatter. The cousins sing a Russian romance before retiring to bed. Andrei is charmed by Natasha's youthful energy and enthusiasm, and declares that you have to believe in love and springtime in order to be happy.

Tableau II – A ball given by a courtier of Catherine the Great.

Time and Place: On the eve of the New Year 1810. Natasha, her father, and Sonya arrive for Natasha's first ball given by an old courtier of Catherine the Great in honor of Tsar Alexander I.

Guests dance to the sounds of a polonaise while new arrivals are announced as they enter the ballroom. Count Rostov (bass-baritone) enters with Natasha and Sonya and is greeted by Marya Akhrosimova (mezzo-soprano). Natasha notices Count Pierre Bezukhov (tenor) and his beautiful but notorious wife Helene (contralto) across the room. Helene's brother Anatole Kuragin (tenor) and his friend Dolokhov (baritone) are among those dancing in the crowd. A mazurka begins. Having promised to find dancing partners for Natasha, Pierre asks Prince Andrei to dance with her. Andrei approaches Natasha and they dance a waltz. They dance in silence at first, but then Andrei tells Natasha of the night he

overheard her from the window; Natasha, however, is too excited by the experience of the ball and says little in response. While they dance, Anatole notices Natasha admiringly; Helene agrees to arrange for the two to meet. At the end of the waltz, Andre and Natasha find themselves alone on the floor. He leads Natasha to her seat and retires. He then decides that if Natasha goes first to her cousin and then to the other lady, he will ask her to be his wife. Natasha runs up to her cousin.

Tableau III – In the house of old Prince Bolkonsky

Time and Place: January 1811. A country estate outside of Moscow. A small reception hall in the house of Prince Nikolai Bolkonsky.

Natasha, who is now Prince Andrei's fiancée, arrives to visit Andrei's father. The old Prince Bolkonsky is opposed to his son's marriage. Natasha is hopeful that meeting the old Prince will allow him to accept her as his daughter-in-law. The servants inform them the old Prince is unable to see them. Princess Marya (mezzo-soprano), Andrei's Sister will receive them instead. Count Rostov leaves Natasha and Princess Marya alone to talk in private, but they have difficulty sustaining conversation. Suddenly Prince Nikolai Bolkonsky (basso-profundo) enters in his dressing gown. He pretends to not know that Natasha was visiting. He exits leaving the two ladies in despair. Marya leaves Natasha alone allowing her to express her despair. If only Andrei were here; then she would be happy. Princess Marya returns and tells Natasha that she is happy for the engagement. Natasha responds callously and departs with her father.

Tableau IV – A ball in the house of Helene Bezukhova

Time and Place: The drawing room in the house of Pierre and Helene Bezukhov. Through the arch leading to the ballroom can be seen dancers in pairs.

Helene enters a drawing room with Natasha while a waltz sounds from an adjacent room. She tells Natasha that her brother, Anatole, has fallen in lover with her. Count Rostov enters to find Natasha and to leave. Helene distracts the Count by taking him to meet a special guest, leaving Natasha alone. At that moment, Anatole enters the chamber and confesses his affection for her. He does not care that she is already engaged, but because of her relationship with Andrei, Anatole tells her that he must keep his love for her a secret. He gives her a letter, kisses her, and quickly leaves. Natasha opens the letter reading a request from Anatole to run away with him and elope. Natasha does not know what to do; she desperately loves Andrei, but is moved by Anatole's request. Sonya enters and warns her cousin not to become involved with Anatole. Natasha replies that Sonya could not possibly understand how she feels. Count Rostov enters once more and leaves with the girls.

Tableau V – At Dolokhov's

Time and Place: Moscow. Dolokhov's study, decorated with Persian rugs and bearskins. Anatole sits on a sofa. Dolokhov sits in front of an open bureau.

Anatole is reviewing his arrangements to meet Natasha. He plans to take her away and marry her tonight. Dolokhov tries to dissuade his friend. Dolokhov wrote the letter, made the arrangements to take Natasha away, collected money for the trip, and located a priest to perform the ceremony, even though Anatole is already married. But Dolokhov is worried about his friend. Anatole disregards his friend's concerns. All he cares about is Natasha. The coachman, Balaga (bass), arrives and informs his friends that his troika is ready for their journey. Anatole gives Balaga, while Dolokhov gathers the money. Meanwhile, Balaga recounts his adventures with his young friends. Anatole gives a toast and the men smash their glasses. A gypsy woman, Matryosha (contralto), enters and reluctantly hands over her sable coat. Anatole bids Matryosha fairwell and the three men exit.

Tableau VI – At Marya Dmitrievna Akhrosimova's

Time and Place: Moscow. The same evening. A room in the house of Marya Akhrosimova, a friend of the Rostov family.

Natasha awaits Anatole's arrival. She has ended her engagement with Prince Andrei, without her parent's knowledge, and has decided elope with Anatole. However, Sonya informed Marya Dmitriyevna of Natasha's plans. Her servant, Gavrila (bass), enters and blocks Anatole's entry asking him to come with him. Dolokhov shouts to Anatole to escape. They are chased as Natasha watches. She collapses as she witnesses her plans to elope fall apart. Marya Dmitriyevna enters with Anatole's letter and tells Natasha that she is angry with how she has behaved. Marya Dmitriyevna's continues condemning Helene Bezukhova's behavior and influence. She continues to talk, but Natasha does not listen. She only wishes for her mother.

Pierre Bezukhov comes in and learns of the evening's events from Marya Dmitriyevna. She asks him to speak with Natasha. However, he realizes that he is attracted to Natasha and this upsets him; she is the fiancée of his close friend. Natasha returns to find Pierre and believes him to be involved in Marya Dmitriyevna's trap. She asks if Anatole is truly married, which Pierre confirms. Upset with herself, she asks that he begs Andrei to forgive her for her actions. Pierre, overwhelmed by Natasha's sadness, confesses his feelings for her. But Natasha does not hear him and he leaves. Sonya appears and is distressed for having upset her cousin. She fears Natasha will hate her, but Natasha calls for her. She has taken poison.

Tableau VII – Pierre Bezukhov's study

Time and Place: Moscow. The same evening. A room in the house of Pierre Bezukhov.

Helene and Anatole are gathered with friends who are sharing stories of the old Prince Bolkonsky. Pierre enters and asks to speak with Anatole in private. Helene and her guests exit. Pierre confronts Anatole about the night's events and grows angry due to his casual disregard for Natasha's reputation and emotions. Pierre grabs him by the collar shaking him violently. Pierre demands Anatole give him Natasha's letters and leave from Moscow immediately. Anatole is reluctant, but finally agrees when Pierre gives him money to do so. Pierre watches as Anatole leaves; he is confused and feels that he will never experience happiness. However, he is interrupted by his friend Colonel Denisov, (bass-baritone), who has come to inform him that Napoleon has invaded Russia.

Tableau VIII – Before the Battle of Borodino

Time and Place: 1812. A few miles outside of Moscow on the Borodino field before the battle.

The army prepares for battle, determined to save Moscow from Napoleon's army. Colonel Denisov and Prince Andrei enter and introduce themselves. Denisov has come to meet with General Kutuzov his ideas about defeating the enemy; he will need only five hundred men. A group of peasants arrives on the scene from Smolensk and report of the destruction of their town. Everything was destroyed and burned. They come to fight alongside the army. Under General Kutuzov, they plan to fight to the death. Meanwhile, Prince Andrei recalls his love for Natasha. At first, the memories bring him pleasure, but soon they become too painful. He loved Natasha and she brought him happiness. He grows angry that he agreed to leave her for a year to serve in the army; he should have known that her love would not survive his absence.

Pierre arrives on the battlefield to witness the battle firsthand. He speaks with a group of soldiers, who tell him of their fears of the looming battle. Andrei sees Pierre, but is reluctant to speak with him; he does not want to speak of Natasha. Two German generals pass and Andrei grows irritated with them; they did nothing to save his father, who has now died. He turns to Pierre and declares that Russia will win regardless of what happens in tomorrow's battle. Cheers sound in the distance as Kutuzov arrives. Prince Andrei embraces his friend and bits him farewell. Pierre acknowledges that he will probably never see his friend again.

A group of soldiers marches by singing a song. Pierre thinks of their bravery and grows jealous. He wants to make a difference for Russia as well. Cheers sound again as General Kutuzov (bass) enters with his officers. The Field Marshal addresses the army, inspiring them with pronouncements of victory. Then various groups of soldiers march past Kutuzov as he respectfully inspects them. Kutuzov sees Prince Andrei and invites him to join his personal staff. Andrei declines the offer, choosing instead to remain on the battlefield with his men. The soldiers prepare for the impending battled with enthusiasm as the first sounds of cannon fire are heard.

Tableau IX – Shevardinsky Redoubt

Time and Place: Napoleon's headquarters during the Battle of Borodino. Napoleon observes the progress of the battle from a hillock. Near him are Marshals Berthier and Caulaincourt, and Monsieur de Beausset.

Sounds of ensuing battle are heard. Napoleon (baritone), pacing up and down, stops periodically to listen to the sound of the guns. The aide-de-camp of General Campans enters to inform Napoleon that the Russians are holding steady and that the French army has lost to generals. He orders that reinforcements be sent to Marshal Ney. The young aide-de-camp of General Murat then enters and asks for reinforcements on behalf of his commanding officer. Napoleon denies the request, sends the aide-de-camp away, and continues to watch the battle. General Belliard (bass) enters requesting reinforcements and is followed by another aide-de-camp who asks for reinforcements as well. Napoleon ponders the situation and agrees to send reinforcements from the army's reserves. Napoleon is sits and becomes worried. He recalls the success of previous battles. His army is strong, has more experience now, and yet they seemingly cannot deter the Russian forces. Russian soldiers are heard singing in the distance. Suddenly a cannonball falls at Napoleon's feet, but does not explode. He pushes the cannonball away as the Marshals watch, dumbfounded.

Tableau X – The Council of War at Fili

Time and Place: A peasant hut at Fili. Kutuzov, Barclay de Tolle, Beningsen, Rayevsky, Yermolov, and other advisors are present for a war council.

The Russian forces have retreated to Fili. Kutuzov is presiding over the war council. Beningsen (bass) asks Kutuzov whether they should fight to protect Moscow, or retreat to preserve the army. Kutuzov considers the situation deciding that if the army falls, then Moscow and Russia will fall as well. General Barclay (tenor) states that the army must be preserved. Generals Yermolov (bass) and Beningsen advise that the army should stand against the French and defend Moscow. The city is too precious to the Russian people. Rayevsky's (baritone) advises that they should attack Napoleon and his army rather than stand in defense of the city. However, only Kutuzov can decide the army's next move. He believes that the army must retreat; his companions depart, leaving him alone. Outside, Russian soldiers are heard sing a fighting song. They believe that Kutuzov will lead them to victory. Kutuzov, though, is distraught. He opens the window and looks over Moscow sadly, but the song of the Russian soldiers is still heard in the background.

Tableau XI – The Burning of Moscow

Time and Place: A street in enemy occupied Moscow.

Most of Moscow's people have fled the city. Two French officers, Jerard (tenor) and Jacquo (bass), discuss the deteriorating conditions of the city. They begin to think that

coming to Russia was a bad idea. A group of French soldiers enter posting Napoleon's new decrees about how Moscow will be governed. They about Moscow's beautiful treasures, left behind by the Russian people. Dunyasha (soprano), the former maid of the Rostovs, and a few other remaining Muscovites gather around one of the postings. Dunyasha and Matveyev (baritone) read the decree aloud. According to the edict, Napoleon guarantees the safety of Moscow's people and their belongings. A group of French soldiers enter, pillaging the city of its treasures.

Pierre enters dressed as a peasant. The suffering of Moscow and her people has led him to decide kill Napoleon, or die trying. Dunyasha and Marya Kuzminichna (contralto), the Rostov's concierge, recognize Pierre and approach him. They inform Pierre that the Rostov family has left Moscow, leaving their belongings behind to save a number of wounded Russian soldiers. They continue telling him that Prince Andrei is among the soldiers the family took with them. Upset further by the news of Andrei's mortal wounds, Pierre reaffirms his belief that Napoleon must die to end Russia's and Europe's suffering.

The glowing of a fire is seen in the distance. The Russian people have decided to burn their homes, the food supplies, and to release any livestock that the French army could use as food. A group of Russian peasants enter ordering that everything in sight be burned. The crowd exits and a group of French soldiers lead in a group of Russian prisoners who have been accused of starting the fires. Among the prisons is Pierre. Marshal Davoust (bass) sees Pierre and claims to recognize him as a Russian spy. Pierre claims that he is innocent, but Davoust orders that he and the other prisoners be executed. The prisoners are led outside and one-by-one they are shot. In despair for his current situation, he begs that he be executed quickly, but before he realizes, it is decided that he and a few others be spared. Platon Karatayev (tenor), a sick peasant soldier taken from an army hospital, calms Pierre, offers him a potato.

All of Moscow is burning as people watch the flames—both excited and afraid. Three madmen have escaped from the asylum and are led away by French soldiers. A group of French actresses flee from a theater. Napoleon appears through the smoke gazing at the burning city. A building collapses in front of him and he reflects on the strength and determination of the Russian people. A group of peasants enter carrying the bodies of their murdered countrymen and declare that Russia will not yield to her invaders.

Tableau XII – The death of Prince Andrei

Time and Place: Outside of Moscow. The interior of a dark hut at night. Prince Andrei is lying on a bed in the corner while a candle glows on a nearby stove.

Prince Andrei is delirious from his fatal wounds. He hears a low monotonous voice repeating over and over again: "Piti, piti, piti." Suddenly, he notices something white near the door, but it is only his shirt. The monotonous "Piti, piti, piti" begins again. He thinks about how much he loved Natasha and wishes that he could see her one final time. Natasha enters the room, deafened by the beating of her own heart. She moves to Andrei's side and he tells him that he loves her. How can they be united only for Andrei

to die? Natasha wants nothing more than to speak of her love for Andrei, but she implores him to sleep. The delirium sets in once more and Andrei feels as though he is once again dancing a waltz with Natasha. The "Piti, piti, piti" sounds return and Andrei dies.

Tableau XIII – The Smolensk road

Time and Place: A violent snow storm. The French army is retreating along the Smolensk road.

The French army is retreating taking their Russian prisoners with them. As they move along the road, their numbers continuously get smaller; unaccustomed to Russian winters, the French soldiers succumb to the harsh elements. Pierre and Karatayev are at the end of the procession. Pierre is barefoot and is wearing only a soldier's coat; Karatayev is dying and can proceed no further. Pierre asks a French officer to help his new friend, but instead the officer shoots Karatayev ignoring Pierre's protests. Suddenly Denisov appears leading a group of Russian soldiers behind the dwindling French army. Dolokhov appears with a second group. Then a third group then appears and fighting is heard offstage. The Russian soldiers return with the newly freed Russian prisoners. Pierre approaches his friend, but Denisov barely recognizes him. Denisov informs Pierre that the French have left Moscow and that people are beginning to return. Pierre learns that Helene has died, that Anatole has lost a leg, and of Andrei's death. He begins to recall his feelings for Natasha, but forces himself to put her out of his mind. General Kutuzov enters as his soldiers gather around. Kutuzov congratulates everyone for leading Russia to its victory. The people sing in triumph.