

.....

April 3, 09.

Hi Fred,

Yes, by all means I would like very much to hear your selection of Russian A Capella. This is a real exciting paradox for me. Here is a people who did not create a great composer like Bach or Beethoven, as you say very well, and, yet, who generates the best choir work in the world. There is something very big that I am missing here. I don't understand how this can be done. Could this be simply something like the dynamic of the "Russian soul" like Negro spirituals are the emanation of the African American soul?

I would like very much to look into Morosan and Smolensky's books, and see if they talk about this. However, it seems that you did not think it necessary to give the bibliographical references. I found that very upsetting because there is nowhere I can go beyond your text. Either I have to do the search myself, or I face your text like a dead end. Please send me those references so that I can look further into this important question.

I have included some comments and frustrations in your text below. **[[They are highlighted in double brackets.]]**

Please let me know when I can hear your selection.

Pierre.

BEL CANTO, AND THE RUSSIAN, A CAPELLA, CHORAL TRADITION:

BY FRED HAIGHT

All of my recent studies have centered on the creation of a musical- artistic culture, as part of the larger picture of nation- building, out of which genius emerges. We know the geni today, and it is their works that we should study. But it is important to understand the social process from which they were born.

There are three areas.

1. The intense developments between Sweelinck and Bull, leading into Bach, including the role of Kepler.
2. Dvorak's mission to the USA.
3. This essay's topic. These researches are beginning to interface in a most beautiful way, like the surfaces, edges, and vertexes of Platonic solids. **[[I hope you are not referring to Euler's contraption of  $V - E + F = 2$ . The Kepler salad bowl doesn't do it for me either. I would rather appreciate your reference to Kepler's Harmony of the World as a generative dynamic principle rather than a mechanistic combination. Indeed, I do not see at all how you can draw proportionality between a Russian choral polyphony and a combination of surface, edge, and vertex. I hope that you will expand more on this in the future and explain it to me.]]**

I do not intend to lavish praise upon particular composers. There are no Russian equivalents of Bach and Beethoven. There is however, a lot of beautiful music, a superb choral tradition, and an attempt to build a musical culture, which resonates often with developments in the US, and can help our two nations find more common ground.

### A CAPELLA SINGING

A capella simply means, "as done in the Chapel", where unaccompanied choral singing developed at first. The physical qualities of the chapel itself are involved, such as a decrescendo down to ppp, followed by the reverberation in the room, after the voices have stopped singing. Bach knew this well: he would write detailed reports on the acoustical qualities of performance places, and how they could be improved.

John Sigerson can tell you how difficult this is to replicate in a D.C hotel! **[[It would be worth going through why a chapel is a better CAPELLA than a DC. Hotel, because people don't know that a CAPELLA is like the cavities of the human head. ]]**

### Chorus singing in a "Capella"

High choral standards were born in Russia, as a matter of freedom - necessity. The Orthodox Church banned instruments, and organs. The response could either be, to accept such musical limitations, or, turn weakness into strength, and develop choral music to a higher standard.

The great composers of German lieder, such as Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms, were masters of larger forms, but the vocalization of poetry, as lieder, was the creative wellspring from which they drew. I believe that the a capella setting of the liturgy may have also been such a wellspring for Russian composers.

### THE ROLE OF UKRAINE

The tradition is initially a Ukrainian one. Ukraine was exposed to the West much earlier than Russia. As early as 1588, the city of L'vov sent musicians to The West to study. They learned singing and composition, and brought back modern 5 line staff notation, to replace the imprecise Russian neumes. Four-part singing became the norm. They adopted the trivium and quadrivium as general educational standards.

According to Vladimir Morosan, author of "Choral Performance in Pre-Revolutionary Russia", the book from which much of this information comes, the Ukrainian response was not just to adapt to the superior qualities of the West, but try to surpass them, to insure that their culture was not swallowed up. Mr. Morosan, who is Russian Orthodox, claims that several Ukrainian Orthodox brotherhoods formed, which intended to absorb the lessons of the West, but also " put to shame the Latins", in choral singing; and that these brotherhoods commissioned new works, and supported conductors, teachers, and singers.

However, he is missing something. The driving idea of all art, is not just avoiding being assimilated, but that a new, national culture must be created, to intervene into its own peoples' national consciousness, and to uplift and transform the existing culture.

A quote from Mr. Morosan's book: "The rapid acceptance of part singing in Muscovite society was due, in part, to the fact that the new style had already gained a foothold in the Southwest part of Russia known as the Ukraine. The leaders of Muscovy turned to their Orthodox brethren in the southwest, for knowledge and education. They brought back books and singers. Around 1652, a steady stream of southwest singers flowed into Moscow." (Rachel Douglas informs me that this stream included the

kidnapping of singers!) **[[What is the bibliographical reference for this Morosan book ?]]**

Ukrainians helped the Muscovites deal with all kinds of new ideas: sharps and flats, vocal registers, leaps by large intervals, fast-moving sixteenth notes, and especially, polyphony (Imagine the initial social challenge for someone used to being a soloist, embellishing chants, of hearing what you have just sung, repeated by another voice, at a different interval, while you are moving on to something different!)

Another quote: "By 1680-1700 the chorus known as the " Czar's Clerics", peaked at one hundred singers, abounding with Ukrainian and Polish last names. Polyphonic settings, known as part books, from the time, are preserved in the collection of Count Razumovsky." (The families of Beethoven's patrons, Count Razumovsky, and Prince Golitsyn (Galitzin), played key roles in developing this tradition over generations-FH.)

Mr. Morosan is honest enough to admit: " The roots of the Russian choral tradition are not to be found in the first six and a half centuries of orthodox liturgical singing in Russia . Contrary to the beliefs of some Slavophile music historians, Russia before 1650 shows no evidence of indigenous cultural forces strong enough to have transformed a Byzantine tradition of soloistic monody into a tradition of choral singing. When the change to choral singing did occur, it was due to powerful cultural forces from the West."

Russian culture was challenged by Western ideas. One Patriarch said: "The singing of the Latins I cannot bear to hear." Other orthodox leaders sided with reason. A fight between these churchmen and some of the "soloistic" singers developed. The Monk Evfrosin wrote, in the 17th century: " Pay heed diligently to what the Holy Spirit says: He commands to sing,not merely with noise, and the ornamenting of the voice, but so that the singer would know what is being sung, and the hearer understand the meaning.. We only fill the air with shouting and whining." **[[What year and what is the historical specificity?]]**

Western music and theory were known as " musikiiia". The famous singer Login called it heresy. The fight was intense. From a 1680 treatise on musikiiia:

" He who has lost his reason, and knows not the harmony of his own nature, says that church singing is not derived from musikiiia. yet, he cannot .write a single hymn without knowing the musical intervals.Another, a veritable fool, says that Russian neumes are one thing, and the signs of musikiiia another. Such a man is truly insane and speaks foolishness."

But, you cannot just adopt a foreign culture: you have to forge a new one, that intervenes, in a powerful way, into the problems of your own culture, something that Gottfried Leibniz understood well.

#### PETER THE GREAT'S OPENING TO THE WEST

Leibniz

Peter the Great

Peter's correspondence with Leibniz began around 1698, at which time he also traveled across Europe, meeting with the inventor of the microscope, Leeuwenhoek, and others.

He founded St Petersburg as a city in 1703, on the Gulf of Finland coast, off of the Baltic Sea, thus making it accessible by sea from Europe.

Peter met Leibniz in Hanover, in 1711, and they had many correspondences.

In 1712, Leibniz wrote to Peter:

".you are so situated that you can take the best from Europe on the one side and from China on the other and, through good institutions, improve upon the achievements of both. Indeed, since in most parts of your empire all the studies are as yet in a large measure new and resemble, so to speak, a tabula rasa, it is possible for you to avoid countless errors, which have crept in gradually and imperceptibly in Europe. It is generally known that a palace built altogether anew comes out better than one that is rebuilt, improved upon, and much altered through many centuries."

In 1716, Leibniz wrote again, in a Memorandum to Peter:

". A library should contain both manuscripts and printed books, and I do not doubt that His Tsarist Majesty can acquire from Greece, Turkey, and Persia many manuscripts as yet unknown in Europe... At Your Tsarist Majesty's command it could be found out whether Asia can be circumnavigated on the north, or whether the edge of the ice cap is attached to America, which is something that the English and the Dutch have tried in vain to discover during their dangerous sea explorations. Finally, Your Tsarist Majesty can render a great service to navigation by conducting assiduous observations of magnetic variations in your far-flung empire and in the neighboring lands in order to come closer to solving this mystery. This will be of great help in determining longitude at sea, i.e. how far east or west one is-in short, the exact spot on the sea one finds oneself at-even if it does not fully solve this problem." [[Again, your bibliographical references are missing everywhere. What is the book you are referring to: title, edition, year, page?]]

Peter visited Leibniz' French Academy, and preferred it as a model for his St Petersburg Academy of Science, over the British Royal Society, which he had also visited. His St Petersburg Academy was founded in 1725. The Bernoulli brothers were brought over to lead it, but so was Euler.

#### The original Academy of Sciences St Petersburg

As part of Peter's "Opening to the West", Italian architects were brought in to build a beautiful city. Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli emigrated to Russia in 1715, and designed the Winter Palace in St Petersburg, and the Catherine Palace in Tsarskoye Selo.

Rastrelli did not just build according to Western European models. In the spirit of Leibniz' sly turn on John Locke's " tabula rasa", he forged something new, combining the best of Western European, and Russian architecture. **[[I don't think you are being fair to Leibniz with this reference to Locke. This is all tongue in cheek stuff on his part. I think you are misreading his intention. Leibniz was referring to the errors of Europeans that the Russians are lucky not to have been infected by. He was pulling Peter's leg ever so gently to make him realize that the Russian people don't have to suffer from the mistakes of Western European, implying that they had enough of their own mistakes to deal with. Leibniz was telling him to make tabula rasa of European stupidities and build from their own culture. He was ironizing on the fact that it is the "pure virgin state" of the Russian soul that Russian culture should be developed from.]]**

Other Italian architects included Domenico Trezzini, and Giovanni Rossi who designed the Palace Square in St Petersburg.

Painters included Alexei Zubov, who came from Holland.

Winter Palace: Rastrelli and others

The Catherine Palace at Tsarskoye Tselo

By Rastrelli

Peter and Paul Cathedral is the most celebrated work by Domenico Trezzini.

Alexey Zubov. St. Petersburg. View of the Summer Gardens from the Neva River. 1717. Etching, chisel. 16.5 x 20.3 cm. The Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia.

I also included a couple of watercolors from a century later.

Tsarskoe Selo Ca. 1855, watercolour by Luigi Premazzi

Inside the Hermitage Luigi Premazzi 1855

However, in the same 1716 memorandum, Leibniz laid out a plan for higher education for the population. I do not know how committed Peter was to that, or what was done. The general welfare is the key question. The serfs were not freed until 1861. There were many ups and downs during this period, and the rejection of Westernization was intense. However, without this project, I doubt if subsequent developments in Russia would have been possible.

THE IMPERIAL COURT KAPELLA CHOIR

Glinka Chapel: Formerly the Imperial Court Chapel.

The development of music proceeded slightly later.

In her 1730-40 reign, the Empress Anna Ionnova, organized a campaign to recruit young singers from Ukraine, which had served as the primary source of singers since the mid 17th century.

In 1738, she established a school to train the choristers for the St Petersburg Court Kapella Choir, at Glukhov (Hlukhiv) (administrative center of Ukraine), where Bortniansky, and Berezovsky were trained.

By 1752 the Court Kapella Choir had grown to 48 adults and 52 boys.

Italian opera was introduced in 1736, when the Court Choir singers participated in Hasse's "La Clemenza di Tito".

Here is where the research into nation- building helps. Does the name Hasse mean anything to you?

Hasse had been involved in the Hamburg Opera, the very first opera company in Germany, founded in 1678, by, among others, the great organist Jan Adam Reincken, who was both a student of a student of Sweelinck, but also an inspiration to J S Bach!

It was founded as a public, not a court opera, which was unique in its time, and apparently upset some Lutheran prigs, who denounced it as a " public menace", much as Katherine later upset members of the Russian Orthodox Synod. (Katherine the Great loved Italian opera, and intervened to force her austere bishops to break their solemn vows and attend. She once remarked: " The Holy Synod were at yesterday's performance, and laughed to tears along with us.")

#### The original Hamburg Opera House

The Hamburg Opera encouraged German language "Singspiel", while welcoming touring Italian companies, thus promoting the building of a national culture, while recognizing the achievements, and aid brought in by another nation's culture. Handel, who had studied in both Germany and Italy, joined the Hamburg Opera in 1703, and had his first opera, Nero, presented there in 1705, when he was 20 years old.

So, it should not be surprising if one revolutionary institution, aids another!

Over the next sixty years, the opera composers Araja, Raupach, Manfredini, Starzer, Galuppi, Traetta, Paisello, Canobbio, Sarti, Astaritta, Cimarosa, and Martin y Soler, all came in to head the St Petersburg Court Choir.

#### THE BEST CHOIR IN THE WORLD!

Choral standards had become high enough, that, in 1765, opera composer Baldassare Galuppi arrived, and pronounced, " Un si magnifico coro mai non io sentito in Italia." (Such a magnificent choir I have never heard in all of Italy.)

These Italian composers did not simply compose Italianate music in Russian. Like the architects, and again, in the spirit of Leibniz' judoing of Locke's " tabula rasa", they wrote a very different kind of music, taking what they already knew, but utilizing the unique Russian qualities that they found, and set Orthodox liturgy, thus participating in creating a new culture (as Dvorak reported, later, that he found himself writing a very different type of music in the United States.)

Exclusive a capella singing required a greater sonority, and a more full sound. Since they were opera composers, the Italians used their knowledge of orchestral writing to develop what became known as

"choral orchestration." This included divisi voices, and octave doublings. In fact, the famous Russian basses are known as octavists, and double the bass line, much as a double bass does the cellos.

Serious musicians sought restraint from their octavists, and suppressed show-off qualities. (I have tried to find out the secret of how Russia produces such basses, and one explanation is sillier than the next. It finally became clear to me, that true basses are as rare in Russia as anywhere else. Government institutions, such as an Imperial Choir, have a huge well from which to draw.)

## BORTNIANSKY

Bortniansky                      Baldassare Galuppi                      Dmitro Stepanovitch

Bortniansky was trained at Hlukhiv, and sent at the age of 7 to the Kapella in St Petersburg. Galuppi recognized his talent, and later, had him sent to Italy for 11 years to study, where he wrote successful operas, during the time of the American Revolution. By 1796, his genius was so undeniable, that even though Ukrainian, he was appointed as the first non- Western import to head the Imperial Chapel Choir. His Italianate works are beautiful, and Mozart-like. His Russian a capella "Sacred Concerti for Choir", are also very beautiful, but entirely different. It reminds me of Plato's Cave. You cannot just enjoy the sunlight, you must return to the cave, to deliver others.

A comparison of both Gallupi's and Bortnianski's Italian works with their Russian language works, is most useful in appreciating this creation of a new culture.

Mr. Morosan reports that: "During Bortniansky's tenure the Chapel developed into an outstanding vocal ensemble", but he also reveals another aspect of the man, that of an organizer of the population: "He possessed administrative skills, as well as musical. He assured a general, as well as musical education for the boys, and, service in the Chapel under Bortniansky took on a measure of dignity and security that was unique for the choral profession in Russia at the time. When the boys' voices changed, he secured jobs in the civil service for them. Parents willingly consigned their children to the Chapel Choir."

Though Kapella performances were closed, Bortniansky made sure that the Chapel Choir's rehearsals, on Saturday afternoons, were open to the public. They became important events in St Petersburg life.

Bortniansky became the sole authority and censor over Russian church music. His Court Chapel Choir went from being the private performance group of the monarchy, to controlling all church choral singing in the entire Russian Empire. I can only suspect, how much this had to do with countering "Raskolniky" tendencies. When churches employed inferior compositions, written out in manuscript, he set the standards.

From an Imperial Decree in 1816:

"The Emperor, on discovering that many churches use manuscript scores, that do not correspond to the sort of singing that is acceptable in churches, has supremely decreed: "Everything sung in churches must be in printed form, and must consist either of the compositions, of the Director of the Imperial Choir, Bortniansky, or the compositions of other famous composers, but the compositions of the latter may be printed only with the approval of Bortniansky." **[[Now, that is what you can call back up!]]**

That may seem like too much power of censorship, and in fact, under subsequent directors, it did turn

into abuse.

But, Bortniansky did emphatically promote " other famous composers." His choir, together with the St Petersburg Philharmonic (Ft1), performed: Haydn's Creation, in 1802; Haydn's Seasons, in 1805; Mozart's Requiem, in 1805; Handel's Messiah, in 1806; Cherubini's first Mass, in 1810; Beethoven's Christus am Olberge, in 1813; Cherubini's Requiem, in 1821.

During this period, Rachel Douglas relates:

" A Russian edition of Alexander Hamilton's 1791 Report on the Usefulness of the Manufactories in Relation to Trade and Agriculture was published in St. Petersburg in 1807. Minister of Finance D.A. Guryev sponsored the pamphlet. In an introduction, Russian educator V. Malinovsky wrote, ``The similarity of American United Provinces with Russia appears both in the expanse of the land, climate and natural conditions, in the size of population disproportionate to the space, and in the general youthfulness of various generally useful institutions; therefore all the rules, remarks and means proposed here are suitable for our country."

Again, Leibniz' Tabula Rasa: a place where civilization could be created anew. Though, again, there are big differences between the American Republic, and Tzarist Russia.

Bortniansky's greatest triumph though, was the world premiere of Beethoven's Missa Solemnis, in 1824. Beethoven, in a letter, insisted, personally, that the Kapella choir, developed, and still headed by Bortniansky, sing his masterpiece. (Bortniansky died in 1825, but led the Kapella choir till then.)

Beethoven with the score of the Missa Solemnis, inscribed: " From the heart, to the heart."

We have reflected before on the political implications of that premier. But, ask yourself: "What must have been the quality of this choir to sing such a work, that still suffers today from bad performances? Was this, in fact, the most qualified ensemble in the world to perform the premiere?"

In 1829, the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm III, sent a military man, one Capt. Einbeck to St Petersburg, to investigate the superior qualities of the Kapella Choir, in order to help find a model for his planned Berlin Dom Chor.

Capt. Einbeck reported on the reasons for the choir's excellence:

1. All singers had exceptionally fine voices.
2. All singers were trained according to the best Italian method.
3. All sections and soloists had superb knowledge of their parts.
4. The Imperial Chapel, as a special Government supported church choir, constituted a single artistic entity not affected by external circumstances, with the singers not having to devote their time to outside activities.

In 1844, Robert Schumann wrote in his diary:

"The chapel is the most wonderful choir that we have ever had the occasion of hearing. The basses at all times remind one of the low notes of an organ, while the descants have a magical sound. The subtlest nuances are mastered to the limit."

Even Berlioz had to admit, in 1847: "The choir of chapel singers in St Petersburg surpasses all choirs that exist at this moment in the entire world".

After Bortniansky's death, the choir, like everything else, had its ups and downs. Glinka, who had studied singing and vocal pedagogy in Italy, found it in terrible condition when he took it over in 1837, and wrote



his "exercises for steadying and perfecting the flexibility of the voice" for choir members.

## BRINGING MUSIC TO THE PEOPLE

The civil war period is crucial. Some leaders thought, like LaRouche, that involving the people in choruses would be crucial in bringing about social change. Prince Yuri Golitsyn's serf choir had toured England and America in the 1850's. The 1861 emancipation of the serfs led to the expansion of choruses all over Russia, and in 1869, shortly after the Civil War, Dmitri Aleksandrovich Agrenev (who had studied singing in Italy), and his choir, which included emancipated serfs, gave 175 concerts throughout the United States, singing among other things, Russian folk songs. In 1867 Dimitri Razumovsky published the first major work on Russian liturgical singing.

## THE MOSCOW SYNODAL CHOIR

### Printing House at the Moscow Synodal School

In the early 1800's, the Choir of the Moscow Synodal School was so backwards, that it could not decipher Bortniansky's music.

A decision was made, around 1880, to integrate the upgrading of the choir, with a compositional project to elevate Russian liturgical chant through polyphony, as Bach had done with Lutheran hymns.

In 1880, the 40 year- old Tchaikovsky (who respected Bortniansky enough, that he took the trouble to personally edit all ten volumes of his liturgical works), played a leading role in bringing about this change. **[[If I am not mistaken, I think that Tchaikovsky was also Ukranian.]]**

He personally recommended the composer Kastalsky and the conductor Orlov to lead the Synodal Choir, and kicked the effort off by writing his liturgy of St John of Chrysostom, which has some beautiful sections, though he admitted treating the chants rather loosely. (There had long been a division over whether to treat the chants, which are far less rational than Protestant hymns, loosely, or meet the challenge of keeping them intact. Old believers could only be won over if the chants were intelligible. The church rejected Tchaikovsky's liturgy as frivolous.)

Most Russian composers got involved in this project, including Rimsky-Korsakov, head of the St Petersburg Conservatory, and Balikirev, who with Rimsky, headed the St Petersburg Court Kapella Choir in 1883, where they, again, sought to improve the standards of singing. Their a capella settings of the liturgy, are more serious and beautiful than their other works.

Perhaps they were more respectful in these circumstances. Perhaps they knew that the church would not accept arbitrary dissonances. More likely, the very act of being involved in a fight to develop a national culture (like Dvorak in first Czechia, and then America, during the same period) brought out the best in them.

This was during the same time that the American System industrialization of Russia, was rapidly advancing. Tchaikovsky's father was a mine inspector who also headed the iron works that boasted Russia's first hearth furnace.

Tchaikovsky's patron, Nadezhda von Meck, was the widow of Karl von Meck, who was a major force, in

expanding Russia's rail lines from 100 miles to 15,000 between 1860 and 1880. She was well read, and an astute businesswoman, who, after Karl's death, headed up one of the railroads with her son. She patronized many other musicians as well. (FT2)

I don't know if she was directly involved with Count Sergei Witte, though Witte must have been aware of her husband. In his Memoirs, Witte wrote of his passion for music in his youth, and how he spent much time practicing at the local conservatory.

More generally, the necessity for industrial, scientific, and artistic progress to go hand in hand, was understood in Russia in those days, despite all kinds of cultural problems, as it was in Jeanette Thurber's and Dvorak's America, and in parts of Europe, where Max Planck was distinguished enough as a pianist, to play with the great violinist and friend of Brahms, Joseph Joachim. (Are we to believe that they did not discuss science?)

Many leaders at the end of the 19th century were committed to creating the world's greatest scientific, industrial, and cultural Renaissance, inspired by the American victory in the Civil war! It was not a slow, fin-de-siecle decline into decadence! That is something that has been mapped onto the period, post- facto!

They did however; underestimate the British Empire's accelerated drive both to WWI, and a counter-cultural dark age.

As part of the Moscow Synodal School project, another Razumovsky was appointed head of church music history at the Moscow Conservatory.

In 1889, chant expert and resident genius, Stepan Smolensky, became administrative head of the Synodal School, and its choir.

He had been involved with the St Petersburg Chapel Choir, and reported on it: "The Chapel at that time sang absolutely entrancingly-precisely, in tune, rhythmically, and with an entire scale of the most amazing nuances. I particularly liked its fortissimo- deafening in volume, clear in sound, but without the least amount of shouting, and absolutely uniform in all the voice parts.the choral sound was inimitably mellow, the result, of course, of its excellent voices. Finally, the Chapel's ppp was somehow magical, remarkably light and mobile." **[[Bibliographical reference? This Smolensky work sounds to me like a turning point that probably intersected the works of Witte, Vernadsky, and Mendeleiev. Have you any idea how to tie these loose ends together?]]**

In 1901, he headed the same choir, and found it in bad shape, so he focused his efforts on the Moscow Synodal Choir, and wrote:

"The last links in our plan to raise the Synodal Choir's technique and artistic level were courses (non-musical-FH) for the adult singers, and a number of works such as Mozart's Requiem, Beethoven's Mass in C, the entire Musica Sacra anthology, several masses of Palestrina, Josquin's Stabat.Lasso's Penitential Psalms. This plan was accomplished over several years under my administration, and culminated by our learning all the choruses in Bach's b minor Mass. The study. extraordinarily raised the cultural level of the Synodal Choir, which began to sing with intelligence, and developed marvelous vocal technique... it awakened the talent of Kastalsky and Chesnikov, who began composing under the influence of ancient chants, and the examples of the old masters."

(From Mr. Morosan: "The choral literature of the new Russian School was created by composers working in close contact with specific choirs, that served for them as tangible 'sonorous laboratories'.")

Smolensky continues: ". The Synodal Choir developed into a first-class choral artist, whose technique.was higher than anything I had heard in my entire life, Within the Choir their arose a most noble awareness of their mastery, which had nothing in common with conceit, but on the contrary, embodied the kind of humility characteristic of a good artist; also - a remarkably refined sense of discipline, and an entirely unexpected improvement in the lifestyle, behavior, and attitude of the singers toward their work."

**[[This is definitely of the same quality that is required to make crucial scientific experiments that Mendeleiev and Vernadsky were doing with the Table of the Elements and in the relevant biotic and a-biotic domains of chemistry. This was also the fermentation time for the creation of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences by Vernadsky at the beginning of the twentieth century. If ever there is a crucial moment in science and in classical artistic composition in Russia after the Leibniz intervention, it is the aftermath of the Centennial Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876 and the impact on Russia of the emancipation of the slaves by Lincoln and the creation of the transcontinental railroad. This is the cultural period of the transcontinental awakening of Russia. Have you checked to see if Orlov was not also a train conductor?]]**

The Choir's conductor Orlov, reported at the outset, that students ran away from the Synodal School, in search of knowledge and status, and wrote:

"We must overhaul our programs so that they could impart a complete body of knowledge, and along with knowledge, we must provide some status, at least that of 'free artist.' " (In Czarist Russia, such status was important.)

To implement this they introduced a general education, and an amazing musical curriculum, that included voice training, seven years of solfège, 6 years of choral score reading at the keyboard, 10 of piano, 8 of violin, 6 of cello, 5 of conducting and ensemble playing, 1 of counterpoint, and one of fugue writing, all for chorus members!

Student conductors gained experience in a laboratory situation. String quartets played vocal scores under rotating student conductors. Students were required to sing one part of a vocal score, while playing another on the violin. The Imperial Chapel followed their lead.

Under Orlov's direction, the Synodal Choir was compared to a string quartet, for its polyphonic transparency. **[[This crucial point requires more development]]**

## CHORAL BEL CANTO

As we have seen, Italian bel-canto had long been at the center of Russian choral music. This is important, because Maestro Briano, and Lyn, have kicked against the pricks of modernism, in insisting on bel-canto as the foundation of choral singing. Bel-canto is accepted for operatic, solo singing. But, the predominant choral approach is the British-modeled suppression of vibrato (which they claim muddies the polyphony), and promotion of white voices (which they claim enhances the transparency of counterpoint.)

In white voice choral singing, polyphony is lost, not enhanced! Vocal lines are like individual human personalities. More shaping, and differentiating, of each line, as bel-canto facilitates; yields more hearing of beauty in both the independence and the interaction of all four voices. In far too many choral performances, we hear only the soprano and the bass. When we examine the score, we weep over the loss of the great composers' beautiful dialogue among voices.

I will quote here, some of the writings on the matter by those involved in the Moscow Synodal Choir. It is difficult to put bel-canto training into words, and there were disagreements among them. I print the following excerpts from choral conductors, not as specific recommendations, but to document the degree to which bel-canto training for chorus was being debated. **[[All of the bibliographic sources for these quotes are missing????? You are going to upset your reader considerably if you keep doing this, because your text is the last chance they have to access these works. ]]**

From Kazansky: "The voice must be pure, rounded, and precise, mobile and mellow, capable of producing sounds of the shortest duration, the voice should maintain its integrity in forte and piano."

From Lomakin: "The student at the very beginning must master a vocal sound that is accurate, rounded,

and mellow, and not allow himself to sing with a constricted nasal or throaty voice. it must be 'resonant and ringing.' "

From Vitashavsky: " The sound is most rounded and most resonant when the sound forms a column of air that is directed at the middle of the hard palate. Focusing on the soft palate produces a muted or matte sound, and focusing on the lips a shrill one."

The choral conductor and composer, Kastalsky described "Placement", as follows:

"While singing the "Ah" vowel, maintain the throat as if you were blowing to warm up a window pane that has frosted over, sing a note of medium pitch, and try to feel it resonate in the chest, the sound should come straight out of the mouth, (without the teeth getting in the way), and feel as though it is striking the top front teeth. The rounded roof of the mouth behind the front teeth is called the hard palate.it is here that the sound strikes."

The choral conductor and composer, Arkhangelsky, demanded closed sounds. He had singers close their mouths, and with mouths closed, and jaws clenched, sing the pitches, hearing the words mentally.

The choral conductor and composer, Pavel Chesnikov, preferred a more covered sound. He thought that sound that strikes the hard palate tended to be reedy, open, and "white"

He believed that you could produce a rounded sound by focusing on the soft palate but then open it up by moving it gradually to the hard. "Opening creates a majestic effect that cannot be achieved with any other manner of sound production."

He also promoted what he called a semi-covered sound, with a lot of breathiness: "By means of a semi-covered sound the most rigorous pianissimo may be easily achieved."

## THE SECOND TIME A RUSSIAN CHOIR IS HAILED AS THE WORLD'S BEST

The choir toured Europe, and in 1889,was pronounced in Vienna, as the best in the world. In 1911, they sang in Dresden. A review stated:

"Evidently the Moscow Synodal School still cultivated the old Italian method of singing, the art of sound production and breathing have been applied here to choral singing: In all Germany among the Catholic and protestant Choirs, there is not a single one that can be compared even most distantly to this Russian Choir, simply for the reason that in Germany there are no such voices." **[[Where ?????]]**

Other reviews from Dresden noted the beautiful bel-canto, the prevalence of legato, and the continuity of the text declamation with the musical line.

The movement looked towards the future: In 1910, Bulychev wrote:

" At present we can perceive the desire of composers to diversify choral sonority by deliberately exploiting the natural variety of timbre even within each vocal category.(future) polyphony will exploit not only pitches of different levels, but differences in their timbre. The difference may be either natural or artificial. .The second would result from voice techniques such as open and closed sounds, the crossing of voices, and many other things. In a word, the symphonic chorus would be an enormous living organ, whose every pipe would be a thinking being, capable of melding into a single purpose with its conductor, and responding to the most difficult artistic and technical demands ...bear in mind, that every member must be a musically educated, virtuoso singer." **[[Where ?????]]**

Some concept of vocal registers developed, especially in this symphonic concept.

Chesnikov stayed in the Soviet Union, and perhaps hoped that it might provide him with the virtually unlimited pool of voices that his ideas required.

He wrote a book that remained unpublished until 1940, (soon to be translated into English) in which he addressed this registral-timbral question. Each voice species, he said, had at least two groups, echoing operatic distinctions. 1st and second sopranos, for example, were not mere assignments of the same voice, but differed. The first was "strong, bright, brilliant, and silvery", in the upper second to third register, whereas the second soprano, was "rich, solid and saturated". Each voice was divided into three registers, A, B, and C. The B register was the characteristic timbre of each of these voices: A and C were to be employed sparingly, and intelligently. Chesnikov wrote: "only that which lies in the natural (B) register may be sung well, and only when nuances are assigned to the subgroup (A or C), that has all the required attributes, can they be executed successfully, easily, and correctly."

His ideal chorus was 81 singers. He wanted 9 each of first and second sopranos, thus totaling 18. The same was true for altos and tenors. He wanted 9 baritones, as a unique species, and 12 basses, and six octavists, thus totaling 18 basses.

He describes his ideal chorus, and the role of the conductor:

"We see first, the concentrated attention of the singers towards their own section. The thriving of each individual to blend with his section both in volume and in timbre. Each section in turn strives to balance with the other sections. Each singer and each section, listening intently to their neighbors and the other sections, tune their sound in relation to the others, with absolute precision and correctness. Each singer is tightly bound to the conductor: the conductor's will is his will; the singer does not attempt to make a single sound without observing the conductor and without being in constant communication with him; in this communication and guidance lies the singer's strength... Such communications and melding of singers with the conductor, establish an extraordinarily sensitive mutual understanding: the slightest direction of the conductor is immediately accepted and executed by every singer, every section: the entire choir. From this most subtle understanding are born the most delicate nuances."

For Chesnikov, this was not just some ideal choir, but the Moscow Synodal Choir: he lamented over its disbandment after the 1917 revolution.

### BOYS VS WOMEN'S VOICES

As in the 1861 freeing of the serfs, social processes again intervened. In 1911, the "Musical Worker" issued a poll on the use of women's voices.

Kompaneisky relayed the standard argument: "Boys' voices have less vibrato, and the character of the timbre is serene and devoid of passion, which is more appropriate to a religious atmosphere."

Smolensky responded: "The opinion that boys' voices have some special beauty which does not exist in the female voice is mere prejudice."

And finally composer-conductor Gretchaninov told the truth: "Boys are incapable of the same deep feeling and inspiration of which adults are capable...performance by children will always be objectively cool, naive (granted, occasionally beautiful in its naiveté), but in most instances completely insufficient to convey the necessary mood."

Arkhangelsky also added that bringing in women would improve the moral standards of the all-male choruses.

### TO CHANT. OR NOT.

Mr. Morosan relates that with the "raskol", Russian orthodox chants disappeared into the forests, and western Musikiia dominated. A great division occurred over whether or not to maintain the integrity of the

chants. Musikiia was scientific, but old believers could only be recruited if the chants were intelligible. How to unify the two?

There were conceptual problems on both sides. In 1881 Tchaikovsky wrote of the licenses he took, to his former student, and now quasi-mentor Taneyev:

"As ever. I'm obeying my instincts rather than follow any preconceived theories. I've treated the melodies very freely-somewhat like Bortniansky. I've not been ashamed of forcing them into a specific rhythm, have sometimes changed them, been unfaithful to them, and in some places I've completely abandoned them, giving free reign to my own invention."

Though beautiful in places, the church rejected Tchaikovsky's Liturgy as frivolous.

Taneyev, a master of formal counterpoint, and a good, though not great composer, wrote an incredibly formal response:

"Catholic and Protestant music each represent something finished and complete (!). By examining how... they have carried development of a musical style to its logical conclusion, we can learn what we ought to do in our church music. Gregorian chant is the foundation of Catholic church music, as the chorale is the foundation of Protestant church music (!). There is no real difference between Gregorian melodies and ours."

Tchaikovsky was amazed that Taneyev thought that Gregorian and Znamenny chant were the same, and could be set simply by following Western models: but, his response was only:

"Creative geniuses never intellectualize about it. They seek beauty, and what sort it is, whether it is an original kind, or borrowed from somewhere else becomes clear later on."

What is missing in this dialogue, is any discussion of how to intervene on the supposedly known, in order to uplift the population, which requires a creative solution to the paradox, in the form of freedom-necessity!

Smolensky, head of the Synodal School Choir, opposed Taneyev and proposed contrapunctia, a new Russian type of counterpoint that kept the idea of rigorous beauty, but included parallel octaves, as in orchestral doublings, the use of voices ranging in number from 2 to 8, and unusual rhythmic patterns determined by the chant itself (remember what the Dresden review said about clarity in the declamation of the text. The peculiarities of the Russian language as set in Znamenny chant, demanded new rhythms!)

The Synodal choir was the lab, and Kastalsky innovated the idea of passing the chant from voice to voice, instead of always keeping it in one voice, thus introducing an order of freedom, to a very limiting circumstance.

Chesnikov also kept the chants intact. His use of the chorus was brilliant, but his music less so. Orthodox chants are not as coherent as Protestant hymns, and are more difficult to set.

The person who solved the problem, was Sergei Rachmaninoff (Forget whatever you think you know about this man, and his Hollywood incarnation. He had a rigorous training. Some of his music is unlistenable, while some of it reflects remnants of the classical tradition, but his two works written for the Moscow Synodal Choir, are quite different.)

His first essay was his own 1910 setting of the Liturgy of St John of Chrysostom, which followed Tchaikovsky, in ignoring the chants. Though it was rejected by the church, it is quite beautiful, and selections from it were sung by the Synodal Choir, in the 1911 tour.

In 1915, he composed the "All-Night Vigil", known in English as the Vespers, under very different circumstances, World War One. They were accepted by the church, and sung in a benefit concert for

veterans, by the same Moscow Synodal Choir. He dedicated it to Stepan Smolensky, chief executive of that choir. Rachmaninoff employed Smolensky's idea of a Russian "contrapunctiia", in opposition to his respected counterpoint teacher, Taneyev. He achieved music that is new, and Russian, but very strict in its adherence to classical beauty.

This work, the Vespers, keeps the chants more intact than any other, but at the same time, generates far more polyphonic beauty than any other (it helps to have the chants in front of you, to see what he did with them.) Bear in mind, that this is two years after Stravinsky's barbaric "Rite of Spring", had been presented to the world, as representing the " Russian Soul." In 1915, Rachmaninoff, and Taneyev, both produced classical choral beauty, two years after Stravinsky, Diaghalev, and Rorich glorified human sacrifice, in " Pagan Rus."

In 1917 the Moscow Synodal Choir was shut down. Since 1989, many new choruses have been founded in Russia, in an attempt to recreate the tradition. Their quality varies. I shall supply recordings to anyone interested.

Ft 1. The St Petersburg Philharmonic also mastered the bel-canto approach. I have been recently pleased to discover a recording from 1960 of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony by the same orchestra, but known as the Leningrad Philharmonic, under Evgeny Mravinsky, who led it for 50 years.

This orchestra was often attacked for using vibrato in the brass, even the trumpets, which they explicitly said was modeled on the human voice. The horn solo in the 2nd mov't sings, with vibrato, like no other performance, and the strings have a very full, rich sound.

Ft 2. Tchaikovsky's Romantic problems are well known and fairly clear. He admitted that he composed impulsively, and emotionally, with not enough planning, and that those works of his that he chose to submit to a process of revision, according to reason, were better for it; but still insisted that he still had to compose impulsively.

Nevertheless, he has also suffered from slanders, and an effort to divide. The same racists such as Phillip Hale, who freaked out over Dvorak's New World Symphony, sought to create a division by insisting that the " Slavic" music of Dvorak, Tchaikovsky, and Smetena, was inferior to the German music of Brahms et al, though they had no problem in attacking Brahms, when necessary. They were freaked out about any cultural intervention into the USA!

In 1890, Dvorak visited Moscow, and had his music performed there, at the invitation of his friend, Tchaikovsky. From 1892- 1895, Dvorak was in the U.S. In between, in 1891, Tchaikovsky visited the U.S., though only for a week, where he intersected some of the same circles as Dvorak. He played for the opening night of Carnegie Hall, and met Andrew Carnegie (Carnegie was one of Jeanette Thurber's key financiers for the National Conservatory of Music).

#### Opening Night at Carnegie Hall 1891.

His music was conducted both by himself, and by Walter Damrosch, who was assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic when they premiered the New World Symphony in 1893.

Despite the usual reports on how homesick and depressed (like Dvorak), he was in the U.S., Tchaikovsky wrote in his diary:

"I am ten times better known here than in Russia. Of all the people I have met, [the Americans] are the most generous and open hearted."

And, after a reception in his honor, wrote:

"The Americans are absolutely amazing! Their sincerity, generosity, friendliness and desire to please are absolutely out of this world! Nowhere but in Russia have I ever seen so much love for foreigners. The American way of life is really so good me!"

"I wish the Americans knew more about the intellectual life and progress in Russia, As far as I go, I'm really enchanted by your country and I'm sure that some day I will do my duty and familiarize the Americans with the musical achievements we have in Russia. I'm certain that this is not my last visit to America."

I have a lot more to say on this, but at this time it would be disproportionate to the subject at hand. **[[You end so abruptly. I was hoping for more, but instead, you end comme en queue de poisson. I hope there is more to come.]]**

-----Original Message-----

From: fhaight2@juno.com [<mailto:fhaight2@juno.com>]

Sent: Thursday, April 02, 2009 7:34 PM

To: pierrebeaudry@larouchepub.com

Subject: Russia as Leibniz' Tabula Rasa

Hi Pierre. This is a bit long, but a quick read none the less. If you wish to hear the music, I shall oblige.

.....

April 6, 09.

Hi Fred,

Now, you're talking to me!

Those ideas that you are now discussing were the missing references I was talking about, not just the page numbers and literary sources. If you incorporate these new insights in you report, your reader will become much more confident that you are doing this for his own benefit, and will realize that you are trying to help him solve his shortcomings by improving his musical culture. I am happy that you responded by getting a little bit upset at my complaints. So, in return, I have a bit more for you to get upset about.

I can see the limitations of Morosan's book and also the fact that you tried to get everything out of it, as much as you you could. And I can see the limitations there. I did not know he was a boomer. That explains everything.

I am now beginning to understand what you are trying to do about the cultural climate of creating music in the way that Lyn referenced as his own shortcomings in poetry, and where a composer is able to "play with the expectations of a literate audience." You are right about a composer coming out of a crash program of a national culture. That is us also. And that was precisely the reason I had gone into the Hudson River School of painting, myself, at the suggestion of Gerry. However I disagree with you on the timing of the audience of the composer.



There is a very important distinction to make here about their different times. The audience the composer or the artist is talking to is not the one which lives in his time. This, to me, poses the problem of the difference between creative-time and clock-time. The creator and the physical audience do not live in the same time. And these two times cannot be reconciled. They are incompatible, just like Plato and Aristotle, because one is real and the other fictitious. Their contradictory relationship can only cause exquisite paradoxes that are a joy resolve. And this is a real problem that I am trying to get our members to see in classical artistic composition.

This is a nice little problem that I have been discovering more recently with Rabelais. But, you could do it with Beethoven as well. You see, In all of his writings, Rabelais developed the most delicious paradoxes by means of which he demonstrated that the reality of his own time was utterly fictitious while the content of his own fictions were most real. This is most perplexing and extremely intreeging at the same time, and I will have a report out on this soon. However, since the composer or the artist live in the simultaneity of eternity, he cannot be limited by the circumstance of clock-time that his audience is living in.

I can understand how Lyn may have been frustrated on that count, but his internal audience is the one living in the simultaneity of eternity, and not the guy sitting next to him. His frustration is not with his contemporary, but in his attempt to conciliate the current generations with his ideal of man in the future. Any composer must go through the same torment. The composer must be dealing with a very specific human being who understands and who represents his ideal of man, and who implicitly can understand new ideas that the composer is risking, and to which he can and must respond. In that sense, the composer doesn't care what his audience thinks, he must create the people he wants. And if Karayan, as you noted, was concerned with what the ghost of Furtwangler was thinking, it was because he was propitiating him, not because he wanted to do better. The same goes for the great geniuses of the past that you are talking with and that you are talking to about your ideal of man. The artist or the composer is never trying to recruit his contemporary audience, but to change it so that it becomes deserving of the audience that he is speaking to in his own soul.

In that sense, the present population is never the one that you talk to. The present population is merely the one that overhears you speaking to someone else, and who wants to change because he wants to understand what the hell you are talking about. If this is not clear, it is because I am talking to my own gallery of friends. But, I think you understand.

In other words, any composer who writes for the current generation of listeners is a fool, like Karayan who wanted to please his audience. That is why he cancelled his recording session after listening to Mravinsky; he kept looking at his watch. It was a matter of chronometric time. As Rabelais put it in his extraordinary insight about his notion of real time generating the principle of the Peace of Westphalia: "Such is the nature of gratuitousness [gratuité]. Time, which gnaws and fritters all things away, only augments and increases the value of benefits. For one good turn freely done to an intelligent man grows continuously by his generous thoughts and remembrances." (François Rabelais, *The Histories of Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Penguin Books, 1955, p. 147)

Just though you might like to toss these ideas around for a while.

Salut.

Pierre.

4/16/2009

Hi Fred,

Don't get me wrong on what I said about the Orthodox Choir music you got me to listen to. I am very thankful that you made me see the error of my ways.

I first had a tendency to listen to those choirs as expressions of perfect voices, perfect harmony, perfect angelic sounds, even more beautiful than western choirs. Then, I stopped and asked myself: is there something wrong here? Au contraire, I replied to myself, they were as pure heaven, like in a paradise where nothing disquieting could ever happen to you and where nothing could go wrong. What is wrong with that, I asked myself? My mental image was like tasting great French pastry: C'était comme de la crème qui glisse dans du gâteau. I was having a fantastic dream!

On the other hand, that music was exactly the opposite of classical artistic composition, where there are organized ironies of cross voicing, dissonances, changes in register shifts, paradoxical ideas, angry tones, etc. But what of it? Those hymns had none of that! It was as if the music had been created deliberately to smooth everything out, every impurity, every anomaly, so that you are left with the purest effects of the purest harmony between tones. The distilled effect of the voices on me was like getting rid of everything between the notes that might prevent me from becoming mesmerized by the most heavenly agreement between angels, in complete peace. Was I having a religious experience? No! I was just having a bad dream!

What I characterized as angelic music, as opposed to human music, meant precisely what I said. The music is made to be too perfect, too divine for human consumption. This is not Bel Canto, this is music you want to listen to after the confession of terrible crimes, like seeking relief at the movies after seeing *Crime and Punishment*. It was as if the singers had been told to eliminate every possible vibrato and dissonance, and smooth everything out to appease the soul and soothe the passions. Eliminate all possible disturbances. It is music to become inspired by, but not to arouse a truthful passion from.

So, I realized it was too "beautiful" to be true. This does not mean that there is no great Russian and Ukrainian music. Give me something with ironies and paradoxes, conflicting ideas like the famous Fidelio cross voicing of "all is clear, he loves me." There must be Russian or Ukrainian songs which express such Rabelaisian singularities, as Ilya Repin's painting of *The Cossacks Letter to the Turkish Sultan, Mahmud IV*. As you know, even better than I, that beauty in music must also be truthful, that is, tell a truth that no one else dare say openly. Now, can you help me find such truthful ironies and dissonances in Russian and Ukrainian music? What about the opera of Tchaikovsky *The Oprichnik*?

Moreover, since we are in a period of axiomatic change, where historical **maturing time** has reached boundary conditions for all of us who live on this planet today, there is no greater moment for discovering how some musical compositions failed to express such ironies and which succeeded. That is what I need to know from you.

Let me know what you think about what I have just said.

Pierre.



4/17/2009

Hi Fred,

Can you not hear the angels sing soft Russian hymns in the tragic background of this painting of Ivan the Terrible consoling his dying son? I do. And I also hear a very faint discordant note to express the tear that the son is shedding in compensation for his father's madness. Now, tell me: What would be the intention of such an angelic hymn of Russian Choir music if not to bring out the irony that Ilia Repin has



Ilya Repin, *Ivan the Terrible realizing he killed his own son*.

created in this masterpiece by expressing the singularity of the tear that the son is shedding, not for himself, but for his poor father. The subject of this painting is wrongly viewed by foolish critics as depicting the violent insanity of Ivan the Terrible, while in reality it is depicting the irony of the son's forgiveness. One tear is worth more for the love of his father than all of the gory blood that he is shedding. Need I say more?

Pierre.