

**Absolutist Creed vs. Nostalgia:
Stravinsky's Setting of *Four Russian Peasant Songs*
by Desiree Fowler, August 2009**

While Igor Stravinsky states “music is, by its very nature essentially powerless to express *anything*” (*Autobiography* 53), his choice of text in *Four Russian Peasant Songs* shows a microcosm of his own personal life and experiences. This research paper will use *Four Russian Peasant Songs (Podblyudniye)* to examine two camps of thinking in hopes of providing a more balanced way of relating to Stravinsky's music, so that both the “cognitive” and the “romantic” listener have a home in their appreciation.

Schonberg writes, “Stravinsky was never reticent about his belief that music is primarily form and logic. His anti-Romanticism extended to fierce attacks on performers and conductors who misinterpreted his music. . . . His main interest continued to be in structure, in texture, in balance, in rhythm. His music is the work of one of the supreme logicians” (486). Stravinsky's childhood exposed him to a rich musical world, his father a famous operatic bass at the Imperial Opera in St. Petersburg, and his mother a teacher of piano. At age nine his parents gave him a “piano mistress” who trained him to read very well and discouraged his natural inclination to improvise. Stravinsky's musical potential was not particularly recognized until he met Rimsky-Korsakov who became Stravinsky's mentor and eventually persuaded Stravinsky to focus his attention onto composition rather than his studies in law school. Before Stravinsky began to study with Rimsky-Korsakov, he took to studying counterpoint with the aide of a manual. “I set myself with heart and soul to the task of solving the many problems it contains” (*Autobiography* 15). Stravinsky spoke often of his lack of interest in school and in lessons. He “describes his parents as cold or even malicious” (Griffiths 3). Suffice it to say, Stravinsky's passion lay in putting his “heart and soul” into the logic and reasoning of music.

Stravinsky, like most quality composers, selected the notes and rhythms in ways that are dictated by the text with which he chose to work. Klien's article on the declining performance of quality choral literature describes Stravinsky's choral music as “equally divided, having subtle conflict between macro and micro rhythms, and having a keen regard for vocal timbres” (35-6). *Four Russian Peasant Songs* is no exception from Stravinsky's other compositions in that it contains explicit directions and markings. This might suggest that Stravinsky intentionally left very little, if any, room for the conductor or performer to freely interpret or romanticize his work. Also, Stravinsky's use of irregular meters and rhythmic figures, as well as his constructs of form and structure, are often used to characterize him as being form-driven, unemotional and anti-Romantic.

Notable also is *how* Stravinsky composed. Ramuz, in awe of Stravinsky's worktable remarked, “Stravinsky's scores are magnificent. He is above all a calligrapher. . . . His writing desk resembled a surgeon's instrument case. Bottles of different colored inks in their ordered hierarchy each had a separate part to play in the ordering of his art” (qtd. in Schonberg 486). Stravinsky sent his compositions in for publishing with specific colors, codifying various attributes of his music. According to Schoenberg, Stravinsky's tidy and extravagantly organized work habits give away to his treatment of composing as a systematically run occupation.

In Stravinsky's Autobiography he gives the impression that the sole purpose of even having an autobiography is to be avoid being misinterpreted. "There are still further reasons which induce me to write this book. In numerous interviews I have given, my thoughts, my words, and even facts have often been disfigured to the extent of becoming absolutely unrecognizable" (Forward). He also spends five of the last seven paragraphs of the book explaining how he has "deliberately avoided any lyrical outpourings or intimate confessions" (174). Stravinsky is communicating that his intention of being correctly portrayed involves the deliberate omission of his personal feelings and of his private life.

Thanks to Robert Craft, we have documentation of correspondence from Stravinsky from as far back as 1911, until about three years before his death. Stravinsky's discourse is supremely cordial and friendly and only makes delicate mention of any illness or hardship on the behalf of himself or his acquaintances. Much of the correspondence revolves around his music— in functional, professional, even business transactional manners. One might note that the letters and commentaries that we have from Stravinsky, while eloquent, fail to be poetic or have resemblance to a diary entry. And as far as music history goes it is perhaps also notable to compare Stravinsky's writings that to the historical letters of Beethoven and his "Immortal Beloved." Last, Stravinsky sustained close friendships, especially with Serge Diaghilev and with Craft, and one might point out that these two gentlemen had very much to do with Stravinsky's career and success.

Specifically around the time that Stravinsky composed *Four Russian Peasant Songs*, he first corresponded with Edwin Evans. The letters from both parties were very business oriented. It is evident that a friendship of sorts emerged but that the nature of their relationship, or at least their reasons for writing one another, revolved around selling the pieces. "I would like to sell the Four Russian Songs for children (French text by Ramuz, with the right to translate into English) as Four a cappella choruses (*Podblyudnye*). . . . It is understood that I retain all performance rights, as well as my reproduction rights for all of my works" (Craft 121). Twelve years later Stravinsky writes to Ramuz, "I am glad it occurred to me last time I was in London, to speak to you about my a cappella choruses which have been in the safe at the glorious Chester Ltd. for 10 solid years now. Had you not intervened, they brandashing fleabanes, would have come to revive my choruses in the name of that triumphant decade. . . . Attached you will find the corrected proofs of the choruses" (Craft 303).

Richard Taruskin's seventeen-hundred page biography on Stravinsky makes an argument to suggest that there is a fifth Russian Peasant Song. He goes further to claim that this fifth song is perhaps still residing "with the heirs to Mme Khvoshchinskaya's estate. This musical material may have been reworked into the "*Podblyudnaya*" from the *Quatre chants russes*, which would account for its never having been published" (1158). This assertion will be examined more closely at a later point; however, Walsh suggests that the fifth Russian Peasant song most likely did not exist and makes a claim that Stravinsky often added a chorus to improve his chances of advanced publication when he writes:

After getting the brush-off from Benois, however, Stravinsky settled down to work on *Les noces* and its attendant pieces (*Pri-baoutki*, *Berceuses du chat* and the *Women's choruses*), and poured his excitement into them instead, as is clear

on every page of Taruskin's exhaustive and brilliantly serendipitous discussion, which even comes up with the (one happily accepts) precise locus of Stravinsky's 'rejoicing discovery' about the mobile accent in Russian folk verse, in Sakharov's scansion of 'The Pike' in his third volume of *Russian Folk Tales*. What is so typical and satisfying about this part of the book is the quantity, clarity and aptness of Taruskin's exemplification, which enables the reader to, for instance, verify every step in the account of the evolution of the text and music of *Renard* and *Les noces*, but which also alerts him to those occasional moments when the author presses his evidence too far, as when he claims it to be 'unassailable' that Stravinsky must have composed a fifth women's '*Podblyudniye*' chorus (because an unknown fifth one is listed on a calligraphic title-page he sent to Chesters; but this would not have been the first time Stravinsky exaggerated the number of pieces in a set for the benefit of an advance-paying publisher ("Rev." 452).

Taruskin's two-volume biography had a significant amount of information devoted to *Four Russian Peasant Songs* and Walsh's review was specifically on this section of Taruskin's work. Walsh clearly asserts that Taruskin overstepped his bounds with the conclusion that there must be a fifth song. Walsh probably holds this view in the sheer spirit & essence of what Stravinsky would have wanted?

A popular quote from Victor Hugo is, "Music *expresses* that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent."

Hanning points out, "In the course of a long career, Igor Stravinsky not only participated in, but also actually began, some of the most significant musical developments of the first half of the twentieth century. As a result, his influence on three generations of composers has been enormous" (481). "Hanslick, in his treatise *The Beautiful in Music*, had based his entire argument on the theory that music was a completely abstract art, incapable of painting pictures or conveying anything except broad emotions. His, and Stravinsky's remarks are probably accurate, though aestheticians have devoted much study to the meaning in music and have never been able to come to a satisfactory answer" (Schonberg 486). The second half of this paper will examine the opposite end of Schonberg's "probably accurate" contention.

Both Morgan and Griffiths begin their writings on Stravinsky by referencing the opening paragraphs of Stravinsky's Autobiography where Stravinsky depicts his "earliest memories of sound" (3). He generously describes two memories of peasants singing, the first, an "enormous peasant" who sang and made clicking noises to amuse the children that gathered; and the second, women returning from their work day singing in unison. As a child Stravinsky, to a highly satisfactory degree, musically imitated both experiences. Regarding the later memory, "To this day I clearly remember the tune, and the way they sang it, and how, when I used to sing it at home, imitating their manner, I was complimented on the trueness of my ear. This praise made me very happy" (4).

Stravinsky begins chapter four of his Autobiography with "My profound emotion on reading the news of war, which aroused patriotic feelings and a sense of sadness at being so distant from my country, found some alleviation in the delight with which I steeped myself in Russian folk poems" (53). *Four Russian Peasant Songs* were composed from 1914–1917. In June 1914, Stravinsky spent ten days in Ustilug and Kiev gathering Russian folk verse that he needed to work on commissions such as *Le noces*.

The outbreak of war the following month made traveling throughout Europe impossible. Stravinsky settled in Switzerland and did not return to Russia again until 1962.

These folk verses, specifically the works of Ivan Sakharov, were the textual source behind *Four Russian Peasant Songs*. These choruses were not commissioned, and after more than ten years, the *Four Russian Peasant Songs* were still not published. During these years of the war Stravinsky's Four Russian Peasant Choruses often took precedence despite his current commissions.

Stravinsky's compositions on Russian texts began to emerge. For the first year or so of the war, Stravinsky worked away at his little songs and choruses, with their tight distillation of the cellular and harmonic field techniques of *The Rite of Spring*, and at *The Wedding* . . . The Russian texts, taken from the 19th-century collections were a crucial part of the new idiom. Stravinsky was experimenting with an idea he later claimed to have extracted from Russian folk verse of a moveable accent, which could be played off against the natural accents of speech, as well as against the musical metre, to make yet an extra rhythmic tier, somewhat like the stresses superimposed on the regular patterns of *The Rite*, but less arbitrary" (Walsh *Second Exile* 112).

What would be known as the musical characteristics of Stravinsky's Russian period had emerged. Stravinsky was in the midst of war, in a foreign country writing music that carried, at least on some level, childhood and native land nostalgia. These years marked one of significant compositional changes that occurred in Stravinsky's long career. The compositional transformations would present themselves not only in *Four Russian Peasant Songs*, but also in works such as *Le noces* and *Petrushka*.

"While emphatically asserting that "tonality is my discipline," Stravinsky himself remarked in his *Poetics of Music* (published in 1942): "My chief concern is not so much with what is known as tonality as what one might term the polar attraction of sound, of an interval, or even a complex of tones." This new and more broadly defined sense of tonal centricity transformed what had been basically a dynamic, and essentially diatonic, concept into a largely static one that was equally applicable to diatonic or chromatic contexts" (Morgan 94).

In *Twentieth Century Music*, Morgan analyzes the better-known works from Stravinsky's Russian period noting many of the commonalities between them. The basic concepts he outlines are all found in the choruses of *Four Russian Peasant Songs*. They are: (1) Minimal motivic content, (2) Tonal centricity, and (3) Melodic fragments. *Four Russian Peasant Songs* melodic rhythm patterns are also very similar to those found in the "March" movement of *Soldier's Tale*, and to the opening theme in the *Rite of Spring*. Further, the fore-mentioned pieces also contain folk-like melodies treated in Stravinsky's characteristic tonal and rhythmic style.

The first chorus in *Four Russian Peasant Songs*, "On Saints' Days in Chigisakh" is based on a simple Stravinsky-invented folk-like melody sung unison interspersed with a chorus. The piece does this four times and the ends by adding in a short harmonic segment at the end of the soloist's phrase. The tonal language is very simple, basically from G–E, a six-note tonal hexachord. Although it is basically a G major scale without the leading tone, there are many aspects that indicate D Mixolydian or Dorian (without the third, the two scales are identical). "On Saints' Days, the first of the *Four Russian Peasant Songs* ('Saucers'), in 1917, Stravinsky's 1954 addition of fanfare like flourishes

(with four horns) implicates the D-scale on D, this song outlines an alternation of (0 4 7) triads at G and F; (this G B D)–(F A C) alternation naturally yields the (D C B A G F) hexachord, which is inferable from within the fully accredited diatonic D-scale-on-D music framework” (Van Den Toorn 477). Moreover, there is the repetition of the D as a recitation note. The horn accompaniment (added thirty-eight years later) also held a D pedal.

The melody of “On Saints’ Days in Chigisakh” has two basic themes, with the A theme lasting for roughly nine eighth notes and outlining the fifth G-D. The B theme lasts roughly thirteen eighth notes (sometimes longer depending on the text, since the repetition of the D changes based on the words) and extends the range to the E. The chorus (C theme) consists of the most tonally harmonic-sounding material of the piece, giving the impression of a simple plagal cadence sung twice (I- IV-I, I- IV-I). This cadence functions traditionally, serving to wrap up the phrase; however, the chords are not as traditional, with the tonic missing the third and the IV chord having an additional color of a fourth added (C at first, then C# in the second, adding extra chromaticism). The addition of the C and C# can be seen as creating pull back towards the D tonal center, with the C# increasing the pull. In collaboration, the rhythmic values on the second iteration are shortened, creating a drive to the phrase ending. The entire form of the movement is thus:

A B C B C B C A B C C’. The only changes are rhythmic and based on the text. Also, the final chorus adds an extra iteration as well as lengthening of note values, slowing down time for the finale.

There are basically two contrasting ideas in second song, “Ovsen,” the word “Ovsen” itself, and the rest of the text. The text is treated musically in different ways, much like the first song but in reverse. In this one, the repeated chorus “Ovsen,” have the intertwined duet that is repetitive in nature whereas the changing lyrics have a fuller harmonic sound created through the use of larger intervals and tessitura. During the “Ovsen” sections, because of the nature of the SSA range limitations, they constantly have dissonances such as the minor second and major second mixed in with unisons and thirds. Although the voices rarely cross, they give the impressions of intertwining. In fact, the parts move like a mirror, albeit a cracked one, since the shifting of tones happens at different times, thus causing the dissonances.

“Ovsen,” second chorus’ upper voice, uses the pitches G#, A#, B, C# D#. The lower voice stays mainly in the same range, although with F# as its low pitch and only extending up to B. The pitch content leads to a tonal center of C#, but much like the first piece, leaving out a note which would be the third of the scale and would determine if it was Dorian or Mixolydian.

In the text sections of “Ovsen,” the parts similarly move in contrary motion like an inversion, but the range is expanded, giving the larger intervallic quality and sound, with fourths and fifths giving impressions of tonal harmonic goals. This is particularly evident in the last three notes of the first phrase, where we get the diads F# - C# and G#- C#, leaving the feeling of a V – I in C#, only to be completely erased by the final syllable, an almost toss off minor second right before the breath and end of phrase. This transitions us back to the lighter and more transparent “Ovsen” phrase. One peculiarity of this movement is the way the A and B themes change. They are constantly different, especially the A theme, and although the words are the same, they are treated differently.

The B theme on the other hand gives a lot more tonal contrast, with the goal of expanding the tonality and ideas of the song.

The text setting implications for “Ovsen” are as follows: (referenced with the English translation) Text: “She has hid ‘neath a bush” extends the range down to E at first, giving the major seventh (E – D#) which sounds even more dissonant since it is such a wide interval compared to what we have already heard. The lower part then descends to E# and then to D#. The theme is being developed, providing a new color. The mode would seem to be decided, with the addition of the E making the Dorian likely; however, the E# a few beats later implies Mixolydian, leaving it uncertain. Text: “I’ve caught her fast,” repeats the earlier melody only shortened (faster). Text: “And a handful of money too,” starts just like the last two, but on the words “of money too,” there are dramatic changes. The upper part makes a leap up to E, and the lower part introduces an A natural, giving us a large open fifth in an unfamiliar tonal area. This is followed by a G – B major third, thus reinforcing the new tonal area. This temporary shift resolves to a nice E# - C#, reinforcing a C# Mixolydian tonality. The last two B sections are a da capo repeat of the first and second. This is differentiated in the original from the later version. In the original, there is no da capo ending, and the whole piece itself is a major third lower. The only differentiation in pitch, however, is in the most dissonant section, the phrase “handful of money.” In the later version this phrase was made even more dissonant and also added rest at the end of the line bringing additional tension and attention for a dramatic climactic phrase.

The third chorus “The Pike,” essentially shares its form with the first chorus, differing in that a trio (or duet in the later version with the other part being played in the horn) is on the text contrasting with the full chorus on the text “Glory.” Appropriately, “Glory” is a loud and harmonically colorful declamation. The trio is similar in nature to the A section of the “Ovsen.” The upper two voices move between the notes F and C, completing a 5 note F Lydian segment, whereas the lower voice just alternates between A – B – C#, creating the dissonant cross relation between the top voices C. This contrasts greatly with the large F# minor seventh chord for the first syllable of “Glory” (which changes slightly on the second). “The Pike” includes dynamic tonal contrast between sections moving from F to F#, a technique of half-step movement, which will be elaborated on in the fourth song, “Master Portly.” In the second A section, the range is expanded in the upper voice with a C# thrown in for coloration near the end, briefly giving the impression of a move to G Lydian. The form would be A B A’ B A B A’ B A B A’ B coda, A and B. The coda A extends the note values of the original, whereas the Coda B adds a completely new tonal feel and a third chord. The three chords end on what sounds like a B major tonal center. Therefore tonally, it seems to alternate between F and G Lydian in the A sections, F# in the B section, and ends a tritone away in B. This gives a very bright sound, perhaps setting an impression of this great beautiful fish, setting the text: “flash’d silvery white; glittering gem; crown’d with a pearl set diadem; instead of eyes two diamonds blaz’d!”

The fourth song, “Master Portly” is the most diverse in form basically setting four separate parts repeated three times total. Its form would be best represented by: A A’ B C A A’ B C A A’ B C’. The first A theme is once again a short modal idea with a note range of a fifth, A to E, but with a tonal center of D, either Dorian or Mixolydian. The A’ has the choir join in with a peculiar three part counterpoint, filling in the scale by adding

an F, implying Dorian. This is quickly canceled out in the B section, changing the texture from 3 part to two part, with the upper voice using Bb – Db – E-flat – F and the lower part using the added tonalities of Gb, Ab and G natural. The C theme reinforces the B themes' E-flat tonality.

Whimsical in nature, the idea of this “portly” Master with his sacks of fleas and lice, are used to evoke the idea of “Glory.” For this fourth song of the set, “Glory” is treated more jovially, especially after the previous setting’s use of “Glory” for the beautiful pike. The humor of this song is evinced in the tonality. The constant switch between D and E-flat and the change in texture help push the sarcastic tone of the words. The B theme is a mimic of the A. It resembles a childlike call and response nursery chant, with a leader creating an insult and the rest of the group then repeating it. The humor is arranged in how the response gets ‘uglier’ each time, firstly by the slight dissonant setting of the A’, and then the change of tonality to the B. The C theme’s “Glory” comes off like a taunt or a laugh.

In all four of the Four Russian Peasant songs, Stravinsky uses a mixolydian or dorian mode without a third, leaving ambiguous tonality but with a tonal center, as if it *would* have a major or minor third. Stravinsky alternates soloist (or duet) sections and full harmonic sections, usually treated as verse and chorus often times breaking up the melody into fragments. Lastly, Stravinsky, mostly in the chorus of each of the four songs, evokes a motive idea that is treated differently each time it is used, implying that there be no escape from the repetition of the text being sung differently each time.

The setting of the text in *Four Russian Peasant Songs* has now been touched upon in its analysis, as well as the origin and reasoning behind Stravinsky’s use of Sakharov’s folk verse. Stravinsky’s *choice* of text and subject matter will now be considered. The title used by Stravinsky on the calligraphic title page he sent to Chesters is *Podblyudniye*. There has been much commentary on the translation of the title because of a correspondence with Craft and Stravinsky where Stravinsky speaks of “saucers.”

Yet, discussing these choruses with Robert Craft in *Expositions and Developments* (New York, 1962, rpt. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1981), pp. 118-19, Stravinsky stated: "Choruses of this sort were sung by the 240 peasants while fortunetellers read their fingerprints on the smoke-blackened bottoms of saucers." This is either an aberration of memory or an ad hoc invention. No such method of fortune-telling is associated with *podblyudniye* songs by any Russian poet or student of folklore (nor does it seem likely that reading fingerprints was known to Russian peasants in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries). The saucers, whose mention by Stravinsky has saddled these choruses with their unsuitable English title, may have come from his confusing the Russian word for "dish," *bliudo*, with the one for "saucer," *bliudtse*. Or Stravinsky may have been thinking that the English "saucer" had the same meaning as the French *sauciere* (Karlinsky 233-4). Karlinsky goes on to say that it would not have been likely for Stravinsky to have program notes of any original performances indicating the folk stories behind the text. Also, the original text was translated, often anonymously from Russian into French, German, and English. Therefore, according to Taruskin, Walsh and Karlinsky, the documented comments regarding *Four Russian Peasant Songs*, made by Stravinsky were commonly misunderstood.

The source of the text is best studied through the works of Sakharov himself where *Podblyudniye*, is better translated as “dish-divination songs.” Note also that Stravinsky worked on *Podblyudniye* over the course of four years and most of that time was during the winter months.

As outlined by Propp in *Russian Agrarian Holidays* (p. 108), dish-divination songs were sung during Yuletide by young women in rural areas as an accompaniment to a special fortune-telling game. A large dish filled with water was put on the table and each participant would place her ring, comb or some other small trinket in it, after which the dish was covered with a towel. Next came the singing of the *Podbliudnye* (lit. "in the presence of the dish") songs, whose texts dealt with allegorical descriptions of agricultural activities, gigantic symbolic animals, and possession of gold, jewels, and other treasures. Most of these songs featured the obligatory refrain of "slava!" or "slavna!" ("glory!" or "glorious! "). During the singing, the trinkets were extracted one by one from under the towel over the dish and the fortunes of their owners were predicted in accordance with the imagery of the line that was sung while it was withdrawn. In addition to its documentation by folklorists such as Propp, this divination game was described in two of the best-known Russian literary works of the early nineteenth century" (Walsh “Obscuring” 693–4).

To be noted, Stravinsky did not arrange folk songs or even borrow from their melodies. When Robert Craft specifically asked about Russian folk melodies Stravinsky replied, “To my knowledge, none of my Russian songs- *Pribaouti*, the *Four Russian Peasant Choruses*, *The Four Russian songs*, the *Berceuses du Chat*- contains folk material. If any of these pieces *sound* like aboriginal folk music, it may be because my powers of fabrication were able to tap some unconscious folk memory. In each case, however, the syllables and words of the songs dictated the music” (Stravinsky, Craft 91). Stravinsky therefore drew text from Sakharov and created his own four *Podbliudniye* songs: (1) *U Spasa v Chigisakh*, (2) *Ovsen*, (3) *Shchuka* and (4) *Puzishche*. Translated for our purposes as (1) *Saints' Day in Chigisakh*, (2) *Ovsen* (celebratory of the New Year noted in the score as “A beneficent solar deity honored in Russian mythology”), (3) *The Pike*, and (4) *Master Portly*.

The following summaries of the text in *Four Russian Peasant Songs* is largely credited to Taruskin (1159-62), the original a capella score published in French (1938), (with the English translation underneath), and the English score that Stravinsky published in 1954 with the addition of four horns. Taruskin’s findings match those of Walsh in that *Podblyudniye* is best described as “dish divination songs” that celebrated “old Russian Yule” where there were activities centered on fortunetelling and luck. Taruskin cited his research on *Podblyudniye* songs from Nobokov’s *Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Ceris* by *Aleksandr Pushkin* (1153).

All four songs have to do with the Russian folk celebrations and the symbolism that that revolved around luck and good fortune. It is likely that these ideas are what Stravinsky perceived as the very livelihood that encapsulated peasant life. The text in song II of *Four Russian Peasant Songs*, “*Ovsen*” is about a successful hunting excursion that ends with the added luck of the hunter finding a handful of money. *Ovsen* is a term associated with the New Year and originates from the Pagan worship or belief that *Ovsen* is the god that lights the solar wheel every year providing the gift of light. In addition to

the *Podblyudniye* songs, Ovsen appears in “ceremonial or calendar songs of the solar cycle” (Taruskin 1161). Ovsen became a New Year’s carol sung door to door in exchange for presents. “Ovsen, whose name is derived from Oves (oats, pronounced avyos), like the Teutonic Sun-god, is supposed to ride a pig or a boar. Hence the sacrifices of pigs’ trotters, and other pork products, were offered to the gods at New-Year, and such dishes are still preferred in Russia at that season” (Hapgood 12).

The text translated in English for Song I, “Saints’ Day in Chigisakh”, without repeats, is as follows: “So it is said, that on Saints’ Days in Chigisakh on Yaouzoi, all the lucky peasants roll in riches, gathering golden pieces by the shovelful and silver by the basketful.” “This song foretells a marriage to a wealthy man” (Taruskin 1159). The maidens that practiced dish-divination ceremonies in Sakharov’s folk verse were highly interested in the fate of their love life (marriage) and whether or not that included any inherited wealth. The ceremony involved a matchmaker that sang while the “trinkets” were drawn from the dish.

Song IV, “Master Portly” is about the harvest and spreading seeds throughout a turnip field. What is odd about this is that “sacks of fleas and lice” are metaphors for the “seeds” that Master Portly sows while trampling through the fields that are being harvested. Musically Stravinsky toys with the text’s use of fleas and lice even though it’s roots are again, referencing the lives and cares of the Russian peasant. At the end of each phrase, Stravinsky inserts the exclamation of “Glory!”

Song III “The Pike” is about a fish that is made of gems and jewels. The song is again foretelling of riches and fortune with the scattering of the text of “Glory!”

The text in the chorus sections of “The Pike” is Glory in English, and *Vivat* in French. This is interesting because the text Glory in the song IV “Master Portly” is written in French as *Hourrah*, which is also, the French text used to ascribe ‘so’tis said’ in “On Saints’ Days in Chigisakh” (song I). “*Hourrah*” used in song I and IV, while “Glory!” appears in song IV translated from “*Hurrah!*” in Song III. The literal French translation of *vivat* to English is cheer, while the translation of glory to French is *glorie*. The word *slava* means Glory in Russian and in appears at the end of *each* phrase for all three songs. So the assumption is that Stravinsky wrote “*Slava!*” in all three songs yet it somehow was lost in translation.

What Taruskin and Walsh fail to mention, or focus on rather, is the connection between *Podblyudniye* song’s mixing of the “Glory” text with the other settings of Ovsen-related songs. “One of the most prominent and interesting of the Christianized carols is the Sláva, or Glory Song. . . . This Glory song is used in the following manner: The young people assemble together to deduce omens from the words that are sung, while trinkets belonging to each person present are drawn at random from a cloth-covered bowl, in which they have deposited. This is the first song of the series:

Glory to God in Heaven, Glory!

To our Lord on this earth, Glory! . . .

(12 more stanzas, each phrase ending in ‘Glory!’)

But this song we sing to the Grain, Glory!

To the Grain we sing, the Grain we honor, Glory!” (Hapgood 11).

Hapgood goes on to say, “Another curious old song connected with the grain is sung at the New-Year. Boys go about from house to house, scattering grain of different sorts,

chiefly oats, and singing ‘*O, Ovsen*’” (12). It is hard to say whether Stravinsky knew of Sakharov’s sources or whether this connection was made inadvertently through Stravinsky’s own study. Suffice it to say, it is possible that Stravinsky, in his priority of verse, made his own connections across many folk verses and songs, resulting in his own original amalgamation of song; spanning across quite a variety of folk sources. Perhaps there is more to this. Perhaps Stravinsky’s deliberate choice of text within his *Four Russian Peasant Songs*, written while away from his beloved native country during the First World War, was an effort to preserve Russian heritage while finding “alleviation in the delight with which I steeped myself in Russian folk poems” (Stravinsky *Autobiography* 53).

Taruskin’s makes a claim to the existence of a fifth Russian Peasant song based on several factors. Chester was scheduled to publish *Four Russian Peasant Songs* along with all of Stravinsky’s wartime compositions in 1920; however, Chester did not publish them until 1932. These publications included translations in Russian, English, and French but were never given a Russian title. (German rights were assigned in 1930 and the choruses were give a German title.) Consequently, Taruskin refers to a copy of a “Calligraphic title page of a lost fair copy of Stravinsky’s peasant chorus, listing a fifth setting titled “*Na korite sizhu*” . . . The title page is on the Morgan Library Manuscript is the only one we have in Stravinsky’s hand for the set as it stands, and should be regarded as definitive” (1156–7). The text is found in Sakharov’s *Skazaniya russkogo naroda* and also follows the Glory song pattern. Taruskin affirms, “(as usual, the exclamation ‘*Slava!*’— ‘*Glory*’— follows each line of the text): I’m sitting on an overturned trough, I’m looking for some advantage, I’ll sit some more, I’ll look some more; I glance here and there, And advantage came to [our] homestead,” (1156).

Taruskin then relates “*Na korite sizhu*” to another of Stravinsky’s dish-divination songs, “*Sidit varabey na chuzhoy garadbe*”, which was the second song of the *Quatre chants russes* of 1919. This text of “*Sidit varabey na chuzhoy garadbe*” also includes the use of “*Glory!*” at the end of each phrase, and Taruskin persists further, suggesting the two are really about Stravinsky’s feelings of isolation as an alien away from his home country. This text of “*Sidit varabey na chuzhoy garadbe*” goes on about a sparrow that is perched on a stranger’s fence, in a stranger’s home. Taruskin writes “One can hardly imagine anything more fitting than this text as a metaphor of Stravinsky’s own condition. The song set is about the closest thing we have to an autobiographical confession from this most tight-lipped of composers. It is precisely the aptness of his textual choices that proves—however little he may have remembered or cared about the texts he set when it came time to give his most widely noticed testimony about them—that at the time of writing Stravinsky’s interest in his sources was lively and his knowledge of them detailed and accurate” (1160–1).

Stravinsky writes, “The Phenomenon of music is given to us with the sole purpose of establishing an order in things, including, and particularly, the coordination between *man* and *time*. To be put into practice, its indispensable and single requirement is construction. Construction once completed, this order has been attained, and there is nothing more to be said” (*Autobiography* 54). Stravinsky irrefutably composed with a sense of structure and balance and there are many indicators to suggest that he valued order in his life *and* in his work. If we conclude that his music was not composed to express or emote anything, then Stravinsky— as one of the most well renowned

composers of all time— has then most likely created a greater emotional connection for his audience than he gives credit of having experienced himself.

As a private yet public figure, many things apparently annoyed Stravinsky, such as the misinterpretation of his music, his audiences' lack of understanding his forward movement, and others asserting their own interpretation of meaning onto his work. Is it conceivable that he resented the notion that his music could be valued only the unfounded opinions of those whom would just simply listen and try to draw out some sort of raw emotion? Was his ideal of being fully understood better derived out of one's appreciation for the depth of his craft and invention? Did he desire to be separated from a level of unsophisticated irrational, emotionality? Stravinsky *may not have* composed *Four Russian Peasant Songs* to share express feelings of nostalgia for his childhood and his native country. His choice of text could very well be happenstance. It is feasible to reason why, "many aestheticians have devoted much study to the meaning in music" (Schonberg 486), because that is how we are biologically hard-wired to experience it. Stravinsky insisting that it is "futile to look for, or expect anything else from" (54), music outside of its construction, is to suggest that so many of us are *trying* to synthesize something that is plausibly inherent in us from a very young age. Inherent in Stravinsky, unquestionably was his function as a composer. "For me, as a creative musician, I compose as a daily function that I feel compelled to discharge. I compose because I am made for that and cannot do otherwise" (174).

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