

ORTHODOX church music

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From The Editor

Today one can find a multiplicity of musical styles predominating in the liturgical services of the Orthodox Church, especially in America: monophonic or simple one-line chant, harmonized or polyphonic arrangements of chant melodies, and freely-composed works which are not based on any traditional chant melodies.

Such a diversity of musical styles, especially when used together in one liturgical service, can often prove to be spiritually and liturgically distracting. Radical proposals which favor the use of one type of musical style to the elimination of all others — made in the interest of “purity of musical form” — are, more often than not, based on subjective and one-sided criteria and do not necessarily result in good liturgical prayer.

The articles presented in this issue highlight other considerations which are just as important as musical style in determining what is or is not good liturgical music. In Vincent Peterson’s article on “Reasonable Worship”, we see how bishops and leaders of the Russian Church in the 16th and 17th centuries were faced with the task of correcting linguistic, liturgical, and musical abuses which abounded in the service books. They stressed understanding as a key element in defining acceptable church singing. As John Shimchick illustrates, it was important for the bishops, who met in 1905 to prepare for a Great Council of the Russian Church, that church music be in conformity with the “spirit” of Orthodox worship. They strongly advocated a form of music that would encourage congregational participation. Raising the level and the quality of church singing through education was a primary goal for Stepan Smolensky, as described by Vladimir Morosan.

Today in the Church, Fr. Michael Fortounatto stresses the importance of an ascetical as well as an aesthetic vision of worship. Finally, in an article that should be read by all pastors as well as church musicians, Fr. Sergei Glagolev shows us that it is in the hymnography of the Church that the faithful can discover the theology of the Orthodox faith; therefore, it is of paramount importance that church singers do know “how” to sing.

— David Drillock

Cover Illustration — June Magaziner

“St. Romanos the Melodist (patron saint of church singers everywhere) conducting from his podium, manuscript in hand.”

Music & Worship

By John Shimchick

Some suggestions from the Russian Bishops of 1905 *

The missionaries who came to Alaska in the 1700's brought not only the Orthodox faith, but also the Russian approach to the way in which this faith was expressed in worship. From that time on, the standard service books published by the pre-revolutionary Russian Church have been generally accepted as the norm for the liturgical life and practice of the Church in America.

While some people look nostalgically back to this period as the "golden age" of Orthodoxy, it is an historic fact that the liturgical situation in pre-revolutionary Russia was not only unsatisfactory, but also chaotic and in need of substantial corrections and changes.¹ This fact is well-established in "*The Responses of the Diocesan Bishops Concerning the Question of Church Reform*,"² a document which includes statements from several Russian bishops of the pre-revolutionary era. These "Responses" were prepared in 1905 for the anticipated Great Council (Sobor) of the Russian Church that was eventually held in 1917-1918. While the bishops spoke on many other areas of Church reform, the purpose of this article is to discuss the relationship between their comments on worship and the liturgical situation presently found in America.³

"The Orthodox faith is experienced, strengthened, and affirmed mainly in worship. Worship is justifiably considered as the best school for the teaching of faith and morality and it bountifully and generously acts on all the powers and capacities of the soul. But, in order for it to accomplish this, all believers must directly and actively be able to participate in it. It must take hold and draw them by its contents and celebration and become an indispensable yearning. It is terribly unfortunate, however, that one cannot say this about the worship of

the Russian Orthodox Church." (II, p. 454) With these words, Bishop Nazarius of Nizhni-Novgorod not only introduced his own remarks about worship, but summarized what many of his fellow bishops felt and expressed. They understood the important position worship occupied in the life of the Church and realized, as well, how far it was from fulfilling this responsibility.

Several bishops excellently described what was no doubt the liturgical situation throughout most of pre-revolutionary Russia. Bishop Constantine of Samara wrote that:

The people have no true prayers. They patiently stand for whole hours through the worship in the church, but this is not prayer since the feeling of prayer cannot be sustained for whole hours without an understanding of the words of prayer, and the words of the service in the church are above the understanding of the people. Divine worship is incomprehensible to the people not only because it is celebrated in the Church Slavonic language and with hurried readings, but also simply because a certain measure of theological education is needed to understand it. Orthodox worship is a great treasure if we compare our church's chants with the rather shallow Lutheran hymns and someday all the Orthodox will take

Worship is a powerful means of influence which the pastor has on his flock, and it has a religious, moral, and educational meaning. However, it will fully reach its goal only when it will be celebrated in a language which is understandable for all . . .

Bishop Ioanniky of Archangel

advantage of this. Nevertheless, at present this is still a treasure 'concealed within the village walls,' while the people are spiritually starving and impoverished having no prayer within reach of their understanding, except the litanies and to some extent the akathists, which the people love so much just because they are somewhat understood. It is necessary to educate the people so that they will consider not just the bows and the sign of the cross, not just mechanical readings or the hearing of the incomprehensible words of the psalter, troparia and sticheras as forms of prayer. What can be done so that the corporate worship, in the church, which in Greece was once such a perfect way of satisfying the spiritual needs of prayer, should again be turned into a truly prayerful attitude of worship? (I, p. 440)

Bishop Gury of Simbirsk offers a similar description. He says:

Orthodox worship is one of the main expressions of love for God and the best school for development of the community spirit among the members of the parish, for here in the church hundreds of souls become one in praises, thanksgivings and supplications which unite the souls of the shepherd and his flock, the clergy and the people. This, at least, must be the ideal. Unfortunately, the present situation of Orthodox worship does not fully promote this merging of souls of the pastors and their flocks. Without mentioning the many defects in our worship, which are related to the abuses in the manner in which it is celebrated (extreme hastiness, unintelligible reading and singing, distraction in the celebration of worship and an absence of prayerful feeling in the people themselves) one cannot help but direct his attention to a feature of our worship which, through being sanctified by church practice, leads to the separation of the clergy and people. While the

The church building ought to be a school for the Orthodox layman, and the worship celebrated within it ought to be a series of individual lessons in Christian life, since here a man learns not only what he must do, but also what he must think and feel.

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clergy offer their hymns of thanksgiving, supplication and glorification the people are reduced to the role of passive listeners. Hence, there exists a striking difference in spirit among the laity who, on the one hand, attend services in Orthodox churches and those who attend "non-Orthodox" (sectarian) churches and the difference is not in our favor. (II, p. 20)

Many of the bishops referred to the church and particularly worship as the main school for Christians. Bishop Ioanniky of Archangel seemed to sense and express the real implication behind this image and its relation to the liturgical language. He wrote:

Worship is a powerful means of influence which the pastor has on his flock, and it has a religious, moral, and educational meaning. However, it will fully reach its goal only when it will be celebrated in a language which is understandable for all, that is, in the native Russian language. Holy Scripture says, "Sing to God with understanding." The apostles preached and prayed with the believers in all languages. We have in Russia the translation of the liturgy into Latvian, Zirian, Mordovian, but worship is not celebrated in our own native language. The sectarians lead some astray precisely because their worship is simple, comprehensible and served in Russian. The church building ought to be a school for the Orthodox layman, and the worship celebrated within it ought to be a series of individual lessons in Christian life, since here a man learns not only what he must do, but also what he must think and feel.

What can be said for a school that conducts its classes in an incomprehensible language? Every sensible person would say that such a school would be of little use, and would have little influence on its pupils.

The Orthodox Church in Russia is, in this case, in a worse situation than all of the other schools for the people; everywhere, in all schools, instruction is carried out in a generally comprehensible language; only in the church is worship celebrated in the partially understood and for many even completely unintelligible Slavonic language. Being splendid in content, it remains incomprehensible, and as a result, does not have the desired influence on the simple people. Therefore, it would be useful to substitute Russian in place of the Slavonic language. Such a change will give many the great joy of participating in worship often, not just by standing in church, but by taking part with knowledge. (I pp. 335-336)

Another area mentioned by the bishops concerned the structure of worship as indicated by the Typikon and the way that this was arbitrarily being practiced. Bishop Michael of Minsk wrote that:

The entire compilation of our present worship did not appear at one time. On the contrary, our worship has endured many alterations: from simple prayers, orders, and rites that existed at the time of the apostles, it has undergone constant stratification and additions and now appears in a complicated and many-layered form, intended for numerous hours. In order to celebrate our worship as is meant, without hurrying and distinctly, one would need seven hours to complete the All-Night Vigil before a feast day, three hours for the liturgy, and another two hours for vespers, which adds up to twelve hours. This is celebrated at a few monasteries - and only a few at that.

In some places where it is celebrated according to the rules, with all of the proper readings and hymns, the natural weakness of the clergy forces them to shorten it by hurrying and as a result the readings and hymns are irreverently and incomprehensibly rendered. From this one can conclude that out of the 50,000 Russian churches in the empire, worship is celebrated in 49,000 of them with extremely arbitrary abbreviations and also hastiness and very poor reading and singing. (I, pp. 41-42)

Bishop Nazarius of Nazhni-Novgorod added:

Obviously, this matter does not simply concern the good or bad training of the readers and singers. There was a time when "psalm-reader" positions were assumed only by those people who had finished a seminary course of study; but even then it was not much better. The situation does usually improve in those places where the rectors themselves are concerned about the best execution of the reading and singing and have the support of the other "clerics" ("psalm-readers" and others who help with the services) who in return welcome the pious zeal of the rectors . . . However, it seems that in most cases the liturgical service becomes a profession or formal job for the "clerics" and not something in which they direct all their energy . . . This leads to their coldness and indifference towards it and also, as a result, to the meaningless abbreviations of the services. Many of these abbreviations, because they were done so long ago and have been spread around to such an extent, have become accepted everywhere as normal and proper - and

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Bishop Nazarius of Nizhni-Novgorod

almost no one notices that they do not make any sense. The soul of one who does notice this mourns, grumbles and is filled with indignation. Here are some examples of the abbreviations:

1) At the Vigil:

The Opening Psalm “Bless the Lord, O My Soul” (104)

First Kathisma (Blessed is the Man)

Polyeleion Psalms (Praise the Name of the Lord)

Praises, before “Glory to God in the Highest”

First Hour, when it begins directly with “Holy God, Holy Mighty . . .

2) At the Liturgy:

The Antiphons (Bless the Lord, O My Soul and the others)

The usual practice in numerous cases is to sing some parts of the verses which are selected from the Psalms without any connection between the logical meaning and the structure. But everyone gets so accustomed to these abridgements that no one thinks about it and simply accepts them as being necessary and even appointed. (II, pp. 454-458)

The Deanery Assembly of the Shenkursk Province (Archangel Diocese) wrote:

The Typikon, according to which the services must be celebrated, is only carried out in monasteries; in the parishes there is so much which is omitted, depending on the arbitrariness of the clergy, that the fair though offensive saying has come about that: “Each priest has his own Typikon.”

Therefore it is necessary to develop a special Parish Typikon. (I, p. 403)

Bishop Eusebius of Vladivostok felt that guidelines were needed to regulate the already existing, though unofficial, “Parish Typikon.” He wrote that:

I would like to point out the desirability of introducing uniformity into the celebration of worship in view of the fairly long existence of a generally practiced and deviated form of the Typikon. This form is handed down in the village and city churches not according to a written, but oral tradition and could be recognized as a “Parish Typikon.” On the one hand, it must be acknowledged that this abridged Typikon for parishes obviously is caused by the demands of life itself and the absence of a non-monastic Typikon. But on the other hand, all of these deviations, while being reinforced by long practice, still have not attained widespread agreement and uniformity. As a result, this leaves a great deal of room for the personal and often completely arbitrary discretion of the negligent and shrewd pastors who usually justify themselves by saying that we do not have a monastery here, that abbreviations are done in all parishes and that if the services drag on for too long then the worshippers will not come. If it is necessary to shorten the Typikon, then it would be better to show some definite guidelines. (IV, p. 202)

Additionally, many of the bishops pointed out that liturgical music had an important role in making worship accessible to the people and in encouraging congregational participation. Bishop John of Poltava wrote:

In regard to worship, both singing and reading have the same essential meaning and both should be understandable and prayerful. However, this prayerful liturgical character now is frequently disturbed by the musical rendition of the hymnography which was created on a basis alien to the spirit

of our Church. There are musical arrangements which are completely foreign to this humble and reverently prayerful character, such as "Our Father" ascribed to Mozart, "Open to Me the Doors of Repentance" by Vedel and others which are unfit for worship. There are such arrangements which, because of their artistic execution, draw the attention of listeners more to their aesthetical than prayerful side, as seen, for example in Grechaninov's recent composition of "The Creed" for solo voice and most of the "concert" pieces. Such compositions are unsuitable for use in church. They offer truly beautiful harmonizations, but undermine the spirit of man which is turned to God. Instead of the spiritual movement toward the One who is everywhere, as appears in the intense elevation of our minds and hearts toward God, we get musical enjoyment instead. The result turns out to be a religious concert, but it is not prayer. Probably everyone who examines his own prayer life during the singing of this type will find that what has been said is correct. (II, p. 334)

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Bishop John of Poltava

Bishop George of Astrakhan added:

It is necessary to turn our attention to liturgical singing and to use only those chants which are strictly in conformity with the spirit of Orthodox worship. Those presently selected now exhibit great arbitrariness and disorder. The pieces chosen are highly embellished, flowery, and in the spirit of Italian music, which, as a result, sometimes turn the church of God into a musical hall, and a religiously-prayerful spirit into one that

is more concerned with artistic and aesthetical matters. (I, p. 323)

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Bishop Antonii (Khrapovitskii) of Volhynia felt that in order to do something about the condition of church music, one must first deal with those whom he felt are really in charge of the services. He wrote that:

The diocesan councils must discuss how to adorn the divine worship to God by its correct performance, how to manage the chief "regulators" of our present worship (that is, the choir directors), and generally, how to change its present and confused state. The order of each festal service is dependent not upon the priest or even on the "psalm-reader" but upon a hired "expert" from a secular background who is completely ignorant and often a disgrace. During the service there is almost nothing that remains the same, but everything is abandoned in favor of two or three disgusting "concert" numbers that are not appointed by the Typikon. (I, p. 134)

Bishop Constantine of Samara wrote about congregational singing.

We must restore singing to the state it should and formerly did have. It is necessary to renew in the minds of the people the notion that congregational singing is the norm, and that choral singing is only a substitution for this, just as the work of cantors only replaces the choir in those situations where a community is unable to have a choir. The idea of the choir as only a replacement for congregational singing, whenever it is impractical for the whole church to sing something (depending on the existing conditions of time and place), must be taught to the people through worship in cathedrals and in the churches of the ecclesiastical schools

where the worshippers would mostly consist of students. Congregational singing can begin most easily with the singing of psalms, using melodies that are not very complicated and fairly well known. The text could be published with divisions into musical phrases (as when the stichera are published) so that all churches would be able to utilize it in worship. After the psalms, one could use some of the various hymns that make up daily worship and whose melodies are known throughout the whole church. For example: "O Gladsome Light," "St. Simeon's Prayer," "Only Begotten Son," "Glory to God in the Highest," "Holy God," and "Come, Let us Worship." (I, pp. 440-441)

The Deanery Report of the Onezh Province (Archangel Diocese) concluded:

It is desirable to introduce the practice of singing some of the psalms such as "I will bless the Lord at all times," (Ps 34) and "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy," (Ps 51) so that those parishioners who would like could sing them during Holy Communion . . . In addition, it would be good to teach all parishioners the following hymns: "The Creed," "The Anaphora - It is meet and right; Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth!; We praise Thee," "It is Truly Meet," and "Our Father." These hymns should especially be taught to school children, who will be able to continually sing them as they grow older. (I, p. 339)

Bishop Gury of Simbirsk, while encouraging the introduction of congregational singing, realized that "it will not be very organized (especially at the beginning); but what a change for the better can come about in the spirit of the faithful!" (II, p. 20)

As we have seen, the Russian bishops touched upon many aspects of worship. Their "Responses" reflected the desire that worship should be intelligible, that the congregation must be able to participate in it, and finally that it must return to its role as the "school" for the teaching of the Christian faith.

In a recent article Andrew Kuharsky listed

some of the problems that he has experienced in contemporary Orthodox worship.⁴ These included such things as: lack of uniformity in the celebration, careless and hurried reading and singing, the need for parish typikon, the problems of liturgical language and the need for congregational singing. Not much has changed since the Russian bishops submitted their "Responses" 80 years ago!

The problems are the same, and they concern not only the topic of worship, but the typical approach of Orthodox people toward their faith. How does a church which prides itself in tradition recognize creativity and change? Is the Church the preservation of customs and identity or is it the living continuity of the faith of the apostles of Jesus Christ? Are the unchangeable essentials of this faith accessible to every age? These are the questions which we as Orthodox Christians (and not just liturgical musicians) must face. These are the questions which we, unlike the bishops of 1905, (who were prevented by the Russian Revolution), have the possibility of answering.

References:

- 1 Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, "On the Question of Liturgical Practices - A Letter to My Bishop," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, 17:3/1973, pp. 227-38.
- 2 *Otzyvy eparkhial'nykh arkhirey po voprosam o tserkovnoi reforme*, 3 vols., St. Petersburg, 1906, and supplement (contains a total of 79 reports from 64 bishops).
- 3 Various aspects of these documents have been studied recently. Fr. John Meyendorff briefly presents the background and outlines some areas of their discussion in "Russian Bishops and Church Reform in 1905," *Catholicity and the Church*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983, pp. 143-156. James W. Cunningham studies in great detail the documents and the movement for the Church renewal in Russia (1905-1906) in *A Vanquished Hope*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1981. Liturgical reform, however, has been discussed only by Nicholas Zernov, "The Reform of the Church and the Pre-Revolutionary Russian Episcopate," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, 6:1962, pp. 128-138, and in : *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century*, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1963. pp. 53-85.
- 4 "Lipservice to the Lord," *The Orthodox Church*, May, 1984.

* Most of this article is taken from: *The Responses of the Russian Episcopate Concerning Worship - 1905 and the Liturgical Situation in America*. Unpublished master's thesis prepared for St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary, 1980.

Reasonable Worship?

By Vincent Peterson

ISSUES IN 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY RUSSIAN CHURCH SINGING

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were not the brightest for the Russian Church. The southern and western regions of the old Kievan appanage had long since fallen under the domination of the Poles and Lithuanians following devastation by the Mongol Horde. The Orthodox of Galicia, Volhynia and White Russia were engaged in a life and death struggle with the Catholic nobility to retain their Orthodox Faith. The Muscovites to the north, at times nothing more than political pawns in the struggle between the Poles and Swedes for domination of the north, were subject to the horrendous abuses of Ivan IV the Terrible only to emerge into the so-called Times of Trouble when Russia groped for a new dynasty to rule in place of the heir-less house of Rurik. The triumphant ideology of Moscow as the Third Rome, bastion of true Christianity, collapsed miserably.

The Church itself was not exempt from difficulties in this period. By the reign of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, (the second Romanov), reformation was badly needed in the Russian Church. While the West was embroiled in controversy in matters of doctrine, the Russians found themselves tangled in a web of liturgical problems. Both liturgical and musical abuses were rampant. The liturgical books were replete with errors and innovations which rendered the texts of the liturgy and daily office practically incomprehensible at points. Even Avvakum, the famous archpriest who led the dissent against the reforms of Patriarch Nikon, recognized the need for change of some kind.

There were three major areas of abuse in the worship of the Russian Orthodox Church of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that we will deal with in this article: (1) *Khomoniia* (also referred to as *razdel'norechie*

or divergent speech) which concerned a corruption of the liturgical text as a result of a linguistic development, (2) *mnogoglasie* (not to be confused with *mnogogolosie*) which was a problem of liturgical practice or execution and (3) *anenaika* and *khabuvoe penie*, two problems of a purely musical nature. It is important for us as Christians to see these abuses not as mere corruptions of some venerable body of chant alone, but as practices which made Orthodox Christian worship all but impossible.

KHOMONIIA

While the origins of the term *Khomoniia* are debated, there is no mistaking that it refers to a problem which arose in the pronunciation and singing of liturgical texts. It is a problem which is bound to appear when one deals with ancient monuments of any living language: the problem of change. One need only look at *Beowulf* or the works of William Shakespeare to see that the English language has undergone transformation in time. Something much the same occurred in the Russian language. Very simply, liturgical texts were pronounced and sung differently in the 11th century than they were read later in the 17th century. Something of the sort exists in the rendering of Elizabethan English. Modern English pronunciation of the word "moved" is rendered in one syllable (moov'd). But, an actor wishing to read the lines of Shakespeare's angered prince in *Romeo and Juliet* would pronounce the very same word in two syllables, as in the following:

Throw your mistemper'd weapons to
the ground, and hear the sentence of
your moved prince. (moov ed)

The double syllable could be ignored in a reading, but it would have to be sung as two distinct syllables if notes were to appear above the final "ed" in a musical setting. The problem is magnified in the case of old Slavonic texts as

the additional syllables occur repeatedly both in the middle and at the end of words, making them unrecognizable, as we will see.

The controversy centered around a major change in the pronunciation of the Russian hard sign Ѣ and soft sign Ъ. Neither of these letters are pronounced in modern Russian, nor were they in the 17th century. But, these same letters were voiced semi-vowels in the Russian of the 11th and 12th centuries. Manuscripts dating from this early period are distinguished by the continuation of the melody over the letters Ѣ and Ъ, as well as the presence of neumes or musical signs above them. As S. V. Smolenskii, a pioneer in the field of medieval Russian singing, notes, "it is only possible for us to theorize about the probable pronunciation of these letters . . ." ¹ But we do know that from the fifteenth century onward, a gradual change in orthography and popular speech began which is reflected in manuscripts of the period. This change involved omission of the semi-vowels in most cases and their full-voicing in others. The hard sign Ѣ came to be pronounced o and the soft sign Ъ became e. Thus, a word like ДѢНЬСЬ (meaning: today), unpronounceable in modern Russian, presented no real problem in the 11th and 12th centuries; musical signs would be found above each soft sign indicating three distinct syllables. But, as the Russian language developed and the status of the hard and soft signs changed in speech, a gradual disparity became evident between the language of the market place and that of the cathedral.

The singers remained rather conservative about the chant they inherited from their ancestors and teachers. A change in the vowels, especially their omission, would necessitate a change of some sort in the structure of the melodic line. Not wanting to alter their traditional melodies, the singers insisted on singing o and e whenever Ѣ and Ъ appeared. Ironically, the vowel sounds that the singers used to replace the semi-vowels in the 17th century had very little to do with those which 11th century singers actually sang. It should be noted that this affectation in pronunciation by singers was not tolerated at all in the *reading* of the various liturgical texts, the Gospel or epistles.

There are indications, chiefly in the 17th century manuscripts, of full-voicing at totally unwarranted points. It seems that in the golden age of medieval Russian singing (znamenny chant) and virtuoso singers, some singers felt there was no harm in adding extra syllables to words where the melody would be enhanced. Whatever their reasons were for disregarding the clarity of the texts, the results were disastrous for the liturgy and Christian worship. The music might well have been wonderful, but nobody understood what was being prayed. Smolenskii continues:

From unnecessary full-voicing and extension of the melody over unstressed vowels, it happened that either (1) a different meaning was added to the word as a result of alphabetical configurations, (2) a different meaning resulted from the modification of grammatical forms, or, finally, (3) absolute nonsense resulted. ²

The issue at hand is a basic one concerning the very nature of singing in Orthodox Christian worship: does the music serve the text or does the text remain somehow neutral and secondary? In the case of *khomoniiia* it would appear that the singers and the Church authorities had somewhat different views as to the inviolability of the chant heritage where the spiritual well-being of the faithful was at stake. Indeed, this is often the case today where elaborate compositions of Baroque inspiration and an often archaic and obscure liturgical language encounter spiritual renewal.

MNOGOGLASIE

The second great abuse of the age concerned a liturgical practice which is often confused with the advent of Western harmony in Muscovite church singing and/or native Russian forms of polyphony which also began to emerge in the 17th century.

Western harmony was first applied to Orthodox church singing among the Orthodox living under the combined Polish and Lithuanian Crown. Considerable pressure was put on non-Roman Catholics to join the state church by the Polish nobility and Jesuits. Sadly, the Orthodox hierarchy buckled under persecution, but their flocks did not. The laity

formed brotherhoods (*bratstva*) in order to preserve their faith and way of life. The Poles decided that the best way to bring the Orthodox populace into submission to Rome was to allow them to retain their Eastern or Byzantine form of worship within the Roman Church. There were, however, certain external elements of Latin worship some of the Orthodox faithful found attractive, even tempting; among them was the Latin music. Harmony was something entirely new to the Orthodox and it was not too long before it found its way into Orthodox church singing. W.J. Birbeck explains:

. . . these brotherhoods seeing the immense influence that harmonized music had upon the people, and determined, as we should say, "not to let the devil have all the best tunes," started choirs to sing on the same principles as their rivals, and added harmonies in three or four parts (mostly in note to note counterpoint of a very elementary description to the old Slavonic plainsong.³

It was in the seventeenth century that this Western style harmonized church singing was first introduced into the Muscovite liturgy. It is very likely that this occurred under the patronage of Patriarch Nikon himself.

From here (Western Russia or the Ukraine) it gradually spread into Great Russia, although it made very slow progress; for it was strenuously resisted both by some of the Church authorities and by the extremely conservative temperament of the nation, which was the more intensified by fear and dislike of Rome. This antagonism to the West reached its climax in the first years of the seventeenth century when the Poles took Moscow, and all but made an end of the nation and the national church. But after these troubles were over, the harmonized settings were gradually introduced, together with the stave of five lines, first into Great Novgorod, and then to Moscow itself, until by the beginning of the eighteenth century nothing but the plainsong remained in common between one monastery and

another, every choir having its own way of harmonizing the melodies.⁴

This type of singing was called *partesnoe penie* or part singing. It has often been confused with *mnogoglasie* and *mnogogolosie*, both of which refer to multiple voices, but in very different forms.

What is an already difficult situation is made even more confusing by the fact that *mnogoglasie* and *mnogogolosie* are closely related linguistically, sharing the same roots; *mnogo* (many) and *golog/glas* (voice). *Mnogogolosie* is a musical term which is applied to a native Russian form of polyphony which is unrelated to Western European harmony and polyphony. *Mnogoglasie*, on the other hand, is a liturgical term which concerns a relatively widespread abuse in the liturgy of sixteenth and seventeenth century Russia.

As was the case with *khomoniiia*, many complaints were lodged both by the clergy and laity about *mnogoglasie*. But, lacking a precise musical terminology considerable confusion arose as to whether or not these complaints were directed against the harmonized church singing of the Ukraine. Patriarch Germogen (1606-1612) wrote:

We are informed that . . . great disorder has occurred in the church singing. According to the Holy Apostles and the laws of the Holy Fathers, one does not alter the church singing and speak in two, three or four voices and sometimes even in five or six voices simultaneously. That is foreign to Christian law.⁵

Another complaint was directed to Patriarch Iosaf (1667-1672):

The customary royal singing is insecure in many ways. It is not performed in the correct manner. A second voice and a third voice are added to the initial voice, even up to five and six voices are added.⁶

At first glance one might easily deduce that the issue was that of part singing or *partesnoe penie*, especially due to the use of the word "voice." Rather, *mnogoglasie* was a curious parochial method of reducing the amount of time necessary for a given service without

omitting anything required by the *typikon* or book that regulates the cycle of the services in the Orthodox Church.

In a nutshell, the various elements of a given service were divided among the singers and readers present so that they could all be read or sung simultaneously, for example: Singer A might be given the opening psalm of vespers and two stikhera on "Lord I Call", singer B might be given four Apostikha verses and Gladsome Light, singer C might be given the remaining "Lord I Call" verses and St. Simeon's Prayer, and then they would all proceed to sing them at once. A five hour monastic vigil service could be done in its entirety in a fraction of the time, without having omitted one "jot or tittle." Fears of transgressing "holy tradition" could be easily assuaged as everything that was required had been done. The fact that nobody had the faintest idea what was being prayed obviously was not an issue.

Gardner suggests that the genesis of this practice may well have been the result of parish churches trying to manage an essentially monastic *typikon*, a tension that exists today. The *typikon* of the St. Savva monastery, which was adopted by the whole Russian Church some time towards the close of the 14th century, is a monastic *typikon*. However fine it

might have been for monks to keep long hours in church, the rigors of the monastic order of services were not suited for parochial life. Men with families to care for and fields to tend, simply could not afford to spend the greater portion of a day in church. Gardner points out that *mnogoglasie* was; in fact, primarily a parochial practice and that monasteries, for the most part, did not employ it.

ANENAIKA AND KHABUVOE PENIE

One would think that the utter confusion and disorder that resulted from the affected pronunciation of *khomoniiia* and the chaos of *mnogoglasie* would have been sufficient for any age. But there remain two additional practices of the 16th and 17th centuries which further clouded Orthodox worship in Muscovy: *anenaika* and *khabuvoe penie*. Both of these abuses involved the insertion of nonsensical syllables into a given liturgical text on the pretext that these syllables facilitated the singing in some manner or that they served as ornament.

Anenaika involves the addition of the syllables *НА*, *НЕ*, and *НИ* to a given text. It would appear that these extraneous syllables are to be found primarily in hymns of a festal nature at points where the melodic line of the chant reaches a peak.

THE MAGNIFICATION OF ANNUNCIATION

1. Ар ха гге ле сны и гла со
2. во пи е мо ти чи ста я
3. о ле та ни _____ [аи не не на а ни]
4. ра доу и ся об ра до ван на я
5. го спо де с то бо ю.

(From Gardner *Bogosluzhebnoe penie* p. 480)

The phenomenon of *anenaika* can be observed in the third line of the above example within the brackets. It occurs about midway in the hymn where an extended melisma would otherwise be found. The question arises as to its purpose: were the syllables added to help the singer with a difficult vocal line or are we to infer some form of verbal elaboration? Whatever the case may be, a definite corruption of the text occurs for what appears to be rather capricious reasons.

Likewise, another seemingly nonsensical addition to the singing of the same period is the word *хабува* (*khabuva*), which also appears in the form of *ине ине хабува* (*ine ine khabuva*). Its origins and meaning are as much a mystery today as they were in the 17th century. Given the name *khabuvoe penie* (*khabuva* singing), several theories have been advanced as to the origin of the word.

One such theory, which appears to have been rather popular in the seventeenth century itself, is mentioned in an anonymous letter to Patriarch Germogen (1606-1612). Its author, obviously dissatisfied with conventional explanations, turned to certain Greeks living in Moscow at the time in hopes that they might be able to shed some light on this subject.

Some say that where *хебуве* is said, it means *христе боже* (*KHriste bozhe* - Christ God); where *хабува* is said, that it means *христа бога* (*KHrista boga*); and where *хабуву* is said, it means *христу богу* (*KHristu bogu*). Still others say that it calls down the glory of God; others think that this is done for the sake of beauty. And there are others, with whom I agree, who believe that it does not mean anything . . . It appears, my lord, that we are shaking in darkness and that no one knows the truth . . . I asked the Greeks, my lord: Arsenii who is the archbishop of Elasson who serves in Moscow at the Arkhangel'skii Cathedral; Ignatii, the bishop of Skir, who was a patriarch and knows singing very well . . .; Ioan Damaskin, the archimandrite of the Voskresenskii Monastery who served in Jerusalem at the Lord's Tomb and now lives in

Moscow at the Chudov Monastery; and I asked the scribe Feodor Kas'ianov, and this scribe Feodor knows more than one language, Greek and Latin. And they said, my lord: "We have never heard of and do not know what you call *хабуве*, *ине*, *ине хабуве* (*khabuve*, *ine*, *ine khabuve*). We have nothing of this kind in our Greek language, in any of our books for singers or kanonarchs, nor is there anything like it in any other language that we know. We have never heard such a word in the singing . . ."7

The author goes on to say that if, indeed, these syllables stand for *KHrista boga* (Christ God), then there is no reason why one should not sing *KHrista boga*. He considers *khabuvoe penie* to be nonsense and recommends to the patriarch that it be done away with. There has been speculation that the word *khabuva* is somehow derived from either Greek or Bulgarian, but this is difficult to establish with any certitude.

BABEL OR PENTECOST

For many, the issues raised in *khomoniiia*, *mnogoglasie*, *anenaika* and *khabuvoe penie* may appear to be somewhat obscure and unimportant. However, closer scrutiny will reveal that these very same tendencies exist within the Orthodox Church today in different forms. They are bound up in a constant struggle to maintain a "reasonable worship," accessible to all of God's people. There are those who would return us to Babel once again for no reason other than to preserve dead languages that stir a sense of roots and ethnic identity. Likewise, there are others who refuse to recognize the Spirit of Pentecost, the Spirit of Life, out of a simple sense of conservatism and a blind fidelity to whatever is "old" or "traditional." Are these not the very same impulses which drove the virtuoso singers of 17th century Russia to cultivate and promote an affected pronunciation of text and the introduction of nonsense syllables which then rendered the church singing incomprehensible to all but a few delectantes?

Is God pleased by the sort of fanatic devotion
(Continued on page 40)

Church Music and Spiritual Life

By Father Michael Fortounatto

“You must be perfect . . . as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt. 5:48). This commandment is directed to every disciple who hears the word of the Lord Christ. Is there any sense in which this radical call to perfection can be said to apply to the particular case of the practitioner of church music? Is there any obligation for the singer of the church to face himself and say: “Does this incredible summons by Christ to man to emulate the Father in what He is and in what He does, apply to me in my service at the choir desk, in my art and my behavior, as it does in all vocation as a human being? Or does it only operate on the level of my eternal destiny, the eternal life? Should not the precepts of eternal life be allowed to permeate all my existence every day of my life, “in the evening and in the morning, at night and at noonday?” (Ps 55:17) Is not my vocation to emulate both Martha and Mary? Or conversely, in order to inherit eternal life, I should perhaps surrender all that is mine and made mine on this beautiful but tragic earth, and begin to walk in the total poverty of the rich young man in the gospel, as did all the hermits of the world? (There would then be no choir director left in the cathedral in London, England . . .)

Yes, at the crossroad of life, in the ultimate hour of reckoning, only “one thing” is said to be needed. In one of the rare passages in which psalmody is directly mentioned in the Philocalia it is said to apply to the diversity, the multiplicity of things in this world, (the 8 tones alone present a variety of tones) while true worship concerns itself with only one thing — with the stillness of the contemplative and ceaseless worship — with silence, or, we might say, with *hesychia*.

Yet, if not directly, the Philocalia as a body of spiritual teaching certainly does reveal some-

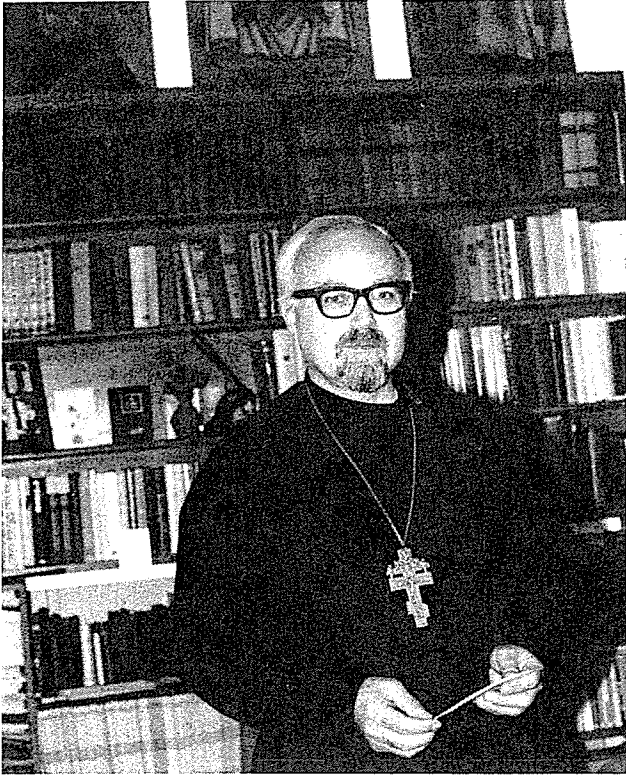
thing to enlighten us on the spirituality of church singing. The Philocalia, or “love of beauty”, in its very name leads us into the knowledge and practice of the art of prayer. What is that beauty, whose beauty is it?

The Fathers of the desert, these very hermits who turned their backs on our common history in order to be alone with God, — they immersed themselves into the deepest recesses of God’s creation, as in the waters of baptism; they went to dwell in the deepest valleys of earthly existence among the animals, the plants and the stones of the desert, seeking the essential humility, in order to discover in themselves the root of all things, the beginning of creation in their being; and once they had found Alpha, they also knew Omega, the eternal Word of God, the Lamb of God slaughtered from before time began, the King of the ages, the Savior of the world. They were all, here and now, to reach out to the end of time, to God’s holy eternity, and already anticipate the coming Kingdom.

The ascetical vision, therefore, and a determination in humility, must be our first lesson: our attitude of discernment towards the world and its graces. Like the hermit, we will love the cosmos around us, the created world, with all the beauty that it is capable of offering; but stand free from the fascination and the deceit of pure aestheticism and its arrogant self-sufficiency. We will also love and practice the morality of the Sermon of the Mount (from which my original quotation is taken) and of the entire Gospel, which will make of us men and women of God, emulators of the apostles and the other saints, “made perfect” in the sacramental sense of being marked (“branded”) at Chrismation with the seal of the divine gift; for we all have been anointed with the holy oil: our physical ears and mouth, our lungs and heart also.

But above all, we will await eagerly the return of the Lord, the Bridegroom of the Church, as

* Lecture delivered at the 1984 Liturgical Institute, St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, June 28, 1984.



He appeared — shining with the light of the Resurrection at the heart of the new time — to the bewildered disciples late at night on the first day of the first Bright Week, to give them peace and fill their burning hearts with joy.

So, early every morning, rising from sleep, as we stand to sing “God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us. Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord” (in England we say “The Lord is God who has *appeared* unto us”) we in fact proclaim the mysterious return of the Risen Lord in our midst, veiled for a time in the twilight of our earthly historical existence, but already gloriously made manifest in the inner chambers of our hearts through the kenotic action in the Church by God in the Holy Spirit. Every service of Matins during the entire year can be thus said to be a liturgical image of the first Easter Matins.

Furthermore, we can detect a mysterious link - when the Church sings her welcome to the Risen Lord - between the Resurrection and the human fact of singing. The Paschal joy of seeing the Lord is a hidden joy most of the year. It is particularly obscured by the recollection and celebration of the events of Holy Week,

especially on Great and Holy Friday and Saturday. But even then, we rise to sing “God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us.” If Christ was dead now, as He was on the first Great Holy Friday, we simply could not sing at all; we could not force our shrunken throats into the quiet discipline of voice production and of melody. We could perhaps howl in pain and terror; but there would be no beauty in this. Yet, even on Great Friday, while we are genuinely stricken with sorrow, while our melodies and our interpretation of them are filled with seriousness and dignified sadness, with a feeling of untainted personal grief, while we may actually weep with Joseph and Nicodemus, yet, we do not interrupt our song, our psalmody, the musical intonation of prophesies and praises, of prokeimena and various troparia. Our song, however vulnerable and uncertain it may be through the smallness and uncertainty of our personal faith, nevertheless proclaims to the world that “Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord, is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 12:8), risen and sovereign over life and death. For we have seen the resurrection of Christ, and this memory remains with us once and for all.

This is what liturgical singing can be said to be: a glorious confirmation of the Resurrection. What the Desert Fathers have nurtured ceaselessly to this day in their deepest heart - the Jesus prayer - we, the musicians of the Church, discover with amazement, beyond ourselves, through the ordinary practice of ceaseless singing: the abiding presence and return of the Risen Lord which is consistent with His own promise to the disciples to be with us, wherever we may be, to the end of time. We anticipate this blessed end, this epiphany, in the secret of the Divine Office, at every recurrence of the daily, weekly and yearly cycle, whenever song resounds in the Holy Temple of God, and like the flame in the lamp in front of an icon, it kindles life.

The intimate “spiritual” experience of the presence of the Risen Lord in the Church is common to all the believers, and is a unifying factor in the being of the Body. Consequently, everyone has his place in the liturgy and the musical set-up of the services. Let me, in brief, describe the three areas where things happen.

1) Proclamation or recitation of Holy Scripture

The priest, the deacon, and the reader proclaim the Word of God in the manner of *recto tono*, i.e., on one note with brief variations stressing the meaning. The voice is pitched slightly higher than the normal operating tone of the voice. The pace is quiet and the expression peaceful. This is the standard style normally used in the reading of the Gospel, the Epistles, and the prophecies.

The Psalms can also be entoned according to the tradition of chanting them, which requires the reader, singer or group of singers to be trained in the use of the chant to convey the thought and poetry of the text, and not to put the music forward. The latter is but the vehicle of the word, however well-organized and beautiful it may be. This requirement does, of course, apply to all types of chanting and singing. The sermon is nearly always spoken, not sung.

2) The liturgical dialogues

This, in many circumstances, may include the participation of the whole congregation in the form of a question or a greeting followed by an answer, or, by a repetition or variation of the same statement; for example, the Peace, the Litany, Alleluia, Prokeimenon. The leader, or questioner, can be either the priest, deacon, or reader. In many well-established parishes the answers are given by a separate choir; in some it is the congregation; in others still, the choir leads and the rest of the congregation accompanies it with a profound sort of musical murmur.

Apart from these dialogues, the whole congregation is often invited to sing well-known prayers or hymns: Our Father, the Creed, We have seen the Resurrection, Holy God; these come into the fixed parts of the services.

3) Fixed and variable hymns, prayers, verses, etc.

Nearly everywhere, this is the responsibility of the appointed choir. We must consider most of these texts, an extension of Holy Scripture, a teaching commentary devised by the Church through her poets and musicians to praise God, but also to educate: to educate the Body of the Church into salvation, and to express the mind of the Church to interested visitors. This

missionary aspect of singing by the choir imposes on the director and his singers a very heavy, but exalted priestly responsibility. They must always strive to grow in the knowledge of the Church, to learn not to obscure their message by unpreparedness and incompetence, or by an abuse of artistic self-importance.

One may accuse our choirs of exaggerated self-importance not so much in that they may perhaps obscure the Word of God in their interpretations of it — many are excellent liturgical choirs. No, it is their apparent monopoly in all but the role of the clergy; hence, the equally apparent silence and passivity of the people, the rest of the believers (on the floor). Reasons for this state of affairs are complex. But in our time of transition, I will say this: choirs as they are could be drawn to inform themselves about the nature, articulation and contents of the liturgy, and thereby prepare the people of the Church for a better understanding of Orthodox worship. A few ideas spring in mind: a) a better functional cooperation between choir-master and priest or deacon (for example: begin the litanies on the same pitch as the deacon when he says, "In peace . . ."), b) sing the prayers which ideally belong to the whole congregation always to the same simple tune (avoid temptations), c) try and keep the practice of singing the Office, be it Vespers or Vigil, d) make sure of learning the eight tones in their various forms and share this knowledge. In this way choirs could become schools of liturgical singing and knowledge; they would then 1) become the conscious core of the church, leading the congregation in the dialogues and hymns, 2) sing the variable parts, the teaching of the Church, and 3) sing the processional hymns during sacramental actions (Cherubic Hymn). Both the choir director and the singers must ideally be not only part of the Church, but also part of the particular parish or diocese, not artists invited from outside the body.

Finally, St. Ignatius of Antioch refers to the choir as representing the angels; he is echoed by Dionysios Areopagite, as well as St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory in their liturgies. Indeed, the choir leads us into a participation of the heavenly liturgy, where abides our Lord on the right hand of the heavenly Father, the true and only model of our desired perfection.

Stepan Vasilyevich Smolensky

(1848–1909)

By Vladimir Morosan

The Guiding Light of the Russian Orthodox Musical Renaissance

The history of musical culture has witnessed several periods when a favorable combination of circumstances and personalities has brought about remarkable outpourings of musical creativity in a particular idiom. In Russia, one such period, of particular interest to students of Orthodox church music, encompassed the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade-and-a-half of the twentieth centuries. During this relatively brief span of time, the face and direction of Russian Orthodox choral church music were thoroughly transformed: from a dormant backwater in the national musical culture to a dynamic and vibrant sphere of activity that commanded the attention of the leading composers and musicians in the land and critical acclaim abroad. In the course of this extraordinary renaissance, a new school of Russian sacred choral composition arose, which within a period of twenty-five years produced close to 2000 new compositions, crowned by such monumental masterpieces as Sergei Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil*.

Undoubtedly there were a number of historical and cultural factors that paved the way for this sudden blossoming of choral church music in Russia at this time. However, to the extent that this creative "movement" can be attributed to the achievements of any one individual, there is no doubt that the single most influential figure of this epoch was Stepan Vasilyevich Smolensky. By his activities as a scholar, pedagogue, administrator, critic, and composer, he inspired and guided an entire generation of Russian choral musicians, whose

talents may have otherwise developed in entirely different directions. Yet, much of his work was carried on "behind the scenes," in the realm of the visionary, the idealistic — the kind of activity that is not easily measured and described in reference books and encyclopedia articles. This, the 75th Anniversary of his death, presents an appropriate occasion to reflect upon the accomplishments of this remarkable man and to attempt to understand his vision of Orthodox church singing in Russia — a vision that holds great meaning and importance to the fledgling Orthodox musical culture in America and elsewhere in the West.

Stepan Vasilyevich Smolensky was born on October 8, 1848, in the city of Kazan' on the Volga River. Upon his graduation from preparatory school, he entered the Kazan' University receiving a law degree in 1872. After working for three years in the legal field, however, he passed an examination of the philology faculty, which enabled him to become an instructor of history and geography at the local Teachers' Seminary serving the various non-Russian peoples living in the Volga region. To this point in his life, nothing portended a distinguished career as a musical scholar.

Like many educated Russians of the time, Smolensky received some musical training as an amateur. He learned to play the piano, the organ, and the violin, — the latter instrument well enough to take part in the local string quartet. In his University days he directed the student church choir, and at the Teachers' Seminary he organized a choir as well, arranging Orthodox church hymns in the various native languages of the students in the school. It was during his fourteen-year tenure at

the Seminary that he developed an interest in musical pedagogy, and along with it, an intense interest in the history of Russian Orthodox church singing — two concerns that would preoccupy him for the remainder of his life.

For his students at the Teachers' Seminary, Smolensky wrote what was at that time one of the first textbooks for choral singers, entitled *A Course in Choral Church Singing*.¹ From the start, he pursued an intelligent, conscious approach to the subject, emphasizing the total development of musical sensibilities, rather than merely technical training. To this end he instituted the practice, highly unconventional at the time, of singing from complete scores, rather than individual choral parts. As he wrote in the preface to his book: "Studying the fundamentals of harmony and understanding even the simplest musical structures not only enable the student to study musical works meaningfully but also to receive genuinely artistic pleasure."² The goal of the book, in addition to imparting these fundamentals, was "to enable students to express freely and sincerely their religious feelings through liturgical singing, achieving this end not by artistic performance, not by a brilliant complement of voices in the choir, not by extravagant, outwardly effective execution of nuances, but by means of sincere sung prayer, warmed by religious emotion."³

During this period Smolensky also became interested in the history of church singing. This interest was prompted in part by his contact with the community of Old Believers in Kazan', as well as by an extensive collection of ancient manuscripts at the library of the Kazan' Theological Academy. At the time Smolensky was beginning his pedagogical career, Russia had just seen the publication of the first scholarly history of Russian church singing, Dmitry Razumovsky's *Church Singing in Russia*.⁴ His personal acquaintance with Razumovsky, whom he met during one of his trips to Moscow, further stimulated Smolensky's studies in this field. As Smolensky himself relates, during one of their heated discussions "Razumovsky was pacing and talking, then suddenly stopped and asked: Stepan Vasilyevich, do you know how to sing from the neumes? No? Well, in that case, first

learn how, and then we will continue our discussion. So I applied myself to this wisdom and only then began to understand Razumovsky."⁵

In 1887 Smolensky produced his first scholarly publications in the field of Russian church music history: *A general history and musical significance of musical manuscripts of the Solovetsk library and the "singer's primer" of Aleksandr Mezenets* and *A brief description of an ancient (12th-13th c.) znamenny heirmologion belonging to the Voskresensk "Novy Ierusalim" Monastery*.⁶ A year later, he produced his most important work to date, a facsimile edition with extensive commentary of Aleksandr Mezenetz's *Azbuka*, a seventeenth-century theoretical treatise on Russian neumatic notation.⁷ This work not only received the coveted Metropolitan Makary Award, but also firmly established Smolensky's reputation as an expert in the field of Russian musical scholarship. Already known to the church authorities in St. Petersburg from his work on various commissions and musical editions of the Holy Synod, Smolensky was now invited to take the Director's post at the Moscow Synodal School of Church Singing. At the same time, he took over the Chair of Russian Church Music History at the Moscow Conservatory, which had been vacated by Razumovsky's death in 1889. For the next twelve years, Moscow would witness some of the most remarkable developments in the history of Russian church music.

By the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Moscow Synodal Choir, formerly the glorious Patriarchal Singing Clerks, had become a shadow of their former selves. Neglected after the abolition of the patriarchate, headed for two centuries by a series of undistinguished preceptors, the choir responsible for singing in the chief cathedral of Russia, the Moscow Cathedral of the Dormition in the Kremlin, was no better, and perhaps worse, than an average church choir in Moscow. The choir school, formally established in 1857, ostensibly to train the choir boys musically and educate them, was a four-year lower-level institution, housed in a group of ramshackle buildings next to the Conservatory. As was common for choral establishments of



Stepan Vasilyevich Smolensky (1848-1909)

the time, the level of discipline and education was very low: the choir boys worked long hours, often singing several services in one day; exposed to drunkenness and unsavory moral behavior of the adult men in the choir, they picked up those habits themselves; and when their voices changed, the boys were literally turned out into the street, without status, without an education, and without any means of earning a decent living. Such were the conditions at the Synodal School and Choir until shortly before Smolensky's appointment.

The Synodal School had undergone a significant administrative reform three years earlier, in 1886. The four-year elementary course was upgraded into an eight-year, middle school course, designed "to train knowledgeable performers of Orthodox church singing for the Synodal Choir, as well as skillful preceptors and teachers of church singing."⁸ At the same time, the number of adult singers was increased from twenty-four to thirty, and the number of boys was set at fifty. More importantly, "to raise the moral level of the Synodal Choir, which must be an exemplary

performer of church singing in general and a dedicated preserver of Orthodox church chants, and to give the younger singers the means to pursue church singing and other subjects thoroughly," the singer's salaries and upkeep were increased, eliminating the need to hire themselves out for various private services, a practice that had contributed to moral and disciplinary problems. To oversee the educational programs of the School, a special Supervisory Council was appointed, initially comprising Razumovsky, the Director of the Moscow Conservatory, Gubert, and the noted composer Tchaikovsky.

It fell largely to Smolensky to carry out in practice the reforms initiated in 1886. Even before coming to Moscow, Smolensky had harbored ideas of establishing an "academy of liturgical singing," where the subject would be studied in depth not only practically, but historically and theoretically as well. Now he was in a position to carry out his dream. But first, important changes had to be made at the School and in the Choir. Smolensky had a marvellous ability to rally those around him toward intense effort in a common purpose. With his able assistants, Vasily Sergeyeovich Orlov, the chief conductor of the Synodal Choir, and Alexander Kastalsky, assistant conductor and professor of piano, Smolensky formed what one contemporary called "the glorious 'triumvirate' of the Synodal School: Smolensky — all thought, Orlov — all action, Kastalsky — all inspiration." Together, these three individuals would shape the various aspects of the Synodal School's activity, raising Russian liturgical singing to an unprecedented position of importance in the cultural life of the nation.

Guided by his pedagogical instincts, Smolensky set out to reform the prevailing attitudes of both the boys and adults towards their work. Working tirelessly to improve the singers' economic conditions, he gradually succeeded in establishing an atmosphere of diligence, camaraderie, and respectability among them. At the same time, together with Orlov, he strove to raise the singers' musical excellence and sophistication. Following principles established in Kazan', Smolensky

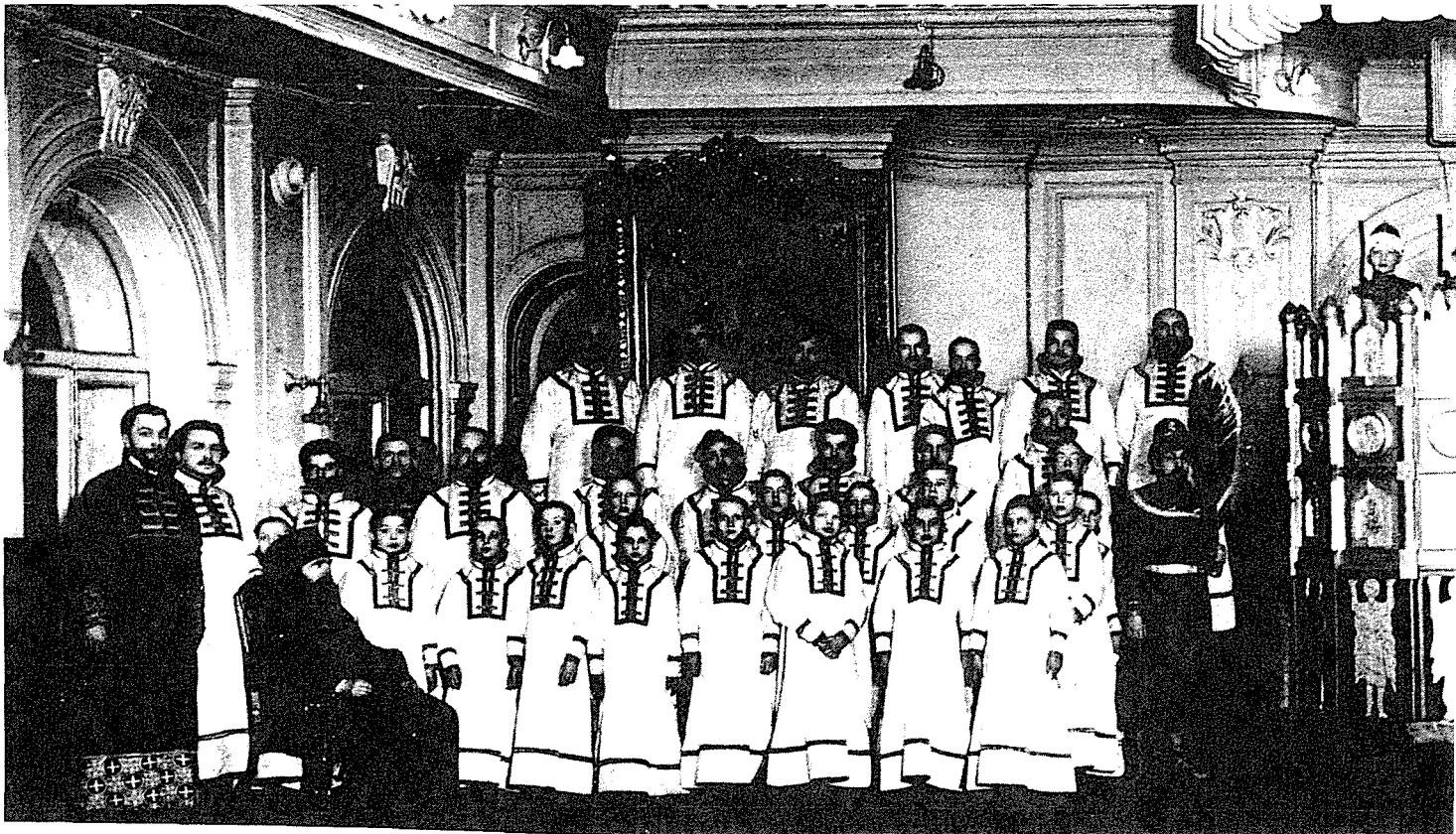
introduced singing from scores, and involved the Choir in extra-liturgical choral concerts of both Orthodox works and Western European classics. The Choir sang works by Josquin, Palestrina, Lassus, the Mozart Requiem, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, and all the choruses from Bach's *Mass in B minor*. "The study of these works . . . extraordinarily raised the cultural level of the Synodal Choir, so that it began to sing with *intelligence* (Smolensky's emphasis) and developed marvellous vocal technique. . . ." wrote Smolensky in his memoirs.⁹

In 1885 the Synodal Choir presented a series of three Historical Concerts, designed to show the development of Russian liturgical singing from the monophonic chant and early polyphony of the sixteenth century, through the various periods of Polish, Italian, and Germanic foreign influence, and finally, to the nascent emergence of a national Russian style in the works of Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. "The Historical Concerts," wrote Smolensky, "were the Synodal Choir's first serious debut, for they displayed the Choir's

ability to perform works of all styles and periods and demonstrated its superior choral technique . . ." ¹⁰ Subsequently, the Choir was invited to St. Petersburg to perform for the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod, Konstantin Pobedonostsev, and sang at the coronation ceremonies for Emperor Nicholas II in Moscow. Perhaps the Choir's greatest artistic triumph under Smolensky's tenure was its performance in Vienna, given in April of 1899 in connection with the consecration of the Russian embassy church there. Before a panoply of Western European musicians and critics, the Synodal Choir displayed "an unheard-of subtlety of nuances," "an ensemble so good that it resembles an excellent organ" — "an experience the likes of which is not soon forgotten." Wrote the *Neue Musikalische Presse*: "We have nothing equal to this Synodal Choir, nor anything even resembling it; we would do well to ponder the reasons why we do not, and how we could."¹¹

The growing excellence of the Synodal Choir as a choral instrument, as well as Smolensky's

The Moscow Synodal Choir at a performance of "The Play of the Fiery Furnace" in the hall of the Synodal School.

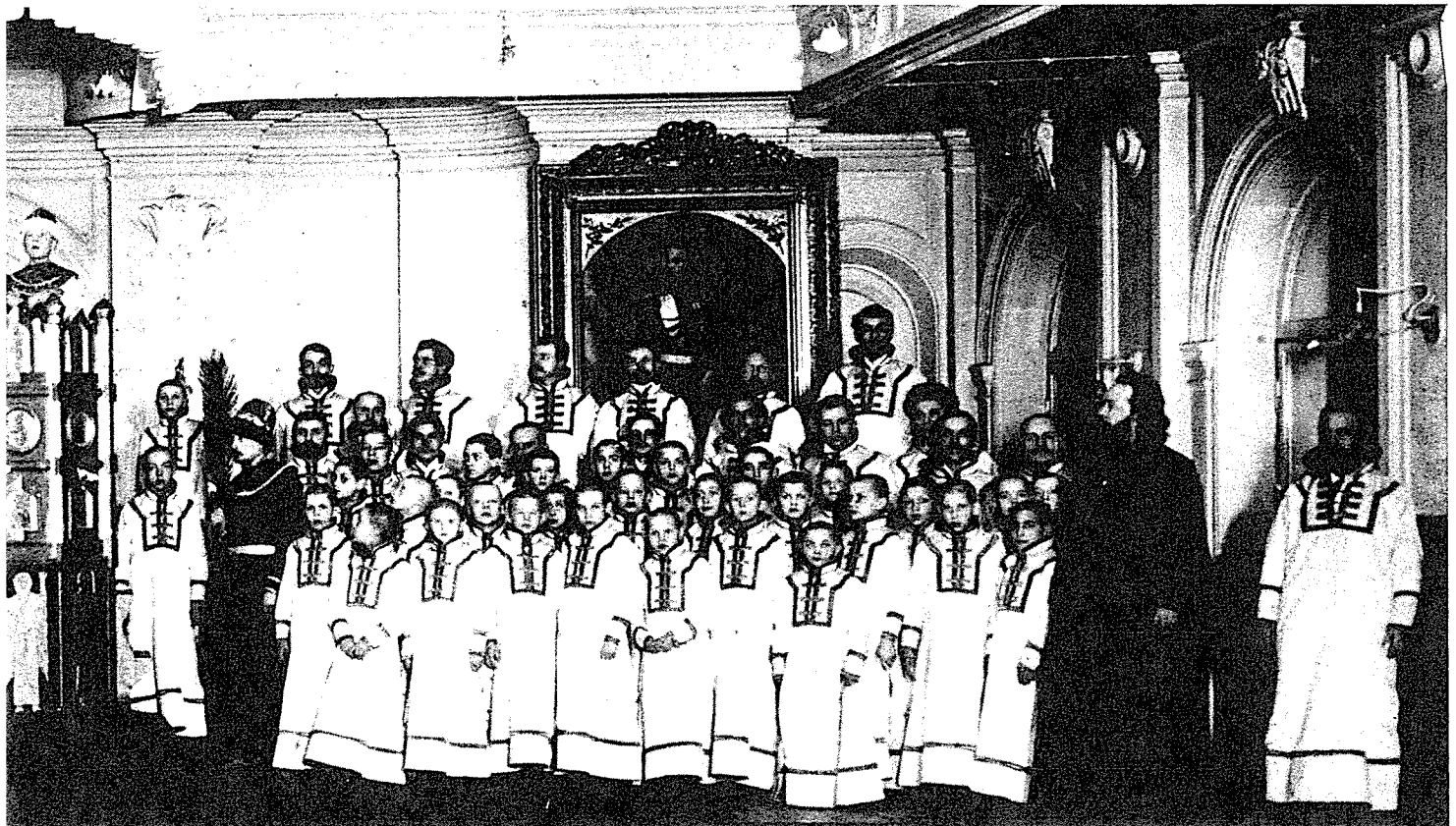


aggressive efforts to renew the repertoire sung by Russian church choirs, stimulated the composition of new works for the Orthodox liturgy. Although the repressive censorship of sacred choral works by the Imperial Court Chapel had been lifted in 1880, the following fifteen years saw only a few important additions to the sacred repertoire — some works by Rimsky-Korsakov and Balakirev. But with Smolensky's arrival at the Moscow Synodal School a powerful new wave of sacred choral composition began. "The beginning of [the Synodal Choir's] perfection, dating from the winter of 1893/94, awakened the talent of Kastalsky and then Chesnokov, who began to compose under the influence of the ancient chants and examples of the old [Western Renaissance] masters."¹² In a letter to Nicholas Findeisen, Smolensky wrote: "Soon we will have a concert [of sacred music] here — a debut for many composers, including myself; I have programmed newly composed works by Koreshchenko, Ippolitov-Ivanov, [Pavel] Chesnokov, Kastalsky, Ilyinsky, and Grechaninov. I have stirred up every single

Muscovite capable of writing a score, and they have composed a variety of pieces."¹³

Although not a prolific composer himself, Smolensky had very definite ideas concerning the nature and style of liturgical compositions and chant arrangements. Contrary to the views of some contemporaries, most notably, Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov, Smolensky held that the application of textbook harmony to Russian church chants was essentially inappropriate and could not yield acceptable results. In his view, harmony, as an essentially Western European phenomenon, was organically contrary to the essence and spirit of the chants. To "harmonize" them was tantamount to attiring them in foreign clothing, thereby distorting their true meaning and character. Similarly inappropriate was the application of European-style counterpoint (of the Palestrinian variety), a technique advocated by the composer Sergei Taneyev. Russian chant needs both harmony and counterpoint, said Smolensky, but both must be indigenous, organically cultivated upon native Russian soil.

(Photos courtesy of the Glinka State Museum of Musical Culture, Moscow.)



These ideas, persistently expressed by Smolensky in the 1890's among his colleagues at the Moscow Synodal School, led to the creative search of composers such as Kastalsky, Grechaninov, and later, Chesnokov. What emerged was indeed a new style of native Russian "counterpoint" in church music, which used elements from the Russian folk song. In the words of Alexander Nikolsky, another composer of the new style, "Smolensky was one of the ideologists of the new direction, who had the courage, contrary to prevailing opinions and tastes, to propagate and support the revival of the ancient church chants upon bases derived from their spirit and essence."¹⁴

Besides supervising the Synodal Choir's growth to excellence and stimulating a new direction in church composition, Smolensky during his tenure at the Synodal School made a great contribution to future historical scholarship in the field of Russian church singing. Almost immediately upon his arrival in Moscow he began the gargantuan task of assembling a vast collection of liturgical musical manuscripts, in essence the first musical manuscript library in Russia. Entirely on his own initiative and resources, armed only with a calling card from Ober-Procurator Pobedonostsev, Smolensky literally "raided" various ancient monasteries, village churches, and Old Believer prayer houses, where invaluable neumed manuscripts were lying unused and in danger of being irretrievably lost. These he turned over to the Moscow Synodal School Library, which eventually came to number over 3000 volumes. In this collection was documented the entire development of church singing in the Russian land, from the earliest times until the end of the nineteenth century, enabling Smolensky to argue that, of all the Slavic Orthodox peoples, the Russians had the richest treasury of native melodic materials. It was on this basis that Smolensky foresaw the rebirth of Russian church singing in a native style, free of foreign accretions. What was called a "new" direction was in reality a return to the ancient.

Unfortunately, not all elements of Russian society at that time shared Smolensky's vision. Many of his "innovations" drew fire from leading figures in the church bureaucracy, as

well as from conservative "connoisseurs" of church music. As one of his Synodal superiors said to him: "Just remember, we do not need your historical concerts, nor your new directions [in church singing], nor scholarly papers. What we need are good choristers in the Moscow Dormition Cathedral."¹⁵ The Procurator of the Synodal chancery ordered the curtailment of musical subjects at the Synodal School, since in his opinion, future church choir directors needed only practical training in their craft. Under the onslaught of such misunderstandings, Smolensky, who was not one to compromise easily, in 1901 resigned from his Director's post at the Synodal School.

Much to his astonishment, and perhaps with a touch of apprehension, Smolensky almost immediately thereafter received an appointment as Superintendent of the Imperial Court Chapel in St. Petersburg, the highest-ranking church musical institution in the land. Here the potential for action was even greater than in Moscow, but the meddlesome bureaucrats who had caused him so much grief were that much closer. Ever faithful to his ideas, Smolensky began at once to effect some of the same measures that had been so successful in Moscow. Soon after his appointment the Chapel celebrated the 150th anniversary of Dmitry Bortniansky's birth with memorial services, concerts, and an exhibit of the composer's autographs. The following year featured a retrospective concert of works by the Chapel's former directors and by representatives of the new direction in Russian church music. But the spirit of conservatism and complacency was too great even for Smolensky to dislodge. As he lamented to the critic Ivan Lipaev: "I simply cannot make any headway. Such a distinguished position, of which I could not have even dreamed . . . But how my heart aches! One almost literally has to beat out with a stick the slowness and ignorance of the Chapel's members. They have become accustomed to Balakirev's 'treats.' They expect undeserved rewards, which I cannot give to them. We are on different paths . . ." ¹⁶ After a year-and-a-half of frustration, Smolensky left the Chapel, accepting Count S. D. Sheremetiev's offer of an opportunity to devote more time to research and scholarship.

Although Smolensky had never ceased his scholarly and publishing activities, the years 1903 to 1906 were in many respects his most fruitful ones in this area. He became increasingly active in the Imperial Society of Fanciers of Ancient Literature in St. Petersburg, delivering a number of scholarly papers. The variety of topics covered by Smolensky attest to his wide range of interests and erudition: "Ancient Russian musical notations" (1901), "The most urgent goals and research problems of Russian church-musical archeology" (1903), "The relationship of Russian church music to that of Byzantium" (1904), "Russian choral literature from the mid-16th century until the influence of visiting Italians" (1905), "The ancient Bulgarian chant in the editions of Anastas Nikolov" (1905), "Several new facts concerning kontakarian neumes and kontakaria of the 12th-13th centuries" (1906), "Three-voiced *kants* and psalms in 17th- and early 18th-century manuscripts" (1907), "The significance of 17th-century *kants* and psalms in the so-called 'plain' singing" (1908), "Keyboard music in 18th-century Russia" (1908). Many of these papers were eventually published by the Society.

In 1906 Smolensky headed an expedition, financed by Count S. Sheremetiev, to the monasteries of Mount Athos, from where he brought back over 2000 photographs of Greek and Slavonic manuscripts that he hoped would shed light upon the relationship between Byzantine and Russian liturgical singing. On this question Smolensky reached some innovative conclusions, which radically departed from the views held by previous Russian scholars such as Razumovsky and Yurii Arnold. The prevailing view had been that the Russians had accepted the Byzantine system of musical theory and the Eight Tones in its entirety; operating on this assumption, Razumovsky and Arnold attempted to explain the Russian system of Eight Tones in terms of their Byzantine counterparts. From his study of Mezenetz's *Azbuka* and other manuscripts, Smolensky observed, however, that the Russians in fact did not slavishly copy the Byzantine system. Rather than being based upon a specific modal structure of prevailing and cadential tones, the Russian Eight Tones were differentiated by an assortment of specific melodic formulae,

known as *popevki*, that were characteristic for each Tone. Thus, Smolensky concluded, "while the theoretical structure of ancient Russian *znamenny* singing, e.g., the system of Tones, the use of *prosomoia*, the division of hymns into phrases, and the retaining of some neume names, betrays a certain amount of Greek influence, the melodic development of the chants and the development of the *znamenny* notation are, undoubtedly, of Russian origin."¹⁷

Smolensky's observations concerning the transmission of chant culture from Byzantium to Russia are not without interest to Orthodox musicians in modern-day America. Far from slavishly imitating Byzantine melodic models, Russian chanters only retained the most characteristic melodic formulae of each Tone, and then applied them freely to new texts according to their own artistic judgment. The whole art of a chant "composer" consisted of using these melodic figures to create characteristic musical forms within the framework of a given Tone.

The final chapter in Smolensky's relentless quest to raise the level and quality of Russian church singing saw him return once again to pedagogical and administrative activity. When in 1907 the Imperial Chapel closed its doors to outside students wishing to study church choral conducting, Smolensky received the blessing of the Holy Synod to open his own private Precentor's School (*Regentskoe Uchilishche*) in St. Petersburg. Assembling a faculty from among his former students at the Synodal School, Smolensky plunged into this new undertaking with characteristic fervor. Wrote he to Lipaev: "Neither the Synodal School nor the Imperial Chapel are capable of picking up those who truly thirst for education in the field of church music. Hundreds of these individuals are afraid even to cross the threshold of either the School or the Chapel. We need to fill the vacuum."¹⁸ The School was open to all, but not many students could afford to enroll. Among the thirty or so who did enroll, the majority were very poor and incapable of paying full tuition. Despite some difficult times at the outset, Smolensky persisted and eventually succeeded in obtaining a small subsidy from the church authorities. After Smolensky's death, the enterprise was continued by his students

and followers, remaining, until the Revolution, the only institution in Russia open to all who wished to study the art of choral church music.

A discussion of Smolensky's contributions to Russian church music would not be complete without mentioning his small, but attractive output of choral chant arrangements. In addition to his well-known znamenny chant litany responses and Paschal stichera, he published a cycle of "Major hymns of the Divine Liturgy, the Prayer Service, the Memorial Service, and All-Night Vigil" in simple arrangement for male chorus, an attractive Polyeleion based on an ancient chant he heard in Novgorod, the Prokeimenon "Who is so great a God," and a highly original Memorial Service (*panikhida*) for male chorus. In these works Smolensky shows himself to be a literate, if not highly original, composer. The harmonies are "euphonious, clear, and at times rise to uncommon gracefulness."¹⁹

In the summers of 1908 and 1909 Smolensky took an active role in the first two All-Russian Conventions of Choral Directors, planning, lecturing, advising. In the summer of 1909 he also lectured at the Summer Precentor's Courses in Moscow, led by his student, Alexander Nikolsky. From Moscow he departed to visit his native Kazan' for the remainder of the summer. But en route, in the town of Vasilsursk, he developed pneumonia with complications and died on July 20, 1909 (O.S.). His body was laid to rest in Kazan'.

When Smolensky himself was asked to assess his accomplishments after some thirty years of work in the field of church music, he rated himself a dismal failure. "Today I am called an 'active scholar'. What a misrepresentation! My [field] of scholarship is at present barely a new dawn! It is not even recognized as being legitimate! . . . The last 30 years of my work have been spent trying to make representatives of our official scholarly circles realize that the history of church singing in Russia and the history and study of the Russian folk song should be introduced (at least as "electives") in the Universities and particularly at the Theological Academies. But the obvious presence of materials already collected has not succeeded in convincing anyone to consent to

recognize my subject as a field of scholarship I have merely been a ditch-digger for the foundation of a future science . . . which will someday be recognized."²⁰

Indeed, on a number of fronts Smolensky's efforts did not appear to have immediate success. At the Synodal School he saw a number of his musical programs dismembered (only to be reinstated in the year following his death). His brief encounter with the Imperial Court Chapel was an exercise in frustration. The Precentor's School experienced its two most difficult years while Smolensky was still living. He left a number of research projects unfinished, projects that he believed would yield a stylistically unified system of church singing in Russia, resulting from an artistic restoration of the ancient chant.

Yet, Smolensky's legacy endures, having survived even the ravages of revolution and militant atheism in the Soviet Union. An entire genealogy of Soviet choral conductors traces its roots to the Moscow Synodal School in the days of Smolensky. The greatest masterpieces of Russian choral literature (sacred and, one might add, secular) embody the principles of native Russian counterpoint propagated by Smolensky. The collection of manuscripts so lovingly collected at the Moscow Synodal School by Smolensky has been largely preserved at the State Historical Museum in Moscow, and is at least accessible to scholars who have the patience and resourcefulness to pursue it. Finally, after years of silence and repression, Soviet scholars have begun, in the last decade or so, timidly and with unsure hands, to pick up the threads of research left dangling by Smolensky, as they proceed to explore their nation's musical past.

In the West, and particularly in Orthodox America, there has also been a reawakening of interest in the history of Orthodox church music. The bold reforms initiated by Smolensky did not have time to reach these shores before the Russian Revolution struck. Some of the questions about the nature and direction of Orthodox church singing posed nearly one hundred years ago by Smolensky, have been raised in our minds only recently. In his

(Continued on page 33)

The Sound of Sacred Music

By Father Sergei Glagolev

(Interpretation: Part Two)

I. To Sing is to Pray Twice

Most discussions about liturgical music center on “what to sing”. They should focus on the action of singing, as the liturgical act, as the act of worship.

For discussion, we must understand there is no worship without singing. In this context, there is no singing that is not prayer.¹ Is there a prayer “where two or three are gathered” (Mt 18:20) that is not a song? Is there a song in Church that is not a prayer?

Does this not answer the question, “what to sing?” We *sing* prayers; we do not introduce them, accompany them, comment on them or complement them. The songs are the prayers. That is what is given us to sing. This also answers the question, “why sing?” We sing because that’s the way the Orthodox pray in church. Ultimately, that’s the way everything that breathes praises the Lord.

There is no song without words, and no words unsung. This precious union of song and words is the prayer of the Church. It is the communion of the People of God and the Word. The Word is heard. He speaks to us in our utterance. He is our Song (Ps 118).

“Pure music” in the secular word is song without words. Pure music in Christian worship is the words of prayer in heightened utterance we call *Sacred Singing*. It would be less confusing if we called what we utter in Church “sacred song” rather than “liturgical music.”²

In church, the music and the words are inseparable. The words give the music utterance. The music celebrates the meaning of these words. Together, they are icons in rhythm and sound, making “visible” in sacred time what holy icons make visible in sacred space. The function of both sacred song and holy icons is to reveal time and space in worship as the antitypes by which we have been “brought up to heaven and endowed with Thy Kingdom which is to come.”³

Sacred song speaks, even as holy icons speak to us. This is the “sound of sacred music”: it is the sweet utterance of the words of prayer, moving in tone and rhythm as an iconic foretaste of the never-ending Day, *Redeeming the time . . .* speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph 5: 16-19).

II A. How to Sing: Making Worship Visible through Audition

The ministry of sacred singing is to communicate ideas, images, words, and the Word. The primary task in interpreting sacred song is to convey the sense of the sounds of the words. “How to sing” begins with the understanding of four points:

1. Singing must convert the visual images you see on the page- the prayers of the music and text - into oral images that make sense when you open your mouth. This requires interpretative skills in vocalization and articulatory imagery, without which what you see on the page is not what others hear. What is lost is the “vital context of utterance.”⁴ Unless you orally communicate the iconic meaning and the message of these sounds, nothing is shared. Others cannot meaningfully respond. No clear sign is given. No invitation has been made to participate.

Our tradition of worship is *oral*. The revelation given to celebrate is *audible*. In worship, *audition* is the key to meaning, response and participation. “How to sing” means making sense out of the sounds you make for those who hear them, so that in the hearing and feeling of the words rendered in tones and rhythm, they can “see” what is sung and pray with you! This first point is the art of oral interpretation.

2. The second point is not obvious. You

yourself must *completely understand* the meaning of the text - both in the content of the hymn and the context of the liturgical service - if the meaning is to be conveyed to the worshipping assembly. Again, the experience of the true sense of words must be interpreted *orally*. "Sounded out in song," these words must make sense to you. You must understand the stream of thoughts - both the thought units of the text and the units of the melodic thoughts - in order to convey them. You must thoroughly understand the thoughts of what the words stand for, and have the skill to interpret them orally. This is *not* a visual exercise. The key is *audition*. The words and the music must be sounded out, and you must practice "hearing" the meaning.

3. Every interpretative effort will fail unless there is the *intentional*, earnest desire on your part to share the meaning of what you sing with the whole worshipping assembly. Choirs are notorious for singing for their own self-enjoyment. You must intend to involve *everybody* in Church. You must intentionally seek to communicate the full meaning of every prayer to everybody. You must want to stir their hearts, even as yours has been stirred. You must be sensitive to their every reaction, carefully and subtly responding to *their* comprehension and *their* responses, singing not for yourselves, not singing "to" them or "at" them. Your clear intention must be to sing for the People of God, enabling the prayers to be *their* song (not your performance). This is ultimately realized when you are singing *with* the people, no longer singing at them, allowing them grudgingly occasionally to sing along. But this takes much caring and pastoral experience.
4. The fourth and most subtle point on "how to sing" is the problem of beauty. The sound of sacred music is meant to be beautiful. The language of prayer is an art. Its purpose transcends mere communication. The words rendered in sacred song are a complex of tones and nuances, infinite combinations of rhythmic and sound patterns, image patterns, feeling

patterns, — something so much more than the words and the music themselves. These words and this music must be the incarnation of beauty. Some would say this is an art function. I believe it is the fruit of inspired worship. I hasten to add, however, that such inspiration comes from the studied discipline of the art of prayer: the love of its sound, and the longing for its fulfillment.

II B. How to Sing: The Revelation of the Word through Words

Words and the Word: How to sing words to reveal the presence of the Word — this is the music ministry of evangelism, to give voice to the Good News. Indeed, it would be difficult to conceive of any evangelical impetus in Orthodox Christianity without a new emphasis on sacred song as evangelism.⁶

We have said that prayers are sung in the Orthodox Church. It is the sung prayers that contain the catholic theology of the Church. The song celebrated in worship is the epiphany of Orthodox doctrine, dogma, history, piety and patristic tradition.

Moreover, there is no prayer that is not rooted in Scriptural tradition. The "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" of the Orthodox Church are nothing less than the continuity of the oral tradition from which the Holy Scriptures themselves spring. Father Florovsky is absolutely right in saying that it is impossible to understand Christianity outside of "the Scriptural mind."⁷

That "Scriptural mind" is no more clearly revealed than in the sacred songs of Orthodox worship, the continuing recitation of our "salvation history."⁸ Even as it is difficult to understand the Gospels outside the communities that transmit them orally, or to comprehend the Pauline texts without the liturgical hymns and prayers behind them,⁹ so is it inconceivable to "evangelize" without celebrating the words of our sacred songs. Is there a source that better "explains" Orthodoxy? Words are an Icon of the Word.¹⁰

How to sing these words is the subject of our concern in this essay. The sacred song is meant to transmit the music of the language. Language

is meant to be the song of the words. The words of worship reveal who God is and what He calls us to be in the celebration of His Word.

The melodies of the past link us to that continuity so essential to our living spiritual tradition. There is a greater vision: if we are to “evangelize,” should not the language we use shape the sacred song we sing? The remaining pages are devoted to the sound of words (or to the sounding of words), to the *action* of singing these words to make sense.

III. Melodic Thought: A “Community of Words”

It is ascribed to St. Cyprian to have said “One Christian is no Christian”. He means by this that the uniqueness of the solitary person is ultimately revealed in his or her *relationship to others*, in the *community* of persons.

The same must be said of *words*. Words in isolation from one another rarely make sense. Words make sense *in relation to one another*, — how they are grouped, how the word groupings relate to one another as “thought units.” This is particularly true in vocal utterance, the way we worship as “Church.”

I’m very much convinced that we fail to understand what is being chanted or sung not so much because of bad diction or enunciation, but because of the lack of proper *pause* and *breath*. The pause and the breath are the ways we “phrase” words into thought units. In voicing sacred song, it is not the punctuation (which cannot be heard) but the *phrasing* that relates words into logical groups in order to make sense.

I began writing this essay during the Christmas Season. Indeed, I heard again from priests and deacons the proclamation that the shepherds found:

“Mary, Joseph and the Babe
lying in the Manger,”

only to have the choir repeat the same awkward image of three individuals together in the manger. Look at what Luke 2:16 really says. Remember, you can’t “hear” punctuation. The words must be *grouped* so that we “see” Mary and Joseph - (pause) - and the Babe lying in the manger.¹¹

Some careless word groupings are more serious. I still hear in the credal statement that

the Son of God is “not made of one essence with the Father.” Again, you cannot “hear semi-colons. Obviously, the Slavonic “adaptation” must be changed to make sense in English. We must hear that the Word of God is “begotten” - (pause) - “not made” - (pause) - [because He is in fact] “of One Essence with the Father,” - (pause) - [and it is through Him, i.e., the Word] “by Whom all things were made.”¹²

I have bracketed interpretative thoughts above to illustrate that the pause (and often the breath at the pause) gives us the opportunity to both “take in the thought” (reflect upon it) and prepare to utter the sense of the *next* thought unit in its logical relationship. There are two common practices that often destroy thought unit relationships: affectatious “dove-tailing” of musical phrases without consideration of the logical progression of word groupings, and slavery to the “bar line” that in English adaptations rarely has anything to do with the meaning of the words.¹²

Here is another example of misplaced word relationships. In the Vespertine Hymn “Gladsome Light,” the words “heavenly, holy, blessed Jesus Christ” are commonly grouped together. A study of the early Greek text, however,¹³ clearly shows that the word cluster “heavenly, holy, blessed” belongs to “the immortal Father” *preceding* it. “Jesus Christ” refers to “gladsome Light of the holy glory” stated at the beginning of the hymn. This clumsy translation nevertheless can be made to make sense vocally, with timing, careful pausing, and inflection. You cannot assume that Greek or Slavonic settings will carry the words logically in English.

Once you begin looking at texts more carefully, you will see that there is hardly a liturgical text that does not present problems to resolve if you intend for the sacred song to do what it is meant to do.

There is a fourth problem to touch upon, although we will be dealing with it more fully at the end of this study (Section V on hymnic parallelism of verse members according to the principles of Scriptural “thought-rhyme”). It is mentioned here because it also points out the importance of word-group relationships, i.e., which words relate to which in order to make complete thought units.

In the “tones” as we commonly sing them,

the *melodic* “thoughts” are meant to correspond to the unfolding development of word-thought clusters, and to their progression as they enfold upon each other. The melodic phrases are meant to serve the new thoughts as they develop, and their contrasts, first by phrase, then by verse, completing the strophe.

Many a Troparion or Kontakion now sung confuses these word relationships, causing the melodic thought units to contradict the meaning of the words. At this point in writing, we just celebrated Theophany. The Kontakion is in “Tone 4”. In the commonly used Bakhmetev setting, *melodic* “thoughts” are in the “A-B Cadence” form.¹⁴ But this is what we hear.

“Today Thou hast appeared to the universe, (melodic thought “A”) And Thy Light, O Lord, has shone on us (Complementary thought “B”) Who with understanding praise Thee” (melodic thought “A”?)

- Do you see the problem? There are three phrases in the word arrangement of this verse, but only two in the melodic thesis-antithesis structure! You *think* the word arrangement is making sense because you are mesmerized by the all-too familiar question/answer pattern of Tone 4. To say this happens in too many settings of our sacred songs is no exaggeration.

Words. Word relationships are “heard” in sacred song, and understood by the way in which we orally group them together. We phrase these group clusters into sung thought units through *breath* (breathing must *always* serve the expression of the thought¹⁵) and *pause* (the interpretative tool, the voice, has to group words into ideas that paint the images that are seen by being heard). In either case, *timing* and *inflection* must serve the breath and pause in expressing thought units both melodic and textual. “Timing” is a study in itself. In this present study, let’s attempt to touch on the rudiments of *inflection*. To do so, we must necessarily discuss *emphases*, of which inflection is a critical element.

IV. Emphases: The Music of Language - Language as Music

No language is monotonic. The voice of prayer is rhythmic.¹⁶ Words make sense in

rhythmic patterns, and thoughts move one to another in rhythmic sequences. Music enfolds from song-speech.¹⁷ Within the rhythm of words, the voice moves forward along various pitches - stressing, elongating, pausing, inflecting. Singing together “with one voice,”¹⁸ the worshipping assembly discovers timbre and texture.¹⁹

This “music of language” must never be contradicted by clumsy adaptations of word phrases, melodies, harmonies, etc., that fail to “translate” into the language of the worshipping assembly. Emphases - both rhythmic and melodic - have something to do with thoughts, establishing one thought, then moving to another. Worse than poor translation is the use of emphasis to effect a musical notion rather than express the music of the language.

Within the rhythmic structure of moving pitches, words, phrases and thoughts, both music and language are inclined to use emphases in order to distinguish, clarify, and sometimes to call attention to the relationship of ideas. This is particularly so in English. To simplify, consider three major emphases in music and language.

The first major emphasis is *stress*, i.e., to “hit” or accent a word or note in one of various ways, thus calling attention to it. Although this is the most often used type of emphasis, it is the least effective. One always runs the risk of knocking the whole sequence of delicate relationships out of commission. Both in music and language - or in the “music of language” as I have been calling it - sacred singing lends itself much more to the *elongation* of pivotal words or syllables. Of course, here we must obviously take care that these “lengthenings” - e.g., half and whole notes in quarter-note sequences, ties, neumatic phrases and melismatic extensions, sometimes a measure-mark, etc., - make sense when they are translated from one language to another.

The second major emphasis is the *pause*, already discussed at some length. Here most often the difficulty is the arbitrary interpretation of the “bar-line” as denoting the end of a phrase.

The third emphasis is *inflection*. The rising or falling of a pitch inflects the word and distin-

guishes it. A rising inflection in English most often signals that something important follows, or that there is more to come. A falling inflection suggests completion of a thought, a mediant, or a cadence. Translators and adaptors have been less than sensitive to these sounds of English.

The inflection of words as they relate to each other naturally must have something to do with the gracious curves of melodic lines and their cadences. Contrary to frequently voiced opinion, English is one of the most expressive languages of all. But the music must make sense in the idiom of its natural sounds. Good English needs very little stress, and the thoughts fall into place logically by rhythm inflection. The mistake is to try to copy melodic ideas that make sense in another language without consideration of the inflected word-tone sequences of English. Idiom makes sense, with the rhythmic and melodic ideas responding to the subtle emphases of elongation, pause and inflection by which English expresses itself.

Much of sacred singing is not purely syllabic. There are groups of notes sung on a syllable, extensions more in the nature of inflection than elongation. In English we could call this inflection "circumflex," i.e., the curving, the bending, the wavering, the rising and falling of pitch on the same syllable. The inflected circumflex translated neumatically into music suggests a complexity of thought, an implication, or an expression of "so much more" than what is found in the simple progression of words. It is best to avoid the confusion of the worshipping assembly when the melodic neumes of the sacred song do not correspond to the sense of the English language. When neumes are sung on vocatives like "O," on articles like "the," on conjunctions like "and," or prepositions like "with" and "of," very little sense is made of the sacred text. When such words are extended into melismas, there is a caricature of the original intent, as in "Bless the Lord, o, ho-ho, ho, ho, wo-wo wo my soul . . ." ²⁰

What thoughts most need to be emphasized? The structure and phrase division of the sacred song must complement both horizontally

and vertically the progression of thoughts. In English, we emphasize new thoughts as they appear, and contrasts as they develop.²¹ The "shifting" of emphasis on a word or group of words in a phrase will alter the thought progression. Two examples come to mind: "Mary, full of grace," - and the progression: "the Lord is with you." "God is the Lord," - and the progression: "and has revealed Himself . . ." Think it through. I've heard all the arguments about how it doesn't make any difference. If you look for the logic, you may change your mind. Another example: in the "Our Father", the phrases, "and lead us not . . ." and "but deliver us . . ." Are they contrasting phrases, or complementary thoughts? Where should the emphasis fall?

I am convinced that the music of language is meant to bring out the best understanding of words in their relationship one to another. Sacred singing can be nothing less than the heightened expression of the Word Who wills to be described in the voiced images of utterance.

V. Scriptural Prosody: The Model for the Orthodox Sacred Song

Ultimately, we must come to appreciate that the sound of sacred music is shaped not so much by the melodic motif as it is by the poetic types and forms of the Psalms, Hymns and Canticles of Sacred Scripture. Our hymnody is rooted in the Bible, and the Bible is meant to be "sung".²² More than one-third of the Old Testament alone is in poetic form for singing, and the New Testament abounds with examples of hymns of the Early Church. This sets the pattern for the development of sacred singing.²³

We particularly look to the Psalms as the guide to understanding the "sound" of our sacred song. It is the Psalter, indeed, that is the "Prayer-Book of the Church."²⁴

The chief characteristic of psalmody is generally known as "parallelism of verse members."²⁵ Each Psalm verse is divided into two - sometimes three - parts, called "stichs." The stichs complement one another, completing the thought of the verse by what can be called "thought-rhyme." In Scriptural prosody, each verse is a complete thought unit in itself.

The “thought-rhyme” does not “spill over” in to the next verse. Rather, the verses relate to each other in the context of the strophe.

In this prosodic versification, the stichs relate to each other in three basic ways: *synonymous* (the words of the stichs repeat the same thought), *antithetical* (the parallelism of the stichs “echoes” the thought by contrast), and *synthetic* (the last stich adds and completes the thought of the first).

Melodic form and structure most often follow the same pattern. In sacred song, this is an essential “sound” of the text and music. Two things have happened to our liturgical music that contribute to the loss of the sense of the model. The first are those historical influences that allow the “music” to be composed and rendered without the form and structure of the words in mind. The second “loss” has been thus described: “Poetry is what gets lost in the translation.”²⁶ All serious church musicians struggle with the loss of prayer as an artful communication. The fault does not begin with our contemporary translators. In Russia, for example, the problem already peaked in the 17th century, in the Nikonian period.²⁷ The results of these two problems are so complex that we do not dare elaborate on them in this short paper.

The harmonized chant reductions in use today are less than ideal. Scriptural “sound” is not metrical; nor does it lend itself to the typical “harmonic blocks,” introduced into our music as well as Dutch and Anglican music in the 18th century. We have lost the natural rhythm of the words: this essential rhythm is the missing sound - rhythm in the sense of the “tone” of words in living speech; we have lost the rhythm as the thought-rhyme of our hymnic models. We have inherited the corrupting tyranny of the bar-line — most noticeable on the final notes of cadences of our melodies. By tradition, our harmonizations usually imply an accent following the bar-line. Thus, what Winfred Douglas described as the “Anglican thump” has become the “Russian stomp.”²⁸ Both are totally inappropriate in the rendering of sacred song in English.

VI. The “Sacred Sound” - What is it?

We all have preconceived notions about how our church music should sound. These notions

probably have more to do with “where we were when” than with pastoral considerations of what the ministry of sacred song is in the developing life of the Orthodox Church in America. I grew up in the late 20’s and early 30’s and sang in the huge, well-trained choirs of large parishes under the tutelage of my father, who was well-schooled in the Great Russian Choral Tradition. Others in my age bracket came from parishes where plain-song was the common response of the people. Converts are rooted in what they have read about Orthodoxy, and come to their own conclusions. Byzantines insist that nothing is worthy of Orthodox worship that is not a return to the principles of 10th century “Angelic Chant” — and so on. I conclude this essay by sharing with you my own musing.

Does the “cathedral sound” make sense in a small mission of converts in the Southern Diocese? On the other hand, does the folk-like plain-song of the common people who actually built the bulk of our parishes in the beginning of this century lend itself to the use of space and ceremony of the cathedral, or to the rhythmic and melodic idioms of another language in another time and place? Will the reading of “Canons” and “Church Fathers” alone give us the right clues if we fail to understand the cultural milieu in which they were written?²⁹ Is it realistic to insist on using one particular set of Byzantine patterns as the material “par excellence” of sacred sound when we realize that these same melodic formulas were bonded to original language formulas that can sharply contradict the rhythm, tone, inflection, and characteristic expression of English?³⁰ As I study more and more, I am less and less inclined to simplistic situations.

There is a “pastoral dimension to “sacred sound” - in Dr. Shepherd’s words:³¹

“communal sensitivity . . . that our (sacred) song is our common response to God’s Word here and now coming to us in our own 20th century situation . . . We will not find the holy in music by archaism, but in our own idiom. We will seek to share our common experience (of the worshipping assembly) without a false kind of objectivism, a false aesthetic that simulates union with God because it seems otherworldly and superhuman. There is no

supernatural music - not of the past, nor of the present, nor of the future . . .”

We are not called to sing *like* angels as the assembly of the redeemed People of God.³² We are not called to affect a particular style, period, or sound, but to transform the dimensions of our own time and space into Paschal images - our own time and space being the iconic materials of our utterance rendered in sacred song. “Calling to remembrance” is an activity of the present that links us to the eternal future. This “sound” of the eternal holiness to which we are called simply cannot be a caricature of the past; neither can it be shaped by preconceived notions. It takes the shape of the idiom of a new people in a new land. *And yet*, if it is true to “Tradition” in the truly Orthodox sense of the word, in every situation there will be, even in “contemporary” sound, that which remains familiar, recognizable, and identifiable as the “Sound of Sacred Music.” Indeed, that is the dimension our singing shares with the Holy Icon.

NOTES:

- ¹ The ultimate act of worship is not “silent private prayer,” but the assembled People of God who “sing the Song of Moses, the Servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb” (Rev 15:13). Speaking of prayer, St. John Chrysostom says, “we all sing with one voice . . . one single melody . . . together we make up a single choir . . . the expression whereby earth imitates heaven” (Homilia 5.2 PG 63: 486-487 quoted by Jos. Gelineau in his *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship*, Collegeville, The Liturgical Press 1964, p. 82).
- ² Vladimir Morosan, *Penie and Musikiia*, p. 152, St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly, Vol. 23 Nos. 3/4 1979. Read the whole essay to see why I draw upon it to support my conclusion.
- ³ *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America, 1967. In the Anaphora of St. Basil the Great (included in Appendix IV of the same prayerbook), St. Basil refers to the bread and wine as “antitypes.”
Lawrence J. Johnson in *The Ministers of Music*, NAPM, Washington DC 1983, p. 4, concludes from Patristic sources that “just as the breaking and reception of the Eucharistic Bread are a sign that all who partake become the body in Christ, so singing is to be the vehicle for expressing this same unity of hearts and minds.” These are all “iconic” images, our unity in the sacred song being the “sign” extending *beyond* our assembly on earth to the angels in heaven and all creation offering praise - in the words of St. Basil the

Great, “that bond of unity harmoniously drawing all into the symphony of one choir” (Homilia in psalmum).

- ⁴ Charles W. Cooper, *Preface to Poetry*, p. 165 “Context and Communication,” Harcourt, Brace and Co. NY 1946. I see the lack of *poetic skills* as a real impediment to interpretation. This particular book may be out of print. But I urge my readers to ground themselves in some experience of the oral sound and the feel of words in English, particularly as they attempt to “translate” visual images into articulation and attempt to communicate them.
- ⁵ I am particularly impressed with the development of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, Washington DC 20011. Unlike music societies concentrating on “performance,” the books, journals and seminars of NAPM focus on music in worship as a caring ministry of the assembly. A good example of their publications: *Chant: from Gueranger to Gelineau*, Norita Lanners, American Essays in Liturgy 2, Pastoral Press, Washington DC. 1984.
- ⁶ “Evangelism” is the announced theme of the All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America, Washington DC, August 1986. St. Paul says, “And how are they to believe in Him of Whom they have never heard? . . . So faith comes from what is heard . . .” (Romans 10: 14, 17). Next to preaching, what is it that people “hear” in Church? It seems obvious that sacred song is meant to be an evangelical tool.
- ⁷ Fr. George Florovsky, Vol. 1, *Collected Works: Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*, Ch. 1, “The Lost Scriptural Mind,” p. 10. “We are in danger of losing the uniqueness of the Word of God in the process of continuous ‘reinterpretation.’ Would it not be safer to bend our thought to the mental habits of biblical language and to relearn the idiom of the Bible?”
- ⁸ *God Who Acts - Biblical Theology as Recital*, G. Ernest Wright, Studies in Biblical Theology 8, SCM Press Bloomsbury Street London 1952. Wright maintains that the recounting of our “salvation history” in recital is the central religious act of the worshipping community (p. 13).
- ⁹ *Introduction to the New Testament*, Fr. Raymond Collins, Doubleday NY 1983. Fr. Collins’ point is that Holy Scripture comes to us from the whole fabric of units of tradition transmitted orally within the ongoing life of the worshipping community as the People of God.
- ¹⁰ Sergei Glagolev, *Music: Iconography in Rhythm and Sound*, Sacred Art Journal Vol. 4 No. 1, 1983, St. John Damascus Assn., Torrance CA 90505. (From the keynote lecture given at the Eastern Conference of Orthodox Iconographers, Iconologists and Architects held at St. Vladimir’s Seminary, Crestwood NY, Oct. 23-24, 1982.)

- ¹¹ It is next to impossible to demonstrate the oral technique of word grouping by writing about it. I found one cassette helpful: Dr. W.J. Beaners, Speech Dept., Princeton Theological Seminary, *How to Make Sense When You Open Your Mouth*, Ministers Life Resources 1977, Minneapolis 55416. Although the cassette addresses problems of preaching, it very much relates to the sound of singing as discussed in this paper.
- ¹² One can appreciate why the 4th century Canons of Laodicea forbid any singing in the assembly except by "the canonical singers (cantors) who mount the ambo and sing from the parchment." Misplacement of words, word-substitutions, omissions, etc., were the means of introducing heresy. Who among us cannot remember the strange images we conjured as children by having mis-heard something said or sung in church? This is no argument against choirs and singing assemblies. It is a caution, however, that we must take the "power" of oral word images seriously. It is something for pastoral musicians to fuss about.
- ¹³ See Paul Garrett's two articles in the St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly (Crestwood NY 10107) *The Problem of Liturgical Translation*, Vol. 22 Nos. 2 & 3. 1978, and the *addendum* published in Vol. 24, No. 1, 1980.
- ¹⁴ *Anthology of Music - The Music of the Byzantine Church/13*, Egon Wellesz, edited by Karl Gustav Fellerer, Arno Volk-Verlag Koln 1959. Wellesz has pretty well established that the melodic thoughts of church modes ("tones") were melodic formulas dealing with forms of *prosody*, i.e., the "tone" of *word-groupings* in their stichal progression. In the "Tone 4" reduction, there are only two related stichs to the thought-rime of a verse. Either another "tone" (mode) must be used in this example, or the stichs will have to be re-arranged to follow an A-B pattern.
- ¹⁵ Obviously, we breathe at pauses to interpret word grouping relationships. We breathe at *pausing breaks*, not when we run out of breath. Breathing must always serve interpretation. Most often, the "culprit" of distortion is the choirmaster, thinking vertically by harmonic blocks within measure-marks, and by harmonic resolutions, thus "winding up" for a "down beat" because of his or her memorized "beat-patterns," or to resolve a chord with disregard for the word associations. I am at a loss as to how to explain this in writing. As in Note 11, I think this must be demonstrated by audition.
- ¹⁶ "The speech rhythms are the most supple, its accents more subtly placed. Still more free in its rhythmic flow is poetic prose, whose elastic rhythms - as in the prose of the Bible - are capable of a rich and varied music." (*Introduction to Contemporary Music*, Joseph Machlis, WW Norton NY 1979, p. 30). Machlis also quotes Stravinsky: "Rhythm and motion, not the element of feeling, are the foundation of musical art." The lack of rhythm in the voice of prayer is not a lost dimension, but a distortion.
- ¹⁷ "Psalmody, Hymnody, and other forms of chant were undoubtedly simple in melody, in all probability resembling song-speech. In fact, many believe that the distinction between singing and reciting (cantillating) liturgical texts was, in the early days of the Church, less defined than it is today." p. 3, *The Ministers of Music*, Lawrence J. Johnson, National Association of Pastoral Musicians, Washington DC 20011, 1983.
- ¹⁸ "To sing with one voice" is the phrase by which Quasten characterizes the patristic reference to the song of the assembly. "Una voce dicentes: The Koinonia of Early Christian Singing," p. 66, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, Johannes Quasten, NAPM Washington DC, 1983. We find these same references repeatedly in our liturgical texts. I disagree with Quasten, however, that St. John Chrysostom's phrase "a unity out of the many who participate" leaves us with nothing else but unisonous, monophonic singing to express "harmony out of disharmony." That "one voice" means "unison singing" might be an interpretation of later developments. Note 19 below attempts to elaborate.
- ¹⁹ It would seem to me that if everybody in Church sang, the assembly would soon discover "timbre," the distinction of qualities among voices - young and old, high and low, thick and thin, heady and chesty, men and women as distinct from children, full or nasal, etc. Further, it is inconceivable to me that early Church singing would sound like the neatly sonorous pure-tone monophonic chant of French Benedictine monks. Any church musician knows how difficult it is to get a "unison" sound out of an untrained group of voices. My guess is that the distinction between "singing, crying out, shouting and proclaiming" was not that neat. The "texture" of the sound of the assembly may have been that of people voicing "similar" melodies on different pitches on the same words at the same time, not unlike the "prostopenie" I heard as a child. The objection of Church Fathers to "homophony" and "polyphony" may have been to the *heterotonic* inventions of the pagan cults who used *instruments* to carry melodies *independent* of the sung parts. I include these thoughts here because I worry about a "diversion" of our studies in "church sound" from the rhythm and music of language to a search for "pure unison sound" based on dubitable assumptions.
- ²⁰ Although born in America in the 20's, English is not my first language. Perhaps this makes me more sensitive to how English really sounds. We all agree that the *text* of the sacred song is essential to the "sound" of our music in worship. Yet precious little has been done about it.
- ²¹ This structure of sacred song is discussed in Section V of this essay. Massey J. Shepherd's *Psalms in Christian Worship* (cited below, Note 25) and the Beaners cassette (Note 11) might be helpful introductions.

²² *Jewish Music*, A.Z. Idelsohn, Ch. III, Schocken Books NY 1975.

David's Harp, Alfred Sendry and Mildred Norton, Ch. XXV, NAL-WORLD BOOK, New American Library (Jewish Heritage Foundation) NY 1964.

²³ *Music: Now and Then*, Ashley Pettis, *Psalms, Hymns and Canticles* Coleman - Ross NY 1955.

²⁴ *The Psalms*, Introduction and Notes, Mary Perkins Ryan, Fides Pub. Chicago 1955.

²⁵ *The Psalms in Christian Worship*, Massey H. Shepherd Jr., p. 8, Augsburg, Minneapolis 1976.

²⁶ Attributed to Robert Frost By Fr. John Kselman in *Psalms: Poetry at its Best*, Pastoral Music Vol. 8 No. 6 Aug.-Sept. 1984 NAMP cited above.

²⁷ *Bogoslužebnoye Penie Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi*, Vol. II, Section One, Johannes von Gardner, Jordanville NY, 1982.)

²⁸ *Church Music in History and Practice*, Winfred Douglas 1937 Scribner Sons NY pp. 108-113.

²⁹ Read Quasten (cited above, Note 18). "Canons" are almost always negative responses to serious abuses that may or may not pertain to the threats of our own pluralistic, secularistic surroundings. The Church

Fathers were divided on whether to forbid these "influences," or to transform them into vehicles of Christian experience (St. Ambrose was not afraid to use "pagan" antiphony to teach Orthodoxy). The Fathers themselves were not without being "influenced" by the cultural milieu of their times, using the poetic, philosophical and rhetorical styles of their own age to communicate the eternal truths to contemporary people.

³⁰ Are not the notions of some Byzantists and musicologists among us a little romantic? I think looking for the "pure sound" of liturgical worship is a little like looking for a way to turn copper into gold.

³¹ Massey Shepherd quoting the proceedings of the Liturgical Conference 1967, pp. 11-12, Church Music Association of America, Washington (see Note 25, p. 93).

³² *Ministry and Music*, Robert J. Mitchell, Westminster Press Phila. 1978, pp. 17-18. Throughout the Bible, revelation depicts "heaven" as the "singing assembly". But there is no confusion about angels and people redeemed. In the presence of God ("heaven"), all things created visible and invisible offer their own unique sound of praise eternally "with one voice".

SMOLENSKY, Continued from page 24

uncompromising search for a true, genuine church music in Russia, Smolensky understood the value of knowing and preserving one's Orthodox musical past. Although our concerns may be somewhat different, we would do well to follow in Smolensky's footsteps.

References:

- ¹ *Kurs khorovogo tserkovnogo peniia*, (Kazan': 1885).
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 140.
- ⁴ *Tserkovnoe penie v Rossii*, 3 vols., (Moscow 1867, 1868, 1869).
- ⁵ Cited in V. Vasilyev, "Iz vospominanii o S. Smolenskom" [Reminiscences about S. Smolensky], *Russkaia Muzykal'naia Gazeta* 28/29 (1911): 570.
- ⁶ *Obshchii ocherk istorii i muzykal'nogo znacheniiia pevchikh rukopisei Solovetskoii biblioteki i "azbuki pevchei" Aleksandra Mezentsa; Kratkoe opisaniie drevniago (XII-XIII veka) znamennoogo irmologa, prinaldzhavshego Voskresenskomu "Novyi Ierusalim" imenuemomu, monastyriu, (Kazan': 1887).*
- ⁷ *Azbuka znamennoogo peniia (izveshchenie o soglasneishikh pometakh) startsa Aleksandra Mezentsa (1688-go goda)*. Facsimile and commentary. (Kazan': 1888).
- ⁸ V. Metallov, *Sinodal'noe uchilishche tserkovnogo peniia v ego proshlom i nastoiashchem* [The Synodal

School of Church Singing in its past and present] (Moscow: 1911), p. 33.

- ⁹ S. Smolensky, *Vospominaniia* [Memoirs], MS, Golovanov Collection, no. 527-8, Glinka State Museum of Musical Culture, Moscow, 2:42.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:75.
- ¹¹ Cited in *Khronika Muzykal'nogo Sovremennika*, 5/6 (1916-17): 6-8.
- ¹² Smolensky, *op.cit.*, 2:42.
- ¹³ Letter of 24 February, 1898, Cited in N. Findeisen, "Pamiati Smolenskago" [Smolensky: In memoriam], *Muzykal'naia Starina*, 5 (1911): 24-5.
- ¹⁴ A. Nikolsky, "S. V. Smolensky i ego rol' v novom napravlenii russkoi tserkovnoi muzyki" [S. V. Smolensky and his role in the new direction of Russian church music] *Khorovoe i regentskoe delo*, 10 (1913): 156.
- ¹⁵ N. Kompaneisky, "Stepan Vasilyevich Smolensky" *Muzyka i penie*, 5 (1906): 3-4.
- ¹⁶ I. Lipaev, "S. V. Smolensky (iz vospominanii i perepiski)" [S. V. Smolensky (Reminiscences and coorespondence)] *Russkaia muzykal'naia gazeta*, 37/38 (1905): 560.
- ¹⁷ Smolensky, *Azbuka*, pp. 32-3.
- ¹⁸ Lipaev, *op.cit.*, p. 560.
- ¹⁹ S. Rachinsky, Review in *Russkoe obozrenie* (March, 1894): 172.
- ²⁰ Lipaev, *op.cit.*, pp. 581-2.

Music for the Church

BLESSED IS THE MAN — COMMENTS

By Mark Bailey

Perhaps this new setting of “Blessed is the Man” partially reflects the tradition of unison chant and harmonized chant in basic form, but its purpose is to help motivate a new tradition of transforming texts in English into sung liturgical prayer. In other words, the melodies of this setting were composed for the English text similar to how Znamenny Chant was created for Slavonic. In fact, many liturgical settings now used in the Orthodox Church in America are Znamenny Chant harmonizations. While some of the melodies are quite beautiful in their original form, they often work less successfully when forced to fit the English language. A careful study of English and Slavonic diction explains why. English encompasses an entirely different use of vowel formations and syllabic stresses. Therefore, if text and melody are to have a marriage-like relationship in order to become prayer, then the English texts used in our Church deserve their own melodic framework encompassing the uniqueness of our language.

I, like many Orthodox Christians, greatly appreciate the existing wealth of musical tradition and repertoire in our Church. I also realize how limited we are in trying to translate these marvelous settings into English. Any opera buff can also understand this problem. It’s wonderful to hear an opera translated into your native language, but, as a result, the music often loses some of its original intensity and “life.” The puritan would, of course, simply say: “keep the opera in its original language.” Yet, for our Church, this attitude would totally defeat the goal of understanding and growing within the liturgical services. It seems to me very necessary to explore a new compositional style which works in the language of the local Church.

This setting of “Blessed is the Man” is one such compositional approach. As mentioned above, it combines unison chant and harmonized chant in basic form; neither the

chant line nor its harmonization are very elaborate. Its simplicity allows for a memorable melody which is easy for even the non-musical ear to pick up. There are two similar chant patterns in use, both with the built-in flexibility to fit a variety of verses. Pitches within each chant pattern may be freely omitted or repeated as quarter notes or half notes (slurring when desired), while keeping a consistent pulse throughout each verse and refrain. This gives the composer a chance to work at each verse individually, using particular aspects of text emphasis unique to that verse, while maintaining a rhythmic and tonal unity for the entire setting. There are no deviations from the half note pulse or natural minor tonality.

This setting may be sung in a variety of different ways. It calls for two unison choirs to sing the verses while both choirs together sing the refrain. However, 1) two chanters may intone the verses instead, or 2) one separate choir or chanter may sing the verses with one or two alternating choirs singing the refrain, or 3) it can even be sung entirely by one choir — whatever best fits the particular needs of a situation.

Even though the final note between each verse and refrain is written as a half note, it may be sung at twice or three times its length, depending on the desired amount of time between each verse. However, the basic pulse must not be obscured. The parallel fifths in the refrain are intentional, creating a less formally structured harmonized sound. The voice leading of the alto and bass are a bit plain to allow the simplicity of the original chant line to penetrate. Again, although this is not a very elaborate setting, the tendency will be to sing it too slowly. The recommended tempo marking is half note equal to 126 on the metronome (give or take a notch for the director’s preference).

This setting was composed for the 1984 Liturgical Institute at St. Vladimir’s Seminary, and was first sung at the Vigil of the feast of SS. Peter and Paul.

Blessed is the Man

(The First Antiphon of the First Kathisma)

Ps. 1:1,6; 2:11,12; 3:7,8

Mark Bailey (1984)

CHANTER I OR CHOIR I

[Rapidly, $\text{♩} = 100-112$]

1. 

BLESS-ED IS THE MAN WHO WALKS NOT IN THE COUN-CIL OF THE WICK - ED.

REFRAIN: CHOIR OR CONGREGATION

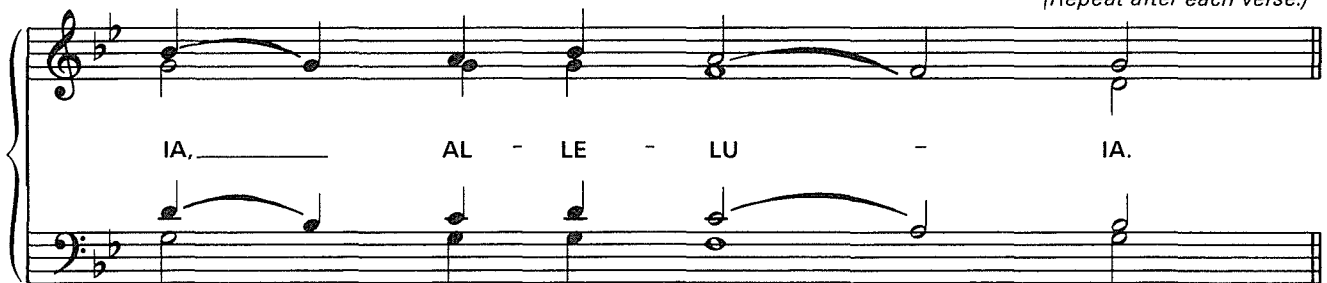
Soprano Alto 

AL - LE - LU - IA, AL - LE - LU

Tenor Bass 

AL - LE - LU - IA, AL - LE - LU

(Repeat after each verse.)



IA, AL - LE - LU - IA.

CHANTER II OR CHOIR II

2. 

FOR THE LORD KNOWS THE WAY OF THE RIGHT - EOUS,



(Refrain)

BUT THE WAY OF THE WICK - ED WILL PER - ISH.

3. 

SERVE THE LORD WITH FEAR AND RE-JOICE IN HIM WITH TREM - BLING.

4. 

BLESS - ED ARE ALL WHO TAKE REF - UGE IN HIM

5. *i.* *(Refrain)*

A - RISE, O LORD, SAVE ME, O MY GOD.

6. *ii.*

SAL - VA - TION BE - LONGS TO THE LORD,

(Refrain)

THY BLESS - ING BE UP - ON THY PEO - PLE.

7. *i.* *(Refrain)*

GLO - RY TO THE FA - THER AND TO THE SON AND TO THE HO - LY SPIR - IT.

8. *ii.* *(Refrain)*

NOW AND EV - ER AND UN - TO A - GES OF A - GES. A - MEN.

(After the refrain)
CHOIR OR CONGREGATION

p

AL - LE - LU - IA, AL - LE - LU - IA,

(Repeat 3 times)

AL - LE - LU - IA, GLO - RY TO THEE O GOD.

Vesper Prokeimenon

(Saturday night)

Ps. 93:1

Tone 6
Carpatho-Russian Chant
(Fr) Paul Jannakos, arr.

[♩ = 80]

p

Soprano
Alto

THE LORD IS KING:

Tenor
Bass

p

f

HE IS ROBED IN MAJ - - - ES - TY.

f

(Alternative version for small choir or congregation)

p

High voices
Low voices

THE LORD IS KING:

f

HE IS ROBED IN MAJ - - - ES - TY.

p

Reviews —

Nicholas Uspensky, *Evening Worship in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1985. 248 pp.)

This study consists of an English translation of several articles by the pre-eminent Russian liturgical scholar. In two long studies on Vespers and on the Liturgy of the Presanctified, Uspensky outlines the early history and later development of each. The final article, "The Collision of Two Theologies," contains several interesting case studies of the influence of Western theology and practice on modern Orthodoxy. In his work Uspensky shows himself a devout follower of the historical approach, imbued in him by his mentor, A.A. Dmitrievskii.

The church musician will derive much benefit from this work. First, he or she will gain greater insight into the structure of services — services often performed on "automatic pilot." While the historical material is at times dry and complex, the reader's patience will be rewarded with a greater appreciation for the services. In particular, the musician will be made aware of the tremendous variety which has characterized the office throughout history. This variety was not only in the texts, but also in the mode of performance.

From the fourth century, two main trends, generally labeled "cathedral" and "monastic," appeared. As Uspensky makes clear, the monastic trend eventually won out and almost completely obliterated the cathedral practice. Only a few traces of the latter remain, such as the performance of the first kathisma, "Blessed

is the man," at Vespers, and the singing of "Let my prayer arise" at the Presanctified Liturgy. These were performed in an "antiphonal" or "responsorial" style: a psalmist or small group of singers sang selected verses from the psalm, and the people responded with a short, melodic refrain after each verse. Thus the office was an act of the entire gathered community, was true "*leitourgia*," or "common work." In modern practice, the role of the congregation has been taken over entirely by the choir. The cathedral practice contrasts with the monastic, which is generally based on the continuous recitation of the Psalter, with no room for popular refrains or other embellishments.

The value of a historical study such as this lies in the fact that it can pave the way for the restoration of certain "cathedral" elements in Orthodox worship. As we begin to talk of the necessity of developing a "parish typikon," it is to cathedral practice that we might well turn. Cathedral worship coexisted with monastic practice for a millenium and provided an increased role for the entire congregation. In addition, cathedral worship was characterized by more colorful, yet structurally simple, services. Some steps, such as the reintroduction of true antiphonal and responsorial singing, could be taken immediately, without any changes in the existing structure of services. This could easily be done by church musicians, working hand in hand with liturgists. But it must be done on the basis of sound historical knowledge, as well as good pastoral sense. Uspensky's work is thus an indispensable prelude to any such project.

—Paul Meyendorff

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Dimitri Conomos. *Byzantine Hymnography and Byzantine Chant*. Brookline: Hellenic College Press, 1984. 50 pp.

This slender volume contains two lectures given by Professor Conomos at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology as the first Kulukundis Lecturer in the History of Hellenism. Although a great deal of this material has appeared elsewhere, both lectures contain in condensed and accessible form material useful to the choir director and church singer interested in the history of our church singing.

The first lecture provides a brief history of Orthodox hymnography from early Christian times through the great poetic achievements of the kontakion and kanon. Remnants of Christian hymns found in the New Testament are analyzed, and there is a detailed discussion of some early troparia, including their origins and structures. Reference is made to many of the major hymnographers of the Church and to their contributions to our liturgical services.

The second lecture deals with Byzantine liturgical chant, from its shadowy beginnings before the dawn of transcribable musical

notation through the elaborate musical developments of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Probable characteristics of early chant are noted and the formulaic structure of later chant is analyzed and related to the nature of the texts served. In the case of the Trisagion (Holy God) Byzantine melodies are analyzed and compared to contemporary musical material of the Christian West. This section of the book offers the layman an excellent overview of the work being carried on in the study of Byzantine music today.

—Helen Erickson

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To keep you informed of the latest developments in the field of Orthodox liturgical singing, the Department of Liturgical Music of the Orthodox Church in America publishes a quarterly Newsletter — *The Orthodox Church Singer*. We invite all clergy, choir directors, church singers, and interested parishioners to receive the Newsletter, free of charge, as a service of the Department. To ensure that you receive each issue, please send name and address to: The Department of Liturgical Music, c/o Vincent Peterson, 3872 Gilbert, Detroit, MI 48210.

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REASONABLE WORSHIP?

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to the order and complexities of Byzantine ritual that tolerates an abomination like *mnogoglasie*? Conversely, is not hurried expediency also to be avoided? Indeed, it is not a Rhodes scholarship which is required to resolve these issues, but a pure heart which seeks the Living God. While one must not disregard the aesthetics of Orthodox worship, its ascetic quality must not be discounted either. For ultimately, the Orthodox singer must join the choir of saints and angels which surrounds the throne of God and sings: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" (Rev.4).

References:

¹S.V. Smolenskii, *Azbuka znamennogo peniia (izveshchenie o soglasneishikh pometakh)* startsa Aleksandra Mezentsa (1668) (Kazan, 1888) p. 34.

²*Ibid.*, p. 37.

³W.J. Birkbeck, "Some Notes upon Russian Ecclesiastical Music, Ancient and Modern," *Proceedings of the Musical Association for the Investigation and Discussion of Subjects Connected with the Art and Science of Music*, the 17th Session, 1898-1891 (reprint with the permission of the Royal Musical Association, London, by Kraus Reprint, LTD, Vaduz, 1966) p. 140.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 140

⁵As cited in V. Metallov, *An Outline History of Orthodox Church Singing in Russia*, trans, Frank Fennel Starbuck (unpublished masters thesis, Indiana University, 1957) p. 129.

⁶*Ibid.*, p.130.

⁷A.I. Rogov, *Muzykal'naia estetika Rossii XI-XVIII vekov*, (izdatel'stvo "Muzyka," 1973) p. 59-65.

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