

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX MUSIC WEBINAR - HANDOUT

MAJOR SERVICES OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Divine Liturgy (comparable to Catholic Mass):

- The Liturgy of St John Chrysostom
- The Liturgy of St Vasily (Basil the Great)
- The Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts

Vespers

Matins

The All-Night Vigil (combining Vespers & Matins)

Panikhida (a memorial service)

All liturgical music is sung in Old Church Slavonic

PUBLISHERS

Musica Russica (MR)

www.musicarussica.com

All major pieces available (sacred and secular) for all voice parts and seasons

Decent transliteration system (though a handful of errors)

Audio guides available

OUP

Russian Sacred Music for Choirs edited Noelle Mann

Great collection of music from chant to 20th century

Great transliteration system Audio guides available

Sarah Tenant-Flowers (STF)

stenantflowers@btinternet.com

Random home produced editions!

Novello

New edition of Rachmaninov's All-Night Vigil produced



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REPERTOIRE SUGGESTIONS

Pieces in bold type were played during the webinar.

Chants

Dostoyno yest - Byzantine chant (It is truly meet)

Dostoyno yest – Znamenny chant

Blazhen muzh – Greek chant

Voskreseniye Tvoye, Hriste Spase (Kievan chant)

Sheet Music

STF

OUP (RSMfC)

OUP (RSMfC)

STF

17th Century

ANON

O presvyataya Mariye Devitse (O most holy maiden Mary)

STF

VASILY TITOV (c1650-c1715)

Slava/Yedinorodni Syne (Glory/Only-Begotten Son)

MR

NIKOLAI DILETSKY (c1630-c1680)

Khvalitye imia Ghospodne (Praise the Name of the Lord)

MR

18th Century

GIUSEPPE SARTI (1729-1802)

Nine sili nebesniya (Now the powers of heaven)

MR

DIMITRY BORTNIANSKY (1751-1825)

Izhe Kheruvimi (Cherubic Hymn No 7)

MR

Skazhi mi, Ghospodi (Lord, make me know mine end)

MR

Mnogaya lyeta (Many years)

OUP (RSMfC) + MR



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ARTEMY VEDEL (1767-1808)

Na rekakh vavilonskikh (By the rivers of Babylon)

MR

Blazhen muzh (Blessed is the Man)

OUP (RSMfC)

BALDASSARE GALUPPI (1706-1785)

Plotiyu usnuy (In the flesh Thou fell asleep)

MR

MAXIM BEREZOVSKY (1745-1777)

Nye otvyerzhi menye (Do not reject me in my old age)

OUP (RSMfC) + MR

19th - 20th Centuries

PAVEL CHESNOKOV (1877-1944)

Blagoslovi, dushe moya Op44 No 1 (Bless the Lord, O my soul)

MR

Panihida (Memorial) Op39 (I I Movements)

MR

Blazhen muzh (Blessed is the man)

OUP (RSMfC)

ALEXANDER GRECHANINOV ((1865-1956)

Nye ridai (Weep not for me, Mother) from the Strastnaya Sedmitsa

(Holy Week Cycle, Op 58)

MR + STF

Otche nash (Our Father)

OUP (RSMfC)

PETER I TCHAIKOVSKY (1840 -1893)

Liturgy of St John Chrysostom (15 movements)

MR

All-Night Vigil

MR

Dostoyno yest

MR

Blazheni, yazhe izbral (Blessed are they/Memorial service)

MR

VICTOR KALINNIKOV (1870-1927)

Bogoroditse Dyevo (Rejoice, O Mother of God)

OUP (RSMfC)

SERGEI RACHMANINOV (1873 – 1943)

V'molitivakh nyeusipayuschuyu Bogoroditsu (Mother of God, ever praying) MR + OUP + STF

Liturgy of St John Chrysostom (20 movements*) MR

*including the sublime Cherubic Hymn (No 8) and Tebe poyem (No 12)

The All-Night Vigil (15 movements including Bogoroditse Devo No 6) MR + Novello

ALEXANDER KASTALSKY (1856 – 1926)

Milost mira (A mercy of peace) OUP +MR

GEORGY SVIRIDOV (1915 – 1998)

To lyubov (Sacred Love) OUP

ALFRED SCHNITTKE (1934 – 1998)

Psalms of Repentance Sikorski

NIKOLAI KEDROV (1871 – 1940)

Otche nash (Our Father) MR

TIPS ON INTERPRETATION AND PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

CHOIR SIZE AND LAYOUT

- Minimum size of choir for SATB music with no divisi writing = 12 (3.3.3.3)
- Minimum choir for divisi music = 27 (6.6.6.7+2)
- Idea choir for divisi music = 54 (27 as above x 2)
- For very large choirs (over 100) divide the singers into timbral groups and use orchestrally

Chesnokov's suggested layout:

B	B	Octavists	T	T
A	A		S	S
Cond.				



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BALANCES AND TUNING

- Perfect balance and blend within a section - no protruding voices)
- Likewise between sections - all voice parts of equal strength, with the exceptions of
- (1) Slightly more basses (plus optional octavists)
- (2) When a chant line is being sung, bring it to the fore

Be particularly careful to ensure balance of strength between divisi parts. Rachmaninov in particular spaces a chord with deliberate intent (and meaning) in mind, which poorly balanced divisis spoil.

Chesnokov: “Each singer and each section seeks to position themselves in the overall chord with perfect precision, both in relation to the sound of adjacent singers within a section, and in relation to the sound of other sections.”

PHRASE LENGTHS AND BREATHING

- Breath is taken to articulate a break in the text, never because the singers need it!
- Stagger breathing over lengthy periods is the norm
- Chesnokov recommends dividing the choir into units of 3 singers each to achieve a continuum of sound

COLOURS

- Default sound is clear, focussed, well projected, perfectly blended
- Wide variety of vocal colours is encouraged (light, dark etc) – use warm ups and ‘play’ with the dimension of colour with your choirs
- A special colour – reserved for short periods only – is a whispering tone (which Chesnokov referred to as semi-covered). Allow plenty of air out into the sound
- Neither vibrato nor nasal singing is allowed
- Avoid mimickry (constantly depressed larynx)

HAIRPINS

- Be subtle if no ‘value’ is given
- if a crescendo extends over a long period, consider the option of adding a moderate accelerando. Likewise, if a decrescendo is lengthy, consider the option of adding a slight rallentando



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DYNAMICS

- mp is not a marking used by Chesnokov or Rachmaninov in their sacred works. The default, neutral dynamic is mf, i.e.
- ppp pp p mf f ff fff
- never force the tone in a crescendo

NUANCE AND MARKINGS

- the shading of light and dark, stresses and non-stresses in the text is subtle and important to give the lines chant-like flexibility
- constantly aim for forward flow
- Rachmaninov's markings are incredibly detailed
- In the absence of markings, assume (super smooth) legato

RUBATO (unwritten)

Don't overdo it. Reserve for:

- Final cadences
- Approaches to awesome words
- Lengthy decrescendos
- Climactic harmony moments

TASTE

Chesnokov: "Call forth inspiration from within, and regulate that inspiration with a sense of artistic measure."

Avoid gratuities (eg excessive over-emoting, swooping, vibrato, superimposing additional markings not given by Rachmaninov)

NB Music is a channel through which people collectively worship, not a form of individual expression.



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