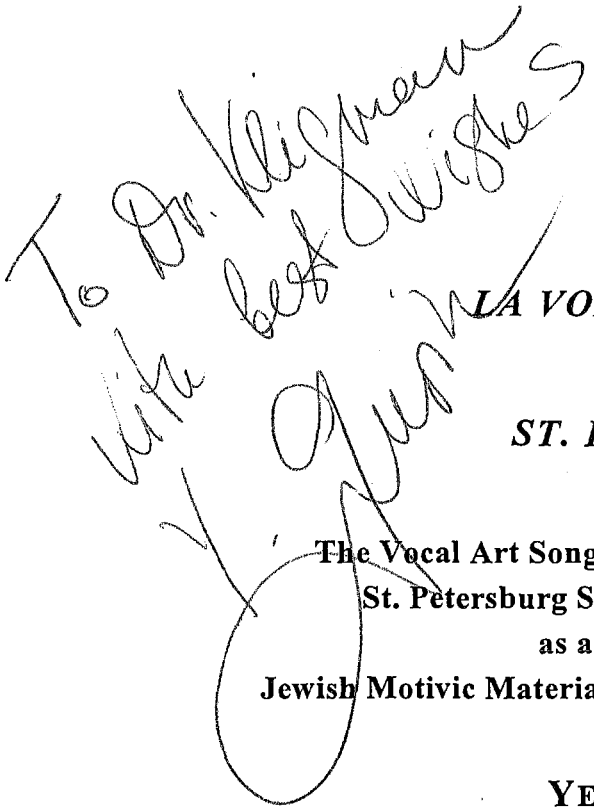

# *LA VOIX HEBRAIQUE DE ST. PETERSBURG*

**The Vocal Art Song of the Jewish Composers of the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music as an Intersection of Jewish Motivic Material and Russian Conservatory Matter**

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of Requirements for
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# *La Voix Hebraique de St. Petersburg*

by

**Yelena Gurin**

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## Preface and Acknowledgements

Before I thank the many people who helped to bring this thesis into being, I would like to share with you how I arrived at its unusual, and for me fulfilling, topic. This will help the reader understand how very grateful I am to all those who helped me "on my way."

I grew up in (Soviet) Russia. Throughout my high school years in my home-town of St. Petersburg I attended a French "lycée," where we were exposed to French culture and language. My first inclination regarding a thesis topic, therefore, was to explore the subject of the French Jewish Art Song form.

Thus it was, back in April of 1997, that I began some preliminary research into the history of European Jewry and general European culture. In so doing, I came across the names of some German composers but very few French ones. Reading further about the German School, I "bumped into" some Russian-sounding composer names, such as Achron, Saminsky, Rozowsky, Gnessin, etc.

My curiosity was aroused. I had heard of M. Gnessin and his sisters. They were, I knew, figures in music, for the Music Institute of Higher Education in Moscow was named in their honor -- that much I knew. However, what I did not know, was that Gnessin had been Jewish, a composer, a founder and one of the most highly-talented composers of the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music -- an entity of which I had never even heard! -- as well as one of the outstanding composers of his generation.

To my.further great surprise I discovered that an entire group of Russian Jewish composers had been active at the beginning of the twentieth century and had founded a National Jewish School in Music with its center in St. Petersburg, the very city where I had grown up and received an extensive education in music.

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I shared my discovery with **Dr. Mark Kligman**, who confirmed the existence of the Society and provided me with the names of some researchers and publications connected with this topic, which developed into the subject of my thesis. Thus, my first debt of gratitude goes to him.

One of the names he gave me was that of a musicologist, and a musician in her own right, **Ms. Paula Bekker**, who kindly spent an hour discussing it with me over the telephone. In that time she convinced me that my background and interests made me uniquely qualified to write on the subject. Moreover, she strongly suggested that, instead of the comparative analyses which had been my earlier plan, I concentrate on the subject of the crossroads between the Jewish element and Russian Conservatory matter in the vocal art music of the Jewish composers of the Society. Thank you, Paula, very much for helping me to crystallize my plans and bringing to light for me this niche in the world of musical criticism/musicology.

**Professor Benjamin Nathans** of Indiana University: Thank you for sending me your articles on St. Petersburg's *intelligentsia.*

**Miss Joyce Rosenzweig** shared with me some of the art songs by composers of interest in her collection, and gave me emotional support and a deeper performative understanding of some of the songs.

The well-guarded reference room of manuscripts in the **NY Public Library of Performing Arts** at Lincoln Center allowed me to look at and copy by hand, when needed, some of the manuscripts produced by the composers of the Society, as well as Rimsky-Korsakov's "Hebrew Song."

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**Mr. William Mannahan**, Assistant Legal Reference Librarian of the Law Library of Congress in Washington DC (with whom I had several hours of engaging conversation, ranging from President Harrison's responses on the expulsion of Jews from Moscow in 1891 to the behavioral aspects of congressmen and interns today on Capitol Hill) paid sincere compliments to me and showed respect and interest in the subject I was researching. His help and encouragement are greatly appreciated and helped to make my stay in Washington DC even more pleasant and productive.

To **Hannah Mlotek** of YIVO, who spent an entire day with me locating the materials I had requested and even let me touch the original first edition manuscripts of the arrangements by composers of the Society -- my heartfelt thanks.

Some of the music I found was quite complicated from the viewpoint of musical analysis. I am very privileged to have in my family a cousin, **Mr. Vladimir Gurin**, who is a composer, theorist and pianist, and at the present time is heading the piano faculty of a private school of music, as well as serving as President of the American Russian Musical Society in Boston, MA.

Mr. Gurin, together with his colleague **Lyudmila Khazan**, helped me to decipher the mysterious harmonies of Alexander Krein. Through discussions with Mr. Gurin I was also able to identify the main characteristics of the St. Petersburg and Moscow Conservatory Schools of composition, a task which was essential to my topic. Thank you, cousin and colleague.

To **my mother Bella Gurin** and **my son Daniel**, who cooperated so patiently, especially in the last busy couple of months: your love, help and understanding are appreciated more than you can know.

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To **Cantor Goldstein** of HUC, who strongly encouraged me to apply to the School of Sacred Music, thereby giving me the chance to explore and express my Jewishness through writing and singing -- my deep thanks.

My sincere thanks, too, to **Rabbi David Posner** of Temple Emanue-El for sharing with me not only his doctoral thesis on piano works by composers of the Society, but who actively encouraged me to go through with the project and permitted me to read all his Lazar Saminsky books. Your joyful, enthusiastic attitude always made me smile.

I must also thank here the four major supporters in my life at HUC-JIR.

**Dr. Rabbi Paul Steinberg**: Thank you for being you! Thank you for being there for me always! Thank you for believing in me and standing by me! You and your dear wife Trudy are my extended family.

**Cantor Noah Shaul**, who has worked hard to make me a truly Jewish singer: I have endless admiration for your profound knowledge of Hazzanut. Thank you for believing in me.

**Cantor Robert Abelson**, who, by his example and teaching, taught me a great deal about the Jewish Art Song from the interpretive side: Thank you!

**Dr. Carole Balin**, my teacher of Jewish History, who has been my Thesis Advisor: You brought me a new understanding of writing scholarly papers, and you taught me to widen my vision of history. Thank you, too, for being so "picayune" (I learned that word from you!) and digging out of me my best.

And last but not least. . . English is not my mother tongue, and no matter how well I may be equipped to communicate my thoughts it was not enough to pen a scholarly paper. I am lucky and privileged to have as friend, partner-in-life, personal spokesman, artist's representative and Editor-in-Chief my beloved, dear husband, **Mr. David Cohen**. Thank you, darling!

* * *

*Y.G.*
*January 1998*

## SECTION 1
## INTRODUCTION

In the last decade of the nineteenth century in St. Petersburg, the capital of Imperial Russia, a unique window of opportunity opened which enabled Jewish culture to flourish at the highest level of human expression, on a par with the Russian, French and German national schools. How did this come about? What were the goals of the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music? This work will attempt to answer these questions. In addition, several vocal works composed by members of the Society will be analyzed as microcosms of the development of the Jewish vocal art song, reflecting the dynamic that existed between the Russian school of composition and the Jewish elements therein.

In order to understand the creation of a National Jewish School of Music, one has to examine the historical, social and cultural environment of Russia from the mid-nineteenth century through the beginning of the twentieth century. After all, Jewish culture has historically been deeply connected with the cultures of the nations among whom Jews have been dispersed. Thus, the history of Russian Jewry became entangled with that of

Russia itself. The Tsars' attitudes toward Jews were based on "the time-honored tradition dating from the time of Peter the Great, which barred the Jews from the Russian interior" due to "moral peculiarities," resulting in their being hated by the Russian people.[1] Ever since the majority of the Jewish population had become Russian subjects they were subjected to numerous laws of discrimination and disability.[2]

This work is intended to shed light on the unique development of Jewish culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the centrality of St. Petersburg's newly-formed class of *intelligentsia* and its influence on the formation of the Society for Jewish Folk Music of St. Petersburg.

*Haskalah* (Jewish Enlightenment), an intellectual movement which developed initially in Germany, spread to Russia. The *Haskalah* of Russian Jews blossomed at virtually the same time as the general Russian intellectual awakening: during the reign of Tsar Alexander II. As in the

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[1] Simon Dubnov, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland.* Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1918, vol. ii, p. 35. The historical data in this thesis is drawn from various sources; however, facts as to the early history of Jews in Russia are derived primarily from Dubnov's works. I feel a special affinity with this author, since I grew up in (Soviet) Russia and remember the stories my aunts told me, as a child, about Tsarist Russia.

[2] Between 1882 and 1903 alone there were 650 restrictive laws directed against Jews in the Russian Code; ibid., vol. iii.

West, the Age of Enlightenment turned the interest of intellectuals toward their roots: the culture and traditions of their own people. The movement of "going back to people" was called *narodnichestvo*, which was based on a profound interest in folk materials. This movement influenced the Jewish composers of St. Petersburg, causing them to search for authentic Jewish melodies. The remarkable energy which Jewish composers put into collecting folk material, arranging it and composing Jewish art music led to increased interest on the part of Jews and non-Jews alike in the Jewish musical heritage. While Jewish composers like Mikhail Gnessin, Efraim Sckliar, Alexander Krein and Lazar Saminsky hailed from the Pale of Settlement -- from traditional homes where they had grown up with the language of *zemirot* (Sabbath table songs), ritual songs and prayers in their ears -- they brought into vocal art music a knowledge of Western harmony and Russian Conservatory matter, as well as the melodic expressions of their mother-tongue Yiddish and their newly-acquired language, Russian.

This work will include, along with the short biographies of the above-mentioned composers, analyses of some vocal art songs composed by them. While Efraim Schkliar, Mikhail Gnessin and Lazar Saminsky offer the best

examples of the style of composition and harmonization of the St. Petersburg Conservatory and of Hebrew melos, Alexander Krein, who was educated at the Moscow Conservatory and is more representative of the Tchaikovsky/Taneev school of composition, is, in my opinion, the most interesting innovator of the Jewish Art Song. In addition, since this thesis's focus is primarily vocal art music, the author could not neglect a composer as colorful as Alexander Krein.

## SECTION I1
## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From the end of the eighteenth century, when Catherine the Great acquired some half-million Jewish subjects by acquiring a portion of the former Poland Lithuania, until the February Revolution of 1917, "Jewish residence was legally restricted to the Empire's western and southwestern peripheries,"[3] the so-called Pale of Settlement. The "ground laws" and restrictive by-laws issued after 1804 were incorporated in the accurately-titled "Charter of Disabilities" in the April 1835 "Statute Concerning the

[3] Benjamin Nathans, *Conflict, Community, and the Jews of Late Nineteenth-Century St. Petersburg.* Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas 44 (1996), Stuttgart/Germany.

Jews."[4] As a rule, during the reign of Nicholas I Jews could not reside outside the Pale. In order to travel to the interior provinces, a Jew had to obtain a temporary "furlough"[5] with the proviso that the traveler should wear Russian, rather than Jewish, dress.

In a concerted effort to distance Jews from their Judaism, a special status of military service was drafted and signed into law in the form of an *Ukaz* (legal ruling) on August 26, 1827. The eighth clause of the statute prescribed that "the Jewish conscripts presented by the [Jewish] communes shall be between the ages of twelve and twenty-five." This was supplemented by Clause 74, which read: "Jewish minors. . ., below the age of eighteen, shall be placed in a preparatory establishment for military training."[6] In other words, every Jewish community was compelled by law to supply a specific number of recruits. Of course, no one wanted to become a soldier. Young men and boys generally fled, hiding in distant cities

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[4] Dubnov, ibid. The Pale of Settlement was defined in 1835 as follows: Lithuania and Southwestern provinces, without territorial restrictions,White Russia minus the villages, Little Russia (the Government of Chernigov and Poltava) minus the Crown hamlets, New Russia (Kherson, Yekaterinoslav and Bessarabia) minus Nickolaev (a sea port city) and Sevastopol, the Government of Kiev minus the city of Kiev, the Baltic provinces for old settlers only.

[5] Six-week passports were to be certified by the gubernator; the merchants of the First and Second Guilds were allowed to visit the two capitals, St. Petersburg and Moscow.

[6] Dubnov, ibid., vol. ii.

outside of their Kahal, or in a forest. The draft of Jewish youths brought much pain, anguish, devastation and demoralization to the Kahal. The duty of enlisting the recruits was imposed upon the Jewish commune. The community was held responsible for the supply of a given number of recruits. In fact, the Kahal was formed in order to perform only two functions: collect double taxes, and conscript males to the army. As Simon Dubnov claimed, the Kahal became "thoroughly demoralized and had lost its former prestige as a great Jewish institution. . .. Its transformation into a purely fiscal agency was merely the formal ratification of a sad fact."[7] Half a century later, composer Alexander Krein of the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music would write a song *Oi, vein nit, mame* (op.49, #6) based upon the tragedies wrought on the Jewish families by the "special status of military service for Jews."

In 1840, the Council of State, under the direction of Minister of Public Instruction, Uvarov, created the "Committee for Defining Measures Looking to the Radical Transformation of the Jews of Russia." In the memorandum forming the Committee, Uvarov bluntly states that the Tsarist Government was planning to solve the so-called "Jewish question," first

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[7] ibid., p. 60.

through "enlightenment," then abolition of autonomy and, finally, disabilities. "The best among the Jews are conscious of the fact that one of the principal causes of their humiliation lies in the perverted interpretation of their religious traditions. . . that Talmud demoralizes and continues to demoralize their co-religionists." Uvarov then openly stated the essence of the State-supported dominant Russian Orthodox religion: that Judaism is "not the religion of the Cross, the purest symbol of universal citizenship."

As Dubnov explained, Uvarov was well aware of the *Haskalah* in Western Europe and attempted to realize a scheme to de-Judaize the Jewish population by sending a western Jewish intellectual, Lilienthal, to the Pale, there to organize the few isolated *Haskalah* adherents (known as *Maskilim*) and propagate the idea of school reform among the traditional Jewish masses.

Although *Maskilim* were willing to pursue the road of emancipated Jewry of Western Europe, the situation of Russian Jewry remained very different from that of their European brethren. As Lilienthal wrote in his report to the Minister of Public Instructions: "So long as the Government does not accord equal rights to the Jew, general culture will only be his

misfortune.. . .. The enlightened Jew, without means of occupying an honorable position in the country, will be moved by a feeling of discontent to renounce his religion . . .."[8]

As Professor Benjamin Nathans points out: "Despite the absence in Imperial Russia of a European-style Jewish emancipation, a significant breach in the wall barring Jews from the Russian interior did occur during the Era of Great Reforms."[9] A fresh current of air swept through Russia: the liberation of serfs in 1861 pushed the "Jewish Question" to the forefront of Alexander II's Great Reforms. The major shift in the government mentality can be summed up in the report to the Tsar by the Governor-General of New Russia -- Count Stroganov, which stated: "The existence in our times of restrictions in the rights of the Jews. . . is neither in accord with the spirit and tendency of the age nor with the policy of a Government looking towards the amalgamation of the Jews with the original population of the Empire."[10]

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[8] Dubnov, ibid.

[9] Nathans, ibid.

[10] Dubnov, ibid., vol. ii.

Members of the Russian nobility, like Count Stroganov, using their influence, helped to bring about the "Coronation Manifesto" of 1856, which granted, to a certain degree, equal rights in the matter of conscription of Jews. In November 1861, a law was passed granting to Jews with Doctoral, Magister or candidate degrees from universities admission to serve "in all Government offices, without being confined to the Pale established for the residence of Jews."[11] The law of June 28, 1865 permitted Jewish artisans, merchants, mechanics and apprentices to reside all over the Empire. Furthermore, while still not granting Jews equal rights with Russians of similar social status, in 1879 the law conferred the right of universal residence on all categories of persons with a higher education, regardless of the nature of their diplomas.

At the same time, many children of the ghetto, lured by the rosy prospects of a free human existence, became intoxicated with the growth of Russian literature, which brought to them the fruits of the Enlightenment of contemporary European writers. During the 1860s the gymnasias and universities opened their doors to Jews. Jewish youth, children of the ghetto, flocked to these institutions, attracted by the light of science and the masters

[11] Dubnov, ibid., vol. ii, p. 164.

of thought of that generation: Dobrolubov, Pisaryev and Darwin. Nicholas Pirogov[12] was a staunch friend of the Jews and was deeply interested in Jewish culture. In the capacity of superintendent of Odessa's school district, he was largely instrumental in encouraging Jewish youth in their pursuit of general culture and in creating a Russian Jewish press.

Thus, by the mid 1880s, St. Petersburg was flooded with highly educated, prosperous, optimistically-inclined Jews. They became a part of the *Haskalah.* The *Maskilim* fought with the traditional rabbinate for a reform of Judaism, and advocated a popularization of secular education and European culture in Jewish circles. They believed at the time that equality before the law and recognition by Russian society would come to the Jews if their culture and way of life were to resemble that of their Christian neighbors. As the scholar M. Beizer explains: "The Haskala, being a complex and contradictory stream, contributed equally contradictory and far-reaching results to Jewish communal life: the development of Jewish language and literature and, at the same time, the destruction of the Jewish community, its way of life . . .. We are also indebted to it for the growth and

[12] Nicholas Pirogov (1810-1881), physician, famous as a pedagogue.

development of Russo-Jewish literature, that is, literature in Russian language on Jewish themes."[13]

Russian *Maskilim* were willing to pursue the road of the emancipation of Western-European Jewry only to a limited degree, refusing to cut themselves off from their national language (Hebrew), religion and ideals. Russification became the war cry of these Jewish circles. Russification, for a major part of St. Petersburg's *intelligentsia,* culminated in identification with Russian culture. The link between the new Jewish *intelligentsia* and the government was an undeniable fact.

The 1869 census shows that approximately 7,000 Jews had settled in St. Petersburg. For virtually all Jews St. Petersburg was the first "Russian" city they had experienced. As the historian Benjamin Nathans put it: ". . . The northern capital served as a window not on Europe, but on Russia itself."[14] "How attractive the capital seemed to me -- the center of the country's intellectual life where, so I thought, one could meet writers, where

[13] Mikhail Beizer, *The Jews of St. Petersburg- Excursions Through a Noble Past.* Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989.

[14] Nathans, ibid.

life was in full swing, and enlightenment poured forth in broad streams, drawing all to culture and progress."[15]

First guild merchants, physicians, lawyers, artisans and musicians were admitted into the capital to develop business and make up for the shortage of professionals. As Nathans continues: "In a remarkably short period of time, St. Petersburg Jewry gave rise to a new image of the Jew as modern, cosmopolitan and strikingly successful in urban professions, such as banking, law, and journalism, that were emerging in the wake of the Great Reform."[16]

One of the best examples of acculturation (in this case, Russification) is the statistic regarding the adaptation of the language of the "new culture." In 1869, 97 percent of Jews claimed Yiddish as their native tongue in St. Petersburg, while only 2 percent claimed Russian as their native tongue. By 1897, 70 percent of them called Yiddish their native language and 27 percent of those of the Jewish faith called Russian their native tongue.[17]

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[15] G. Sliozberg, *Dela minuvshich dnei. Zapiski russkogo evreia.* 3 vol. Paris 1933, translated from Russian by B. Nathans.

[16] Nathans, ibid., *The New Jews.*

[17] Nathans, ibid., according to *Iukhneva Etnicheskii sostav*, and *Statisticheskii ezhegodnij S. Peterburga.*

While the majority of Russian Jews remained poor, several individuals -- such as Samuel, Iakov and Lazar Poliakov and Evsei Ginsburg and his son Horace -- managed to attain prominent positions in Russian society. These were rare but typical exceptions. The Poliakov Brothers were active in railroad construction. In recognition of his magnificent contributions to Russian charitable institutions, Samuel Poliakov "was elevated to the nobility and appointed privy councilor, a rank equivalent to that of minister."[18] Baron Ginzburg established a bank in Petersburg in 1859 and floated large loans for many government projects. The Jewish *intelligentsia* who began to gather in Petersburg in the 1860s were determined to establish institutions of Jewish life equal to those of their counterparts in Berlin and Paris. Thus, "The Society for the Spread of Enlightenment Among the Jews of Russia" was founded in 1863.

## SECTION III
## ST. PETERSBURG JEWRY

Census statistics highlight the dramatic changes which occurred among the Jews in St. Petersburg throughout the nineteenth century. The city itself was founded in 1703 by Peter the Great, and the formal history of

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[18] M. Beizer, ibid., p.10.

its Jewish community started in 1802 with the purchase of a Jewish burial ground in the Volkov cemetery. The population of Jews then was about 200. By the 1860s, as noted earlier, it had grown to 7,000. In 1869, permission was granted to proceed with the construction of the Choral Synagogue, the interior decoration of which was the work of Leon Bakhman, the first Jew to enter the Academy of Fine Arts[19]. By the 1890s, the Jewish population of St. Petersburg exceeded 30,000.

With the untimely death of Alexander II,[20] a dark cloud of reaction descended over Russia's Empire of Alexander III. As will be shown below, the new Tsar hated the Jews and he also hated the liberal reforms of his enlightened father. The "Jewish Question" was pushed to the forefront during Alexander III's regime for two reasons: (a) the belief that Turkish war losses were due to poor supplies of war ammunitions, which were in the hands of Jewish dealers and suppliers, resulting in "growing irritation against all Jews;" and (b) the desire to "distract public opinion from all that

[19] An institution of higher education, teaching Fine Arts.

[20] Alexander II was assassinated by the revolutionary youth in 1881.

[the people] had hoped for in the last months of the previous reign. . . from liberal reforms."[21]

The reactionary policy of Alexander III and his profound hatred of Jews woke the Russian-Jewish *intelligentsia* from the dream that "Mother Russia" would embrace them if only they would look and behave like their Christian neighbors. Dubnov, who was a living testimonial to the anti-Semitic propaganda perpetrated in the media, writes: "The anti-Semitic bacilli were floating in the social atmosphere of Russia and preparing the way for the pogrom epidemic of the following decade."[22]

The rise of St. Petersburg's Jewish *intelligentsia* and its power earned the respect of the Russian elite. This can be seen through the elite's open responses to bestial anti-Semitic articles which appeared in the St. Petersburg press from the early 1860's through the end of the century. For example, in 1858 the St. Petersburg magazine *Illustrazia* published an anti-Semitic article, "The Zhyds of the Russian West." One hundred and forty writers condemned the conduct of the periodical. In 1880, *Novoje Vremiia*,

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[21] Sliozberg, ibid., p. 115, translated from Russian by Y.G. A law student in the 1880's, Sliozberg had a conversation in the house of General Levitzki who was in charge of the military campaign during the Turkish war. The quote is a recollection of a conversation with the General who was close to the Tsar himself.

[22] Dubnov, ibid., vol. iii, p. 205.

an influential semi-official organ, published a pogrom-agitating article, "Zhid Idet!," and at the same time Feodor Dostoevski's anti-Semitic work, *Dnevnik Pisatelia*, was published[23] In the year preceding the expulsion from Moscow in 1890, Jews were characterized in the official press as ". . . an element hostile to Government."[24] One hundred and fifteen writers and other representatives of the Russian *intelligentsia*, including Leo Tolstoi, wrote a protest in the form of an open letter, the publication of which was denied by every official and semi-official periodical.

Unprecedented and relentless propaganda added fuel to the popular belief in "Jewish exploitation" -- a statement used by the Tsarist government to justify violence against Jews -- and triggered pogroms in Belorussia, the Ukraine (Kiev, Nyezhin, 1881), the Baltic (1882) and Southern Russia (Rostov-on-the Don, 1883). The government's doctrine regarding the Jews was that they were predominantly a mercantile class engaged in "unproductive" labor. As one writer in 1882 maintained: ". . .the Jews have been cast out of the community of human beings. Their destitution,

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[23] *Novoje Vremiia*, March 1880, No. 1461. Regarding the political attitude among St. Petersburg elite, see H. Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia.* Berkeley 1986.

[24] Dubnov, ibid. vol. iii, p. 373.

amounting to beggary, has been firmly established."[25] As if this was not enough, the Tsarist Government continued its path of gradual delegitimation of the Jews. In 1887, the Minister of Public Instruction published a circular limiting the admission of Jews to the universities and secondary schools: St. Petersburg and Moscow, 3 percent; outside the Pale, 5 percent; inside the Pale, 10 percent. In 1901, even these norms were cut down to 2 percent in St. Petersburg, 3 percent outside the Pale and 7 percent inside the Pale. In 1891, the 1865 law conferring the right of universal residence upon Jewish professionals was annulled. This resulted in the Great Expulsion from Moscow in 1891. In terms of a legal method of removing all Jews from the land, this was the only such act by a ruling government since the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492. By 1892, 30,000 Jews had been expelled from Moscow. The same destiny was prescribed for the St. Petersburg Jewish community. However, while other laws of disabilities significantly affected the development and growth of the Jewish community of St. Petersburg (e.g., the norm system in schools, and the 1889 law which blocked legal

[25] Dubnov, ibid.

careers for Jews, with each person needing special permission from the Minister of Justice), a massive expulsion never took place.[26]

A unique political situation formed in St. Petersburg. Its Jewish community of over 20,000 was spared the fate of their Moscow brethren, thus forming single-handedly the largest presence of a class of *intelligentsia* in Imperial Russia. But the focus of Jewish writers, journalists, poets, musicians and politicians had been altered. They turned away from assimilation toward an inward reexamination of historical roots. They became interested, for instance, in folk-art, which was transformed into a spiritual focus, "imbued with the Biblical-Talmudic spirit, and colored by a powerful religious temperament."[27]

The interest in folk-art and national cultural roots was not a new phenomenon. It was part of the Enlightenment which had swept Europe and, by the middle of the nineteenth century, had reached Russia. The discontent with the general political reaction found its expression in the "populism"

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[26] The first protest against the anti-Semitic policy of the Russian government came from France: Alphonse de Rothschild, the head of the great financial firm in Paris, refused "to take a hand in floating the Russian loan of a half a billion". The financial blow from Paris "cooled somewhat the ardor of the Jew baits in St. Petersburg." Simon Dubnov, ibid., vol. iii, p. 408.

[27] S. Anskii, *Evreiskoie narodnoie tvorchestvo,* in: *Perezhitoie 1* (1909), p. 278.

movement of "Going to the People" -- *narodnichestvo*.[28] While the progressive Russian *intelligentsia* addressed the needs of Russian people, the Jewish intellectuals outlined definite political doctrines and organizations with one goal --that of the regeneration of the Jewish people from within. As a demonstration of the awakening of the Jewish people, two main movements appeared: Zionism and Autonomism. Theodor Herzl's pamphlet of 1896, *The Jewish State*, echoed Leon Pinsker's appeal: ". . .the only relief from Jewish misery lay in the concentration of the Jewish people upon a separate territory."[29]

The nationalistic feelings of Zionism were very pronounced among the Russian Jewish *intelligentsia.* It was no surprise that its culture, music and poetry, in particular, reflected the social and political developments of the Jewish communities of Russia. For example, the song *Far'n Obschejd*, by the composer Efraim Schkliar, expresses a great patriotic passion toward the historical mission of the Jewish People's return to Zion. Another song reflects the state of mind of the youth who, as a result of the reactionary laws of 1887 and 1901 regarding the percentage norm system in education,

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[28] *Narodnichestvo,* from the word *narod* (people), a democratic movement in favor of masses.

[29] Dubnov, S., ibid., vol. iii, p. 41.

were forced to go into artisan professions rather than to study in school (see *The Song About Redheaded Motele* by M. Gnessin).

## SECTION IV
## JEWISH PUBLICATIONS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Because of the unique political, historical and social situation of St. Petersburg, the cultural life of St. Petersburg's Jews flourished greatly from `1880 to 1920. Their achievements can be found in the areas of Hebrew writing, Jewish ethnography and history, drama, art and music. Out of this community came such luminaries as Dubnov, Chagall, Mandelstam, Babel, Engel, Gnessin and numerous others.

Jewish publishing reached a high point over the last two decades of the nineteenth century and first two decades of the twentieth. Between 1880 and 1920, Dubnov wrote and published *A Universal History of the Jews* (10 volumes) and *The History of the Jews in Poland, Lithuania, and Russia*. He also participated in creating the first volumes of the *History of the Jewish People*. In the years 1890-1907 the publishing house of Brockhaus and Yefron published the *Russian Encyclopaedic Dictionary*, which consisted of eighty-six volumes. For the Jews of St. Petersburg and the community in

general the most important event in publishing history was the advent of the 16-volume *Evreiskaia Entsiklopediia* (Jewish Encyclopedia) in the Russian language.

The magazine *Voskhod* occupied a very important place as the leading Russian Jewish periodical published in St. Petersburg. Dubnov recalled: ". . .*Voskhod* was for many years the only expression of opinion of the progressive *intelligentsia*, standing between assimilation and nationalism."[30] *Russki Yevrey*, *Razsvet* and *Voskhod* were weekly publications in St. Petersburg, endeavoring to gain the hearts of the Russian Jewish *intelligentsia*. The Hebrew periodicals preached the *Haskalah*, advocating for the necessity of Russian education and secular culture (as a partial result of which there occurred an influx of great musicians -- such as the violin class of Auer and musicologists Engel-Marec, composers who eventually would found a National Jewish School in music, etc.). The Russian publications, which were intended for the Jewish and the Russian *intelligentsia*, pursued mainly a political goal: the fight for equal rights and the defense of Judaism against informers.

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[30] Beizer, ibid.

The middle of the nineteenth century saw the ripening of the talent of Hayim Nahman Bialik, who brought the poetical form of ancient Hebrew speech to an unprecedented height. Sholem Aleichem (S. Rabinovitz) -- the Jewish humorist -- drew a picture of the little people of the ghetto and described the joys and sorrows of their children. He wrote in Yiddish, the vernacular of the masses. Indeed, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the Jewish *intelligentsia* was channeling its entire energy into national cultural endeavors.

Profiting from the law of 1906, which granted freedom of assembly and meeting, they founded cultural, educational, and economic societies. The list of Jewish organization of those times speaks for itself. Examples include: the *Jewish Literary Society* (1908), the *Jewish Historic-Ethnographic Society* (1908), the *Society for the Provision of Assistance to Poor Jews* (OPB), the *St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music* (1908), and the *Jewish Theatrical Society* (1916). The *Society for the Diffusion of Enlightenment* expanded its activities, creating a new type of National Jewish School --a middle-school and high-school where, alongside Hebrew and Jewish studies, students learned secular subjects, taught in the Russian

language, and professional trades like tailoring, flower arranging, factory-work, bookkeeping, and so forth.

## SECTION V

## THE FOUNDING OF THE ST. PETERSBURG CONSERVATORY

The scholar B. Schwartz pointed out in his article that "the major Jewish contribution to Russian music in the nineteenth century was made by Anton Rubinstein"[31] (1829-1894), the famous pianist, composer and teacher, who was a Jew by birth and who was baptized together with some other family members in 1831 during the cruel reign of Nicholas I.

In 1859 he founded the *Russian Musical Society* (RMS) in St. Petersburg with the main objectives of having a "vast influence on the musical life of *all of Imperial Russia*"[32] [emphasis added] and advancing the cause of music education. The goal was to "make good music available to large masses of people."[33] RMS sponsored ten annual symphony concerts, a series of chamber music, and solo recitals. The artistic director

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[31] Boris Schwarz, *Interaction between Russian and Jewish Music and Musicians in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.* Proceedings of the World Congress on Jewish Music, Jerusalem, 1978.

[32] *M. Pekelis, Istoria Russkoi Muzyki. Moscow,* 1940, vol. ii, p. 6.

[33] D. V. Stassov, one of the directors of RMS, Friend of Glinka, Dargomijskii etc., brother of the famous music critic V. V. Stassov, (who coined the expression "Mighty Five").

Rubinstein conducted all symphonic concerts until 1867. The repertoire consisted mostly of the works of classics like Handel, Bach, Beethoven. Works by Schumann, Mendelson, Glinka, Dargomijskii, Berlioz, Wagner and Lizt were part of the concert repertoire, as well. The Great Princess Elena Pavlovna was the main patron of RMS. In 1860, music classes were established under the aegis of RMS for anyone who wished to study any musical instrument on a fee basis. But Rubinstein was not satisfied with this structure. He wanted to create a music school as a superior educational institution modeled after the Western-European conservatories. In 1861 he wrote an article in the liberal newspaper *"Vek"* (Century) entitled "About Music in Russia," where he articulated the necessity to found the Conservatory in his homeland: ". . . in Russia only amateurs occupy themselves with music. . . in order to help this sad situation. . . the only solution is to establish a conservatory. . . A conservatory never will be a barrier to a genius to get educated without it, while it will supply every year Russian music teachers, Russian orchestra musicians, singers. . .."[34]

In the fall of 1862 the first professional music school of higher education -- the St. Petersburg Conservatory -- was granted permission to

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[34] Perelis, ibid.

open its doors. In 1866, the Society opened a sister Institute: the Moscow Conservatory. While the St. Petersburg Conservatory was under the direction of Anton Rubinstein, the Moscow institution was directed by his brother, Nicholas. During the 1860s, Jewish youth came to the capital in search of a better education and cultural fulfillment. Jewish students numbered among those attending the violin class of Leopold Auer (1845-1930). Begun in 1868, it gave birth to the famous Russian school of violin. One of Auer's students was Yaakov ("Yashe") Heifetz. Auer, a baptised Jew, was a professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatory from 1868 through 1917, when by decree of Lunacharsky/Lenin the Conservatory was nationalized and the Russian Music Society ceased to exist. Auer emigrated to the United States in 1918.

Tsar Alexander III learned of the presence of Jewish students in the St. Petersburg Conservatory. During the reactionary years of Alexander III and the vicious anti-Jewish campaign in which he prepared public opinion for the expulsion of Jews from the capital in 1889, for the fiftieth anniversary of the artistic achievements of Anton Rubinstein, the influential newspaper *Novoje Vremiia* published an article accusing the Conservatory,

under Rubinstein's leadership, of promoting the "avoidance of military service and proliferation of zjids in the capital."[35] As a composer, A. Rubinstein wrote numerous compositions . Except for the group of opera/oratorios under the title *Biblical Operas*, he did not "aim at any Jewish musical idiom, aside from an occasional near-Eastern orientalism, which was a fashionable trend in European and Russian music of the time."[36]

## SECTION VI

## GLINKA AND THE MIGHTY FIVE AS FOUNDERS OF THE RUSSIAN NATIONAL SCHOOL

The nineteenth century saw the birth and flourishing of the Russian Classical School of composition and performance. As the musicologist Stassov claimed: "Starting with Glinka, the Russian School of Music differed by total independence of thought and vision on what was created before in music."[37]

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[35] Pekelis, ibid.

[36] Schwarz, ibid. Rubinstein wrote *The Tower of Babel (1870), The Maccabees (1875), Moses* (1894) after collaboration with the Jewish writer in London, Julius Rodenberg: "Rubinstein never concealed his Jewish origin."

[37] Stassov, from Pikelis, ibid.

Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857) was innovative in the way in which he related to folk songs and folk melodies. Glinka on many occasions stressed the aim of the composer as not just the borrowing and arranging of folk songs, but the deep understanding of the spirit of folk musical art and its free artistic application in the composer's own works.

Glinka influenced Milii Balakirev (1836/7-1910), a brilliant pianist and composer. After one of the St. Petersburg musical soirees, Glinka noted: "Balakirev is the first in whom I found the ideas so closely related to mine." From 1855 Balakirev lived in St. Petersburg, where he founded the group of composers later called "The Mighty Five" (Balakirev, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Musorgsky and Kui). The influence of these composers and, later, of Tchaikovsky, Glazunov and Ljadov, on the young Jewish composers is critically important for understanding the artistic and technical (compositional) development of the St. Petersburg Society of Jewish Music. Thus I will delineate the main characteristics of their style of composition of the vocal art song, which in the Russian language is called the *romance*.

## SECTION VII
## RUSSIAN CLASSICAL ROMANCE

***Romance*** is a unique genre in vocal music. Its uniqueness lies in its small chamber form, which is capable of transmitting much to the listener. It is a synthesis of music and words, which within moments can paint the state of mind of an individual or tell the story of a generation. As an independent form, romance appeared in the last decade of the eighteenth century. In the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries it was called the solo lyric song. These songs had a lot in common with the three-voices chant in strophic form with parallel motion. The Romance borrowed features from the folk song: the rich and expressive melos, the lyricism, and the flexibility of the melodies.

**Michael Glinka** (1804-1857)[38] wrote more than seventy romances. At the peak of his development, he wrote a song cycle *Farewell to St. Petersburg* (1840, words by Kukolnik). All twelve romances in this cycle are united by the same mood, the same theme of wondering. Expansive characteristics and concrete genre descriptions of musical characters are the unique qualities of this work. The number two song of the cycle is called *A*

[38] Information on Russian romance, composers and history of music can be found in the *Musikalnii Entsiklopeditchesky Slovar*, main editor G. Keldish, Soviet Encyclopedia, Moscow, 1990.

*Hebrew Song,* which expresses love and longing for Palestine and uses elements of oriental melos in the music language.

For **Modest Mussorgsky** (1839-1881), the source of innovative composition was the Russian folk song of the era. Mussorgsky brought to perfection the genre of the *song-scene*, first introduced by Dargomijsky. In his composition, the melodic expression and the story (subtext) are synthesized to a point where one can no longer imagine one without the other. The romance *Seminarist* serves as an excellent illustration of this: in the song-scene, the seminarist is portrayed as mechanically memorizing boring Latin while his heart and his mind are full of memories of a certain beauty. Mussorgsky created realistic characters with a twist of parody, making a humorous romance out of the song-scene. This genre had a great influence on the Jewish composers of the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music, as will be seen in later discussion of their work.

**Nicholai Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844-1908) wrote forty-seven romances. His compositions tend to combine romance and the operatic genre. He tends to paint beautiful, lush pictures with a large stroke. Rimsky-Korsakov was a master of vocal lyricism and a lover of oriental melos. He

introduced the new forms of the *romance-improvisation* and the *romance-serenade* (e.g., the Hebrew Song). Rimsky-Korsakov's vocal art songs are easily identified by their very expressive beautiful melodies with no-less-expressive accompaniments. His influence is especially vivid in the compositions of Efraim Schkliar, a student of Rimsky-Korsakov in the composition class in the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

**Pyotr Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893) brought to the form of romance yet another genre: the *romance-monologue*. His contribution to the development of the vocal art song is immense. Tchaikovsky brought to the romance the character of the lyric-dramatic aria, and he tends to symphonize this genre by uplifting the role of piano accompaniment to a more complex form and to greater emotional depths. The seeds of Tchaikovsky's innovations can be traced through the works of Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Bartok, Saminsky and Alexander Krein (the last two being members of the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music).

The Jewish national school in music was a logical outgrowth of the late-nineteenth century group of Russian composers, on the one hand, and a musical response to Jewish nationalism, on the other, which manifested

itself in interest in Jewish folk materials. The St. Petersburg Conservatory was not only the first institution of higher education in music in the entire Imperial Russia, it was also the first one to accept Jewish students in a class of composition run by "schoolmaster to the Russian national group"[39] Nicholai Rimsky-Korsakov. Lazar Saminsky describes the composer as ". . .a giant of northern sagas with the wide eye of a benevolent sorcerer, a tenderly passionate and delicate artist-aristocrat, religiously in love with the freshest, airiest walk in art."[40] Among the few Jewish students in the class of Rimsky-Korsakov, and later of his protegé Anatole Liadov[41], were Efraim Schkliar, Michail Gniessin and Lazar Saminsky.

## SECTION VIII
## EFRAIM SCHKLIAR (1871- 19 )

Efraim Schkliar was born in Timkevitchi (a small town in the Minsk province), the son of a Hebrew scholar and part-time cantor. The musical historian Albert Weisser wrote: "At an early age [Schkliar] was found to be musical in that he possessed a fine voice and a sensitive ear. . .. the

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[39] Lazar Saminsky, *Music of our Day,* Thomas Y. Crowell Company Publishers, 1932.

[40] Saminsky, ibid.

[41] Anatole Liadov (1855-1914) -- Russian composer, conductor, student of R-K., the teacher of several famous composers, the important link between R-K. and New Russians: Gniessin, Prokofiev, Miaskovsky.

youngster was encouraged to perform the music of the Synagogue."[42] Later he began to officiate as a cantor. At the age of twelve he left home to follow the visiting cantor's choir. His travels brought him finally to Warsaw's Conservatory, where he started his studies on double-bass and, later, theory and composition.

In 1894 Mili Balakirev, instigator of "The Mighty Five," Inspector of Music Classes in St. Petersburg Schools, arrived in Warsaw. There, among other activities[43], he met with a young student of composition of the Warsaw Conservatory named Efraim Schkliar. Balakirev listened to his composition, became enthusiastic, and asked Shkliar to come to St. Petersburg to study with Rimsky- Korsakov. Shkliar, concerned with obtaining a permit to reside outside the Pale, agreed. Balakirev, together with Baron David Guinsburg, sponsored Schkliar's travel to, and living expenses in, St. Petersburg.[44] Upon his arrival, Schkliar immediately started working with Rimsky-Korsakov. During one of the classes in composition, Schkliar brought two songs which he called "Oriental Melodies," one of

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[42] Albert Weisser, *The Modern Renaissance of Jewish Music*, Da Capo Press, New York, 1983, pp. 41-42.

[43] Weisser, *ibid,* p. 42.

[44] Weisser, ibid., p. 43.

which was a song called *"Farn Obsheid"* (text by Jaffe). The Russian master said: "Very charming compositions, but why did you name them 'Oriental Melodies?' They are typical Jewish melodies, it is difficult to mix them up with others."[45] And he continued: "How strange, that students of mine -- Jewish ones -- study their own music so little. Jewish music exists, it is wonderful music, and it awaits its own Glinka."[46]

This statement by Rimsky-Korsakov acted as a call to the students of Jewish origin to form their own circle for Jewish music. In 1902 Schkliar, together with other Jewish students of the Conservatory, was instrumental in creating a circle called *Kinor Zion* (Lyre of Zion). Schkliar pursued his creativity and began visualizing a larger society which would devote all of its energies to the fashioning of a Jewish school.

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[45] Michail Gniessin, *Rimsky-Korsakov with the Students,* Leningrad Conservatory in memoires v. 1, Leningrad, 1987, p. 36.

[46] Lazar Saminsky, *Anniversary of Petersburg's Conservatory and the Jews,* translated by Y.G. as quoted in the article by M. Weinstein, *The Society for Jewish Folk Music as a Factor of the Cultural Life of Petersburg in the Beginning of the XX Century.*

## SECTION IX

## JULI ENGEL (1868-1927?)

While the influence of Rimsky-Korsakov upon Jewish composers and his support of them were crucial for their development, and for the growth of Jewish national pride in a rich musical heritage, the strengthening of their Jewish musical identity was brought about by the Moscow-based composer and critic Juli Dimitrevich Engel. Like Efraim Shkliar, who had followed Balakirev's advice and enrolled at St. Petersburg's Conservatory, Juli Engel of the Pale's city of Kharkov followed, in 1893, Tchaikovsky's recommendation to attend the Moscow Conservatory. In the spring of 1897 Engel was introduced to the famous non-Jewish critic Vladimir Stassov, with whom he developed a long-term friendship. The words of Stassov "struck Engel's imagination like lightning, and the Jew awoke in him."[47] The conversation revovled around nationalism in the arts and the Jewish pride of an "ancient, aristocratic forefather."[48] Another well-known musicologist of the time, Leonid Sabanejev, wrote: "All preconditions for a further development of this [the school of Jewish national music] exist:

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[47] Avraham Soltes, *Off the Willows*, NY/Bloch Publishing Company, 1970.

[48] Soltes, ibid., p. 39. In this context, "forefather" could mean Abraham.

musical talent, a number of Jewish musicians, the artistic temperament of the nation, suitability to musical activity, an interest in national art, the example of past musicians of genius -- all this justifies the assumption that the Jewish people will enrich world music literature with a stream of fresh and original works."[49]

At that time Engel served as the chief music critic of the most liberal Russian newspaper *Russkie Vedomosti* (Russian Gazette); he was a member of the Commissariat for Public Education of the Imperial Institute of Musical Sciences in the Imperial Academy of Arts in Moscow; he was one of the organizers of the historic symphonic concerts for the *Russian Musical Society* in Moscow, often opening these concerts with introductory lectures. While Schkliar founded *Kinor Zion* in St. Petersburg, Engel organized *Zacharivka Circle.* The primary interest of its members was the Jewish folk song and its harmonization: "So strong was the Jewish pulse beating in our group, that whoever joined the Circle had to become a Jew, more or less" (Engel). In 1898, *Zacharivka Circle* dissolved. During the same year, two of

[49] Joachim Braun, *Jews in Soviet Culture,* Edited by Jack Miller, Institute of Jewish Affairs, London.

its members, Saul Ginsburg and Pesach Marek[50], published an appeal in an article entitled *Jewish Folk Songs* for "all persons close to the masses of our people to record and inform us of Yiddish folk songs sung in their locality. . ." Beginning in 1898, Engel went with the newly-invented phonograph to the shtetls in the Pale and recorded their folk melodies, songs and dances. Ada Engel-Roginskaia, Engel's daughter, remembers: " . . .about Jewish Folk music, in which Yuli Dmitrievich took profound interest, very little was known in musical literature before the end of the last century. And he decided himself to research this subject, important as well to his own art."[51] In 1900 the first-ever public lecture and concert of Jewish Folk Music took place under the auspices of the Imperial Society of Natural Sciences, Anthropology and Geology at Moscow University. The following are quotes from Engel's memorable lecture: "Only a few years ago there were doubts as to whether Jews possess secular songs of large popularity and importance. . . But the Jewish song does indeed exist and it presents independently interesting ethnographic as well as artistic. . . Today you will hear a kind of

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[50] Saul Ginsberg was a prominent Jewish journalist, wrote critical articles in the Jewish press, in "Voschod." More footnotes can be found in A. Weisser, ibid, p. 30. Pesach Marek was an accountant who devoted his free time to historical study. For further details see Weisser, ibid.

[51] Joel Engel, *Glazami Sovremennika,* Moscow, 1971, p. 503, translated from the Russian by Y.G.

microcosm of Jewish song. Here are lullabies, love songs, genre-scene songs, family and wedding songs, humorous and soldiers' ones. The melodies, which will be performed today on instruments, were recorded (written out) by me personally."[52]

The concert-lecture was attended by great musicians and Russian *intelligentsia*. Several months later, the same basic program was repeated in a private salon in St. Petersburg. Tickets were sold at very high prices. The success was enourmous. As Professor Gruzinsky who attended, stated: ". . .Having heard these songs, how is it possible not to believe that the Jews will give to music of their own, which will be new and fresh?" Since scholarly Russians had set their seal of approval on Jewish song, declaring it to be an interesting phenomenon, Jewish intellectuals subsequently began taking open pride in their own heritage. From 1900 onwards, concerts of Jewish music took place yearly in Russia's major cities. The last concert occurred in 1922, in the Great Hall of Moscow's Conservatory.

The influence of these concerts on Jewish composers of the St. Petersburg group was great. The composers Schkliar, Gnessin, Rosowsky and Saminsky, who had entered St. Petersburg's Conservatory in 1906 --

[52] The quote is translated by Y.G., taken from the archives of Ada Engel-Roginskaia.

with the fuel added by Engel's concerts to the flickering flames of Jewish self-expression -- began to organize a *Society for Jewish Music*. The details of how the organization was legitimized and got its appellation, *The Society for Jewish Folk Music,* can be found in a number of sources. The most detailed report is presented in an article by A. Soltes, *The Russians Thought They Had Bled Us White: Rebirth In The Northern Snow.* On October 19, 1908, there was an announcement in the *Russian Music Gazette* about the formation of *The Society for Jewish Folk Music*. On November 30, 1908, the first meeting of the Society took place. At that time about one hundred people were counted as members.[53] The unique political situation in St. Petersburg, combined with a lively interest on the part of the Russian liberal *intelligentsia* in the works of Jewish composers and musical folklorists. These, along with the tremendous support given by Rimsky-Korsakov, gave birth to a remarkable surge of creative activity on the part of Jewish composers, the majority of whom were his and Liadov's followers. Not only Russian Jewish periodicals, but also other Russian musical publications, referred constantly to the achievements of the Society. The following are quotes by non-Jewish critics, from 1910 and 1914 respectively:

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[53] *Chronika Musicalnogo sovremennika,* 1915-1916. #6, p. 22.

> The words of Jewish folk songs are exceptionally rich and varied. They evoke the whole gamut of moods, since Jewish poetry reflects religious ecstasy, the tragic suffering of Jewry and the feeling of unrestrained, spontaneous gaiety.
>
> . . .what I was sincerely envious of was the joy, the pleasure with which the very large audience (almost exclusively Jewish) listened to every song, demanding endless encores. The performers put on a magnificent performance.

The activities of the Society developed rapidly. By 1913 it already had 884 members, 410 of whom were in St. Petersburg. In its first five years the Society presented 153 concerts in various towns, including sixteen musical gatherings in St. Petersburg. It published more than a hundred musical compositions for voices and various instruments (in the first few years alone), including Kissilgoff's collection, *Jewish Songs for Home, School and Family.* The aim of the Society was to work in the research and development of Jewish Folk Music, by collecting folksongs, harmonizing them and promoting and supporting Jewish composers in the field of Jewish music. The Society aimed at opening its chapters in different cities, organizing and performing concerts of Jewish folk music by Jewish composers, forming orchestras and music libraries as well as publishing Jewish music. In 1913/14 a major expedition was sponsored by Baron Ginsburg to record folk melodies all around Imperial Russia. The

headquarters of the Society remained in St. Petersburg. Engel became its first honorable member and president of its Moscow chapter. At the head of the organization stood, among others, Efraim Schkliar, Mikhail Gnessin and Lazar Saminsky.

## SECTION X
## MIKHAIL GNESSIN (1883-1957)

Mikhail Gnessin was "one of the most promising figures in the modern Jewish Renaissance and later one of the most respected Soviet composers."[54] By the end of the 1920s this composer had written over forty-five of his sixty-or-so works deeply rooted in Jewish tradition. Gnessin himself said: "Elements of Jewish music captured my musical feelings and imagination to such an extent that even when I did not have the mission to look for a Jewish style, those elements appeared in my work."[55]

Mikhail Gnessin, son of a rabbi, was born on January 23, 1883 in Rostov-on-the-Don. His mother, a talented vocalist, was a daughter of Schaike der Feifer, a famous minstrel-singer (folk singer). Another deep influence on the young boy came from frequent visits to the Gnessin home,

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[54] Joachim Braun, *Jews in Soviet Culture*, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, USA and London, p. 69.

[55] Braun, ibid.

of the cantor Eliezar Gerovich, who was one of the shining stars of the cantorial art of *chazzanut*. It is probably through him that Gnessin "first came in contact with the tradition of Biblical and Ashkenazi song."[56] At the ages of seven and ten he wrote his first art songs. In 1901 his early works were shown to Liadov and the same year he was matriculated at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. There Gnessin studied counterpoint, fugue and instrumentation under Rimsky-Korsakov, becoming his favorite student and being referred to by him as "the Jewish Glinka." Just as Glinka had given Russia her first national opera, so Gnessin fulfilled his teacher's prophecy, years later, by composing two operas --- *The Youth of Abraham* and *Maccabbeus* -- based on Jewish themes.

The years at the Conservatory were very important for Gnessin's artistic development. During that period he befriended and was active with the circle of Symbolist poets, playwrights and painters. Among his friends were Vrubel, Meyerhold and Balmont. It was that period of Russian intellectual life during which figures like Blok, Scriabin and Pasternak were creating their unforgettable works. In his early years, Gnessin was influenced by the music of Wagner and Scriabin. The late Romantics were

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[56] Weisser, ibid, p. 124.

swept up by feelings of pathos and passionate fervor. In the works of Gnessin of that period we find such characteristics expressed through complex chromatic harmonies. In 1908 he became one of the active forces behind the organization of the Society for Jewish Folk Music in St. Petersburg. In 1914, his piece for violin and piano, "A Nigun for Shyke Fyfer," was published by the Society, thus beginning his "Jewish" period. The same year Gnessin went to Palestine where, he felt, he would be able to improve his knowledge of Jewish culture. After his return to Russia he wrote music more simple in construction, concentrating mostly on Jewish themes. His interesting invention is a kind of music recitation in a precise rhythm and pitch, most probably adopted from Cantillation - Torah trope. "The Hebrew Songs," "Song of Miriam" and "The Song of Red-Headed Mottele" are good representations of "Jewish" melos in the genre of the Art Song.

The Revolution of 1917 divided the Russian musical world, including Jewish musicians, according to their attitudes to the event. Gnessin was one of those who remained in Soviet Russia and embraced the Revolution: " I waited and yearned for Revolution, I thirsted for activity, I wanted to see

how the artistic life of the people would change."[57] While in 1966 Soviet sources listed Gnessin as a "Russian and Jewish composer," by 1973 the *Encyclopedia of Music* (Moscow) referred to him simply as a Soviet composer.

## SECTION XI
## LAZAR SAMINSKY (1882-1957)

As Albert Weisser claimed, Lazar Saminsky ". . .must be accorded a singular and honored position in the national movement, for he was its aesthetic conscience, constantly remonstrating against mediocrity, constantly reminding it of its responsibilities and high ideals."[58] The composer was born on October 27, 1882 near Odessa. He started piano lessons at the age of twelve. In 1906, he entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he worked with Rimsky-Korsakov, Lyadov and the composer Tcherepnin. At the same time, he was a student of mathematics in the University of St. Petersburg. In 1908, together with Schkliar, Gnessin, Engel, Rosowsky and others, he founded the Society for Jewish Folk Music. During its first year Lazar Saminsky served the Society as Secretary; then

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[57] Braun, ibid., p. 69.

[58] Weisser, ibid., p. 112.

chaired the art committee for a number of years and was also in charge of music publishing. Saminsky went on trips to collect folk tunes of Yemenite Jews, Turkish Sephardim and other communities. He lectured in Jerusalem and Jaffa on Jewish folk music and at King's College, Oxford and in Liverpool, England. In the twenties Lazar Saminsky immigrated to the United States. There he became Music Director of Temple Emanu-El in New York, where he founded the Three Choir Festival and, in 1925, 1927 and 1928, conducted concerts of Biblical and Renaissance music.

Saminsky's creativity lies, among other qualities, in the fact that he was among the first to direct his thought toward the ancient Hebrew melos. Since his days as Rimsky-Korsakov's student, Saminsky had worked actively toward creating a basis for Hebrew national music. Leonid Sabaneyev maintained: "A rare harmonic taste and invention, a serious and stable type of creation, somewhat sombre and pessimistic, a fine technique of composition and color mastery -- these traits characterise Saminsky's works. In opposition to Alexander Krein, the romanticist, Saminsky is rather an aesthete."[59]

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[59] Gdal. Saleski, *Famous Musicians of Jewish Origin*, NY, Bloch Publishing, 1949.

After the expeditions to the southern borders of Imperial Russia, a controversy arose between Saminsky and Engel regarding the origins of Hebrew melos. Saminsky questioned whether Engel's indiscriminate gathering and propagation of any and every tune taken from the "folk" really represented Jewish music. He insisted on a more discerning search, as well as on recognition of the authentity of the liturgical tradition. According to Saminsky, "authentic" Jewish music is the music of "the ancient synagogue," chanting of the Torah, cantillation of the Megillot and prayers like Kaddish.

The latter argument brings us to a discussion of a definition of Jewish vocal art music, and origins of the Hebrew melos. This subject is of profound interest to us because the composers of the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music worked in several directions. They proceeded from study and harmonization of the folk song to the free use of folk material, to the modernization and development of individual styles of composition. In the beginning the composers of the Society were eager to collect and study the folk melodies privately and on expeditions (as mentioned earlier).

## SECTION XII
## EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWISH FOLKSONG

Eastern European Jewish folksong, or Yiddish folksong, achieved its fullest expression in what is today Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, South of Russia and Belorussia, approximately one hundred years ago, but its earliest roots have been partly traced to sixteenth-century Germany. Yiddish folksong is multi-faceted. It includes joyous wedding tunes, lullabies, children songs, humorous and satiric songs and heroic songs of the young Zionists. It embraces the *zemirot* of the Sabbath meals, holidays songs and songs, with and without words, of the Hassidim. The songs of the *badchonim*, or theatrical songs, also constitute the Jewish folksong.

As presented earlier, most of nineteenth-century Eastern European Jewry lived in the rather segregated Pale of Settlement, living a life that was for the most part oppressed economically, socially, politically and culturally. Yet out of this enviroment emerged a body of song, rich in text and melodies, "as distinctive as the people itself. . . distinguished by its genuine folk character, voicing the sentiments of the life of the people."[60]

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[60] A.Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, Tudor Publishing Co., 1944.

The majority of the songs are secular in nature, providing us with what Ruth Rubin describes as " a vivid picture of the customs, habits, dreams and moods, struggles and aspirations of the largest Jewish community of modern times."[61] Some of the oldest Jewish folksongs of Eastern European Jews are lullabies (cradle songs). The dreams of Jewish mothers are reflected in the cradle songs.

In addition, love songs expressed sorrow, longing, frustration. The notion of romantic love was considered alien in the Jewish Pale. Parents usually selected a mate for their children. Young people were mostly not in charge of their own fate with respect to "affairs of the heart." The love songs also contain the themes of unfaithful love and the broken heart. However, there were also happy songs and flirtatious songs full of charm.

There were also work songs, created by craftsmen -- the little tailor, little tinsmith or cobbler. These songs were often created along with poverty songs. The latter describe with stark simplicity the conditions in which millions of Jews lived: the rent problems, the long hard work day and the tremendous deprivation suffered by so many. The work song overlaps with

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[61] Ruth Rubin, *Yiddish Folksong of the Eastern European Jews*, published by the National Jewish Music Council, Dec. 1948.

the *shteyger song*, which also describes the way of life. The shteyger song (not to be confused with the *styger* mode in synagogue liturgy) expresses the habits of the people, their customs, their manner of speech. Shtyger songs include humorous and satirical songs, those of courtship and marriage and children. These type of songs became the basis for all Genre-Scene art songs written by the composers of the Society, as well as by non-Jewish composers who wrote vocal art music using elements of the jewish folksong. Hassidic song occupied an important place in the mosaic of Eastern European Jewish folksong. It consists mostly of songs without words, *niggun,* with occasional "ay-ay-ay," "oy-oy-oy," etc.

It should be noted that not only Eastern European folk melodies appeared in the works of the composers of the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music. For example, Mikhail Gnessin and Lazar Saminsky visited Palestine and Georgia of Southern Russia. They became acquainted with Jewish musical material of Yemenite, Middle Eastern and Georgian origins.[62] The latter musical materials were incorporated by Lazar Saminsky in some of his works, while Michael Gnessin, after his trip to Palestine,

[62] Lazar Saminsky gives a detailed analysis of Georgian Jewish folk music and its origins in his book *Music of our Day*, Thomas Y. Crowell Company Publishers, 1932.

redefined his own style of composition by employing a clearer clear form and using trope elements in his art songs.

Representatives of the Society were interested in the Jewish liturgical musical tradition. Saminsky, Rozovsky, Idelsohn and others conducted research in this field. Numerous compositions by A. Krein, Milner, Saminsky, Gnessin and Veprik employed the motifs of the *Nusach.* Nearly every member of the group, for instance, wrote a seting for the *Kaddish.* Alexander Krein wrote in his letter regarding usage of traditional synagogual music in his compositions: "as much as possible material from *ancient* books of the synagogue [was utilized]."[63]

Saminsky proposed that "authentic" Jewish music is that of the "ancient synagogue," chanting and cantillation of Megillot, Torah and prayers. Engel, by contrast, suggested that domestic tunes, Hasidic songs and dances are the original, primary sources of Jewish music. I argue, however, that it is not possible to determine absolute authenticity. While Jews lived in Palestine and the Diaspora, they developed their own rich religious and secular music. At the same time, the liturgical, folk and art

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[63] Joachim Braun, *The Jewish Art School in Russia,* Proceedings of the World Congress on Jewish Music, Jerusalem, 1978.

music of the surrounding cultures were integrated into Jewish liturgical music (e.g. works by Solomon Rossi in Italy, or Sulzer in Vienna and Lewandowsky in Berlin, or the liturgical music of Sephardic Jewry, which was influenced by Arabic secular/religious music). Therefore, I argue, "authentic" Jewish music is a *synthesis* of three major elements: *trope, modes* and *folk-melodies* (songs and dances).

**Trope / Cantillation.**

The *trope* or *ta'amei hamikra* of the Bible (a system of signs interpreted by a set motif or motivic group) are ancient melodies related to the early medieval *sentonization* system.[64] The *trope* system which was (and is) used in the Eastern European tradition was codified in the ninth-tenth centuries C.E. in Tiberius, in keeping with the Babylonian system. According to Binder and Rozowsky, there are six systems of trope in the Ashkenazi, or Eastern European, tradition of chanting: Torah trope; trope of the Prophets; trope of High Holyday cantillation; trope of the Scroll of Esther; trope of the

[64] Sentonization is a patchwork of motifs. Motif, the basic unit of any melody, depends on the text and structure of the prose. If the text is uneven, new motifs are added according to the structure of the sentence. This "adding on" method of writing music is called *sentonization.*

three scrolls "Song of Songs," "Ruth" and "Ecclesiastes;" and the trope of the scroll of "Lamentations."[65]

**Modes / Nusach.**

With the development of *ta'amei hamikra* around the twelfth-to-fourteenth centuries, synagogual *nusach* was formed. Some *nusach* (simple prayer formula) melodies were taken from *ta'amim* (trope motifs). However, the main difference was in the freedom of interpretation of *nusach.* While the *cantillation* had to be done precisely, the *nusach* developed into the art of *chazzanut* -- modal improvisation. It is of great importance to identify here, in technical terms, what are *nusach, scale* and *mode* because in the later analyses of art songs by composers of the Society, I shall be referring to these definitions.

*Nusach* is a mold consisting of scale, patterns within the scale, and should be recognized as such despite its variations. A *scale* is "a pre-determined arrangement of sounds within an octave."[66] The *mode* involves more than a scale. *Mode* consists of certain melismatic pattern(s) within a

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[65] More on the subject of the history and structure of the trope systems can be found in Solomon Rozowsky, *The Cantillation of the Bible,* Reconstructionist Press, New york, 1957; and in A.W. Binder, *Biblical Chant,* Philosophical Library, NewYork, 1959.

[66] Isadore Freed, *Harmonizing the Jewish Modes,* Sacred Music Press of Hebrew Union College--JIR, New York, 1990.

fixed scale, plus a special mood of the prayer(s) for which a given *mode* is used. The three main *modes* of Jewish liturgy are: *Adonai Malach, Magen Avot* and *Ahavah Rabbah.* While the first two are of Biblical origin, the *Ahavah Rabbah* mode is not. It was imported into Jewish liturgy around the eighth century C.E.[67] This particular *mode* is of special interest to the subject of this thesis since the scale on which the *Ahavah Rabbah* mode is based is generally associated with Jewish music of a non-religious genre. *Ahavah Rabbah* is a modified Phrygian scale. Although the strongest chord of the scale, the triad on the first degree, is major, because of the lowered second degree and half-tone between the fifth and sixth one, the color of the scale is closer to minor. This duality, or *innerplay,* between "major" and "minor" permits the folksongs, or a composer of art song, to communicate the complexity, the multi-layeredness, if you will, of the physical, spiritual and emotional lives of people. The scale of *Ahavah Rabbah* was used more than any other scale in vocal art music by the composers of the Society for Jewish Folk Music and by non-Jewish composers like Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Ravel and Schostakovich.

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[67] Freed, ibid, p. 17.

## Jewish Folksong

This element in the Jewish art song -- Jewish folksong -- is discussed in the previous section (Eastern European Jewish Folksong)

## SECTION XIII

## RUSSIAN SCHOOL OF COMPOSITION (ST. PETERSBURG vs. MOSCOW)

To help our understanding of the art songs composed by the Society's Jewish members, we need to examine the school of composition of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, led by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, "schoolmaster to the Russian national group" (Saminsky), since most of the composers were his students and, therefore, masters of harmony, instrumentation and treatment of melodies characteristic of the St. Petersburg Conservatory. However, in order to better understand the particularity of the school of composition of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, I will begin by characterizing, in a few words, the Moscow school of composition led by Tchaikovsky and Tanyeev (the teacher of S. Rachmaninoff, Scriabin).

Since the founding of the St. Petersburg and Moscow Conservatories in the 1860s, the tendencies of development of these schools of composition were based on the style, character and perceptions of form, thematic usage

of motivic material and harmony, of their great "lead" composers, Rimsky-Korsakov and Liadov in St. Petersburg , and Tchaikovsky and Taneev in Moscow. The St. Petersburg school of composition grew out of the innovative character of composition of the "Mighty Five." Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky, in particular, had a special affinity and understanding of folk art and folk music. Their compositions tend to be more Slavic in form, motivic structure and harmony. For example: the three-part composition is non existent in Russian music because it is not characteristic of Russian Folk music. Lazar Saminsky, in his book *Music of our Day,* wrote: "Rimsky-Korsakov led the *tonal newness* that has played so great a part in tonal reform" and "revolutionized Russian music."

What is meant by *tonal newness*? It is characteristic of c*lassical* composers, such as Bach, Beethoven and, later, Schubert and Tchaikovsky, to use modal modulations (where the minor takes the place of the major mode). In Western music, the major mode is less flexible; it is clear and identifiable. Russian Folk music is based on the "pentatonic" mode and the "three-chord" mode (based on three notes). A variable major/minor is very typical of Russian folk music. Modal music, or musical compositions based

on the above-mentioned modes, as well as compositions based on the Jewish modes described earlier, tend to have flexible, "movable" tonical centers, due to the structure of the scales on which the *mode* is built. This creates vast harmonic possibilities because it is not limited by classical harmonic progressions. While the Moscow giants believed that:"only after having created its own epoch of strict counterpoint and its ensuing polyphonic style will Russian music get under way to a normal profile of development" (as Taneev wrote to Tchaikovsky)[68], the *Mighty Five* were in awe of folk music and wanted to build their compositions using the form and motivic structure of folk melodies. For this reason, historians of Russian Music have tagged them more "populist" as compared to the school of Tchaikovsky and Taneev. While the St. Petersburg composers often used, as form and motivic development, the modal structure of the folk song or dance, the Moscow group based their compositions on Western harmonies (authentic cadences, for example), and used, as a main element of thematic development, *sequence*, the development of short motifs, building to a climax of the form. Illustrations of such a style include the famous romance by Tchaikovsky *Den li tsarit* (When the Day is Reigning) and Beethoven's

[68] Saminsky, ibid.

Sonata #17 in D-minor, where the main theme is developed sequentially. Tchaikovsky took the Western three-part form and "Russified" it by taking the Russian melos and developing it in the Western manner of composition, sequentialy, using altered IV degree (IV+) and dominant seventh chords.

In vocal music the St. Petersburg composers, especially Borodin and Mussorgsky, closely followed the text of the song: the speaking intonation thus exerted considerable influence on the melodic and harmonic structure. A variety of meters and rhythm (the 5/4 meter used often by Rimsky-Korsakov comes from Russian speech) derived from this structure. It is characteristic of St. Petersburg composers to "paint pictures" and juxtopose them, while Tchaikovsky used classics as an example, talking about one aspect of existence at a time: either "good" or "bad". St. Petersburg composers used natural modal combinations a lot, such as I-III-VI-IV-I, with a natural VII degree in minor.

What were the main themes of Jewish art songs? Thematically, the St. Petersburg school reflected the school of "critical realism." Social injustice, scenes from family life, notions of humanism , themes of contrast between strength/power and absence of rights, found a vivid response in the Jewish

composers of St. Petersburg .With the encouragement of Rimsky-Korsakov to use their own materials in their compositions, Jewish composers like Schkliar, Saminsky, Lvov, Rozowsky ,Gnessin and others went passionately back to their roots and, using their academic-music background which they had acquired St. Petersburg's Conservatory, created remarkable musical compositions which laid the foundation for a national Jewish school of music.

## SECTION XIV
## MUSIC ANALYSES

**a. THE SONG ABOUT REDHEADED MOTELE *(Das Liedel von dem Mottele)***
Music by M. Gnessin, Op. 37 #4; Poetry from the story by I. Utkin

This song can be characterised as of the *song-scene* genre of romance. It is a portrait, part of a larger story. The 6/8 meter and short phrases closely follow the intonation of Russian speech . From a musical point of view, the song is similar to Mussorgsky's *Seminarist,* which was discussed previously. The character Motele's work and social position are described: he is a tailor, a little tailor, whose father and grandfather were tailors before him. While Motele would prefer to be a scholar, he has no choice but to work as a tailor. He may feel like crying and weeping because of that, but he

must be content and work as a tailor. There is a humorous or rather ironic twist at the end of the song: " . . .and he put ten patches on the same vest," he did become a tailor although "mother-nature" did not intend him to be one. The capacity to smile through tears, to bring humor into everyday life , to survive hardships and enjoy and succeed in life, is characteristic of the *shtyger song* of Jewish folksong (see the section on Eastern European Folksong). At the same time it has an element of a *work* folksong, since it partially describes a profession.

The Russian speech intonation (i.e., as conveyed musically) of a Jewish character brings out his national color. This relates to, and is in keeping with, the St. Petersburg school of composition.

The song is written in the key of g-minor. However there are two tonal centers: g-minor and d-minor. In the 3rd measure (see appendix #1) e-natural appears in the alto/soprano (leading voice), which is a lower VI, one of the characteristics of the Ahava Rabbah mode. The relationship based on the interval of the third (I-III, VI-I) is softer than of the fourths, like I-IV or V-I. The latter is typical of classical harmony, while the former is of folk origin and is frequently used by composers of the St. Petersburg school. The

floating tonic, appearance of temporary one creates a character of twinkle (measure 12, appendix #1). The raised VI degree in the key of d repeating in the 13th measure, as well as the temporary modulations to the d minor in measures 33 through 36, and the usage of natural dominant D-Flat-A, produce this effect. Throughout the song Gnessin gives harmonical cadences in d or g-minor, which creates the impression of non-completion. While harmonic progression based on I-IV degrees is typical for the Russian school, especially St. Petersburg, the non third structure of a chord is not (see measure 6 in appendix #1) as well as 9th on the suspension on dominant measures #5 and #6.

In the *Redheaded Motele* song, Gnessin masterfully uses the elements of cantillation. For example: in measures #11/12, on the words *"za dvoich,"* in the vocal part, we can clearly detect the motif of *sof pasuk* (the ending motif of a sentence) from the cantillation of *Kriat ha'Torah*, while in measure #22/23 we hear the intonation of *zakef katon* (an intermediate pause in the sentence) from the cantillation of "Song of Songs," "Ruth" and "Ecclesiastes."

In measure #21, the Minor Second and the downward motion of the motif remind us of the *Yishtabach* mode or (as some scholars call it) the *Yishtabach* maneuver.

To summarize, this song (by the composer M. Gnessin, one of the founders of the Society for Jewish Folk music) is a good representation of the synthesis, or intersection, of St. Petersburg Conservatory matter and the Jewish elements, which in this particular song is traced to the genre of the shtyger/work folk song, as well as to the presence of a modal fluctuation incorporating a taste of Ahava Rabbah and trope motivic material.

**b. SAYING GOODBY WITHOUT A SAD WORD *(Far'n Obschejd)***
Music by E. Schkliar, words by L. Yaffe, translation by M. Riwesman

This is the song which, according to some of the scholars mentioned earlier, Efraim Schkliar brought to Rimsky-Korsakov's attention during the composition class at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. The song can be classified as a *romance-monologue,* as genre, and *love song,* as type. It is a beautiful composition in which the Jewish element is textually and harmonically weaved intensly into classical form and motivic development. It also has melodic patterns which are unmistakebly identifiable as Russian

folk melody, used even by Rimsky-Korsakov himself in, for example, the *Snow Maiden* (measures 20 through 24, app#2).

The romance is written in the close ternary form A B A, which, as noted earlier, is characteristic of Western music and Moscow Conservatory matter. The piece is very clearly divided into three sections. There is a piano interlude in D-major between the second and third parts, which prepares the latter. There is a clear piano introduction in the F# of Ahavah Rabbah mode. From the first measure of the prelude we dive into the Jewish world by means of the Jewish mode -- Ahavah Rabbah. There is an interesting similarity to the *Song of Varlaam ("Uzj kak v gorode bilo vo Kazani* -- As it Was in the City of Kazan") from the opera *Boris Godunov* by Mussorgsky. The aria-song starts in F# and ends in F# (similar to the Shkliar piece. Mussorgsky's opening motif could be borrowed from Ahavah Rabbah -- motion: I-V-II (lowered)-I, and, because it is in F#, it sounds in close relation with the *Far'n Obschejd.* In measure #10 (see appendix #2) the singer comes in with a melody which develops sequentially. The method of sequential motivic development is characteristic of classical composition, and not so for the St. Petersburg school. The melody is very expressive and

is supported by a rich, expansive accompaniment of the piano. Arpeggiation of the harmonies, the base line full of motion (e.g., measure #20) and the 6/8 meter all come from the style of composition of the *Mighty Five,* the teachings of Rimsky-Korsakov. The melodic phrasing closely follows the speech intonation. The song is about great love for Palestine, about passionate belief in the justness of fighting for the fatherland. It is structured textually as the monologue of a lover who has to leave behind his loved one, without regret, since he is sure that they will meet again on "the bright, great road" of the fight for freedom. The motion of the bases by fourth and fifth intervals (e.g., measure #20), the sharp rhythm of dotted eight notes along with sixteenths, and dotted sixteenths with thirty seconds, produce a courageous, manly character. There are a few places which, in words, express hope, a better, brighter future (measures #15, #17) or an affinity to the Jewish people (measures #21, #27), where the composer uses melismas characteristic to the *nusach* of synagogual liturgy.

Without doubt, this vocal composition is one of the best examples of the total integration of Jewish motivic and harmonic material with the

manner of development, structure and textual approach used by the Russian schools of composition (St. Petersburg and Moscow).

## SECTION XV
## ALEXANDER KREIN (1883-1951)

The scholar Albert Weisser, in the chapter on Alexander Krein of his book on the Renaissance of Jewish music, wrote that ". . .it was probably Alexander Krein who showed the most vigorous and individual musical personality" of all composers of the Society for Jewish Folk Music in Moscow. There is vey little, if any, trace of the influence of the St. Petersburg composers. However, he was a composer who was characterized, even by non-Jewish scholars such as L. Sabaneyev, as a Jewish composer, ". . . of the national-Jewish movement," which he had co-founded. His innovative approach to Jewish vocal art music , his integration of the new harmonies of the impressionists and early expressionists, along with short motifs of cantillation and his usage of augmented seconds (characteristic of the "fregish" -- a colloquialism for Ahavah Rabbah -- mode of Jewish music), enriched the range of expressiveness in the genre of the vocal art song.

Alexander Krein was born in the city of Nizjni-Novgorod on October 20, 1883, into a family of musicians. Lazar Saminsky described in his book *Music of Our Day*: "The Krein Family -- a well known dynasty of Moscow musicians." At the age of thirteen he entered the Moscow Conservatory, where he studed violin and cello with Glehn. He studied piano privately with one of the founders of the Russian piano school, L. Nicolaev. Upon his graduation from the Conservatory, Krein joined the Moscow chapter of the Society for Jewish Folk Music. While serving as Secretary for Modern Music in the Music Section of the Commission for Folkore from 1918 to 1920, he was very active in the Russian-Jewish theater, writing many scores for the Habimah , Ukranian, Moscow and White Russia Jewish State theaters.

Krein wrote operas, chamber music, piano music and compositions for violin. He also wrote many vocal art songs, a bibliography of which will be found in Appendix #3.

Krein explored the subject of "authentic" Jewish melos differently than other composers. While Jewish intonations are practically always present in his compositions, he never quoted any specific folk melody or

any clearly identifiable pattern from cantillation. However, he uses elements of both the trope and folksong together. From the character of folksong , Krein takes mostly rhythmical patterns and melodic turnes, while he composes the motifs himself. It is of interest how the well-known music critic L. Sabaneev views the Jewishness of Alexander Krein's compositions: "Krein's emotional plane is characteristic of one of the denominators of complex Hebraic spirituality: it is not its mystic, but its sensual, erotic, earthly facet. Krein loves this passionate, burning earth, full of temptation and fleshy struggle. . . his primeval Hebraic sources. . . are those of the ancient Hebrew spirit. . .."

As an example of his innovative writing of the Jewish art song, I would like to discuss one of Alexander Krein's songs from Opus.29, #1.

**a. IN MY SOUL *(V Mojei Dushe)***
Music by A. Krein, Words by L. Yaffe.

This song belongs to the genre of romance-monologue, which was widely used by the German romantic Schumann and was developed into the lyrico-dramatic song -- like a recitative -- by P. Tchaikovsky. The revolutionary approach to piano accompaniment, coming from Schumann, Brahms and Mahler, its depth, fullness, monumental character and richness

of colors were adopted by Tchaikovsky for the composition of Russian vocal art music, were followed by L. Saminsky and were innovated even further by Alexander Krein.

The musical form of the piece is in the form of a song, reminiscent of the strophic one and yet not quite so. There are four short quasi-stanzas, where the last one repeats the first with slight variation. The intermediate second and third ones are used for motivic, tonal and harmonic development. Every phrase consist of two measures -- characteristic of a genre of song; its texture is of a recitative character with only a couple of moments of cantable writing (in measures #5, #10 and #20), where the vocalized character of the melody underlines the importance of the words. This intimate connection to the text , to the speech, is deeply rooted in the Jewish musical tradition (chanting of the Bible) and in the St. Petersburg school of composition (which was brought in the vocal art song, first, by Dargomijsky and later masterfully developed by Mussorgsky and the Jewish composers of the Society).

The dominant theme of the song is " questions without answers," which was so typical of symbolists(in the poetry of Block, Balmont etc.),

and, in the music of impressionists, is transmitted musically to the listener via a "quasi-modal" structure: unstable, movable tonic centers, with ever present twinkle elements of Ahavah Rabbah mode (measure #20, appendix #4), augmented seconds (measure #12, appendix #4). The general key of f#-minor is rather more felt than identified from the first measures of the piece, as was so often the case with romantic and classical compositions. Looking at the base line and general harmonic structure, one can see that Krein moves from the F# to D, and on the second page he modulates to A-major. However, the composer avoids all of these tonalities by avoiding the tonics of the keys. This was typical in symbolists' music. For example, the F#-major poem of Scriabin, and the opening of his fourth sonata op.30, bear a similarity to Krein's composition in terms of their constant unresolvedness into tonic, which creates the feeling of a twinkle, an allusion to the tonality. The resources of the Jewish modes, with their ever-alluding presence of tonal centers, creates a wide spectrum of harmonic and melodic possibilities of expressing the state of one's soul, the colors and depth of human emotions. The mysterious and multilayered depth of the character are transmitted also through poli-tonality, the non classical, non-thirds structure

of the chords. Krein often uses nine-chords (e.g., measures# 2, #6) as did Debussy and Scriabin at precisely the same time. Often, he also adds "foreign" sounds (ones which do not belong to harmonic progression) to clear "classical"chords. Occasionally, he uses a seven-chords motion in the left hand along with six-four chords, which also do not belong together in classical harmony (see measure #13). All these are surely connected closely to the text, in which the agonizing question (expressed musically through a lifting intonation, which ends every two poetic lines on a weak degree, measures #3, #5, #10, etc.) and passionate plea (expressed via repetitions from different notes with variate rhythm and melodic ornament) are ever present. The changing meter, 5/4 to 6/4 and back, in addition to the matter discussed above, give a strong feeling of inner lack of tranquility, confusion, pain and instability.

A. Krein was the first Jewish composer of his time who connected the Jewish elements in music(modality), the genre, and the rather independent , enriched role of the piano accompaniment introduced in Russian vocal art music by Tchaikovsky, with the innovative discoveries and new language of the impressionists and symbolists in musical composition.

## SECTION XVI
## CONCLUSION

The Society for Jewish Folk Music ceased to exist after the October Revolution of 1917. In 1918 Lenin declared that its existence was "incompatible with the spirit of the time." In 1917 he had already made the statement that although every artist takes it as his right to create freely. . . whether it is good or not. . . we must guide this development and mould and determine the results."[69]

While in 1914 the Bolshevick party had proposed the "Bill for the Abolition of All Disabilities of the Jews and of All Restrictions on the Grounds of Origin or Nationality (*Put Pravdi #48),* and in November 1917 had declared in article #4 of the Decision of the Council of the People's Commissars (*Declaration of the Rights of the Nationalities of Russia)* that it granted "free development of the national minorities and ethnographic groups living within the confines of Russia,"[70] in his article published in 1913 Lenin had wrtten:" Jewish national culture is the slogan of the rabbis and the bourgeoisie, the slogan of our enemies." Lenin considered the

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[69] Braun, ibid.

[70] *Lenin on the Jewish Question,* edited by Hyman Lumer, International Publishers, New York, pp. 126, 140.

"world progressive features of Jewish culture" to be internationalism, "identification with the advanced movements of the epoch (meaning - Communism)". "Whoever, directly or indirectly, puts forward the slogan of Jewish "national culture". . . is an enemy of the proletariat. . .."[71] For Jewish culture, and music in particular, it meant "the contradiction between the complete negation of a Jewish people and the limited acceptance of spiritual life and art, national in form and socialist in content."[72]

With the disbandment of the Society for Jewish Folk Music, whoever could escape did so and left Russia. To my knowledge only five composers remained in Russia: Milner, Gnessin, Krein, Veprik and the only female, member of the Society, Lyubov Shtreicher. (All have passed away, the last one, Shtreicher, in the 70s in Leningrad). Engel went via Berlin to Palestine, Rozowsky and Weinberg went first to Palestine and then setteled in the United States, where Achron and Saminsky also settled. They composed for the American Synagogue and for the reborn State of Israel. In fact, some scholars of our days agree that without the composers of the St. Petersburg Society there would not be a Modern Rennaissance of Jewish Music in

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[71] *Lenin. . .*, ibid., p. 107.

[72] Braun, ibid., p. 68.

Israel. Rozowsky and Idelsohn's study of cantillation and History of Jewish Music established landmarks in Jewish musicological research. The giants of American Jewish Music, the creators of the pearls of the American Jewish Art Song -- Bloch, Weiner, Freed, Jacobi -- are students of the composers of the Society.

The role of the Society for Jewish Folk Music goes far beyond demonstrating to the world the existence of Jewish music. It became the foundation of the first Jewish national school of music. It was the first and only school of European Jewish art music, and therefore its historic significance is unique.

The influence of the Jewish composers of the Society not only on composers of their own culture but also on those of non-Jewish nationalities is important and remarkable, especially taking into consideration the short period of the Society's existence: ten years. I would like to breifly discuss three composers of non-Jewish origin in particular: Prokofieff, Shostakovich and Ravel.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) is considered to be one of the great composers of this century. He was a student of Rimsky-Korsakov and

Liadov during the same time as the Jewish composers in the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He wrote *Overture on Jewish Themes,* op. 34, for an instrumental sextet. It was premiered in New York in 1920, with Prokofiev himself at the piano. In 1934 he wrote an orchestral arrangement. Prokofiev worked a lot with Meyerchold (a well known Jewish actor/stage director), and wrote music for the Jewish theater. There is no doubt that he learned the Jewish melos, which he used in his own compositions, from the compositions of his Jewish colleagues and classmates at the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975), the great composer of the Soviet era, was a student in the class of composition of Steinberg (student of Rimsky-Korsakov) in the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Shostakovich was deeply committed to the Jewish aspect in music. The scholar B. Schwartz, in his article *Russian and Jewish Music,* wrote: "Whenever he turned to the Jewish idiom, he did it as a gesture of defiance or of identification, in support of the Jewish cause." During WWII he wrote a trio, op. 67, which has a Jewish dance melody of a bitter, satirical character, crying out against the suffering of the Holocaust. While Shostakovich wrote a number of

compositions based on Jewish themes, our primary interest lies in his vocal art songs. Shostakovich, more than any other world-famous composer, expressed his admiration for Jewish folk music. Here I want to introduce a quote from the book by Solomon Volkov, *Testimony, The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich,* as related to the editor. This lengthy quote best represents the composer's attitude towards Jewish music and the Jewish people:

> . . . if we speak of musical impressions, that Jewish folk music has made a most powerful impression on me. I never tired of delighting in it, it is multifaceted, it can appear to be happy while it is tragic. . .. This quality of Jewish folk music is close to my ideas of what music should be. There should be two layers in music. Jews were tormented for so long that they learned to hide their despair. . .. All folk music is lovely, but I can say that Jewish folk music is unique. Many composers listened to it, including Russian composers, Mussorgsky for instance. He carefully set down Jewish folk songs. Many of my works reflect my impressions of Jewish music. This is not a purely musical issue, this is also a moral issue. I often test a person by his attitude toward Jews. . .. My parents considered anti-Semitism a shameful superstition, and in that sense I was given a singular upbringing.[73]

In 1947 he found in the bookstore collection of Jewish folk poetry. Shostakovich selected from it eleven poems and wrote a cycle of songs

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[73] *The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich, as Related to and Edited by S. Volkov*, translated from the Russian by Antonia W. Bouis, Limelight Edition, 1995.

called *From Jewish Folk Poetry* in 1948. However they were perfomed for the first time only in 1955, after Stalin's death. The songs don't quote any specific Jewish folk melody or a motive.The musical setting is of great compassion and reflect human sufferings of hunger, separation and death. They are written as song-recitatives, romance-monologues in the tradition of St. Petersburg school, which always made a point of staying close to the text and the manner of speach of the charachter in the art song.

Shostakovich , being of Slavic blood, stood by Jewish people and Jewish music. It took heroic effort to write music during Stalin's regime (even without incorporating a clear Jewish musical element), to openly call any composition Jewish, or to use a Jewish name in songs, or describe any social/political injustice toward Jews. For that alone Jews in general, and Jewish musicians, critics, musicologists and composers, are grateful to D. D. Shostakovich. That is why he deserves to be talked about in this work.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) -- a French composer of the same generation as the Jewish composers of the Society -- studied with the famous composer Gabriel Fauré in the Paris Conservatory. Ravel was very attracted to the Spanish and Oriental melos. He carefully studied the tonal

chemistry of Berlioz and Rimsky-Korsakov, and stood on the path of new harmonies and "musical mechanics" (Saminsky). Ravel once said in an interview that he is "attracted to the strange and haunting beauty of Hebrew music," that he felt that he "had been brought into a new musical world when a few authentic melodies were brought to [his] notice."[74] Ravel wrote several arrangements of Yiddish songs, as well as cycle of Hebrew songs.

Although the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music ceased to exist at that time, the Rennaissance of Jewish music is evident in Israel today. The Society was like a mature tree, full of life, which had just enough time to give its first fruit before being abruptly cut down. The "children" of the St. Petersburg composers came to *Eretz Israel*, where they planted the seeds of a National Jewish school in music in their own fatherland.

-- end --

[74] Hannah Mlotek, *Introduction to Yiddish Song*, vol. 3, Workmen's Circle, New York, 1997.

# Песня о рыжем Мотэле.

# Das Liedel von dem Motele.

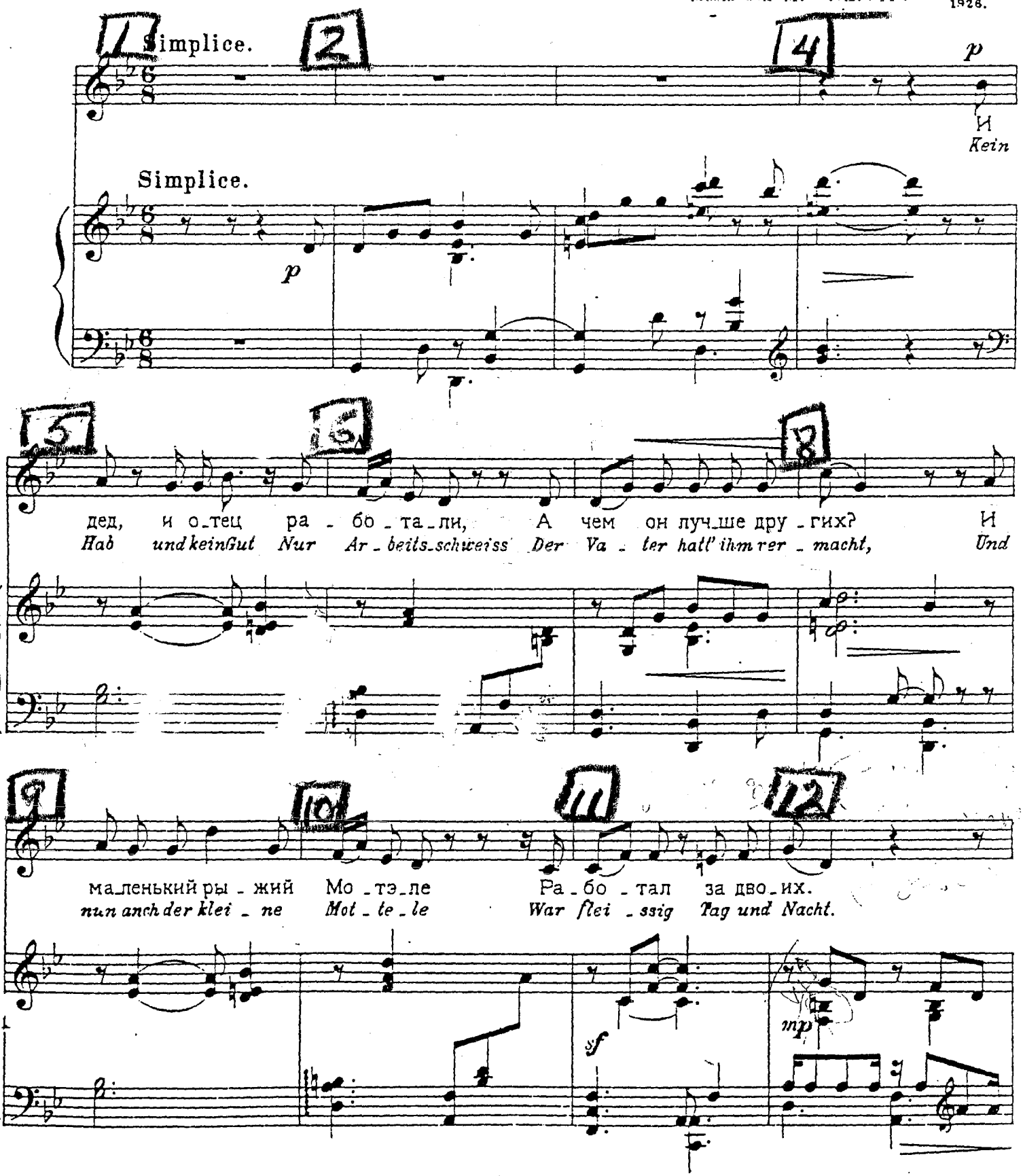
Deutsch von Wally Ramm.

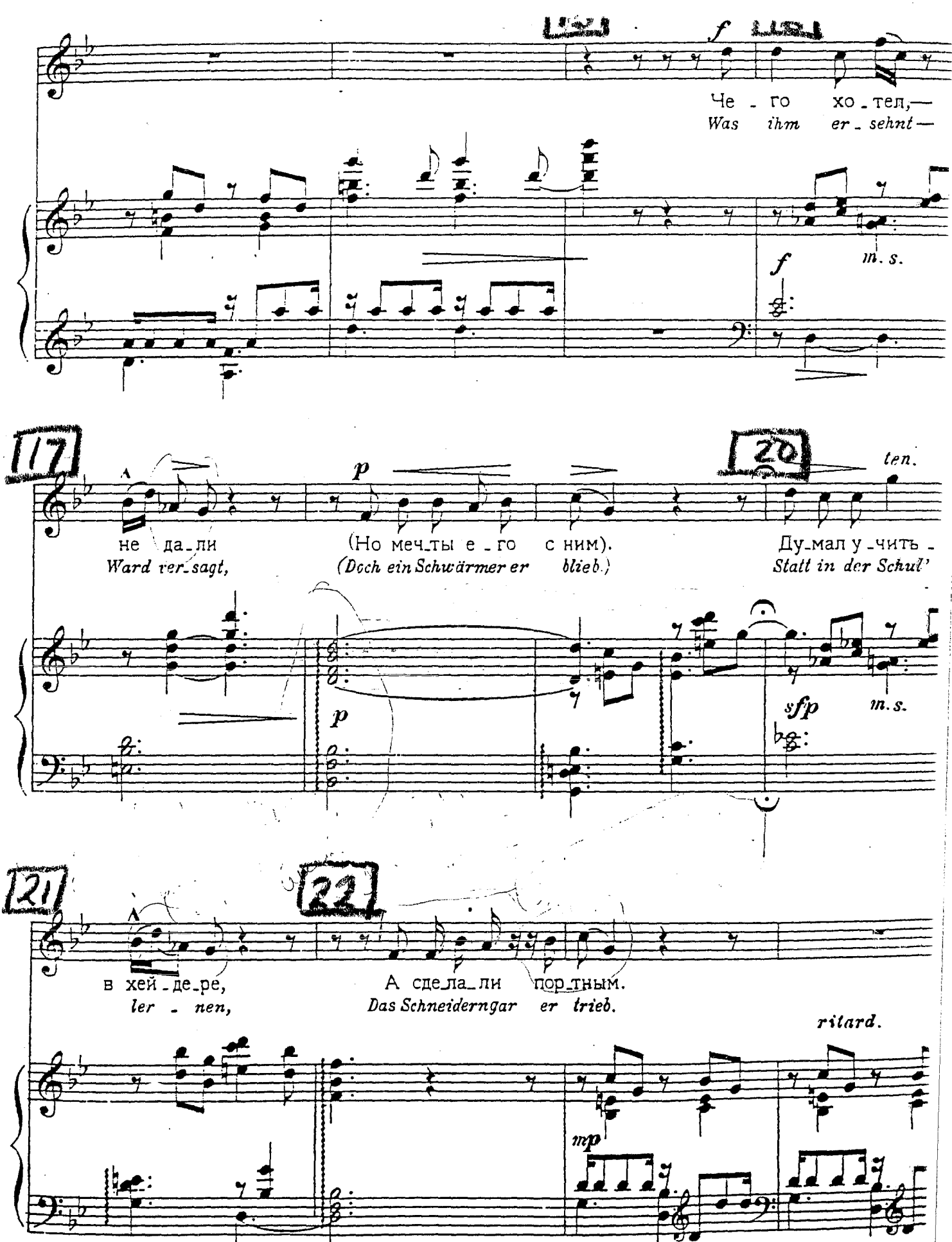
Appendix #1

стихотворный текст из повести И. УТКИНА.

Муз. М. ГНЕСИНА.

Musik von M. GNESSIN. Op. 37. №4. 1926.




f
Че - го хо - тел,—
Was ihm er - sehnt—
f
m. s.
17
p
20
ten.
не да - ли
Ward ver - sagt,
(Но меч - ты е - го с ним).
(Doch ein Schwärmer er blieb.)
Ду - мал у - чить -
Statt in der Schul'
p
sfp
m. s.
21
22
в хей - де - ре,
ler - nen,
А сде - ла - ли пор - тным.
Das Schneiderngar er trieb.
ritard.
mp

26

f

Так что же? Прика_же_те пла - кать? Нет, так
*Was wei - ter? Dahilft kei_ne Trä - ne, Wo kein*

f

нет.
*Glück!*

p

И он ста - вил де_сять за - пла - ток
*Und auf man - chen lum_pi_gen Kit - tel*

8

mp

34 35 37

p

На о_дин жи - лет.
*Legt'er Flick auf Flick.*

sfp p

Appendix #2



Разрѣшено къ публичному исполненію Главнымъ Управленіемъ по дѣламъ печати въ С.Пб. 10го апрѣля 1913 г. за № 5347.

57.

# Far'n Obschejd

Worte von L. Jaffe
Übersetzt von M. Riwesman
Musik von E. Schkljar
für Stimme und Piano.

# פאַרן אָבשיעד

ווערטער פון ל. יאפפע
איבערזעצט פון מ. ריוועסמאן
מוזיק פון א. שקליאר
פאר שטימע און פיאנע.

Herrn Hermann Lowtzky gewidmet.

Прощаясь безъ грустнаго слова,
Хочу отъ тебя я уйти:
Я вѣрю, мы встрѣтимся снова
На свѣтломъ великомъ пути.

Въ служеніи родному народу,
Въ ряду беззавѣтныхъ бордовъ,
За новую жизнь и свободу,
За крайне забвенныхъ отцовъ.

Связали насъ чудныя звенья,
Одинъ насъ влечетъ идеалъ
И отблескъ зари возрожденія
Обокмъ намъ въ душу запалъ.

איך זאגען זיך אָב, איך קען נים ווידערן...
איך פאָר שוין פֿון דאנען אוועק ...
איך האָף, אז עס ווארם אויף אונז בייראן
אנייער א ליכטינער וועג.

דאס פאלק וועלען בויד מיר דינען
און שפּרייטען ווי העלדען בוינאנד-
מיר וועלען דאס גלוק שוין נעמינען
אין מייערען היילינען לאנד.

פעסם האם אונז דער טויל פערבונדען;
מיר וועלען דערלעבען א ציים-
פון גלות פערנעסען די וואונדען
און ווערען פון קנעכטשאפט בעפרייט

Andantino.

Фортепіано.

Maestoso.

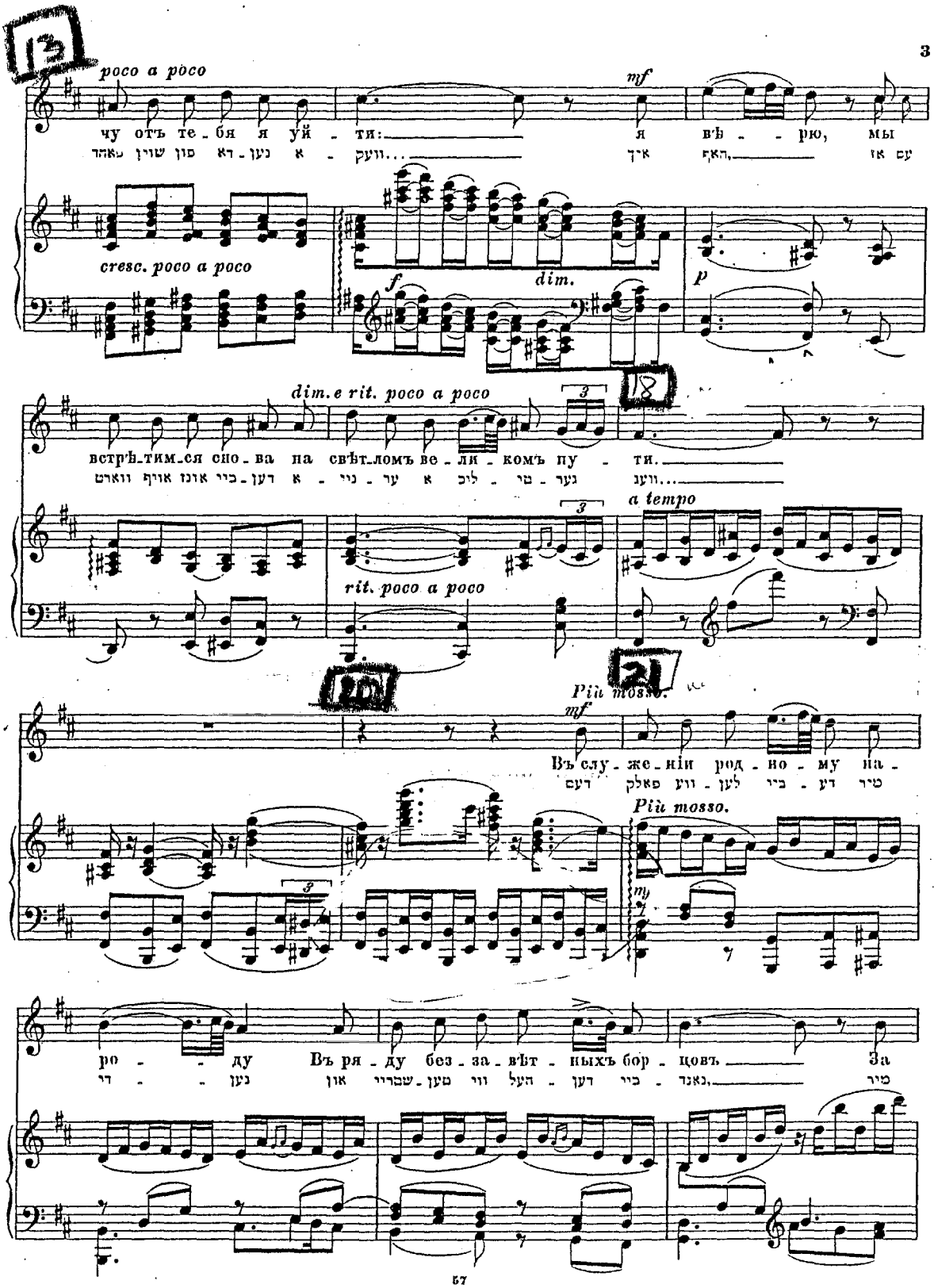
più cresc.

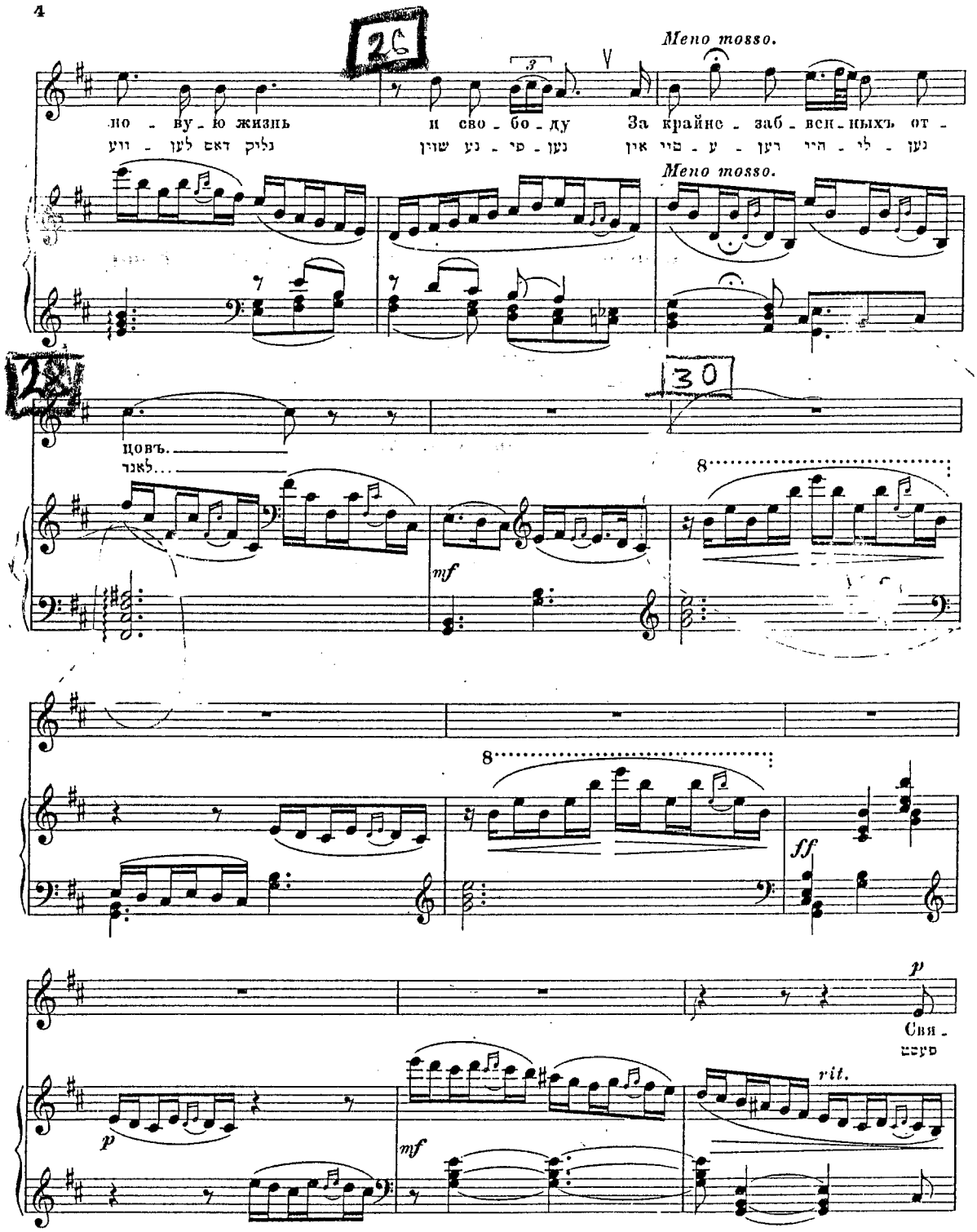
Tenore Canto.

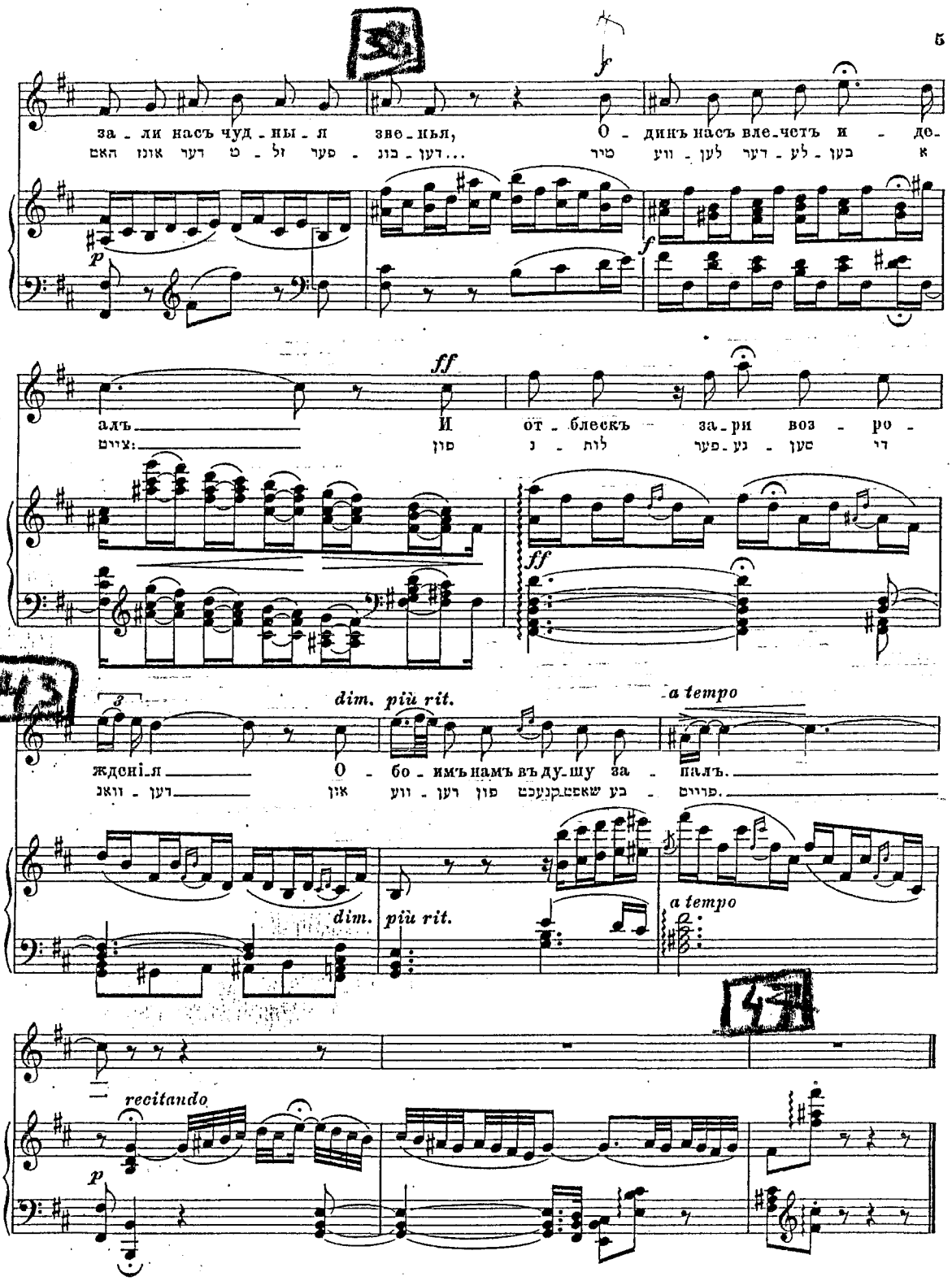
Про - ща - ясь безъ гру - стна - го сло - ва Хо -
איך זאגען זיך אָב, איך קען נים ווידערן... איך

cresc.

Stich und Druck von Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig.


poco a poco
mf
чу отъ те_бя я уй_ти:
я вѣ_рю,
cresc. poco a poco
dim.
f
p
dim. e rit. poco a poco
встрѣ_тим_ся сно_ва на свѣт_ломъ ве_ли_комъ пу_ти.
a tempo
rit. poco a poco
Più mosso.
mf
Въ слу_же_ніи род_но_му на_
Più mosso.
mp
ро_ду
Въ ря_ду без_за_вѣт_ныхъ бор_цовъ
За


26
Meno mosso.
ло - ву - ю жизнь
и сво - бо - ду
За крайне - заб - вен - ных от -
נעמ - לי - היי רען - ע - מיי אין
נען - פי - נע שוין
נליק דאס לעז - ווע
Meno mosso.
28
30
цовъ.
לאנד...
mf
8
8
ff
p
Свя -
שטרו
p
rit.
mf


38
43
45
f
p
ff
dim. più rit.
a tempo
recitando
за - ли насъ чуд - ны - я зве - нья,
О - динъ насъ вле - четъ и - де -
алъ
И от - блескъ за - ри воз - ро -
ждені - я
О - бо - имъ намъ въ ду - шу за - палъ.

## APPENDIX 3
## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF VOCAL ART SONGS OF ALEXANDER ABRAMOVITCH KREIN

according to A. A. Krein, by Sabaneyev, ed.,
Musik Section -- Staat S-Verlay, Moskau, 1928.
Translated from the Russian by Yelena Gurin.

**Opus 5:** **Four Romances - for one voice and piano.**

1. To The Moon
2. Flower In The Dew
3. I Will Wave My Song
4. In The Heat of Summer's Night

**Opus 5A:** **Poem by Shelley-Balmont - for one voice and piano**
I Am Afraid of Your Caresses, for one voice and piano.

**Opus 6:** **Four Romances - for one voice and piano.**

1. I Am Tender Tranquility
2. Why
3. Simple Song
4. Heaviness

**Opus 8:** **Three Romances - for one voice and piano.**

1. At The Sea At Night
2. Autumn Song
3. Swan

**Opus 17:** **Only Love -- Five Romances - for one voice and piano.**

1. Perfect Love
2. Sad And Quiet
3. Spanish Song
4. The Street At Night
5. Yes, I Love

**Opus 20:** **In The Days of Sorrow -- Five Romances - for one voice and piano.**

1. Tones
2. Step Lightly
3. Winter Garden
4. I Don't Mourn
5. In My Black Days

**Opus 22:** **Romances** (manuscripts).

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*Appendix 3 -- Bibliography of Vocal Art Songs of A. A. Krein -- page 2 of 2*

**Opus 23:** **Three Pieces based on words by C. N. Bialik** (manuscript).
1. Be My Mother
2. Where Are You?
3. On The Verge of A Tear

**Opus 25:** **Rose and Cross -- Four Poems from Play by Alexander Block - for one voice and piano.**
1. The Song of Aliskan -- The Joyous Day
2. Song of The First Minstrel -- I Love Breath
3. Song of The Second Minstrel -- Through The Deep Forest
4. The Flowering Lawn -- Here Is May (small female choir)

**Opus 27:** **Three Poems by A. Orchanin.**
1. My Love
2. In April's Evening
3. Mad Moment of Passion

**Opus 28:** **Three Fragments from Song of Songs - for one voice and piano.**
1. I Am The Narcissus of The Sharon
2. I Sleep (manuscript)
3. ---

**Opus 29:** **Two Hebrew Songs.**
1. In My Soul
2. More Tender Than Tenderness

**Opus 31:** **Gazelle and Songs - for one voice and piano.**
1. I Get Up And Cry
2. At The Hour of Dawn
3. I Climbed The Mountain In The Evening
4. Sing of The Crimson of The Rose
5. Your Face Is Miserable

**Opus 32:** **Romances based on words by Alexander Block** (manuscripts).

**Opus 39:** **Two Hebrew Songs** (manuscript).
1. Ozetov's Lullaby Song
2. May

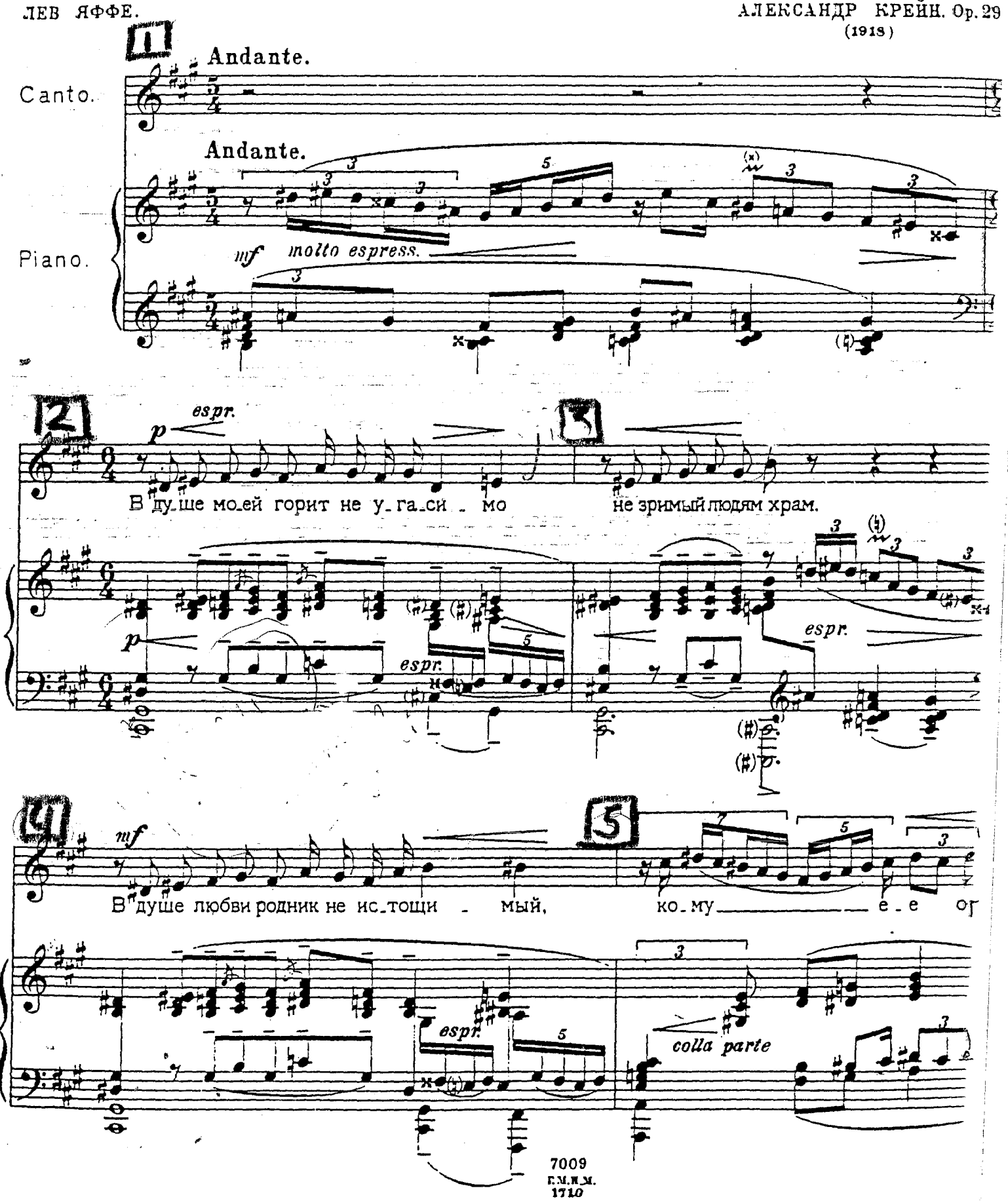
**Opus 42:** **Ornaments. Three Vocalizers - for one voice and piano** (manuscript).

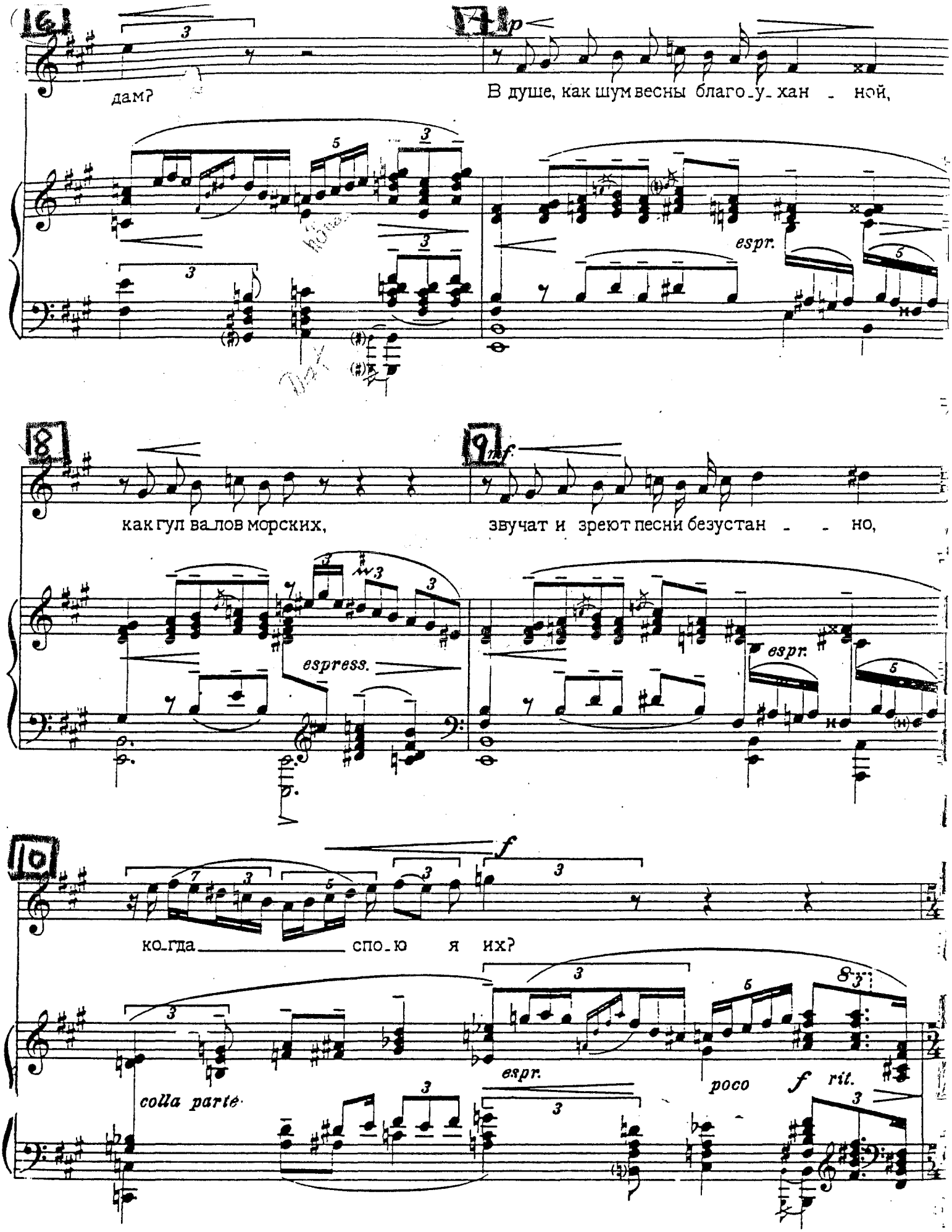
* * *

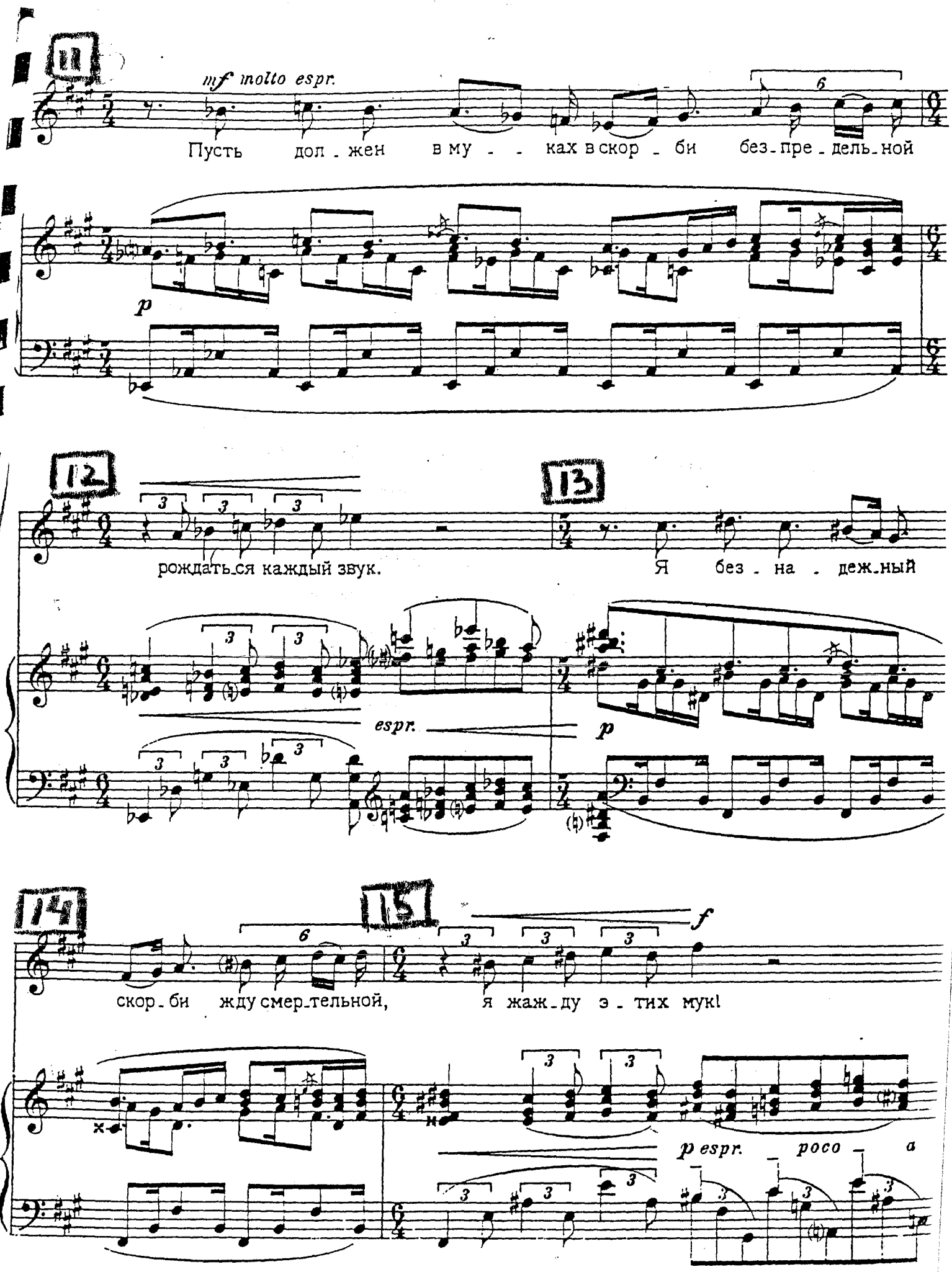
# ДВЕ ЕВРЕЙСКИЯ ПЕСНИ. Appendix

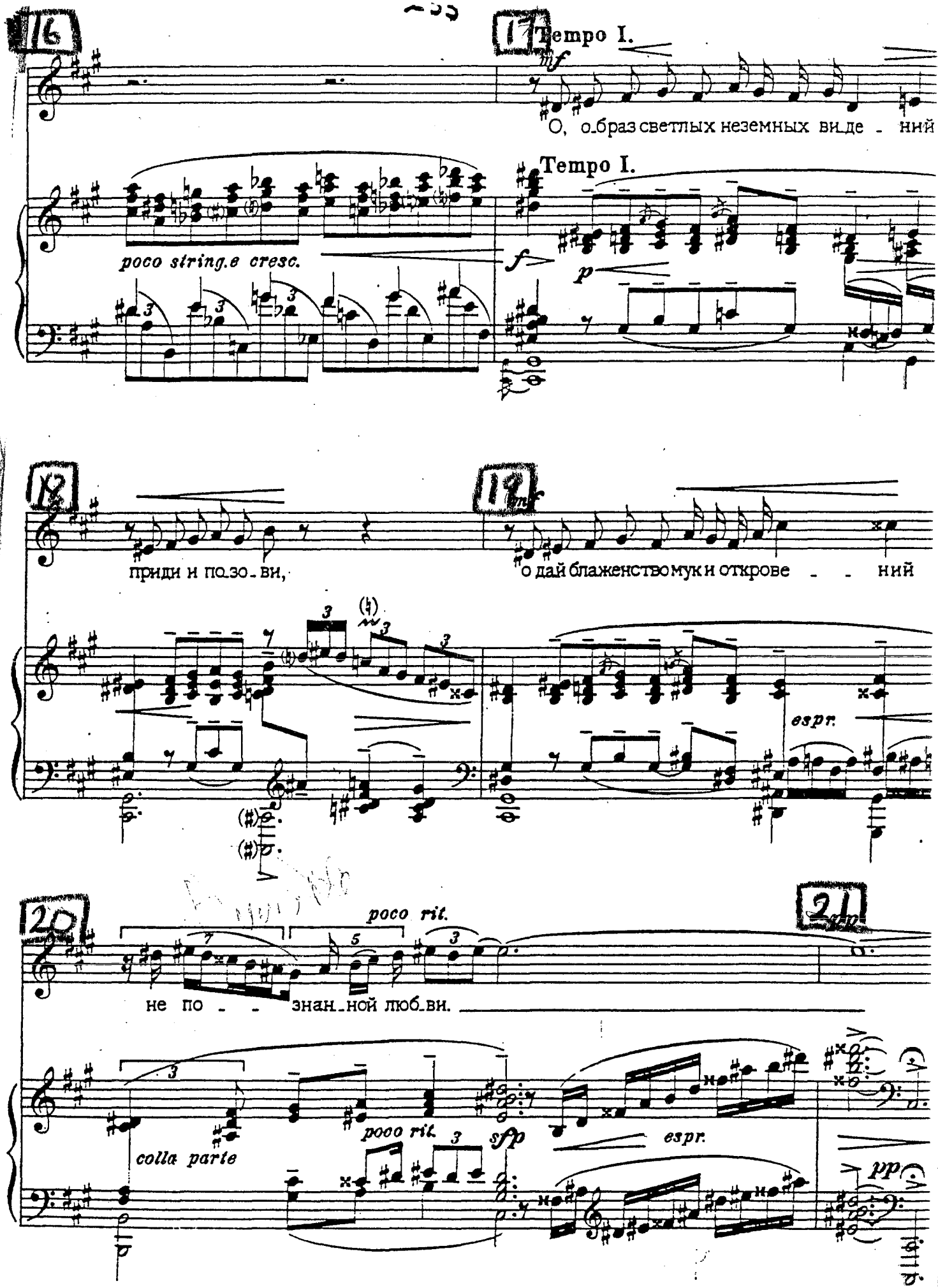
## I. „В душе моей." AL Krein

ЛЕВ ЯФФЕ. АЛЕКСАНДР КРЕЙН. Op. 29
(1918)




16
дам?
17
p
В душе, как шум весны благо_у_хан - ной,
espr.
18
как гул ва_лов морских,
19
mf
звучат и зреют песни безустан - - но,
espress.
espr.
10
f
ко_гда спо_ю я их?
colla parte
espr.
poco f rit.


11
mf molto espr.
Пусть дол - жен в му - - ках в скор - би без - пре - дель - ной
p
12
рождать - ся каждый звук.
13
Я без - на - деж - ный
espr.
p
14
15
скор - би жду смер - тельной,
я жаж - ду э - тих мук!
f
p espr.
poco - a


16
17
Tempo I.
mf
О, образ светлых неземных виде - ний
Tempo I.
poco string.e cresc.
f
p
18
19
mf
приди и позо - ви,
о дай блаженство муки и открове - - ний
espr.
20
poco rit.
21
не по - - знан - ной люб - ви.
colla parte
poco rit.
sfp
espr.
pp

## APPENDIX 5

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