

## NIKOLAI TCHEREPNIN Songs

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TT 79:20

**Elena Mindlina, soprano**

**David Witten, piano**

FIRST RECORDINGS

# Nikolai TCHEREPNIN



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**Japanese Lyrics, Op. 52**

**Oceanic Suite, Op. 53**

**Fairy Tales, Op. 33**

**Four Songs, Op. 16**

**Four Songs, Op. 8**

**Elena Mindlina, soprano**  
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FIRST RECORDINGS

# NIKOLAI TCHEREPNIN: SONGS

by Elena Mindlina and David Witten

Nikolai Nikolaievich Tcherepnin (1873–1945) was a Russian composer, conductor and teacher. In his youth he developed a flair for colourful orchestration through studies with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, his professor of composition at the St Petersburg Conservatoire, and he later came under the guidance and influence of Anatoly Lyadov. Both older composers sought musical inspiration in Russian folklore, art, mythology and fairy tales, and so it comes as no surprise that these elements attracted Tcherepnin throughout his own creative career.

In addition to his work as a composer, Tcherepnin sustained parallel careers as conductor and professor. Many composers of the day, including Rimsky-Korsakov, Lyadov, Glazunov, Taneyev and Glière, chose him to conduct premieres of their works. After graduation from the Conservatoire in 1898, Tcherepnin joined St Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre as a choral conductor and steadily moved up the ranks, becoming Director in 1906, by which time he was conducting its most important opera and ballet productions. In these years, he was also appointed Professor of Conducting at the Conservatoire, a position he maintained until 1918.

His talents came to the attention of the impresario Sergei Diaghilev, who hired him as Principal Conductor in the founding years of the Ballets Russes. Two of Tcherepnin's own ballets, *Le Pavillon d'Armide* and *Narcisse et Echo*, were featured in the 1909 and 1911 seasons of the Ballets Russes, and both showcased the young, supremely gifted dancer Vaslav Fomich Nijinsky. In 1918, fleeing civil war, Tcherepnin accepted the directorship of the National Conservatoire (now the Tbilisi State Conservatoire) in Tiflis, Georgia; he also conducted the local orchestra. In 1921 he emigrated westwards with his family, to Paris, where he lived for the remainder of his life.

Subsequent generations of Tcherepnins form a veritable dynasty of composers. Nikolai Tcherepnin's only child, Alexander (1899–1977), wrote four symphonies, six piano concertos, four operas, fourteen ballets, and over 100 works for piano. Of Alexander's three sons, Peter, Serge and Ivan, the latter two established themselves as musical innovators and composers; the youngest, Ivan Tcherepnin (1943–98), wrote for traditional instruments as well as electronic media and, in 1996, won the prestigious Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition. In more recent years, two of Ivan's four children, Stefan and Sergei, have begun to achieve recognition as composers.

<sup>1</sup> The website [www.tcherepnin.com](http://www.tcherepnin.com) is an excellent resource for information about the Tcherepnin family.



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[28] No. 7, «Земле»

И ты сломана будешь, Земля.  
Не скорби. Да, и ты, даже ты.  
Не скорби. Не скорби.

[29] No. 8, «Магей-Агава»

Я магей восхвалю на гремячем тамтаме.  
Встрепенулся напев – переклички струя.  
Он зовется магей – за горами-морями,  
И агавою – там, где отчизна моя.  
Каждый лист – мощный меч, и с двумя острями,  
И с насечкою игл на черте остря.  
Хищный помысл блеснул, весь в иззубренной раме,  
То растенье – напев, а напев – это Я.

[28] No. 7, 'To the Earth'

Earth, you will be shattered.  
Don't be sad. Yes, you. Even you!  
Don't be sad.

[29] No. 7, 'Maguey-Agave'

I will praise Maguey, beating the tam tam drum,  
Its thunderous strains explode and proclaim.  
It is called 'Maguey' across mountains and seas.  
And Agave – where my fatherland is.  
Each of his leaves is a mighty dual-pointed sabre  
With spikes jutting out of its blade.  
A brutal idea sparked, within a serrated frame.  
That plant is the song, and that song is I.

*Translations by Marina Cunningham*

Vocal music occupied a substantial part of Nikolai Tcherepnin's output throughout his life. He wrote secular and sacred choral works, an oratorio, *The Descent of the Virgin Mary into Hell* (which his son Alexander considered his greatest score), two operas (*Svat* and *Vanka*), and more than ninety songs. Most of the early songs, in a late-Romantic idiom, are dedicated to his wife, Maria Albertovna Tcherepnin, a talented singer who chose not to pursue a public career. Later songs in more modernist veins were designed for leading singers of his era. This recording represents a microcosm of Tcherepnin's musical evolution over the course of his long compositional career.

**Four Songs, Op. 8 (1900), and Four Songs, Op. 16 (1903)**

The eight songs of Opp. 8 and 16 represent Tcherepnin's early musical style (though some even earlier songs had been composed by 1894, under the tutelage of Rimsky-Korsakov). Remembering the summer of 1896 as one of the happiest and most productive of his early life, Tcherepnin wrote,

I also experienced restless dreams of 'another happiness.' To put these dreams to music was a great joy and contributed greatly to my compositional output. Perhaps that is why the songs I wrote that summer are so well-loved by both musicians and the public.<sup>2</sup>

The poetry that inspired young Tcherepnin in those years included works by Konstantin Fofanov, Vasily Zhukovsky, Aleksei Tolstoy, Mikhail Lermontov, Yevgeny Baratynsky, Alexander Zorin, Appolon Maykov, Afanasy Fet and Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev (1803–73). Tyutchev is considered a forerunner of Russian symbolism and his poetic descriptions of nature, love, melancholy and longing resonated with Tcherepnin, who set no less than fifteen of his poems to music. The critic and musicologist Alexander Ossovsky deemed Tcherepnin's musical sensibilities ideally suited to Tyutchev's delicate verses:

At last, one hundred years after his birth, Tyutchev had found an artist among Russian composers who, with great care and love, [realised] his poetry [in] musical sounds. [...] A young musician – N. N. Tcherepnin – who used Tyutchev's texts in his earliest compositions, later composed a number of instrumental and vocal works that were inspired by Tyutchev's poetry. The composer discovered an entire world of sentiments – alive and interesting – yet new to Russian music, which inspired Tcherepnin's works, giving them their distinctive style.<sup>3</sup>

Seven of the eight early songs presented here feature poems by Tyutchev; the exception is the second song of Op. 8 – 'Like a Wavering Cloud' [19], written by another great nineteenth-century Russian poet, Afanasy

<sup>2</sup> Nikolai Tcherepnin, *Under the Canopy of My Life*, unpublished autobiography in Russian, 1942, translated by John Ranck, [www.tcherepnin.com/nikolai/memoirs\\_nik.htm](http://www.tcherepnin.com/nikolai/memoirs_nik.htm), p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Vyacheslavovich Ossovsky, *Critical Essays on Music*, Leningrad, 1971, p. 49; quoted in Olga Mikhailovna Tompakova, *Nikolai Nikolaievich Tcherepnin: Sketch of his Life and Works*, Muzyka, Moscow, 1991, p. 23.

Afanasievich Fet (1822–92). Tcherernin's sense of long musical lines is in keeping with the Romantic traditions of Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Rachmaninov. All eight songs heard here are in a relaxed 3/4 or 6/8 metre – indeed, four of them employ the stately rhythm of the Sarabande. Melodically, Tcherernin shows a penchant for pairs of notes that descend in falling intervals of a third, especially in 'Spring Solace', Op. 8, No. 4 [21], and 'Thoughts and Waves', Op. 16, No. 1 [7]. About 'Spring Solace' Tcherernin wrote, 'I consider these rather candid musical lines, set down to Tyutchev's moving text, to be some of the best I have ever written.'<sup>4</sup>

The two-note 'sigh' motive, a tried-and-true expressive device used by Mozart, Chopin, Schubert and many other composers, was a musical thumbprint for Tcherernin. He used it to create moments of beauty and of elegiac sadness, especially in the piano part of 'Last Love', Op. 16, No. 2 [8]. Tcherernin's most Puccini-esque song, 'Lake at Tsarskoe-Selo', Op. 16, No. 3 [9] offers the singer many lovely opportunities for *portamento*. In 'Like a Wavering Cloud' [19], Tcherernin shows his talent for word-painting. He brilliantly captures the theatrical nature of the poem, and the piano part sets up the scene – the sound of a galloping horse coming from the distance and then immediately passing by is one of its most expressive episodes.

All of the later Tcherernin songs on this recording are taken from poems by the mystical, peripatetic poet, Konstantin Dmitrievich Balmont (1867–1942). One of the early symbolist poets of the Silver Age,<sup>5</sup> Balmont was one of the most prolific of all Russian writers: his enormous output includes 35 books of poetry and twenty books of essays, narratives and travelogues. Although the quality of his output varies widely, even his detractors agree that there is a musical, sonorous quality to his words and verses.<sup>6</sup> Tcherernin clearly felt a strong affinity for his poetry, and he insightfully adapted his musical style to Balmont's changes of both genre and style, as is vividly apparent in the three groups of Balmont songs on this CD. The Russian musicologist Yelena Kiseeva summed up his approach thus:

Nikolai Tcherernin understood Balmont's poetry in a much deeper way than the majority of composers. He was able to capture the nuances and find ways to express the essential features of Balmont's poems – subtlety of the moment, instantaneity of impressions and lightness of imagery.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Tcherernin, *op. cit.* p. 60, note 157.

<sup>5</sup> The 'Silver Age' refers to the very remarkable and productive years of the early twentieth century that produced Russian poets such as Akhmatova, Blok, Mandelshtam, Pasternak and Tsvetaeva. (The 'Golden Age' was that of the supreme masters of the nineteenth century: Pushkin, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky.)

<sup>6</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that so many composers were drawn to Balmont's verses for their songs and cantatas. Among the others who set his poems to music were Arensky, Glière, Ippolitov-Ivanov, Medtner, Miaskovsky, Prokofiev, Rachmaninov, Stravinsky and Taneyev.

<sup>7</sup> Yelena Vasilievna Kiseeva, 'Vocal Chamber Music of N. N. Tcherernin and Symbolism', *Problems of Musicology*, Rostov Conservatoire, 2006, p. 133.

Быстро домой воротись.  
Я говорю: «Ты моя!»  
В месяц ли глянь, - «это я.»

Return home quickly.  
I say, 'You are mine.'  
Look at the moon, – 'It is I.'

[27] No. 6, «Заговор для памяти»

Я принес тебе вкрадчивый лист,  
Я принес тебе прятный бистль.  
Положи его в рот, насладись.  
Полюбив меня, помни меня.  
Солнце встанет ли, помни меня,  
Солнце ляжет ли, помни меня,  
Как ты помнишь отца или мать,  
Как ты помнишь родимый свой дом,  
Помнишь двери и лестницу в нем,  
Днем ли, ночью ли, помни меня.

[27] No. 6, 'Incantation to Memory'

I brought you a stolen leaf.  
I brought you a spiced betel  
Put it in your mouth and savour it.  
Fall in love with me, and remember me.  
When the sun rises, remember me.  
When the sun sets, remember me.  
Just as you remember your father and mother.  
Just as you remember your home.  
Remember the doors, the stairs.  
At night or day, remember me.

Если гром загремит, вспомяни,  
Если ветер свистит, вспомяни,  
Если в небе сверкают огни,  
Вспомяни, вспомяни, вспомяни!

When you hear thunder, remember me.  
When the wind whistles, remember me.  
When lights illuminate the sky,  
Remember, remember, remember.

Если звонко петух пропоет,  
Если слышишь, как время идет,  
Если час убегает за час,  
И бежит, и ведет свой рассказ,  
Если Солнце идет за Луной,  
Будь всей памятью вместе со мной.

When the rooster crows loudly,  
When you hear time pass,  
When the hour chases the hour,  
And the story continues on and on,  
When the sun chases the moon,  
Let all your memory be of me.

Стук, стук, стук. Это я прихожу.  
Стук, стук, стук. Я в окошко гляжу.  
Слышишь сердце? В нем столько огня.  
Душу чувствуешь? Помни меня!

Knock, knock, knock. It is me who is coming.  
Knock, knock, knock. I glance through the window.  
Can you hear you heart? It is all afire.  
Can you feel your soul? Remember me.

Мною разум обними,  
Разум во рога смуги,  
Замани и обольсти.  
Замани и обольсти.  
Поселись в его крови,  
Навались и задави.

Bewilder your enemy with reason.  
Taunt and seduce him.  
Settle yourself within his heart.  
Attack and crush him.

### *Fairy Tales, Op. 33 (1905)*

By 1904, as Tcherepnin began to leave his late-Romantic style behind, he was becoming a Russian-tinged French Impressionist. He was attracted to music of Debussy and Ravel – indeed, at a certain point, his friends teasingly called him ‘Debussy Ravelevich Tcherepnin.’<sup>8</sup> Now turning his attention to the world of children and fairy tales, he enjoyed works by artists with similar interests, such as Balmont and the painter Alexander Benois (who was the composer’s wife’s uncle).<sup>9</sup> All three men had children under the age of five, so the theme of childhood strongly inspired their works of that period.

In 1905 Balmont took a break from his more serious poetry and wrote 67 short poems for his four-year-old daughter Nina, published under the title *Fairy Tales*. These poems are brief, designed specifically to engage a young child whose attention-span might not be long enough for a lengthier story; the characters are fairies, butterflies, snowflakes, breezes and other real and imaginary creatures. Tcherepnin, whose son Alexander was only slightly older than Nina, was inspired to set nineteen of these *Fairy Tales* to music. He published the first book of his Op. 33 songs in 1907, and the second in 1912, the first containing nine songs and the second ten.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout these colourful songs, one can hear Tcherepnin freeing himself from symmetrical phrase-grouping and other traditional expectations of Classical and Romantic music as Balmont’s fantastical words take charge. The singer reminisces, expresses wishes and at times generates narratives in which as many as four distinct personalities must be portrayed in one song. The pianist is directed to play *quasi mandolina* and *quasi timpani*, a reflection of Tcherepnin’s acute sensitivity to orchestral colour. The piano accompaniment also frequently avoids cadences, omits downbeats and often moves forward with *stringendo* – all at the service of entertaining a child.

‘Morning’, Op. 33, No. 1 [1], is a D major waltz full of the joyful freshness of morning. It opens the cycle and introduces the listener to its two main characters – the child and the poet. The poet, a loving father, awakens his child and brings her ‘fresh poppies with morning dew’. Flowers appear here as a symbol of fantasy, inspiration and creativity. A distinctive, rhythmic door-knocking in the piano part is the father’s invitation to the creative process.

‘Cat’s House’, Op. 33, No. 6 [2], gives the singer the responsibility of creating four voices: the narrator, a cat, a mouse – even a match! Perhaps Tcherepnin was inspired by various songs from Mussorgsky’s *Nursery* song-cycle, which requires the singer to portray the narrator, a nanny and a child. The bumblebee-style ‘buzzing’ of the piano throughout the song clearly pays homage to Tcherepnin’s esteemed professor, Rimsky-Korsakov.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1996, p. 455.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Benois (1870–1960) was an artist and set-designer for the Ballets Russes. Interestingly, during these same years Tcherepnin was writing his *14 Sketches on Pictures from the Russian Alphabet*, Op. 38, based on Benois’ *Alphabet Book in Pictures*, which Benois had created for his own children (recorded by David Witten on Toccata Classics TOCC 0117).

<sup>10</sup> During his later years in Paris, Tcherepnin and his wife were friends and neighbours of the Balmont family: ‘Nicolas Tcherepnin had written his marvelous Fairytales to Balmont’s verses, and his friendship with the poet continued in Paris, where the Balmonts lived nearby. Notes and invitations to performances were exchanged.’ (Ludmila Korabelnikova, *Alexander Tcherepnin: The Saga of a Russian Emigré Composer*, ed. Sue-Ellen Hershman-Tcherepnin, trans. Anna Winestein, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2008, p. 47).

- [25] No. 4, «Продавцу Теней»  
Го! Ирупи, Теневой,  
Дай Царице быть со мной!  
Потревожь ее во сне,  
Укажи бежать ко мне, Го!

- [25] No. 4, ‘Incantation to the Maker of Shadows’  
Hail! Erebus, Maker of Shadows,  
Let the Tsarina stay with me!  
Arouse her from her slumber  
Tell her to come to me.  
Shake her and arouse her,  
Transform her dreams and make them real.

Потряси и встать заставь,  
Обрати дремоту в явь.  
Душу вынув из нея,  
Душу в сердце вдунь мое.  
Так чтоб к левой стороне  
Прилегла она ко мне.  
Го! Ирупи, Теневой,  
Заговор исполни мой! Го!

Remove her soul  
And blow it into my heart  
So that she could lie down  
On my left side, beside me.  
Hail! Erebus, Maker of Shadows  
Obey my incantation!

- [26] No. 5, «Заговор любовный»  
Черная ягода – имя твое,  
Птица багряная – имя мое.  
«Майя!» – пропел я. Внемили,  
Мысли ко мне все пошли.  
Мною пребудь зажжена,  
Любишь и будь влюблена.  
Будь как потеряна ночью и днем,  
Будь вся затеряна в сердце моем.  
Днем семикратно смугтись,  
В ночь семикратно проснись.

- [26] No. 5, ‘Incantation to Love’  
Blackberry – this is your name.  
Crimson bird – this is my name.  
‘Maya!’ I sing. Listen.  
Thoughts come to me,  
I am ablaze.  
Love me and be loved.  
Vanish at day and at night.  
Disappear inside my heart.  
Be dazed seven times a day.  
Be awakened seven times at night.

In 'Pansies', Op. 33, No. 8 [3], dried flowers provide endless memories of simpler, happier times. The flowers, a symbol of inspiration and creativity brought by the poet to his daughter in the first poem, here become the letters in an old book of fairy tales. Tchernepin recalls them in the most elegant fashion, the piano offering a gently flexible, light, airy waltz.

In 'Fairy's Charms', the sweet, almost supernatural poem set as No. 10 [4], one can imagine the beautiful world that Balmont wished for his beloved Nina. The character in the song wonders: 'Why are the trees so enchanted, why are the clouds softer than ever; and why do the river and even the lilies of the valley sing and sigh?' And the answer: 'Ah, I do know! It is – the Fairy!' Once more, Tchernepin adopts the new approach of the French Impressionists, particularly in his orchestra-like writing: soft, syncopated piano chords floating in a gentle downward path evoke a trio of flutes and muted strings outlining their own independent melody. This musical texture is very reminiscent of Ravel's early song *Ballade de la reine morte d'aimer* (1894). Harp-like arpeggios in the piano complete the transition from old-school Russia to *fin de siècle* France – and may remind the listener of the ending of Ravel's *Manteau des fleurs* (1903).

'Fairy's Breeze', No. 11 [5], is another waltz, but even quicker and lighter than those in the earlier songs. The breeze here appears to be the Fairy's servant, who tosses flowers toward the poet for inspiration. The breeze is alive and animated, even playing a trick on the poet: 'it was a joke. I left, but only in jest. I have brought you more flowers!'

'Butterfly', No. 15 [6], is a cautionary tale that offers more than a touch of nostalgia. A beautiful butterfly on the wrong side of the window sparks a strong, early memory for the child. The five-year-old frees the butterfly, allowing it to begin a full, rich life. Has the die been cast, then, for the future poet? It is a cherished primal memory, which, if the poet chooses, may become the moral compass for his future life. Constant trills in the piano part represent the rapid beating of the butterfly's delicate wings. Tremolos become 'flash-backs', which transport both the character and the listener to the past. A new section opens with a memory: 'It was in May. I was five then.'

### *Japanese Lyrics, Op. 52 (1923)*

Orientalism – the enthusiasm for all things Asian, whether real or imagined – was all the rage in turn-of-the-century Russia, spreading to Paris and throughout Europe more generally.<sup>11</sup> Balmont went one step beyond simply learning and waxing enthusiastic about Asia. In 1916 he travelled there during one of his many treks around the world. He was especially enchanted with Japan – its landscapes, its women and its poetry. Upon his return to Russia, he lectured and wrote essays about the country and the Japanese people, whose mentality and poetic nature he so admired. This sentiment is well-captured in Balmont's words: 'The Japanese, do not simply write poetry – they *live* poetry.'<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For example, Stravinsky's *Three Japanese Lyrics* (1913) are on the texts of Japanese poems, taken from Alexander Brandt's landmark collection of Japanese poetry translated into Russian, published in 1912.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in K. M. Azadovskii and E. M. Diakonova, *Balmont and Japan*, Nauka Publishing, Moscow, 1991, p. 166.

Не скорби.  
О любви ли ты будешь печалиться?  
Огорчаться на то, что покрыла собою  
Поверхность Воды?  
Огорчаться на длительность Времени?

Don't be sad.  
Will you grieve about love?  
Will you lament that you are  
Covered by shallow waters?  
Will you mourn the eternity of Time?

### [23] No. 2, «Заклинание для Сердца»

Если ночью, при луне,  
Спишь, – как дух иди ко мне.

### [23] No. 2, 'Incantation to the Heart'

If in the lunar night  
You sleep – then like a spirit, come to me.

Птица крылья разверни,  
Дымка встань в моей тени.  
Куры сядут на насест,  
Много в мире есть невест.  
Много\* в мире есть невест,  
Сколько дней и сколько мест.

Bird, spread your wings,  
Smoke, stand in my shadow.  
Hens will sit on their perch.  
There are many brides in the world.  
How many brides are there in the world.  
How many days and how much space.

Эй, петух, скорее клюй,  
Столько зерен, сколько струй.  
Мир построен весь из струй,  
Дай мне, радость, поцелуй.  
Каждой двери слушай скрип,  
Птице молви: Цып, Цып, Цып.  
С сердцем хочешь воевать, --  
К сердцу вблизи и сердце хватя!

Hey, rooster, peck faster,  
How many seeds, how many streams,  
The whole world is built on streams,  
Give me a kiss, my darling.  
Listen to the creak of every door  
Call the bird, chicky, chicky, chicky.  
Do you want to fight with your heart.  
Come closer and capture it.

### [24] No. 3, «Духу Земли»

Мир с тобою Дух Земли,  
Мир с тобой, и мне внемли,  
Дух земли, ты с виду Бык,  
Земный демон, Дух-старик,  
Бык, кем движется весь мир.  
Бык, кем движется весь мир,  
Приходи сюда на пир.  
Угощение прими,

### [24] No. 3, 'Incantation to the Earth Spirit'

Peace is with you, Earth Spirit.  
Peace is with you, and within me.  
Earth Spirit, you look like an ox  
An earthly demon, a spirit of an ancient man.  
You are an ox that can move the world.  
Come and join the feast.  
Partake of the offerings.  
Make me embrace reason.

Тихой ночью, поздним летом  
Как на небе звёзды рдеют!  
Как под сумрачным их светом  
Нивы дремлющая зреют...

Тихой ночью, поздним летом  
Как на небе звёзды рдеют!

On a quiet night in the late summer,  
how the stars in the sky glow red;  
how beneath their dusky light,  
the sleeping cornfields ripen...

Drowsily silent,  
how in the nocturnal stillness  
their gilded waves shine,  
whitened by the moon.

*Translation by Frank Jude*

[21] No. 4, «Весеннее успокоение» (Тютчев)

О, не кладите меня  
в землю сырую.  
Скройте, заройте меня  
в траву густую.

Пушай дыханье ветерка  
шевелит травую,  
Свирель поёт издалека,  
Светло и тихо облака  
плывут надо мною.

Океанийская сюита (цикл заклинаний К.  
Бальмонта), соч. 53  
Посвящается Анне Мейчик

[22] No. 1, «Земле»

И ты сломана будешь, Земля.  
Не скорби. Да, и ты, даже ты.

[21] No. 4, 'Spring Solace' (Tyutchev)

This is Tyutchev's translation into Russian of Johann  
Ludwig Uhland's 'Frühlingsruhe' (1812)  
*Dedicated to Alexander Fyodorovich Glubov*

Oh, do not bury me  
in the damp earth.  
Cover me, hide me  
in the thick grass!

Let breezes breathe  
and rustle in the grass,  
let a distant pipe play songs,  
let bright, quiet clouds  
sail above me!

*Translation by Frank Jude*

*Oceanic Suite: A Cycle of Incantations, Op. 53*  
Texts by Balmont  
*Dedicated to Anna Meitschik*

[22] No. 1, 'To the Earth'

(Epigraph at the beginning of Balmont's cycle)  
Earth, you will be shattered.  
Don't be sad. Yes, you. Even you!

He was especially taken with the tanka, an ancient and revered five-line poetic form, with lines written in a syllabic pattern of 5-7-5-7-7. Although Balmont's skills as a polyglot were certainly impressive, in this case it is more likely that he was working from French or German translations of the Japanese poems.<sup>13</sup> He also used word-for-word Russian translations of the Japanese poet, translator and philologist Yamaguchi Moichi, who held his versions of Japanese poetry in high regard, as a letter from Moichi reveals:

I am now reading your translations and everything that you have said about Japanese poetry. [...] Some of your translations are so good that they make me cry. You have made real the very dreams of my soul.<sup>14</sup>

Balmont's Russian verse-translations preserve the five-line structure of tanka, and, in most cases, even match the syllable count. He published these Japanese poems in his second edition of *Evocations of Antiquity* (1923).<sup>15</sup> This book, first published in 1908, was an important anthology of poems from around the world which Balmont translated into Russian. The second edition, much larger than the first, included Assyrian, Chaldean, Egyptian, Indian, Iranian, Japanese Mayan and Mexican poems. Ever resourceful, he chose tanka poems that span thirteen centuries, beginning with the seventh-century poet Kakinomoto no Hitomaro and reaching into his own time. In place of titles for these tanka, Balmont indicated the names of the original Japanese poets.

From Balmont's published tanka, Tcherepnin chose a group of seven to set to music. Completing these songs in 1923, he dedicated them to the prominent Russian soprano Nina Koshetz, who performed them, with the composer at the keyboard, at her 1927 jubilee concert in Paris.<sup>16</sup>

It is interesting that on the title page of Tcherepnin's published score both the Russian and German titles indicate the five-line nature of the poetry: in Russian the songs are called 'Пятистишия' ('Five-line stanza') rather than the more usual 'Романсы' ('Romances') or 'Песни' ('Songs'), as usually seen in published vocal music; in German, they are called 'Fünfzeiler' ('Five-liners') rather than 'Lieder'.<sup>17</sup> In every song Tcherepnin exploits the highest range of the keyboard, creating an atmosphere that suggests now bells, now flute sounds. And, particularly in the accompaniments to the first and third songs, he uses grace-notes in an approximation of how a Japanese *shakuhachi* player might ornament the musical line.

The first of the *Japanese Lyrics*, marked *Andante* [11], sets a text by Ōshikōchi no Mitsune (859–925) who along with Kakinomoto, was included among the 'Thirty-six Immortals of Poetry' – Japanese poets long considered to be the greatest poets of the sixth to the twelfth centuries. A gentle repetitive three-note figure in the

<sup>13</sup> <http://akitahaiku.com/2009/06/28/translations-of-classic-japanese-poetry-part-2>.

<sup>14</sup> Letter dated 31 July/13 August, 1916, quoted in Azadovskii and Diakonova, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>15</sup> Konstantin Balmont, *Zovy drevnosti* ('Evocations of Antiquity'), Slovo, Moscow, 1923.

<sup>16</sup> On 11 December 1927. *Sergey Prokofiev Diaries: 1924–1933 Prodigal Son*, transl. Anthony Phillips, Faber and Faber, London, 2012, p. 672. The lovely Koshetz (1891–1965) inspired numerous composers to dedicate songs to her, among them Gretchaninov, Medtner, Prokofiev, Rachmaninov and Tcherepnin.

<sup>17</sup> The French and English translations simply say 'Poésies' and 'Lyrics'.

high register of the piano creates the mood of a springtime night, and the singer sings a tender pentatonic melody. The pentatonic notes are abandoned only in the very last phrase, as two unexpected tones float upward, allowing the spirit and fragrance to escape.

No. 2, *Molto sostenuto e tranquillo* [12], is set to an anonymous text that tells of the quiet of an autumn night. The piano, never rising above *pianissimo*, visits every possible triad, but never commits to any tonality in particular. The vocal part is set in a low register. The singer lets us know that we are hearing a harp, awakened by gentle fingers, in an otherwise silent and lonely night.

No. 3, *Andantino tranquillo, quasi Andante* [13], uses a tanka by Saigyō Hōshi (1118–90), who, although born into an aristocratic family, decided to become a monk when he was 22. In his time, Buddhism was experiencing a decline, and a sense of melancholy is reflected in his poetry. The opening musical texture may remind the listener of Debussy's youthful song 'Le jet d'eau', the third of his five *Poèmes de Baudelaire* (1887–89). The singer contemplates a peaceful death in springtime beneath the full moon.

No. 4, *Andantino pensieroso, tranquillo* [14], sets the text of a contemporary of Tcherepnin's who is named only as 'Ooi'. In a stately prelude, the piano suggests a subtly shimmering lake in the month of May. When the singer enters, she obliquely refers to the two shadows gliding beneath the moon.

No. 5, *Sostenuto assai* [15], is a setting of a tanka by Tekkan Yosano (1873–1935), the son of a Buddhist priest, who became a poet and literary critic, also serving as a staff writer for Tokyo newspapers. He advocated reforms in Japanese verse to make poetry more accessible to his generation. This poem refers to a flute, soft breezes and a willow tree; and again, as in all of these Japanese poems that Tcherepnin has selected, the scene portrayed occurs after dark. A sinuous right-hand melody foreshadows the expressive vocal line, and the flute is depicted with a repetitive pair of delicate *staccato* notes.

The penultimate, No. 6, of the *Japanese Lyrics*, marked *Sostenuto assai, molto tranquillo* [16] is based on another tanka by Tekkan Yosano. The quiet evening scene now takes place at a tombstone, damp from the dew of flowers. The piano continually offers distant bells, repeated at the end in the highest register, while the vocal part creates moments of mournful stillness.

Finally, No. 7, *Moderato con moto* [17], sets a tanka by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (d. 708), who, along with Yamabe no Akahito (d. 736), is considered to be one of the 'twin stars of Japanese poetry',<sup>18</sup> which refers to the flowering of a wonderful poetic age in seventh- and eighth-century Japan.

Hitomaro, whose image is carved in a beautiful woodcut print with a pheasant near him, uses an aviary analogy in this poem. The lonely, endless night is as long as the tail of a pheasant in flight. Tcherepnin makes the final vocal phrase 'fly up' to the high B flat, thus expressing the meaning of the words. He indicates that the pianist play the disturbing and repetitive short rhythms *très nerveux* throughout. Only the final, unexpected low note no longer includes that rhythm – an unsettling but ultimately convincing ending for this entire Japanese song-cycle.

<sup>18</sup> Edwin A. Cranston, *A Waka Anthology – Volume One: The Gem–Listening Cup*. Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, 1998, p. 299.

#### Четыре романса, соч. 8

##### [18] No. 1, «Слезы» (Тютчев)

Слезы людские, о слезы людские,  
Льетесь вы ранней и поздней порой:  
Льетесь безвестные, льетесь незримые,  
Неистощимые, неисчислимые,  
Льетесь, как льются струи дождевые  
В осень глухую порою ночной.

##### [19] No. 2, «Облаком волнистым» (Фет)

Облаком волнистым  
Пыль встает вдали;  
Конный или пеший –  
Не видать в пыли!

Вижу: кто-то скачет  
На лихом коне.  
Друг мой, друг далекий,  
Вспомни обо мне!

##### [20] No. 3, «Тихой ночью» (Тютчев)

Тихой ночью, поздним летом,  
Как на небе звезды рдеют!  
Как под сумрачным их светом  
Нивы дремлющая зреют...

Усыпительно-безмолвны,  
Как блестят в тиши ночной  
Золотистые их волны,  
Убеленные луной!

#### Four Songs, Op. 8

##### [18] No. 1, 'Tears' (Tyutchev)

Tears of people, tears of people,  
morning and evening you fall,  
pouring invisibly, poured in obscurity,  
never an end to you, flowing so constantly,  
flowing as rain in its torrents careers  
deep in the autumn, when night covers all.

*Translation by Frank Jude<sup>1</sup>*

##### [19] No. 2, 'Like a Wavering Cloud' (Fet)

A cloud of dust rises  
Like a wavering cloud;  
Horse or foot – no sight in the dust!

I see: someone jumps on a spirited horse.  
My friend, distant friend,  
Remember me!

*Translation by Frank Jude*

##### [20] No. 4, 'On a Quiet Night' (Tyutchev)

Quiet evening, late in summer,  
as the stars glow in the heavens,  
as beneath their dusky glimmer  
slumbering cornfields ripen...

In their silent, soothing radiance,  
in the stillness of the night,  
undulating, golden wavelets  
in the moonlight splashed with white...

<sup>1</sup> Frank Jude, *Complete Poems of Tyutchev in an English Translation*, Durham, 2000: <http://web.archive.org/web/20080227084942/http://www.cultinfo.ru/fulltext/1/001/001/241/1.htm>.

14 No. 4, *Andantino pensieroso, tranquillo*  
*Ooi* 20-й век  
Озеро в мае,  
Юные листья,  
В чаще тропинка,  
Двигаются тени  
Двух под Луной.

15 No. 5, *Sostenuto assai*  
*Iosa-No-Tekan* 20-й век  
В вечерней дали  
Тоскует флейта,  
Вздыхает ветер,  
У винной лавки  
Качает иву.

16 No. 6, *Sostenuto assai, molto tranquillo*  
*Iosa-No-Tekan* 20-й век  
В тиши вечерней,  
На мох могильный  
Роса с цветка  
Скользнула. Если  
Он в снах проснется!

17 No. 7, *Moderato con moto*  
*Каки-но-Мото*  
Ночь бесконечна  
Для одиноких!  
Она длинней,  
Чем хвост фазана,  
Когда летит он!

14 No. 4, *Andantino pensieroso, tranquillo*  
*Ooi* (twentieth century)  
The lake in May,  
Buds deck the tree,  
Steal down the pathway.  
Two shadows gliding  
The two beneath the moon.

15 No. 5, *Sostenuto assai*  
*Tekkan Yosano* (1873–1935)  
Far off at evening  
Plaintive is the flute sound.  
Soft are the breezes,  
And near the tavern  
Are dancing willows.

16 No. 6, *Sostenuto assai, molto tranquillo*  
*Tekkan Yosano*  
In evening stillness  
Over mossy tombstone  
The dew from flowers has fallen.  
Might he wake,  
Wake from dreaming...

17 No. 7, *Moderato con moto*  
*Kakinomoto no Hitomaro* (d. 708)  
Endless night  
When you are lonely!  
It is even longer  
Than the tail of the pheasant  
When pheasant is flying!

*Translations by Robert Burness*



Woodblock print by Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861), depicting Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, the poet of Japanese Lyrics, Op. 52, No. 7; the bird is a Copper Pheasant, *Syrmaticus soemmerringii*.

**Oceanic Suite: A Cycle of Incantations, Op. 53 (1917)**

In the final song-cycle on this recording Tcherepnin achieved a primitive, primaevial style of music unlike anything he had written before – a change of style necessary to match the eerie, mystical, pagan incantations presented in Balmont's texts. Balmont believed in connections between music, poetry and sorcery, and felt that it was important for all Russian artists to 'renew Russian art by returning to the lost mysteries of the past'.<sup>19</sup> Incantations, as Balmont understood them, were spells directed entirely

against the evil forces of Nature. [...] The incantatory word is Music, and Music on its own is an incantation, which forces our stagnant unconscious to be roused and to light up with a phosphoric light.<sup>20</sup>

During 1905–13, one of his longest periods of exile from Russia (before he left the country in 1920), Balmont visited Mexico, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Polynesia (including Samoa, Fiji and Tonga) and 'Oceania', a name rarely used today that includes Indonesia, Malaysia, Micronesia and Melanesia. Upon his return to Russia, he published one of his most unusual collections of poetry, *The White Architect: The Sacrament of the Four Lights* (1914), which included a group of seven poems under the heading 'Malayan Incantations'. It is from this set of poems, along with an epigraphic, ancient 'Oceanic Song' that Tcherepnin developed his 'Oceanic Suite' in 1917.

The Suite is dedicated to Anna Meitschik (1878–1934), a remarkable Russian contralto who, like Tcherepnin, had studied at the St Petersburg Conservatory. During her extensive operatic career (she had a repertoire of over fifty roles) Meitschik sang in the world's leading opera-houses, including La Scala and the Met. She spent her last years in New York.<sup>21</sup>

In 'To the Earth' [22] Tcherepnin begins the song-cycle with an ingenious construction: an arpeggiated piano part with full pedal but using only three pitches, C–D–G. The resulting wash of sound suggests the 'primordial ooze' of the Earth at its creation, while the vocal line casts a mournful spell in a natural minor scale.

In No. 2, 'Incantation to the Heart' [23], floating parallel fifths zig-zag in the piano while the vocal part outlines augmented chords. The resulting sense of the supernatural is very appropriate for Balmont's theme of mysterious interactions, both with animals and with the 'smoke' that swirls in the poet's shadow. Through such interaction, the poet gains supernatural powers that are sent forth to 'fight' and 'capture' the beloved's heart.

<sup>19</sup> Pamela Davidson, 'Magic, Music and Poetry: Prokofiev's Creative Relationship with Balmont and the Genesis of *Semero ikh*', *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, 2002, p. 72.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted by Pamela Davidson, *op. cit.*, pp. 74 and 69. At Balmont's urging, his friend Prokofiev used his resetting of a Chaldean Invocation engraved in ancient Assyro-Babylonian cuneiform on the wall of an Akkadian Temple, which became Prokofiev's cantata *Seven, They are Seven*.

<sup>21</sup> Meitschik's original Russian name was Alexandra Davidovna Meichik. She was married to Solomon Rosowsky (1878–1962), a cantor and composer who had studied with Rimsky-Korsakov. When they moved to New York in 1922, she formed her own teaching studio, and Rosowsky later taught at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Тихий, томный, благовонный,  
Все залей и утиши.  
Чувства – мглой самозабвенья,  
Переполни через край!  
Дай вкусить уничтоженья,  
С миром дремлющим смешай.

*Семь пятистиший Японских поэтов, соч. 52*  
Русский перевод К. Бальмонта  
*Посвящается Нине Кошец*

[11] No. 1, *Andante*

*Осиночи-но-Мицунэ 9-й век*  
Весенней ночью,  
Цветущей сливы  
Сокрыт расцвет,  
Не видно краски,  
Но слышен дух.

[12] No. 2, *Molto sostenuto e tranquillo*

*Неизвестный Поэт 9-й век*  
Осенней ночью,  
Все люди стихли,  
Лишь плачут нежно  
На арфе пальцы  
В дрожаньи струн.

[13] No. 3, *Andantino tranquillo, quasi Andante*

*Сүгю-Хоси 12-й век*  
Ах, умереть бы  
Мне под цветами,  
Когда весной  
Всем полным кругом  
Горит луна.

Quiet twilight, sleeping twilight  
Pour into the depths of my soul;  
Silent, aromatic languor  
Flood into everything and bring peace.  
Overfill my feelings with the shadows of haze.  
Let me be destroyed,  
Blended with the sleeping world!

*Translation by Elena Mindlina*

*Seven Japanese Lyrics, Op. 52*  
Russian translation K. Balmont  
*Dedicated to Nina Koshetz*

[11] No. 1, *Andante*

*Oshikōchi no Mitsune (859–925)*  
The night in springtime  
May hide the cherries on flowering tree.  
Though veiled the glory,  
It is fragrant still.

[12] No. 2, *Molto sostenuto e tranquillo*

*Anon.*  
It is night in autumn  
The world is silent,  
Yet fingers gently  
The harp awaken  
In trembling of the strings.

[13] No. 3, *Andantino tranquillo, quasi Andante*

*Saigyō Hōshi (1118–90)*  
Ah, if I could die beneath the flowers,  
When first and spring  
Full sphered and argent  
Forth glints the moon.

9] No. 3, «Царское озеро»

Тихо в озере струится,  
Отблеск кровель золотых,  
Много в озере глядится  
Достолавностей былых.  
Жизнь играет, солнце греет,  
Но над нею и под ним  
Здесь былое чудно вьет  
Обаянием своим.

Солнце светит золотое,  
Блещут озера струи...  
Здесь великое былое  
Словно дышит в забыты;  
Дремлет сладко, беззаботно,  
Не смущая дивных снов  
И тревогой мимолетной

10] No. 4, «Сумерки»

Тени сизые смешались,  
Цвет поблекнул, звук уснул;  
Жизнь, движенье разрешились  
В сумрак зыбкий, в дальний гул...

Мотылька полет незримый  
Слышен в воздухе ночном...  
Час тоски невыразимой!  
Все во мне, – и я во всем...  
Сумрак тихий, сумрак сонный,  
Лейся в глубь моей души.

9] No. 3, 'Lake in Tsarskoe Selo'

*Dedicated to Anton Stepanovich Arensky*

Lake's still currents,  
gold-glinting roofs,  
past glories in abundance  
in the lake.  
Life plays. Sun burns.  
Under both, here,  
a wonder-wafting past,  
wafted by its own enchantment.

Golden sun glints,  
lake-currents glimmer.  
Here the great past  
seems to breathe oblivion,  
slumbering sweetly, carefree,  
unworried, unalarmed  
in wondrous dreams  
by the momentary tremor  
of swan-voices.

*Translation by Frank Jude*

10] No. 4, 'Twilight'

Blue-grey shadows are mingling;  
Colour is growing dim;  
Sound is fading.  
Life and movement have drowned  
Into the rippling dusk and distant hum.

A moth's unseen flight  
Is heard in the night-time air.  
An hour of unbearable anguish:  
Everything is in me and I am in everything.

In No. 3, 'Incantation to the Earth Spirit' [24], Tcherepnin returns to the deepest registers of the keyboard, *molto pesante e sempre marcato* but beginning *piano*, to evoke a primaeval sense of the Earth. A repetitive two-note motif serves as an introduction that welcomes the vocalist to complete a plaintive pentatonic scale. In this song, the most primitivistic of the cycle, a female character invites the ox – the creature that keeps the world going round – to a feast, where she asks it to seduce and finally crush her beloved.<sup>22</sup> Representing the ox, the piano part takes on the role of a relentless crushing force, the sound of which, by the end of the song, is reminiscent both of Prokofiev's 'Dance of the Pagan Monsters' from the *Scythian Suite* and of Bartók at his fiercest.

The heraldic sounds that open No. 4, 'Incantation to the Maker of Shadows' [25], suggest a group of trumpeters issuing a call to arms, but in this case the music does not summon war. Instead, the singer commands the Maker of Shadows to bring the Tsarina to him. Then, in a *misterioso* descending scale, a bizarre request is made – to have the Tsarina's soul 'removed' from her bosom and then 'breathed' into the poet's heart. Anything to win the heart of his beloved!

The gentle right-hand piano *ostinato* and harp-like left hand in No. 5, 'Incantation to Love' [26], provide a welcome textural contrast to the previous songs. Tcherepnin puts the words of this incantation into a sweet-sounding, seductive melody, the notes of which are actually a musical anagram of the melodic line of No. 3. The poet calls his beloved a blackberry and himself a ruby crimson bird. Will the blackberry attract the bird? Most certainly!

In No. 6, 'Incantation to Memory' [27], Tcherepnin sets the same Balmont poem that Prokofiev used in his *Five Poems*, Op. 36.<sup>23</sup> With hands playing softly in contrary motion, the pianist creates an ethereal, trance-like background, with pentatonic figurations subtly borrowed from the vocal part of the previous song – a further unification of the cycle. The poet begins by saying, 'I have brought you a magical fruit called betel. Put it in your mouth and savour it'.

No. 7 [28] is a shorter version of the first song, appearing as a quiet reminder of the 'primordial ooze' and creating an effective contrast to the imminent finale of the cycle, No. 8, 'Maguey-Agave' [29]. Where the previous poems were all drawn from the 'Malayan Incantations' in Balmont's *The White Architect*, Tcherepnin's final song, 'Maguey-Agave', appears slightly earlier in the book. The poem refers to the Aztec goddess Mayahuel, about whom Balmont undoubtedly learned during his 1905 journey to Mexico. Mayahuel is the female divinity associated with the maguey-agave plant, whose pulp was extracted to become the drink known as *pulque*, the alcoholic beverage of choice for many Aztec rituals. In later times, this same plant became the source of the well-known Mexican liquor, tequila. The plant itself has long, pointed leaves, with sharp bristles along its sides – details dramatically rendered in the poem.

<sup>22</sup> In Balinese tradition the ox (banteng) symbolises the strength of the people.

<sup>23</sup> In Prokofiev's Op. 36 (1921), all five poems are by Balmont, and three of the five are also incantations. Prokofiev had a long friendship with Balmont, and they frequently saw each other in France. Prokofiev set ten of Balmont's poems to music.

Tcherepnin specifically indicates that the pianist is to simulate drums (*Risoluto, quasi timpani*). Tcherepnin has given the singer a strong Spanish Flamenco profile – historically anachronistic, perhaps, but it certainly emphasises the vigor and strength of Mayahuel, the formidable Aztec goddess.

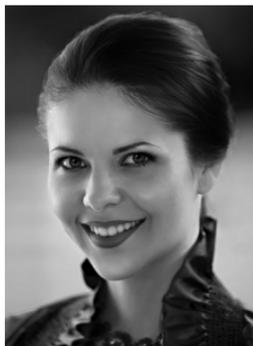
**Elena Mindlina**, soprano, received her early musical education in Russia. She started to play the piano when she was two and began her training as a violinist at five. She subsequently received her first Master's degree, in violin, from the Saratov State Conservatoire. In 2006 she came to New York to study musical theatre at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in Manhattan. Immediately after her graduation, she made an acclaimed Broadway debut at New York Town Hall and appeared in a concert programme at the Symphony Space, receiving standing ovations in both venues.

In 2009 she appeared as Alessandro in the New York premiere of Cavalli's *Eliogabalo* with Stony Brook Opera. A recipient of the Full Tuition Scholarship from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, she received her second Master's degree, this one in classical voice, in 2010 and will finish a doctorate at the same university in spring 2014.

Her dramatic range is wide: in 2011, for example, she appeared as Feodor in *Boris Godunov*, Elena Franco in *South Pacific* and Lo-Lo in *The Merry Widow* as well as as a soloist and ensemble member in various concert programmes with Utah Festival Opera and Musical Theater Company. In recent years, she has been heard in a number of venues in Manhattan, including Merkin Concert Hall in the Lincoln Center and the Bruno Walter Auditorium at The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

In addition to her performing career, Elena Mindlina also enjoys teaching voice and violin in her private studios in New York and Stony Brook and has given master-classes on vocal repertoire and technique in the United States and Russia.

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, **David Witten** received his early training at the Peabody Conservatory and the Rubin Academy of Music in Jerusalem. His undergraduate studies at the Johns Hopkins University led to a degree in psychology. After receiving an MFA in piano performance from SUNY at Buffalo, he graduated with high honours from Boston University, where he earned the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in piano performance. His most influential teachers were Tinka Knopf, Benjamin Oren, Reynaldo Reyes, Walter



Если умру я, и спросят меня:  
В чем твое доброе дело?  
Молвлю я: Мысль моя майского дня  
Бабочке зла не хотела.

*Четыре романа на стихи Тютчева, соч. 16*

[7] No. 1, «Думы и волны»

Дума за думой, волна за волной –  
Два проявленья стихии одной:  
В сердце ли тесном, в безбрежном ли море,  
Здесь – в заключении, там – на просторе, –  
Тот же все вечный прибой и отбой,  
Тот же все призрак тревожно-пустой.

[8] No. 2, «Последняя любовь»

О, как на склоне наших лет  
Нежней мы любим и суеверней...  
Сияй, сияй, прощальный свет  
Любви последней, зари вечерней!

Полнеба обхватила тень,  
Лишь там, на западе, бродит сиянье, –  
Помедли, помедли, вечерний день,  
Продлись, продлись, очарованье.

Пускай скудеет в жилах кровь,  
Но в сердце не скудеет нежность...  
О ты, последняя любовь!  
Ты и блаженство, и безнадежность.

When I die, I will be asked,  
'What good deeds have you ever done?'  
I will answer, 'My thoughts are about a day in May  
When I didn't want to harm the butterfly.'

*Translations by Marina Cunningham*

**Four Songs, Op. 16**

Texts by Fyodor Tyutchev

[7] No. 1, 'Thoughts and Waves'

Thought after thought, wave after wave –  
Two manifestations of one element.  
In the cramped heart, in the boundless ocean:  
Here they are captives, there – in free motion...  
Always the same ebb and flow of the seas,  
Always that spectre of empty unease . . .

*Translation by Frank Jude and Elena Mindlina*

[8] No. 2, 'Last Love'

*Dedicated to Maria Albertovna Tcherepnina*  
On the final slope of years  
our love's more tender, more superstitious.  
Shine on, shine on, parting light!  
Shine on, last twilight love!

Half the sky is dark.  
Only in the west a glimmer prowls.  
Slow down, slow down, departing day,  
stay longer, longer, charm.

Should blood run thinner,  
tenderness is just as full.  
Ah, last love,  
bliss you are, and hopelessness!

*Translation by Frank Jude*

И почему ручью река  
Поэт: Мы будем дружны?

И почему так ландыш вдрут  
Вдохнул, в траве бледнея?  
И почему так нежен луг?  
Ах, знаю! Это – Фея.

**5** No. 11, «Ветерок Феи»

В сказке феиной, тиховойиной,  
Легкий Майский ветерок  
Кольхнул цветок лилейный  
Нашептал мне пенье строк.

И от Феи лунно-нежной  
Бросил в песни мне цветы.  
И умчался в мир безбрежный,  
В новой жажде красоты.

А еще через минутку  
Возвратился с гроздьёю роз:  
«Я ушел, но это в шутку,  
Я тебе цветов принес».

**6** No. 15, «Бабочка»

*Посвящается Николаю Петровичу Черетнину*  
Помню я, бабочка билась в окно.  
Крылышки тонко стучали.  
Тонко стекло, и прозрачно оно.  
Но отделяет от дали.

В мае то было. Мне было пять лет.  
В нашей усадьбе старинной.  
Узнице воздух вернул я и свет.  
Выпустил в сад наш пустынный.

And why does the stream chant to the river,  
‘We will be friends?’

Why did the lily-of-the-valley  
Suddenly sigh and turn pale?  
And why is it so gentle?  
Oh, I know! It is – the Fairy!

**4** No. 11, ‘The Fairy’s Breeze’

A gentle May breeze blows  
In a soundless fairy tale,  
Making the lily flutter.  
It whispered the song’s words to me.

And from the gentle lunar Fairy  
It tossed flowers into my songs.  
It fled through the boundless world,  
Once again in search of beauty.

And a moment later  
It returned with a rose bouquet, and said,  
‘I left, but it was all in jest –  
I brought you back flowers.’

**6** No. 15, ‘Butterfly’

*Dedicated to Nikolai Petrovich Tcherepnin*  
I remember the butterfly pounding on the window.  
Her wings hitting softly.  
The glass is thin and translucent.  
Yet it blocks the open air.

It took place in May. I was five then.  
In our ancient home,  
I returned the prisoner to open air and light.  
Freeing her into our empty garden.

Hautzig, Leo Smit and Dorothy Taubman. After twenty years as an active recitalist, chamber-music pianist and teacher in the Boston area, he accepted a position at the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University, where he is currently Coordinator of Keyboard Studies.

His international career has included numerous concert tours in China, Finland, Ireland, Mexico, Russia, Ukraine and South America. As the recipient of a 1990 Fulbright Scholar award, he spent five months teaching and concertising throughout Brazil, and he is frequently invited back to give concerts and masterclasses.

Closer to home, his performances have included solo appearances with the Boston Pops Orchestra, the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra and various chamber-music collaborations with members of the New York Philharmonic and the Boston Symphony Orchestras. He has also been active in contemporary music. He has recorded piano music by Nicholas Van Slyck (Titanic Records), and has commissioned over a dozen new works for Soli Espri, a chamber trio he founded in Boston with the clarinetist Chester Brezniak and mezzo soprano D’Anna Fortunato. With the flautist Sue-Ellen Hershman-Tcherepnin, he formed Dúo Clásico; their recording, *Flute and Piano Music of Latin America*, was issued on the Musical Heritage Society label. Marco Polo released his solo recording of the piano music of Manuel M. Ponce. For Toccata Classics he recorded a CD of piano music by Nikolai Tcherepnin (TOCC 0117).

David Witten is also the editor of *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music: Essays in Performance and Analysis* (Garland Publishing, New York, 1997), which includes a landmark analytical study of the Chopin *Ballades*.

Professor Witten has won top prizes in several international photography competitions and has held solo photography exhibitions in Budapest and Milan. His photographs can be accessed through [www.davidwitten.com](http://www.davidwitten.com).



Photo: Mike Peters

Погубила ревность злая,  
Кошкин дом сгорел до тла.  
«Этой мышке помогла я»,  
Спичка молвила, пылая. –  
Мышка до сих пор цела.

Wicked envy destroyed everything,  
The cat's house burned down to ashes.  
'I helped that little mouse,'  
Said the flaming match.  
The mouse is still intact.

1 No. 1, «Утро»  
Деточка, птичка моя,  
Дверку открой.  
Это я,  
Мальчик твой.  
Ты котенком меня назвала,  
Ты сказала мне – мальчик, поэт.  
Ты причудливой с первых мгновений была,  
И ко мне возвратилось младенчество лет.  
Я принес тебе свежие маки с росой,  
Зацелую тебя, светлоглазка моя.  
Ну, скорей же, открой,  
Это я.

1 No. 1, 'Morning'  
My little child, my little bird,  
Open your door.  
It's just me,  
Your little boy.  
You call me your kitten.  
You said: 'The boy is a poet.'  
You could divine from the start.  
And I felt that I was a babe again.  
I brought you fresh poppies covered with dew.  
I will cover you with kisses, my bright-eyed one.  
Hurry, and open the door.  
It's me!

3 No. 8, «Анютины глазки»  
Анютины глазки,  
Жасмин, маргаритки,  
Вы – буквы на свитке  
Поблекнувшей сказки,

3 No. 8, 'Pansies'  
Pansies,  
Jasmine and daisies  
You are letters on a page  
Of a faded fairytale.

Вы где-то дышали,  
Кому-то светили,  
Без слез, без печали,  
Вы жили, вы были.

You sighed somewhere.  
You shone for someone  
Without tears, without sorrow.  
You lived, and you were alive.

2 No. 6, «Кошкин дом»  
Посвящается Татьяне Николаевне Черепниной  
Мышка спичками играла,  
Загорелся кошкин дом  
Нет, давай начну сначала,  
Мышка спичками играла,  
Перед Васькой, пред котом.

2 No. 6, 'Cat's House'  
Dedicated to Tatyana Nikolayevna Tcherepnina  
Little mouse played with matches  
And the cat's house caught on fire  
No! let me start over,  
Little mouse played with matches  
In front of Vaska the cat

И вот чрез мечтанья,  
Воздушны и зыбки,  
Вы шлете сиянья,  
Дарите улыбки.

And now in dreams,  
Light and breezy  
You sparkle.  
You give away smiles.

Вы шлете мне ласки,  
В бессмертном избытке,  
Жасмин, маргаритки,  
Анютины глазки.

You embrace me dearly,  
In everlasting joy,  
Jasmine, daisies,  
And pansies.

Промаякнул он на мышку, –  
А она ему: «Кис-кис»  
«Нет», – сказал он, – «это – лишку»,  
И за хвостик хватя плутишку,  
Вдруг усы его зажглись.

The cat meowed at the mouse  
And the mouse answered, 'Kis, kis.'  
'No,' said the cat, 'that's not right'  
And pulled the little rogue's tail,  
And suddenly his whiskers caught on fire.

Кот мяукать, кот метаться,  
Загорелся кошкин дом.  
Тут бы кошке догадаться,  
А она давай считаться,  
Все поставила вверх дном.

The cat meows, the cat paces.  
The cat's house is on fire.  
The cat should have known.  
But he argued and paced,  
And everything fell upside down.

4 No. 10, «Чары Феи»  
Я шел в лесу Лес темный был  
Так странно зачарован.  
И сам кого-то я любил,  
И сам я был взволнован.

4 No. 10, 'Fairy's Charms'  
I walked in the woods. The woods were dark.  
Strange and charmed.  
And I loved someone,  
And I was restless.

Кто так разнежил облака,  
Они совсем жемчужны?

Who made the clouds so gentle,  
And so pearly.