

ALEXANDER GRECHANINOV (1864–1956)

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Soloists: Dārta Paldiņa, mezzo-soprano (3, 9); Kārlis Rūtentāls, tenor (3) & Jānis Kurševs, tenor (9);

Jānis Kokins, bass (3)

LATVIAN RADIO CHOIR SIGVARDS KĻAVA, conductor

Fate gave him a long life that made up for what he had lost by ascending on the musical path late. In general, a long life suited him. Calm, quiet, loving nature and children, peacefully religious, never extreme either in religion or in music – he embodied another face of Russia, not the broken and restless face of Dostoevsky, Bely, Scriabin, but a benevolent, soothing, enlightened and humble one.

- Leonid Sabaneev1

The range of musical genres in the output of composer Alexander Grechaninov (1864–1956) is incredibly wide: to take an example, in addition to works in common classical genres, he wrote notable children's music (for children both to listen to and to play). Also, while most composers have opera and ballet as either the core of their output or only a marginal interest, with Grechaninov the genres in his output are well balanced – with the outstanding exception of his liturgical music, which is uncommonly natural, sonorous, harmonious and homogeneous in expression and character. His depth of interest in this genre is reflected for instance in the fact that he wrote four settings of the *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (1897, 1902, 1917, 1943). This is the aspect of his work that has most attracted musicians and listeners in the early 21st century, with an increasing number of performances and recordings demonstrating that Grechaninov's music is not old-fashioned or outdated. Quite the contrary, in fact: it is welcomed and appreciated by a wide audience.

Grechaninov's *All-Night Vigil*, or *Vespers*, (Всенощное бдѣніе, Vsénoshchnoye bdéniye, Op. 59, 1912) was first performed in Moscow by the extraordinary Synod Choir conducted by the young Nikolai Golovanov on 18 November 1912. The titles are interchangeable, and in any case the work was and is mainly intended for concert use. As such, it principally commands actual wakefulness from the musicians and the audience rather than the spiritual wakefulness also implied. But as Mikhail Bakhtin wrote, "the genre

lives in the present but always remembers its past". Thus, the primary determining factor in this journey towards spiritual and actual dawn is light – so much so that it dominates the entire composition. In formal and technical terms, this is achieved by the use of major keys and variants of the major scale. The influence of earlier music is immediately felt and undeniable, as Grechaninov used old traditional Slavic chants of the Russian Greek Orthodox Church (as compiled in the *Octoechos*). He selected the uplifting, solemnly glorious chants to emphasise the character of joy, exultation and jubilance. Instead of using direct, obvious quotes, however, he mixed inputs from various sources in terms of genre, geographical provenance and general atmosphere. There was a deliberate and clear intention behind this approach, as Grechaninov himself noted: "to create a harmonic dress for our simple church songs that is better suited to the Russian style".

It is also interesting that the keys chosen by the composer are so peremptorily brilliant: F sharp major, C sharp major, B major, E major. No matter which tuning for A4 you may choose, the multitude of sharp signs (described in many languages as 'raising signs'!) has a psychological effect on performers, activating and encouraging them. The melodic profiles are graduated, as is characteristic of the genre, with melodic lines progressing mostly in a natural flow of seconds and thirds (often like the ancient melodic cells known as *popevki*). There are also leaps of a fourth, of course, though rarely and mostly in the middle parts, and even the occasional fifth. But such deviations are simultaneously or immediately balanced with smooth movement in the other voices and extended pedal points (often in the upper parts, above what we would call the melody), balancing the more active moments that occur.

An example of the above that we may point to is in no. 5, 'Hvalite imia Ghospodne' (Praise Ye the Name of the Lord), which begins with a calmly ascending perfect fourth and soon repeats this device – but this takes place within a freely constructed framework of other voices merging into a single polymelodic complex, with small twists and oscillations balancing the texture into a harmonious whole.

The music closely follows the prosody of the text, so much so that the time signature changes to accommodate emphases on important words and even on particular syllables. This variety prevents the constrained melodic lines from becoming grey and boring. The entire fabric is in motion all the time in a vivid, scintillating texture. Another major feature we may point to is the classic octave doubling of the bass line with the famous sonority rich in overtones of the Russian *oktavist*.

The work is written for two choirs to take advantage of and explore the spatial dimension. This is especially evident in the solemn and poetic representation of the sound of bells, evoking the characteristic background sonority of ancient Russia (as also referenced in music by Borodin and Mussorgsky). This is particularly impressive in no. 10, 'Vzbrannoy voyevode' (To Thee, Victorious Leader), where the bell imitation appears from the very beginning and is the main element in the solemn hymn texture. Throughout the ten movements of the *All-Night Vigil*, Grechaninov makes use of ancient influences, but only as echoes and hints, while shaping an overall arc which, without any sharp peaks or falls, captures an emotional and benevolent message in what we might call silent drama.

A contrast of a different kind – extreme calmness – may be found for instance in no. 3, 'Svete tihiy' (Gladsome Light), with homogeneous vertical harmonies and an almost consistently observed 3/2 time signature. The steady, reciting prosody is reminiscent of a congregation murmuring in unison, yet even here the sense of light and spiritual elevation remains present. A similar moment occurs in no. 7, 'Ot yunosti moyeya' (From my Youth). Overall, Grechaninov demonstrates a consistency of approach that reflects a confidence in the continued survival of the genre. This, then, is what makes his sacred music significant and guarantees that it will remain relevant for the musical world.

Jānis Torgāns

¹ Sabaneev, Leonid Vospominanija o Rossiji [Memories of Russia]. – Moskva/Moscow: Classic-XXI, 2005. – [268 p., Ill.] p. 89

"A great musical power." - Washington Post

"This chorus's expertise in music pushes voices to extremes, from ethereal high tones to uncannily sustained bass drones."

– The New York Times

"One of the world's greatest choirs."

- The Advertiser

The **Latvian Radio Choir** is a unique, award-winning ensemble of professional singers that offers its audiences an extraordinary variety of repertoire ranging from early music to the most sophisticated scores of contemporary compositions.

The choir has recorded the Grammy Award-winning album *Adam's Lament* (ECM) composed by Arvo Pärt and conducted by Tonu Kaljuste. It is a repeat winner of the Great Music Award of Latvia (the highest national award for professional achievement in music) and has received the Latvian Cabinet of Ministers Award. The choir's recording of Sergei Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil* was praised by Gramophone as the best recording of February 2013 and ranked among the 25 best albums of the year by the American radio station NPR.

The Latvian Radio Choir has performed at many of the world's most renowned concert halls: Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw (the Netherlands), Elbphilharmonie (Germany), Theatre des Champs-Elysees and Cite de la Musique-Philharmonie de Paris (France), Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Duke University Chapel and the Walt Disney Concert Hall (USA), Konzerthaus Berlin (Germany), the Library of Congress (USA), Queen Elizabeth Hall (UK) and the Dresden Frauenkirche (Germany).

It is also a regular performer at leading musical events, such as BBC Proms (UK), the Salzburg (Austria) and Lucerne (Switzerland) festivals, the Festival of Radio France

Occitanie Montpellier (France), the Baltic Sea Festival (Sweden), Printemps des arts de Monte-Carlo (Monaco), Klangspuren Festival (Austria), the White Light Festival (USA), Klangvokal Dortmund (Germany), Musikfest Erzgebirge (Germany), OzAsia Festival (Australia) and Soundstreams (Canada).

Often serving as a creative lab, the choir encourages composers to write new music that challenges the capabilities of the human voice. During the past 20 years, the ensemble has evolved into an unprecedented form of a choir where every singer has an individual mission and provides their unique contribution to the group's unique, defining blend of timbral qualities.

The choir regularly releases new recordings with Ondine, Hyperion Records, Deutsche Grammophon, ECM, BIS and Naïve, collaborating with outstanding guest conductors like Heinz Holliger, Riccardo Muti, Riccardo Chailly, Gustavo Dudamel, Lars Ulrik Mortensen, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Peter Phillips. It has also partnered with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, Ensemble Intercontemporain, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Camerata Salzburg and Concerto Copenhagen.

The Latvian Radio Choir was founded in 1940 by the legendary Latvian conductor Teodors Kalniņš, who led the ensemble until his passing in 1962. Following the artistic direction by Edgars Račevskis (1963–86) and Juris Kļaviņš (1987–92), the choir has had two conductors ever since 1992 – artistic director and principal conductor Sigvards Kļava and conductor Kaspars Putniņš.

In 2020, the Ondine recording of Tchaikovsky's *All-Night Vigil* with the Latvian Radio Choir and conductor Sigvards Kļava won the ICMA Award for the best choral album of the year.

www.radiokoris.lv

Sigvards Kļava is one of the most outstanding Latvian conductors, also a professor of conducting and producer, music director of the Latvian Radio Choir since 1992. As a result of Sigvards Kļava's steady efforts, the Latvian Radio Choir has become an internationally recognized, vocally distinctive collective, where each singer possesses a creative individuality. Under Sigvards' guidance, the choir has recorded a number of choral works by little known or completely forgotten composers of the past, as well as formed a friendly collaboration with a number of notable Latvian composers. Sigvards Kļava is a professor at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music. Kļava is a multiple winner of the Latvian Grand Music Award. He has performed at the Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw of Amsterdam, Berliner Konzerthaus and Philharmonie, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Berwaldhallen in Stockholm, Dresdner Frauenkirche as well as in the New York Lincoln Centre.





All-Night Vigil, Op. 59

1

Blagoslovi, dushe moya, Ghospoda

Blagoslovi, dushe moya, Ghospoda, blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi.
Blagoslovi, dushe moya, Ghospoda.
Ghospodi Bozhe moy, vozvelichilsia yesi zelo.
Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi.
Na gorah stanut vodï.
Divna dela Tvoya, Ghospodi.
Posrede gor proydut vodï.
Divna dela Tvoya, Ghospodi.
Fsia premudrostiyu sotvoril yesi.
Slava Ti, Ghospodi, sotvorivshemu fsia.
Slava Ottsu, i Sinu, i Sviatomu Duhu.
Slava Ti, Ghospodi, sotvorivshemu fsia.
I nîne i prisno i vo veki vekov. Amin.
Slava Ti, Ghospodi, sotvorivshemu fsia.

2

Kafizma: Blazhen muzh

Blazhen muzh, izhe ne ide na sovet nechestivïh. Alliluya.

I put nechestivih pogibnet. Alliluya. Rabotayte Ghospodevi so strahom, i raduytesia Yemu s trepetom. Alliluya. Blazheni fsi nadeyushchiisia nan. Alliluya. Voskresni, Ghospodi, spasi mia, Bozhe moy. Alliluya.

I na liudeh Tvoih blagosloveniye Tvoye. Alliluya. Slava Ottsu, i Sïnu, i Sviatomu Duhu. Alliluya.

Bless the Lord, O My Soul

Bless the Lord, O my soul, blessed art Thou, O lord.
Bless the Lord, O my soul.
O Lord my God, Thou art very great.
Blessed art Thou, O Lord.
The waters stand upon the mountains.
Marvelous are Thy works, O Lord.
The waters flow between the hills.
Marvelous are Thy works, O Lord.
In wisdom hast Thou made all things.
Glory to Thee, O Lord, who hast created all!
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Glory to Thee, O Lord, who hast created all! Both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Glory to Thee O Lord, who hast created all! (English text: Psalm 104:1, 6, 10, 24)

Kathisma: Blessed is the Man

Blessed is the man, who walks not in the counsel of the wicked.

Alleluia.

The way of the wicked will perish. Alleluia. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice in Him with trembling. Alleluia. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him. Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God! Alleluia. Salvation is of the Lord; And Thy blessing is upon Thy people. Alleluia.

8 1 7 1 1

I nïne i prisno i vo veki vekov. Amin. Alliluva.

3

Svete tihiy

Svete tihiy sviatïya slavī Bessmertnago, Ottsa Nebesnago, Sviatago, Blazhennago, Iisuse Hriste. Prishedshe na zapad solntsa, videvshe svet vecherniy, poyem Ottsa, Sīna i Sviatago Duha, Boga. Dostoin yesi vo fsia vremena pet bīti glasī prepodobnīmi, Sīne Bozhīy, zhīvot dayay, temzhe mir Tia slavit.

4

Bogoroditse Devo

Bogoroditse Devo, raduysia, Blagodatnaya Mariye, Ghospod s Toboyu. Blagoslovenna Ti v zhenah, i blagosloven Plod chreva Tvoyego, yako Spasa rodila yesi dush nashih.

5

Hvalite imia Ghospodne

Hvalite imia Ghospodne.
Hvalite imia Ghospodne.
Hvalite, rabi Ghospoda. Alliluia.
Blagosloven Ghospod ot Siona,
zhïvïy vo Iyerusalime. Alliluia.
Ispovedaytesia Ghospodevi, yako blag,
yako vek milost Yego. Alliluia.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Alleluia.

Both now and ever unto ages of ages. Amen. Alleluia.

(English text: Psalm 1:1, 6; 2:11, 12; 3:7, 8)

Gladsome Light

Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the Immortal One.

the Heavenly Father, holy and blessed, O Jesus Christ!

Now that we have come to the setting of the sun, and behold the light of evening, we praise the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – God. Thou art worthy at every moment to be praised in hymns by reverent voices. O Son of God, Thou art the Giver of Life; therefore, all the world glorifies Thee.

Rejoice, O Virgin

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary full of grace, the Lord is with Thee. Blessed art Thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of Thy womb, for Thou hast borne the Saviour of our souls.

Praise the Name of the Lord

Praise the name of the Lord.
Praise the Lord, O you His servants. Alleluia.
Blessed be the Lord from Zion,
He who dwells in Jerusalem. Alleluia.
O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,
For His mercy endures forever. Alleluia.

Ispovedaytesia Bogu nebesnomu, Yyko vek milost Yego. Alliluia.

6

Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi

Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi, nauchi mia opravdaniyem Tvoim.

Angelskiy sobor udivisia, zria Tebe v mertvih vmenivshasia, smertnuyu zhe, Spase, krepost razorivsha, i s Soboyu Adama vozdvigsha, i ot ada fsia svobozhdsha.

Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi, nauchi mia opravdaniyem Tvoim.

"Pochto mira s milostivnïmi slezami, o uchenitsï, rastvoriayete?" Blistayayasia vo grobe Angel, mironositsam veshchashe:

"Vidite vi grob, i urazumeyte: Spas bo voskrese ot groba."

Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi, nauchi mia opravdaniyem Tvoim.

Zelo rano mironositsī techahu ko grobu Tvoyemu rīdayushchiya, no predsta k nim Angel, i reche: "Rīdaniya vremia presta, ne plachite, voskreseniye zhe apostolom rtsīte." O give thanks unto the God of Heaven, For His mercy endures forever. Alleluia.

Blessed Art Thou, O Lord

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.

The angelic host was filled with awe, when it saw Thee among the dead. By destroying the power of death, O Savior, Thou didst raise Adam, and save all men from hel!!

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.

In the tomb the radiant angel cried to the myrrhbearers:

"Why do you women mingle with your tears? Look at the tomb and understand! The Savior is risen from the dead!"

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.

Very early in the morning the myrrhbearers ran with sorrow to Thy tomb, but an Angel came to them and said: "The time for sorrow has come to an end! Do not weep, but announce the resurrection to the apostles!"

Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi, nauchi mia opravdaniyem Tvoim.

Mironositsï zhenï s mirî prishedshïya ko grobu Tvoyemu, Spase, rîdahu. Angel zhe k nim reche, glagolia: "Chto s mertvîmi zhïvago pomïshliayete? Yako Bog bo voskrese ot groba!"

Slava Ottsu, i Sïnu, i Sviatomu Duhu.

Poklonimsia Ottsu, i Yego Sïnovi, i Sviatomu Duhu.

Sviatey Troitse vo yedinom sushchestve s Serafimï zovushche:

"Sviat, Sviat, Vesi Ghospodi!"

I nïne, i prisno, i vo veki vekov. Amin.

Zhīznodavtsa rozhdshī, greha, Devo, Adama izbavila yesi. Radost zhe Yeve v pechali mesto podala yesi; padshīya zhe ot zhīzni, k sey napravi, iz Tebe voplotivīysia Bog i chelovek.

Alliluiya, alliluiya, alliluiya, slava Tebe, Bozhe!

7

Ot yunosti moyeya

Ot yunosti moyeya mnozi boriut mia strasti: no Sam mia zastupi i spasi, Spase moy.

Nenavidiashchii Siona, posramitesia ot Ghospoda: yako trava bo ognem, budete izsohshe.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.

The myrrhbearers were sorrowful as they neared Thy tomb, but the Angel said to them:
"Why do you number the living among the dead? Since He is God. He is risen from the tomb!"

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

We worship the Father, and His Son, and the Holy Spirit: the Holy Trinity, one in essence! We cry with the Seraphim: "Holy, Holy Holy art Thou, O Lord!"

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Since Thou didst give birth to the Giver of Life, O Virgin,
Thou didst deliver Adam from his sin!
Thou gavest joy to Eve instead of sadness!
The God-man who was born of Thee
has restored to life those who had fallen from it!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Glory to Thee, O God

From My Youth

From my youth many passions have fought against me; but do Thou protect me and save me, O my Saviour.

You who hate Zion shall be put shame by the Lord; you shall be withered up like grass by the fire.

Slava Ottsu, i Sinu, i Sviatomu Duhu, i nine, i prisno, i vo veki vekov. Amin.

Sviatim Duhom fsiaka dusha zhivitsia, i chistotoyu vozvishayetsia, svetleyetsia Troycheskim yedinstvom, sviashchennotayne.

8

Voskreseniye Hristovo videvshe

Voskreseniye Hristovo videvshe, poklonimsia Sviatomu Ghospodu Iisusu, yedinomu bezgreshnomu. Krestu Tvoyemu pokloniayemsia, Hriste, i sviatoye voskreseniye Tvoye poyem i slavim: Ti bo yesi Bog nash, razve Tebe inogo ne znayem, imia Tvoye imenuyem.
Priidite fsi vernii, poklonimsia sviatomu Hristovu voskreseniyu: se bo priide krestom radost fsemu miru, fsegda blagosloviashche Ghospoda, poyem voskreseniye Yego: raspiatiye bo preterpev, smertiyu smert razrushi.

9

Velikoye slavosloviye

Slava v vishnih Bogu, i na zemli mir, v chelovetseh blagovoleniye. Hvalim Tia, blagoslovim Tia, klaniayem Ti sia, slavoslovim Tia, blagoradim Tia, velikiya radi slavi Tvoyeya. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Every soul is enlivened by the Holy Spirit and is exalted in purity, illumined by the Triune Godhead in a sacred mystery.

Having Beheld the Resurrection of Christ

Having beheld the resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only Sinless One. We venerate Thy Cross, O Christ, and we hymn and glorify Thy holy resurrection, for Thou art our God, and we know no other than Thee: we call on Thy name. Come, all you faithful, let us venerate Christ's holy resurrection. For, behold, through the cross joy has come into all the world. Ever blessing the Lord, let us praise His resurrection, for by enduring the cross for us, He has destroyed death by death.

The Great Doxology

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, Good will toward men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory. Ghospodi, Tsariu Nebesnïy, Bozhe Otche Fsederzhiteliu. Ghospodi, Sïne Yedinorodnïy, Iisuse Hriste, i Sviatïv Dushe. Ghospodi Bozhe, Agnche Bozhiy, Sine Otech, vzemliay greh mira, pomiluy nas; vzemliav grehi mira, priimi molitvu nashu. Sediay odesnuyu Ottsa, pomiluy nas. Yako Ti yesi yedin sviat, Ti yesi yedin Ghospod, Iisus Hristos, v slavu Boga Ottsa. Amin. Na fsiak den blagoslovliu Tia I vos'hvaliu imia Tvoye vo veki i v vek veka. Spodobi, Ghospodi, v den sey bez greha sohranitisia nam.

Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi, Bozhe otets nashih, i hvalno i proslavleno imia Tvoye vo veki. Amin. Budi, Ghospodi, milost Tvoya na nas, yakozhe upovahom na Tia.
Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi, nauchi mia opravdaniyem Tvoim.

Ghospodi, pribezhïshche bïl yesi nam v rod i rod.

Az reh: Ghospodi, pomiluy mia, istseli dushu moyu, yako sogreshïh Tebe.
Ghospodi, k Tebe pribegoh, nauchi mia tvoriti voliu Tvoyu, yako Ti yesi Bog moy, yako u Tebe istochnik zhïvota; vo svete Tvoyem uzrim svet.

Probavi milost Tvoyu vedushchim Tia.

O Lord, Heavenly King, God the Father almighty, O Lord, only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit! O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takest away the sin of the world, have mercy on 115 Thou who takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayers! Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us! For thou alone art holy, Thou alone art the Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen. Every day I will bless Thee and praise Thy name forever and ever. Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin!

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, God of our fathers, and praise and glorified is Thy name forever. Amen. Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have set our hope on Thee.
Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes!

from generation to generation.
I said: Lord, have mercy on me,
heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.
Lord, I flee to Thee,
teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God;
for with Thee is the fountain of life,
and in Thy light we shall see the light.
Continue Thy mercy on those who know Thee!

Lord, Thou has been our refuge

Sviatïy Bozhe, Sviatïy Krepkiy, Sviatïy Bessmertnïy, pomiluy nas.

Slava Ottsu i Sīnu i Sviatomu Duhu, i nīne i prisno, i vo veki vekov. Amin. Sviatīy Bessmertnīy, pomiluy nas. Sviatīy Bozhe, Sviatīy Krepkiy, Sviatīy Bessmertnīy, pomiluy nas.

10

Vzbrannoy voyevode

Vzbrannoý voýevode pobeditelnaya, yako izbavlshesia ot zlïh, blagodarstvennaya vospisuyem Ti rabi Tvoi, Bogoroditse: na yako imushchaya derzhavu nepobedimuyu, ot fsiakih nas bed svobodi, da zovem Ti:

da zovem 11: raduysia, Nevesto Nenevestnaya. Holy God, Holy Might, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.
Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!
Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal,
have mercy on us!

To Thee, the Victorious Leader

To Thee, the victorious Leader of triumphant hosts, we Thy servants, delivered from evil, offer hymns of thanksgiving, O Theotokos!

Since Thou dost possess invincible might, set us free from all calamities, so that we may cry to Thee:
"Rejoice, O unwedded Bride!"

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LATVIAN RADIO CHOIR



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