

Nikolay MYASKOVSKY

VOCAL WORKS, VOLUME ONE

ROMANCES ON VERSES BY MIKHAIL LERMONTOV

NOTEBOOK OF LYRICS

VIOLIN SONATA

Elizaveta Pakhomova, soprano
Tatiana Barsukova, soprano
Marina Dichenko, violin
Olga Solovieva, piano

NIKOLAY MYASKOVSKY: VOCAL WORKS, VOLUME ONE

by Yuri Abdokov

The vocal music of Nikolay Yakovlevich Myaskovsky is still little known to the concert-going public. Apart from two choral works,¹ it consists of compositionally diverse song-cycles and individual songs; the poets he set include Konstantin Balmont, Yevgeny Baratynsky, Alexander Blok, Anton Delvig, Zinaida Gippius, Mikhail Lermontov, Stepan Shchipachev and Fyodor Tyutchev. There are more than a hundred songs in total, and they belong to both the Russian tradition (Glinka, Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov) and the western (Brahms, Schubert, Schumann, Wolf, Richard Strauss). But for Myaskovsky 'tradition' did not mean a kind of mechanical conservatism, still less the stylistic imitation of other composers. A 'Myaskovskian' colour that is characteristic of most of his vocal works can soon be recognised in the subtle spiritual reflections of the texts he set, in the complex counterpoint of feeling and thought, and in the frequent occurrence of 'twilight' tonalities and a reserved emotional palette.

The foundations of Myaskovsky's aesthetics are hidden in emotional opposites: deep reflection, elegiac lyrics and tragic drama, religious contemplation and heartfelt radiance. He never blindly follows the external attributes of the texts he has chosen; instead, he gives each poem its own image, its own rhythm, its own phrasing, so that poems that have been repeatedly set by other composers acquire, in Myaskovsky, both musical and poetic freshness. This album features Myaskovsky's last works for soprano and piano – the *Notebook of Lyrics* (1946) and *Romances on Verses by Mikhail Lermontov* (1935–36) – and it also includes the later Sonata for violin and piano (1946–47), which is as little known as his songs.

¹ The cantata *Kirov is with us*, Op. 61, for mezzo-soprano, baritone, choir and orchestra (1942–43), and the 'Nocturne' *The Kremlin by Night*, Op. 75 (1947).

The obtrusion of a chamber work into an album of songs is readily explained. The premiere of the *Notebook of Lyrics* took place on 29 April 1947 in the Small Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire, given by Nina Dorliak and Sviatoslav Richter, who performed several romances from the Lermontov cycle on the same evening. David Oistrakh and Lev Oborin gave the Violin Sonata its first performance at the same concert. This recording thus echoes one of the last concerts of Myaskovsky's music during his own lifetime, and so it also takes on a memorial and historical subtext.

The *Notebook of Lyrics, Op. 72* – six romances on poems by Mira Mendelson² and her translations of Robert Burns – was Myaskovsky's last song-cycle.³ The composer Nikolay Peyko, known for his chess matches with Prokofiev, told me that turning to the poetry of Mira Mendelson was an obvious way for Myaskovsky to express his sincere affection for the second wife of his close friend, and for Prokofiev himself.

Mira Mendelson described the appearance of this cycle as follows:

Nikolay Yakovlevich asked Seryozha⁴ if he had any verses for romances in mind. Transmitting this request, Seryozha told me to add some of my poems to the volumes I had selected for Nikolay Yakovlevich.⁵ When he came to see us, I gave him four of my lyrical poems and two translations from Burns, and promised to bring my poetry collections from Moscow later.⁶

When she visited Myaskovsky again, bringing books by other poets, he said that he was quite satisfied with the poems by Mendelson herself. When she said that they were from the cycle dedicated to Seryozha, he smiled: 'Not a bad cycle'. She added:

² Mira Alexandrovna Mendelson-Prokofieva (1915-68), writer, poet, second wife of Sergei Prokofiev. After the official registration of her marriage to Prokofiev on 15 January 1948, she took her husband's last name. Co-author of the librettos of his operas *Betrothal in a Monastery*, *War and Peace* and *The Tale of a Real Man* and the ballet *The Tale of the Stone Flower*. Prokofiev dedicated his Piano Sonata No. 8 to her.

³ Later, in 1950, he compiled and prepared for publication a collection of romances, *Over the Years*, Op. 87, which included individual works from different years.

⁴ 'Seryozha' is a pet name for Sergei, i.e., Prokofiev.

⁵ The complete cycle of poems dedicated to Prokofiev, written in 1939-40, was not published and has not been preserved. There are drafts and partial autographs of only a few poems.

⁶ M. A. Mendelson-Prokofieva, *On Sergey Prokofiev. Memoirs. Diaries. 1938-1967*, Kompozitor, Moscow, 2012, pp. 280-81.

I was happy, Seryozha was very happy. The romances were written quickly, and the day came when we could hear them. [...] First, Nikolay Yakovlevich read my text, then played each song twice. He was worried, since it seemed to him that it would be difficult for us to hear the accompaniment in his performance, but everything was clear and beautiful. I wanted to cry with joy, looking at dear Nikolay Yakovlevich, who wrote such music for poems related to Seryozha.⁷

Myaskovsky did not attend the premiere of the *Notebook of Lyrics*, noting in his diary on 29 April 1947: ‘Contrary to my wishes, the Philharmonic⁸ arranged an author’s concert. I didn’t go. The artists were offended.’⁹ Prokofiev and his wife, though, did attend the concert, with Mira Mendelson recording in her diary: ‘Seryozha listened to the romances with pleasure. [...] I was very worried. The romances were accepted well. Many friends congratulated me. I was filled with deep gratitude to dear Nikolay Yakovlevich.’¹⁰

The *Notebook of Lyrics* is based on continuous development rather than on contrast, on a unity of thought, as well as – and this is especially important – on gradual modulation and ‘thickening’ of the palette, expressing a subtle transformation of lyrical feeling.

The first two songs of the cycle (‘Will I forget you?’ [1] and ‘Like a sail that flashes at times...’ [2]) are the lightest and act as preludes. The third song (‘Cloudless April Day’) [3] is unusual in its construction: in form and content; it is also a kind of prelude – but it is here that Myaskovsky begins to thicken his palette, so that the combination of light colours and increasing expressiveness in the fourth song (‘How often at night...’) [4] follows naturally, with the key changing from a warm C major in the final bars of the third song to the mournful, twilit E flat minor in the fourth. But here, with the fourth song, the genre changes dramatically: whereas the first three functioned ‘preludially’, from now on they serve as statements in their own right.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Moscow State Academic Philharmonic, the concerts organisation.

⁹ O. P. Lamm, *Pages of Myaskovsky’s Creative Biography*, Sovyetskoye Kompozitor, Moscow, 1989, p. 320.

¹⁰ Mendelson-Prokofieva, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

Russian vocal 'Burnsiana'¹¹ is very diverse. It boasts several masterpieces – for example, the *Robert Burns Songs* (1955) of Georgy Sviridov,¹² preceded by the *Six Songs on Verses by British Poets*, Op. 62, by Sviridov's teacher, Dmitry Shostakovich, three of which are settings of Burns. And yet the two romances that complete the *Notebook of Lyrics* stand apart.

Myaskovsky makes no attempt to achieve a Scottish flavour. Without changing himself or his style by a single gesture, he heats up the emotional atmosphere with the swirling vortices of the fifth song ('My heart's in the Highlands') [5], and, in the finale ('My Bonnie Mary'), with its light/shadow contrast of dazzling G major and twilit G minor.

Myaskovsky's song-cycle *Romances on Verses by Mikhail Lermontov, Op. 40*, is one of the peaks of Russian vocal music in the first half of the twentieth century, and one of the best musical embodiments of the poems of the greatest Russian poet.¹³ According to Nikolai Peyko, Myaskovsky did not value Lermontov more highly than Pushkin, but preferred Lermontov 'exclusively on his inner affinity'.¹⁴

These twelve romances were composed within a month, from 24 December 1935 to 24 January 1936. Five of the twelve were performed for the first time on 28 May 1936, in Moscow, by Evgenia Romanova¹⁵ and Boleslav Yavorsky;¹⁶ and in 1939 several of them were recorded on a gramophone record by Elena Katulskaya.¹⁷

¹¹ Burns had the status almost of an adoptive national poet in the Soviet Union, thanks to the translations of Samuel Marshak (1887–1964). Marshak began his work in 1924, and by the 1950s 600,000 editions of Burns' poetry had been sold in the Soviet Union.

¹² Georgy Vassilyevich Sviridov (1915–98), one of the leading Russian composers of the twentieth century, a student of Dmitry Shostakovich. His *Robert Burns Songs* (1955) is one of his most frequently performed vocal compositions. It was recorded by Vassily Savenko, bass-baritone, and Alexander Blok, piano, on the album *Russian Settings of Robert Burns* (Tocatta Classics trcc 0039).

¹³ Mikhail Lermontov (1814–41), Russian poet, novelist and dramatist. The Lermontov family originated in Scotland, claiming ancestry from the semi-mythical bard-prophet Sir Thomas de Escildoun, also known as Thomas Learmont, and best remembered as Thomas the Rhymer (*fl.* c. 1220–98). Although he lived for fewer than 27 years (he died in a duel), Lermontov created a huge poetic world, without which it is impossible to imagine Russian literature and culture as a whole.

¹⁴ Reported during one of our conversations in 1994.

¹⁵ Evgenia Vassilyevna Romanova (1890–1992), singer, student of the famous teacher and soloist of the Imperial theatres, Maria Deisha-Sionitskaya, and wife of the outstanding physicist Vyacheslav Ilyich Romanov (1880–1954).

¹⁶ Boleslav Leopoldovich Yavorsky (1877–1942), famous Russian musicologist, composer and pianist, and a student of Taneyev.

¹⁷ Elena Klementyevna Katulskaya (1888–1966), a lyric coloratura soprano, one of the most famous Russian chamber and opera singers and a soloist of the Bolshoi Theatre of the USSR.

This extraordinary cycle is valuable, first of all, for the completeness and complexity of its musical development of Lermontov's poetry. Indeed, it is possible, that before Myaskovsky, Lermontov had never been comprehended in music in such a figuratively and poetically exhaustive way. All the generic prototypes used by the composer (from the elegy to the folksong) are poetically transformed here.

In the romance 'A Cossack Lullaby' (No. 1) [7] there is no hint of the copying of ethnographic examples. For all the simplicity of the compositional design, the melos of a long lullaby undergoes metamorphosis: the unchanging melodic line, repeated in each verse, expresses different feelings. The movement of the solo voice overcomes the barlines, creating the illusion that it is floating freely above the piano accompaniment. In general, in terms of the nobility of the tone, the elegance of the melodic pattern and the refinement of the harmonic language, this lullaby is much more aristocratic than 'Cossack'.¹⁸ Most Russians will be aware of the biographical subtext of the words:

I will send a holy image
'Gainst the foe with thee,
To it kneeling, dearest Being,
Pray with piety!

After Lermontov's death, only an icon given to him by his grandmother and a worn-out old Gospel were found among his modest personal belongings.

The poem 'Alone, I come to the road' (No. 2) [8] was written by Lermontov two months before his death. The text expresses the lyrical and philosophical outcome of the poet's short life and has been set to music by many composers.¹⁹ An 1861 romance with music by Elizaveta Shashina²⁰ gained the status of a folksong.²¹ Myaskovsky, of course,

¹⁸ In former times in the territory of modern Ukraine, Cossacks were part of the military-agricultural community of free settlers on the outskirts of the state, participating in the protection and expansion of state borders. The descendants of these settlers were soldiers of military units assembled from these peasants.

¹⁹ Among them are Peter Bulakhov, Konstantin Vilbova, Nikolai Khristianovich, Karl Davydov and Nikolai Ogarev.

²⁰ Elizaveta Sergeevna Shashina (1805-1903), singer and composer.

²¹ In the west, Shashina's romance on Lermontov's poems is known through a recording by Nicolai Gedda, the Swedish tenor who had Russian roots.

was well aware of Shashina's song, as well as of the many other musical embodiments of the poem, and uses it as some kind of 'folk' or 'stylistic' archetype, as he does with other poems in the cycle that had been repeatedly set to music before him. Lermontov's poem provides many opportunities for a purely illustrative musical response, but Myaskovsky considers Lermontov's numerous poetic symbols as an occasion for reflection; even a hint of the sentimental flavour that distinguishes most of the famous settings of this poem is excluded. The atmosphere of quiet, nocturnal excitement characteristic of the exposition and reprise, which in other sections of the composition unexpectedly increases or fades, is striking: the triplet movement in the piano part, coupled with the duplet cantilena of the voice, creates the effect of a dreamlike flow of time. Lydian intonations give a special flavour to the romance, producing a special shimmer in the tonal palette.

'No, it is not you I love so ardently...' (No. 3) [9] is an elegiac monologue, with the voice and piano suggesting orchestral colour. 'To a Portrait' (No. 4) [10] is an exquisite waltz with whimsical movement, although it manages to remain both elusive and gracefully noble. This precipitous 'portrait' is characterised by bright modulations that upset the tonal stability. The fast waltz transforms into a slow second section, and then organically recalls the initial whirling in the coda.

'The Sun' (No. 5) [11] is one of the simplest, shortest, most ascetic of the cycle in language, and yet highly imaginative in its use of colour, reminiscent of the musical laconicism of some of Schubert's songs. The real revelation comes in the last bar, when the last crotchet of the vocal line seems to dissolve in the tender and sad light of the surprising A minor chord.

'They loved each other...' (No. 6) [12] is another bright monologue, in which the timbre is much more chamber-like than in No. 3. In a kind of syncopated unfolding, strong expression is hidden – increasing, then subsiding – but never disappears. The pauses in the vocal part, which vary in length, are significant. With minimal means, the music achieves a kind of ecstatic state. Caesuras become invisible obstacles that do not slow down the steady progress, but are invariably overcome; and the vocal line remains melodious.

'In an Album' (No. 7) [13] is a kind of mobile barcarolle. Although the song is a miniature in the spirit of a small sketch, the composition sets its drama in relief. This effect is facilitated largely by the changing 'light-shadow' game, which alternately darkens and lightens the palette in major-minor aberrations.

'Romance' (No. 8) [14] significantly surpasses in musical terms the title Lermontov gave it. In fact, in Myaskovsky's version 'You are going to the battlefield' is a mournful ballade, reminiscent of some of the songs of Brahms, even of Hugo Wolf and Mahler. Myaskovsky's strophic form reflects the unusual structure of an eight-line poem based on three rhymes with a piercing refrain: 'Remember me'. Myaskovsky forms a musical period with an extended second sentence, where the first sentence spans three poetic lines and the second five. The mournful tone is achieved through the measured 'mourning' movement in the piano, with a characteristic dotted rhythm, the thickened, resonant bass in the piano and the overall tonal plan. In terms of internal tension and nobility of tone, it is one of the most striking pieces of the cycle.

'She sings... ' (No. 9) [15] is another 'female portrait', or rather, a sketch made as if with a single movement of a pencil. Though little more than a miniature outline, it shades and softens the gloomy colour of the previous song and prepares a serious change of genre.

'Don't cry, don't cry, my child...' (No. 10) [16] is, for Myaskovsky, a rare example of the oriental romance. Russian orientalism originated with Glinka and was developed by almost every major Russian composer up to Stravinsky, but Myaskovsky is very careful with this type of expression. He never had an inner need to speak in a stylised language; instead, paying tribute to the bright 'eastern' (more correctly, Caucasian) motifs of Lermontov, he very subtly and elegantly uses the symbolism of the designated genre without changing his own style at all.

'From an Album' (No. 11) [17] is the last 'elegiac sketch' of the cycle, where Myaskovsky reflects a certain spiritual longing, some kind of dreamlike discomfort.

'Forgive me! We will not meet again...' (No. 12) [18] is a lyrical finale in which elegiac elements and heartfelt excitement are expressed alternately. In the dramatic sense, the

finale does not close the circle but seems rather to break it, as if the poetic images, inspired by music, continue beyond the cycle.

Myaskovsky's **Violin Sonata in E minor, Op. 90**, was composed in the summer of 1946. On 30 June he noted in his diary:

Since the 13th I have been at Nikolina Gora. I worked hard: to my relief a piano with a moderator²² was despatched. [...] I have planned a Sonata for the violin. [...] 15 September - I finally arrived from my dacha. Worked hard again. I composed a violin sonata (in two movements, with variations) [...].²³

Myaskovsky was very demanding of himself, and often left his finished works to 'lie down' for some time in order to evaluate the results of his work with the benefit of hindsight. Three months later, on 8 December 1946, he wrote in his diary: 'Lamm's students [Viktor Dubrovsky and Vsevolod Petrushansky] played the violin sonata – many things have to be redone.'²⁴

On 27 February, a new entry appeared in the diary: 'I studied the violin sonata with D. F. Oistrakh. I've corrected a great deal, but I'm still dissatisfied with it. It is difficult, not fluid, and many things are not suitable.'²⁵ In its initial version, the Sonata was first performed in public on 29 April 1947. But Myaskovsky continued to refine it, and on 22 October 1947 he wrote in his diary: 'I finished the violin sonata – it seems that it has become decent.'²⁶ In 1948 the Sonata was published by the State Music Publishing House (Muzgiz). This recording presents, for the first time, the final version of the Sonata.

Myaskovsky never duplicated standard classical sonata form, nor was any form transferred from one composition to another as a kind of unified template. For all its classical clarity, the structure of the Sonata is unique.

²² The moderator is a felt bar that is inserted between hammers and strings when the middle pedal is depressed; the effect is to make the sound quieter and duller. It is sometimes called the muffler.

²³ Lamm, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

The first movement (*Allegro animato*) [19] of this organically fused diptych is a sonata-elegy, in which the vastness of the melody embodies the idea of instrumental singing. Myaskovsky is very strict in his technical requirements in this first movement, not only as to the constant flowing cantilena of the bow and complete rejection of *detaché* in the violin but also as to the melodious flexibility of the piano part. He does not abuse the high positions of the violin; instead, all attention is focused on the unity of the long-breathed melodic line, which gives an impression of infinite fluidity.

The second movement – a theme, twelve variations and coda [20] – expands the arsenal of expressive means. The use of the mute (in variations two and three) seems to facilitate the transition from total *legato* to the most diverse forms of *detaché*. The range is expansive, with distinctly different modes of expression in all of the variations. The vortices in variation five are very expressive, leading into the shaky trills of variation six. The juxtapositions of sparkling, short, quick bow movements and sonorous *pizzicato* chords in variation eight (*vivo*) are spectacular.

The imaginative euphoria of the finale (variation twelve) is truly breathtaking. The piano and the violin are equal to each other in virtuosity, both forming an indissoluble alloy. And even in the most brilliant virtuosic episodes of the Sonata, Myaskovsky does not for a moment lose the melodic control that is the emblem of his noble style.

Yuri Abdokov, PhD, born in 1967, was a student of Nikolai Peyko and Boris Tchaikovsky. On their initiative, he was invited in 1996 to teach at the Department of Composition at the Moscow Conservatoire, where he is currently a professor. As well as teaching individual classes in composition and orchestration, he is head of the course in History of Orchestral Styles for composers and operatic and symphonic conductors. He is also the supervisor of dissertation projects on the theory of composition, orchestral writing, musical theatre, conducting and pedagogy. Concurrently with his activities at the Conservatoire, from 2000 to 2007 he held the chair of composition at the Academy of Choral Art, and from 2001 to 2016 was a professor at the Moscow Academy of Choreography. He is Director of the international creative workshop 'Terra musica' (which takes place in Russia, Italy and Germany) and the author of over a hundred scientific papers on the theory, history and practice of orchestral writing and orchestral styles. He is also chairman of the Artistic Council of The Boris Tchaikovsky Society, chairman of the commission for the creative and literary heritage of Nikolai Peyko and the curator of Peyko's archive. He has composed a number of operas and ballets, as well as symphonic, chamber and vocal works.

The soprano **Tatiana Barsukova** graduated from The P. I. Tchaikovsky Conservatoire in Moscow in 2013, from the vocal class of Clara Kadinskaya, and has participated in master-classes given by Elizabeth Bice, Jan Latham-Koenig and Deborah York. She received a diploma at the international Competizione dell'Opera in Minsk in 2012, and became a laureate of the Nadezhda Obukhova All-Russian Competition of Vocalists in Lipetsk in 2014. At the Elena Obraztsova International Chamber Music Competition in Memory of Conchita Badía, in St Petersburg in 2014, she took the special prize for the best German Romantic Lied performance.

She has taken part in concerts in many halls in Moscow, including some in the Moscow Conservatoire, and has appeared as a soloist with such orchestras as the Russian State Symphony Orchestra 'Novaya Rossiya', with the conductor Cesario Costa, 'Russkaya Conservatoria' Chamber Capella, with the conductor Nikolay Khondzinsky, the Musica Viva Chamber Orchestra, the 'Soul of Russia' Folk Instruments Orchestra, the 'Blagovest' Ensemble of Sacred Music and the Pfeifer Ensemble of Ancient Music. Among her frequent concert partners are the pianist Natalia Bel'kova and the organist Margarita Es'kina. She makes her debut recording with this album.



The soprano **Elizaveta Pakhomova** graduated from the Maimonides Russian State Classical Academy in Moscow, from the class of Nadezhda Krasnaya (a soloist with the Bolshoi Theatre), in 2018. She is a laureate of many international voice competitions, among them the Leopold Mozart Ancient Music Competition in Moscow in 2015 and the 'Star Rhapsody' Competition in St Petersburg in 2016. She also received the diploma and the special prize at the Third Natalia Shpiller All-Russian competition of vocalists in Moscow in 2016 and the diploma at the Ninth International Vocal Competition in Astana, in Kazakhstan, in 2017. In 2021 she was the winner of the Boris Tchaikovsky Society International Award.

She has performed as a recitalist and as a soloist in Baroque music, singing in cantatas, oratorios and other pieces of sacred music, in many cities in Russia, and has also appeared in Turkey. This album is likewise her debut recording.



The violinist **Marina Dichenko** studied violin at the Central Music School in Kharkov, Ukraine, before continuing her studies at the Russian Academy of Music in Moscow under Halida Akhtiamova, Valentin Berlinsky and Leonid Blok. She is a prize-winner of chamber-music competitions in Donetsk, Ukraine, and the International Taneyev Chamber Music Competition in Russia. In 2014 she completed the Artist Diploma programme at Texas Christian University (TCU) School of Music in Fort Worth, Texas, where she was later a teaching artist in the Youth Music Program. In previous years she was principal violin in the TCU Symphony Orchestra, McKinney Philharmonic Orchestra and Odysseus Chamber Orchestra. She has performed in concerts and festivals in Ukraine, Russia, Belgium, Japan and the United States. She made her recording debut with an album of piano and chamber music by Boris Tchaikovsky on the Grand Piano label.



The pianist **Olga Solovieva** was born in Moscow into a non-musical family (the only professional musician was the singer Natalia Kurtener, the sister of Olga's grandmother). She graduated from the Russian Academy of Music in Moscow and took a postgraduate course as an assistant to Leonid Blok. Since 2004 she has been a professor at the Gnessin Musical College, and has given master-classes in Ireland and Belgium. She has been a prize-winner in the Russian Open Taneyev Chamber Music Competition in 1999, and a finalist at the 20th Chamber Music Competition in Trapani, Italy, in 2000. At the Twelfth International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow in 2002 she was awarded the 'Best Accompanist' prize. In 2010 she was the winner of the Boris Tchaikovsky Society Award.



She has performed in Russia and abroad (Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, Ireland and Lithuania), including such festivals as the West Cork Chamber Music Festival in Ireland and Raritäten von Klaviermusik in Husum, Germany; she has also played in some major venues, among them the Sala São Paulo (with the conductor Wagner Polistchuk), the Small Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire and the Moscow Kremlin. Her partners in chamber music have included The Vanbrugh Quartet, Vilnius String Quartet, the cellists Roel Dieltiens, Christopher Marwood and Alexander Rudin, the violinists Fanny Clamagirand, Haik Kazazyan and Tai Murray, the clarinetist Julian Bliss and the flautist William Dowdall.

Her discography consists of a number of recordings for Toccata Classics (with music by Boris Tchaikovsky, Herman Galynin and Vissarion Shebalin), as well as for such labels as Naxos, Grand Piano and Albany Records, and the complete piano music by Anatoly Lyadov (on four CDs from Northern Flowers). Her recordings have received nominations for the International Classical Music Awards (2019) and won silver medals in the Global Music Awards (2019 and 2020). In October 2019 she received three First Prizes (in three nominations) at the 'Pure Sound' International Award for the best audio recordings of Russian music (2019), as well as the Second Prize for her album of music of Vissarion Shebalin (TOCC 0327).

www.olga-solovieva.ru

Texts and Translations

Тетрадь лирики

Стихи Миры Мендельсон (№ 1-4)
и её переводы из Роберта Бёрнса (№ 5-6)

1 No. 1. Забуду ли тебя?

Забуду ли тебя? Ответ ты хочешь знать.
Забудет ли Сентябрь
багрец в листву ронять?
Забудет ли в лесу свирепствовать метель
И белый капюшон закидывать на ель?

Забудет ли поток весенних вольных вод
Сорвать с своей груди тяжёлый зимний
лёд?
Забудет ли Апрель прийти за Мартом
вслед?
Ты спрашивал меня: забуду или нет?

Notebook of Lyrics

English translations by Igor Prokhorov of texts
by Mira Mendelson (1-4), original poems by
Robert Burns (5-6)

No. 1. Will I forget you?

Will I forget you? You want to know the
answer.
Will September forget
to drop crimson into the foliage?
Will the blizzard forget to rage in the forest
And to throw a white hood over the spruce?

Will the stream of free waters in spring forget
To rip off the heavy winter ice from its chest?
Will April forget to follow March?
You asked me: will I forget or not?

2] No. 2. Как парус, что мелькнёт порою...

Как парус, что мелькнёт порою
Над вечной гладью синих вод,
Казалось, счастье стороною
У горизонта проплывёт.

И мы расстанемся чужими,
Доверив памяти своей
Непроизнесенное имя, непроизнесенное
имя,
И шелест лёгких тополей.

И увезём в далёкий город
Мечты обрывок голубой...
Не знали мы, что встанем скоро
Лицом к лицу с своей судьбой.

3] No. 3. День безоблачный апреля

День безоблачный апреля.
Я проснулась. Мне легко.
Счастья нашего качели
Мы подбросим высоко.

Мы взлетаем выше, выше,
Чтоб никто догнать не мог.
И мелькают только крыши
всех сомнений и тревог.

No. 2. Like a sail that flashes at times...

Like a sail that flashes at times
Over the eternal smooth surface of blue
waters,
Happiness seemed to be on the side
Somewhere on the horizon.

It seemed we will part as strangers,
Trusting an unspoken name,
And the rustle of poplars
To our memories.

It seemed we would take a piece
Of unattainable dream to a distant city...
But we didn't know that we would soon come
Face to face with our destiny.

No. 3. Cloudless April Day

Cloudless April day.
I wake up. I feel fine.
We will throw very high
The swing of our happiness.

We fly higher and higher,
So that no one can catch up with us.
And only the roofs of all doubts and worries
Are flickering.

4] No. 4. Как часто ночью...

Как часто ночью в час прилива
Неясных дум встречая сон
Мы проявляем негативы,
Где жизни бег запечатлён.

Так сквозь запыленный, забытый
Ряд мест и лиц, и встреч, и фраз
Встаёт он, августом залитый,
Любовью меченый Кавказ.

Пред нами мёртвой глыбой белой
Простёрто тело ледника.
Внизу по скалам неумело
Скользят и тают облака.

А мы идём всё выше, выше,
Туда, где солнце и простор,
Где только ветер, может, слышит
Сердце тревожный разговор.

И слов ронять совсем не надо
В такой тиши, в такой тиши.
Как хорошо по мосту взгляда
Проникнуть вдруг на дно души.

И здесь, почти что в самом небе,
Где горы сказ веков хранят,
Вдруг ощутить, что брошен жребий,
Что брошен жребий, а не взгляд.

No. 4. How often at night...

How often at night, at the hour of high tide,
We meet a dream of vague thoughts
And we develop the negative,
Where the run of life is captured.

Thus, through dusty and forgotten
Places, meetings, phrases
Marked with love and flooded with August,
The Caucasus rises.

The body of the glacier is stretched out before us
Like a dead block of white.
Clouds slide down clumsily
Onto the rocks, and melt.

And we go higher and higher,
Where there is sun and space,
Where only the wind can hear
The disturbing conversation of hearts.

And there's no need to drop words at all
In such silence, in such silence.
How good it is to suddenly penetrate
Into the depths of the soul with a single sight.

And here, almost in the sky itself,
Where mountains keep the tales of centuries,
Suddenly to feel that the lot is cast,
The lot is cast, and not the view.

5] No. 5. Моё сердце в горах

Моё сердце не здесь, моё сердце в горах;
На охоте за ланью, мелькнувшей в кустах;
Дикой ланью, стремящей к потоку свой бег,
Сердце рвётся к вершинам, окутанным в снег.

Цепи гор, вы прощайте; ты, север, прощай;
Покидаю отваги и доблести край;
Где бы я ни скитался, где бы я ни блуждал,
Я вершинам родным своё сердце отдал.

Вы прощайте, ряды серебристых вершин;
Вы прощайте, зелёные склоны долин;
Вы прощайте, потоки, бегущие с гор;
И приникший к обрыву темнеющий бор.

Моё сердце не здесь, моё сердце в горах;
На охоте за ланью, мелькнувшей в кустах;
Дикой ланью, стремящей к потоку свой бег,
Сердце рвётся к вершинам, окутанным в снег.

No. 5. My heart's in the Highlands

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild-deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild-deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

6] No. 6. Мери

Друзья, налейте мне вина,
 Вина серебряную чашу;
 Я осушу её до дна,
 За Мери, в час разлуки нашей.
 Неистов вод глубоких рёв;
 Швыряет пену вихрь на берег;
 Корабль к плаванью готов,
 И я покинуть должен Мери.

Пора, пора, трубач трубит,
 Знамёна к тучам ветер поднял:
 Я слышу клич кровавых битв,
 Туда мой путь лежит сегодня;
 Давно готов к сраженью я,
 Что ж медлю так покинуть берег!
 Налейте мне вина, друзья –
 Я чашу осушу за Мери!

*Романсы на слова М. Лермонтова***7] No. 1. Казачья колыбельная песня**

Спи, младенец мой прекрасный,
 Баюшки-баю.
 Тихо смотрит месяц ясный
 В колыбель твою.
 Стану сказывать я сказки,
 Песенку спою;
 Ты ж дремли, закрывши глазки,
 Баюшки-баю.

No. 6. My Bonnie Mary

Go, fetch to me a pint o' wine,
 And fill it in a silver tassie;
 That I may drink before I go,
 A service to my bonnie lassie.
 The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith;
 Fu' loud the wind blows frae the Ferry;
 The ship rides by the Berwick-law,
 And I maun leave my bonnie Mary.

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
 The glittering spears are ranked ready:
 The shouts o' war are heard afar,
 The battle closes deep and bloody;
 It's not the roar o' sea or shore,
 Wad mak me langer wish to tarry!
 Nor shouts o' war that's heard afar –
 It's leaving thee, my bonnie Mary!

*Romances on Verses by Mikhail Lermontov***No. 1. A Cossack Lullaby**

Slumber sweet, my fairest baby,
 Slumber calmly, sleep.
 Peaceful moonbeams light thy chamber
 In thy cradle creep.
 I will tell to thee a story,
 Pure as dewdrop glow;
 Close those two beloved eyelids,
 Lullaby, By-low.

По камням струится Терек,
Плещет мутный вал;
Злой чечен ползёт на берег,
Точит свой кинжал;
Но отец твой старый воин,
Закалён в бою:
Спи, малютка, будь спокоен,
Баюшки-баю.

Сам узнаешь, будет время,
Бранное житьё;
Смело вденешь ногу в стремя
И возьмёшь ружьё.
Я седельце боевое
Шёлком разошью...
Спи, дитя моё родное,
Баюшки-баю.

Богатырь ты будешь с виду
И казак душой.
Провожать тебя я выйду, –
Ты махнёшь рукой...
Сколько горьких слёз украдкой,
Я в ту ночь пролью!..
Спи, мой ангел, тихо, сладко,
Баюшки-баю.

List! The Terek o'er its pebbles
Blusters through the vale,
On its shores the little Khirgez
Whets his murderous blade;
Yet thy father grey in battle –
Guards thee, child of woe,
Safely rest thee in thy cradle,
Lullaby, By-low!

Grievous times will sure befall thee,
Danger, slaughterous fire –
Thou shalt on a charger gallop,
Curbing at desire;
And a saddle girth all silken
Sadly I will sew,
Slumber now my wide-eyed darling,
Lullaby, By-low!

When I see thee, my own Being,
As a Cossack true,
Must I only convoy give thee –
'Mother dear, adieu!'
Nightly in the empty chamber
Blinding tears will flow,
Sleep my angel, sweetest dear one,
Lullaby, By-low!

Стану я тоской томиться,
Безутешно ждать;
Стану целый день молиться,
По ночам гадать;
Стану думать, что скучаешь
Ты в чужом краю...
Спи ж, пока забот не знаешь,
Баюшки-баю.

Дам тебе я на дорогу
Образок святой:
Ты его, моляся богу,
Ставь перед собой;
Да готовься в бой опасный,
Помни мать свою...
Спи, младенец мой прекрасный,
Баюшки-баю.

8 **No. 2. Выхожу один я на дорогу**
Выхожу один я на дорогу;
Сквозь туман кремнистый путь блестит;
Ночь тиха. Пустыня внемлет богу,
И звезда с звездою говорит.

В небесах торжественно и чудно!
Спит земля в сиянье голубом...
Что же мне так больно и так трудно?
Жду ль чего? Жалею ли о чём?

Thy return I'll wait lamenting
As the days go by,
Ardent for thee praying, fearing
In the cards to spy.
I shall fancy thou wilt suffer,
As a stranger grow –
Sleep while yet thou nought regrettest,
Lullaby, By-low!

I will send a holy image
'Gainst the foe with thee,
To it kneeling, dearest Being,
Pray with piety!
Think of me in bloody battle,
Dearest child of woe,
Slumber soft within thy cradle,
Lullaby, By-low!

—translation by *Martha Gilbert Dickinson*
Bianchi

No. 2. Alone, I come to the road
Alone, I come to the road.
The stony track gleams in the mist:
the calm night listens to God,
and star is speaking to star.

All's marvellous, grave, in the sky!
Earth sleeps in the radiant blue...
Why such pain then, such weight on the heart?
Do I regret, wait for something new?

Уж не жду от жизни ничего я,
И не жаль мне прошлого ничуть;
Я ищу свободы и покоя!
Я б хотел забыться и заснуть!

Но не тем, не тем холодным сном могилы,
не сном могилы...
Я б желал навеки так заснуть,
Чтоб в груди дремали жизни силы,
Чтоб, дыша, вздымалась тихо грудь;

Чтоб всю ночь, весь день, мой слух лелея,
Про любовь мне сладкий голос пел,
Надо мной чтоб, вечно зеленея,
Тёмный дуб склонялся и шумел.

9] No. 3. Нет, не тебя так пылко я люблю...

Нет, не тебя так пылко я люблю,
Не для меня красоты твоей блистанье;
Люблю в тебе я прошлое страданье
И молодость погибшую мою.

Когда порой я на тебя смотрю,
В твои глаза вникая долгим взором:
Таинственным я занят разговором,
Но не с тобой я сердцем говорю.

I expect no more from this life
and I've no regrets for the past.
I look for freedom and peace:
I want rest and oblivion at last...

But not the chill peace of the grave:
I'd like to sleep for all time
so life's powers slept in my chest,
and it heaved with my gentle breath:

an enchanted voice in my ear
singing, day and night, of love:
and a dark oak to rustle over me,
and bend down from above.

—translation by A. S. Kline

No. 3. No, it is not you I love so ardently...

My love for you is not an ardent thing,
And I can take or leave your beauty's lustre:
In you I love past suffering's memories' muster,
The misspent youth to which I'd like to cling.

And when, betimes, I look upon your face,
On delving eyes in my preoccupation:
I'm having then a secret conversation,
For you are not my words of passion's chase.

Я говорю с подругой юных дней,
В твоих чертах ищу черты другие,
В устах живых - уста давно немые,
В глазах огонь угаснувших очей.

10 No. 4. К портрету

Как мальчик кудрявый, резва,
Нарядна, как бабочка летом;
Значенья пустого слова
В устах её полны приветом.

Ей нравиться долго нельзя:
Как цепь, ей несносна привычка,
Она ускользнёт, как змея,
Порхнёт и умчится, как птичка.

Таит молодое чело
По воле и радость, и горе.
В глазах, как на небе, светло,
В душе её тёмно, как в море!

То истиной дышит в ней всё,
То всё в ней притворно и ложно!
Понять невозможно её,
Зато не любить невозможно.

I'm talking to a love of younger days,
And in your face I'm other's features seeking,
The lips of one who's long since finished
speaking,

In eyes extinguished flame of other's gaze.

—translation by Rupert Moreton

No. 4. To a Portrait

A tomboy, she's curly and brisk,
A bright butterfly as in summer.
The meaningless words from her lips
Are full of a genuine glamour.

You can be her king for a day,
She can't bear the shackles of habits.
She'll slip out at once as a snake,
Take wing and be off as a parrot.

The innocent brow of hers
Conceals now joy now sorrow.
Her eyes are the bright sky 'bove earth,
Her soul's dark like the sea water!

Now all in her breathes the truth,
Now she's a deceitful pretender!
You can't understand her in sooth,
She can't help being high in your favour.

—translation by Andrew Alexandre Owie

11 **№ 5. Солнце**

Как солнце зимнее прекрасно,
Когда бродя меж серых туч,
На белые снега напрасно
Оно кидает слабый луч!

Так точно, дева молодая,
Твой образ предо мной блестит;
Но взор твой, счастье обещаая,
Мою ли душу оживит?

12 **№ 6. Они любили друг друга...**

Они любили друг друга так долго и нежно,
С тоскою глубокой и страстью безумно-
мятежной!
Но, как враги, избегали признанья и встречи,
И были пусты и хладны их краткие речи.

Они расставались в безмолвном и гордом
страданье,
И милый образ во сне лишь порою видали.
И смерть пришла: наступило за гробом
свиданье...
Но в мире новом друг друга они не
узнали.

No. 5. The Sun

The winter sun is so beautiful,
When it roams among the grey clouds,
And in vain throws a faint ray
On the white snows!

Young maiden, your image
Shines before me like that sun,
Your gaze promises me happiness,
But will it revive my soul?

—translation by Igor Prokhorov

No. 6. They loved each other...

They loved each other, yet neither
Owned to his love for the other;
Their bearing was cold and unfriendly
And yet they adored each other.

They parted at last and never met
Except in dreamland at night
And now they're dead and never
Can read their hearts aright.

—translation by Maude Valérie White

13 No. 7. В альбом

Как одинокая гробница
Вниманье путника зовёт,
Так эта бледная страница
Пусть милый взор твой привлечёт.

И если, после многих лет,
Прочтёшь ты, как мечтал поэт,
И вспомнишь, как тебя любил он,
То думай, что его уж нет,
Что сердце здесь похоронил он.

14 No. 8. Романс

Ты идёшь на поле битвы,
Но услышь мои молитвы,
Вспомни обо мне.
Если друг тебя обманет,
Если сердце жить устанет,
И душа твоя увянет,
В дальней стороне
Вспомни обо мне.

Если кто тебе укажет
На могилу и расскажет
При ночном огне
О девице обольщенной,
Позабывтой и презренной,
О тогда, мой друг бесценный,
Ты в чужой стране
Вспомни обо мне.

In an Album¹

As o'er the cold sepulchral stone
Some name arrests the passer-by;
Thus, when thou view'st this page alone,
May mine attract thy pensive eye!

And when by thee that name is read,
Perchance in some succeeding year,
Reflect on me as on the dead,
And think my heart is buried here.

—Byron

No. 8. Romance

You go to the battlefield,
But hear my prayers,
Remember me.
If a friend deceives you,
If the heart gets tired of living,
And your soul will fade,
On the far side
Remember me.

If someone points you
To the grave and tells you,
Under the night fire,
About the seduced,
Forgotten and despicable girl,
Oh, then, my invaluable friend,
Being in an alien country
Remember me.

¹ Lermontov's version is a free translation of Byron's poem.

Время прежнее, быть может,
Посетит тебя, встревожит
В мрачном, тяжком сне;
Ты услышишь плач разлуки,
Песнь любви и вопли муки
Иль подобные им звуки...
О, хотя во сне
Вспомни обо мне!

[15] No. 9. Она поёт...

Она поёт – и звуки тают,
Как поцелуи на устах,
Глядит – и небеса играют
В её божественных глазах;

Идёт ли – все её движенья,
Иль молвит слово – все черты
Так полны чувства, выраженья,
Так полны дивной простоты.

[16] No. 10. Не плачь, не плачь, моё дитя...

Не плачь, не плачь, моё дитя,
Не стоит он безумной муки.
Верь, он ласкал тебя шутя,
Верь, он любил тебя от скуки!
И мало ль в Грузии у нас
Прекрасных юношей найдётся?
Быстрой огонь их чёрных глаз,
И чёрный ус их лучше вьётся!

Maybe the old times
Will come to you, will alarm you
In a dark, heavy dream;
You will hear a cry of separation,
A song of love and a scream of anguish
Or sounds like those...
Oh, though in a dream
Remember me!

—translation by Igor Prokhorov

No. 9. She sings...

She sings, and the sounds melt away
Like kisses on the lips,
She looks – and the heavens play
In her divine eyes;

She goes – all her movements,
Or she speaks – all her features
Are so full of feeling and expression,
So full of wondrous simplicity.

—translation by Igor Prokhorov

No. 10. Don't cry, don't cry, my child...

Don't cry, don't cry, my child!
He isn't worthy of your distress.
Believe, he caressed you just for fun,
Believe, he loved you out of boredom!
There are many lovely young men
In our Georgia,
Their eyes are aflame with more fire,
Their moustaches are black and curly!

Из дальней, чуждой стороны
Он к нам заброшен был судьбою;
Он ищет славы и войны –
И что ж он мог найти с тобою?
Тебя он золотом дарил,
Клялся, что вечно не изменит,
Он ласки дорого ценил,
Но слёз твоих он не оценит!

17 No. 11. Из альбома

Любил и я в былые годы,
В невинности души моей,
И бури шумные природы,
И бури тайные страстей.

Но красоты их безобразной
Я скоро таинство постиг,
И мне наскучил их несвязный
И оглушающий язык.

Люблю я больше год от году,
Желаньям мирным дав простор,
Попутру ясную погоду,
Под вечер тихий разговор.

He was thrown here by chance
From a far, alien country;
He`s looking for glory and for war.
What could he find with you?
He presented you with gold
And swore that he`d be faithful forever.
He valued your love a lot,
But he will not value your tears!

—translation by Igor Prokhorov

No. 11. From an Album

In the old days my soul was innocent,
And in those old days I loved
The storms of noisy nature,
And the secret storms of passions.

But soon I learned the secrets
Of their ugly beauty,
And I got bored with their incoherent
And deafening language.

And now - more from year to year -
I give the freedom for my peaceful desires,
I like clear weather in the morning
I like quiet conversation in the evening.

—translation by Igor Prokhorov

18 No. 12. Прости! – мы не встретимся боле...

Прости! – мы не встретимся боле,
Друг другу руки не пожмём;
Прости! – твоё сердце на воле...
Но счастья не сыщёт в другом.
Я знаю: с порывом страданья
Опять затрепещет оно,
Когда ты услышишь название
Того, кто погиб так давно!

Есть звуки – значенье ничтожно
И презрено гордой толпой,
Но их позабыть невозможно:
Как жизнь, они слиты с душой;
Как в гробе, зарыто былое
На дне этих звуков святых;
И в мире поймут их лишь двое,
И двое лишь вздрогнут от них!

Мгновение вместе мы были,
Но вечность – ничто перед ним;
Все чувства мы вдруг истощили,
Сожгли поцелуем одним.
Прости! – не жалея безрассудно,
О краткой любви не жалея:
Расстаться казалось нам трудно,
Но встретиться было б трудней!

No. 12. Forgive me! We will not meet again...

Forgive me! We shall not meet again,
We shall not shake hands again;
Forgive me! Your heart is free,
But it will not find happiness in another.
I know that with sudden suffering
It will tremble again,
When you hear the name
Of him who died so long ago!

There are sounds that mean nothing,
Sounds despised by the crowd;
But they are impossible to forget,
For as in life they are entwined with the soul.
As in a coffin, the past is buried
In the depth of those holy sounds;
Only two in the whole world will understand
them,
And only two will shudder at them!

We were together but a moment,
But eternity is nothing before it;
We exhausted all our feelings all at once,
We burned them with a single kiss;
Forgive me! Don't feel reckless regret,
Don't regret our short-lived love:
It seemed difficult to say farewell,
But 'twould be far more difficult to meet again!

—translation by Igor Prokhorov



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NIKOLAY MYASKOVSKY Vocal Works, Volume One

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| <i>Notebook of Lyrics, Op. 72</i> (1946)* | 16:44 |
| Poems by Mira Mendelson | |
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| 2 II Like a sail that flashes at times... | 1:29 |
| 3 III Cloudless April Day | 2:21 |
| 4 IV How often at night... | 4:47 |
| Two settings of Robert Burns translated by Mira Mendelson | |
| 5 V My heart's in the Highlands | 3:04 |
| 6 VI My Bonnie Mary | 3:10 |
| <i>Romances on Verses by Mikhail Lermontov, Op. 40</i> (1935–36)* | 31:08 |
| 7 I A Cossack Lullaby | 5:23 |
| 8 II Alone, I come to the road... | 3:20 |
| 9 III No, it is not you I love so ardently... | 2:05 |
| 10 IV To a Portrait | 1:44 |
| 11 V The Sun | 1:37 |
| 12 VI They loved each other... | 2:10 |
| 13 VII In an Album | 1:28 |
| 14 VIII Romance | 2:40 |
| 15 IX She sings... | 1:07 |
| 16 X Don't cry, don't cry, my child... | 2:58 |
| 17 XI From an Album | 1:54 |
| 18 XII Forgive me! We will not meet again... | 4:42 |
| Violin Sonata in F major, Op. 70 (1946–47)** | 20:31 |
| 19 I <i>Allegro animato</i> | 8:41 |
| 20 II Theme (<i>Andante con moto e molto cantabile</i>), Twelve Variations and Coda | 11:50 |

Tatiana Barsukova, soprano 1–6

Elizaveta Pakhomova, soprano 7–18

Marina Dichenko, violin 19–20

Olga Solovieva, piano

TT 68:27

*FIRST RECORDINGS

**FIRST RECORDING OF THIS VERSION