



SPHINX
СФИНКС

Hamish McLaren, *countertenor*
Matthew Jorysz, *piano*



ORCHID CLASSICS

SPHINX СФИНКС

Boris Tchaikovsky (1925-1996)

From Kipling

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 1 | The Distant Amazon | 3.13 |
| 2 | Homer | 4.22 |

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Two Romances to Poems by Lermontov, Op.84

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|------|
| 3 | II Morning in the Caucasus | 3.16 |
| 4 | I Ballad | 6.20 |

Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 5 | My songs are full of poison | 1.14 |
| 6 | For the distant shores of your native country | 4.06 |

Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915)

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 7 | Five Romances to poems by Y. Polonsky:
A Night in the Scottish Highlands, Op.33 No.1 | 3.41 |
| 8 | Ten Poems from Ellis' Collection "Immortals":
Stalactites, Op.26 No.8 | 4.23 |

Boris Tchaikovsky

Two Poems by Lermontov

- | | | |
|----|----------|------|
| 9 | Autumn | 2.30 |
| 10 | The Pine | 2.03 |

Nikolai Myaskovsky (1881-1950)

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 11 | Twelve Songs by Bal'mont: The Albatross, Op.2 No.8* | 3.31 |
|----|---|------|

Dmitri Shostakovich

Spanish Songs, Op.100

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|------|
| 12 | I Farewell, Granada! | 3.10 |
|----|----------------------|------|

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|------|
| 13 | II The Little Stars | 2.00 |
| 14 | III The First Meeting | 3.53 |
| 15 | IV Ronda | 1.57 |
| 16 | V The Dark-Eyed Girl | 2.48 |
| 17 | VI Dream (Barcarolle) | 2.36 |
| 18 | Desdemona's Romance (Willow Song)* | 4.14 |
| 19 | A pointless gift, a chance gift* | 2.51 |

Elena Firsova (b.1950)

Two Songs to Poems by Boris Pasternak

- | | | |
|----|-----------|------|
| 20 | The Wind* | 2.20 |
| 21 | Twilight* | 2.28 |

Nikolai Myaskovsky

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 22 | Twelve Songs by Bal'mont: The Sphinx, Op.2 No.11* | 4.40 |
|----|---|------|

Elena Firsova

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|------|
| 23 | Winter Elegy, Op.91* | 4.51 |
|----|----------------------|------|

Total time

76.31

*World Premiere Recording

Hamish McLaren, *countertenor*

Matthew Jorysz, *piano*

Nathalie Green-Buckley, *viola*

Claudia Fuller, *violin*

Ben Michaels, *cello*

Russia's rich tradition of art song was rooted in the genteel drawing-room and salon culture of the early 19th century. Gradually these modest lyrical "romances" set their sights higher to embrace dramatic and philosophical themes, but never lost their intimacy and their ties to the treasured lines of favourite poets. This selection explores some fascinating, but less-trodden paths through this repertoire, inspired principally by the theme of distant lands. Dreams of travel, romantic landscapes, love and loss, and ruminations on life and death – these motifs appeared at the height of Imperial Russia, and their appeal endured even amidst the paroxysms of Stalin's rule. In this recital, Alexander Borodin (1833-1887), a celebrated chemistry professor and part-time composer from St Petersburg meets Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915), a formidable Moscow professor of composition from the next generation; Dmitry Shostakovich (1906-1975) stands alongside another major symphonist, his Moscow colleague Nikolai Myaskovsky (1881-1950), and Shostakovich's student Boris Tchaikovsky (1925-1996), a prodigy widely known for his film music, passes the baton to Elena Firsova, a post-Soviet émigré to England and a distinctive lyrical voice of today.

Boris Tchaikovsky's two romances *From Kipling* (1994) are among his last pieces – he had planned a full song cycle but did not live to complete the project. The texts may be humorous, but Tchaikovsky's settings lend them a thoughtful and melancholy colouring, prompting us to look for other possible meanings. The text of the **The Distant Amazon** was already well known to the Soviet public thanks to Samuil Marshak's catchy translation which had been set as a jolly little ditty with great popular appeal. The ditty appealed to the keen thirst for travel to distant lands prevalent among Soviet citizens, even if the prospects of quenching that thirst were zero for most of them, and so the poem had already acquired a bitter-sweet flavour. In Tchaikovsky's affecting duet between the voice and solo viola we may also sense the narrowing of options as we move towards the end of our lives. The song **Homer** has an even more personal ring to it as it describes a poet (or the composer) who can only retell old tales, but manages to do

so in an amusing manner, so much so that the public is content. Transparent harmonics in the viola are used to evoke a mysterious and distant past, while also inviting us to take the song in earnest, perhaps even as an artistic credo.

Dmitri Shostakovich's music of the early 1950s divides sharply into public and private works: in those dark, paranoid years of late Stalinism it was prudent to release only those pieces that were optimistic and easy on the ear. These two settings of texts by Lermontov belonged emphatically to the "private" category. In both songs Shostakovich engages with the traditions of 19th century art song on his own terms. The general shapes of musical phrases and textures may look reassuringly familiar on the page – like the piano accompaniment in the **Ballad** which seems to depict the waves – but the harmony is elusive and ever-shifting, while the atmosphere is decidedly morose. **Morning in the Caucasus** is a shade brighter, but it refuses to settle on the main major chord for more than a fleeting moment. If Shostakovich had given these songs a premiere at the time, the critics would have castigated him for indulging again in artistic "formalism". In the event, the songs were left unpublished until they were found among Shostakovich's papers after his death.

These two songs by Alexander Borodin became instant Russian musical classics as soon as he had written them. The prolific critic Vladimir Stasov steered the "Mighty Handful" group of composers towards original national art, and he was wildly enthusiastic on hearing these songs. Borodin's admiration for Robert Schumann can be detected in both, but he has absorbed and personalised the older composer's language. The bitterness of Heine's text elicits a striking harmonic turn in the middle of **My Songs are Full of Poison** (1868), a pivot which abruptly removes the song from the genre of Russian domestic or salon songs. In **For the Distant Shores** (1881), a Pushkin setting, Borodin masterfully conveys the poem's burning sense of loss. The vocal line is austere at times, as if choking back tears, but the piano colours it with myriad shades of emotion subtly implying what we are not explicitly told in the words.

Sergei Taneyev belongs to the following generation of Russian composers and takes the art of Russian song to a further level of sophistication. Yakov Polonsky's poem **A Night in the Scottish Highlands** portrays an enigmatic landscape full of mysterious echoes, echoes which Taneyev enhances with vivid word painting. The piano imitates the sweet plucking of a lute, or the brazen vigour of a horn call, and in one passage it even manages to convey the image of rocks tumbling over a precipice. Beyond these vivid pictorial elements, the music, striving and nearly ecstatic, is powerfully persuasive on its own terms. By contrast, the grief of **Stalactites** seems to take Borodin's "Distant Shores" a step further. The stalactites, symbolising eternal "frozen" tears, are represented in the piano part through a repeated chordal figure, ever present and always gently falling. The vocal part presents a contrasting melody and at times both the musicians fall into the gravitational pull of one recurring motive. The ever-changing combinations of melodic elements remind us that Taneyev was the foremost master of counterpoint in his time, and he could work out these complexities with the art that conceals art.

We return to Boris Tchaikovsky, and a selection of his Lermontov settings. Tchaikovsky approaches this poet in a vastly different manner to Shostakovich, and he sets the words in a fluent, melodic manner that reflects the sing-song style of the verses, particularly in **Autumn**. These songs are the work of a young prodigy still searching for a personal voice at the age of fifteen. **The Pine** is one of Lermontov's most celebrated poems and it had been set by many composers in the past. This daunting artistic precedent spurred Tchaikovsky to bolder invention, and he plays deftly with shifting musical metres, producing a song that is both distinctive and delightful, earning a secure place among the other settings of the poem.

Nikolai Myaskovsky's **Albatross** comes from his youthful collection of songs on the words by Konstantin Balmont. Balmont was a Symbolist poet, but he held back from the more extreme opacity of the movement. This made him a Symbolist congenial to composers, who could approach his imagery with confidence. Myaskovsky captures the rhythm of the gently rocking ocean waves in the piano part, while the albatross soars and glides in the rising phrases of the voice. It is a mesmerising landscape, unveiled through hauntingly gloomy harmonies. But change is afoot: as the poet finds power and freedom in solitude, the mood brightens and intensifies. It is tempting to see the song as a reflection of Myaskovsky's own doleful and hermetic character.

If Shostakovich's **Spanish Songs** seem to lack any of the composer's characteristics, there is a simple reason for that: they are essentially arrangements of Spanish melodies he was given by the contralto Zara Dolukhanova. She had recently been one of the performers in the premiere of Shostakovich's *From Jewish Folk Poetry*, and she most likely expected the composer to do something equally idiosyncratic with the Spanish material. But his treatment of the songs was self-effacing, with a lightly scored and sympathetic piano accompaniment. Dolukhanova premiered them with Shostakovich, but lost interest in them afterwards. Many other singers, however, were delighted with the songs and the Soviet critics were pleased that Shostakovich had produced such simple and accessible "people's music". If anything, we can detect Shostakovich in the economy of the writing, where other composers preferred to treat Spanish themes in a lush and extravagant manner.

The next two songs by Shostakovich were only discovered recently. These were off cuts from the score for the film *Belinsky* (1950) by the distinguished director Grigory Kozintsev. **A Pointless Gift** is a pastiche of early 19th century drawing-room songs, while **Desdemona's Romance** is more individual (and quite possibly

stemmed from an abandoned project of incidental music for *Othello*). It is hard to imagine that anyone could deride this song as “formalist gimmickry”, but that was the phrase used when the materials for the film were presented to the Ministry of Cinematography. At this point, Shostakovich was still under the cloud of being denounced for the complexity of his music two years earlier, so such a complaint meant that the composer was in no position to defend the song, and it was cut.

Elena Firsova made her name in the closing years of the Soviet Union, but she has lived and worked in Britain since the early 1990s. She is represented here by her settings of two contrasting poems by Boris Pasternak. The first of these, **The Wind** comes from the novel *Doctor Zhivago*, where it appears as if it is the work of the protagonist. It is a greeting to the beloved from beyond the grave, simple and stark, and Firsova responds to this simplicity by using that traditional musical symbol of death, the medieval chant *Dies irae*. **Twilight** comes from 1909, at the beginning of Pasternak's career, and it belongs firmly to the Symbolist movement that dominated Russian literature at the time. Its meaning is quite opaque, although some medieval references may remind us of scenes from a pre-Raphaelite painting, and the poem's beauty lies in the music of its alliterations. To match these delicate word patterns, Firsova provides equally enticing and refined harmonies and has the singer deliver the lines in a declamatory fashion, closely following their shifting poetic rhythms and matching the intensity of the music to the poetic images.

Balmont's poem **Sphinx**, set by Myaskovsky, takes a Symbolist theme from ancient Egypt but concentrates concretely on the grandiosity of the immense sculpture and the cruel treatment of the slaves who toiled to build it, leaving a record of their suffering that has endured for over four thousand years. The song starts with enigmatic music drawn from Russian portrayals of the supernatural and continues as a darkly dramatic monologue.

The final track is Firsova's **Winter Elegy** (for countertenor and string trio), a song bordering on a solo cantata. It is a setting of one of Pushkin's most famous poems, loved by generations of Russians for its mixture of philosophy and lyricism, with a touch of wry humour. Firsova's deft word-painting follows the progress of the poem sympathetically, resolving in the sweetly pained ethereal sounds that seem to grant the poet his desire to escape.

Professor Marina Frolova-Walker FBA

Hamish McLaren

Countertenor

Hamish studied history at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he also sang as a choral scholar. From 2016 to 2019 he studied vocal performance at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Hamish developed a passion for Russian culture as a teenager and studied Russian while at school. One of his first opera roles at university was – incongruously enough – as the petulant social climbing Vava in Shostakovich's hilarious operetta *Cheryomushki Moskva*. While at music college Hamish was fortunate enough to be taught Russian song by Ludmilla Andrew, and it was in the library of the Royal Academy of Music that Hamish first encountered the songs of Taneyev, Myaskovsky, and Firsova. Exhilarated by these songs, Hamish travelled to Russia in the summer of 2018, and there he combed through music shops from St Petersburg, to Moscow, and onto remote Irkutsk in Siberia. Many of the songs featured on this CD were brought back from this trip, including the two hitherto unrecorded film songs by Shostakovich.

Upon graduating from the Royal Academy of Music Hamish has launched a career as a freelance singer. He has toured South America, Europe and Russia with the Monteverdi Choir under the baton of John Eliot Gardiner, and he has performed on stage for British Youth Opera, the Royal Academy of Opera and Hampstead Garden Opera amongst others. Future engagements include performances for Opera Settecento and English Touring Opera.

Ben Durrant





Taylor Poenicke



Jo Russell

Matthew Jorysz

Piano

Matthew Jorysz studied at Clare College, Cambridge, where he read music and held the Organ Scholarship. After graduating, he moved to London where he has held the post of Assistant Organist at Westminster Abbey since 2016. His work as an organist has seen tours of Europe and the USA, broadcasts on BBC Radio and television and several recordings, most notably of Duruflé's *Requiem* with Neal Davies and Jennifer Johnston.

Alongside this, he works as a pianist and chamber musician, chiefly collaborating with singers. Recent projects have included performances of Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin*, Messiaen's *Poèmes pour Mi*, Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, Britten's *Winter Words* and a series of Britten's *Canticles* performed at Westminster Abbey.

Nathalie Green-Buckley

Viola

Nathalie, 25, gained her Masters with DipRAM from the Royal Academy of Music in July 2018 where she studied the viola with Martin Outram. Having been principal viola of the National Youth Orchestra, Nathalie went on to pursue further orchestral playing whilst she read Music at the University of Cambridge and was a player on the London Symphony Orchestra String Experience Scheme, performing with the orchestra a number of times. Nathalie also spent two months with the Glyndebourne Tour Orchestra in the 2018 season as part of its 'Pit Perfect' Scheme. In 2018 Nathalie performed Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* with the Magna Sinfonia.

Chamber music is another passion; as a member of the Halcyon Quartet, formed in 2012 by four students at the Royal Academy of Music, Nathalie has performed with the quartet twice at St. Peter's Eaton Square, at the Royal Opera House and in the 2018 Bermuda Music Festival. The quartet is currently the ensemble-in-residence at Holy Sepulchre London and recently launched an online concert series.

1. From Kipling: The distant Amazon (1994)

На далёкой Амазонке
Не бывал я никогда.
Только «Дон» и «Магдалина» -
Быстроходные суда, -
Только «Дон» и «Магдалина»
Ходят по морю туда.

Из Ливерпульской гавани
Всегда по четвергам
Суда уходят в плаванье
К далёким берегам.

Плывут они в Бразилию,
Бразилию,
Бразилию,
И я хочу в Бразилию,
К далёким берегам!

Никогда вы не найдёте
В наших северных лесах
Длиннохвостых ягуаров,
Броненосных черепах.

Но в солнечной Бразилии,
Бразилии моей,
Такое изобилие
Невиданных зверей!

Увижу ли Бразилию,
Бразилию,
Бразилию?
Увижу ли Бразилию
До старости моей?

I've never been.
To the distant Amazon
Only the Don and the Magdalina,
Fast cutters,
Only the Don and the Magdalina
Go there, across the sea.

From the Port of Liverpool
Every Thursday
The ships set sail
For distant shores.

They sail to Brazil,
Brazil,
Brazil,
Well I'd like to go to Brazil,
To distant shores!

You'll never discover
In our northern forests
Long-tailed jaguars
And armadillo turtles.

But in sunny Brazil,
My Brazil,
There's such a wealth
Of unknown animals!

Will I get to see Brazil,
Brazil,
Brazil?
Will I see Brazil
Before I grow old?

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936): 'I've never sailed the Amazon' (in the Just So Stories, published 1902), translated into Russian by Samuil Marshak (1887-1964).

2. From Kipling: Homer (1994)

Гомер все легенды на свете знал,
И всё подходящее из старья
Он, не церемонясь, перенимал,
Но с блеском, - и так же делаю я.

А девки с базара да люд простой
И все знатоки из морской братвы
Смекали: новинки-то с бородой, -
Но слушали тихо - так же, как вы.

Гомер был уверен: не попрекнут
За это при встрече возле корчмы,
А разве что дружески подмигнут,
И он подмигнёт - ну так же, как мы.

Homer knew all the legends around,
And all the useful flotsam
He grabbed without much ado,
But with a twinkle - just like me.

And the girls from the bazaar, simple people
And all the connoisseurs among the sea folk
Realised: here was some sort of novelty-in-a-beard,-
But they listened quietly, just like you did.

Homer was sure: he wouldn't be chided for this
At his meeting by the tavern,
And was that a friendly wink,
For he did wink - well, just like us.

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936): 'Homer' (in the Just So Stories, published 1902), translated into Russian by Alexander Shcherbakov (1932-1994).

3. Two Romances to Poems by Lermontov: Morning in the Caucasus, Op.84 No.2 (1950)

Утро на Кавказе

Светает — вьётся дикой пеленой
Вокруг лесистых гор туман ночной;
Ещё у ног Кавказа тишина;
Молчит табун, река журчит одна.
Вот на скале новорождённый луч
Зарделся вдруг, прорезавшись меж туч,
И розовый по речке и шатрам
Разлился блеск, и светит там и там:
Так девушки, купаясь в тени,
Когда увидят юношу они,
Краснеют все, к земле склоняют взор:
Но как бежать, коль близок милый вор!..

Morning in the Caucasus

It is growing light - the night fog threads
A wild veil around the wooded mountains.
It is still silent at the foot of the Caucasus;
The herd is quiet, only a river murmurs.
Here on the cliff a fresh ray cuts through the clouds,
Blushing all of a sudden,
And pink light spills across the river and the tents,
It shines here and there.
It's just like when girls bathing in the shade
See a young man.
They all blush and look to the ground,
But how to run away, when a gentle thief's close by!

Lermontov (written 1830, published 1889)

4. Two Romances to Poems by Lermontov: Ballad, Op.84 No.1 (1950)

Баллада

Над морем красавица-дева сидит;
И, к другу ласкаясь, так говорит:
«Достань ожерелье, спустился на дно;
Сегодня в пучину упало оно!
Ты этим докажешь свою мне любовь!»
Вскипела лихая у юноши кровь,
И ум его обнял невольный недуг,
Он в пенную бездну кидается вдруг.
Из бездны перловые брызги летят,
И волны теснятся, и мчатся назад,
И снова приходят и о берег бьют,
Вот милого друга они принесут.
О счастье! он жив, он скалу ухватил,
В руке ожерелье, но мрачен как был.
Он верить боится усталым ногам,
И влажные кудри бегут по плечам...
«Скажи, не люблю иль люблю я тебя,
Для перлов прекрасной и жизнь не щадя,
По слову спустился на чёрное дно,
В коралловом гроте лежало оно.
Возьми!» — и печальный он взор устремил
На то, что дороже он жизни любил.
Ответ был: «О милый, о юноша мой!
Достань, если любишь, коралл дорогой».
С душой безнадежной младой удалец
Прыгнул, чтоб найти иль коралл, иль конец.
Из бездны перловые брызги летят,
И волны теснятся, и мчатся назад,
И снова приходят и о берег бьют,
Но милого друга они не несут.

Ballad

A beautiful maiden sits by the sea,
And says to her friend, tenderly:
“Fetch my necklace, go down to the bottom;
It fell into the abyss today!
Thus will you prove your love to me!”
The youth's valiant blood boiled;
His mind was touched by an unwitting sickness
And he suddenly dived into the foamy depths.
From the abyss pearly spray flies,
And the waves cluster and race back,
And return and beat against the shore.
Then they bring back the dear friend.
Oh joy! He's alive, he's caught hold of the cliff,
The necklace in his hand, but how gloomy he is.
He's afraid to trust his exhausted legs,
And his wet locks run down his shoulders...
“Tell me if I love you or not,
For didn't I risk my life for these fine pearls?
At your word I dived to the dark sea bed;
In a coral grotto they were lying.
Take them!” And sorrowfully he laid eyes
Upon her whom he loved more than his life.
The answer was: “Oh my dear, oh my young one!
If you love me, fetch the precious cord!”
With a hopeless soul, the young hero
Dives to find either coral or his end.
From the abyss pearly spray flies,
And the waves cluster and race back.
They return and beat against the shore,
But the dear friend they do not bring.

Lermontov, translated in 1829 from Schiller's *Der Taucher* (The Diver) and *Der Handschuh* (The Glove), both written in 1797.

5. My songs are full of poison (composed 1868, published 1870)

Отравой полны мои песни -
И может ли иначе бытть?
Ты, милая, гибельным ядом
Сумела мне жизнь отравить.

Отравой полны мои песни -
И может ли иначе быть?
Немало змей в сердце ношу я
И должен тебя в нём носить!

My songs are full of poison -
And how could it be otherwise?
You, my sweet, with deadly venom
Have succeeded in poisoning my life.

My songs are full of poison -
And how could it be otherwise?
I carry a lot of snakes in my heart
And I have to carry you in it!

Translated by L. A. Mei (1858), after Heine's Vergiftet sind meine Lieder...

6. For the distant shores of your native country (composed 1881, on the death of Mussorgsky)

Для берегов отчизны дальней
Ты покидала край чужой;
В час незабвенный, в час печальный
Я долго плакал пред тобой.

Мои хладеющие руки
Тебя старались удержать;
Томленья страшного разлуки
Мой стон молил не прерывать.

Но ты от горького лобзанья
Свои уста оторвала;
Из края мрачного изгнанья
Ты в край иной меня звала.

Ты говорила: «В день свиданья,
Под небом вечно голубым,
В тени олив любви лобзанья
Мы вновь, мой друг, соединим.»

Bound for the distant shores of your native
country,
You left this foreign land;
At that unforgettable hour, that miserable hour,
I wept before you for a long time.

Growing ever colder, my hands tried
To hold you back,
My groans begged you not to interrupt
My yearning at this terrible separation.

But you tore your lips free
From that bitter kiss;
From a land of gloomy exile
You called me towards a different realm.

You said "On the day we meet,
Under an eternally blue sky
In the shade of the olive trees, with a loving
embrace
We'll be reunited once again."

Но там, увы, где неба своды
Сияют в блеске голубом,
Где под скалами дремлют воды,
Заснула ты последним сном.

Твоя краса, твои страданья
Исчезли в урне гробовой,
Исчез и поцелуй свиданья...
Но жду его: он за тобой!

Pushkin (written 1830, published 1841)

But there, alas, where the vaulting heaven
Shines a deep blue,
Where beneath the rocks the waters doze,
You drift into your final sleep.

All your beauty, your sufferings
Have gone into the funeral urn
Together with that farewell kiss...
But I am still waiting for it. You owe it to me!

7. 5 Romances to poems by Y. Polonsky: A Night in the Scottish Highlands, Op.33 No.1 (composed 1911, published 1912)

Спишь ли ты, брат мой?
Уж ночь остыла;
В холодный,
Серебряный блеск
Потонули вершины
Громадных
Синеющих гор.

И тихо, и ясно,
И слышно, как с гулом
Катится в бездну
Оторванный камень.
И видно, как ходит
Под облаками
На отдалённом
Голом утёсе
Дикий козлёнок.

Can you really be sleeping, my brother?
The night is already chilled.
In a cold,
Silvery glow
The tops of the huge,
Blue mountains
Are smothered.

Quietly and clearly,
A rumbling is heard,
As a sheered-off rock
Rolls into the abyss.
And beneath the clouds
Can be seen walking
On a bare,
Remote cliff,
A wild goat.

Спишь ли ты, брат мой?
Гуще и гуще
Становится цвет полуночного неба;
Ярче и ярче
Горят планеты -
Грозно
Сверкает во мраке
Меч Ориона.

Встань, брат!
Из замка
Невидимой лютни
Воздушное пенье
Принёс и унёс свежий ветер.

Встань, брат!
Ответный,
Пронзительно-резкий
Звук медного рога
Трижды в горах раздавался,
И трижды
Орлы просыпались на гнёздах.
Трижды орлы просыпались на гнёздах.
Орлы просыпались на гнёздах.

Are you asleep, my brother?
The colour of the midnight sky
Is becoming ever richer.
The planets burn
Ever brighter.
Menacingly,
Gleams in the darkness
The Sword of Orion.

Get up, brother!
From a castle
The sounds of ethereal singing
And an unseen lute
Are carried here and there by the fresh breeze.

Get up, brother!
The answering,
Piercing, bright
Sound of a copper horn
Has echoed across the mountains thrice,
And thrice
The eagles in their nests have woken.
Thrice the eagles in their nests have woken.
The eagles in their nests have woken.

Yakov Polonsky (1819-1898): A Night in the Scottish Highlands (published 1844).

**8. 10 poems from Ellis' collection 'Immortals': Stalactites, Op.26 No.6
(composed 1908, published 1911)**

СТАЛАКТИТЫ

Мне дорог грот, где дымным светом
Мой факел сумрак багрянит,
Где эхо грустное звучит
На вздох невольный мой ответом;

Мне дорог грот, где сталактиты,
Как горьких слёз замёрзший ряд,
На сводах каменных висят,
Где капли падают на плиты.

Пусть вечно в сумраке печальном
Царит торжественный покой,
И сталактиты предо мной
Висят убором погребальным...

Увы! Любви моей давно
Замёрзли горестные слёзы,
Но всё же сердцу суждено
Рыдать и в зимние морозы.

Stalactites

How dear to me is the grotto, where, with
smoky light,
My torch paints the twilight red,
Where a sad echo sounds
In answer to my involuntary sigh;

How dear to me is the grotto, where stalactites,
Like a row of bitter tears, frozen,
Hang from stone vaults,
Where drops fall on slabs.

May solemn peace reign forever
In the melancholy twilight,
And may the stalactites hang in front of me,
As a funeral drape...

Alas! The bitter tears of my love
Have long since become frozen,
Yet still, the heart is destined
To keep sobbing in the winter frosts.

Translation into Russian by Lev Lvovich Kobylinsky (1889-1947) 'Ellis', from the album The Immortals (Moscow, 1904). Based on Les stalactites from Les solitudes by René-François Sully-Prudhomme (1839-1907).

9. Two Poems by Mikhail Lermontov: Autumn (composed 1940)

Осень

Листья в поле пожелтели,
И кружатся и летят;
Лишь в бору поникши ели
Зелень мрачную хранят.
Под нависшею скалою,
Уж не любит, меж цветов,
Пахарь отдыхать порою
От полуденных трудов.
Зверь отважный поневоле
Скрыться где-нибудь спешит.
Ночью месяц тускл, и поле
Сквозь туман лишь серебрит.

Lermontov (written 1828).

Autumn

The leaves in the field have turned yellow
And they whirl and fly;
While in the forest drooping spruces
Keep their sombre green.
Beneath the overhanging cliff,
Among the flowers, the ploughman
No longer enjoys an occasional rest
From midday work.
A plucky beast reluctantly
Hurries to find a hiding place.
At night the moon is dim, and through the fog
The field is scarcely silvered.

10. Two Poems by Mikhail Lermontov: The Pine (composed 1940)

На севере диком стоит одиноко
На голой вершине сосна
И дремлет, качаясь, и снегом сыпучим
Одета, как ризой, она.

И снится ей всё, что в пустыне далёкой,
В том крае, где солнца восход,
Одна и грустна, на утёсе горячем
Прекрасная пальма растёт.

Lermontov (written 1841, published 1842), after Heine's Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam
(written 1822, published 1823).

In the wild north, a lone pine
Stands on a bare peak.
It slumbers and sways, dressed with snow -
Like a robe.

It dreams all the while that in a far-off desert
In the land where the sun rises,
Sad and alone, on a scorching cliff,
A beautiful palm tree grows.

11. Twelve Songs by Bal'mont: The Albatross, Op.2 No.8 (composed 1903-6, revised 1945)

Альбатрос

Над пустыней ночью морей альбатрос
одинокий,
Разрезая ударами крыльев солёный туман,
Любовался, как царством своим, этой бездной
широкой,
И, едва колыхаясь, качался под ним Океан.

И порой омрачаясь, далёко, на небе высоком,
Одиноко плыла, одиноко горела Луна.
О, блаженство быть сильным и гордым и вечно
свободным!
Одиночество! Мир тебе! Море, покой, тишина!

The Albatross

Over the empty sea at night, a single albatross
Cuts the salty mist with the beating of its wings
And admires this vast abyss as its kingdom,
And the ocean, barely swaying, rocks
beneath it.

And sometimes, darkening in the deep sky
far away,
The lonely moon drifts and burns alone.
Oh, what bliss to be strong and proud and
eternally free!
Solitude! Peace to you! Sea, calm, quiet!

Constantin Dmitrievich Bal'mont (written 1899, published 1900).

12-17. Spanish Songs, Op.100 (composed 1956, published 1960)

Cycle from Spanish songs and texts given to the composer by the mezzo soprano Zara Dolukhanova, who heard a Spanish singer living in Moscow sing them.

12. Прощай, Гренада!

Прощай, Гренада, моя Гренада,
С тобой навеки мне расстаться надо!
Прощай, любимый край, очей улада,
Навек прощай! Ах!
Будет память о тебе моей
Единственной отрадой
Мой любимый, мой родимый край!

Навек мне сердце тоска пронзила,
Погибло всё, что в жизни было мило,
Моя любовь ушла во мрак могилы,
И жизнь ушла! Ах!

Farewell, Granada!

Farewell, Granada, my Granada,
I must part from you for ever!
Farewell, beloved land, delight of my eyes,
Farewell for ever! Ah!
Memories of you will be
My only joy,
My beloved, my native land!

My heart will be forever pierced with sorrow;
All that was dear to me in life has perished:
My love has gone into the gloom of the grave
And my life has gone too! Ah!

И вокруг мне всё постыло,
Жить как прежде, нет уж силы
Там где юность так была светла!

Around me all is hateful
And I haven't the strength to live as before,
There, where my youth was so bright!

Russian text by Samuil Borisovich Bolotin (1901-1970), based on Mi ultimo adios by José Rizal (1861-1896).

13. Звёздочки

Под кипарисами старыми
Серебрится прибрежная гладь.
К милой иду я с гитарою,
Чтобы песням её обучать.

Но учить бесплатно мне нет охоты:
Я беру с неё поцелуй за ноту.
Странно, что она к утру узнаёт,
Всё кроме нот!

Жаль, что начать снова поздно!
Жаль, что уже светел воздух!
Жаль, что и днём не дрожат пугливо
Над заливом звёзды...

В звёздочках небо бескрайнее,
Ими знойная полночь полна.
Милой моей называю я
Всех бесчисленных звёзд имена.

Я познаниями дорожу своими
И беру с неё поцелуй за имя.
Странно, что урок кажется ей прост -
Всё кроме звёзд!

Жаль, что начать снова поздно!
Жаль, что уже светел воздух!
Жаль, что и днём не дрожат пугливо
Над заливом звёзды...

The little stars

Below old cypress trees
The shore is silvered.
I come to my beloved with my guitar,
To teach her songs.

But teaching for free is not for me:
I take a kiss from her for each note...
It's strange that in the morning she recalls
Everything except the notes!

A shame it's too late to start again!
A shame that the sky is already pale!
A shame that in the day the stars above the bay
No longer shake timidly...

The boundless sky is covered in stars,
The balmy midnight is full of them.
To my beloved I call out
The names of all the countless stars.

I treasure my knowledge
And take a kiss from her for each name.
It's strange that the lesson seems simple to her -
But not the stars!

A shame it's too late to start again!
A shame that the sky is already pale!
A shame that in the daytime the stars above the bay
No longer shake timidly...

14. Первая встреча

Ты у ручья воды мне дала когда-то,
Свежей воды, холодной,
как снег в ущельях синих гор.
Ночи темней твой взор,
в косах аромат лепестков дикой мяты...

Видишь, опять кружит хоровод,
Бубен гремит, звенит и поёт.
Каждый танцор подружку ведёт,
смотрит на них, любясь, народ.

Бей, мой бубен бей, греми, будто гром!
С милою моею мы танцуем вдвоём.
Лента на тебе небес голубей!
Бей, мой бубен, бей! Бубен, бей! Бубен бей!

Мне не забыть вовек этой первой встречи,
Ласковых слов и смуглой руки,
И блеска чёрных глаз...
Понял я в этот час,
Что тебя люблю и любить буду вечно!

Видишь, опять кружит хоровод,
Бубен гремит, звенит и поёт.
Каждый танцор подружку ведёт,
Смотрит на них, любясь, народ.

Бей, мой бубен бей, греми, будто гром!
С милою моею мы танцуем вдвоём.
Лента на тебе небес голубей!
Бей, мой бубен, бей! Бубен, бей! Бубен бей!

The first meeting

You gave me water from a stream once,
Fresh water, cold as the snow
From blue mountain ravines.
Your gaze was darker than the night,
And from your hair came the scent of petals
of wild mint...

See, the round-dance turns once more,
The tambourine roars, rings and sings.
Each dancer brings his partner;
People watch them in admiration.

Beat, my tambourine, beat, roar like thunder!
Me and my sweetheart are dancing together.
She has a ribbon, bluer than the sky!
Beat, my tambourine, beat! Tambourine, beat!
Tambourine, beat!

I'll never ever forget that first meeting,
Your tender words and dark arms,
And the gleam of your dark eyes...
I knew at that moment
That I loved you and would love you forever!

See, the round-dance is turning again,
The tambourine roars, rings and sings
Each dancer brings his partner;
People watch them in admiration.

Beat, my tambourine, beat, roar like thunder!
Me and my sweetheart are dancing together.
She has a ribbon, bluer than the sky!
Beat, my tambourine, beat! Tambourine,
beat! Tambourine, beat!

15. Ронда

Шумит хоровод у наших дверей,
веселья пора настала.
Иди танцевать со мною скорей,
гвоздики цветочек алый!
В луной тишине слышен звон ручья...
дай руку мне, девушка моя,
Гвоздики цветочек алый!

Улица словно ярки сад.
Шутки звенят, глаза блестят.
Ронда кружится и поёт,
Светится звёздным серебром небосвод,
Мчатся весёлые пары...
Это родостный праздник первык цветов,
Это праздник нашей любви!

Играют в луче луны на окне
Деревьев миндальных тени...
Когда же сюда ты выйдешь ко мне,
Мой нежный цветок весенний?
Ветку миндаля с дерева сорви,
Её мне дай в знак твоей любви,
Мой нежный цветок весенний!

Улица словно ярки сад.
Шутки звенят, глаза блестят.
Ронда кружится и поёт,
Светится звёздным серебром небосвод,
Мчатся весёлые пары...
Это родостный праздник первык цветов,
Это праздник нашей любви!

Ronda

The round dance at our door rings out,
The time for merry-making has come.
Quick, come and dance with me,
Little scarlet carnation-flower!
In the quiet moonlight the sound of a stream
can be heard...
Give me your hand, my girl,
Little scarlet carnation-flower!

The street is like a brilliant garden
Jokes ring out and eyes flash.
Ronda turns and sings,
Starlight silvers the sky,
Merry couples whirl...
It's the joyful celebration of the first flowers,
It's the celebration of our love!

By the window, shadows of almond trees
Play in the moonbeams...
When will you come here to me,
My tender spring flower?
Grab a branch from the almond tree,
Give it to me as a token of your love,
My tender spring flower.

The street is like a brilliant garden
Jokes ring out and eyes flash.
Ronda turns and sings,
Starlight silvers the sky,
Merry couples whirl...
It's the joyful celebration of the first flowers,
It's the celebration of our love!

16. Черноокая

Мать дала тебе очи звёзды,
Нежный цвет твоих смуглых щёк,
Милая моя!

С болью в сердце ночью поздней
Без тебя я брожу, одиночек,
Милая моя!

Ах за что я наказан был судьбой?
Ах, зачем повстречался я с тобой?
Я умру от любви безумной,
Если ты не полюбишь меня,
Милая моя!

Мать дала тебе стан высокий,
Чёрный блеск непокорных кудрей,
Милая моя!

Проклинаю рок жестокий,
Боль и муки души моей.
Милая моя!

О, зачем же тебе сымела мать
Мне назло красоту такую дать?
Я умру от любви безумной,
Если ты не полюбишь меня,
Милая моя!

The dark-eyed girl

Your mother gave you eyes of stars,
And the tender colour of your dusk-like cheeks,
My darling!

With a pain in my heart, late at night
I wander without you, alone,
My darling!

Ah! Why have I been punished by fate?
Ah! Why did I meet you?
I'll die, demented through love,
If you don't love me,
My darling!

Your mother gave you your tall figure,
And the black shine of your unruly curls,
My darling!

I curse my cruel fate,
And the pain and torment of my heart,
My darling!

Oh why did your mother manage to give you
Such beauty to hurt me?
I will die, demented through love
If you don't love me,
My darling!

17. Сон

Не знаю, что это значит...
Сон чудесный приснился мне,
Как будто в лодке рыбацкой
Я плыву по бурной волне.
Чёлн без вёсел, я их бросил...
Волны пенятся, злятся и топят мой чёлн,
Но отважно мчусь я среди тёмных,
Средь огромных волн,
Оттого, что в рыбацкой этой лодке
По морской непокорной глубине
Мчишься ты, моя гордая,
Мчишься вместе со мной.
И меня ты будто тоже любишь!

О моя голубка! Посмотри же,
Как несётся в своей лодочке хрупкой
По морю бедный парень,
Что так крепко любит тебя!

Dream (Barcarolle)

I don't know what it means...
I had a magical dream that
I was in a fishing boat
And sailing on stormy waves.
My boat had no oars, I had thrown them away...
The waves foamed, raged and drenched my craft,
But I sped on bravely through the dark,
Through massive waves,
for to me on this fishing boat
On the sea's unruly depths
You seemed to be hurrying too, my proud one,
Hurrying to be together with me.
You seemed to love me!

O my dove! Just look
How in his fragile little boat
The poor fellow who loves you so strongly
Is carried through the sea!

Based on a Spanish text, translated into Russian by Samuil Borisovich Bolotin (1901-1970) and Tatyana Sergeevna Sikorskaya (1901-1984).

18. Desdemona's Romance (Willow Song) (composed c.1950)

В раздумье бедняжка под тенью густою
Сидела, вздыхая, крушима тоскою:
Вы пойте мне иву, зелёную иву!
Она свою руку на грудь положила
И голову тихо к коленям склонила:
О ива ты, ива, зелёная ива!
Студеные волны, шумя, там бежали, -
И стон её жалкий те волны роптали:
О ива ты, ива, зелёная ива!
Горючие слёзы катились ручьями,
И дикие камни смягчались слезами.
О ива ты, ива, зелёная ива!
Зелёная ива мне будет венком!

In thought, the poor thing under a thick shadow
Sat, sighing, with a crushing longing:
You sing to me willow, green willow!
She laid her hand on her chest
And quietly bowed her head to her knees:
Oh willow, willow, green willow!
Icy waves, noisy, fled there, -
And her pathetic groan those waves murmured:
Oh willow, willow, green willow!
Burning tears rolled down in streams
And the wild stones were softened by tears.
Oh willow, willow, green willow!
Green willow will be a wreath for me!

From Shakespeare's Othello Act 4/3, translated into Russian (1830) by Ivan Kozlov (1779-1840).
Probably composed for, though not used in, Kozintsev's film Belinsky (1951).

19. A pointless gift, a chance gift (composed c.1951)

Дар напрасный, дар случайный,
Жизнь, зачем ты мне дана?
Иль зачем судьбою тайной
Ты на казнь осуждена?

Кто меня враждебной властью
Из ничтожества воззвал,
Душу мне наполнил страстью,
Ум сомненьем взволновал?...

Цели нет передо мною:
Сердце пусто, празден ум,
И томит меня тоскою
Однозвучный жизни шум.

A pointless gift, a chance gift,
Life, why were you given to me?
And why by some secret fate
Were you condemned to die?

Who with a hostile power
Brought me out of nothingness?
Who has filled my soul with passion,
And filled my mind with doubt?...

No goal lies before me,
My heart is empty, my mind idle,
And I am wearied with melancholy
By life's monotonous noise.

Pushkin (written March 26, 1828). Probably composed for, though not used in,
Kozintsev's film Belinsky (1951).

20. Two Songs to Poems by Boris Pasternak: The Wind (1966-67)

Ветер

Я кончился, а ты жива.
И ветер, жалуясь и плача,
Раскачивает лес и дачу.
Не каждую сосну отдельно,
А полностью все деревья
Со всею далью безпредельной,
Как парусников кузова
На глади бухты корабельной.
И это не из удалства
Или из ярости безцельной,
А чтоб в тоске найти слова
Тебе для песни колыбельной.

The Wind

I am no more, but you live.
And the wind, complaining and weeping,
Rocks both forest and dacha.
Not each pine separately,
But absolutely all the trees
Into the far distance,
Like yacht hulks
In a smooth harbour.
And this is not through daring
Or through aimless fury,
But in longing to find words
For you for a lullaby.

Boris Pasternak: Doctor Zhivago Ch. XVII: Poems by Yuri Zhivago (1953).

21 Two Songs to Poems by Boris Pasternak: Twilight (1966-67)

Сумерки... Словно оруженосцы роз,
На которых их копы и шарфы.
Или сумерки их менестрель, что врос
С плечами в печаль свою арфу.

Сумерки оруженосцы роз
Повторят путей их извивы
И, чуть опоздав, отклонят откос
За рыцарскою альмавивой.

Двух иноходцев сменный черед,
На одном только вечер рьяней.
Тот и другой. Их соберет
Ночь в свои тусклые ткани.

Twilight... Like Knights of the Rose,
With their sashes and spears.
Or twilight, their grief-stricken minstrel,
Arms slumped around his harp

Twilight - Knights of the Rose
Track their twists and turns
And, rather late,
Parry Knight Almaviva's dip.

On one particular evening
The two pacers exchange more zealously.
One and the other. The night gathers them
In its dull cloth.

Тот и другой. Топчут полынь
Вспышки копыт порыжелых.
Глубже во мглу. Тушит полынь
Сердцебиение тел их.

One and the other. They trample wormwood,
With a flash of bronzed hooves.
Deeper into darkness. Wormwood stifles
Their body's beating heart.

Boris Pasternak (probably written 1909, published 1913).

22. Twelve Songs by Bal'mont: The Sphinx, Op.2 No.11 (composed 1903-06, revised 1945)

Сфинкс

Среди песков пустыни вековой,
Безмолвный Сфинкс царит на фоне ночи,
В лучах Луны гигантской головой
Встаёт, растёт,- глядят, не видя, очи.

С отчаяньем живого мертвеца,
Воскресшего в безвременной могиле,
Здесь бился раб, томился без конца,-
Рабы кошмар в граните воплотили.

И замысел чудовищной мечты,
Средь Вечности, всегда однообразной,
Восстал как враг обычной красоты,
Как сон, слепой, немой, и безобразный.

Среди песков пустыни вековой,
Безмолвный Сфинкс царит на фоне ночи.

Sphinx

Amidst the sands of the age-old desert
The silent Sphinx reigns against the dark night,
In the moonlight, with its colossal head,
It wakes and grows; its unseeing eyes gaze out.

With the despair of a living corpse,
Resurrected in a premature grave,
A slave hammered and suffered endlessly here;
Slaves realised the nightmare in granite.

And an idea from tortured sleep,
Within Eternity, always the same,
Arose, as an enemy of conventional beauty,
Dream-like, blind, mute and terrible.

Amidst the sands of the age-old desert
The silent Sphinx reigns against the dark night.

Constantin Bal'mont (published 1897).

23. Winter Elegy, Op.91 (composed 1999)

Пора, мой друг, пора! покоя сердце просит –

Летят за днями дни, и каждый день уносит
Частичку бытия, а мы с тобой вдвоём
Предполагаем жить, и глядь – как раз умрём.
На свете счастья нет, но есть покой и воля.

Давно завидная мечтается мне доля –

Давно, усталый раб, замыслил я побег

В обитель дальнюю трудов и чистых нег.

Pushkin (written 1834, published 1886).

Tis time, my friend, tis time! The heart begs
for peace.

The days fly by, and each one carries off
A grain of life, and you and I both
Contemplate living. Yet we die in a wink.
There's no happiness on Earth, but there is
peace and freedom.

For a long time an enviable fate has been
my dream.

For a long time, a tired slave, I've planned
to escape

To a distant realm of work and simple pleasures.

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Moonlit night on the Neva River, view from Okhta on Smolny,
1898 Primorye State Art Gallery, Vladivostock, Russia

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