A Method to the Madness:

Teaching Foreign Language Pronunciation in a Choral Classroom

By Tony Rosetti

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Honors Thesis

PASS WITH DISTINCTION
TO THE UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE:

As thesis advisor for Tony Rodriguez.

I have read this paper and find it satisfactory.

Sri Chitturi
Thesis Advisor

October 8, 2004
This thesis was conducted in order to find a method for teaching foreign language pronunciation to choral students in a way that gives students the ability to accurately perform choral music that employs languages other than their native language, while still being practical in terms of time and effort expended by the conductor, students, and any native speakers or other experts who are working on the project. Many of the most revered works composed for choir are written in a language other than English, and this makes it very difficult for an English-speaking choir to perform these works accurately. The responsibility of being the first resource for instruction in correct pronunciation falls naturally on the choral conductors. However, choral conductors may have little or no experience with the target language, or they may have no idea how to present, diagnose, and correct the choir’s pronunciation. By developing a method that streamlines instruction, ensures an accurate performance, and identifies problems that are likely to occur, so that more choral conductors are able to create more faithful performances of choral music that employs a foreign language.

To complete this research, I first decided on a target language and performance medium. The Washington State University Concert Choir was preparing to perform three selections from Sergei Rachmaninov’s All-Night Vigil, a fifteen-movement work set to liturgical texts of the Russian Orthodox Church. This piece was written completely in an antiquated form of Russian. This situation suited my research well because the Russian language is unfamiliar to most American students, meaning that any progress that the students made would be due to my instructional methods, and not to any previous knowledge from the students.
During the Fall of 2003, I studied the Russian language as a solo performer, as a student in the Russian 101 class at WSU, and on my own, through recordings and texts. I created a translation and a pronunciation guide that was later handed out to the choir. I then spent two weeks conducting 15-20 minute lessons with the choir on Russian pronunciation, and I kept track of our progress using daily journals. Finally, I invited an outside source to help check the accuracy of our pronunciation, and we performed the music at a concert in December 2003. I critiqued the recording of our performance, and drew conclusions from the recording and the feedback I received during the daily lessons.

I found that using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), a system for ensuring proper pronunciation, while sometimes cumbersome, was helpful in the long run. It helped me be clear and definite in describing what I wanted, and it gave a clear frame of reference for the students. However, the students did not have enough time to become completely familiarized with the system, and some felt frustrated that they had to learn two different alphabets instead of one. However, I believe that if a system such as IPA is taught at the beginning of the school year, it can be a helpful tool for expediting pronunciation instruction in any language, including English.

In addition to using a system of pronunciation for reference, choral conductors should consider consulting a native speaker or expert in the target language, especially when dealing with a language where there is relatively little research from the perspective of a singer or choral conductor, such as Russian. The conductor must be the bridge between the speaker and the choir, ensuring that healthy technique and a musically satisfying performance are prioritized.
# Table of Contents

Précis iii

Main Text 1

Illustrations

**Figure 1**: Sergei Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil*, No. 8 *Хвала вам Господне* measures 1-5.

**Figure 2**: Sergei Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil*, No. 13 *Днесь спасение* measures 10-11.

**Figure 3**: Sergei Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil*, No. 6 *Богородица Дево* measures 1-4.

**Figure 4**: Sergei Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil*, No. 6 *Богородица Дево* measures 9-14.

Appendices

**Appendix 1**: Poetic and Literal Translations and Phonetic Transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet 33

**Appendix 2**: Pronunciation Guide 36

**Appendix 3**: Daily Lesson Plans 39

**Appendix 4**: Daily Journal Reflections 48
Teaching foreign language pronunciation in a choral classroom is one of the many daunting tasks that choral teachers must undertake. Becoming proficient in all the languages that might be encountered in choral music is impractical, and in many languages the pronunciation may change when switching from speaking to singing. However, limiting a choir to music sung only in their native language ignores an exciting educational opportunity for the students, as well as an enormous portion of the existing choral repertoire. I have conducted my research and work in order to develop a method of teaching foreign language diction in a choral classroom that I will be able to apply in my future teaching experiences, and that other choral educators can utilize in their classrooms as well.

The format of this project followed a two week time span during which I would teach the WSU Concert Choir the proper pronunciation for three selections from Sergei Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil* Op. 37. The selections were No. 6 Богородице Дево, No. 8 Хвалите имя Господне, and No. 13 Днесь Спасение. This presented several challenges to me as a teacher.

The first challenge was presented by the membership of the choir. WSU Concert Choir initially presents some inherent advantages for teaching the pronunciation of a new foreign language. The choir is a select, auditioned ensemble, and many of its members have been singing together for three, four, or even five years. Through this time, the choir has had a chance to sing in many different languages, including German, French, Italian, and Latin. Therefore, many of the members were used to performing in different languages at the high standard of excellence required by the director, Dr. Lori Wiest. In addition, in the spring of 2004, 61% of the members of WSU Concert Choir were either
studying voice in a private studio at WSU, or had done so at some point in their college career. These statistics are comparable with Fall 2003, the semester in which this project was completed. This was a strong advantage for my project because the voice studios gave individual instruction and critiques on a student's mastery of mainly Italian, German, or French pronunciation. Studio voice instruction taught them the skills of objective self-analysis and of efficient practice outside of the classroom.

However, the makeup of the choir also presented several disadvantages that I had to factor in to my instruction. First, many of the students were not music majors, and several of the music majors were studying a primary instrument other than voice. These students had little experience in learning foreign language diction. Learning and performing the music, not to mention the pronunciation, presented a particular challenge to these students.

Another disadvantage was that very few of the students in Concert Choir had any experience with formal diction studies, even those with previous private voice study. None of the students had any real experience singing in Russian, or any closely related language. Without diction training to refer to, students and the teacher are required to refer to unfamiliar sounds, letters, and words with improvised terminology that may be confusing. Also, foreign language diction study in any language requires students to master sounds that do not exist in their native language. Students without this experience have no framework of skills with which to approach a new language.

The class format of Concert Choir also presented challenges to the learning of these pieces. Only two weeks, or eight rehearsals, were assigned to the learning of the Russian pronunciation. This meant that any class conflicts or absences a student
experienced would seriously impede that student's ability to learn the pronunciation.

Concert Choir meets Monday through Thursday at 2 pm. Many classes in other disciplines at WSU conflict with this schedule. However, it is impractical for the conductor to disallow these students from participating in Concert Choir because she would not have enough voices left with which to perform. Therefore, many students are allowed to come late or leave early because of class conflicts, especially on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This means that these students will miss valuable instructional time every week, and material covered in their absence must be repeated in order to be effective for all students. When considering that Concert Choir also had to learn several other pieces for the upcoming concert, the effect that this situation had on instructional time was quite substantial.

The Russian language, in particular, presents some new advantages and disadvantages. Russian is rarely studied by students in the United States, either in foreign language studies, or in the vocal world. Unlike Latin, which is ubiquitous in choral music, and languages such as Spanish, German, and French, which are commonly studied languages, Russian is unfamiliar to most American students. To make matters worse, Russian is only distantly related to English, and very few of the cognate words that can be quickly identified in the Romance and Germanic languages are present.

The most daunting roadblock for American students studying Russian, however, is the use of the Cyrillic alphabet. Based on the Greek alphabet, with letters added to represent uniquely Slavic sounds, the Cyrillic alphabet is used in many Eastern European and Balkan languages, as well as Russian. While some basic letters, such as A, K, M, O, and T have sounds very similar to the Roman letter they resemble, most of the rest of the
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alphabet is composed of completely new symbols and Greek derivatives. In addition to having to deal with an unfamiliar language, the choral student who is studying Russian music cannot even make a reasonable guess as to the sound of words, as she can in a foreign language that uses the Roman alphabet.

One final problem presented by the use of Russian in Concert Choir is the lack of an expert source who can verify the pronunciation. While in some part it was my responsibility to become that expert to the best of my abilities, I am only a beginner in this field. Due to my lack of experience, it became necessary to find an expert who could verify my conclusions in teaching the Russian diction. To remedy this problem, I invited Dr. Birgitta Ingemanson to review my pronunciation guide and to listen to the pronunciation of the choir once we had prepared the music and text. This ensured the accuracy and intelligibility of the texts and the performance. To begin to overcome these and other barriers to performing Russian in the choral classroom, and to generate a methodology for foreign language pronunciation, it is important to take a more in-depth look at Russian language. While a study of a language at the level undertaken for this project may not be practical for most choral directors, research into the language to be performed should be one of the first steps towards the authentic pronunciation and performance of works in any foreign language.

The Russian language is a rich, sonorous and literary language. Some of the most important works in Theater, Literature, and Poetry are by Russian authors. Russia has also made some important contributions to the instrumental music and opera worlds, but the significant contribution made to the vocal and choral world is not often performed outside of Russia. The boundary that keeps out Russian vocal music from Western
singers is the relative obscurity of the language. However, once a basic understanding of the sounds and structure of Russian are understood, then potentially any choir can accurately perform in this language.

The first obstacle to choral music, as discussed above, is the Cyrillic alphabet. Unlike the Roman alphabet utilized in English, Cyrillic was designed specifically for the sounds encountered in Russian and other Slavonic languages. Most of the letters in the Cyrillic alphabet stand for only one or two sounds, depending on their location in a word. Cyrillic spellings are also much more phonetic than English spellings. A full outline of the modern Cyrillic alphabet, as used in Russia after 1917 (when several duplicate letters were dropped and many spellings were reformed) is presented in the accompanying pronunciation guide. The letters are grouped in vowel and consonant groups. The actual order of the alphabet is:

А Б В Г Д Е Е Ж З И Й К Л М Н О П Р С Т У Ф Х Ц Ч Ш Щ Ъ Ы Ь Э Ю Я.

There is also a cursive form of the alphabet that is used in this thesis and the Rachmaninov scores.

The main characteristics that serve to define Russian in terms of its pronunciation are:

- Palatalization
- Irregular syllabic stress
- Separate vowel sets for stressed and unstressed positions
- Clusters of two, three, or four consonants without a vowel in between
- A large amount of inflections, which also make looking up definitions difficult
- A vowel, [i], found in few other European languages
Palatalization, or what is commonly referred to as 'softness', is one of the first necessary concepts for pronouncing Russian correctly. According to Richard Robin, a "palatalized consonant is pronounced with the blade of the tongue pressed up against the hard palate. A palatalized consonant sounds like a consonant plus the [y] sound of 'yes' pronounced at the exact same time." (Robin et. al. 9). Two letters in the Russian alphabet are only used to indicate 'hardness' [ь]or 'softness' [ь]. All consonants in Russian are either hard or soft, and all vowels either make a preceding consonant hard or soft. Palatalization (transcribed in IPA as []) usually occurs between a consonant and vowel pair, such as in 'живёт' [живёт] or 'тебя' [тебя]. However, it is also common for palatalization to occur at the end of words, especially vowel infinitives such as 'жить' [жить] or 'изучать' [изучать]. This final form of palatalization is one of the most difficult sounds to make for English speakers because it is not associated with a vowel. However, not accurately pronouncing a palatalized consonant can drastically change the meaning of the entire word.

Word stress is another very important quality of Russian. Unlike languages such as Italian, the stress pattern in Russian is very irregular. There are few rules to follow, and it is important for the non-native speaker to have a dictionary that shows the stressed syllable in the word, usually using an accent mark [']. Some words do not follow the same stress patterns in all conjugations or declensions. For instance, the verb 'писать' has the stress on the second syllable in Я form "Я пишу" but the stress shifts to the first syllable all of the other present-tense forms.
The importance of word stress becomes clear when the behavior of vowels in stressed and unstressed syllables is discussed. Most vowels in Russian have a different phonetic value in a stressed position than when they are unstressed. Some vowels, such as 'о', have several different values depending on which unstressed position they are in. For example, in 'обычно' the first 'о' is pronounced [a] while the second 'о' is pronounced [ə]. If the stress were on the last syllable, then the first 'о' would still be [a] and the second 'о' would be pronounced [ə]. If the stress on a word spoken or sung in Russian is incorrect, the word will be completely incomprehensible to the listener.

It is obvious from a quick examination of the Russian alphabet that consonants play a large role in the Russian language. Russian words also use a relatively large amount of consonant clusters with more than two consonants, and there are also many consonant combinations which are not familiar to English speakers. For instance, one form of the word for 'me' in Russian is 'мне' [mn'e]. The 'м' and 'н' sounds together can be difficult at first to make clear for an English speaker. Clusters and unfamiliar combinations should be identified and practiced before a performance of Russian music.

The grammar of Russian, while not always directly related to the pronunciation of Russian, can also be an obstacle for singers and conductors. Russian does not rely on word order to convey meaning, such as English does. In English, the sentences 'I love you' and 'you love I' mean something completely different. However, in Russian 'Я люблю тебя' and 'тебя люблю я' both mean 'I love you.' To make matters more confusing, Russian puts all pronouns and previous information at the beginning of the sentence, so this sentence would become 'я тебя люблю' or 'I you love.' Instead of word order, Russian uses inflections on the word endings to indicate grammatical function.
Russian has six declensions, or conjugations for adjectives, nouns, and pronouns, as well as six conjugations for verbs. Each of these forms must take into account the three possible genders of the word, as well as whether the word is singular or plural. Russian verbs also recognize aspect, or whether the action has been completed or is still happening. It quickly becomes clear that Russian inflections can become quite complicated. This makes meaningful translations into English difficult and finding words in the dictionary almost impossible if the root is not known.

Finally, the vowel Ь [i] is such a unique sound to Russian that it deserves its own discussion. This is basically the "hard" version of the more familiar vowel И [i]. It is found in some of the most common words, such as ТЫ (you' informal), ВЫ (you' formal), and МЫ (we). The tongue moves from the position of [ə] to [i]. English-speaking singers have an especially difficult time because this vowel will often be elongated over several beats, and it will become immediately clear if they have mastered it or not. Jean Piatak and Regina Avrashov recommend that the singer should lower the back of the tongue, essentially sustaining a 'guttural version' of [i] (Piatak and Avrashov 9). However, this description may cause technique problems in young voices, so it is important to make sure the choir does not get the wrong idea. According to Robert Sheil, "the singer should allow it to modify toward an [i] as in sit, thereby accommodating the singer's need to avoid a throaty technique." (Sheil 121). This is the approach I have taken in my instruction, asking any singers who need to modify this vowel, such as when it occurs on a note in their extreme ranges, or when they do not feel completely comfortable pronouncing it, to modify towards [i].
Once I had developed a dependable body of knowledge about the Russian language from my Russian 101 class and from several source materials, I needed to identify a method for presenting that knowledge, as well as the pronunciation skills I had learned, to the choir. There are several tools and methods that have already been identified and used in the field of foreign language diction for singers. One of the most effective in terms of accuracy, if not necessarily efficiency, has been the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The International Phonetic Association defines IPA as "a separate sign for each distinctive sound; that is for each sound which, being used instead of another, in the same language, can change the meaning of a word." (Handbook of the IPA 27). These individual sounds, or phonemes, each have a single symbol. Also, several qualities, from pitch, palatalization, pharyngealization, to such pathologies as a creaky voice, can be defined using the IPA. The following example illustrates the use of IPA when transcribing the letter 'e' in several English words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>IPA</th>
<th>IPA value of 'e'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bet</td>
<td>[bet]</td>
<td>[e]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beet</td>
<td>[bit]</td>
<td>[i]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fire</td>
<td>[faːr]</td>
<td>[ ] (silent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The advantage of IPA for foreign language diction is that it stays the same in every language. Anyone who knows IPA can read aloud a phrase in any language provided it has been transliterated into IPA. This provides a wonderful tool for singers, who are required to be masters of the pronunciation of several languages.

A major difficulty with IPA is that it can only be an approximation of the sounds of any particular language. Furthermore, the closer that a transliterator tries to get to the exact sound, the more cumbersome the transliteration becomes for the reader. When
using IPA, a choral director must decide how much accuracy they need, and whether they must sacrifice that accuracy for the sake of practicality in the classroom. Also, languages that were not given as much consideration when the IPA was first being defined, such as Arabic or Chinese, often require so many different additional symbols that IPA transcriptions in these languages are impossible to read except for the most accomplished linguist. It may be best when performing choral music in these languages to use some other method of instruction. IPA can only be used in the choral setting when most of the students understand what the symbols mean for that setting and use it as a model for proper pronunciation.

Another tool used for creating a guide to choral pronunciation was a system devised by American conductor Fred Waring. Waring developed his system, called Tone Syllables, after years of experience in the first half of the twentieth century with recording and broadcasting choral singing. Waring's system is essentially to outline the text in choral music as it should be sung, rather than how it was spoken. Waring uses colloquial English representations of the individual syllables of each word, such as "ahee luv yoo" for "I love you." According to Fritz Mountford, there are seven main points to choral singing that Waring emphasized along with his system for teaching choral pronunciation:

1. Visual symbols (the English alphabet and choral text setting traditions) do not reflect the spoken nature of English. Waring wanted diphthongs that were ignored by classically trained singers at that time to be sung.

2. All sounds in single-syllable words with more than one sound, such as 'we,' should be sung. Again, the natural rhythm of speech should determine when these sounds should occur.

3. 'Beautiful consonants,' or those that have pitch, should be emphasized when it contributes to the meaning or mood of the phrase.
4. Initial consonants should occur just before the beat, and the stressed vowel on the beat. Therefore, in the word 'America,' the Am-should come before the beat, while the 'e' should come on the beat.

5. Ending consonants for syllables and words should be carried over to the next beat. Waring used French elision patterns as his model for this technique. However, he did not recognize that English needs a glottal stop between a word with an ending consonant and a word with an initial vowel or liquid, resulting in embarrassing performances in some workshops. For example, in the phrase "thinks not," a new meaning is created if the 's' is elided without a glottal stop.

6. Non-voiced plosive and fricative consonants should be de-emphasized because of microphone sensitivity, while the practice of adding an extra [ə] after these consonants to make them clearer is unnecessary.

7. All syllables are not created equal. Important or beautiful sounds should be accented, while distracting or ugly sounds should be de-emphasized. Waring advocated changing the rhythms or setting of composers who had neglected to correctly set the text in this manner. (Mountford 8-16).

To any modern, American choral conductor, the influence of Waring's ideas, as well as the ideas of his followers, such as Robert Shaw, are inescapable. However, the actual use of separate 'Tone Syllables' under the music is not common in today's choral music. Waring's syllables had several specific disadvantages, especially for foreign language pronunciation. First, they were designed specifically for English. They assume that all of the choir members are English speakers, and that any music the choir encounters will only have sounds that are found in English. At best, a syllabification of languages such as German, French, or Russian would only be an anglicized approximation. More accurate, international systems, such as the IPA, would be more helpful for foreign language diction. Second, Waring never set down specific guidelines for pronunciation. Unless the user spoke the same dialect of English as Waring, it would be impossible to be certain of the meaning of his choice of syllables. However, choral
directors can adapt Waring's principles by creating their own system of syllables and teaching them to the choir. Even so, such a system would only be useful to that conductor.

Another system, which is essentially the default of most choir directors, is a simple 'read and repeat' method. The conductor decides how he or she wants the piece to be pronounced, either through a formal transcription or by simple experimentation, and then recites the text accordingly to the choir, who repeats it. This system is probably the most efficient in terms of time and energy spent. The conductor is the only one who needs to know and understand the pronunciation system, which means that there is no need to take extra time teaching the choir how to read a pronunciation. The students also can quickly learn the text, writing in their own personal notes and suggestion in their music.

However, this system of learning choral pronunciation has several drawbacks as well. First, students may forget what the suggestions they wrote in mean. The pronunciation may slip back into bad habits if the conductor does not put in continual effort to maintain it while working on and performing the music. Also, the teacher is throwing away vital learning opportunities for students. First, students who may continue on to the college level to study vocal music will encounter formal pronunciation systems, such as IPA, in their studio lessons and choral ensembles. The secondary teacher can help prepare these students by introducing the basic concept of systems like IPA. Also, a more formal approach allows for cross-curricular collaboration with foreign language teachers and classes, or may provide an opportunity for a non-English speaking student to play an important role in the choir as a language expert.
In creating a methodology for completing the instruction of WSU Concert Choir in Russian pronunciation, I attempted to include the most salient points of each of these methodologies. First, I created an IPA pronunciation guide, which included an IPA transcription of the texts, as well as my own English translations. In addition, I provided an explanation of the Russian alphabet, the corresponding IPA symbol or symbols, and an explanation of each IPA symbol in terms of standard American English. This provided the choir with the tools for learning the text on their own time, as well as a reference with which they could answer many of their own initial questions. I also created lesson plans which outlined my goals for that instructional period, and I wrote journals in which I explored the effectiveness of my previous lesson and the goals of my next lesson. Finally, I invited Dr. Birgitta Ingemanson to critique my pronunciation guide and to listen and assess the authenticity of our choir's performance during a rehearsal. Dr. Ingemanson became the expert whom both the choir and I could depend on for accuracy of the text.

Once I had determined my strategy for presenting the pronunciation of the Russian language to the students, I researched the stylistic, musical, and religious environment in which Rachmaninov created his masterpiece of Russian sacred choral music. While I had developed a knowledge of the pronunciation of the standard, Moscow-dialect version of the Russian language, I could only identify performance practices associated with the All-Night Vigil, and with Russian sacred choral music in general by understanding the conditions and expectations that influenced Rachmaninov's work.
Sergei Rachamaninov's *All-Night Vigil* was a culmination of a long process of development in sacred Russian choral music throughout the nineteenth century. Without these developments, Rachmaninov's work would not have even been conceivable, yet alone possible to accomplish. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the Russian Orthodox Church suffered a schism that swept out the old order of strongly traditionalist or "Old Believer" clergy. This also ended the era in which *znamennyi*-based chant dominated church services in Russia. *znamennyi*...monophony and indigenous Russian polyphony gave way to the 'harmonious and graceful art' of *musikiia*, part-singing modeled after Western European polyphony (Morosan 38). However, the old style had been eliminated without cultivating the institutions, ensembles, and singers necessary for the Italian style to be fully assimilated and performed well. For the next 200 years, technical refinement and good taste were almost impossible to find in all but the most well trained choirs in Russia (68-69). Meanwhile, the *znamennyi* chant was preserved both in manuscript form and by the "Old Believers" who moved to northern Russia and preserved the chant tradition in a form untouched by Western influence. It was this chant tradition that would become a treasure trove of Russian choral style in the nineteenth century (Gauthier 3).

The first moves towards a genuine reform of Russian choral music began with Dmitri Bortniansky (1751-1825), the director of the Imperial Court Chapel from 1796 until his death. Bortniansky ended the practice of hiring out the Chapel choir for opera productions (always very popular in Russia), which allowed the choir to commit to their liturgical duties full-time. He also implemented an education program. This encouraged the parents of the boys who filled the treble parts of Bortniansky's choir to allow them to
participate, ending any recruitment problems. Bortniansky became so successful that, according to Morosan, the Imperial Court Chapel "...acquired the legal means to define and enforce its standards for what...choral singing [in the church] should be" (Morosan 71). While this censorship role allowed Bortniansky to eliminate the poor choral performances of his contemporaries, his successors abused this power, retarding the growth of Russian choral music.

This censorship ability of the Imperial Court Chapel was finally broken in 1861, when P. I. Tchaikovsky attempted to publish his choral work Liturgy, Op. 41, and make it available for public consumption. The Russian Senate decided that since Tchaikovsky did not ask for the approval of his piece for church worship, then the Chapel had no power over his music. Instead, the Moscow Office of Sacred Censorship, which could only rule on text appropriateness, was given the authority over this work. This meant that the Chapel could no longer object to a sacred work simply on the basis of style (Morosan 89). This opened the door for the first public concerts of sacred music.

While the new tradition of public concerts quickly became popular, it became increasingly evident that there was a dearth of good choral music as well as good choirs to perform it. Increasingly, the success of choirs such as the Moscow Synodal Choir and Aleksandr Arkhangel'sky's Choir proved to be the solution to both problems. They served to elevate the reputation of choral music in Russia from that of a liturgical afterthought to that of a respectable musical medium worthy of serious consideration outside of the church. In turn, this attracted the attention of serious composers, such as Rachmaninov, who began creating masterpieces of choral literature for the virtuosic choral ensembles now at their disposal. Rachmaninov's All-Night Vigil was first
performed by the Moscow Synod Choir on March 10, 1915. This proved to be auspicious timing, for the extremely secularist Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 effectively brought an end to this renaissance of sacred choral music in Russia.

Rachmaninov's *Vigil*, also commonly known as the *Vespers*, combines the new Russian choral style that was reaching its pinnacle at the time he was composing. In the nineteenth century, the 'Mighty Five' composers, Borodin, Mussorgsky, Cui, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Balakirev, had used Russian folk music to create secular music that was free from foreign influences and could stand up against the greatest works of the Western masters. However, Russian sacred music was only beginning to free itself of the influence of the Italian style of choral music. Russian sacred composers were searching for a source of Russian musical style, similar to the one found by the 'Mighty Five', for inspiration. In order to find a musical heritage that could support a Russian style of sacred music, Rachmaninov and his contemporaries looked to the history and music of the Russian Orthodox Church before the adoption of the Italian style of polyphony.

Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil* brings several aspects of the Russian Orthodox Church onto the concert stage. The All-Night Vigil is a special service, performed on Saturday evenings, and the night before important feast days and holidays. It is a combination of the texts and hymns associated with two of the *hours*, or services that correspond to the time of day. These hours had become a tradition in Christian monastic settings before the schism in 1054 AD of the Catholic (Western, Mass in Latin, governed by the Pope) and Orthodox (Eastern, Mass in Greek, Governed by various Patriarchates) churches. Because of this, the Russian Orthodox hours are very similar, at least in general, to their Catholic counterparts of the same name. The All-Night Vigil service
combines the Vespers, which is the service of evening or dusk, with Matins, the service of night and early morning. According to Fr. Victor Potapov of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Washington, DC, the time frame of the All-Night Vigil service "conveys to the faithful a sense of the beauty of the setting sun and turns their thoughts toward the spiritual light of Christ. The Church also points the faithful towards prayerful consideration of the coming day and of the eternal light of the Heavenly Kingdom. The All-Night Vigil is a service presenting the border between the day which has passed and the coming day." (Church Website-http://www.stjohndc.org/english.htm.) The All-Night Vigil is a complex musical and religious ritual that symbolizes the Passion of Christ and the ensuing Resurrection. The name of the 'coming day', Sunday, or воскресенье, actually means 'Resurrection'.

The Orthodox Church is highly conservative in regards to the proper execution of its liturgy, and especially so when considering its music. The church would only sanction music that followed their strict guidelines. One of the most important guidelines that would-be sacred music composers had to follow was that of text. The text of each service was outlined in detail, and there could be no deviations. These texts are not sung in the vernacular Russian, but in a dead, literary language called Old Church Slavonic. Old Church Slavonic, according to tradition, is the language created by St. Cyril around ninth century AD, in Slavonic-speaking Bulgaria. Cyril and his partner Methodius created an alphabet that could efficiently represent the sounds of the then completely illiterate Slavonic peoples, so that a Slavonic Bible could be created and Christianity spread. According to S.C Gardiner, "...all Slavonic dialects must at that time have been very close and the intention [of Old Church Slavonic] was to be comprehensible to all"
The Slavonic used as a model for Cyril's alphabet, Glagolitic, which was adapted later into Cyrillic, was the mutually-understood proto-language shared by all the Slavonic peoples, and was the basis for all of the modern branches of the Slavonic tree, including Russian. Old Church Slavonic texts and liturgies made their way quickly into Russia, where the entire country was converted to the Orthodox Church approximately one hundred years later, in 988 AD. However, as Old Church Slavonic texts were brought into Russia, their pronunciation was not precisely preserved. Instead, Russian speakers of Old Church Slavonic added their own version of the pronunciation, in effect 'Russifying' the Old Church Slavonic texts. Robert Auty provides a good example of this phenomenon. Old Church Slavonic contained two nasalized vowels, [3] and [6] (Gardiner 18). Auty points out that in Russia the letters corresponding to these sounds were not pronounced as originally intended but as written variants of Y [u] and A [a] (Auty and Obolensky 5). This is similar to the situation of the letters 'k' and 'q' or the letter 'x' in English. They may have originally stood for different sounds, but now can either be as easily represented by other letters ('x' becomes 'ks') or are theoretically interchangeable (queen or kueen). This pronunciation became part of the tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church, which was handed down until they influenced the composition of Sergei Rachmaninov. Therefore, Russian sacred choral music has its own pronunciation that is different from both Old Church Slavonic and modern Russian. A performance of Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil* should take this traditional pronunciation into consideration.

The *znamennyi* chant that had recently been revived and the traditions surrounding it provided Rachmaninov with the melodic and stylistic basis for his *All-
Night Vigil. This contrasted with pieces such as Tchaikovsky's Liturgy, which used only the traditional texts, set to completely new music. Znamenyi chant was completely different from its Western counterpart. It did acknowledge a system of whole steps and half steps, but the similarities ended there. It uses a scale that spans more than an octave, composed of notes from B to D\(^1\). These notes are divided into groups of three, so that the entire scale is grouped into accordances: low, somber, bright, and very bright (Gauthier 3). Each of these accordances has sets of melodic pitches that serve to further define them, called popevki. These are similar to ideas such as Makam in Central Asian music, where musicians must memorize the patterns that characterize a Makam, and improvise using those patterns. While znamennyi chant was not improvised, only the accordances, not the actual pitch within that accordance, were notated. The only way to be able to know was to memorize all of the approximately 400 popevki so that they could be recognized on sight (Gauthier 3-4).

The style and melodies of znamennyi chant can be identified in the music of Rachmaninov's All-Night Vigil. According to Geoffrey Norris, Nos. 2 and 15 are based on Greek chant, Nos. 4 and 5 are based on Kievan chants, and Nos. 8, 9, 12, 13, and 14 are based on znamennyi chants. The rest, including No. 6, are Rachmaninov's own melodies. (Norris 150). Among the three pieces that were performed by Concert Choir, No. 8, Хвалите имя Господне, has the clearest example of znamennyi chant. The piece begins with the sopranos and tenors singing a richly harmonized accompaniment figure. At measure 3, the altos and basses begin the chant melody and continue to carry it through the most of the piece. (Figure 1).
In No. 13, День спасение, at measure 10, Rachmaninov again uses this technique, giving the melody to the basses and the second altos, while weaving several independent parts through the texture in other voices. (Figure 2).
Rachmaninov's use of his own melodies still stays true to the style of the
znamennyi chant, such that observers at the first performance noted that "a listener
familiar with the znamennyi cycle of chant cannot distinguish themes composed by
Rachmaninov himself from those he borrowed." (Yuri Keldysh in Morosan 248). This
style can clearly be seen in the music of No. 6 Бого роди це Дева. According to Olga
Dolskaya-Ackerly, "Traditionally, chant-based compositions are to be transmitted with a
smooth, insightful declamation of text...Breathing between the last note of the preceding
measure and the first note of the next measure was not permitted" (Dolskaya-Ackerly 11-
12). In other words, the style of *znamennyi* chant required the choir to sing long, smooth, legato phrases with minimal or 'staggered' breathing. This aesthetic is demonstrated in the beginning section of No. 6. Although not directly marked in the score, most choirs sing through measure 3-4, uniting the antecedent phrase "богородице Дево" with the consequent phrase "радуйся" (Figure 3). This continues to measure 9 and the phrase "Господ с тобою" which in itself lasts six measures without a breath. (Figure 4).

---

**Figure 3**
To ensure that the *znamennyi* style is preserved in performance of the *All-Night Vigil*, it is important for a choral conductor to either have reliable scores that identify stylistically appropriate places to breathe, or to listen for breathing points in famous recordings.

Dolskaya-Ackerly also discusses the proper rhythmic setting of the sacred texts in a *znamennyi*-style composition. "There are no downbeats in Russian sacred music, for the simple reason that rhythm is dictated by the inflections of the text" (Dolskaya-
Ackerly 13). While in modern scoring practices, it is nearly impossible to write music without downbeats unless the composer also omits barlines, Rachmaninov does make a priority of avoiding or de-emphasizing downbeats and other strong beats in favor of a free, unmetric text-stress. For example, in measure 14 of No. 6, the altos begin the phrase "благословенна ты" on beat 2, to de-emphasize the strong beats 1 and 3. Instead, the strong syllable "-вен-" is agogically accented, given four times the duration of the syllables in the preceding measure. This puts the final syllable of the word, "-на" which is the least important syllable in the word, on strong beat 1, but the melismatic accentuation of "-вен-" more than makes up for it. When the tenor and soprano parts, which are not in synchrony with the alto, are taken into consideration, the overall effect is that the listener would have a very difficult time counting measures or "seeing" barlines. This is precisely the effect that Dolskaya-Ackerly describes. The choral director must identify these stress patterns in the text of Rachmaninov's music, and make certain that these points are emphasized at the expense of the metric accents. In my pronunciation guide, I took into account the altered stress patterns of the Old Church Slavonic texts, boldfacing both the Cyrillic and the IPA transliteration so that students could clearly see the stress patterns.

While Rachmaninov did stay true to the style of the Russian Orthodox Church and the znamennyi heritage that does not mean that the All-Night Vigil is not a creative and individual work. Instead, Rachmaninov advanced the already flowering school of choral orchestration by writing parts that were inventive and independent of the main melody, yet still served to support, rather than detract from, the meaning of the text. "...all of the textural devices display a great sense of purpose: voices are never present
merely to thicken the texture, but are always divided with the view of emphasizing an additional aspect of the music" (Morosan 248). Rachmaninov's music often divides each individual part into two or three subparts, yet each part is an important musical idea, and some are even doubled at the octave, a classic orchestral-writing technique for bringing parts out of a texture. It is very easy for these parts to be lost in a thick texture if one part has fewer or weaker voices than another. It is imperative that all parts in the *All-Night Vigil* are well balanced.

Overall, the results of this project were rewarding and instructive. The resulting recording of the concert is a good interpretation of the music and the texts were performed well. During the next spring semester, WSU Concert Choir kept these pieces in our repertoire, performing them during our tour of Seattle in March, and during our recording sessions in April. Both students new to the group this semester as well as students who sang with us last semester have shown a growing appreciation for this music, both in their interpretation and in their discussions.

My experience with writing journals and lesson plans helped to solidify my views on this subject. First, my use of IPA had some definite advantages and disadvantages. I spent my first lesson describing the sounds of Russian and how the IPA worked. This took up some time, but I did get questions later on in the project concerning the guide. Students even caught spelling errors in the Cyrillic! However, while we were able to solve most of the problems that we encountered using IPA, there were some trouble spots that continued to creep up. These were situated around sounds, such as [i], that do not exist in English. IPA, then, is no substitute for practice. Also, some of these difficulties could be related to the fact that while I did have a good idea of what I wanted to hear, I
had not completely settled on a way to describe what I wanted. IPA helped me be critical of my own pronunciation, and to narrow down in my own mind what I wanted to hear. Students were also able to help catch inconsistencies in my rules using the guide, which I could research later. Therefore, the greatest benefit of using a formal system such as IPA to discuss pronunciation in a choral setting was its openness, accuracy, and objectivity. It is most useful for the conductor in formulating pronunciations for the choir, but not necessarily practical in presenting those pronunciations to the choir. However, this might change if IPA was introduced at the beginning of the year and students had had previous experience.

The actual confidence level by the concert date, considering the relative newness of the language, was very high. Some students felt confident enough with the principles I had discussed with them to point out problems they heard without my prompting. This was very rewarding, because it meant that the students had understood and internalized the guidelines that I had given them, and were able to apply those guidelines to what they were hearing. As with any of the music or languages we perform with Concert Choir, there was a wide range of achievement levels, and some students still seemed to be lost. However, after two weeks of work in a language that no one in the choir had any experience with, the net progress of the choir was very impressive.

The most difficult parts in the music, were, predictably, the parts which I covered last, and the parts that contained sounds that do not exist in English. In addition, it was made clear where I needed to make the most improvement in my confidence and pronunciation by the location of trouble spots in the choir's pronunciation. The most difficult points were exposed areas, such as No. 6, measure 14 in the alto part, points
where the vowel [i] occurred, such as No. 13, measure 3 in all parts, and places where words ended in palatalized consonants, such as the end of No. 13. An interesting effect of how I read the text was in how the choir interpreted the tempo. For instance, in No. 8, I first read the text slowly, syllable by syllable. During rehearsal, the tempo dragged, the piece lost the tuneful nature of the melody, and the choir began to lose pitch. However, emphasizing the entire word or phrase, instead of just the syllables, helped to buoy the tempo and the feel of the piece when sung. While syllabification is necessary for the choir to understand words clearly, it is also important, especially in languages such as Russian where five or six syllable words are common, to give the choir a clear feeling of the motion and rhythm of the text, as well as the sound of each individual syllable. Only once the choir could feel this rhythm were we able to achieve the chant-like style of the piece.

Taking the Russian 101 class at WSU helped immensely with my familiarity and confidence with the Russian language. I had daily practice with the writing, pronunciation and grammar of Russian. This made modeling unfamiliar sounds for the choir much easier to describe and to model. Also, any daily crises I had in my research that may have conflicted with what we were learning in class, I could bring up to my Russian professor, Dr. Zheng Ming Dong, while they were still fresh. However, it became clear that there are differences in priorities when comparing the foreign language classroom and the choral classroom. Mainly, the foreign language teacher only needs to reach a minimum level of pronunciation proficiency with his students in order for them to be understood. The rest of the instructional effort is spent on grammar, speaking confidence, and vocabulary. Meanwhile, the choral conductor must pay close attention to
the intricacies of pronunciation, because she wants to create as authentic a performance as possible, but does not need her students to understand the grammar or vocabulary at the same level the foreign language teacher does.

In my actual lesson plans, I tried to err on the side of having too much material. My first lesson plans included separate learning exercises and information for the choir about pronunciation and the music. I also formulated homework exercises for the students. However, my experience was that there was simply not enough time to focus on these materials. My later lesson plans were much more sparse; essentially they were bare outlines from which I could improvise and expand. It is far too easy to become attached to the piece of paper instead of trusting one's instincts when teaching and conducting. In these later lessons, I could pay more attention to pacing and management instead of following the plan. Also, it was much easier to make any adaptations before or during class, if necessary.

One of my most productive sessions was my meeting with Dr. Ingemanson. It was my first opportunity to defend my conclusions about my pronunciation choices to an expert in the field. I felt that I had sufficient evidence for my conclusions, but Dr. Ingemanson raised several new problems and queries, and caught several simple mistakes. This oversight, and the rehearsal critique she later gave, was invaluable to my success with this project.

The final recording of the fall concert when we first presented these pieces to the public was a great success. The diction was very accurate, and the choir mastered some of the difficult areas that had been giving them trouble when we began. Mostly, the trouble spots were associated with the fact that this was still new music at this point.
While No. 6 is very musical on this recording, the other two pieces still have not reached that chant style quality, and are weighty and sometimes out of tune. Accentuating the rhythm of the text will help this. Also, some consonant clusters and vowels still needed some work. However, the recording as a whole is very musical and has some very emotional moments.

Through teaching the Russian pronunciation to WSU Concert Choir, I was able to develop a generalized method for teaching foreign language pronunciation that I will use in future choral classrooms. Having multiple recordings of previous performances by trusted, professional conductors is the first ingredient when approaching an unfamiliar language. Next, developing a passing familiarity with the language, as much as time allows, is invaluable when evaluating sources who dispute one another, listening to recordings, and modeling pronunciations for the choir. It is important for the choir director to have a clear idea of what he or she wants to hear in terms of pronunciation. Just as in conducting, if the director cannot be clear with himself, then he cannot be clear with the choir. Formal diction guides, such as IPA, are useful for the choral director to get a clearer picture of what they want to hear, and creating handouts from this may also be helpful if there is time to teach the system used as well as the language itself. Also, in the choral classroom, time is of the essence, and pacing can be helped if the conductor already has clear ideas and can answer questions quickly and effectively. This may mean leaving more extraneous information for until after the music and the pronunciation has been learned. Bringing language experts in to help with pronunciation and translation are always very helpful. However, the conductor must still do research; because that expert may not be familiar with the performance practices of that style of music, and any
pronunciation changes that need to be made because of it. Nevertheless, having a native speaker is essential when performing a language that the director has little familiarity with. This method I have identified will help me in all my future choral activities, but it also has implications for the rest of the American choral world as well. I have outlined tools and ideas that I have used, what worked and what did not. I hope that others may learn and profit from my ideas and use them in their own choral classrooms.
Bibliography


Appendix 1. Poetic and Literal Translations and Phonetic Transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

All text in the IPA transliteration that has been bolded indicates the word stress. This stress pattern does not always correspond to the stress pattern of modern Russian. Instead, it follows the performance practice of the Orthodox Church, as indicated in the score by Vladimir Morosan, as well as in various recordings of the *All-Night Vigil*, and as described by Morosan in his text on pre-revolutionary Russian choral performance (Morosan 300).

6. **Богородица дева**

---

**Bogoroditsye devo**

*Rejoice, Virgin*

> Радуйся, Мадонна, забавися, похваляйся, благослови*

**Bogoroditsye devo**

*Raduisya, Madonna, zabavitsya, byлагослови*

---

**Благодатная мария господь с тобою**

*Blessed Mary the Lord is with you*

**Blagodatnaja marja gospodь s toboju**

*Blessed are you among women*

---

**Благословена ты в женех**

*Blessed are you of women*

**Blagoslovenna ty v zhenah**

*Blessed are you among women*

---

**И благословен плод чрева твоего**

*And blessed is the fruit of your womb*

**I blagosloven plod tsev rojega**

*And blessed is the fruit of your womb*

---

**Яко спаса родила еси душ наших**

*You have borne the savior of our souls*

**Jako spasa rodila esyi duš nazix**

*You have borne the savior of our souls*
8. Хвалите имя господне

Хвалите имя господне. Аллилуйя.
хвалите имя господне ал:пл:их:а
praise name Lord alleluia

Хвалите раби господа. Аллилуйя.
xвалите раби господа ал:пл:их:а
praise servants lord alleluia

Благословен господ от Сиона
blagoslov:en господ от сиона
blessed Lord of Zion

Живый во нерusalemе. Аллилуйя.
жив:и во нерusalemе ал:пл:их:а
lives in Jerusalem alleluia

Исповедаитесь господеви яко благ. Аллилуйя.
isпов:еда:е господев:и яко благ ал:пл:их:а
confess (to the) lord righteous alleluia

Яко в век милость его. Аллилуйя.
jako v век милост:е его ал:пл:их:а
for ages mercy his alleluia

Исповедаитесь богу небесному. Аллилуйя.
isпов:еда:е богу небесному ал:пл:их:а
Confess (to) God Heaven alleluia

Яко в век милость его. Аллилуйя.
jako v век милост:е его ал:пл:их:а
for ages mercy his alleluia

Praise the Name of the Lord

Praise the Name of the Lord. Alleluia.
Praise your Lord, all you his servants. Alleluia.
Blessed is the Lord of Zion
Confess your thanks to the lord for he is righteous. Alleluia.
For his mercy endures for ages and ages. Alleluia.
Confess to God of Heaven. Alleluia.
For his mercy endures for ages and ages. Alleluia.
13. Тропарь «День Спасение»

День спасение миру бысть
День спасение миру бысть
Poem воскресшему из гроба
Sing to he who has risen from the grave

Победу даде нам и велию милость
Победу даде нам и велию милость
Who destroys dying through his death

He gives us victory and great mercy

The Day of Salvation of the world is come

And begins our lives anew

Who destroys dying through his death

He gives us victory and great mercy
Appendix 2. Pronunciations Guide

- All vowels are produced more forward and open than in English. This is the reason that I chose [a] and [o] instead of [α] and [o].
- Boldface in the IPA indicates word stress.
- All plosive consonants are non-aspirated, or “dry.” This is similar in principle to Italian [t], but all plosives are governed by this principle. [k], [t], [p] need particular attention.
- Superscript [j] between a consonant and a vowel indicates “softness” or palatalization of the consonant it is associated with. Produce these consonants with the middle of the tongue against the hard palate. Think of having a slight [j] sound during the consonant, similar to the word “beauty” [b'uti]. Make sure that the [j] sound doesn’t mix into the vowel unless indicated (when [j] is part of the transcription, not a superscript) (Pitiak and Avrashov 8).
- Palatalized consonants that do not occur before a vowel can be particularly difficult.
  - [k], put the tip of the tongue near your teeth. It should sound more like the l in “leak” than the l in “all.” This is similar to the Italian [k].
  - [tʰ] add a very slight s on the end, making a [ts] sound, but not as strong as the actual letter Τ.
  - [d̩] same as [tʰ] but add a slight [z] sound instead
  - for all other consonants, the sound is a nearly negligible [j] glide (Cox guide to pronunciation)
- [l], or [l] non-palatalized, has a very distinct sound. It is close to [l] in English “All,” but it often occurs at the beginning or middle of words, creating a guttural sound. This could present vowel placement problems and is not completely essential. Therefore, I have not included it in the transcription.
- [i kratkə] is a very short [i] sound that is used for creating diphthongs. Stay on the first vowel for as long as possible, especially when [i] is in parentheses in the transcription. (from Robert Shaw recording).
- [ι] is a sound unique to Russian. It is essentially the “hard” version of [i]. Therefore, it has the same shape as [i], but is produced in the back of the throat, at about the same point as [o]. Practice this sound by pairing it with sounds that are “hard” by nature: [3i] and [ji].
- The letters χ, η and ω are always hard. This means that any vowel after them is also hard, even if its pronunciation would be soft. Χ and Ω are always soft, and the reverse is then true for these two consonants.
• When the vowel after a palatalized consonant is [i], the [j] glide is negligible. They are in the transcription as a reminder to keep the tongue high during this consonant, so that the [i] vowel does not become confused with [i].
• Russian is an eliding language. Where indicated in the transcription with [-], do not insert glottal stops such as in English “cow out” [cɔw ɔut]. If [-] connects two consonants, also follow this rule about glottal stops. If it is the same consonant, simply elongate that consonant.
• In spoken Russian, vowels not in the stressed position of a word are modified. [ə] becomes [a] or [ə] depending on its location, and [a] becomes [ə] as well. In Church Slavonic, this reduction is not followed, and unstressed [ə] retains its stressed quality. (Morosan 300).
• [x] is used in Russian, but it is not nearly as strong as in German and other languages. In Russian, the tendency is for this sound is to get closer to [h] when unstressed, while in German, some dialects replace this sound with [ʃ]. IPA gives these sounds the same symbol, but they are used and pronounced differently in these languages.

IPA symbols used in this transcription

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPA Symbol</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
<th>Russian Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>“a” in father, but more forward and open (not used as French [a] in this transcription)</td>
<td>A, a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ġ</td>
<td>“о” in God, but lips rounded more forward (used more to designate forward position of vowel than true [ơ])</td>
<td>Ơ, ơ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>е</td>
<td>“е” in bet</td>
<td>Э, э</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>“ee” in feet</td>
<td>И, и</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>See pronunciation guide</td>
<td>Ь, ы</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>“оо” in boot</td>
<td>У, у</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>“b” in book, but dry</td>
<td>Б, б</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>“v” in very</td>
<td>В, в</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>“g” in garden, but dry</td>
<td>Г, г</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>“d” in door, but dry</td>
<td>Д, д</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>“z” in zebra</td>
<td>З, ژ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋ</td>
<td>“s” in pleasure</td>
<td>Ж, ж</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Russian</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:i</td>
<td>&quot;y&quot; in boy or my, diphthong forming letter</td>
<td>Й, й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>&quot;k&quot; king, but dry</td>
<td>К, к</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>&quot;l&quot; in laugh, not &quot;i&quot; in all</td>
<td>Л, л</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>&quot;m&quot; in moon</td>
<td>М, м</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>&quot;n&quot; in noon</td>
<td>Н, н</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>&quot;p&quot; in pie, but dry</td>
<td>П, п</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>Flipped, not rolled, r, similar to German, Spanish, etc.</td>
<td>Р, р</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>&quot;s&quot; in soar</td>
<td>С, с</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>&quot;t&quot; in tray, but dry</td>
<td>Т, т</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>&quot;f&quot; in fun</td>
<td>Ф, ф</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>&quot;ch&quot; in Scottish loch, German ach, but much softer</td>
<td>Х, х</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ts</td>
<td>&quot;z&quot; in Mozart, &quot;ts&quot; in tsetse fly</td>
<td>Ъ, ъ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʃ</td>
<td>&quot;ch&quot; in church</td>
<td>Ч, ч</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʃ</td>
<td>&quot;sh&quot; in shout, but produced in the back of the mouth (the letter in parentheses is essentially the forward or soft version)</td>
<td>Щ, щ (Щ, щ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>&quot;y&quot; in yes, always paired with another vowel (Russian letters yeh, yoh, yu, ya)</td>
<td>Е,е Ё, ё Ю,ю Я, я</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(consonant)</td>
<td>See pronunciation guide (Russian uses a soft sign and a hard sign, which have no sounds of their own, to designate either the presence or absence of this sound when not governed by a rule)</td>
<td>Б, б (Ъ, ь)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3. Daily Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan 1

Objectives
Russian Alphabet
IPA

Materials
Photocopies of Pronunciation Guide and IPA Guide
CD Recording
Octavos of Vespers

IPA (5-7 min)
Cover each sound in the guide
Check for understanding: have students give examples of English words for each vowel, plus [3], [i] Short,
Any questions on IPA?
Students are not required to use IPA, it is only there to help. If it is too confusing, the transcription in the music is also very useful.

Russian Alphabet (10 min)
Why use Cyrillic? St. Cyril approximating Slavic sounds, the Orthodox Church, Cover all letters in order
How Й works: forming diphthongs
X- Similar to German
Ц- Like z in Mozart
Ч- Ch in Church
Щ (Ш)- Sh as in shape
Ы- hard И. Produce using
Say [i] where you would normally say [ə]
Pencil Technique
If you have difficulty with this sound, it just takes practice.

Modify it towards [i] or [i].

Homework: Try to spell your name in Russian! Here are some hints:
W= в
J as in Jeff or Jim = дж
I as in I am = ай
Ay as in Day = ей
Oy as in Boy = ой
Th as in This or Thwart = т
Ng as in Washington = нг
H as in House = х
Some vowels such as oo in book or i in bitter will need to be approximated
Practice a few names first

Use the remaining time to listen to Богородище Дево while following along in the transcription.
Lesson Plan 2

Objectives: Begin work on no. 6 богородице Дево. Cover the Alto line at m14.

Materials

Octavos
Pronunciation Guide

Activities

Repeat with choir, word for word, not syllable by syllable, the text, going slowly and listening carefully.

Talk about the text: what part, if any, of the Roman service does this seem similar to? Why might they be similar? What is different about the text here, besides simply the language?

Altos at m 14- have everyone speak the text
   Speak the text in rhythm
   Then have only the altos speak the text in rhythm
   Keep going to the past the bass entrance until the last page

Homework- review what we have done, try to write your name?
Lesson Plan 3

Objectives
Review Богородице Дево
Begin work on no. 13: Тропарь «Днесь Спасение»
Maintain lesson pacing
(Check pronunciation guide spelling)

Materials
Pronunciation Guide
Troparion excerpt
Octavos

Activities
Review no. 6. Correct pronunciation as necessary
From last lesson: й at m 4, в женах m 17, чрева m 20,
Begin no. 13. pay attention to sopranos at m 7, Altos and Basses at m 10.
Modification of vowels-
Ы- [I]
All others as English
Discussion of Text- the Troparion and the Orthodox Church service
Lesson Plan 4

Objectives

Finish No. 6 and No. 13

Activities

No. 6 Continue reviewing and assessing the sounds in this piece. Help Altos at m 14-20.
No. 13. Build up confidence; begin working on putting it together with the music. Go syllable-by-syllable, then word-by-word.

Begin to incorporate professor Ingemanson's suggestions, especially about soft t's.

Discuss the text: discuss the idiom of Troparion, and how this piece might fit into that context.

Homework: make sure the students put the IPA into their music to aid their retention of the material.
Lesson Plan 5

Objectives

Review No. 6 and No. 13.
Begin work on No. 8: Хвалите имя Господне
Cover Ingemanson's suggestions

Activities

Explaining the changes in pronunciation
[tʰe], [tse], [tʃ]

No. 6 Theotokos = mother of God
No. 13 = remember to modify in the higher range

Troparion = similar to Antiphon in western Mass, a hymn in between psalms and readings

No. 8 syllabify. Concentrate on:
Хвалите = not too much [x], softer [tʰ]
Яко в век = elongate, not separate
Men at m14
Lesson Plan 6

Objectives

Review pronunciation guides, especially No. 8  
Cover the sound [i]  
Work on consonant cluster clarity

Activities

[i] - “the vowel [i] must be modified during singing because it is impossible to sustain the quick motion of the tongue. It is best to think of and sing the vowel [i] as a guttural form of [i], that is, lower the back of the tongue while you sing [i].” Piatak and Avrashov 8.

[i] - “(Central, Closed vowel). The center of the tongue is raised (very high) toward the center of the palate.

Practice the sound by saying the word ‘book,’ but while keeping the tongue in normal position for this word spread the lips instead of rounding them. This will be a close approximation. (Challis 4-5).

[i] - It is somewhat like the [i] in beet, but is formed much farther back in the mouth, and with the tongue quite low. The lips should remain relaxed, and not be retracted. After the initial formation of this sound, particularly for notes of long duration, the singer should allow it to modify toward an [I], thereby accommodating the singer’s need to avoid a throaty technique. (Sheil 121)

Clusters

В женах  
Плод чрева  
День  
Воскресшему  
Жизни  
Смертью смерть  
Хвалите  
исповедайтесь
Lesson Plan 7

Objectives
- Review all three selections
- Assess problems
- Answer questions
Lesson Plan 8

Objectives
Review
Assess Effectiveness of techniques
Recording

Activities

Review all three pieces from the Rachmaninov Vespers
Cover notes from yesterday in no. 6, no. 8.

Questions in a survey or as a group

Which of the diagrams or guides were most or least helpful?
   Cyrillic Alphabet
   Mouth and Tongue articulators
   Pronunciation guide (the rules)
   Pronunciation guide (the IPA and translation)

Was using IPA helpful?

How could it be made more helpful?

Which sounds or combinations were the most difficult or were easier than expected?

What strategies did you use in order to achieve the correct pronunciation?
Appendix 4. Daily Journal Reflections

Journal 1

Notes

Objectives: While these were a little ambitious, I believe that we achieved at least a level of understanding about both the IPA and the Russian.

I wrote out the Cyrillic Alphabet on the whiteboard because I hadn’t included it in the correct order in the handout. I think this was also easier than flipping pages and other problems that might have occurred if it was in the handout. However, I am lucky the choir classroom has a nice whiteboard and no one (at least no one spoke up) seemed to have a problem seeing the alphabet.

Most students seemed to accept me right away as an “expert” or at least a well-informed instructor. While there were a few helpful comments from choir members who have taken diction and suggested that some of my terminology might be over other students’ heads, everyone was very responsive to the material.

If I had time, perhaps reciting the alphabet and practicing a few words out of context to practice particularly difficult spellings and combinations might be helpful, in this situation I believe that the best way to go about this project is straight through, with less abstract instruction about the language.

I would like to be able to check for understanding with the students before moving on, but once again, I don’t think we have enough time for that, and perhaps the best evaluation is the progress that we make every day.

On a positive note, most seemed to get the difficult letters right away. Having catchy examples that made the students sit up and pay attention (beauty vs. unpalatalized and the ‘punched in the gut’ sound) was very helpful. I may check to see if the isolation of individual sounds was helpful to the students in any way at the end of this project.

Dr. Wiest also had the students write out the IPA guide under their music. We’ll see if this is helpful or not. Sometimes students seem to understand IPA, and sometimes it is best just to have them make up their own symbols for sounds. Since this is a performing ensemble and not a diction class, the final performance is the only thing that really counts. However, if this were a high school class, then this can open opportunities to explore how other languages work and how they work within a musical context.

Also, I didn’t get a chance to ask the students to do the homework. Perhaps, since Tuesday is a holiday (veteran’s day) they can do it for Wednesday?
Journal 2

I think it is important to bring a more practical approach to this project, considering the time constraints.

Although I practiced often, speaking the parts for the choir is turning out to be more difficult than I expected. Since spoken Russian uses a very relaxed pronunciation, and that is the pronunciation used in my Russian 101 class, it is hard to be accurate for the choir sometimes.

Although I had several sources ask for “bright, open” vowels, the choir seemed to respond more and get a better result when using the concept of a slightly “darker” space, as suggested by Dr. Wiest. Before we tried this space, the texture seemed thin and empty. This slight adjustment filled out the texture well.

Dr. Wiest also suggested that the pace of instruction could be quicker. This will help keep the choir from talking and losing attention.

The choir had difficulties with consonant clusters, palatalized consonants, and the vowel [i]. I have not yet heard any comments or complaints about my use of IPA. I hope that it will help at least a few students.

I had the entire choir repeat the text at m14 where the altos were having difficulty. This helped a lot, as well as repeating the text in rhythm.

I talked a little about the meaning of the text for No. 6 today. I think that will help us get more involved with this piece. Apparently, many people in the choir have sung a Latin or English translation of this piece in High School.

Personally, I need to focus more on individual sounds instead of entire words. The choir asks me questions about sounds that I thought were very clear. This may be a result of the previously mentioned relaxed pronunciation. However, the questions demonstrate the different perceptions of the choir. For instance, the ending АЯ [aja] is heard by the choir as [a:a]. While there is a subtle difference, it demonstrates how speakers of different languages might perceive vocal sounds differently.
Journal 3

Today we reviewed No. 6 and began working on No. 13. I chose to begin No. 13 and not No. 8 because I felt that there was less Russian to learn and the parts were easier in No. 13. This allows the choir to experience a learning curve with regards to the pronunciation.

We went over m 14 in No. 6 for the altos again. I think this needs to be something that we work on each time we cover this piece in the next two weeks. This one section contains some of the most difficult text in the entire selection.

The choir had some difficulties in No. 13 with consonant clusters such as День and смерть. This is similar to the problems in No. 6 at m 14 for the altos. However, it gets better each time, and I think it may just be a matter of practice. Also, in almost all spoken Russian I have heard, it seems that middle consonants in clusters become much less pronounced, instead of each consonant receiving equal stress. Instead of [d-n-jes'], where the pronunciation time would be elongated to accent all the syllables, the [n] in this case almost becomes part of the glide. Dr. Wiest and I decided that, just as in English, all the consonant sounds in clusters such as these should therefore come before the beat.

Sopranos at m8 – животи vowel [i] should be modified to [i]. This is also the substitution that seems to work best when a student has difficulty with the [i] sound in general.

Fixed error in the alto line at m11. UwYa makes absolutely no sense, especially considering it only occurs in the alto line and the Russian for the altos here is the same as the basses. Altos can cross this off and write “smyehr-“ or something similar to correspond with the Russian.

m10 through the end seemed to be the most difficult part for the choir. The altos and basses did not take over the melody at this point as strongly as indicated by the music. The ‘orchestration’ of these pieces and the resulting need for sensitive listening and balance may yet be the most challenging part about learning them.

I feel achieved my goal regarding lesson pacing. By moving along at a constant pace, instead of getting bogged down in questions and explanations, I was able to get much more done during this lesson.

After this lesson, I had a meeting with Dr. Birgitta Ingemanson, professor of Russian. I read each transcription/pronunciation to her while she followed along with my guide. While my pronunciations were mostly correct, she did have some comments, mostly about consonants. These included:
No. 6

Богородице – це should have no glide, or ц is always hard
Радуйся – misspelling in the transcription (ц for с) led to mispronunciation
Should о be pronounced as an [a] or [э] in unstressed locations?
Stress patterns do not match standard Russian
Should –его endings be pronounced [jevə] or [jego]?
Женах- should the stressed е be pronounced [zənax]

No. 8

Хвалите – те soft т sound should be less aspirated, should not sound like ц
Небесному – translates directly as “heaven” not as “no evil”

No. 13

Verbal –ть ending is unclear. Went over palatalization without a following vowel sound.
She described this sound as a breath of air escaping after the consonant
Поем- again, should the е sound like е ?

Although I had already come upon exceptions to some of these rules due to the archaic nature of the text in my research, some of these were surprising to me. For instance, the spelling error means I will have to correct the handouts in class, and I still have questions about the e/ě problems. The recording supports my transcription in these areas.

Here are my answers to these questions

No. 6

Богородице – fixed the oversight
Радуйся – spelling error can be attributed to my keyboard (ц is on the с key)
Unstressed о – Morosan, p 300
Stress patterns – suggested by the transcription in the music
-его endings – suggested by the transcription, recording, and confirmed on Morosan, p 300

женах – alternative stress shift to –нах would explain this switch

No. 8

Хвалите – will adapt pronunciation for this correction
Небесному – will change translation

No. 13

51
-ть ending – will continue working on this pronunciation. It is extremely difficult for English speakers to get correct, and neither I nor my entire Russian class has it down yet. We have been practicing these sounds since the beginning of the semester, and the choir gets two weeks. This sound may end up only being “good enough.”

Пое́м – strongly suggested by recording, transcription and confirmed by Morosan

This meeting was very helpful for me with pronunciation. I was able to “test” my relative mastery of the pronunciation patterns used in the All-Night Vigil texts, and Dr. Ingemanson pointed out inaccuracies that I may not have caught myself. Also, it was good for someone to critically approach my non-standard pronunciation changes, forcing me to do more research to back up my decisions.
Journal 4

Began incorporating Dr. Ingemanson’s suggestions and corrections into the choir’s transcription. This was difficult because I had to go back to material we had already practiced and change how I pronounced it and what I wanted to hear from the choir. I was worried that the choir might lose confidence in my ability, but Dr. Wiest reassured me that they handled it well and would still be supportive.

The choir seemed to have the most problems with the changes I made to the ō pronunciation. This was probably due to the fact that the change is present in many words that we have already covered, and that the previous pronunciation was much easier than what I was asking of them now. Also, I was not completely solid on this pronunciation, either. Perhaps Dr. Ingemanson can help when she comes in to listen to us.

The technique of repeating individual syllables instead of whole words seems to work much better than trying entire words at once, especially long ones such as начальнику or спасение. Once they have the individual syllables, I can move on to words and phrasing.

I meant to discuss the meaning of Troparion today, but we didn’t have enough time at the end. I feel at times that the setting of my lessons restricts me. Dr. Wiest has established a set routine for learning foreign pronunciations quickly in choral rehearsal, and I find myself having a hard time resisting the inertia and changing this structure. This structure is very efficient, however, and in the long run will probably help me by increasing the amount of attention the choir pays to detail.

Also, I think I will stop putting homework sections on my lesson plans. This is a concession to the ‘choral inertia’ discussed above. I never seem to get a chance to cover them, and they aren’t particularly necessary. I might still use them in a different choral setting, however.
Today we moved on to No. 8. Dr. Wiest suggested that we begin today with that text instead of reviewing the other two first as originally planned. Time is of the essence! However, we were able to review a little on No. 6.

No. 8 is probably the most difficult of the three pieces in this set. It has the largest words, the longest and most complicated text, and each choir section is split into at least two parts throughout the entire piece. Today I also noticed that it has by far the most difficult tessitura in any piece we are doing this semester, not just among the three Russian pieces.

I continued working on the changes in pronunciation from my session with Dr. Ingemanson, focusing especially on -тъ, -те, and ъ endings.

Again, I noticed in both No. 8 and No. 6 that the choir was having difficulty with consonant clusters. Specifically, in No. 6, the altos at m 14 have problems with в женах and плод чрева, and at the beginning of No. 8, everyone has problems with хвалите and Господне. It seems the choir is overly worried about getting out each and every consonant, and they run out of time to finish the cluster before the beat. This results in altered consonants, such as the altos turning в женах [v 3enax] into [v zenax], or poor attack coordination, which renders the sound incomprehensible to the listener. I feel that they are over-pronouncing these consonant clusters.

The choir also had difficulty on No. 6 with the [i] sound. Dr. Wiest asked me to bring in a more accurate description of this sound for the next lesson. I think most of the singers are improving, however.

On a positive note: No. 6 has progressed very well. The choir has become more comfortable with the pronunciation, and is really starting to make music instead of just worrying about notes, rhythms, and pronunciations.
Journal 6

After having problems yesterday with [i], I went back and copied into my lesson all of the descriptions that each of my sources used. Some of these seemed helpful to the choir, while others were confusing or merely entertaining, such as the suggestion that it should sound like someone had just punched you in the gut. However, I settled on a description in Jones and Ward, using a vowel chart. I drew the chart on the board for the choir, and described the phonetics of [i]. This may help when I describe how it should feel when pronouncing this sound, but otherwise it just means more practice. I am really glad that I took the Russian class now, because I have been forced to practice this sound every day since the beginning of the semester, as well as hear correct examples over and over. I cannot underestimate how much help this has been.

I also focused today on consonant clusters. The choir continues to improve, but my suggestions do not help much. I don’t think asking them to “under-pronounce” these clusters will help very much. Right now, I don’t want to emphasize that too much in case they take that as a license to be lax about detail. Instead, I will demonstrate the correct sound and correct what I can. Each time, they are much better, and eventually, they should become comfortable with these clusters.

Otherwise, we simply reviewed the pronunciations, especially No. 8. I have spent most of the last two weeks or so sitting outside of the choir listening to them sing instead of singing myself. I have been listening to the recording for the entire semester, so I already know my part (and a few of the others, too). It is so enjoyable to listen to the choir every day. While singing with the group, I can get some idea of what the choir sounds like to the audience, but the sound is absolutely amazing in B42 when I am just sitting and listening. I am really glad I could play a part in making music like this.
Journal 7

Today was mostly review and preparation of the musical aspects of these pieces. Regarding pronunciation, everything seems to be coming together well. The [i] sound, consonant clusters, choppy pronunciation of long words, and –ть endings seem to be the biggest problems still. I focused a little more on phrasing and text stress than on individual sounds, especially in No. 8 from m 22-32 with the altos and bases.
Journal 8

This was the final instructional setting for this project. We reviewed both the musical and pronunciation aspects of these three pieces, covering my notes and suggestions from yesterday, as well as any questions the students had. Although I was not able to get any formal feedback from the students on my instructional methods, including the pronunciation guide, the diagrams, and the use of IPA, I got some informal feedback suggesting that these guides were helpful but also confusing. Concert Choir is used to learning language by rote, and it is a very effective method. I simply provided a means for the students to help themselves. Also, the time constraint was a large issue. I had only two weeks to teach the pronunciation for three choral works in a language that was very unfamiliar to all of the students. In my own classroom, I could use pronunciation guides more effectively by giving them out at the beginning of the year. Then, after teaching IPA early, the students would become comfortable enough with the concept that I could use IPA to teach any language pronunciation as needed. Also, any kind of formal guide might help when working on the various problems associated with singing in English.

Dr. Ingemanson joined us today and listened so I could assess how well I had done through the use of an independent, expert listener. For the most part, there were only a few corrections that needed to be made. She corrected a few vowels that she heard as either indistinguishable or wrong. She also corrected the soft -ть ending, describing the sound as a slight breath after the t.