

University of Pittsburgh
Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures

Russian Literature in Musical Adaptation
RUSS 1624 (Undergraduate)
RUSS 2624 (Graduate)

Course Number: 28863/28864
Instructor: Kathleen Manukyan, kam262@pitt.edu
Office: CL 1420A
Office Hours: M 1-2, Th 12-1, or by appointment
Class Meetings: Thursday 2:30-5:25, CL 302

Welcome to “Russian Literature in Musical Adaptation.” This course is designed for graduate students and advanced undergraduate students with a background in Russian literature or music. Knowledge of Russian language and music theory/notation is not a prerequisite for this course, though students with these skills will have the opportunity to make use of them in weekly assignments and term papers. This course explores Russian literature as interpreted in music. Students will read works of Russian poetry and prose, then examine the "transposition" of those works into media such as opera, ballet, and song. In class readings and discussions, students will consider such topics as the role of national identity in the selection and adaptation of narratives to be set to music; technical (linguistic and musical) considerations that influence the revision of a text to a libretto; the influence of musical adaptations on the perception of source works; and competing critical theories of adaptation. By the end of the course, students will be familiar with many canonical and contemporary works of Russian literature and their musical adaptations. But the primary aim of this course is to provide students with the skills required to include musical texts (too often ignored by cultural historians) in their future scholarship.

During this course, students will:

1. Become familiar with many of the most prominent adaptations of Russian literature to the opera, ballet, and concert stage.
2. Learn about the cultural contexts in which these critical works were/are created and performed.
3. Become familiar with the contemporary critical apparatus that scholars use to consider the topic of adaptation of literature to music.
4. Explore and evaluate ways that scholars have attempted to write on the topic of adaptation to music.
5. Practice analyzing text set to music.
6. Produce their own work of scholarship by applying #1-5 above.

Evaluation:

Preparation and Participation: 15%

Students must come to each class meeting having completed the required reading/viewing/listening for that day and prepared for discussion.

Reaction Statements on CourseWeb: 10%

Students must respond to the musical text for the day in at least one posting of several sentences on our class CourseWeb discussion forums. The purpose of this exercise is to keep the class engaged in the material during the long 6 days when we do not meet. Each student should post by Tuesday evening so that there is time to review each other's reactions.

Short Presentations 15%

Students must perform two oral presentations by the end of the semester.

Presentation 1- Author biography (5%)

The presenter should prepare a summary of an author's biography, including, for example, relevant personal information, body of works, the author's place within any relevant literary movements, prominent influences, forms, features, and, in particular, the significance of the work we are reading for class within his body of work. This presentation should last approximately 10 minutes.

Presentation 2- Composer biography + analysis of excerpt (10%)

The presenter should prepare an analogous summary of one composer's biography plus an independent analysis and interpretation of one short excerpt from the musical selection that we listen to for the day. 15-20 min.

Midterm Paper Components: 20%

Midterm Paper Proposal (5%)

One paragraph, bibliography suggested but not required.

Midterm Paper (15%)

Midterm paper must be grounded in our material in that: 1) they include some discussion of a musical piece or performance practice/custom from the tradition of Russian opera, ballet, or concert "art music," for lack of a better term; 2) they include some discussion of a Russian text (words). Within these bounds, students are free and encouraged to pursue their own interests. Students must use at least 2 secondary sources in the midterm paper. Page requirements are: 5-7 undergrad; 7-9 grad.

Final Paper Components: 40%

Final Paper Abstract (5%)

The abstract will be formatted according to guidelines to be distributed at a later date. A properly formatted bibliography of at least three secondary sources is required.

Oral Presentation of Research: (15%)

During the final week, students will perform a formal presentation of their research-to-date.

Final Research Paper: (20%)

The subject matter stipulations are the same as for the midterms. Students are encouraged to develop successful midterm papers into final papers. Page requirements: 8-10 undergrads, 10-25 grad.

Weekly Syllabus of Assignments:

Primary	Secondary
Week 1 – The Roots of Russian Opera	
Viewing: Glinka, <i>A Life for the Tsar</i>	Reading: Maes, 1-29 (PDF)
Week 2 –Opera Libretti: Verse ○ Guest Lecture by Dr. Anna Nisnevich	
Reading: Pushkin, <i>Eugene Onegin</i> (207) (Undergrad – Chapters 1, 3, 6, 8) Viewing: Tchaikovsky, <i>Eugene Onegin</i>	Reading: Schmidgall, 217-246 (Reserve)
Week 3 – Opera Libretti: Prose	
Reading: Pushkin, “The Queen of Spades” (30) Viewing: Tchaikovsky, <i>The Queen of Spades</i>	Reading: Gasparov (online through PittCat in full text), 132-160
Week 4 – “Transposition” and Musical Realism	
Reading: Pushkin, “Boris Godunov” (117) Viewing: Musorgsky, <i>Boris Godunov</i>	Reading: Emerson, 1-29, 88-211 (Undergrads may peruse the second section) (Reserve)
Week 5 – Fairy Tale Opera	
Reading: Ostrovsky, <i>The Snow Maiden</i> Viewing: Rimsky-Korsakov, <i>The Snow Maiden</i>	Reading: Rimsky-Korsakov, <i>My Musical Life</i> 193-206 (Reserve); Halbe 53-92 (Peruse) (PDF)
Week 6 – Russian Opera and the Eastern Theme	
Reading: <i>The Lay of Igor’s Campaign</i> Viewing: Borodin, <i>Prince Igor</i>	Reading: Taruskin, “Entoiling the Falconet” (27)
Week 7 – Modernist Opera ○ Midterm paper proposal due	
Reading: Dostoevsky, <i>The Gambler</i> (146) Viewing: Prokofiev, <i>The Gambler</i>	Reading: Burry, 37-69
Week 8 – Soviet Opera	
Reading: Leskov, <i>Lady MacBeth of Mtsensk District</i> (60) Viewing: Shostakovich, <i>Lady MacBeth of Mtsensk District</i> (Streaming online through PittCat)	Reading: Frolova-Walker (24) (PDF); Grads: Taruskin, <i>Defining Russia Musically</i> , 468-510 (Undergrad optional; Graduate peruse)

Week 9 – Contemporary Opera ○ Midterm Papers Due	
Reading: Gogol, <i>Dead Souls, Part I</i> (278) (Undergrad cut – TBD) Viewing: Shchedrin, <i>Dead Souls</i> (pending or partial/audio only)	Reading: Keefer (22) (PDF)
Week 10 – The Classical Ballet	
Reading: Yershov, “The Humpbacked Horse”; Pushkin, “The Fountain of Bakhchisarai” Viewing: <i>The Humpbacked Horse</i> Asafiev, Zakharov, <i>The Fountain of Bakhchisarai</i>	No secondary reading this week. Start brainstorm/work on final papers.
Week 11 – The Ballets Russes	
Reading: “The Firebird,” Russian Wedding Lyrics Viewing: Stravinsky, <i>The Firebird, Les Noces</i>	Reading: Banes, 94-100, 108-122 (Reserve) Recommended: (Grads – please peruse these chapters) Taruskin, <i>Stravinsky</i> , 555-660 (for Firebird)(available online thru PittCat); Taruskin, <i>Defining Russia Musically</i> , 389-467 (For Svadebka) (Reserve)
Week 12 – Contemporary Ballet	
Reading: Chekhov, <i>The Seagull</i> Viewing: Shchedrin, Plisetskaya <i>The Seagull</i> ; Eifman, <i>The Seagull</i> (pending and/or partial) Neumeier <i>The Seagull</i> (pending)	Reading: Polotskaia (20) (PDF); Erken (12) (PDF)
Week 13 – Choral Music and Song Cycles ○ Abstract of final paper due	
Reading: Russian Orthodox Holy Mass; Poetry selections Listening: Rachmaninov <i>All-Night Vigil</i> ; Sviridov, <i>Oratorio Pathetique</i> ; Rachmaninov, <i>15 Songs, Op. 2s</i> ; Desiatnikov, <i>Love and Life of a Poet</i>	Reading: Manulkina (3) (PDF); Morosan (pages TBD) (Reserve)
Week 14 ○ Student Presentations of Individual Research	

Bibliography of Secondary Sources

Banes, Sally. *Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage*. NY: Routledge, 1998.

Emerson, Caryl. *Boris Godunov: Transpositions of a Russian Theme*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.

Erken, Emily. "Narrative Ballet as Multi-medial Art: John Neumeier's *The Seagull*." *19th –Century Music* 36/2., 2012: 159-171.

Frolova-Walker, Marina. "Stalin and the Art of Boredom." *Twentieth Century Music* 1/1, 2004: 101-124.

Gasparov, Boris. *Five Operas and a Symphony: Words and Music in Russian Culture*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2005.

Halbe, Gregory. —Music, Drama and Folklore in Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's Opera *Snegurochka [Snowmaiden]*.|| PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2004.

Keefer, Lubov. "Gogol' and Music." *The Slavic and East European Journal* XIV/2, 1970: 160-181

Maes, Francis. *A History of Russian Music: From Kamarinskaya to Babi Yar*. University of California P, 2006.

Morosan, Vladimir. *Choral Performance in Pre-revolutionary Russia*. Madison: Musica Russica, 1994.

Polotskaia, Emma. "Chekhov in the Language of Ballet: *The Seagull* at the Bolshoi Theater." *Chekhov Then & Now: The Reception of Chekhov in World Culture*, 1997:239-258.

Rimsky-Korsakov. *My Musical Life*. Trans. Judah Joffe. NY: Tudor, 1936.

Schmidgall, Gary. *Literature as Opera*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Taruskin, Richard. *Defining Russia Musically*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997.

Taruskin, Richard. —'Entoiling the Falconet': Russian Musical Orientalism in Context.|| *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Nov., 1992): 253-280.

Taruskin, Richard. *Stravinsky and the Russian Tradition: A Biography of the Works through Mavra*. University of California Press, 1996.