

WIGMORE HALL

Wednesday 17 January 2024

6.00pm Rachmaninov Song Series Pre-Concert Talk

Join Philip Ross Bullock as he explores the songs of Sergey Rachmaninov, his colleagues and followers, ahead of the second concert in the series.

7.30pm

Kristina Mkhitarian soprano
Andrey Zhilikhovsky baritone
Michael Foyle violin
Iain Burnside piano

Sergey Rachmaninov (1873-1943)	In the silence of the secret night Op. 4 No. 3 (?1892)
	Before my window Op. 26 No. 10 (1906)
Reinhold Glière (1875-1956)	Awake, my child Op. 50 No. 2 (1909)
	Waves, who stopped you in your tracks Op. 62 No. 7 (1912)
Sergey Rachmaninov	When yesterday we met Op. 26 No. 13 (1906)
Reinhold Glière	Meek little star Op. 12 No. 2 (1903)
Sergey Rachmaninov	They answered Op. 21 No. 4 (1902)
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Reinhold Glière	Oh, were my sadness Op. 28 No. 3 (c.1906)
	Twilight Op. 18 No. 2 (1904)
	Atlas Op. 58 No. 7 (1912)
Sergey Rachmaninov	Here it's so fine Op. 21 No. 7 (1902)
	Again I am alone Op. 26 No. 9 (1906)
	She is as beautiful as midday Op. 14 No. 9 (1896)
	Sleep Op. 38 No. 5 (1916)

Interval



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ENGLAND**



Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov (1859-1935) From *4 Poems by Rabindranath Tagore* Op. 68 (1935)
Do not leave me without saying farewell
Hands cling to hands

~

Nicolas Medtner (1880-1951) Echo Op. 32 No. 1 (1915)
Waltz Op. 37 No. 4 (1918-20)
Day and night Op. 24 No. 1 (1911)

~

Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov Georgia Op. 58 No. 3 (c.1925)
Samuil Feinberg (1890-1962) Sing not to me, beautiful maiden Op. 26 No. 1 (1935-6)
Aleksandr Spendiarov (1871-1928) Lullaby Op. 25 No. 1 (1915)
To the beloved (1916)
Ozymandias Op. 11 No. 1 (1904)
Sergey Rachmaninov Sing not to me, beautiful maiden Op. 4 No. 4 (?1892-3)
arranged by Fritz Kreisler

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What is it to speak of Russian song? Does its character stem from a composer's ethnic background? Or the language of its poetry? Or the nationalism of its musical style? Such questions are addressed in the work of six composers active in the final years of the Russian Empire and the first decades of the Soviet Union. Their songs reveal the diversity of a country that is so often called simply 'Russia', but whose geographical expanse has always included a vast range of other territories and peoples. **Rachmaninov** was profoundly aware of such questions, as he observed in America in 1919, shortly after he left his homeland for good: 'The immense dimensions of the country make it quite naturally a collection of diverse peoples – many of them totally and absolutely different from people in other parts of the land. They have diverse languages and different folk songs. The peasant music of the Caucasus and the Crimea, for example, are hardly Russian at all. They are Oriental. Borodin recognised this, and he has used them in some of his works with Oriental settings with wonderful effect. ... Although Russia has a territory of eight million square miles, not all of this is distinctively Slavic.'

'Sing not to me, beautiful maiden' embodies the Oriental strain in Russian song. Based on a famous poem by Pushkin, its rhapsodic melismas, drone basses and insistent rhythms conjure up an exotic, if largely imaginary vision of the East. 'She is as beautiful as midday' sets words by the Jewish poet Nikolay Vilenkin, who derived his penname of 'Minsky' from his hometown, the Belarusian capital, Minsk. Minsky's poem was originally included in a short cycle of eight poems with the title *From the East*, and Rachmaninov's song is full of evocative languor. Elsewhere, Rachmaninov hymned the beauty of the natural world ('Before my window', 'Here it's so fine'), or the erotic entanglements that were so common on Russian country estates ('In the silence of the secret night', 'Again I am alone' – the latter to words by Bunin, the bard of Russian country life). Sometimes, though, a song is just a song – an evocation of psychological interiority beyond any particular time, place or even language. 'When yesterday we met' feels like a scene from a novel, compressed into the concision of a lyric, whilst 'They answered' (to words by Victor Hugo) relates an eternal story of human courtship. In 'Sleep', Rachmaninov ushers us into a dream world of transcendent, timeless beauty.

Glière was a near contemporary of Rachmaninov's, whose origins encapsulate the intricacies of national identity in the Russian Empire. Despite his French-sounding name, he was born to a German father and a Polish mother who had settled in Kyiv. He received his first musical education in the Ukrainian capital, before moving to Moscow. He later returned to Kyiv, where his students included the great Ukrainian symphonist Boris Lyatoshynsky (himself the teacher of Silvestrov). Settling permanently in Moscow in 1920, Glière spent time in Baku, where he composed an opera based on

an Azerbaijani legend, as well as in Tashkent, where he contributed to the development of modern Uzbek art music. In his many songs (all written before the October Revolution), Glière cleaved to the tradition that went back to Glinka and which had been perfected by Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov. His taste in literature was mainly for the classics of the Russian school, such as Pushkin, as well as more modern poets such as Rathaus and Lokhvitskaya. If some of these writers were dismissed by snobbish critics at the time as derivative and middlebrow, Glière showed more accepted taste in his setting of Blok's translation of Heine's 'Atlas' (famous, of course, from Schubert's *Schwanengesang*).

Ippolitov-Ivanov was born in St Petersburg and went on to direct the Moscow Conservatory (where his pupils included Glière). It is, though, with Georgia that he is particularly associated. He spent much of the 1880s running the music academy in Tbilisi, as well as administrating the local branch of the Russian Music Society. Tchaikovsky – whose brother Anatoly was state prosecutor and later deputy governor in Tbilisi – became a close friend at the time. In the 1920s, Ippolitov-Ivanov returned to Soviet Georgia to teach composition at the national conservatory. 'Georgia' records his impressions of that visit, whereas his settings of the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore (written in 1935), look far beyond the Caucasian mountains for inspiration. Tagore had visited the Soviet Union in 1930, drawn to communism as an antidote to British imperialism. **Spendiarov** illustrates another aspect of the relationship between Russia and the Caucasus. Spendiarov (also Spendaryan) was born in Crimea, going on to study in Moscow and St Petersburg. Encouraged by Rimsky-Korsakov, he laid the foundations for modern classical art music in Armenia, composing an opera, orchestral works and songs that fused European forms with local colour. His 'Lullaby' is based on the folklore of the Tatar community he encountered in Crimea, and in 'Ozymandias' (1904), he gives voice to Shelley's dramatic poem about the legendary Egyptian pharaoh, Ramesses II.

Not all Russian composers were drawn to the East. **Medtner** was descended from a family of Baltic Germans who had long made their home in the Russian Empire. As fond of Eichendorff, Heine, Goethe and Nietzsche as he was of Pushkin, Fet and Tyutchev, Medtner found a musical voice that was the perfect fusion of Germanic and Slavonic influences. Born in Odesa in 1890, **Feinberg** moved to Moscow aged four, where he continued the pianistic legacy of Medtner, Rachmaninov and Skryabin into the Soviet era. His setting of Pushkin's 'Sing not to me, beautiful maiden' reflects the gargantuan celebrations of the centenary of the poet's death in 1937, marked from Minsk to Vladivostok, from Murmansk to Dushanbe.

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Sergey Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

In the silence of the secret night Op. 4 No. 3

(?1892)

Afanasy Fet

O, dolga budu ya, v molchani nochi tainoi,	O, long will I, in the silence of the mysterious night,
Kovarnyi lepet tvoi, ulybku, vzor, vzor sluchainyi,	your sly chatter, smile, glance, casual glance,
Perstam poslushnuyu volos, volos tvoikh gustuyu pryad	hair pliant to my fingers, your thick shock of hair,
Iz myslei izgonyat i snova prizyvay;	banish from my thoughts and summon back again,
Sheptat i popravlyat bylye vyrazheniya	whisper and improve past words
Rechei moikh s toboi, ispolnennykh smushcheniya,	I spoke to you, so full of shy confusion,
I v opyaneni, naperekor umu,	and in rapture against all reason,
Zavetnym imenem budit nochnuyu tmu.	awake night's darkness with your cherished name.
O, dolgo budu ya, v molchani nochi tainoi,	O, long will I, in the silence of the mysterious night,
Zavetnym imenem budit nochnuyu tmu.	awake night's darkness with your cherished name.

Before my window Op. 26 No. 10 (1906)

Galina

U moevo okna cheryomukha tsvetyot,	The cherry tree's in flower outside my window,
Tsvetyot zadumchivo pod rizoi serebristoi..	in silver robe it blossoms pensively...
I vetkoi svezhoi i dushystoi	and with a fresh and fragrant bough
Sklonilas i zovyot...	it bends to me and beckons...
Yeyo trepeshchushchikh vozdushnykh lepestkov	Lovely are its trembling airy blossoms,
Ya radostsno lovlyu vesyoloye dykhanye,	in rapture I inhale their happy breath,
lkh sladkii aromat tumanit mne soznanye,	their sweet aroma clouds my senses,
I pesni o lyubvi oni poyut bez slov...	they are singing love songs without words ...

Reinhold Glière (1875-1956)

Awake, my child Op. 50 No. 2 (1909)

Mirra Lokhvitskaya

Prosnis, ditya! zabud nochnye gryozy, Rassei mechty.	Awake, my child! Forget night's dreams, cast reverie aside.
V tvoyom sadu uzhe raskrylis rozy,	The roses in your garden have already opened –
Prosnis i ty!	so you should awake too!
Tsvetov lyubvi v okno ya nabrosayu	Through the window, I rain down flowers of love
Na grud tvoyu.	onto your breast.
Tebya lyublyu, no strast svoyu skryvayu,	I love you, but I conceal my passion,
V dushe tayu.	and harbour it in my soul.
I tolko v pesne, plammenoi i nezhnoi,	It is only in song, so ardent and so tender,
Zvuchit ona,	that my love can be heard,
I lyotsya pesn, kak morya shum myatezhnyi,	and song pours forth, like the restive sound of a storm,
Toboi polna!	so full of you!

Waves, who stopped you in your tracks

Op. 62 No. 7 (1912)

Alexander Pushkin

Kto, volny, vas ostanovil,	Waves, who stopped you in your tracks,
Kto okoval vash beg moguchii,	who fettered your mighty onward rush,
Kto v prud bezmolvnyi i dremuchii	who channelled your insurgent flow
Potok myatezhnyi obratil?	into a hushed and drowsy pond?
Vy, buri, vetry, vzroite vody,	Oh winds and storms, stir up these waters,
Razrushte gibelnyi oplot!	destroy this fateful citadel!
Gde ty, groza – simvol svobody,	Where are you, tempest – symbol of freedom?
Promchis poverkh nevolnykh vod!	Fly across these becalmed waters!

Sergey Rachmaninov

When yesterday we met Op. 26 No. 13 (1906)

Yakov Polonsky

Vchera my vstretilis: Ona ostanovilas,	Yesterday we chanced to meet: she stopped,
Ya takzhe ... my v glaza drug drugu posmotreli ...	so did I ... we looked into each other's eyes ...
O, Bozhe! kak ona s tekh por pereminilas,	Oh God! How she has changed since our last meeting,
V glazakh potukh ogon, i shchyoki pobledneli ...	her eyes have lost their light, her cheeks their colour ...
I dolgo na neyo glyadel ya molcha strogo ...	for a long time I gazed at her, in silence, sternly ...
Mne ruku protyanuv, bednyazhka ulybnulas;	the poor thing offered me her hand, and gave me a smile;
Ya govorit khotel; ona zhe radi Boga,	I was about to speak, but she bade me for God's sake
Velela mne molchat, i tut zhe, otvernulas,	to be still, and quickly turned away,
I brovi sdvinula, I vydernula ruku,	and frowned, and withdrew her hand,
I molvila: 'Proshchaite, do svidanya!'	and spoke: 'Farewell ... goodbye ...!'
A ya khotel skazat: 'Na vechnuyu razluku	And I wanted to say: 'So we part forever,
Proshchai, pogibsheye, no miloe sozdanye.'	farewell, thou being, ruined, but still dear.'

Reinhold Glière

Meek little star Op. 12 No. 2 (1903)

Pyotr Yakobovich

Zvyozdochka krotkaya, zvyozdochka yasnaya	Meek little star, bright little star,
Shto ty glyadish na menya, Vechno spokoinaya, vechno prekrasnaya,	why do you look at me so, always so peaceful, always so beautiful,
Polnaya vecho ognya?	always so full of fire?
Esli b ty znala, s kakimi stradanyami	If only you knew how here, down on earth,
Zdes, na zemle, nuzhno zhit,	we must live our lives with such suffering,
Tshchetno tomitsya mechtami, zhelanyami,	how we languish in vain in dreams and desires,
Gody bez smysla vlachit!	how we eke out our years without meaning!
Esli b ty znala, kak serdtse goryacheye	If only you knew how the ardent heart
Rabskuyu dolyu klyanyot, Rvyotsya pokinut boloto stoyacheye,	curses its slavish lot, how it longs to quit the stagnant bog,
Zhazhdet lazurnykh vysot!	how it yearns for the azure heights above!

Zvyozdochka krotkaya, zvyozdochka yasnaya	Meek little star, bright little star,
Shto zhe ty merknesh, drozhish?	why do you fade, why do you quiver?
Vechno spokoinaya, vechno prekrasnaya,	Always so peaceful, always so beautiful,
Slovno v ispuge glyadish...	you look so afraid...
Shto zhe ty merknesh, drozhish?	Why do you fade, why do you quiver?

Sergey Rachmaninov

They answered Op. 21 No. 4 (1902)

Victor Hugo, trans. Lev Mey

Sprosil oni: 'Kak v letuchikh chelnakh,	The men asked: 'how, in swift boats,
Nam beloyu chaikoi skolznut na volnakh,	can we glide over the waves like white seagulls,
Chob nas storozha ne dognali?'	to escape the guards who pursue us?'
- Grebite! - one otvechali.	Row! - the women answered.

Sprosil oni: 'Kak zabyt navsegda,	They asked: 'how can we forget for good,
Chto v mire yudolnom yest bednost, beda,	that in this vale of tears there's poverty and trouble,
Chto yest v nyom vrazhda i pechali?'	malice and sorrow?'
- Zasnite! - one otvechali.	Sleep! - they answered.

Sprosil oni: 'Kak krasavits privlech	They asked: 'how can we win pretty women
Bez chary: chtob sami, na strastnuyu rech,	without spells: so our passionate words alone
One nam v obyatiya pali?'	will make them fall into our arms?'
- Lyubite! - one otvechali.	Love! - they answered.

Reinhold Glière

Oh, were my sadness Op. 28 No. 3 (c.1906)

Sergey Safonov

O, esly b grust moya,
Shto davit serdtse
mne,
Tebe bez slov byla
ponyatno.
Kak nochi mgla bez
zvyozd,
Kak mir v predsmertnom
sne,
Ona temna i neobyatna!

Oh, were my sadness,
which so oppresses my
heart,
understandable to you
without words.
But like the darkness of a
starless night,
like the world in a dream
that comes before death,
it is dark and vast!

Obmanchivoi
slezoi
Ne vyplachesh vsevo,
Ne pereskazhesh pesnei
nezhnoi.
Ty pesni ne
poimyosh,
Kak serdtsa
moeovo
Ne ponyal ty v grudi
myatezhnoi.

You cannot weep
everything away
with a false tear,
or convey it with a tender
song.
You cannot understand
my song,
just as you failed to
understand
my heart in its rebellious
breast.

Twilight Op. 18 No. 2 (1904)

Daniil Rathaus

Sumerki grustno
spustilis na
zemlyu;
Mgloyu okutalsya nash
ugolok;
Molcha tvoim ya priznaniyam
vnemlyu,
Serdtsem ustalym tebe ya
dalyok.
Tikho ronyaya listki za
listkami,
Rozy pred nami uvyali,
grustya.
Milyi moi drug, dorogoye
ditya!
Nado rasstatsya s vesennimi
snami.

Twilight sorrowfully
descended upon the
earth;
our little nook was
shrouded in darkness;
in silence, I harken to your
words of confession,
but in my heart, I am far
away.
Quietly shedding petal
after petal,
the roses before us have
faded in their sadness.
My beloved friend, my
dear child!
we must abandon our
springtime dreams.

Atlas Op. 58 No. 7 (1912)

Heinrich Heine, trans. Alexander Blok

Ya Atlas
zlopoluchnyi!
Tselyi mir, ves mir
stradanii na plechi
podyemlyu,

I am Atlas, the
unfortunate one!
I must bear the entire
world of sorrows on my
shoulders,

Podyemlyu
neposilnoe, i
serdtse
V grudi gotovo razorvatsya.

I must bear that which
cannot be borne, and
my heart
would break in my breast.

Ty serdtsem gordym sam
tovo zhelal!
Zhelal blazhenstv,
blazhenstv bezmernykh
serdtsu,
Il nepomernykh gordomu
skorbei,
Tak vot: teper ty
skorben.

With your proud heart
you wished it so!
You wished for blessings,
blessings beyond
measure,
or for sorrows beyond the
ken of the proud heart,
so here you are: wretched
now.

Sergey Rachmaninov

Here it's so fine Op. 21 No. 7 (1902)

Galina

Zdes khorosho...Vzglyani:
vdali
Ognyom gorit reka,
Tsvetnym kovrom luga
legli,
Beleyut
oblaka.

Here it's so fine...Look: in
the distance
the river glitters like fire,
the meadows are a carpet
of colour,
there are white clouds
overhead.

Zdes net lyudei...Zdes
tishina...
Zdes tolko Bog da ya.
Tsvety, da staraya
sosna,
Da ty, mechta moya...

Here there are no people
...it's so quiet...
here are only God and I.
And the flowers, and the
old pine tree,
and you, my dream...

Again I am alone Op. 26 No. 9 (1906)

Ivan Bunin

Kak svetla, kak naryadna
vesna!
Poglyadi mne v glaza, kak
byvalo,
I skazhi: otchevo ty
grustna?
Otchevo ty tak laskova
stala?
No molchish ty, slaba, kak
tsvetok ...
O molchi! Mne ne nado
priznanya:
Ya uznal etu lasku
proshchanya ...
Ya opyat odinok!

How bright spring is, how
festively adorned!
Look me in the eyes, as
you often used to,
and tell me: why are you
so sad,
why this sudden loving
caress?
But you're silent, fragile
as a flower ...
Oh, don't speak! No
confession is needed:
I recognise this farewell
caress ...
Once again I'm alone!

She is as beautiful as midday Op. 14 No. 9

(1896)

Nikolay Minsky

Ona, kak polden, khorosha, Ona zagadochnei polnochi. U nei neplakavshiy ochi I ne stradavshaya dusha.	She is as beautiful as midday, more enigmatic than midnight. Her eyes have no known weeping nor her soul suffering.
A mne, chya zhizn borba i gore, Po nei tomitsya suzhdeno. Tak vechno plachushcheye more V bezmolvnyi bereg vlyubleno.	And I, who know but strife and grief, am destined to long for her. Thus eternally the weeping sea is drawn by love to the silent shore.

Sleep Op. 38 No. 5 (1916)

Fyodor Sologub

V mire net nichego Dozhdelenneye sna, Chary yest u nego, U nego tishina. U nego na ustakh Ni pechal i ni smekh, I v bezdonnykh ochakh Mnogo tainykh utekh. U nego shiroki, Shiroki dva kryla, I legki, tak legki, Kak polnochnaya mgla. Ne ponyat, kak nesyot, I kuda i na chyom On krylom ne vzmakhnet I ne dvinet plechom.	Nothing in the world is more wished for than sleep, he has powers to charm, he has stillness. On his lips there is neither sorrow nor laughter, and in his fathomless eyes are many secret pleasures. He has wide, two wide wings, and they're light, as light as midnight darkness. How you're borne is unknown, and whence, and on what, he won't flap his wing, and he won't move his shoulder.
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Interval

Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov (1859-1935)

From 4 Poems by Rabindranath Tagore Op. 68

(1935)

Do not leave me without saying farewell (1935)

Rabindranath Tagore

Ne ukhodi, ne prostivshis so mnoi, moi milyi! Mne ne spalos, i teper, dorogoi moi, Sna prevozmoch ne imeyu ya sily. Yesli usnu, ya tebya poteryayu! Ne ukhodi, ne prostivshis so mnoi. Vzdrognu, tebya ya kasayus v trevoze. Yesli b, svyazav tvoi ruki, Ya serdtsem svoim krepko derzhat u grudi ikh mogla by! Ne ukhodi... Ya shepchu, zasypaya: 'Ne ukhodi... ne ukhodi... ne ukhodi... ne ukhodi!'	Do not leave me without saying farewell, my love! I have not slept all night, and now, my darling, the desire to sleep is too much for me! I fear that should I fall asleep, I should lose you! Do not leave without saying farewell to me. Trembling, I anxiously reach out to touch you. If only, having bound your hands, I could hold them close to my breast with my heart! Do not leave me... I whisper as I fall asleep: 'Do not leave... do not leave... do not leave me!'
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Hands cling to hands (1935)

Rabindranath Tagore

I ruki Inut k rukam, i ochi smotryat v ochi – Tak prost nash gimn serdets v siyanye etoi nochi. Luna nam tikho svetit, struitsya aromat, I fleita, i girlyanda v zabvenii lezhat. Zachem teper mne zvuki, zachem tebe tsvety. Prosta lyubov, kak pesnya, zdes tolko ya da ty. I smotryat ochi v ochi, i Inut k ustam usta. Mezh mnoyu i toboyu lyubov, kak pesn, prosta.	Hands cling to hands, and eyes gaze into eyes – so simple is the hymn of our hearts in the radiance of this night. The moon shines down on us in silence, the air is heavy with scent, and flute and garland lie forgotten. What use are sounds to me, what use are flowers to you? Love is as simple as a song, you and I are here alone, and eyes gaze into eyes, and lips fall upon lips. The love between you and me is as simple as a song.
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Nicolas Medtner (1880-1951)

Echo Op. 32 No. 1 (1915)

Alexander Pushkin

Revyot li zver v lesu
glukhom,
Trubit li rog, gremit li
grom,
Poyot li deva za
kholmom –
Na vsyakii zvuk
Svoi otklik v vozdukhe pustom
Rodish ty vdrug.

If beast should howl deep
in the forest,
if horn should blow, or
thunder roll,
if maid should sing
beyond the hill –
to all these sounds
your voice resounds,
stirring the empty air.

Ty vnemlesh grokhotu
gromov,
I glasu buri i
valov,
I kriku selskikh
pastukhov –
I shlyosh otvet;
Tebe zh net otzyva... Takov
I ty, poet!

You hearken to the
thunder's growl,
to the voice of the storm
and the heavy waves,
to the cry of country
shepherds –
to them to utter your reply;
yet echo comes there not...
Such is your fate, poet!

Waltz Op. 37 No. 4 (1918-20)

Afanasy Fet

Davno I pod volshebnye
zvuki
Nosilis po zale my s
nei?
Tyoply byli nezhnye
ruki,
Tyoply byli zvyozdy
ochei.

How long has it been
since she and I
danced through the hall
to magical sounds?
Her tender arms were
warm then,
warm were the stars of
her eyes.

Vchera peli pesn
pogrebenya,
Bez kryshi grobnitsa byla;
Zakryvshi glaza, bez
dvizhenya,
Ona pod parchoyu
spala.

Yesterday they sang her
funeral song,
her coffin was open;
her eyes were closed,
motionless
she slept beneath a cloth
of brocade.

Ya spal... nad postelyu moyeyu
Stoyala luna
mertvetsom.
Pod chudnye zvuki my s
neyu
Nosilis po zale
vdvoyom.

I slept... Above my bed
the moon stood like a
corpse.
To wondrous sounds, she
and I
danced through the hall
together.

Day and night Op. 24 No. 1 (1911)

Fyodor Tyutchev

Na mir tainstvennyi
dukhov,
Nad etoi bezdnoi
bezmyannoi,
Pokrov nabroshen
zlatotkanyi
Vysokoi voleyu
bogov.
Den – sei blistatelnyi
pokrov –
Den, zemnorodnykh
ozhivlenye,
Dushi bolyashchei itselenye,
Drug chelovekov i
bogov!

Over the mysterious
world of spirits,
above this nameless
abyss,
a golden shroud has been
cast down,
solemnly decreed by the
gods.
Day – this resplendent
shroud –
day, which gives life to
mortals
and cures the ailing soul,
friend of humans and the
gods!

No merknet den – nastala
noch;
Prishla, i s mira
rokovovo
Tkan blagodatnuyu
pokrova
Sorbav, otbrasyvayet proch...
I bezdna nam
obnazhena
S svoimi strakhami i mglami,
I net pregrad mezh yei i
nami –
Vot otchego nam noch
strashna!

But day fades – and night
falls;
it comes and tears from
this fateful world
the blessed fabric of the
shroud,
and casts it aside...
and the abyss is unveiled
to us,
in all its terror and its gloom,
and there is nothing to
separate us from it –
that is why we so fear the
night!

Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov

Georgia Op. 58 No. 3 (c.1925)

Grigol Orbeliani

Gde v ledyanykh ventsakh moguchikh gor vershiny	Where in the icy realms of mighty mountains, the peaks
Voznosyatsya v lazur i tonut v oblakakh,	reach up to the azure sky and drown in the clouds,
Gde izumrud lugov tak pyshno zeleneyet,	where emerald fields luxuriate in their greenery,
Sklolnyayutsya tsvety k lazuri svetlykh vod.	and flowers bow down towards the azure of the radiant waters.
V tishi zhurchat ruchi, s polei prokhlada veyet,	The brooks babble in the silence, a cool breeze wafts from the fields,
I polon divnyi sad charuyushchei krasoyu!	and the wondrous garden is filled with enchanting beauty!
Gde luchshe ugolok? Gde Gruzija drugaya?	Can there be a finer place than this? Can there be another Georgia anywhere but here?

Samuil Feinberg (1890-1962)

Sing not to me, beautiful maiden Op. 26 No. 1

(1935-6)

Alexander Pushkin

Ne poi, krasavitsa, pri mne	Sing not to me, beautiful maiden,
Ty pesen Gruzii pechalnoi;	those Georgian songs so sad;
Napominayut mne one Druguyu zhizn i bereg dalnyi.	they remind me of another life and of a distant shore.
Uvy, napominayut mne Tvoi zhestokie napevy I step, i noch – i pri lune	Alas, your cruel strains remind me of the steppe and of the night,
Cherty dalyokoy, miloi devy!	and of the moonlit face of my distant beloved!
Ya prizrak milyi, rokovoi, Tebya uvidev, zabyvayu; No ty poyosh, v predo mnoi Evo ya vnov voobrazhayu.	Seeing you, I forget that tender, fateful vision; but when you sing, it appears again in my imagination.
Ne poi, krasavitsa, pri mne	Sing not to me, beautiful maiden,
Ty pesen Gruzii pechalnoi;	those Georgian songs so sad;
Napominayut mne one Druguyu zhizn i bereg dalnyi.	they remind me of another life and of a distant shore.

Aleksandr Spendiarov (1871-1928)

Lullaby Op. 25 No. 1 (1915)

Traditional

Spi, synok, spi, rodnoi,	Sleep, my son, sleep, my darling,
Glazki sonnye zakroi!	close those sleepy little eyes!
Kolybelechku tvoyu Ya chadroyu obovyu.	I shall cover your crib with my chador.
Zolotoi na nei uzor Budet radovat tvoi vzor.	Its golden pattern will cheer your gaze.
Suleiman, sverstnik tvoi,	Whilst Suleiman, your little friend,
Plachet v lyulke dorogoi: Kak zhe bednenkomu spat,	cries in his cradle dear: how is that poor child to sleep,
Toshchei grudyu kormit mat,	when his mother's breast is so thin?
Ya-zh nasytila synka Grudyu, polnoi moloka...	But I have fed my bonny son with my breast so full of milk...
Spi synok, spi, rodnoi,	Sleep, my son, sleep, my darling,
Vsyo okutano uzh tmoi, Von i zvyozdochki zazhglis...	all is clad in darkness thick, out there, the stars have begun to shine...
Vse k domam porazbreilis...	Everybody has hurried home...
I svoyu uzhe Dzhelal Pesnyu grustnuyu sygral!	And Jalal has already sung his melancholy song!

To the beloved (1916)

Traditional

I den, i noch vzdychayu, Tebya lyublyu, tebya zovu, No chyornykh glaz i alykh gub Ne znaya sna, vsyo zhdu napraso!	All day and night I sigh, 'tis you I love, 'tis you I call, but for your black eyes and crimson lips I wait in vain, and no sleep comes to me!
Sred dikikh skal skitayus ya, Vsegda odin, vsegda s toskoyu, Dai schastya mne, molyu tebya, Skazhi: 'Lyublyu i ya, moi mily!'	Midst wild cliffs I wander, always alone, always forlorn, I beg you bring me happiness, tell me: 'I love you too, my darling!'

Ozymandias Op. 11 No. 1 (1904)

Percy Bysshe Shelley, trans. Konstantin Balmont

Ya vstretil putnika: on shyol iz stran dalyokikh	I met a traveller from an antique land,
I mne skazal: vdali, gde vechnost storozhit	who said—'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Pustyni tishinu, sredi peskov glubokikh	stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Oblomok statui razpavsheisya lezhit.	half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
Iz polustyortykh chert skvozit nadmennyi plamen,	and wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Zhelanye zastavlyat ves mir sebe sluzhit;	tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Vayatel opytnyi vlozhil v bezdushnyi kamen	which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
Te strasti, chto mogli stoletya perezhit.	the hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
I sokhranil slova oblomok izvayanya: –	and on the pedestal, these words appear:
'Ya – Ozimandiya, ya – moshchnyi tsar tsarei!	My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Vzglyanite na moi velikiye deyanya,	look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Vladyki vsekh vremyon, vsekh stran i vsekh morei!	Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Krugom net nichevo... Glubokoye molchanye...	of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
Pustynya myortvaya... I nebesa nad nei...	the lone and level sands stretch far away.'

Sergey Rachmaninov

Sing not to me, beautiful maiden Op. 4 No. 4

(?1892-3)

Alexander Pushkin

arranged by Fritz Kreisler

Ne poi, krasavitsa, pri mne	Sing not to me, beautiful maiden,
Ty pesen Gruzii pechalnoi;	those Georgian songs so sad;
Napominayut mne one Druguyu zhizn i bereg dalnyi.	they remind me of another life and of a distant shore.
Uvy, napominayut mne Tvoi zhestokie napevy I step, i noch – i pri lune	Alas, your cruel strains remind me of the steppe and of the night,
Cherty dalyokoy, miloi devy!	and of the moonlit face of my distant beloved!
Ya prizrak milyi, rokovoi, Tebya uvidev, zabyvayu; No ty poyosh, v predo mnoi	Seeing you, I forget that tender, fateful vision; but when you sing, it appears again
Evo ya vnov voobrazhayu.	in my imagination.
Ne poi, krasavitsa, pri mne	Sing not to me, beautiful maiden,
Ty pesen Gruzii pechalnoi;	those Georgian songs so sad;
Napominayut mne one Druguyu zhizn i bereg dalnyi.	they remind me of another life and of a distant shore.

Translations of all Rachmaninov except 'Sing not to me, beautiful maiden' by Richard D Sylvester from Rachmaninoff's Complete Songs: A Companion with Texts and Translations published by Indiana University Press. All other translations by Philip Ross Bullock.