
For page 89. Editor’s added headings above title (“New Translations”) belong at the head of the ensuing article in the volume. Footnote 2 should read: Throughout this article Anglicized “tsar” is preferred to “tsar.”

For page 95. Line 3: “Merime” should be “Merimée.”

For page 97. Decorative markings indicating major division in text should be placed after line 2.

For page 98. Decorative markings of division in middle of page should be omitted.

For page 100. Remainder of footnote 27 inexplicably omitted by publisher:

Edmunds (1985: 178) points out another example of change in detail which affects character: in the opera Saltan’s impetuous nature is intensified by the fact that he, not Babarikha, sends the message to have his wife and child thrown onto the ocean in a barrel, thus making his regret later even more profound.

For page 107. Decorative markings indicating major division in text should be placed before tenth line (first complete paragraph) from the bottom.

For page 110. Remainder of footnote 43 inexplicably omitted by publisher:

Rimskii-Korsakov uses several folksongs and other pre-existing tunes in the score. At least ten of these borrowings have been identified (Ястребцев 1913: 626-627); several of the tunes had been included in Rimskii-Korsakov’s Sbornik 100 russkikh narodnykh pesen, Op. 24 (1875-1876). These are as follows:

1. Prologue: Song of two older sisters (“V ponedel’nik ia raneshen’ko vstavala,” from “Otdavala menia matushka” (from Op. 24, No. 24, communicated by Balakirev);
2. Act I: Nurses’s lullaby, sung by the nursemiaids in Act I; it had been sung by a nanny in the composer’s household (Rimskii-Korsakov 1974: 381);
3. Act I: Old Grandfather’s tale “Klich zaklikali po lesu temnomu,” from merchants’ pitching their “Ogurchiki zelennye, rediska molodaia!”
4. Act I: Nurse’s song “Ladushki, ladushki” (Chart I, No. 1, similar to No. 0);
5. Act I: Gvidon’s “boy” motive (Chart I, No. 0), from children’s song “Zain’ka, poplashi” (Op. 24, No. 66);
6. Act II: Chorus “Vozhnesite khvalu vsia zemlia,” from znamenj chant “Tebe Boga khvalim.”
7. Act III, Tableau 2: Merchant-sailor’s tune “Blagodarstvui, tsar Saltan, /torg bez poshliny nam dan,” from “Ia stremslius’ k tomu chertogu,” heard by S. S. Mitusov from paupers not far from the Belogoe station;
8. Act III, Tableau 2: Saltan’s theme of amazement and bewilderment, from “Uzh kak zvali modlost’” (Op. 24, No. 44, also in Prach’s collection, 1815 edition, Part I);
9. Act III, Tableau 2: Squirrel’s tune, from folksong “Vo sadu li, v ogorode” (called for in Pushkin’s poem);
10. Act IV, Tableau 2: Old Grandfather’s closing tune: “Vot domoi vernus’, nashim pokhvalius’,” from “Velichal’naia zhenikhu” (Op. 24, No. 98), at the words “Uzh i kto zu nas bol’shii, nabol’shii” (Also in M. Stakhovich’s Sobranie russkih narodnykh pesen [1854]).

Besides collating the above, Iastrebtsev, who has been called Rimskii-Korsakov’s Boswell and therefore presumably accumulated the above catalogue straight from the horse’s mouth, tentatively suggests that the opening song of the two sisters reflects a somewhat altered version of the song “Dubinushka” but adds that the melody is also similar to the song “Golova l’ ty moia, golovushka” (Op. 24, No. 34).

Lastly, a theme of the oldest sister recalls the tune of “Khodil molodets na Presnii” (Леонова 1953: 9).

In addition to outright borrowing, as with the composer’s other operas there are also musical passages in Tsar Saltan which imitate folksong style in certain melodic turns of phrase, which Rimskii-Korsakov had absorbed decades earlier.
The Tale of Tsar Saltan: A Centenary Appreciation of Rimskii-Korsakov’s Second Pushkin Opera*

Lyle K. Neff

The operas of Nikolai Andreevich Rimskii-Korsakov (1844-1908), along with those of his predecessor Glinka (1804-1857) and his contemporary Chaikovskii (1840-1893), form the foundation of native classic opera repertory in Russia. That all three composers turned to Pushkin\(^1\) as inspiration for one or more of their stage works was inevitable, Rimskii-Korsakov being the last to do so. As with Glinka and Chaikovskii, Rimskii-Korsakov’s three Pushkin-based works remain standards in the Russian repertory. Furthermore, his *Mozart and Salieri* (1897) seems to have good standing in the west, perhaps due to its brevity, non-Russian subject matter, and present-day association with Peter Schaffer’s play and motion picture *Amadeus*. The *Golden Cockerel* (1906-1907), no doubt helped into western venues by Diagilev’s ballet-styled production, has easily become more of a widespread standard than Rimskii-Korsakov’s other Pushkin opera, *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* (1899-1900), which itself nevertheless gained considerable European theatrical exposure in the 1920’s and ’30’s. This apparent repertorial lag is regrettable, because, among all three of these operas, *Tsar Saltan* has the most to please any audience. To borrow from Mirsky’s (1926: 97) evaluation of Pushkin’s original poem, Rimskii-Korsakov’s opera “has the same appeal for a child of six and for the most sophisticated poetry reader of sixty. It requires no understanding; its reception is immediate, direct, unquestionable.”

* This article draws partially from a paper by the author read at the 22nd Annual Conference of the Midwest Popular Culture and the Midwest American Culture Associations, meeting with the Lyrica Society on Nov. 4, 1995 in Indianapolis, Indiana, under the title *And with Warbling Sweetly Sung, She Can Speak Our Native Tongue: Rimsky-Korsakov’s Opera Tsar Saltan in American English*. Unless otherwise indicated, translations here are by the author.


2 Throughout this article Anglicized “tsar” is preferred to “tsar.”

The fact that the creation of the opera *Tsar Saltan*\(^3\) coincided with the centennial of the poet’s birth\(^4\) offers at this time the opportunity to appreciate the interplay of poem and opera as well as their enduring features. This article will examine the opera in view of its background, its adaptation from Pushkin’s original verse tale, and its musical treatment by the composer, whose inclinations, abilities, and goals related to this entire congenial enterprise found perhaps the most nearly perfect expression at that particular moment in his creative life.\(^5\)

The idea of adapting Pushkin’s *skazka* for the musical stage came from Vladimir Vasil’evich Stasov, the noted historian and arts critic who had been the doyen (and co-propagandist) of the old Balakirev circle, or “new Russian school,” of the 1860’s and ’70’s, to which Rimskii-Korsakov himself had belonged (Римский-Корсаков, Н. А. 1957: vi). As the composer notes in his memoirs (Rimskii-Korsakov 1974: 379), during the winter of 1898–99 he planned the scenario of the opera with his librettist, Vladimir Ivanovich Bel’skii (1866–1946), a political economist by profession who had earlier worked with the composer on part of the opera *Sadko* (1894–1896) and would later fully collaborate with him on *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh* (1903–1905) and *The Golden Cockerel*. Rimskii-Korsakov recounts:

> With the coming of spring V. I. began to write his splendid libretto, making use of Pushkin as much as was possible, and artistically as well as skilfully imitating his style. He would hand me the scenes one by one as they were finished, and I set to work on the opera. By summer [...] the Prologue (Introduction) was ready in sketch. (Rimskii-Korsakov 1974: 379–80)

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\(^3\) The full title of the opera agrees with Pushkin’s: Сказка о царе Салтане, о сыне его, славном и могучем богатыре князе Гвидоне Салтановиче и о прекрасной царевне Лебеди.

\(^4\) Indeed, the possibility of a timely performance in 1899 was contemplated. See Римский-Корсаков, А. Н., вып. IV: 138.

\(^5\) The reader is encouraged to study the score of the opera (Rimskii-Korsakov 1981 is an American reprint vocal score that might be easiest to find) in conjunction with one of the few recordings available, such as Мелодия (долгоиграющая, ГОСТ 5289-61, Д-05010-Д-05015). The videotape of the 1978 production by the Staatsoper Dresden (New York: VIEW Video, c1986), in German, suffers from severe and unnecessary cuts (including elimination of material, and even recomposition of the music (e.g. with the creation of new vocal lines for Gvidon in order to accommodate a cut between the introduction to Act II and the ensuing action). Hence, much of the symmetry—and charm—of the original opera is lost. In the “Primechaniia avtora k postanovke” of the score (Римский-Корсаков, Н. А. 1957) the composer strictly forbids tampering (specifically by means of cuts) with the opera without his consent, on the grounds that the “artistic form and dramatic sense” must be maintained.
As the libretto continued to be produced piecemeal, the composer finished composing the opera in short score during the summer of 1899, although the orchestration was not completed until January of the next year (Rimskii-Korsakov 1974: 381).

Despite the formal credit given to Bel’skii, this libretto, as with all those for which Rimskii-Korsakov employed an outside librettist, must be considered also to a large extent the composer’s work, subject to his dictates regarding plot, theme, and other matters. Published correspondence between the two of them («Странная красOTA» 1976: 100–14) reveals active interaction, including occasional arguments over certain matters in which one or the other would prevail. Therein we can read how Rimskii-Korsakov was thinking about moving or cutting certain lines or was dissatisfied with certain other verses as unsuitable to the dramatic situation or as implying an unnecessary idea. Bel’skii’s continuous supply of text lagged at times such that the composer, anxious to compose, manufactured some kind of rough verse for immediate musical use and then sent it to his librettist for refinishing. As can be expected from a mature, sensitive, accomplished opera composer, Rimskii-Korsakov demonstrated a very keen interest in the scenery and action on stage and their effect, at times suggesting micro-scenarios for certain scenes which still awaited fleshing-out with text and music. He also kept Bel’skii informed of the progress of composition and of characteristic features of the music (such as the fanfare) and encouraged his librettist despite their occasional disagreements. A minor example of their interaction can be seen in an exchange in which Bel’skii wonders out loud about a matter of musical characterization:

**[From Bel’skii to Rimskii-Korsakov, June 24, 1899:]* I don’t know whether I am going against what you said of your idea about Gvidon: in spite of the fact that this is [a role for] a grown-up tenor, here I nevertheless hear a child’s intonation in his speech, an extensive [vocal] range, and a child’s frequent and large leaps in the voice.

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6 Hence, reference here to the “librettist” of the opera must be understood in this co-author context. Bel’skii was Rimskii-Korsakov’s most stable collaborator, contributing three full libretti (for *Tsar Saltan*, *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*, and *The Golden Cockerel*, as well as part of *Sadko*). Rimskii-Korsakov himself wrote or adapted the libretti for roughly the first half of his operatic output (i.e., from *The Maid of Pskov* through *Sadko*) without aid from a simultaneously collaborating librettist who was formally acknowledged for the preponderance of the literary product.

7 See also Орлова (1969–1973: вып. 3, 180). Rimskii-Korsakov also used the lag-time to orchestrate already-composed tableaux.

8 Phrases in brackets added by the present writer.
The following day the composer pointedly retorts: "What you write concerning the heterogeneous intonations in the tsarevich's voice, I do not acknowledge; I want to write music, not Musorgskii's The Nursery [1868–1872], in which a baby, as a caricature, behaves in an affected manner" («Странная красота» 1976: 107). A more substantial disagreement concerns the interpretation of the other central character:

[From Rimskii-Korsakov to Bel'skii, June 8, 1899:] As regards the symbolic significance of the Tsarevna (it was something about Beauty, if I'm not mistaken), I don't really know how you will put this into combined singing: very likely no one will hear it, and not even surely. And should one emphasize this? If there exists such symbolic significance, the reader and listener himself will see it, but it's not worth worrying about [the critic] Koptiaev; let him again say that with Russian composers there are not enough philosophical ideas. So it was with Wagner, and, once he started the ball rolling, [is now] with D'Indy, Richard Strauss, and [Felix] Weingartner; but with me a skazka is a skazka! («Странная красота» 1976: 102).

These excerpts exemplify the composer's "basic purpose" (as A. N. Rimskii-Korsakov puts it) in adapting Pushkin's skazka: "fairy-tale fatal­ism and epic naive simplicity—that is what he would have liked to sustain, as a general line, in all aspects. He absolutely did not need any capricious practical psychological justifications" (Римский-Корсаков, А. Н., вып. IV: 140), or, one might add in view of the above, any "philosophical" ones as well.

No doubt part of Rimskii-Korsakov's attitude in this regard derived from the contrast that this particular opera subject presented to him in comparison to his three immediately previous opera projects: Mozart and Salieri (1897), a serious short declamatory drama concerning artistic envy; The Noblewoman [boiarynia] Vera Sheloga (1898, the one-act declamatory "prequel" to his Maid of Pskov); and The Tsar's Bride (1898), a barely pseudo-historic melodrama of jealousy and intrigue. The last of these apparently took its toll, as A. N. Rimskii-Korsakov explains:

The Tale of Tsar Saltan is a child of N. A.'s particularly easy and happy humor. In relation to The Tsar's Bride, its predecessor, this is a scherzo which relieves the dramatic allegro of the first move­ment [as in a symphony]. Having finished The Tsar's Bride less than a year before, N. A. had expended upon it, as it were, all the pathos of Russian tragedy available to him at that time, all the psychical capacity of which his musical soul was then capable. (Римский-Корсаков, А. Н., вып. IV: 145)
Another factor in the choice of subject involved Rimskii-Korsakov's longstanding search for "a solution to the personal stylistic crisis he had experienced as a consequence of encountering the music of Richard Wagner"; he firmly believed that Wagnerian musico-dramatic style would in time give way among composers to melody while retaining other contemporary expressive means, and that the only way to avoid the continuation of Wagnerian melodrama as a manner of composing opera would be to restore melodic expression (Brown 1987). In fact, Rimskii-Korsakov had already attempted such a rapprochement with melody in his previous work, _The Tsar's Bride_, in which he strove for "a clear and frank turn to singing, and consequently not backward, but forward," adding that "if this turn will not summon operatic art to further life, then that means it is judged to have perished in that swamp where it began to sink, in spite of all the talented tests of truth" (Римский-Корсаков, А. Н., вып. II: 122). Clearly, as his own works demonstrate, he did not renounce all of Wagner's methods (e.g., leitmotive, continuity of musical texture, aspects of orchestral technique), nor was he calling for a complete stylistic return to the older, _bel canto_ variety of opera. Rimskii-Korsakov wanted "to write music," and obviously _The Tale of Tsar Saltan_ would be ill served by means derived from Wagner—or Bellini—or Musorgskii, for that matter.

Besides these considerations, Rimskii-Korsakov's _Tsar Saltan_ has little in common with the kind of topical derivation or dramatic quality of Wagner's works. As a "pseudo-folk tale in verse ingeniously flavored to suggest an ancient Russian legend," borrowing from _A Thousand and One Nights_, d'Aulnoy, and Danilov, Pushkin's _Tsar Saltan_ does not supply the authentic folk-myth basis of Wagner's music dramas (Brown 1987). Furthermore, whereas such works as _Tristan und Isolde_ and _Der Ring des Nibelungen_ strive for an effect of drama and tragedy, the opera _Tsar Saltan_ has nothing to do with tragedy or (melo)drama of any stripe. Of the nine operas by Rimskii-Korsakov preceding _Tsar Saltan_, most belong to a broad "dramatic" or "melodramatic" category (_Maid of Pskov_ [first version, 1868–1872], _Mlada_ [1889–1890], _Mozart and Salieri_, _Noblewoman Vera Sheloga_, and _The Tsar's Bride_); the two "folk" operas based on Gogol' (_May Night_ (1878–1879) and _Christmas Eve_ (1894–1895)) present comparatively lighter content, with some supernatural occurrences, albeit still set in the "real" world of "real" humans. Fairy-tales (in the broad sense of "fantasy")

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9 As is well known, Rimskii-Korsakov's major encounter with Wagner's music occurred in 1889, when he experienced a production of _The Ring of the Nibelungs_ in St. Petersburg. (See Rimskii-Korsakov 1974: 297–98.)

10 With reference to the Prologue of _Tsar Saltan_ the composer (Rimskii-Korsakov 1974: 380) noted that "the really melodic element lies invariably in the voices, which do not cling to fragments of melodic phrases in the orchestra" (à la Wagner).
are masterfully treated in the "skazka of Spring" Snowmaiden\textsuperscript{11} (first version, 1880–1881) and the "opera-byлина" Sadko (1894–1896), both of which entwine human beings with forces and personifications of nature while still retaining some basis in a "real world."\textsuperscript{12} The opera Tsar Saltan goes a major step further in the composer's topical output: here Pushkin's poem not only situates both humans and nature in the same fairy-tale world, but also provides a subject "free from all [human] irrelevancies of emotion and symbol" (Mirsky 1926: 97)—and to be preserved as such in accordance with the composer's "basic purpose" as noted above. In sum, Rimskii-Korsakov's Tsar Saltan is "not inviting us to a profound aesthetic experience. His musical interpretation of Pushkin's fairy-tale can be appreciated without a Bruno Bettelheim-like psychological analysis of what it all means" (Brown 1987).

The deliberateness of musico-dramatic method and intent discussed in the above background sketch did not necessarily produce a result satisfactory to the composer, for, when the time came for his new opera to be appreciated publicly for the first time, Rimskii-Korsakov found himself somewhat reserved in reporting to his wife about the rehearsals for the first performance: "The hearing of Saltan gives me much less pleasure than did The Tsar's Bride at rehearsals last year, because of the music itself. I do not especially like Saltan as you do, but, contrary to you, I like The Tsar's Bride very much." To this self-criticism Nadezhda Nikolaevna Rimskiaia-Korsakova objected:

You are not correct, my dear, concerning Saltan. You are always demeaning it. It's true, you have not said anything new in it; it remains true to your former manner, in a word, like you yourself; much there reminds one of Christmas Eve, Mlada, in part Snowmaiden. But, firstly, one can borrow from oneself—this is met within all composers. But secondly, in Saltan there is beautiful and expressive music; it is written like all your mature works, masterfully, and in general produces an impression of a merry, humorous tale—that's what was needed. The other day I played through it as a whole. On the basis of everything said I ask you not to demean it, but above all I ask you not to tell any stranger your censure and comparison with The Tsar's Bride. This can ter-

\textsuperscript{11} Mirsky (1926: 255) evaluates Ostrovskii's original play Snowmaiden as "the only really poetical romantic comedy in the language."

\textsuperscript{12} The fairy-tale inclination likewise informs the pre-Saltan, purely orchestral works Sadko (first version 1867), Antar (first version 1868), Skazka (1879–1880), and Sheheresade (1888). After Tsar Saltan were composed the (melodramas Servilia (1900–1901) and Pan Wojewoda (1902–1903), and three more "fantasy" operas: Kaschbei the Immortal (1901–1902), The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maiden Fevronia (1903–1905), and The Golden Cockerel.
ribly damage the thing. You often are your own enemy. Never say something bad about yourself—your friends will talk a lot about you enough. Don’t forget this maxim of genius from Mérimé.

Nikolai Andreevich became only partially convinced:

I thank you for the comment on Saltan and for the admonition which I will follow. In general I agree fully with your opinion; but you, too, must agree with the fact that in Saltan I never rose to the height of the last scene of The Tsar’s Bride, which always will remain in rank with the best of my things; moreover it [i.e., The Tsar’s Bride] does not present repetitions of something previous. That’s why I love this opera, and any censure upon it grieves me. (Римский-Корсаков, А. Н., вып. II: 121–22)

The Tale of Tsar Saltan was premiered in Moscow on October 21 (old style), 1900 by the Association of the Russian Private Opera (formerly Mamontov’s company) at the Solodovnikov Theater, with the cast listed in the box on the following page. According to the newspapers, the first performance had a full house:

The opera went off with enormous success. The composer began to be called out already after the first tableau and was called out after each act. After the fourth tableau the composer was honored at the opening of the curtain by the public and the company. [...] Judging from the ovations, the opera made an exceedingly pleasant impression. (Орлова, вып. III: 225)

13 The composer here seems to ignore the real fact that the two operas are of totally different natures and hence cannot be expected to share the same modes of expression.
14 One must take this statement as an exaggeration. With regard to dramaturgical or topical features among his own operas, Rimskii-Korsakov had already treated jealousy in Snowmaiden and Mlada, a detrimental potion in the latter, and the figure of Ivan the Terrible in Maid of Pskov. (In fact, repetition of dramatic motifs or clichés in his previous operas would not prevent the composer from writing Pan Wojewoda, whose plot significantly echoes The Tsar’s Bride.) Musically speaking, various passages in Rimskij-Korsakov’s operas—including The Tsar’s Bride—recall earlier works.
15 The Russian term kartina is translated here as “tableau” in order to distinguish those large, score-designated portions defined by total change of scenery at the opening of the curtain from smaller segments of action or music which might be referred to as “scenes.” (The score contains no divisions labelled “stsena.”) In relation to this, it should be noted that the formally closed orchestral vstupleniia (introductions) to Act I, Act II, and Act IV, Tableau 2 were brought together by the composer as a suite of musical kartinki (little pictures) for concert purposes.
16 This particular report comes from Новости дня (1900, №. 6258, 22 окт.) Орлова (Орлова, вып. III, 225–28) cites reminiscences and letters, as well as the following other notices and reviews of the premiere production (most with excerpts):
Tsar Saltan (bass) N. V. Mutin
Tsaritsa Militisa, the youngest sister (soprano) E. Ia. Tsvetkova
Tkachikha [Weaver], the middle sister (mezzo-soprano) I. E. Rostovtseva
Povarikha [Cook], the oldest sister (soprano) A. I. Veretennikova
Svat’ia baba17 Babarikha (contralto) V. I. Strakhova
Tsarevich Gvidon (tenor) A. V. Sekar-Rozhanski
Tsarevna-Swan, at first Swan-Bird (soprano) N. A. Zabela-Vrubel’
Old Grandfather (tenor) V. P. Shkafer
Messenger (baritone) N. A. Shevelev
Skomorokh (bass) M. V. Levandovskii
Sailors (bass, tenor, baritone) Makhin, M. V. Bocharov, A. K. Bedlevich
Conductor: M. M. lppolitov-Ivanov
Stage director: M. V. Lentovskii
Set designer: M. A. Vrubel’18

After the Moscow premiere the opera was produced at the St. Petersburg Conservatory (December 22, 1902), again in Moscow with Zimin’s private company (November 2, 1906), in Kiev (January 31, 1908), then at last (posthumously) at the Imperial Theaters:19 the Bol’shoi in Moscow (October 5, 1913) and the Mariinskii in St. Petersburg (March 2, 1915). From 1924 to 1935 Tsar Saltan reached theaters in Barcelona, Riga, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Aachen, Paris, Milan, Kaunas, London, Sofia, and Prague.20 In the Soviet Union the opera was performed in

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17 Apparently in keeping close to a dictionary definition, Edmunds (1985: 162) renders this phrase “relative by marriage,” whereas Arndt (Pushkin 1993: 350–51) and Taruskin (1992: 635) read “marriage broker” and “matchmaker-crone,” respectively.
18 Cast list adapted from “Ot redaktsii” in Римской-Корсаков, Н. А. 1957: x.
19 In fall 1897 Rimskii-Korsakov had submitted his opera Sadko to the Imperial Theaters, but, due to the politics of the director, I. A. Vsevolozhskii, the composer decided “to leave the Directorate in peace, never again to trouble it with offers of my operas.” In the meantime the fortunate existence of private opera companies made possible the advancement of the composer’s new operas. After Vsevolozhskii was superceded by S. M. Volkonskii in 1899, the Mariinskii Theater belatedly produced Sadko in 1901. (Rimskii-Korsakov 1974: 369–70, 393–94.)
20 For details on the Russian productions see Римский-Корсаков, Н. А. (1957: x-xii); for the others, Lowenberg (1955: v. 1, col. 1229). Of the listed productions outside Russia apparently only those in Barcelona and Paris used the Russian text. The London premiere took place on Oct. 11, 1933 at Sadler’s Wells, with English by Edward Agate. Hadley (1987: 1), previewing
Bel’skii and Rimkii-Korsakov designed the scenario of the opera to follow Pushkin's poem quite closely:

PROLOGUE. Tsar Saltan, ruler of Tmutarakan, having overheard three sisters in their house, chooses the youngest as his bride for her promise to give him an heir. The other sisters enlist the aid of Babarikha to plot against her. Their plan: the Tsar will inevitably go to war, and his wife in the meantime will give birth to a child; the sisters and Babarikha will intercept the Tsaritsa's joyous message to the Tsar about the birth and replace it with one describing the child as a monster.

ACT I. In Tmutarakan, after the Tsar has spent only three weeks with his new bride and been away long on a military campaign, vain attempts in the palace are made to console Militrisa, the Tsaritsa, who has recently born his son. Various diversions from a Skomorokh and an Old Grandfather come to no avail. Finally a messenger arrives, bringing Saltan's angry response to Babarikha's as-yet-unrevealed treachery: the Tsaritsa and her offspring must be sealed in a barrel and cast into the sea. Mournfully the people obey the Tsar's command.

ACT II. After a rough-and-tumble ocean journey in the barrel, Militrisa and son (who has quickly grown into an adult) land on the barren island of Buian. While hunting for food, the son saves a Swan from attack by a bird of prey, and the grateful Swan promises a reward. Night passes, and a wonderful city appears on the island as the people of the city hail Gvidon (as Saltan's son is now called) as their Prince.

ACT III, TABLEAU 1. Later, as sea-merchants are leaving his island, Gvidon longs to see his father. The Swan appears and in answer to his call changes him into a bumblebee so that he can fly off and catch up with the merchant ships.

ACT III, TABLEAU 2. The merchants arrive at Tmutarakan and tell Tsar Saltan about the three wonders on Gvidon's island: the fabulous city, a magic squirrel that cracks gold nuts, and thirty-three brave knights who appear out of the sea. Against the sisters' wishes, Saltan decides to visit the island. Babarikha tries to dissuade him by telling of a beautiful production at Indiana University in April 1987, quotes Nicola Rossi-Lemeni, the stage director of the production, with reference to a staging in New York in the 1930's under the title The Bumblebee Prince. The production at Indiana University used a translation by the present author and was broadcast on NPR World of Opera in August 1987.

21 Rosa Newmarch (1972: 316) gives a curiously inaccurate rendering of the beginning of the story: "Militrissa [...] marries the Tsar's son, and during Saltan's absence from home [the older sisters] revenge themselves upon her by sending a false message announcing that she has borne her husband a daughter instead of a son."
Tsarevna, but her attempt is thwarted by Gvidon, who stings her in the eye and then escapes the resulting bedlam.

ACT IV, TABLEAU 1. Back on Buian Gvidon finds himself pining after the Tsarevna of which Babarikha spoke. The Swan appears again to help him, and, after warning him of the seriousness of marriage, transforms into that very Princess. Their betrothal is blessed by Militrisa.

ACT IV, TABLEAU 2. Tsar Saltan and retinue reach Buian. Gvidon, who has hidden his mother and not yet revealed his identity, asks the Tsar whether he is married and has any heirs, in answer to which Saltan expresses his regret for what he did to his wife. Gvidon tries to cheer him up by presenting the squirrel, the thirty-three knights, and then the Tsarevna. The Tsar begs the Swan-Princess to use her magic to restore his wife to him, and his Tsaritsa at last appears. Everyone is forgiven, and a wedding feast is prepared for the Prince and Tsarevna-Swan.

Scholars have noted that the tale combines elements from what we are familiar with as the "Cinderella" story with the theme of the slandered wife, plus features like the magic helper (e.g., a fairy-godmother), the grateful animal (à la Androcles and the lion), transformations, and the ideal kingdom beyond the sea (Edmunds 1985: 160, 221), as well as the story of Danaë and Perseus (Abraham 1970: 126). Although not readily apparent from the synopsis above, both poem and libretto emulate fairy-tale genres also by evincing much structural and literal repetition (reflected as well in the music), particularly with regard to the number three, as will be seen below.

Despite the faithfulness of the libretto to Pushkin's original poem, some significant alterations and additions obtain. Most notable among these are

1) the addition of several minor characters, with associated diversionary episodes, including most prominently the events and speeches of most of the first act, which are almost completely extraneous to the original poem—as well as to the unfolding of plot—but nevertheless form a culturally indispensable grand Russian tableau in the manner of the introduction to Glinka's *Ruslan and Liudmila*; and

2) the reduction of the hero's travelling from three trips to one, thus obviating the necessity for Gvidon to change into a gnat, then a fly, then a bumblebee in order to further the plot. This concession to staging, of course, alters the naïve formal charm of the original,
but is more than made up for by Bel’skii’s addition of other symmetrical or repetitious elements, especially ternary\textsuperscript{22} ones.

In addition, the opera fleshes out the \textit{dramatis personae}\textsuperscript{23} by calling for numerous groups, mostly of the choral persuasion: boyars, boyarinas, courtiers, nurses, scribes, guards, an army, sailors, astrologers, runners, singers, servants and dancers of both genders, and—not to be omitted from great Russian opera—“people,” which in this instance admittedly and understandably lack the protagonist quality of crowds in a dramatic work like \textit{Boris Godunov}, but nevertheless possess the same power of expression. Besides these, there is the wonder of the thirty-three knights of the sea with Master Chernomor (a major personnel difficulty, if attempted literally), as well as the non-singing wonder of the squirrel, and, of course, the bumblebee, a supernumerary, clandestine, \textit{de facto} “wonder” via transformation.\textsuperscript{24} Also, offstage during Act II, upon the death of the \textit{korsun} (kite) which attacks the Swan are heard briefly the (male) voices of sorcerers and spirits. Lastly, the part of Tsarevich Gvidon Saltanovich requires not only the adult tenor lead (beginning in Act II), but also (in Act I) two differently aged \textit{baletnye vospitanniki} (boy ballet pupils)—a casting devised to show how quickly the child is growing during the course of the action up to the opening of the barrel, as befits Pushkin’s phrase “I rastet rebenok tam / Ne po dniam, a po chasam.”\textsuperscript{25} Needless to say, in order to produce this opera in accordance with the requirements of the original cast list (let alone the costumes, the stage design, and the machinery!), a performing company unaccustomed to the extensive choral expression characteristic of Russian opera might have a difficult time. This heavy reliance on choral forces in \textit{Tsar Saltan}, though not unusual in Russian opera, coincidentally works into Rimskii-Korsakov’s anti-Wagnerian mu-

\textsuperscript{22} The term “ternary” here is used to refer simply to some sort of construction ‘based on “threes,” not as a designation for rounded musical form (i.e., ABA).

\textsuperscript{23} For the complete cast list, see “Deistvuiushchie litsa” in the preliminaries of \textit{Rimsky-Korsakov}, N. A. 1957. The composer suggests in his “Primechaniia avtora k postanovke” from the same source that the singers for the parts of the Old Grandfather, the Messenger, and the Skomorokh may be employed for the three sailors. The generic high-low male vocal pairing represented by the Old Grandfather and Skomorokh, the two most significant—and comic—added characters (the Messenger being already present in the poem), should be noted, especially for their affinity to Borodin’s \textit{gudok}-players Skula and Eroshka in \textit{Prince Igor} and Rimskii-Korsakov’s own Duda and Sopel’ in \textit{Sadko}.

\textsuperscript{24} The squirrel and the bumblebee are supposed to be performed by boys in appropriate costumes. See “Primechaniia avtora k postanovke” in the preliminaries of the full score (Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A. 1957). However, this specification (quite practical for productions lacking a large machinery budget) has not been always observed.

\textsuperscript{25} This couplet in the poem appears when the Tsaritsa and her son are riding in the barrel on the sea (lines 113–14); in the opera it is incorporated into the nurses’ lullaby in Act I.
sico-dramatic agenda—in addition to the emphasis on melody and reliance on quick-paced episodic structure.

With the scenario and full cast in mind, we now can take a look at a few narrative procedures and details of the operatic adaptation of Pushkin's *skazka*. Chart I, subdivided according to tableau, roughly lists micro-elements of the plot of the poem and the opera in parallel to provide a somewhat systematic illustration (keyed to lines of the poem) of the borrowing, rearrangement, omission, and supplementation involved. In this way we can see at a glance how, "in adapting Pushkin's *skazka* to meet the requirements of the libretto form, and in structurally integrating their new material with the material of Pushkin's tale, Bel'skii and Rimskii-Korsakov were able to follow the compositional principles of their original source" (Edmunds 1985: 222).

As with almost any opera adapted from a complex narrative source, literal representation or full narration of certain details, such as Gvidon's birth, have to be omitted for the sake of practicality, with the understanding that the audience will fill in the gaps, whereas others are truncated or telescoped in some way. We see both of these techniques in the latter part of the Prologue (Chart I-A), where the complicated sequence in Pushkin (i.e., the exchanges of messages) becomes a more simplified matter of on-the-spot prediction and planning by Babarikha upon the older sisters' request for help, eventually to be completed in Act I with the arrival of the drunk Messenger. The most extreme (and theatrically necessary) concatenation of scenes, of course, occurs with Gvidon's commutes to Tmutarakan (Chart I-D and I-E): his three transformations into gnat, fly, and bumblebee in Pushkin's poem, with their associated journeys and gradually revealed wonders, become a single all-purpose sequence.

In contrast to these kinds of simplification, we find details not present in the original, often added in order to heighten or change the characterizations. Again in the Prologue (Chart I-A), for instance, the older sisters demonstrate their selfishness and laziness by ordering the younger sister to do the chores (*à la* "Cinderella"), and Babarikha's sinister nature is implied immediately by the presence of a stereotypical black cat (Edmunds 1985: 162–63). Sometimes these interpolations are large and diversionary, as was noted above with Act I (Chart I-B); others are more subtle, such as the Swan's riddle in the final tableau (Chart I-G), wherein

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26 The charts referred to in the text are provided at the end of this article, starting on p. 119.
27 The evil of the operatic Babarikha is emphasized also by the fact that Gvidon's positive feelings for her (his *staraia babushka*), as represented in the poem (lines 718–20), are substituted in the opera by violence such that, when he is a bumblebee, rather than stinging her on the nose as per Pushkin, he stings her in the eye and blinds her (Chart I-E). This negative change by the librettist to intensify Babarikha contrasts with the fact that the Swan, depicted in the poem as pecking at the kite in order to hasten its death, is purged of such violent tendencies in the opera (Chart I-C), probably for staging reasons if nothing else.
Bel’skii apparently tried to apply the symbolism of “beauty” to the Tsarevna-Swan.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{center}
ЦАРЕВНА ЛЕБЕДЬ
\end{center}

Для живых чудес
Я сошла с небес
И живу незримо
в мильных мне сердцах.

Светел им со мной
Жеребий земной,
Горе сладко в песне,
в сказке мил и страхи.

Солнце им ясней,
вешний цвет красней,
говор боли понятен,
птичья речь в лесах.

Although Saltan finds the riddle addressed to him “painfully sweet to hear,” he does not understand it and immediately begs the Tsarevna to use her powers to bring his wife back. Thus, despite its musical value as pure melody (the first and only time the Swan-Princess sings this leitmotif), the accretion seems at first glance essentially superfluous, except to cause everyone present to marvel.

However, we see at this point another technique of adaptation: the librettist has delayed the appearance of Saltan’s wife, Militrisa, who in the poem simply strides forth with the Tsarevna-Swan to meet her overjoyed husband. The dramatic effect of this alteration in the sequence of events might be even more subtle than the riddle: the Tsar has arrived on Gvidon’s island disconsolate and is left unrelieved by the wonders sequentially presented to him; the separate, highlighted appearance of his long-lost wife proves to be the last, and best, wonder of them all. In such a context the Swan’s riddle, which precedes this appearance, just as well could

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{28} The composer wrote the following to Bel’skii in a letter of August 14, 1899 concerning this point in the opera: “[As regards] the lecture on the aesthetics ‘of Beauty’ which you proposed to put into the Swan’s mouth, it wouldn’t be bad to put it into her mouth in the last tableau, when she appears to Saltan; there it would be appropriate, but in the duet you will not add this.” Eight days later, having composed music in advance for this passage, Rimskii-Korsakov told Bel’skii what meter and quantity of verses were needed. («Странныя красота» 1976: 112, 114).
\end{footnotesize}
symbolize love as it could beauty.\textsuperscript{29} These adaptations in the final tableau provide a satisfactory theatrical expansion of the relatively concise closing to Pushkin's skazka.

Probably the most significant characteristic of the original poem which Bel'skii and Rimskii-Korsakov maintain in their opera is symmetry and repetition, particularly the emphasis on "threes," albeit here and there reduced or, more importantly, enriched. A primary symmetrical feature preserved in the libretto, but not necessarily apparent in the charts, frames the entire poem and opera: the "realistic" or "folk" character of the first and last scenes (the three sisters in their svetlitsa and the feast and dance with "the people" at Gvidon's court). As Edmunds (1985: 221) points out, this rounding of the action with "popular" intonation not only reflects Rimskii-Korsakov's intentions but also links the beginning of the action, with its union of Militrisa and Saltan and planned deception by the sisters and Babarikha, to the conclusion, where the royal couple is reunited and the conspiracy uncovered.

These outer bytovoi scenes, of course, implicitly form a contrast to the inner tableaux, in which fantastic events and scenes of courtly life predominate. This binary opposition of topoi obtains in poem and libretto. However, Bel'skii and Rimskii-Korsakov increase the "folk" effect by adding the two comic personages of Old Grandfather and Skomorokh (along with their political commentary) as well as providing numerous opportunities, many prompted by Pushkin, for "the simple people" to participate (Леонова 1984: 7–8).\textsuperscript{30}

As to the ternary items, these may appear as cohesive groups, either simultaneously or in direct sequence. In the poem they include the three sisters, the thirty-three knights, and the three wonders (when presented together). Elsewhere, three items in a set might be separated from each other by other events in the presentation, as with the poem's three insect transformations, three journeys of Gvidon, three separately manifested wonders, and three stingings from Gvidon the insect. All of these are shown in Chart II-A in parallel chronological sequence. The first column lists the self-contained ternary items, and the other columns list the disconnected ones, which, as can be seen, become artfully intertwined with each other in symmetrical sequences. Note that the Swan has three central appearances (each to help Gvidon visit his father); and her two

\textsuperscript{29} Catherine J. Edmunds (1985: 207) argues that the riddle expresses the role of fantasy (folklore) and the Swan's function in that role.

\textsuperscript{30} Besides the binary opposition of the everyday and the refined, both poem and opera ovince the classic thematic contrast between good and evil (the latter enhanced in the libretto for Babarikha); also, there is the contrast between the supernatural Swan and the other "real" characters, discussed below with regard to the musical dichotomy. Furthermore, the Swan herself, in changing into the Tsarevna, demonstrates both supernatural and human nature in one being.
"supernumerary" appearances outside of these encompass the other dis-united ternary elements. Although the Swan becomes in essence a "fourth" wonder\(^{31}\) with her self-transformation into a tsarevna, it might be more appropriate to designate this grateful-animal/magic-helper as the "Ur-," "proto-," or "super-wonder" of the story,\(^{32}\) because she not only predates most of the other events (wonders, transformations, and journeys) but also makes them, as well as her own human transformation, all possible. Furthermore, in the opera it is she who is responsible for reuniting Tsar Saltan and his bride by introducing Militrisa with the declaration "Dar chudes tsarevne dan, / Vzglinik na terem, tsar Saltan!" The fact that the ensuing duet of Saltan and Militrisa reveals Gvidon's identity (another dramatic addition to the skazka) likewise highlights the magical Swan's reunion, or, more properly, first meeting all together of father, mother, and son—the central family of the story—which happens to form a trio in itself.

Ternary elements added in the opera (Chart II-B) include the three separated statements of the nurses' lullaby in Act I and Militrisa's long solo in Act II, which, with Rimskii-Korsakov's music, becomes a rondo with three iterations of the primary theme. The schematization below shows how the interludes provide narration between the plaintive rondo texts:

ЦАРИЦА МИЛИТРИСА

Мой Салтан, царь возлюбленный,  
Мне, супруге загубленной,  
Дай ответ.

Уж как царь жену любил,  
На руках ее носил;  
Целых долгих три недели  
Миловались мы сидели.  
Вдруг нагрянула война,  
И осталась я одна.

\(^{31}\) The Dresden production of 1978, as represented in the video of 1986 cited earlier, reorders and recomposes the opera at this point so that Militrisa appears before the Tsarevna-Swan.

\(^{32}\) As regards the last tableau (Act IV, Tableau II), Rimskii-Korsakov in a letter actually referred to the Swan-Princess as the third wonder, after the squirrel and the knights («Странная красна» 1976: 106), no doubt because all three actually appear on stage in that tableau, whereas the magical island is already the setting for the tableau.
Mention has already been made of the reduction of Pushkin’s triple transformation-journey sequence to a single itinerary. This episode is prepared by an added ternary ritual described in the following text excerpt (from Act III, Tableau I):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEBEDЬ-ПТИЦА [ласково]</th>
<th>[line no. in poem:]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Здравствуй, князь ты мой прекрасный!</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Что ты тих, как день ненастный?</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Опечален ли чему?</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Говори, я помогу.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ГВИДОН</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Грусть-тоска меня съедает,</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>День и ночь одолевает,</td>
<td>[265]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Мне прискушили, ходя,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Тридцать три богатыря.</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>И не тешит тоже белка, --</td>
<td>[363]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Хоть и чудо, да безделка.</td>
<td>[362]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ты порадуй молодца.</td>
<td>[265]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Видеть я б хотел отца</td>
<td>[266]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Невидимкой.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33 One could also see three other journeys common to poem and opera: Saltan’s war campaign, the sea-journey in the barrel, and Saltan’s trip to Gvidon’s island (the latter of which is not musically depicted).
In the original poem, the Swan splashes Gvidon with her wings to accomplish each of the three insect transformations. The change to a triple plunge into the water—here made verbally explicit—not only is easier to stage by simply taking it behind the scenery but also compensates somewhat for the loss of the three transformations and journeys which Pushkin’s Gvidon undertakes. In addition, this episode reflects telescoping of the original plot. Gvidon makes it clear that he has already been blessed by the Swan with the magic squirrel and the thirty-three knights, i.e., we have not gone through the original sequential pattern of transformation, journey, narration, and manifestation of wonders through which the poem carefully leads us.

The above excerpt also gives us a chance to examine Bel’skii’s methods of adapting Pushkin’s text for the actual words of the libretto. Besides borrowing speeches from the poem directly, Bel’skii transferred or adapted many lines from Pushkin from third-person narrative into direct discourse, sometimes borrowing only single words or combining snatches from scattered passages. In addition, he incorporated new verses in emulation to extend the dialogue and created most of the choral utterances. The example above, keyed to the line-numberings of the poem, shows how Bel’skii borrowed whole lines or individual words literally from Pushkin (marked above with underscore) and modifies other phrases or words (in bold print).

Besides adapting the skazka itself, Bel’skii incorporated couplets and longer passages from other works by Pushkin in crafting the libretto of Tsar Saltan (Edmunds 1985: 175–77, 180, 209), most notably an excerpt from an unfinished Pushkin verse tale, Skazka o medvedikhe, recited and continued by the Old Grandfather in Act I (beginning at the words “Klich zaklikali po lesu temnomu,” with commentary by the Skomorokh). Lines snipped from other Pushkin works include the couplet “Khi, khi, khi, kha, kha, kha,...

34 Rimskii-Korsakov, of course, provides leitmotivic reference to these wonders at this point.
kha, kha, kha, / Ne boimsia my grekha” (adapted from near the end of 
*Skazka o zolotom petushke* and sung gleefully by Povarikha, Tkachikha, 
and Babarikha at the end of Act I) and “Ekh, nikto s nachala mira / Ne vi-
dal takogo pira!” (taken from *Skazka o mertvoi tsarevne* and sung by “the 
people” in the finale of the opera).

Bel’skii makes telling use not only of Pushkin’s other works but also of 
other Russian literary and cultural features. Certain significant passages 
of text are added in the libretto to fulfill hints in the narrative. Among the 
big choral numbers, the choristers’ passage in Act II beginning with 
“Voznesite khvalu, vsia zemlia” is cited by Edmunds (1985: 190–91) for its 
high concentration of Church Slavonicisms in conformity with Pushkin’s 
comparably Church-Slavonic description of Gvidon’s triumphal enthron­
ment. Other inserted passages of text have no counterpart or suggestion 
in the original poem (most of these, as noted above, belong to Act I). The 
initial exchange between the Skomorokh and the Old Grandfather in Act I 
might have derived its form from A. K. Tolstoi’s “Gosudar’ ty nash 
batiushka”:

**СКОМОРОХ**

Государь ты мой, родный дедушка, 
Видно, много тебе лет будет

**СТАРЫЙ ДЕД**

Сметы нет, миленький,  [note triple responses] 
Сметы нет, родименький, 
Сметы нет.

**СКОМОРОХ**

Государь ты мой, родный дедушка, 
Когда ж тебе хоронить будем?

**СТАРЫЙ ДЕД**

В середу, миленький, 
В середу, родименький, 
В середу. [u m. д.]

Although this interpolation, along with the Pushkin-based tale told by 
the Old Grandfather, serves to add aspects of folk tradition, Edmunds 
(1985: 174–77) sees in both of them an effort by the librettist (and com­
poser) at social commentary concerning autocracy and the plight of peas-
ants. Lastly, the incorporation of traditional verbal formulas, such as the Old Grandfather’s and the Messenger’s initial pleas to the Tsaritsa not to be executed (“Ne veli menia kaznit”) demonstrates Bel’skii’s attention to detail.

Even with such interpolated diversions, the libretto overwhelmingly exudes Pushkin, not only through borrowing of lines and emulation of style, but also in the form of verse. The poem’s uniform rhymed couplets in trochaic tetrameter dominate the libretto (see the above excerpt from Act III, Tableau I). With few exceptions these couplets in the libretto follow the pattern of the poem by alternating strong and weak endings. 35 Most of the other verse in the libretto of Tsar Saltan is constructed in rhymed couplets. Other passages use alternate rhyme or more complex patterns with rhyme schemes of aab...ccb...ddb (Militrisa’s narration in Act II, which alternates with passages in the standard meter) and aabc ddec ffgc (e.g., the Swan’s riddle quoted above).

The occasional departures from the “standard meter” (as marked in Chart I with italics) are associated with minor characters, choral numbers, and certain dramatic moments, and occur usually in variously sized meters, often with dactylic clausulae. The notable examples are the opening folksong-like exchange of the two older sisters, many of the choruses throughout the opera, solos of minor characters in the first and last acts (e.g., the Old Grandfather’s entrance in folk verse, the exchange between the Skomorokh and the Grandfather quoted above, and the Grandfather’s tale), the Tsaritsa’s narration in Act II, the love duet of the Prince and the Princess-Swan in Act III, and the Princess-Swan’s riddle to Saltan in Act IV. Not insignificantly, these episodes also tend to be strongly highlighted in the music by some stylistic or textural contrast.

The music of Tsar Saltan perfectly embodies Bel’skii’s libretto and Pushkin’s poem. As hinted in the above discussion of ternary elements, the most formalistic feature of the poem—namely, symmetry—itself dominates both the libretto and the musical setting. Indeed, as Abraham (1970: 129) observes, Pushkin’s poem was “peculiarly congenial not only because of its fantastic content but on account of its shape,” which in turn influenced the “formalised design” of the opera:

The tendency to reduce a story to a more or less symmetrical pattern is apparent in the fairy-tales of all countries; and this trait in the telling of “The Tale of Tsar Saltan” particularly appealed to

35 The same verse pattern dominates Pushkin’s The Golden Cockerel, likewise adapted as an opera by Rimskii-Korsakov and Bel’skii. Edmunds (1985: 160), who notes that verse was not typical for folk tales, cites Michel Gorlin’s contention that Pushkin may have borrowed the meter from popular eighteenth-century soldiers’ songs. (Gorlin’s article is “Le conte populaire dans la littérature russe vers 1830,” Revue des Études slaves, 17 [1937], p. 219–39.)
Rimsky-Korsakov, for whom music was always essentially a matter of symmetrical pattern and who had always striven in his operas to impose purely musical shapes (equivalent to the old aria and rondo forms) on long dramatic scenes instead of following the dramatic development with a free symphonic tissue in Wagner's way.

Mindful of the pro-Wagnerian bias in these comments, we see designs applied in the music not only for those parts of the poem taken over into the libretto, but also in the many events added to Pushkin. In lieu of attempting a full-length exhaustive analysis of the music, suffice it to say that the musical structures within each tableau, be they recitative, strophic song, rounded aria, rondo scene, or some other form, correspond to the episodes of the libretto precisely (or, given the compositional history, the libretto at times conforms precisely to the music) while at the same time proceeding without conventional operatic breaks. The ternary elements of the libretto, of course, are matched by comparable musical structures, as in Militrissa's lament-narration quoted above. Rimskii-Korsakov described this passage as "a ballad with a thrice-repeated lyric refrain" («Странная красота» 1976: 108), although each statement of the "refrain" has different words, thus (to be more precise) resulting in interrupted strophic form. Although not specified in Chart II-B, the triple-stanza form of the opening duet of the older sisters (Prologue) and of the "daybreak" song of the maidens (end of Act III, Tableau I) constitute additional examples of strophic construction in the melody.

A more large-scale ternary effect is added to the scenario by the composer with the presence of the three "orchestral pictures" among the tableaux. On a more esoteric "micro"-level, the fanfare of the opera (Chart III, No. 1), which opens every tableau (orchestral "pictures" included therein) possesses a purely theoretical ternary construction in that it comprises melodically expressed major triads whose roots are a major-third apart (i.e., initially A Major and F Major).

This oft-noted fanfare provides the most obvious musico-thematic symmetry by introducing every tableau. In his letters to Bel’skii the
composer wrote that the fanfare serves to "convey 'they're starting the show!' or 'listen, look here!' or something to such effect" («Странная красота» 1976: 100). In his memoirs he described it as “a call or invitation to hear and see the act which began immediately after it. This is a device quite original and suitable for a fairy-tale” (Rimskii-Korsakov 1974: 381). In addition, as shown in Chart III, No. 1–2, the fanfare serves to announce the standard trochaic tetrameter of the libretto and poem in a simple, if rapid, rhythm of sixteenth notes; its literal tie-in with the story is made explicit only at the very end of the opera, when the fanfare tune is set broadly to the words of the very final couplet of the opera (Chart III, No. 2).

With regard to musico-dramatic procedure, the fanfare also provides this opera with the most striking opening of all Rimskii-Korsakov's stage works. The composer, apparently so caught up in the skazka-mindset, begins the action almost immediately, without some lengthy introduction or formal overture. This abrupt beginning, unlike all of his previous operas (even the short operas Mozart and Salieri and Vera Sheloga) may be interpreted as another means for the composer to yank his audience into the tale, as a storyteller would—again in contrast to Wagner with his extended preludes.

Lastly, representing as it does the storyteller or the self-telling skazka itself, the fanfare introduces us to the leitmotive system of the opera, which in turn is interlinked with the symmetrical construction. Like Rimskii-Korsakov's other operas written after Snowmaiden, Tsar Saltan employs an extensive system of leitmotives which fit together quite unlike the Wagnerian manner, which is usually considered more psychological or "organic." Many of these leitmotives appear in Chart III, where they are chosen particularly for their affinity to the trochaic tetrameter lines to which they are attached. Like the fanfare, the basic forms of these motives in the opera reflect an obvious connection to the text in their easy accommodation to the "standard" meter (and often the couplet structure) through the brevity and balance of their phrases or their minimal number.

38 Note that Rimskii-Korsakov applied the same technique with the trumpet fanfare of The Golden Cockerel. Given that this device does not obtain in the "skazka of spring," Snowmaiden, the composer obviously considered Pushkin's fairy-tales to be of a different type.

39 Rimskii-Korsakov (1974: 381) actually considered the entire Prologue as the substitute for an overture or prelude, with the fanfare announcing each tableau as a kind of compensation. The longer orchestral passages later, however, also make up for the omission of an extended orchestral prelude.

40 Gerald Abraham (1970: 131), arguing from the negative, asserts that Rimskii-Korsakov's operas, or rather the "symphonic" aspect of this music, "does not unfold and develop from itself, generating its own life and motive power as it goes along. No music in the world has ever been more empty of rhythm in the broadest sense of that vague word. It is a mosaic, a delightful arrangement of little musical tiles (often exquisite in themselves)."
of notes. Some of these motives possess a symmetry of their own, particularly in the arpeggiated minor seventh chord of Gvidon’s “hero” motive (Chart III, No. 7) and the similarly falling and rising melodic triads in the first measure of the “city” motive (No. 8). The numerous and varied appearances of most of the leitmotives in the opera—sometimes in combination—are straightforward and uncomplicated, providing adequate adjustment to the given situation (if necessary). For instance, Tsar Saltan’s march theme (Chart III, No. 5), becomes the basis for his plaintive aria in the final tableau by means of slower tempo and minor mode.

Among the characters in the opera Prince Gvidon possesses one of the most elaborate catalogues of leitmotivic permutations. Some of the most significant of these are listed in Chart IV. Like a few of the other characters, Gvidon is assigned more than one motive. The first of these, derived (appropriately) from a well-known children’s tune and first hinted at by the nurses in Act I (Chart IV, No. 1), we shall call the “boy Gvidon” motive (pitches labelled “X” in the chart). When the young prince appears on stage (No. 2), an animated version of this motive scurries along with him, and we hear a decorated version of his other motive, the rather abstractly constructed descending and rising minor seventh (also in Chart III, No. 7), here designated the “hero Gvidon” (“Y”) motive. Not until Act II—when Gvidon is fully grown—do we first encounter these themes in a fairly plain form (Chart IV, No. 3, both motives linked together into one tune). These two motives continue together through the penultimate tableau of the opera, including the chromatic variation of the “boy” motive in the “Flight of the Bumblebee” (No. 4). Except for the maternal blessing scene that closes Act IV, Tableau I, we last hear the “boy” motive in the love duet between the Tsarevna-Swan and Gvidon (No. 5; the fact that the Tsarevna sings the Tsarevich’s theme here might signify her willing “submission” to her husband-to-be.) Although it may be stretching credulity to argue some significance in the fact that the theme here overlaps with its own retrograde form as marked, we can immediately hear how much more lyrical the motive has become in singing,

41 Edmunds (1985: 187, 189) asserts that theme of the city derives from what she labels as the Swan’s “swimming” motive, a variant of which is shown in Chart III, No. 10, m. 1–2.
42 Square-sounding marches are associated with several of Rimskii-Korsakov’s other operatic rulers, such as the officials in May Night, Tsar Berendei in Snowmaiden, Mstivoi in Mlado, and Tsar Dodon in The Golden Cockerel.
43 The American reader/listener may notice that this motive happens to resemble a common children’s taunt, usually with the words “Nyah, nyah, nyah, nyah” or “Nanny-nanny, boo-boo,” etc.
44 See the score at Gvidon’s words “My dia prazdnika takogo.” The “boy” theme in ornamented form could be perceived in the last tableau, when Gvidon asks Saltan “Rat’ chuzhuiu pobivaesh?”; but this resemblance is probably only accidental.
no doubt due to the tender moment of betrothal here depicted. The “hero” motive appropriately triumphs alone in the final tableau.

Discussion and opinion of musical characterization of the personages in Rimskii-Korsakov’s opera goes beyond the transformation of leitmotives. Gerald Abraham (1970: 126–27)—after needlessly pointing out that the opera Tsar Saltan contains “hardly any dramatic element [...] at all”—contends that part of the fortunate choice of Pushkin’s poem as inspiration for Rimskii-Korsakov’s music lies in the “sharply characterised puppets” and complete absence of “psychological subtlety or dramatic power” in the tale. The undisguised comparison to Wagner in this oft-reiterated opinion, of course, seems unnecessary in view of the fundamental contrast between the ways the two composers choose and treat their subject matter as addressed above. But even if we accept some grain of truth in the evaluation of Rimskii-Korsakov’s handling of characters, the notion that Wagner’s (human) characters themselves might lack depth did not escape Eduard Hanslick (1988: 133, 217), whose disgust with the un-modern dramatic reliance on potions—not to mention gods and other magic—in Der Ring des Nibelungen prompted him to declare the character of Siegfried “not a hero but a puppet.” Indeed, for Hanslick the employment of this “lamentable [...] fairy-tale requisite” in Tristan und Isolde turns the title characters into “helpless victims of a purely superficial pathological process, free of moral responsibility, and thus the very opposite of the tragic heroes of a drama.” Thus, Wagner’s supposed success at portraying his human characters is not universally acknowledged. Nevertheless, if we accept the notion that Rimskii-Korsakov was much more at home with the conventional emotions of the fairy-tale he was setting than with situations involving “human being[s] of flesh and blood” (Abraham: 1970: 127), Tsar Saltan was the perfect vehicle for his talents and inclinations and satisfied his oft repeated precept that “opernoe proizvedenie est’ prezhde vsego

45 Abraham (1970: 135–36) correctly cites “the theme of the youthful Tsarevich” (apparently the same as the “boy” motive defined here) as an “actual folk-tune,” but does not recognize it in the love duet, where because of the compound meter he hears in the first measure another folksong (“Na more utushka kupalasia,” used by Chaikovskii in his Voevoda and Oprichnik, appended to Chart IV) and in the second measure part of “Tsarevna-Swan” motive (Chart III. No. 9, m. 2). The former derivation, of course, posits borrowing a tune beginning on the mediant pitch of the minor mode and harmonizing it as the dominant pitch of the major.

Of course, the “Song of the Volga Boatmen” begins with a four-note cell quite similar to the five-note “boy Gvidon” motive. We see similarity also, for instance, in Chaikovskii’s pseudo-folk tune from his Snowmaiden appended to Chart IV. Whatever the statistical prevalence this melodic fragment might have in Russian folksong, its employment by Rimskii-Korsakov represents that kind of absorption of folk manner praised by Abraham (1970: 136): “What does matter is that the composer, knowingly or not, has made those scraps of tune his own. By fitting them into his pattern so perfectly, he has established his right to them.”
muzykal'noe proizvedenie,” a sentiment whose priorities render the portrayal of human beings of less importance—and eschew the notion of a Gesamtkunstwerk.

To return to Chart III and its representations of trochaic tetrameter settings, the reader may rightfully gather from the excerpts therein that most of the text of the opera is set to music syllabically, or at most with minimal melismas, such that durational values of quarter, dotted-quarter, and eighth notes dominate the syllabic rhythm applied to the tetrameter lines. This rhythmic palette in the vocal lines—in itself not necessarily unusual for Rimskii-Korsakov and certainly relieved occasionally in folk passages (e.g., Chart V, No. 1), lyric scenes, and choruses—is applied with such simplicity and consistency as to add musical and poetic support to the opera’s effect as a skazka. In this regard the composer specifically remarked that the recitatives (e.g., Chart V, No. 2) possess “a special character of fairy-tale naïveté” (Rimskii-Korsakov 1974: 381). With reference to the “humorous simplicity in much of the melodic quasi-recitative” in particular, Abraham (1970: 128) writes that “the music is the perfect equivalent of the quaint, childish, metrical pattern that Pushkin borrowed from Russian folk-poetry.” Hence, there is no attempt in this opera to practice thorough, absolute faithfulness to natural Russian declamation—a tenet of musical realism which the Balakirevists propounded in the 1860’s and ‘70’s and which consequentially had informed Rimskii-Korsakov’s earliest operas. The composer’s avowed aim to restore melody—here with its frequent infusion of folksong with its associated prosody—and above all his faithfulness to his vision of the skazka aesthetic took precedence over old realist ideals.

Besides its application to the general setting of the text, fairy-tale naïveté is also manifested in the musical rhyming of many couplets; that is, a musical phrase for the first line of a couplet recurs for the second line, sometimes slightly modified. In Gvidon’s opening lyrical solo of Act III, for example (Chart V, No. 3), almost all the pairs of lines are set to the same rhythm, and the lines of each rhymed couplet share a common melodic phrase.

Although many of the couplets of the libretto are set this way, this is not always the rule. For instance, in genuine dialogue the composer is

46 “An operatic composition is above all a musical composition.” See “Primechaniia avtora k postanovke” in the preliminaries of РИМСКИЙ-КОРСАКОВ. Н. А. (1957). A similar statement can be found in the prefaces to some of the composer’s other operas.

47 In Chart III, No. 10, for instance, note how the melodic, coloratura inspiration overrides declamatory correctness in the musical setting of the word izbasitel’ in that, although the third (stressed) syllable receives attention as the most melismatic figure, it is placed on the weakest beat of the measure while the other (unstressed) syllables have longer durations and occur on stronger beats. According to Edmunds (1985: 188–89) the Swan’s prosody is less “natural” than that of the other characters.
careful to recognize enjambements (e.g., Chart V, No. 4). Furthermore, to
go to the extreme opposite of broad lyric melody as in Gvidon’s aria we
find that the text in some passages, such as the famous “Flight of the
Bumblebee” (Chart V, No. 5) is set to vocal lines of non-melodic (and even
non-declamatory) interest in order for the orchestra to come to the fore.
Generally, though, Rimskii-Korsakov’s musical setting avoids monotonous
rendering of the dominant verse pattern by employing a wide range of dif­
ferent rhythmic and metric settings. Chart VI, which shows all of the
rhythmic permutations applied to trochaic tetrameter in the Prologue,
should make this point clear.

The musical styles applied to the text range from homophonic ceremo­
nial choral writing to uncomplicated recitative, as in Babarikha’s part;
from Militrisa’s laments to the joyous hopak-like finale; from folk-song (or
imitation thereof) to lyrical aria, such as the Swan’s first address to
Gvidon in Act II. This aria of the Swan, given in Chart III, No. 10, clearly
contrasts with the other excerpts listed in the same chart. In general the
music sung by the Swan-Princess, although usually to text of the
“standard” verse meter, is vocally ornate and harmonically exotic, in keep­
ing with her magical, other-worldly character (Abraham 1970: 128–29; 
Edmunds 1985: 187–89). This melodic and harmonic differentiation be­tween the fantastic and the “real” is quite typical of Rimskii-Korsakov’s
operatic writing. The composer himself analyzed the contrast thus:

Saltan was composed in a mixed manner which I shall call in­
strumental-vocal. Its entire fantastic part belonged rather to the
first manner, the realistic part to the second manner. [...] The fan­tastic
singing of the Swan in Act II is in a way instrumental; but
its harmonies are novel. (Rimskii-Korsakov 1974: 380) 50

In Tsar Saltan, at the crucial point where the Swan changes into a
tsarevna (i.e., becomes “human” and therefore eligible, so to speak, to
marry Gvidon), she suddenly begins to sing in a more simple, diatonic,
“human” manner (Chart IV, no. 5), like the other characters

48 The soprano leads in such operas as Sadko (Volkhova) and Golden Cockerel (the Queen of
Shemakha) display coloratura with exotic harmonization, although only the latter evinces
the artificial orientalism well known from the composer’s other works.
49 Most of the composer’s operas, in fact, combine the “real” or everyday world with fantastic
elements in some manner, both dramatically and musically. This tendency can be traced
back to his second opera, May Night, with its rusaliki, although Vlas’evna’s tale in Act I of
The Maid of Pskov, his first, hints at it through narrative. (This is not to mention the even
earlier tone poem Sadko.)
50 This quotation constitutes a late echo of the stylistic tendencies of the baroque period,
when, for instance, composers would deliberately write music for soprano voice which was
more idiomatic to, say, a violin or a trumpet.
Then in the last tableau during the presentation of Militrisa, when the Tsarevna-Swan's magic is manifested once more, her supernatural musical persona does likewise (Edmunds 1985: 207–08). Given that musical gems, like textual details, in the opera Tsar Saltan are far too numerous and varied to discuss equitably in this short space, the last remarks in this respect will deal with the one magnificent pearl of this work whose brilliance cannot be overlooked: the role of the orchestra. The three orchestral introductions or “pictures,” accompanied in the score by lines from Pushkin's poem as descriptive prefaces (which presumably could or should be printed in a performance program or projected onto the curtain at these points), are based musically on themes and whole passages used elsewhere in the vocal portions of the opera. The first two of these in particular (the introductions to Act I and Act II) are needed to replace action which would be impractical or impossible to dramatize on stage literally from Pushkin's poem: Saltan's martial departure off to war, and the voyage of the barrel on the sea. The third orchestral picture, introducing the last tableau, is completely redundant as far as music is concerned, as almost all of the content has been heard previously in one variant or another; but it serves also not only to hold the audience in suspense but also to replace some of the structural repetition otherwise lost in the libretto. The ending of this third orchestral picture, besides giving the audience a symmetrical foretaste of the final flourish of the opera, also provides a spectacular closing in a concert performance of the three pictures.

As with the composer's other stage works, in this opera the orchestra is responsible for transmitting not only much of the leitmotivic information but also for evoking moods and depicting surrounding conditions, including nature. In most of Rimskii-Korsakov's operas we can find one or more of his orchestral impressions of big and small natural phenomena: winter (Snowmaiden), forests (Maid of Pskov, Pan Wojewoda, Kitezh), a rainbow (Mlada), birds (Snowmaiden, Kitezh), night (May Night, Mlada, Christmas Eve, Pan Wojewoda), daybreak (May Night, Mlada), deluge (Mlada), and, last but definitely not least, the broad topic of lakes, seas,

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51 Given Edmunds' contention that the Swan's riddle concerns the role of fantasy, one might be tempted to consider that episode likewise as another reversion of the Tsarevna to her "magic" state, especially as the tune has been originally sung plainly and syllabically by Babarikha (Chart III, No. 9). However, the harmony here—lacking chromaticism and ninth chords so characteristic of the Swan—does not impress as comparatively "exotic." Ozeretskovskaia, in fact, asserts that the theme is based on the folk tune "la vechor mlada," harmonized by Rimskii-Korsakov in his 40 Folk Songs (Озерецковская 1984: 6), and appended to Chart IV.

52 The famous "Flight of the Bumblebee" which closes Act III, Tableau 1 has become a famous chestnut not only for full orchestra but also for all manner of solo instruments.
and oceans (Sadko). No doubt one of the great attractions of Tsar Saltan as an opera subject for Rimskii-Korsakov—besides those factors which had long fascinated him in his other operas, such as the interplay of reality and fantasy and the incorporation of ritual scenes and folk music—was the opportunity to encounter once more the motif of the sea. As is well known, the composer's former career in the Russian navy had included a long sailing tour (1862–1865). This experience would play an important role in his early orchestral tone-poem Sadko (as well as the opera later based upon it) and in his symphonic masterpiece Sheherazade.53 In Tsar Saltan we see the dangerous (ending of Act I) and placid (beginning of Act III) aspects of the sea, both of which employ an arpeggiated accompaniment pattern in the bass similar to that in Sheherazade but add other figures in the treble which suggest stars, the sailing of ships, and the heaving of waves. This sea-painting by Rimskii-Korsakov, according to Abraham (1970: 132–35), contrasts unfavorably with Wagner's depictions of nature: whereas Wagner supposedly is able to "express the moods of nature" and "suggest natural appearances to the mind's eye" with precision that creates a universally perceptible musical representation of those phenomena, Rimskii-Korsakov "again and again attempts tone-painting without having any real flair for it; he writes essentially abstract music congruent to the matter in hand. That is all." Abraham would have us believe that the end of Die Walküre precisely and powerfully suggests flames to the listener's mind,54 but the "sea" accompaniment from Sheherazade or Tsar Saltan brings the idea of waves to Rimskii-Korsakov's mind alone. Yet, given that Abraham patently is projecting his personal reactions (or established pro-Wagnerist opinion) as universal, does not explain here what features of Wagner's orchestral or motivic writing accomplish what Rimskii-Korsakov's fails to, and suspends the fact that both composers were writing for the very visible venue of the theater (with printed stage directions), his assertion must be discounted until some objective scientific study on listeners unfamiliar with either composer's "nature" music demonstrates the suggestive superiority of one over the other. There is no doubt, however, that in Tsar Saltan Rimskii-Korsakov's reputation as one of the great orchestral composers of the nineteenth century (along with Wagner, Berlioz, Debussy, and Richard Strauss) remains as strong as ever.

The opera Tsar Saltan, like Pushkin's poem, is the happy result of an eclectic approach. The poet created a narrative which on the one hand de-

53 After Saltan the sea as a motif would reappear in the cantata Iz Gomera (From Homer, 1901), which derived from an abandoned opera project based on the Nausicaa episode from The Odyssey (Rimskii-Korsakov 1974: 399).

54 The "city" motive in Tsar Saltan (Chart III, No. 8, sixteenth-note version) shares a close affinity with Wagner's "fire" music from Die Walküre, with the primary difference that Rimsky-Korsakov's theme is comparatively diatonic in nature.
rives from many different international and pan-national sources, but nevertheless possesses a thoroughly Russian soul. As a fairy-tale it is at once universal in its application of folk- and fairy-tale formulas and unique in its perfection of form. To this skazka Bel'skii brought his avocational passion for Russian antiquity and ancient Russian literature, and Rimskii-Korsakov his penchant for fantasy, love of folk music, and particular tastes as a composer steeped in the musical legacy of Glinka and of westerners, including Wagner. Like Pushkin, both Bel'skii and Rimskii-Korsakov created a thoroughly enjoyable Russian fairy-tale in their opera Tsar Saltan. As with many of his other operas, the composer would never write another work like it; furthermore, Tsar Saltan has no counterpart among the other Balakirevists, or Chaikovskii, or even their common predecessor Glinka, whose Ruslan, foundation of Russian "fantasy" opera that it is, nevertheless differs by its marked Italianate characteristics, broad strokes, multi-authored libretto, and monumental length. However, Glinka's Ruslan does share with Rimskii-Korsakov's Tsar Saltan a reliance on full vocal melody and masterly orchestration in the telling of the tale—not to mention an origin in Pushkin.

Whether out of some aspect of turn-of-the-century Zeitgeist, or dissatisfaction in favor of The Tsar's Bride, or simply the weariness of old age, Rimskii-Korsakov considered his opera Tsar Saltan to be his "farewell to the skazka," for, when he returned to this folk-literary genre in composing The Golden Cockerel, fairy-tale humor was transformed into sarcasm and irony (Римский-Корсаков, А. Н., вып. IV: 146–48). As much as that last magnum opus of his may be considered the masterpiece, we can still rejoice that the amiable Tsar Saltan, itself now a hundred years young, was created in the milieu of Pushkin's centennial, especially because this opera seems to have given Rimskii-Korsakov the most favorable opportunity at that time to revel in a subject so congenial to his nature, to communicate it directly to his audience, and to apply some of his most strongly held ideals about opera.

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University of Delaware
### CHART I: Tsar Saltan: Parallel events in poem and opera

Note: Many of the details noted here are indebted to the narrative analysis by Edmunds (1985: 159-224). The sequence of events as outlined here follows the opera, although here and there an attempt is made parenthetically to note significant shifts in sequence or other details.

**Key:** *italics* = departure from Pushkin’s verse pattern  
* ↔ = common feature with slight change  
B. = Babarixa, G. = Gvidon, M. = Militrisa, OG = Old Grandfather,  
P. = Povarikha, S. = Saltan, Sk. = Skomorokh, T. = Tkachikha

#### CHART I-A: Tsar Saltan: Prologue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>POEM</strong></th>
<th><strong>BOTH</strong></th>
<th><strong>OPERA</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>line 1-</strong> (B. not present)</td>
<td>Evening; in a sverlitsa; 3 sisters spinning</td>
<td>Winter; all action of prologue in the room Includes B. with black cat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| In 3- | 3 “if I were tsaritsa” speeches  
S. enters after having been eavesdropping and takes youngest sister as bride  
Other sisters named as servants | Comic song of laziness & matchmaking  
Make youngest sister work |
| Move to palace | In 33- | |
| In 43- | Older sisters envious | |
| S. off to war (see 1st orchestral picture) | In 50- | |
| In 69-72 | | Sisters ask B. for help.  
B. suggests false message |
| Birth of son | In 58- | Birth letter to S. intercepted  
S. receives B. & sisters’ false message  
S. angry, threatens messenger  
(Messenger later narrates)  
S. answers that he will wait until return (used later in chorus)  
B. & sisters replace S.’s message |
## CHART I-B: Tsar Saltan, Act I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POEM</th>
<th>BOTH</th>
<th>OPERA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>(In 50-54)</em> Pushkin's verses narrating S.'s farewell ↔ 1st Orch. picture <em>(S. off to war)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>Setting = Tmutarakan, palace M. waiting for messenger 1st lullaby, + B. &amp; M M. interrupts Sk. tries to distract M. P. (cook) enters OG enters Sk. and OG dialogue 2nd lullaby (like 1st) M. asks for story OG tells 1st part of story ← With ironic comments from Sk. T. (weaver) enters OG's tale concluded chorus has entered &amp; helps end 3rd lullaby (shortened) G. (boy) wakes up, is chased by nurses Chorus of praise for G. Drunk Messenger arrives &amp; narrates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(adapts In 113-114)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(In 75-78)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>(S.'s response replaced)</em> <em>(In 91-94)</em> M. is to be punished Response is S.'s own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(boyars tell M. in her chamber)</em> <em>(In 79-80)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>M. alarmed People want to wait B. warns of consequences of disobedience M. laments G. (grown more) brought forth People mourn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(uses G.'s words from inside barrel)</em> <em>(In 117-124)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>M. begs elements to be merciful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(In 102)</em> Barrel thrown into the sea</td>
<td></td>
<td>B., T., and P. exult <em>(adapts couplet from end of Golden Cockerel)</em> People mourn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POEM</td>
<td>BOTH</td>
<td>OPERA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(In 107-114)</td>
<td>Pushkin's verses narrating travel of barrel ↔ 2nd orch. picture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Butan=different island)</td>
<td>In 125-</td>
<td>Gvidon's island (seashore)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narration of G.'s escape from barrel</td>
<td>In 131-</td>
<td>Escape from barrel already taken place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 139-</td>
<td>More narration ↔ dialogue btw. M. &amp; G. description of island making of bow Swan attacked Kite's groans</td>
<td>(+chorus of defeated spirits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 169-</td>
<td>Swan pecks at kite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 175-</td>
<td>Swan's gratitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 174</td>
<td>Swan speaks Russian ↔ M.'s comment</td>
<td>M. sings a another lullaby M.'s recurring laments alternate with narrations of past life Lullaby again, both sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 193-</td>
<td>Night passes ↔ Moon, sunrise City has appeared ↔ Swan's city (Ledenets) arises Description of city ↔ G.'s monologue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Musical images)</td>
<td>In 209-</td>
<td>Presentation of ducal cap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People proclaim G. their leader</td>
<td></td>
<td>People ask G. to be their prince Triumphant chorus, describes life in Ledenec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 216-</td>
<td>Presentation of ducal cap</td>
<td>G. accepts and becomes prince</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Choral praise for G.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POEM</td>
<td>BOTH</td>
<td>OPERA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 223-</td>
<td>On Gvidon’s island Lines from G.’s reception of sailors ↔ G. has already bade farewell to them introduces scene with these lines</td>
<td>wooded seashore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 254-</td>
<td>G’s sadness described ↔ More monologue; calls Swan Swan appears to help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Swan conjures squirrel and knights in course of trips below)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Squirrel and knights already present: G. not happy with them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 266</td>
<td>G. wants to see father</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st trip to Tmutarakan, G. as gnat</td>
<td>In 268-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd trip, G. as fly</td>
<td>In 433-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan splashes G. to transform him into bumblebee</td>
<td>In 631-</td>
<td>G. must plunge 3 times into sea to transform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 634-</td>
<td>3rd trip ↔ one and only trip, adds results of all three together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POEM</strong></td>
<td><strong>BOTH</strong></td>
<td><strong>OPERA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Narrated from G.'s perspective)</td>
<td>In Tmutarakan</td>
<td>Threefold sequence of sailors. B. &amp; sisters. S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 643-</td>
<td>In Tmutarakan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 653-</td>
<td>B. &amp; sisters keep close eye on S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.’s subjugation more forcefully noted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.’s misery Recognized by sailors instead of G.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 wonders described (3 separate trips) 3 wonders described each by a sailor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 307-</td>
<td>1. island city</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P. challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-bee sting (right eye brow)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 473-</td>
<td>2. squirrel (whistling high flute)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T. challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-bee sting (left eye brow)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 670-</td>
<td>3. 33 knights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(later S. will want to leave straightaway)</td>
<td>In 919-</td>
<td>Saltan wants to leave the next day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swan described by B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Last B-bee sting (nose eye, blinded)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-bee escapes through window blinds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All try to catch B-bee as it escapes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 696-</td>
<td>Saltan orders the guards to be hanged</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(G. feels sorry for B.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>BOTH</td>
<td>Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 733-</td>
<td>On Gvidon's island</td>
<td>wooded seashore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Swan appears, sees G. unhappy)</td>
<td>In 735-</td>
<td>G. longs for tsarevna, calls for Swan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 741-</td>
<td>G. tells Swan wants marriage, reiterates B.'s description of Tsarevna</td>
<td>Swan warns about marriage G. still longs (→ speech) Swan transforms into Tsarevna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 795-</td>
<td>M.'s blessing</td>
<td>Love duet Women approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple is wed</td>
<td>In 809-</td>
<td>G. wants father to share happiness Trio with chorus of blessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th trip of sailors to see Swan</td>
<td>S. decides to go &quot;now&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POEM</strong></td>
<td><strong>BOTH</strong></td>
<td><strong>OPERA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In 933-</strong></td>
<td>Adaptation of various Pushkin lines about 3 wonders ← 3rd orch picture Setting: city of Ledeneck G. tells M. that S. has arrived Cannon &amp; bells for S.'s welcome</td>
<td>(with chorus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(S. sees knights, then squirrel, then Tsarevna) <strong>In 955-</strong></td>
<td>S. is shown squirrel, knights; earlier descriptions sung</td>
<td>G. greets S. S.'s aria of regret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tsarevna escorts M.) <strong>In 970</strong></td>
<td>Tsarevna appears</td>
<td>(Tsarevna alone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In 981-</strong></td>
<td>S. reunited with wife and son includes a love duet</td>
<td>Riddle of Swan S. affected by riddle S. asks help of Tsarevna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In 991-</strong></td>
<td>All 3 evildoers pardoned</td>
<td>B. runs away; P. &amp; T. beg S. accusing B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(adapts <strong>In 995</strong>)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chorus while feast is prepared OG comments Chorus again OG again End of tale (fanfare is sung)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(adapts <strong>In 993-994</strong>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsar drunk, goes to bed</td>
<td><strong>In 993-</strong></td>
<td>(Concludes w/ narrator addressing audience)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHART II: *Tsar Saltan*: TERNARY ELEMENTS

(Lines spaced to indicate relative chronology among columns)

Key:  
A = Appearance;  
F = Fanfare;  
J = Journey;  
S = Stinging;  
T = Transformation;  
W = Wonder

CHART II-A: TERNARY ELEMENTS IN POEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNITS</th>
<th>SWAN</th>
<th>WONDERS APPEARING</th>
<th>WONDERS MENTIONED</th>
<th>STINGS</th>
<th>TRANSFORMATIONS AND JOURNEYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 sisters</td>
<td>(Swan)¹</td>
<td>A of W1 (City)</td>
<td>W1 + W2 (Squirrel)</td>
<td>S1</td>
<td>T1 + J1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swan A1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swan A2</td>
<td>A of W2</td>
<td>W2 + W3 (Knights)</td>
<td>S2</td>
<td>T2 + J2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swan A3</td>
<td>A of W3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T3 + J3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Ws presented (with 33 knights)</td>
<td>(Swan)²</td>
<td>[W4, Princess]</td>
<td></td>
<td>S3</td>
<td>[Tr4, Princess]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹The Swan (as a bird) enters the story at this point.
²At this juncture the Swan (as a bird) leaves the story by becoming the Tsarevna.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNITS</th>
<th>ORCH. PICTURES</th>
<th>LULLABY</th>
<th>GRANDFATHER &amp; SKOMOROKH</th>
<th>SWAN</th>
<th>WONDERS</th>
<th>BUMBLEBEE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 sisters and speeches</td>
<td>F.-Orch. 1</td>
<td>Lullaby 1</td>
<td>OG enters</td>
<td>Swan A1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OG's triple responses to Skomorokh</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lullaby 2</td>
<td>OG tale, pt.1</td>
<td>Swan A2</td>
<td>A of W1 (City)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lullaby 3</td>
<td>OG tale, pt.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>mention of W2 (Squirrel) &amp; W3 (Knights)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M's triple-rondo</td>
<td>F.-Orch. 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T into B-bee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.'s triple plunge into water</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enter B-bee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trifold chorus, with 3 groups of singers;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exit B-bee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (+1) Ws mentioned, each 3 stingings</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Ws presented (with 33 knights)</td>
<td>F.-Orch. 3-F.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3+1 wonders)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trio of father, mother &amp; son brought</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>together</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CHART III. *TSAR SALTAN* -- Selected Recurring Themes (Leitmotives)

Highlighting Trochaic Tetrameter

(Dotted lines connect related pitches.)

1. Prologue, m. 1- (fanfare, story-teller's attention-getter)

2. Act IV, 2, Finale, m. 152

3. Prologue, m. 248- (two older sisters)

4. Prologue, m. 306- (Militrisa's promise)

5. Prologue, m. 318- (Saltan's march)

6. Act I, m. 830- (Militrisa's lament)

Simplified version:

(i.e., appoggiatura)

Nу, теперь уж сказка вся. Дальше сказь-вать нельзя.

Ах. голубушка сестрица. Кабы я была царица...

Кабы я была царица. Ткать плоха я мастерица...

Ах. в глазах все темнело

Ах. в глазах все темнело
7. Act II, m. 11-(Gvidon's 2nd theme)

Ах, как славно! Мы на во ле.

8. Act III, 2, m. 226- (the magical city)

А теперь стоит на нем Го род но-вый со дворцом...

(orchestra simultaneously)

9. Act III, 2, m. 485- (the beautiful Tsarevna)

За морем ца-рев-на есть. Что не мож-но глаз от весть...

10. Act II, m. 193- (Swan)

Ты, ца-ре-вич, мой спа-си-тель. И мо-гу-чий из-ба-ви тель.

Simplified version:

Ты, ца-ре-вич, мой спа-си-тель. И мо-гу-чий из-ба-ви тель.

(cont. of preceding)

Утро но-чи му-дре-ней. Будь 3 по-ко-ен, не 3 жа-лей.

(primary motive)

Simplified version:

CHART IV. **TSAR SALTAN** -- Leitmotives of Gvidon (selected transformations)

(basic pitches of "boy" and "hero" motives are marked with "X" and "Y" respectively)

0. Variant of children's tune borrowed for Gvidon
(Ястребцев 1960: 151)

1. Act I, mm. 511- (Nurses' song, uses folk song "Ладушки, лапушки")

2. Act I, mm. 529- (Boy Gvidon runs out and is chased)

3. Act II, Introduction, mm. 69-

4. Act III, Tableau I, mm. 165- (Bumblebee)

5. Act IV, Tableau I, mm. 216- (Gvidon and Tsarevna Swan's Love Duet)

COMPARE:
A. Chaikovskii, Incidental Music to Ostrovskii's
   *Snowmaiden* (Op. 12, 1873), No. 2. Dances
   and Chorus of the Birds, mm. 261-

B. Chaikovskii, *50 Russian Folk Songs*,
   arranged for piano four hands (1868-1869), No. 23,
   "На море утюшка купалася"

C. Rimskii-Korsakov, *40 Folk Songs*, with piano accompaniment, collected by Filippov (1882),
   No. 39, "Я вечер, младца"
CHART V. Tsar Saltan -- Examples of Vocal Styles

No. 1: Prologue, m. 83-, folk tune with new words applied with folk-type prosody

OLDER SISTER

No. 2: Prologue, m. 166-, recitative in trochaic tetrameter

BABARIKA

OLDER SISTER

No. 3: Act III, Tableau I, m. 151-, Aria; pairs of melodic phrases matching couplets

GVIDON

Ветер по морю гуляет И кораблик подгоняет: Он бежит себе в волнах На раздутых парусах. Гости земли объезжали, Соболя миторговали, А теперь им вышел срок, Едут прямо на восток, Мимо острова Буяна. К царству славного Салтана.
No. 4: Act III, Tableau 1, m. 124-, Recitative with handling of enjambment

No. 5: Act III, Tableau 1, m. 180- (Flight of the Bumblebee), minimal melodic/declamatory interest in voice
CHART VI: *THE TALE OF TSAR SALTAN*, PROLOGUE
RHYTHMIC SETTINGS OF TROCHAIC TETRAMETER
(in order of initial appearance; slurred notes are combined into one duration)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>( \text{\textbf{\textit{J}}.~~IJ'll'.PJ~IJ'ld}) )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>( \text{\textbf{\textit{J}}.~~IJ'll'.PJ~IJ'ld}) )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>( \text{\textbf{\textit{J}}.~~IJ'll'.PJ~IJ'ld}) )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>( \text{\textbf{\textit{J}}.~~IJ'll'.PJ~IJ'ld}) )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>( \text{\textbf{\textit{J}}.~~IJ'll'.PJ~IJ'ld}) )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>( \text{\textbf{\textit{J}}.~~IJ'll'.PJ~IJ'ld}) )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 4 | \( \text{\textbf{\textit{J}}.~~IJ'll'.PJ~IJ'ld}) \) |

| 4 | \( \text{\textbf{\textit{J}}.~~IJ'll'.PJ~IJ'ld}) \) |