Stravinsky's "Les Noces" and Russian Village Wedding Ritual
Author(s): Margarita Mazo
Source: *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Spring, 1990), pp. 99-142
Published by: University of California Press on behalf of the American Musicological Society
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/831407
Accessed: 18-08-2018 18:15 UTC

Stravinsky's *Les Noces* And Russian Village Wedding Ritual*

By MARGARITA MAZO

According to Robert Craft, at the time he met Stravinsky, the composer "was bored with folk music and even more so with the question of its connections with his work."[1] This may well have been the case in the late 1940s; but towards the end of his days the question of the roots of his music once again became an important issue for the composer. In 1962, when the Soviet government allowed Stravinsky to visit Russia, he was greeted as a returning celebrity. During his visit, *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, the Soviet youth newspaper, published an address Stravinsky made to the Soviet public, in which he said:

> I have spoken Russian all my life, my way of expression [*slog*] is Russian. It may be not noticeable in my music at the first glance, but it is inherent in my music and in its inner latent nature.[2]

A few days later, on 1 October 1962, as Craft writes, during one official but "deeply Dostoevskian dinner" in Moscow, Soviet composers Shostakovich, A. Khachaturian, Kara-Karaev, and Khrennikov made their toasts-confessions about their previous misunderstanding of Stravinsky. Stravinsky replied with a strong statement:

> A man has one birthplace, one fatherland, one country—he *can* have only one country—and the place of his birth is the most important factor in his life. I regret that circumstances separated me from my fatherland.[3]

*This article was prepared in part under a fellowship from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C.

[1] Robert Craft, Preface to Boris Asafiev, *A Book about Stravinsky*, trans. R. F. French (Ann Arbor, 1982), xiv; see also Robert Craft and William Harkins, "Stravinsky's Svadebka (*Les Noces*)," *The New York Review of Books* (14 December 1972): 26 (section IV, "A Note on Derivations").

[2] Igor Stravinsky, "Liubite muzyku!" *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, 27 September 1962; cited from Mikhail Druskin, *Igor Stravinskii. Lichnost', tvorchestvo, vzgliady* (Leningrad, 1982), 60–61.

[3] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Dialogues and A Diary* (London, 1968), 292–93.

One would doubt that the octogenarian composer had any need to exhibit a feigned devotion to his roots in order to find favor with his hosts. More probably, these words were spoken with sincerity; they were not a mask worn for the occasion.

The present article examines one aspect of traditional life in Russian villages, the wedding ritual. This ritual can help to reveal the "inner latent nature" Stravinsky speaks of in the *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* citation above, as it relates to one of his most distinctive ballets, *Les Noces* (1914–1923, for soprano, mezzosoprano, tenor, bass, SATB chorus, four pianos, and percussion ensemble). The idea of this article arose from observations obtained in direct contacts with people who themselves were participants in folk wedding rituals.[4] The article is not intended to analyze in depth either Stravinsky's ballet or the Russian folk wedding. Rather, it aims to set a framework to support a certain reading of the composition. Since many aspects of *Les Noces* have been discussed at length elsewhere,[5] I choose to omit delving into the history of the ballet's creation or its significance in Stravinsky's output. For the same reason, I exclude discussions on the work as a whole, the structure of its parts, or the coordination between the three main components of this ballet: singing, instruments, and dance. The first part of the article discusses Stravinsky's contacts with primary sources on folk music. In addition to the music of *Les Noces* and statements made by the composer himself, the data used are gleaned from materials with which he is known to have come in

[4] I collected material on wedding ritual, laments, and songs in Russian villages during 1963–1978, in the North-European (Vologda, Arkhangelsk, Leningrad provinces) and West-European (Pskov, Smolensk provinces) parts of the Soviet Union. These areas relate to Stravinsky's personal experience or to published sources with which he worked. Most of the musical examples in this article are taken from North-Russian songs. This, however, does not carry an implication that folk traditions from the North of Russia were a specific source for Stravinsky's inspiration.

[5] See, for example, Pieter C. van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky* (New Haven and London, 1985), 155–77; Victor Belaiev, *Igor Stravinsky's "Les Noces:" The Outline*, trans. S. Pring (London, 1928); Asafiev, *A Book About Stravinsky*, 129–55; Craft and Harkins, "Stravinsky's Svadebka"; Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: TheComposer and His Works*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1979); Irina Vershinina, *Rannie balety Stravinskogo* (Moscow, 1967); Rafail Birkan, "O poeticheskom texte *Svadebki Stravinskogo*," in Mikhail Mikhailov and Elena Orlova, eds., *Russkaia muzyka na rubezhe 20 veka* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1966); Rafail Birkan, "O tematizme 'Svadebki' Stravinskogo," in Semen Ginzburg and Mikhail Druskin, eds., *Iz istorii muzyki XX veka* (Moscow, 1971); Yury Paisov, "Russkii fol'klor v vokal'no-khorovom tvorchestve Stravinskogo," in Galina Alfeevskaia and Irina Vershinina, eds., *I. F. Stravinskii. Stat'i i vospominaniia* (Moscow, 1985); Yury Paisov, "O ladovom svoebrazii 'Svadebki' Stravinskogo," in L. Diachkova, comp., *I. F. Stravinskii. Stat'i i materialy* (Moscow, 1973), 214–50.

contact or that were accessible to him. Some of the observations in this part are pertinent to *Les Noces* per se, while others relate to many others of Stravinsky's works, particularly from the "Russian" period. The remainder of the article examines Stravinsky's conceptualization of *Les Noces* in light of the village wedding as a ritual. The latter is one of the most complicated and lengthy rituals known in folk practice. I discuss only those of its particular elements that are relevant to the musical and dramatic ideas of *Les Noces*, specifically laments and their role in the wedding ritual. I choose not to deal here with the poetic text of *Les Noces* and its sources.[6] Stravinsky drew most of the text from various, sometimes unrelated, folk texts and freely combined these texts as he wished. Analysis of *Les Noces*'s text is a subject that requires its own, separate investigation.

* * *

Stravinsky strongly objected to Boris Asafiev's vision of *Les Noces* as a representation of folk rites of fertility and procreation. As Craft reports, Stravinsky commented in the margins of Asafiev's book: "I do not agree," or "This has no bearing on it [*Les Noces*]," or "I meant nothing of the kind." Nevertheless, Craft says, "for all his objection to this obtrusion of the mistaken thesis, he offers no clue to the right one."[7] Recognition of Stravinsky's attitudes towards folk material (musical as well as verbal and ethnographic) and a comparison of *Les Noces* with certain aspects of the village wedding ritual can lead us to some of these clues.

It is crucial for this task to examine Stravinsky's own accounts of his connections with the traditional music of Russian villages, however inaccurate and even deceiving his recollections are sometimes reputed to be.[8] Though these recollections are "not certainty about things as they seemed or were, but only 'to the best of my may-have-been-deceived memory,'" Stravinsky himself emphasized the significance of the selectiveness of a composer's memory and the

[6] The main source of the text is *Pesni sobrannye P. V. Kireevskim, Novaia seriia*, ed. V. Miller and M. Speransky, part 1: Ritual songs (Moscow, 1911). For a partial identification of the texts used by Stravinsky see Rafail Birkan, "O poeticheskom texte 'Svadebki' Stravinskogo."

[7] Craft, Preface to Boris Asafiev, *A Book About Stravinsky*, xiii.

[8] Taruskin's research confirms the necessity of a critical reading of the composer's recollections in Stravinsky-Craft conversation books. See, for example, Richard Taruskin, "Stravinsky and the Traditions: Why the Memory Hole," *Opus* 3, no. 4(June 1987): 10–17.

importance of earliest impressions: "I believe, in fact, that a composer's first memory impression is already a composition."[9] In Stravinsky's recollections of the landscapes from his childhood, his very first memories of musical sound are linked directly to folk singing, and, what is more important for our discussion, to its characteristic sonority in particular.[10]

While living in Russia, the Stravinskys usually spent the summer in the country, as was customary for families of the intelligentsia in large Russian cities. His first memories of folk singing are from the summer of 1884, which he spent in the village of Lzy, about a hundred miles south-east of St. Petersburg (Pskov province); Stravinsky returned there in 1902, when he lived for a week with Rimsky-Korsakov; in 1904 he stayed with the Rimsky-Korsakovs for at least thirteen days in the village of Vechasha (Pskov province), Rimsky-Korsakov's favorite summer place. In 1911 Stravinsky transcribed folk songs in Princess Tenisheva's country estate in the village of Talashkino, near Smolensk. He spent the summers of 1896 through 1900 at the estate of Nossenko in Ustilug, a Jewish shtetl "out of Isaac Babel or Chagall" in the Volyn' province of the Ukraine;[11] he built his own summer home there in 1907 and during 1907–1914 he spent in Ustilug at least a part of every summer. The peasant music he heard in the village of Pechisky in the Podol province of the Ukraine (about 400 miles south of Ustilug), where he spent the summers of 1891 and 1892, also left important marks on his memory, particularly the picturesque fairs of Yarmolintsy, a nearby small town.[12] Although this is perhaps not a comprehensive list of all country places Stravinsky visited in Russia and Ukraine, it is sufficient to demonstrate many opportunities for the composer to become familiar with rural life. It also raises an interesting issue unexplored in research on Stravinsky. Both Russian and Ukrainian folk song exist in several distinctly different musical dialects and perhaps it is possible to find in Stravinsky's compositions traces of specific local traditions in places he visited. It appears, for example, that music of the West-Russian

[9] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1981), 46.

[10] Stravinsky, *An Autobiography* (New York and London, 1962), 3–4.

[11] Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, 52.

[12] The information presented above is to be found in Stravinsky, *An Autobiography*; Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*; Stravinsky and Craft, *Dialogues* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982); Vasilii Yastrebtsev, *Rimsky-Korsakov. Vospominaniia V. V. Yastrebtseva*, 2 vols. (Leningrad, 1960); Nikolai Roerich, *Iz literaturnogo naslediia* (Moscow, 1974).

regional style, including certain Pskov and Smolensk traditions, does have some properties pertinent to Stravinsky's writings, particularly to his "Russian" compositions. By way of preliminary remarks I shall note the following aspects of local traditional melodies: (a) relatively small range; (b) characteristic pitch collections 035, 057, 0357, 0578, 0579; (c) formal structures consisting of reiterations (ordinarily with variation) of short asymmetric phrases; (d) syllabic rather then melismatic setting of text; (e) importance of ritual (particularly seasonal and wedding) songs in local repertoire; (f) significance of melodies-formulae (melodies that serve many texts); (g) shifting and playing freely with a syllable's accents in a line and in a verse; (h) changing length of metric units; (i) close range of female voices in choral singing (usually low or middle register); (j) heterophony with sporadic clusters of seconds. To investigate the issue further one would require field work and special research.

Mikhail Druskin reports that, in his private conversation with Stravinsky in 1962, the composer said that he did not trust published collections of folk songs: "Everyone who transcribes folk melody—by ear or from a phonograph—modifies it, adapting it to one's own level of understanding."[13] In spite of this statement, Stravinsky certainly studied published collections and studied some quite closely. From a letter to his mother dated 10 (23 old style) February 1916, we learn that at this time Stravinsky was seriously interested in ethnographically reliable and unmediated sources on folk music. He asked her to find at Jurgenson's music store and send him quickly available publications of folk songs, including "folk songs of Caucasian peoples recorded by a *phonograph*" and all other collections of songs "recorded *phonographically only* (italics by Stravinsky)."[14] His specific guidance instructs: "Others, recorded without a phonograph, do not take." He

[13] Druskin, *Igor Stravinskii*, 44.

[14] L. Diachkova, *I.F. Stravinskii*, letter no. 55, p. 488; (all letters are edited and commented on by I. Blazhkov). The book includes first publications of many other documents from Soviet archives. For an English translation of the letter in question see Taruskin, "Russian Folk Melodies in *The Rite of Spring*," this JOURNAL 33 (1980): 507–08. Stravinsky's mention of Caucasian songs, most probably, refers to twenty-seven transcriptions from phonographic recordings of Georgian folk songs which were published by D. Arakishvili together with thirty-seven Georgian chants from the *Ioann Zlatoust* liturgy in the first volume of *Trudy Muzykal'no-etnograficheskoi komissii* (Moscow, 1906). Arakishvili also published other materials on Georgian traditional music in volumes 2 and 5 of *Trudy* (1911, 1916), but these were his arrangements and a study. At the time, the only other publication of phonographically recorded Georgian songs was Z. Paliashvili, *Kartuli khalkhuri simgerebi* (Tiflis, 1910), published in Georgian and doubtfully offered for sale at Jurgenson's music store.

also made a special request for publications of Evgenia Lineva's transcriptions from phonographic field recordings; he already owned the first volume of her work.[15]

The quest for phonographic field recordings reflects an important new trend in Russian intellectual life. During the period 1900 to 1910, the preoccupation with folk religion, mythology, and unmediated folklore already had become a crucial issue for Russian modernist culture.[16] Activities of ethnographers and folklorists were also an integral part of this trend. By 1916, however, not many musical publications were based on phonographic recordings to satisfy Stravinsky's longing for folk song untrimmed by the transcriber's ear and biases. "Unprocessed" folk songs (or so it was thought at the time) were presented in Lineva's *Great Russian Songs in Folk Harmonization* and in the first four volumes of *Trudy Muzykal'no-ethnograficheskoi Komissii* with transcriptions from phonographic field recordings by Lineva, Arakishvili, Listopadov, Maslov, and other members of the Moscow Musical-Ethnographic Commission. The 1906 volume of *Trudy* (vol. 1) was definitely known to the composer;[17] it contains transcriptions of wedding songs, wedding and funeral laments, a detailed description of the wedding ritual, and unusual notations of street peddlers' calls and exclamations.[18] Phonographic recordings of

[15] E. Lineva, *Velikorusskie pesni v narodnoi garmonizatsii*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1904, 1909). Lineva was the first to make phonographic field recordings in Russia. Her cylinders still exist and are located now in the Phonogram-Archive of the Institute of Russian Language and Literature, the USSR Academy of Sciences (*Pushkinskii Dom*) in Leningrad.

[16] Taruskin's article, "From Subject to Style: Stravinsky and the Painters," provides a discussion of this issue in a broad cultural context. In the same publication see also S. Karlinsky, "Igor Stravinsky and Russian Preliterate Theater" on the strong interest among Russian artistic intelligentsia to ancient Slavic rituals and religious concepts. *Confronting Stravinsky: Man, Musician, and Modernist*, ed. Jann Pasler (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1986), 3–39.

[17] According to I. Blazhkov, Stravinsky copied 16 Georgian songs from *Trudy*, vol. 1, and provided the song lyrics with Russian transliteration in his manuscript "*Gruzinskie pesni*" (Georgian Songs). Blazhkov then elaborates on Stravinsky's fascination with Georgian polyphonic singing and its influence on his music (Diachkova, *I.F. Stravinskii*, 518–19).

[18] Stravinsky's own detailed account of the vendors' cries on the streets of St. Petersburg, including pitch notations, is given in Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, 28–30. Apparently, vendors' street-cries at the time were a subject of interest in musical circles. In addition to *Trudy*, a literary description of the genre as observed in the *Podmoskov'e* region accompanied by nineteen musical transcriptions and several woodcut illustrations of street vendors, appeared in a popular guitar magazine, *Akkord*', no. 7 (Tiumen, 1911): 83–88. Besides guitar-related material, the magazine published selected articles on general topics of current musical interest. I am grateful to Mr. Matanya Ophee for bringing this reference to my attention.

Russian folk songs were also published by Alexander Grigoriev and Mitrofan Piatnitsky, but no reference has been found on Stravinsky's knowledge of these anthologies.[19]

Stravinsky's familiarity with Lineva's collection deserves a closer look.[20] Her collection put to rest the question of the very existence of part-singing in Russian peasant songs, an issue much debated in Russian musical circles since the publication of Mel'gunov's anthology of 1879 in which he presented a choral score as a composite of *podgoloski* (individual melodic variants).[21] Lineva also provided an important discussion on the specifics of the choral texture, voice leading, melody, and rhythm in folk songs. Her observations on rhythmical freedom in shifting a logical accent in song word-setting are very close to what has been considered by many scholars to be Stravinsky's approach to word-setting in *Les Noces* and other vocal compositions, the so-called phonemic approach in which the organizing factor is the word's prosody.[22]

The first volume of *Trudy* includes transcriptions of North-Russian wedding and funeral laments from the White Sea area in Arkhangelsk province, collected by A. Markov, A. Maslov, and B. Bogoslovsky (11–157, nos. 44–61); a detailed description of the wedding ritual and wedding songs transcribed by ear from the Vologda province in Northern Russia (475–95); and eighty-three notations of street peddlers' calls, transcribed by Grechaninov, Listopadov, Nevstruev, Yanchuk, Arakishvili and commented by N. Yanchuk (497–516).

[19] Alexander Grigoriev, *Arkhangel'skie byliny i istoricheskie pesni, sobrannye A.D. Grigor'evym v 1899–1901 gg*, 3 vols. (Vols. 1 and 3: St. Petersburg, 1904, 1910; Vol. 2: Prague, 1939); M. Piatnitsky, *Kontserty M. E. Piatnitskogo s Krest'ianami* (Moscow, 1914).

[20] On the significance of Lineva's collection for Stravinsky, see, for example, Richard Taruskin, "From Subject to Style: Stravinsky and the Painters," 28–32, and his "Stravinsky's 'Rejoicing Discovery' and What it Meant: In Defense of His Notorious Text Setting," in *Stravinsky Retrospectives*, ed. E. Haimo and P. Johnson (Lincoln, 1987), 178–80.

[21] Iu. Mel'gunov, *Russkie narodnye pesni neposredstvenno s golosov naroda zapisannye*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1879, 1885). Before Mel'gunov's publication, even Alexander Serov advocated the absence of part-singing in Russian folk songs. See Margarita Mazo, "The Collection of Russian Folk Songs by Nikolai Lvov and Ivan Prach," in *A Collection of Russian Folk Songs by Nikolai Lvov and Ivan Prach*, ed. Malcolm Brown (Ann Arbor, 1987), 74–75.

[22] Druskin, *Igor Stravinskii*, 14, 94. For a thorough investigation of the similarities between rhythms and stress patterns characteristic of folk song and Stravinsky's works see Taruskin, "Stravinsky's 'Rejoicing Discovery,'" passim. Taruskin's assertion that "Linyova was the first Russian ethnographer to make explicit observations on the unusual rhythmic and prosodic traits earlier students of Russian folklore had taken for granted" (p. 179) does not seem to take into account earlier writers who have dealt with the subject for almost a century before Lineva. The 1812 renowned work by A. Vostokov, "Opyt o russkom stikhoslozhenii" already recognized accent fluctuation and rhythmical dissimilarity between spoken and sung words as peculiar-

In addition to the repertoire and the style of traditions represented in the anthology, ideas and concerns of the collector largely determined the content of Lineva's anthology. Lineva herself was a singer and an organizer of choral ensembles performing folk songs. The fascinating sonority and the quality of polyphonic singing, as well as practical considerations (the possibility of using selected songs), were important criteria for her. The preface to Lineva's collection also contains excerpts from her field notes: vibrant descriptions of the actual manner in which the song is performed in the everyday life of a village, observations on performers' behavior, verbal expressions pertaining to their perception of the songs, and reports on the cultural context of a performance. She summarizes her approach in a later work: "It is necessary to examine not only the musical side of the song, but also the surroundings in which the song lives."[23]

Even though her musical notations could be challenged, the collection offered an invaluable insight for the composer. Lineva's approach appears close to the way Stravinsky himself described scenes from "popular" musical life: a musical experience as preserved in the composer's memory was inseparable from its atmosphere and context. It is thus significant that among the many available publications of folksong lyrics, Stravinsky's main literary source for *Les Noces* is P. Kireevsky's collection, which contains not merely texts of folk songs but also information on the circumstances surrounding musical performance in a village.

When asked by Craft about his "use of folk melody," Stravinsky replied that

> only one of the themes of *Les Noces* [Example 1] is folk derived; and it is not really a folk melody, but a workers' melody, a proletarian song. This theme, incidentally, was given me by my friend Stepan Mitusov at least ten years before I made use of it in the final tableau of *Les Noces*. Excellent collections of Russian folk music by Tchaikovsky and Lyadov, and a more or less good one by Rimsky-Korsakov, had been published; all of

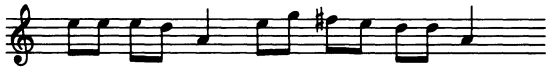
ities of Russian songs. (Vostokov's work was first published in installments in *Sanktpeterburgskii Vestnik*, 1812, part 2, nos. 4, 5, 6; in 1817 it was issued as a book under the same title). This publication was an important beginning for the folklorists' interest to the problem throughout the nineteenth century. Among later studies on the subject, those appeared just before Stravinsky began his scrutiny of Russian prosody, in addition to Lineva, there is an article by Alexander Maslov, "Byliny, ikh proiskhozhdenie, ritmicheskii i melodicheskii sklad," in *Trudy*, vol. 2, 299–329.

[23] Evgeniia Lineva, "Psalms and Religious Songs of Russian Sectarians in the Caucasus," *International Musical Society Congress Reports, 4th Congress* (London, 1911), 187.

these were familiar to me, of course, and while I did not actually turn to folk music as source material, I was undoubtedly influenced by it.[24]

Example 1

Stravinsky and Craft, *Memories and Commentaries*, p. 91



There has been some confusion about the song Stravinsky quotes here. Stravinsky's classification of the melody is dubious, a point also noticed by Druskin, who questioned the validity of Stravinsky's alleged characterization.[25] Usually the category "worker's melody" applied to folk songs of later origins, with characteristic features of the Russian urban tradition of the late nineteenth century. The melody in question does not display such features and, in fact, the song was published by Istomin and Diutsh in 1894 as a traditional peasant song (*Protiazhnaia*, *liubovnaia*, a long-drawn-out love song),"Ne veselaia da kampan'itsa."[26] The melodic phrase given by Stravinsky in Example 1 does not correspond exactly to the theme from the last scene of *Les Noces* (Example 2a). The beginning melodic turn of the quotation in *Les Noces*, however, duplicates a folk song from the anthology by Istomin and Diutsh (Example 2b).

This correspondence leads one to suspect that Stravinsky was familiar with Istomin and Diutsch's collection as well. The anthology was a result of the first special expedition organized by the Russian Imperial Geographic Society in 1886; the second expedition took place in 1893 and its results were published in 1899.[27] The fundamental principles of these two collections coincide. The publications do not contain either arrangements or harmonizations; this was one of the earliest scholarly attempts to present "unprocessed" folk songs in

[24] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Memories and Commentaries* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1981), 97.

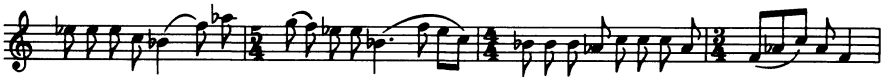
[25] Druskin, *Igor Stravinskii*, 44. Other musicologists have wrongly accepted Stravinsky's attribution without questioning. See, for example, Boris Yarustovsky, *Igor Stravinskii* (Leningrad, 1982), 99. In the earlier edition of *Memories and Commentaries* (New York, 1960) 91, the statement qualifying the song as the workers' is not present.

[26] F. Istomin and G. Diutsh, *Pesni Russkogo naroda sobrannye v Arkhangel'skoi i Olonetskoi guberniiakh v 1886 godu* (St. Petersburg, 1894), 161–62.

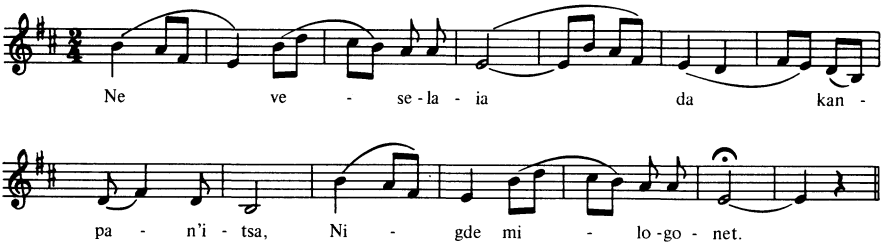
[27] F. Istomin and S. Liapunov, *Pesni Russkogo naroda sobrannye v Vologodskoi, Viatskoi i Kostromskoi guberniiakh v 1893 godu* (St. Petersburg, 1899). RGO expeditions continued until 1903; the third volume was in the process of preparation for publication, but has never been published. Balakirev, Nekrasov, and Liadov also published materials collected by RGO expeditions, but in their arrangements.

Example 2

(a) *Les Noces*, scene 4, 2 mm. after rehearsal 110



(b) "Ne veselaia da kampan'itsa," a *protiazhnaia* song from *Pesni russkogo naroda* by Istomin and Diutsh



a musical publication. Though notated by ear and therefore limited in precision, the transcriptions intended to follow both folk melody and verbal text as closely as possible. This principle resulted in notations unusual for the time, with changing time signatures in melodies and an abundance of peculiar grammatic and phonetic structures in the verbal texts. The anthologies contain wedding laments seldom published previously with their melodies[28] and many wedding songs grouped into sections according to their place in the ritual. Istomin's grouping of wedding songs parallels Stravinsky's own outline of the wedding episodes in his early sketch published by Craft in 1972 (see p. 118 below).

In his Preface to the 1894 volume, the one that contains "Ne veselaia da kampan'itsa," Istomin describes a ritualistic "self-distraction" or "killing the bride":

> Accompanying her laments with sobbing, at certain places she articulates a wail, loud and futile 'i-akh!' and simultaneously she collapses to the floor or to the table, beating herself with the whole weight of her body; not infrequently she repeats this procedure until the lower parts of her arms, from elbows to wrists, which take upon themselves the whole weight of her falls, became swollen and bruised.[29]

[28] Before Istomin and Diutsh's anthology, musical notations of laments were published as follows: one is in N. Pal'chikov, *Krest'ianskie pesni zapisannye v s. Nikolaevke Menzelinskogo uezda Ufimskoi gubernii* (Moscow, 1888) and several can be found in O. Agreneva-Slavianskaia, *Opisanie russkoi krest'ianskoi svad'by s textom i pesniami*, 3 vols. (Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Tver, 1887–89).

[29] Istomin and Diutsh, *Pesni Russkogo naroda*, xviii. Istomin does not illustrate his description with a musical notation; an illustration is provided in Example 5a,

If Stravinsky read this, it too should have persuaded him that laments were a peculiar and indispensable element of wedding rituals.

Parallels between folk practice and *Les Noces* can be drawn on many different levels, from the structure of the composition to the precise wording of its subtitle, "Russian choreographic scenes with singing and music," as though singing is not music. It should be noted that in folk traditions, not only Russian but in many other cultures, songs are not called music. They are songs, that is, they are to be sung. (The majority of Russian folk songs are sung *a cappella*.) The word "music" is applied in Russian folk practice only to what is to be played on instruments. This concept is apparently reflected in Stravinsky's subtitle.

Various aspects of the connections between Russian folk song or "music of the oral tradition," in Asafiev's term, and *Les Noces*, as well as other Stravinsky's works from the "Russian" period, have been explored by musicologists who assert that the most important links are to be found not in quotations of completed melodies, but rather on a level of structural elements in musical language.[30] Scholars discuss specifically the parallels in melodic vocabulary, that is, the use of certain melodic idioms, habitually called *popevki* in Soviet scholarship.[31] More recently, scholars have begun to investigate the

recorded in 1969 in the Nikol'sk district (Vologda province), the same general area where Istomin collected his materials. According to my own field interviews, the bride's behavior described by Istomin was an essential requirement for every wedding in the area until the Second World War. Since that time, weddings were rarely celebrated in a traditional way.

[30] This point of view is presented most explicitly in Taruskin, "Russian Folk Melodies," 509, 528–32, 543. In addition to Taruskin's research, all works on *Les Noces* by Soviet scholars mentioned previously in the present article also discuss this issue. Asafiev suggests that "The Russian melos is the living speech of Stravinsky, his native language, and not just material from which he takes quotations" (Asafiev, *A Book About Stravinsky*, 7). In Asafiev's view, Stravinsky was looking for structural elements, techniques and procedures relevant not only to Russian culture (in the ethnographic or aesthetic sense), but to the musical language "of the whole of humanity." Birkan supports this idea and opposes Stravinsky's approach to the national as one form of expressing similar "universal" content to that of Bartok and Orff. Rafail Birkan, "O tematizme 'Svadebki' Stravinskogo," 171.

[31] *Popevka* (pl. *popevki*; from *pet'*—to sing) as a term has been used for centuries in Russian church musical practice and theory for melodic turns or gestures characteristic of each of the eight *glasy* (echoi); in manuscripts and studies on medieval music many are recognized by names and shapes. See, for example, Maxim Brazhnikov, *Drevnerusskaia teoriia muzyki* (Leningrad, 1972). Since the nineteenth century the term *popevka* has been also used in studies on folk music. It designates there a specific melodic shape, as well as the significance of each tone within a given modal structure. See Feodosii Rubtsov, *Osnovy ladovogo stroeniia russkikh narodnykh pesen* (Leningrad,

affinity between folk practice and Stravinsky's use of certain rhythmic means and temporal procedures, particularly the similarity in text articulation and word-setting.[32] The affinity in the use of certain formal procedures is also a relevant issue. Most characteristic formal structures of folk songs are based either upon recurrences of a *popevka*, its shifting, variation, and rotation, or on interweaving, combining, and juxtaposition of several melodic *popevki*. In Russia, such procedures could also be detected in 19th-century "art" music, particularly in works by Musorgsky and to some extent in works by Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov. As an alternative to a "Western" type of motivic development, these composers advanced repetitions and recurrences of musical blocks combined with rotation, juxtaposition, and accumulation of the blocks as means of structuring the musical whole.[33] As in folk songs, their repetitions are rarely exact: a block can be presented in its asymmetrical transformation, transposition, or rotation; this block as a composite whole or certain of its elements could be expanded in some variants and constricted in the others.

To support the discussion above, the Appendix to this article assembles several folk melodies pertinent to the thematic material of *Les Noces*. Each song in the Appendix represents a certain melodic type of Russian traditional song, rather than a unique or unusual case. The melodies are taken from sources little known (or not known at all) outside Russia; they include melodies with *popevki* that are based on familiar major-minor scales or their segments, as well as on whole-tone and tone-semitone pitch collections. Some of the songs are taken from printed anthologies mentioned by Stravinsky; others he could not have seen prior to composing *Les Noces* (they were transcribed many years after its completion). Still, the melodies complement the Examples in the core of this article and provide more evidence of the affinities between *Les Noces* and folk music on the level of *popevki*, formal procedures, texture, and rhythmic-metric patterns. In short,

1964). In the present article, the term *popevka* will be employed in this connotation. For Asafiev's notion of *popevka* see his *A Book about Stravinsky*, 51. The term is polysemantic and it is accordingly difficult to define various implications of *popevka* precisely; though there is no unanimous definition of the term, many scholars find it convenient and apply it widely in melodic analysis.

[32] Valentina Kholopova, *Voprosy ritma v tvorchestve kompozitorov XX veka* (Moscow, 1971), 194–244; Taruskin, "Stravinsky's 'Rejoicing Discovery,'" passim.

[33] On the significance of block technique for Stravinsky's music see van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky*, passim.

the songs in the Appendix provide more justification and support for what Taruskin assesses as Stravinsky's "unsuspected sensitivity to matters ethnological."[34]

* * *

The interest in folk wedding was not a novelty for Russian composers of the early twentieth century. They had been concerned with the subject ever since the first operas of the late eighteenth century;[35] quoting wedding songs was also quite common for Russian composers throughout the nineteenth century,[36] and towards the end of the century presenting episodes from folk weddings on stage became a popular form of theater and entertainment. In 1869, Dmitry Agrenev-Slaviansky started this movement by bringing folk song and wedding ritual to the theatric stage in Moscow, dressing his singers in pseudo-folk costumes. The popularity of his chorus was enormous, both within and outside Russia, although his activities were strongly castigated by Laroch and Tchaikovsky, and by folklorists as well. Meanwhile, wedding songs became not only a wellspring of inspiration or musical "subject matters," but also a source of technical development of musical means. Beginning with the two wedding choruses composed by Glinka in 5/4 meter (*A Life for the Tsar*, act 3, Wedding Chorus "Razgulialisia raslivalisia," and *Ruslan and Liudmila*, act 1, Wedding Chorus "Lel' tainstvennyi"), Russian composers attempted to comprehend and build upon the specific melodic and rhythmic properties of wedding songs.

Stravinsky, however, was the first to take an interest in an understanding of the wedding ritual in its entirety, as it was practiced

[34] Taruskin, "Russian Folk Melodies," 509.

[35] The central episode of folk wedding ritual, the *Devichnik* scene (girls gathering), appeared for the first time in a Russian opera premiered in 1779, M. Sokolovsky and A. Ablesimov's *Mel'nik—koldun, obmanshchik i svat* [The Miller—a Wizard, a Cheat, and a Matchmaker] (Act III, No. 14); M. Matinsky's *Sankt Peterburgskii Gostinyi dvor ili Kak pozhivesh' tak i proslyvesh'* [The St. Petersburg Bazaar] (1782, better known in a later version by V. Pashkevich) included an elaborate representation of the *Devichnik* episode (Act II) where eight wedding songs were quoted. Melodies of wedding songs also were used by Pashkevich in *Fevei* (1786), as well as in incidental music to *Nachal'noe upravlenie Olega* [The Beginning of Oleg's Ruling] (1790, co-authored with Carlo Cannobio and Giuseppe Sarti). For the songs' identification see Nina Bachinskaia, *Narodnye pesni v tvorchestve russkikh kompozitorov* (Moscow, 1962).

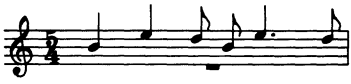
[36] The following tabulation is extracted from Bachinskaia 1962 cataloging: Balakirev quoted one wedding melody; Glinka, Dargomyzhsky, Arensky, and Liapunov each quoted two; Grechaninov and Musorgsky quoted three; Rimsky-Korsakov cited ten; and Tchaikovsky cited six.

in Russian villages. He was interested both in songs and in the integral context and atmosphere of the ritual ("the surroundings in which the song lives," in Lineva's words). Several works composed prior to the conception of *Les Noces* already demonstrate Stravinsky's preoccupation with folk tales, legends, and customs derived from pre-Christian times (*The Firebird* and *Petroushka*, for example), specifically in nature-worshiping seasonal rituals practiced in order to insure the unhampered cycle of seasonal changes (*The Rite of Spring*). He shared this inspiration with his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, as well as with many of his contemporaries. Representations of folk rituals on stage were still popular, both in villages and, particularly, in cities, where *zrelishcha* (large-scale metaphoric spectacles) produced in theaters or in parks during festive celebrations invariably gathered large audiences. One such representation deserves specific mention because of its chronological association with *Les Noces*: the musical composition by Alexander Kastalsky, a noted expert on folk music, *Kartiny narodnykh prazdnovanii na Rusi* (*Scenes of Folk Festivals in Old Russia*), composed about 1913. Kastalsky's work was published posthumously in 1960,[37] but Kastalsky's preface to the composition containing an outline of his ideas on the work as a whole was published in 1914 in *Muzyka* (no. 196), a musical journal well known at the time. According to this preface, the composer's intention in *Kartiny narodnykh prazdnovanii* was "to restore with maximum completeness and in viable images the musical-ritualistic side of Russian folk festivals" through a re-creation of the year-long cycle of assorted rituals. Kastalsky based this re-creation on ethnographically reliable descriptions of rituals and field-collected folk songs. This cycle of seasonal rituals is presented in the composition as several episodes, seemingly unrelated but consolidated by ritual flow and musical means. Not unlike Stravinsky, Kastalsky compiled the text of the entire work from various folk songs and expressions, though the idea was different: he used the whole stanza (and often several stanzas) of folk texts with their melodies as he found them in various ethnographic sources, sometimes matching

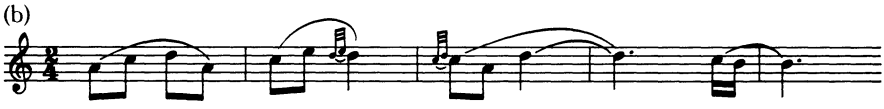
[37] The final version of Kastalsky's composition, unfinished, was planned in eight sections for solo singers, four choruses, narrators and piano (the piano part and Katalsky's preface suggest orchestral scoring). With the exception of one choral number, the composition has never been performed in public. Known excerpts, published from the autograph manuscript, consist of five scenes in piano-vocal score, each introduced by a description of the stage setting. Detailed descriptions of stage actions, ethnographic in nature and derived from sources on folk rituals, are given throughout the scenes. See Alexander Kastalsky, *Stat'i. Vospominaniia. Materialy* (Moscow, 1960), 174–266.

Example 3

(a) Alexander Kastal'sky, *Kartiny narodnykh prazdnovanii na Rusi*



(b)



texts only available without their tunes to appropriate melodies from existing musical publications. Musical sources enumerated by Kastalsky in his preface to *Kartiny narodnykh prazdnovanii* include all "classic" folk songs anthologies (including those Stravinsky mentioned as "excellent"), as well as more recent ones, like *Trudy*, from which Kastalsky singled out recordings by Alexander Listopadov. Kastalsky, whose particular area of expertise was chord progression, polyphony, and voice leading in choral folk songs,[38] set the folk melodies in the free manner of *podgoloski* with a constantly changing number of voices: at some points all voices join in a unison and disperse into thick chords at others. Essentially he chose chords of a non-triadic structure, using *popevki* of the melody as a tonal referential link between the vocal and piano parts (a technique also found in *Les Noces*), "though in some cases it was difficult to avoid commonly accepted formulae." The first scene of Kastalsky's work begins with a picturesque church bell-ringing constructed from non-tonal harmony based on the tritone, a favorite idiom for bells in nineteenth-century Russian music. Like *Les Noces*, the vocal section begins with a lament, and the entire scene is structured as an interaction between two lamenters and the chorus. The second lament starts with the same *popevka* (and at the same pitch) as the opening lament in *Les Noces* (Example 3a); the song quoted at the beginning of the following scene is also based on the same *popevka* (Example 3b). This *popevka* then recurs repeatedly throughout the piece (sometimes exactly, and sometimes in variants and at different pitch), both in the melody and accompaniment.

Further examination of Kastalsky's work would yield other correspondences to Stravinsky's. The purpose here, however, is not to compare the two, since their goals were altogether different, but to point out that the analogy suggesting certain ideas which were in

[38] Kastalsky's book, *Osnovy narodnogo mnogogolosiia* (Moscow, 1948), published twenty years after its completion, remains important in the field.

circulation at the time is unavoidable. Stravinsky never heard *Kartiny narodnykh prazdnovanii*, and Kastalsky did not particularly like *Les Noces* and resented the treatment of folk procedures there as too dissonant and "barbaric."

Not unlike his colleagues (in music, as well as in poetry, literature, painting, and theater), Stravinsky pursued a representation of folk ritual as a metaphoric spectacle and symbolic theatrical act. In *Les Noces*, however, the interest in "pagan" rituals took a somewhat different turn. One of the composer's concerns here focused on ritualistic aspects reflecting the typical mentality of Russian peasants, a conglomeration of religious concepts and beliefs, which, for the lack of a better term, I shall call peasant faith. Customs, notions, and verbal images derived from both pre-Christian and Christian concepts are tightly intertwined into a syncretic whole and coexist peacefully as indispensable parts of everyday life, festivities, and rituals. The Christian saints often participate in peasant rituals and are treated there as though they were a part of the habitual pre-Christian pantheon. Villagers address Christian saints not only with religious prayers but also with traditional spells and incantations: in folk practice a prayer often differs from a spell only in its mode of expression. Rather than asking a saint for help, as in a Christian prayer, traditional incantations are characterized by verbal expressions of direct instructions and giving orders for actions ("go here and there," "do this and that"). In the second scene of *Les Noces*, a short exclamation-order "Go to the wedding," which addresses the Mother of God at two measures before rehearsal no. 47 and later St. Luke at no. 62, is reiterated throughout the scene. The text selected by Stravinsky for the opening of the scene also reveals this mode:

> Purest Mother,
> Come, come to our hut,
> Help matchmakers
> To comb the curls,
> Khfetis' curls,
> To comb curls,
> Parfilevich's light-brown [curls].

This symbiosis of Christian and "pagan" presents an important key to understanding *Les Noces*. In Stravinsky's account,

> *Les Noces* is also—perhaps even primarily—a product of the Russian Church. Invocations to the Virgin and saints are heard throughout the work. Among the latter, the names of Cosmos and Damian occur more often than any others. They were recognized as wedding saints in Russia,

and they were popularly worshiped as deities of a fertility cult.[39]

Craft pointed out specific connections between *Les Noces* and music of the Russian Orthodox service: "the music at 50–53 is derived entirely (and the music after 53 partly) from the Fifth Tone [*glas*] of the *Znamennyi* Chant [old Russian liturgical chant] which is sung at the beginning of the Sunday Dogmatik."[40] Stravinsky himself prompted the comparison in his remark that "the two unaccompanied basses in the second scene, *however much their music may suggest the actual reading of the marriage service*, are not to be identified with two priests" (italics mine).

Many students of Russian music have noticed general similarities between Russian chants and folk melodies.[41] Examination of thematic ideas in *Les Noces* prompts one to single out two specific *popevki* found in melodic vocabulary of both *znamennyi* chants (particularly noticeable in chants of the second and the fifth *glasy* as in Examples 4a and 4c) and folk songs (Examples 4b and 4d).[42]

The tenor part at no. 21 (Example 5a) in the first scene is based on the same *popevka* as example 4a, and the *popevka* from example 4c is recognized in several melodic ideas dominating in the second scene of *Les Noces* (Example 5).

Feodosii Rubtsov, one of the founders of Soviet ethnomusicology, considered the *popevka* in Example 5 specifically characteristic of folk songs connected with the Russian church, *dukhovnye stikhi* (spiritual verses, a category of traditional songs based on biblical stories and

[39] This and all the following verbal accounts of the composer concerning *Les Noces* are taken from Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, 114–18, unless stated otherwise.

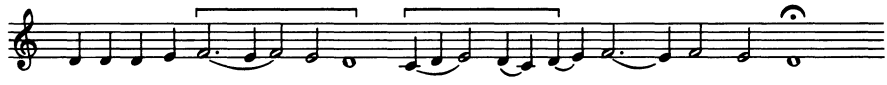
[40] Craft and Harkins, "Stravinsky's Svadebka," 27–28. Craft refers here to the *Oktoechos* (The Book of Eight Echoi). (In Russian, echoi are called *glasy*, pl.; *glas*, sing.). The significance of stylistic affinity between old liturgical chant (*znamennyi*) and *Les Noces* was also pointed out in Birkan's 1971 article, though in more general terms. Birkan, "O tematizme," 179. As examples Birkan points to *Les Noces* at 21 (first scene) and 27 and 49 (second scene).

[41] The idea was expressed already by Prince Vladimir Odoevsky in the 1860s. It can be traced in works by Stepan Smolensky, Alexander Kastalsky, Soviet medievalists Maxim Brazknikov, Nikolai Uspensky, and Tatiana Vladyshevskaia, though, to my knowledge, no research was done to investigate this problem systematically.

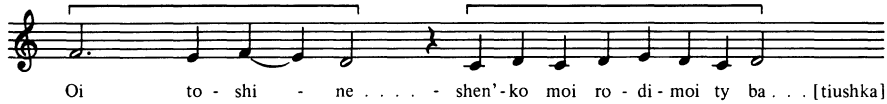
[42] Examples 4a and 4c are taken from Nikolai Uspensky, *Obraztsy drevne-russkogo pevcheskogo iskusstva*, Leningrad, 1968), nos. 7 and 28 respectively; example 4b is from a 1970 field recording in the Babushkino district of the Vologda province; 4d is a *dukhovnyi stikh* from A. Liadov, *Sbornik russkikh narodnykh pesen* op. 43 (Leipzig, 1898), no. 3. The melody of no. 28 in the same Liadov's collection (no. 1 in the appendix) is based on a trichord 035, characteristic of a large body of Russian folk songs, but here given at the same pitch and descending order as at the beginning of *Les Noces*.

Example 4

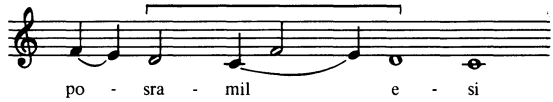
(a) *Znamenny* chant, the second *glas*



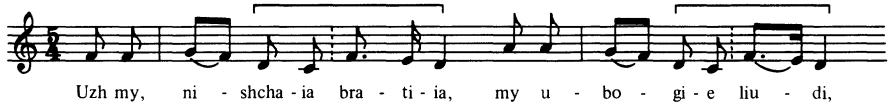
(b) "Oi toshineshen'ko," a funeral lament



(c) *Znamenny* chant, the fifth *glas*



(d) "Yzh my nishchaia bratiia," a spiritual verse



sung outside the church).[43] An indicative example is found in the collection by Anatolii Liadov (Example 4d); Stravinsky knew this collection and esteemed it as "excellent."

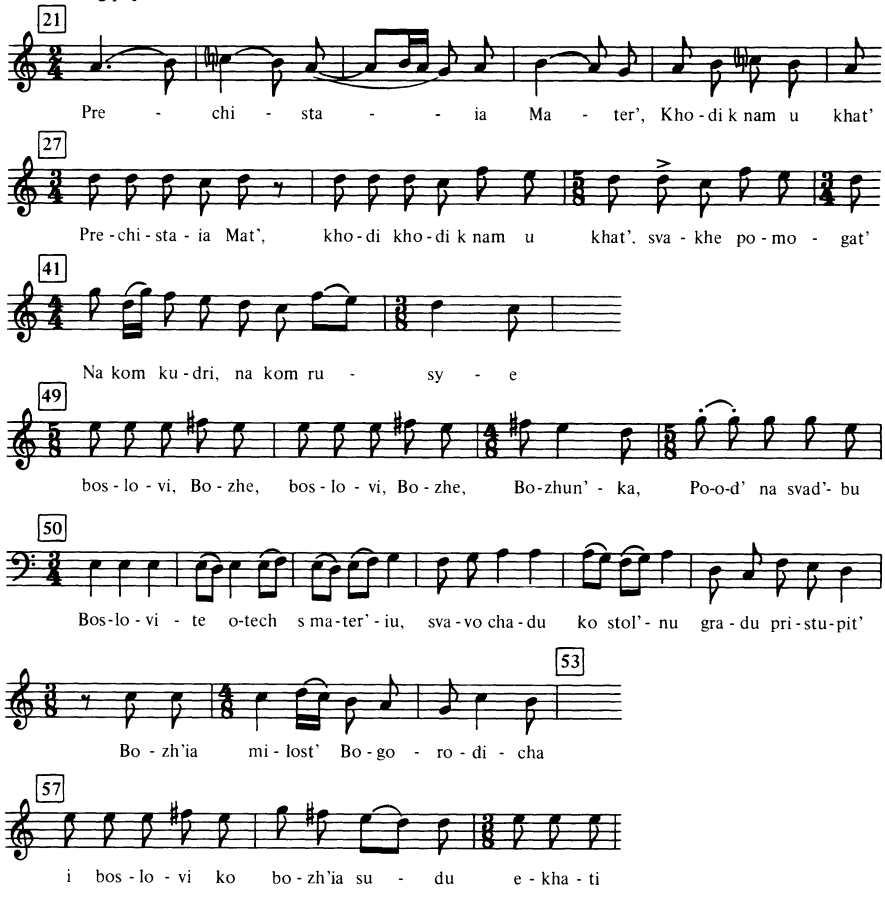
* * *

The folk wedding ritual or, as Russian villagers call it, a "wedding play" consists of a long and intricate series of contrasting episodes. (In folk terminology to perform the wedding ritual (*igrat' svad'bu*) is "to act the wedding out"). The ritual exists in a great variety of local forms that differ from one village to the next. It is not possible to observe all the variants which exist or may have existed in different Russian localities, and at the present stage of research on Russian folk culture, an attempt to present a general depiction of Russian weddings would be a venture of a questionable merit. The phenomenon, nevertheless, does contain certain common ceremonial occurrences that do not conform to a set standard and vary significantly in their sequence, duration, place and form of actions, the number of characters in the cast, and the weight that each episode carries in a given local tradition. Most common ritual episodes can be sketched as follows:

[43] Notes from Rubtsov's lectures on Russian folk music at Leningrad Conservatory during the early 1960s.

Example 5

Recurring *popevki* in Les Noces, scene 2



1. the *svatovstvo* (the matchmaking)
2. the *smotriny* (the bride-show)
3. the inspection of the groom's household
4. *rukobit'e* and *sgovor* (confirmation an unwritten contract, bargaining, and factual betrothal)
5. the *devichnik* (girls gathering, a sort of bridal shower; includes unplaiting the braid and other actions which signify the bride's extrication from girlhood)
6. the *bania* (purifying bath)
7. the arrival of the groom and his *poezd* (ritual personages from the groom's side)
8. the blessing by the bride's parents

9. the seeing off of the bride and the departure of the wedding train to church

10. the *venchanie* (the crowning, church ceremony)

11. the arrival of the wedding train at the groom's house, greeting the newly wedded couple

12. the blessing by the groom's parents

13. the *krasnyi stol* (the wedding feast)

14. the newlyweds' departure from the feast

15. the *vykup posteli* (the ritualistic purchase of the wedding bed by the groom)

16. the verification of the young woman's chastity prior to the wedding and checking her household skills

17. the visiting of her parents

Out of this multiplicity, Stravinsky singled out the key personages, their behavior, their characteristic vocal gestures, and the most important episodes that support the ritual's progress. The first sketch of the scenario for *Les Noces*, published by Craft in 1972, consisted of three acts. It "was much longer than the final one, for Stravinsky had originally planned to dramatize the complete wedding ritual."[44] The original structure was as follows: act 1, "The Inspection scene"; act 2, scene 1, "The Bargain" ("At the Bride's" and "At the Groom's," including "An Incantation Against Sorcery"); act 2, scene 2a, "Devichnik"; act 2, scene 2b, "The Girls Take Her to the Bath"; act 2, scene 3, "In the Bride's House Before the Departure for the Church"; act 3, "The Beautiful Table" (*Krasnyi stol*, the wedding feast). Only four scenes survived from this plan: Part One, (1) *At the Bride's. The Braid*; (2) *At the Bridegroom's. The Curls*; (3) *Seeing Off the Bride*; and Part Two, (4) *The Wedding Feast*. The episodes left in the final version and their sequence constitute a concise outline of that larger cycle of events, which is the ritual itself.

It is not my intention here to compare Stravinsky's scenario with the folk wedding play step by step.[45] It is necessary for my study, however, to map some major points in this ritualistic play. The

[44] Craft and Harkins, "Stravinsky's Svadebka," 29.

[45] It appears worthwhile to analyze Stravinsky's "deviations" from the tradition and to look into what Stravinsky did not include in his scenario and into what he "revised" or "augmented" by giving to some episodes more weight than it was customary for folk rituals. Thus, for example, the first part of the folk ritual is typically focused on the bride; only a few published sources describe the preparation of the groom for the wedding, and even there ritualistic actions "at the groom's" are never as elaborate as "at the bride's." In *Les Noces* Stravinsky chose to present the two sets of actions equally, as counterparts.

episodes are grouped into two large, though unequal, parts. The first part, much larger than the second, symbolizes the separation of the bride and the groom from their previous lives (this corresponds to Part One, the first three scenes in *Les Noces*). The second is a greeting and celebration of the new family, the wedding feast, and rituals that assure the family's proper future (Part Two, one scene in *Les Noces*).

Depending on local tradition, the first part takes from a few days up to several weeks, during which, in certain situations, singing plays a central role. Among all kinds of household activities, comings and goings, meetings, conversations discussing matters of everyday life, as well as ritualistic actions, gestures, speeches, and exclamations, music serves as if to mark off the key moments in the ceremony. Laments are a necessary aspect of this part, but laments are not allowed to cross the wedding's main watershed into the episode *Krasnyi stol*. In the second part, laments, ritualistic wedding songs, and lyrical songs of the bride's girlfriends, all related to her farewell to her girlhood, give way to drinking songs, dancing songs, and songs laudatory of the young couple and all the guests. The majority of the songs and dances from the second part of the play can also be performed on many occasions other than weddings. In the *Krasnyi stol* scene of *Les Noces*, Stravinsky found it appropriate to quote a worker's song that does not belong to the wedding ritual proper (see Example 1).

The behavior of each participant depend on and strictly conforms to a local form of the ritual. There are no firmly fixed texts for any member of the cast. Yet the same requirements, set by each local tradition, rule the behavior of all the brides, all the grooms, all the matchmakers, and all the best men for generations. The ritualistic essence of *Les Noces* is heavily emphasized by Stravinsky:

> *Les Noces* is a suite of typical wedding episodes told through quotations of typical talk. The latter, whether the bride's, the groom's, the parents' or the guests', is always ritualistic. As a collection of clichés and quotations of typical wedding sayings it might be compared to one of those scenes in *Ulysses* in which the reader seems to be overhearing scraps of conversation without the connecting thread of discourse. *Les Noces* might also be compared to *Ulysses* in the larger sense that both works are trying to *present* rather than to *describe*.

The parallel between *Les Noces* and James Joyce's *Ulysses* invites the observation that one of the functions of music in the folk wedding could be seen to be an organizing force that bridges seemingly unrelated events, "the connecting thread of discourse." Even though presented as highly tense and emotionally charged, these episodes,

being a part of a ritual, were not meant to describe or express the actual feelings of the participants. Their actions during the ceremony embody impersonal responses to the requirements of a ritualized situation. Thus one finds here a peculiar coalescence of high emotional intensity and at the same time personal detachment. An atmosphere of this nature must have intrigued Stravinsky. It certainly corresponds to his conceptualization of the "ritualistic" where "individual and personalities did not, could not, emerge." The bride laments in the opening scene of *Les Noces*, the composer remarks, "not necessarily because of real sorrow at her prospective loss of virginity, but because, ritualistically, she *must* weep" (italics by Stravinsky). Stravinsky's search for "proper" instrumentation is another point of this conceptualization. The 1917 sketch is for a large orchestra, similar to the one in *The Rite of Spring*, and the final version of 1923 is for a small ensemble (four pianos and several percussion instruments) with the chamber-like scoring preferred by Stravinsky at the time (*Pribaoutki*, *Berceuse du Chat*, *Baika*, *Histoire du Soldat*, *Rag-time*, to name widely-known compositions). It took him an unprecedentedly long time and several experiments with quite unusual instruments (the 1919 version is for two cimbaloms, pianola, harmonium, and percussion) to find the sonority which is "at the same time perfectly homogeneous, perfectly impersonal, and perfectly mechanical."[46]

Stravinsky's approach to individual roles also echoes the folk practice: "Individual roles do not exist in *Les Noces*, but only solo voices that impersonate now one type of character and now another. Thus the soprano in the first scene is not the bride, but merely a bride's voice."[47] In folk practice, indeed, the combination of emotional

[46] Stravinsky did not finish the 1919 version, but considered it "the most authentic, more so in some ways than the final score," and thought highly about this choice of instruments, though the final version is "instrumentally more homogeneous" (note the use of the same adjective as in the citation above). Stravinsky, *Themes and Conclusions* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982), 198. The final instrumentation is solely for percussion instruments; piano is used here as a percussion and not as a melodic instrument, resulting in "perfectly homogeneous" sonority. In folk ritual, rattles and various home-made percussions (pans, oven doors, scythes, and all kinds of utensils capable of producing noisy sound) struck in a fast tempo often accompany the key wedding episodes (noise, as a common attribute of the protection magic, is used to protect the bride and the groom from the evil). This is particularly characteristic of Central-Russian areas (along the Oka river and its tributaries) and the Smolensk province, according to observation by the Soviet ethnomusicologist Dmitry Pokrovsky (private conversation in August, 1989).

[47] Depersonalization is a well known Stravinskian feature. Symbolic representation of ritualistic roles (as Chosen in *The Rite of Spring*) and mythological personages is particularly persistent throughout Stravinsky's works, much beyond his "Russian"

involvement and detachment becomes particularly evident in that a lament may be performed not by the bride herself, but by proxy, a woman who knows the tradition and laments for the bride and thus represents the "bride's voice," to use Stravinsky's expression. The proxy is usually the same woman who is also invited to lament over the dead during funerals. In many local traditions wedding and funeral laments even share the same tune-formula.

The emergence of laments in the Russian folk wedding has been often interpreted in the scholarly literature as a reflection of economic and social conditions—the miserable life a married woman lived in Russian villages during the so-called Russian Middle Ages.[48] This, however, must be reconsidered in the light of new data collected in the field and new theoretical ideas, which suggest that the wedding is to be looked at within a framework of ancient initiation rituals, namely, as a rite of passage.[49] Vladimir Propp believed that "initiation rites are bound to representations of death so tightly that it is impossible to deal with one without dealing with the other."[50] From this point of view, lament is a representation of funeral rites, a representation of death. Young persons cannot enter a new stage and become different persons without also undergoing a symbolic death of their former personalities. In such a framework, actions described in folk phrasing as "self-destruction" of the bride or "killing the bride," as Istomin reports in the preface to his collection, are seen as essential part of the wedding ritual.

Russian lament is a rich and diverse category of folk tradition. It is a true poetic and melodic improvisation; it is also a part of a ritual. As such, it is spontaneous, but at the same time is submitted to the rigid

---

compositions: in *Oedipus Rex* (1926–1927), for instance, Oedipus as an individual is a subject for "symbolic treatment" (Stravinsky and Craft, *Dialogues*, 24); the main character in *Perséphone* (1933–1934) is presented by the dancer and the speaker; in *The Flood* (1962), the part of God is sung by two voices; "God or—as we do not actually see Him—His Master's Voice, is a Person, but a person free of what talent scouts call personality" (Stravinsky and Craft, *Dialogues*, 76). On musical connections between *The Flood* and *Les Noces* see van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky*, 439–40.

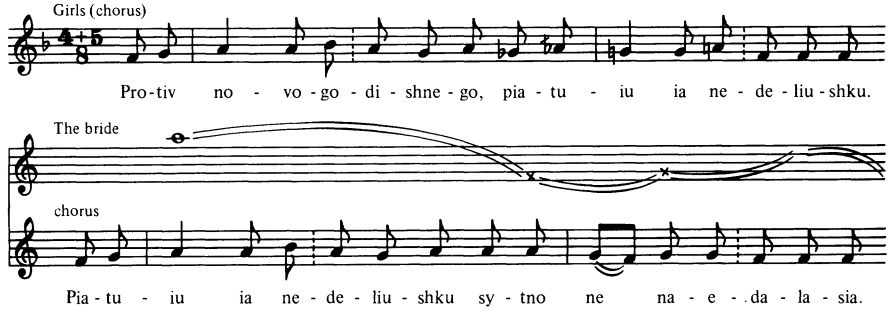
[48] Tatiana Popova, *Osnovy russkoi narodnoi muzyki* (Moscow, 1977) 64; Yarustovsky, *Igor Stravinskii*, 97.

[49] For example, Zoia Skvortsova, "O prichitaniiakh v svadebnom obriade," in *Folklor i Etnografiia* (Leningrad: 1974); Stoyan Genchev, "Lamentation at Deaths, at Weddings and When Seeing People Off in Bulgaria and Russia," *Belgarska etnografia*, book 2 (1983).

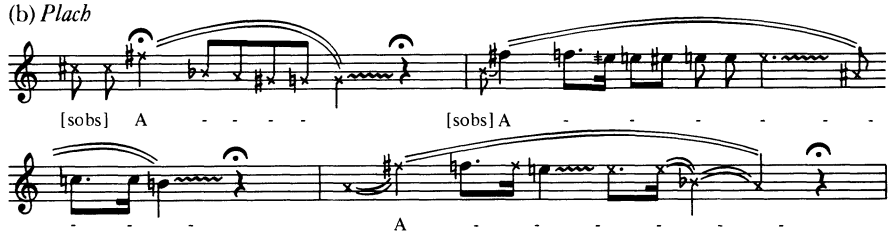
[50] Vladimir Propp, *Istoricheskie korni volshebnoi skazki* (Leningrad, 1946) 141. See also a discussion of Propp's idea in Liberman's intoduction to V. Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore*, ed. A. Liberman (Minneapolis, 1984), lxvii–lxviii.

Example 6

(a) A wedding song of the bride's girlfriends with the bride's *vopl'*



(b) *Plach*



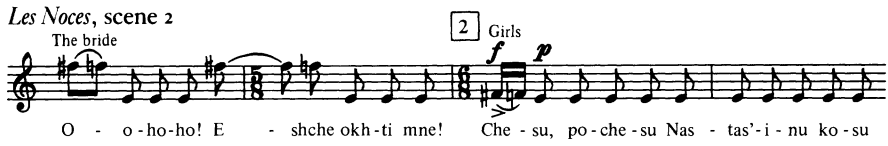
rules of each local tradition. These rules control all aspects of musical/poetic/behavioral patterns. Each tradition has a particular tune-formula which has to be used in lamenting, if it is to be accepted by the community as a proper lament. Tradition dictates not only a certain formal structure for both the melody and the text, but also a certain manner of voice production, and finally, the particular proportions between the three main properties of lamenting: *vopl'*, a momentary and natural voice gesture of the one who wails (Example 6a, solo line); *prichitanie*, roughly, uninterrupted rhythmic recitation (Example 6a, chorus line); and *plach'*, actual weeping or crying (Example 6b).[51]

Stravinsky used all three properties of laments; the employment of *vopl'* is seen, for example, in an exclamation, *Okh-okh-kho-kho*, at two measures before no. 2 in the first scene of *Les Noces*, and the use of *prichitanie* in "Chesu pochesu Nastas'inu kosu" at no. 2 (Example 7).

When studying laments, scholars have habitually isolated them from their context and from the live situation in which they exist.

[51] Examples 6a and 6b are taken from Margarita Mazo, "Nikol'skie prichitaniia v sootnoshenii s drugimi zhanrami mestnoi pesennosti," in *Musykal'naia folkloristika*, ed. Alexander Banin, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1978).

Example 7



Ethnomusicologists and philologists alike have analyzed the peculiarities of laments, known phonographic recordings of which were confined only to a few initial stanzas. Within such narrow limits, it was impossible to detect peculiarities of musical behavior in the unfolding of the musical whole, that is, the peculiar features of voice production, the manner of singing, and the general qualities of the musical utterance, which, for the lack of a better word, I shall call intoning. The following Example, a transcription of a wedding lament recorded in 1971 in the Tot'ma region (Vologda province), attempts to demonstrate musical properties of the intoning in laments and the process of the lament's unfolding during a performance.[52]

If we trust what Stravinsky himself said, these were precisely the features that captured the composer's imagination during his encounters with Russian folk music. In the first pages of his *Autobiography*, he describes his first musical experience in a village, punctuating his fascination with the peculiar manner of singing by peasant women: "To this day I clearly remember the tune, and *the way they* [village women] *sang it*, and how, when I used to sing it at home, imitating their *manner*, I was complimented on the trueness of my ear" (italics mine).[53] Decades later he describes this episode again, and his description further emphasizes the aspects of sonority: "They [the country women of Lzy] sang it in octaves—unharmonized, of course —their high, shrill voices sounding like a billion bees."[54] It seems that the features related to the manner of singing and intoning are also of crucial importance for Russian villagers as well: even if it is the same tune, they do not accept a lament as their own if it is sung in an improper manner of intoning, or if the local perception of the correct proportions between *vopl'*, *plach'* and *prichitanie* are disturbed. Once,

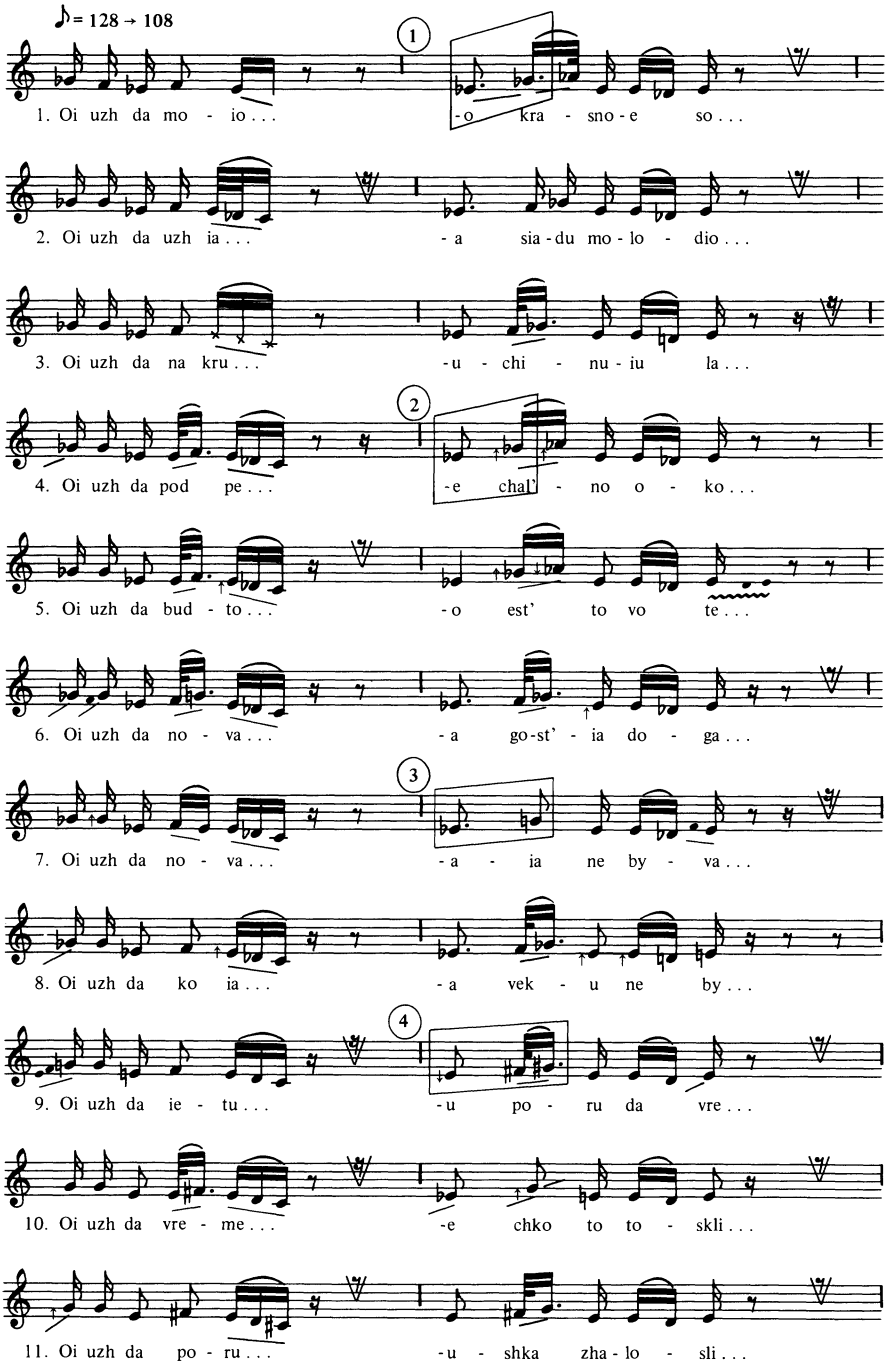
[52] I realize well the limitations of such a transcription, particularly for those who have not heard laments in a live situation. Certain qualities of the music of oral tradition are impossible to translate into a conventional notation. I view examples 6, 8, 11, 14 and my other published transcriptions of laments (for example, in *Nikol'skie pesni* [Leningrad, 1975] as analytical tools to be used in an attempt to study and understand traditional laments.

[53] Stravinsky, *An Autobiography*, 4.

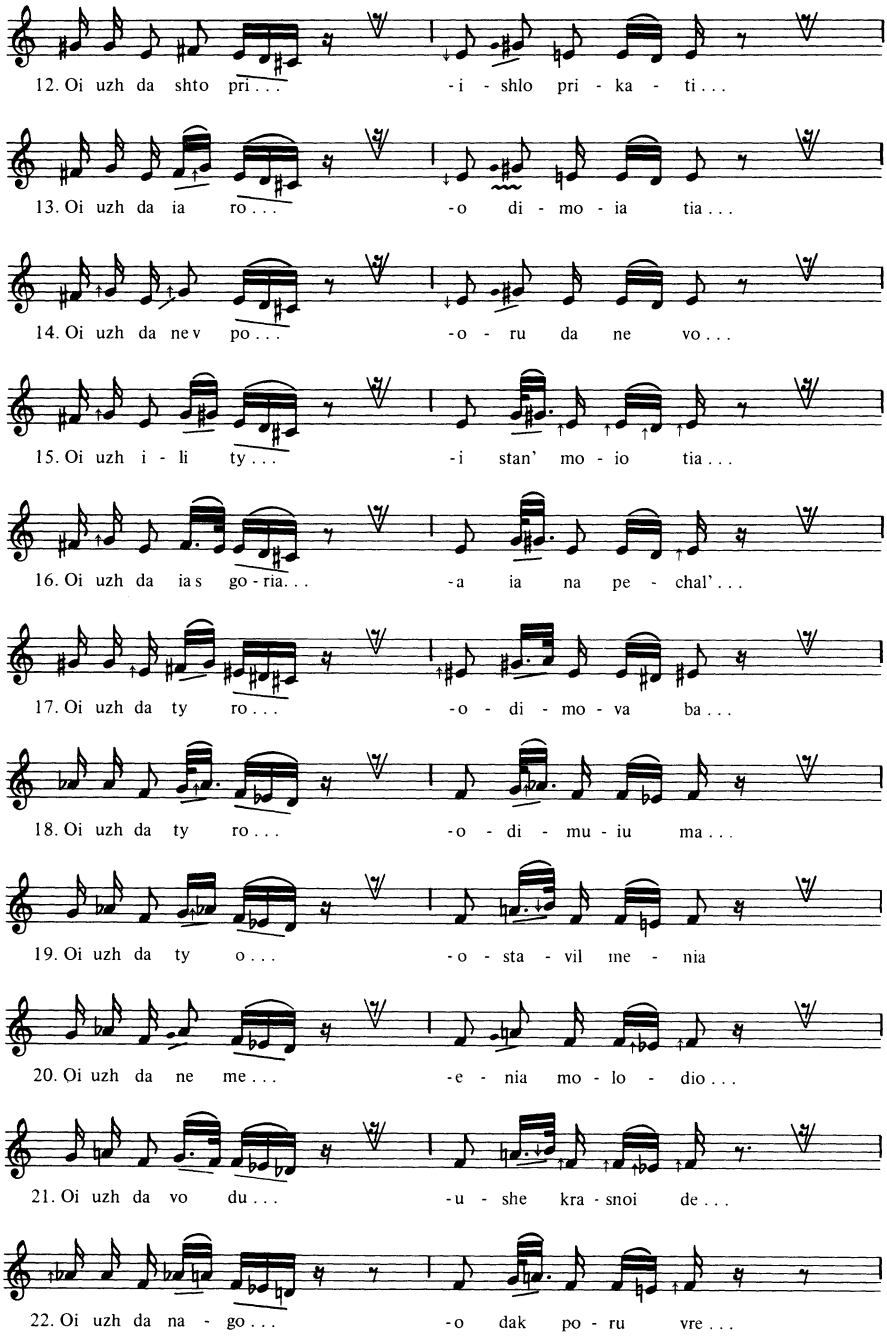
[54] Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, 36.

Example 8

"Oi uzh da moe," the bride's lament



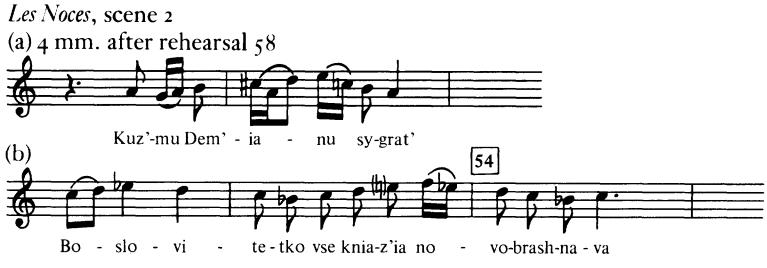
Example 8 (*continued*)



vocalized breathing

after listening to a taped lament from a different village, an experienced performer said: "The tune seems fine, but the voice is different. We are lamenting and crying at the same time, and she is only singing, as if not lamenting at all but just singing a song."[55] Judgments like this clearly indicate that the singers draw a sharp dividing line between the two aspects of the musical entity. They seem to distinguish two different types of intoning, which they refer to as "singing" and "lamenting." From the standpoint of musical analysis, "singing" is associated with a certain manner of intoning characterized by a set of fixed pitches and stable intervallic relationships within the modal structure; "lamenting," on the other hand, implies a gliding pitch contour, glissandi, vocalized breathing, and other attributes of *vopl'* and *plach'*, as in Examples 6 and 8. As a result, pitches and intervallic distances between different degrees of the modal structure constantly vary, thus making any representation in traditional notation inadequate. Pitch variation of a certain tone within a modal structure is characteristic for folk practice in general, not just for laments. One of the most common variations of pitch relies on the general direction of the melodic contour: in the ascending motion the pitch is most likely to be higher than in the descending one. Stravinsky uses this characteristic procedure in *Les Noces*; two melodic phrases in Example 9 will serve as an illustration:

Example 9

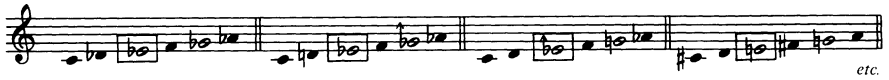


In laments, however, the entire modal structure is floating. In addition to the floating intervals within the modal structure (as, for instance, in numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 marked in Example 8), lament-type intoning involves a characteristic gradual rising of the pitch level, as the transcription of an entire lament in example 8 shows. In other words, the transcription reveals a modal structure that uses an

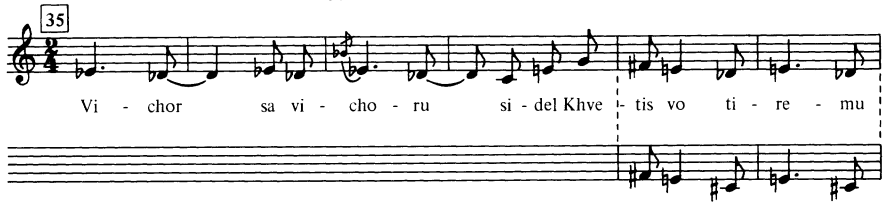
[55] Recorded in 1971 during a field experiment on villagers' perception of laments.

Example 10

(a) Variants of the scale in the lament from Example 7



(b) *Les Noces*, scene 2 at rehearsal 35



unstable scale.[56] Several of these pitch variations are shown schematically in Example 10a.[57]

Les Noces prompts one to think that Stravinsky was aware of these characteristics of folk lamenting.[58] The manner of intoning with short glissandi that opens *Les Noces* is the essential feature that makes this music sound lament-like: without the short glissandi it could be a melody of a seasonal song (as Example 3 in the Appendix, or in any *vesnianka*, an incantation of spring, from Smolensk province, for example), or a wedding song (as no. 5 in the Appendix), or a spring *khorovodnaia*, a song accompanying a spring dance (Example 1 in the Appendix), but not a lament. Faithful to the unwritten rules of folk

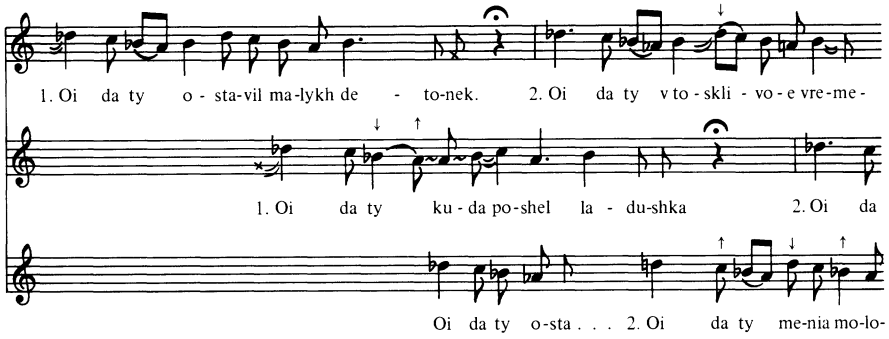
[56] Alekseev considers the scale instability as one of characteristic features of the archaic singing. Eduard Alekseev, *Ranne-fol'klornoe intonirovanie* (Moscow, 1986).

[57] A parallel between the lament in example 8 and the octatonic theme in *Les Noces* at 35 (example 10b) is noteworthy. The parallel could be observed in phrase endings with "gliding" inhalations on a tone and a half from a melodic center, in a division of a larger range into cells each within a third, in the melodic center with the pitch floating between e and e flat. This parallel becomes more apparent in an imaginary integration of *popevki* based on different scale versions from separate lines of the lament (as in example 10a) into a melodic line which uses different variants of *popevki* simultaneously. In other words, I see the application of the octatonic scale in this theme from *Les Noces* as a product of an integration of several variants of diatonic *popevki* each within a small range. The similar technique of creating more complex scales by merging variants of diatonic *popevki* within a small range can be observed in the melodic material of *Les Noces* at 91, 127, 129. In essence, this is a technique widely used at the time by Stravinsky's colleagues and friends in poetry and the visual arts: multiple, various presentations of the same poetic idea or object (its different parts, or from different angles) exist simultaneously within the same canvas.

[58] Lamenting as a special manner of intoning was exploited to a much larger extent in the 1960s-1970 when it was "re-discovered" by Edison Denisov (*Plachi*), Sergei Slonimsky (*Virineia*), Boris Tishchenko (*Yaroslavna*), and other Soviet composers.

Example 11

Three women lamenting during a remembrance ritual for a deceased relative



tradition, this manner of intoning, that is, lamenting, does not cross the watershed of the ritual into Stravinsky's episode *Krasnyi stol.* When the opening tune recurs at the end of the composition, it is presented not as *lamenting*, but as *singing*, without grace notes or glissandi.

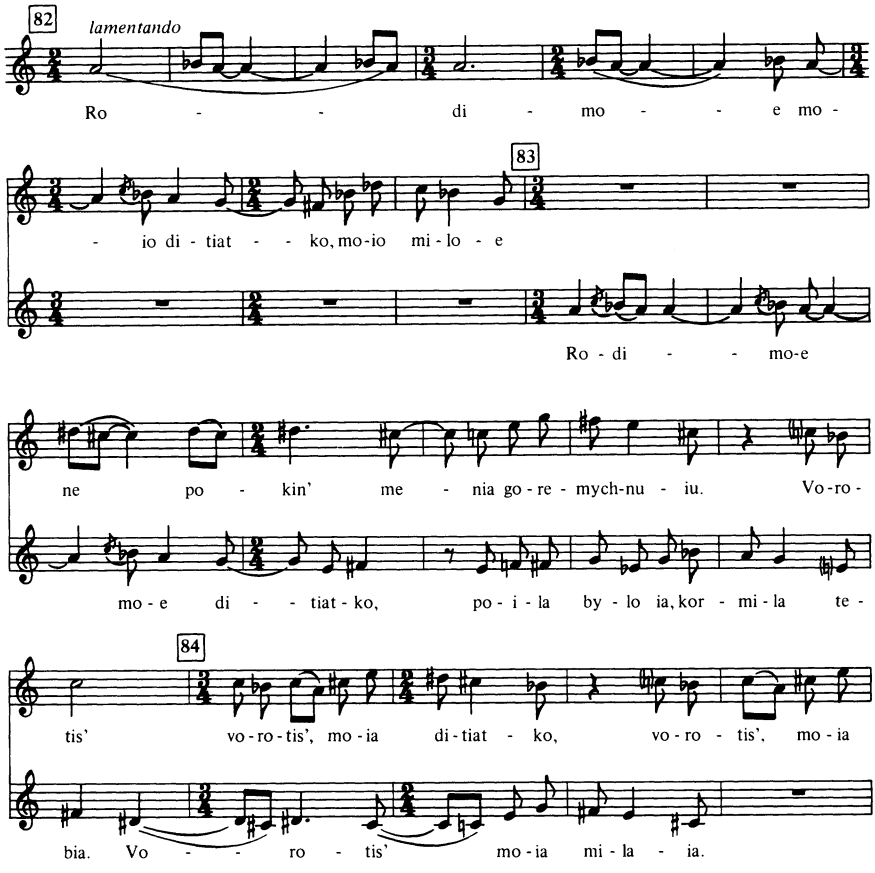
In some local traditions, particularly in the Russian North, laments are omnipresent throughout the entire first part of the wedding ritual, and it is therefore possible to say that laments function as an ostinato, though concrete realizations of this ostinato constantly vary. If the lament is not a solo, it can be joined by another lament of the bride's mother or another female relative (Example 11).

Since all "parts" belong to the same local tradition, each lamenter presents that performer's own melodic and timbral rendition of the same formula. These renditions sound simultaneously, though without particular temporal or harmonic alignment between them. Stravinsky's procedure in the second and third scenes of *Les Noces* clearly resembles such musical forms in folk practice, particularly in "Seeing Off the Bride" at nos. 82–87, a section rendered as a sort of free imitation: sometimes two lamenters (mothers of the bride and the groom) come close to each other melodically or temporally, and at other times they are apart (Example 12).

In the course of the first part of the folk wedding play, when the ritual intensifies, the number of combined musical layers increases; this is another feature which is found in Stravinsky's composition. At some moments of the "Devichnik" the bride's lament sounds together with another ritual wedding song, or with a lyric song, or with a

Example 12

Les Noces, scene 3 at rehearsal 82



khorovod song.[59] In Example 13, a transcription from a field recording in the village Matveevo (Tot'ma district, Vologda province), the solo lament sounds with, first, the chorus (marked 1), then with another solo lament (marked 2); later the song of the chorus returns.[60] This

[59] I have recorded performances (Tarnoga area of the Vologda province) in which three layers of musical texture were combined: a solo lament, choral singing of *pripevki* (type of traditional ditties), and an instrumental accompaniment on *tal'ianka*, a sort of concertina.

[60] The example is taken from A. Mekhnetsov, *Narodnye pesni Vologodskoi oblasti* (Leningrad, 1981). Though my name is nowhere mentioned in this publication, this example, like all other materials in this collection, were recorded by myself and a group of my students under my supervision and according to my guidelines. We recorded this particular example during the summer of 1975, when I conducted several field recording sessions designed to document the musical flow of the wedding

episode can illuminate the formal procedures in the first three scenes of *Les Noces*: the various layers freely merge and alternate within a continuous uninterrupted stream of musical events.

The chorus part in this Example, as well as in Examples 6a and 14, is a special wedding ritual song. Songs of this type are heard during much of the wedding without the solo lament; they are verbalizations and comments on what is happening by the ever-present chorus. The texts of these songs "present" all ritualistic actions in verses rich in metaphors and symbols. Stravinsky's composition is also replete with symbolic images typical of this type of song: "a swan" and "the young moon" denote the bride and the groom respectively; undoing the braid or splitting the braid into two symbolizes the end of girlhood; a swan who is losing a feather signifies the bride who is losing her girlhood; strangers and a strange country refer to the groom's family; two doves, to the bride and the groom. Not unlike the texts of folk ritual songs, *Les Noces*, as Stravinsky remarks, is "trying to *present* rather than *describe*" (italics Stravinsky's).

A local tradition usually contains numerous texts of wedding songs, although all these texts are sung only to two or three melodies or tune-formulae (and in some traditions even to a single tune-formula), which sound over a period of several days. Thus we can observe that songs based on these tune-formulae also make up an ostinato, the second melodic ostinato in the overall musical unfolding of the ritual. The characteristics of this ostinato, however, are quite different from the first one.

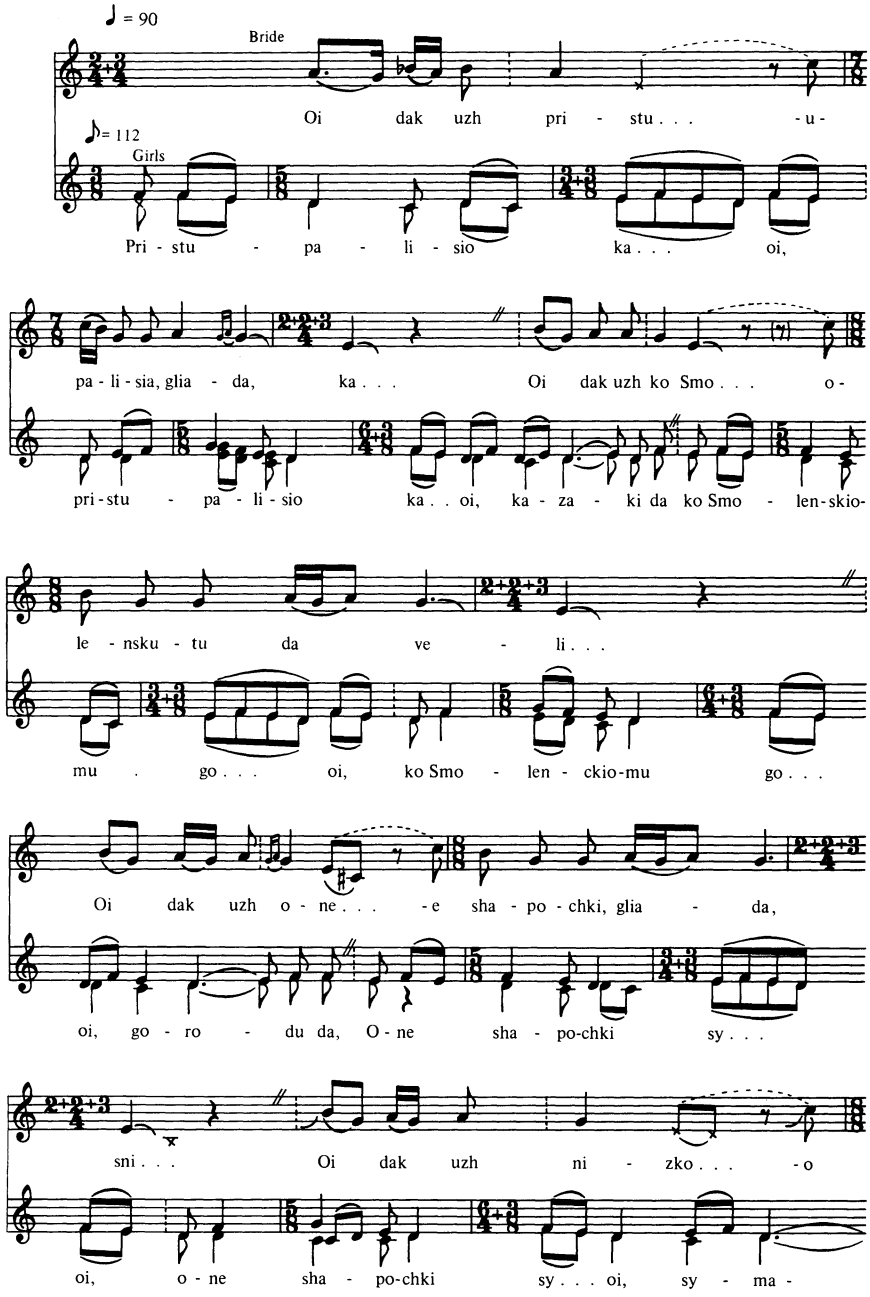
As noted by Rubtsov, the peculiar structure of wedding-tune formulae is often (though not always) characterized by an imbalance, an incompleteness in the stanza, that necessitates the beginning of the following stanza and thus creates a kind of hypnotic effect.[61] Not infrequently the effect of imbalance is due to rhythm, as in the previous examples. Wedding tune-formulae, metrically the most complex among Russian folk songs, are usually based on rhythmic patterns consisting of several units of mutable length and structure. Once established, however, this complex pattern is stubbornly repeated stanza after stanza, song after song, making the general pulse and rhythmic drive of the music very strong. These songs rarely

ritual in its coherence, as a continuum of sound. This conceptualization of the music in the wedding ritual emerged from numerous interviews in my previous expeditions in the region.

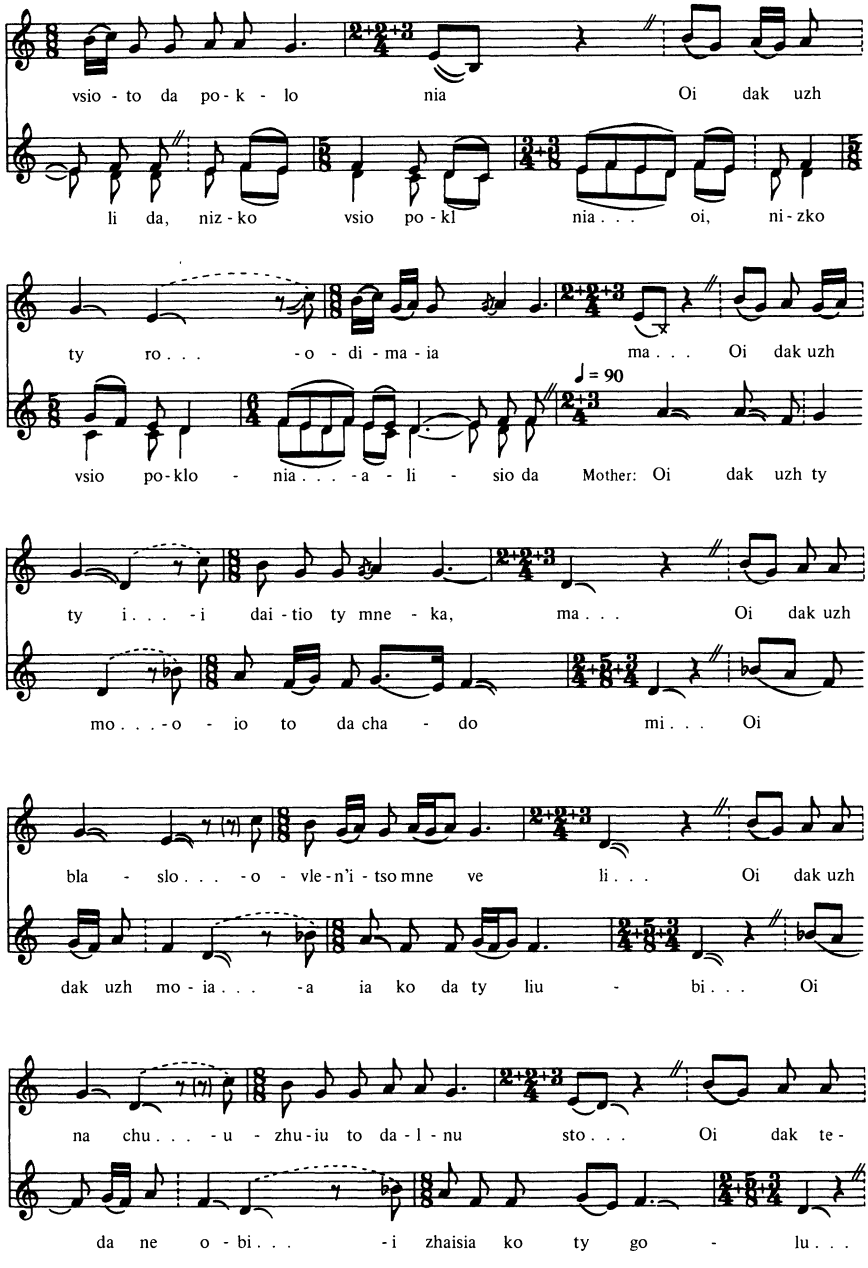
[61] Discussed in Mazo, "The Collection of Russian Folk Songs by Nikolai Lvov and Ivan Prach," 58–59.

Example 13

"Pristupalisia kazaki," from a wedding ritual; the girls sing while the bride and her mother lament



Example 13 (*continued*)



employ large melismata and are based mostly on a syllabication of text; the rhythm with which the poetic text is rendered in singing (and not the musical rhythm proper) becomes the means that essentially

Noces have links with traditional wedding songs through their metric and syllabic organization, and through the power of their general rhythmic drive: in the first scene at no. 2 ("Chesu pochesu Nastas'inu kosu") and no. 9 ("Ne klich' ne klich' lebiodushka"), and in the second scene at no. 27 ("Prechistaia mat' khodi k nam ukhat'").

As Examples 6a and 13 illustrate, in some key episodes of folk ritual both "ostinatos"—the solo lament and the ritual song of the chorus—are combined. In these episodes a particular polymorphic two-layer texture is being used. Every aspect of this texture is dual, so that one is apt to speak about a bi-melody, bi-rhythm, bi-tempo, and bi-structure, as in the following example, recorded in 1971 in the Vozhbal district of the Vologda province. (Example 14).

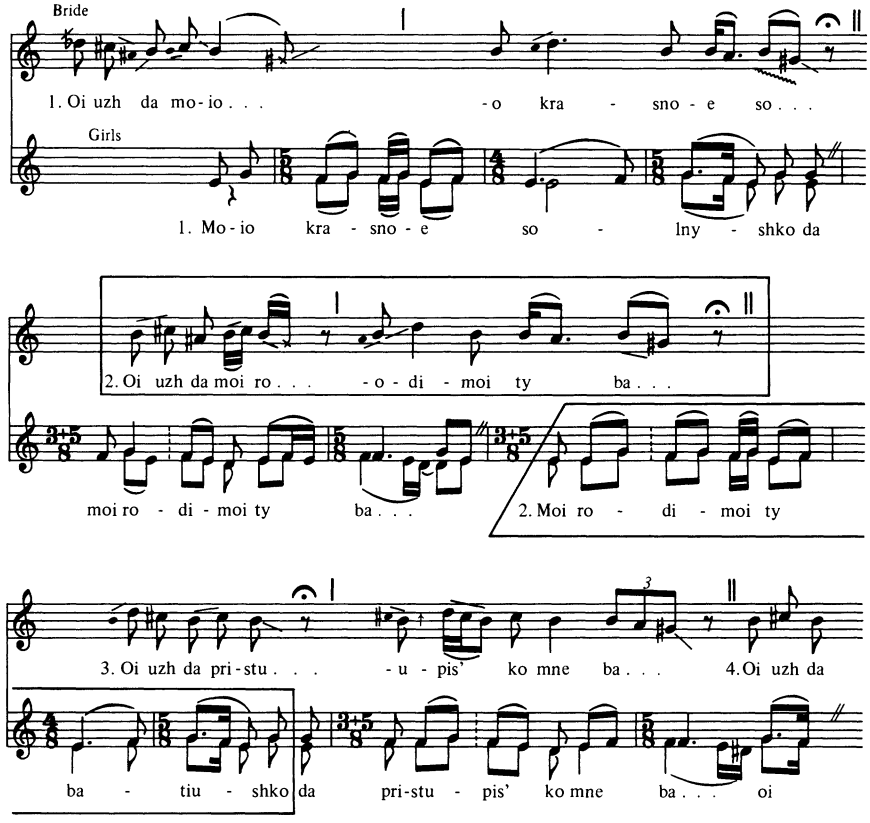
At first glance, the two musical entities comprising the musical texture in example 14 are unrelated: the upper layer (the bride's lament) is saturated with semi-naturalistic exclamations and sobs and moves in a free, seemingly a-musical time, whereas the lower layer (the girls' song) sustains a rigid syllabication, strongly accentuated, and its melodic flow is songlike. Moreover, the two layers move in different tempi and their vertical alignment changes with each stanza. Both layers are improvised independently, each within its own framework and with no fixed idea as to note-to-note correspondences and harmonic coordinations between them. (Compare similar procedures in *Les Noces* at nos. 24–27 in the first scene or nos. 68–70 in the third.)

By no means do the two layers join or overlap mechanically. Instead they comprise an organic unity that might not be accessible to direct observation. Nevertheless, the combined parts belong to the same local tradition and thus converge on a common stylistic ground (usually, a coherent local tradition can be identified, among other features, by idiosyncratic melodic vocabulary, formal procedures, rhythmic-metric patterns, and musical texture) that controls the unfolding of a complex whole and guides the anticipation of its dynamic growth. More specifically, in Example 14 above, common stylistic ground determines a common stock of modal structures and *popevki* in the solo and chorus parts. It also implies sharing the rhythmic patterns of the text pronunciation: though concrete musical rhythms in the solo and chorus parts look seemingly different (Example 15, left part), the temporal proportions of syllables, or the duration of each syllable as it is actually set to the melody (Example 15, right part), do coincide.[62]

[62] Example 15 is based on the second stanza from Example 14.

Example 14

"Moe krasnoe solnyshko," from a wedding ritual; the girls sing while the bride laments

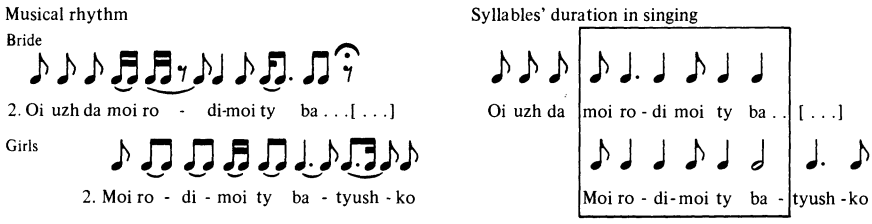


This Example demonstrates this correlation and maps out temporal relations between text and music. The frame shows the part of a text line that coincides in the solo and chorus lines. The frame cuts out three non-meaningful exclamatory syllables at the beginning and two last syllables of each line in the solo lament; the latter, characteristic of solo laments, are not pronounced at all, as though they are swollen in sobs; they are sung, however, in the chorus part. Phrases of the solo lament are similar melodically, but they are not equal in length, and the rests between the phrases are not equal either. The soloist moves freely ahead or holds back, adds exclamations or truncates ends of the sentences, yet the chorus's stanzas, with their rigid reiteration of fixed rhythmic-metric patterns, serve as the articulate frame of reference and synchronizing force.

It should be noted that, in the local tradition in which Example 14

Example 15

Musical rhythm and duration of syllables as they are set in singing "Pristupalisia kazaki" (see Example 13)



It should be noted that, in the local tradition in which Example 14 was recorded, both the solo lament and the song of the chorus are called *prichet* (from *prichitanie*), revealing the inner similarity of the two musical forms. Peculiar incongruities in text articulation between the solo lament and the choral song are connected with different properties of vocal gestures characteristic of laments: solo, with *plach'* and *vopl'*; chorus, with *prichitanie*. One can easily trace these two approaches to the pronunciation of the ritual text in the first three scenes of *Les Noces*: the solo laments use exclamations, the apocope (at measure 4 of the piece, the only apocope in the entire score), text-setting with slightly prolonged syllables, as in *plach'* and *vopl'*; conversely, the chorus part is based almost exclusively on the uninterrupted syllabication characteristic of *prichitanie*.

A certain fluidity can also be observed in the realm of pitch level. It is almost imperceptible in the chorus part, which remains on a stable pitch level throughout, and which uses a scale of stable intervallic structure. In the solo lament, on the other hand, both the pitch level and the sizes of the intervals of the scale are subject to change. We are left to assume that a modal pattern exists in such polyphonic forms in two different states, corresponding to two different scale versions, stable and unstable, simultaneously. The lament's scale seems to be floating above and somehow restrained by the stable treatment of the scale in the chorus part. Not unlike folk practice, the solo lament in the first scene of *Les Noces*, supported by strong rhythmic reiterations of the chorus, remains on a relatively stable pitch level, and without the chorus, when one solo lament is juxtaposed with another solo lament (as, for example, in the third scene; see Example 12), the pitch level of melodic phrases shifts significantly.

The polymelodic texture presented in Example 14 recurs continually during the wedding. One could say, perhaps, that this musical

the ritual. However obvious or subtle the correlation between two layers in this intricate ostinato, the "vertical" and "horizontal" alignment of the superimposed parts, which are similar and opposite at the same time, is neither rigid nor mechanical. The resemblance of such episodes to melodic, metro-rhythmic, and formal procedures in the first three scenes of *Les Noces* is striking. Van den Toorn comments on nos. 60–70 in *Les Noces*: "Indeed, few passages in the literature can match the invention here, the subtle play of symmetrical confinement that unfolds through a superimposition of reiterating fragments whose rhythmic-metric periods vary 'separately from' or 'independently of' one another, and effect a vertical (or 'harmonic') coincidence that is constantly changing."[63] It would be only just to count the episode from the folk wedding discussed above as one of these "few passages."

There is no need to re-emphasize the importance of poly-layered texture or the function of rhythmic and melodic ostinato in Stravinsky's works, particularly in *Les Noces*. I do not suggest, of course, that the folk wedding was the only source for these well-known techniques of Stravinsky. On the other hand, constant recurrences of certain textural and rhythmic patterns, as well as the recurrences of certain melodic phrases repeated exactly or in a varied but highly recognizable form, secure the integrity of the wedding and give its music a strong drive. It appears that the way Stravinsky used these means in *Les Noces* is very similar to their use in the folk practice.

It must be stated that, as much as *Les Noces* can be shown to contain elements which exist elsewhere, including those the composer absorbed during his long peregrinations through the annals of Russian folk tradition, it is, first and foremost, a product of the composer's genius and creativity. Stravinsky did not copy or re-create a folk Russian wedding. One can hardly find in a concrete ritual a succession of elements (dramatic, musical, or verbal) that would correspond exactly to Stravinsky's work. His remarkable intuition towards folk practice allowed him to sense, comprehend, and freely use essential features of the Russian folk tradition that were not apparent to and remained undetected by other musicians for many years. Druskin, the author of many thoughtful insights on Stravinsky's music, comments: "From where comes his poignantly deep penetration into the essence

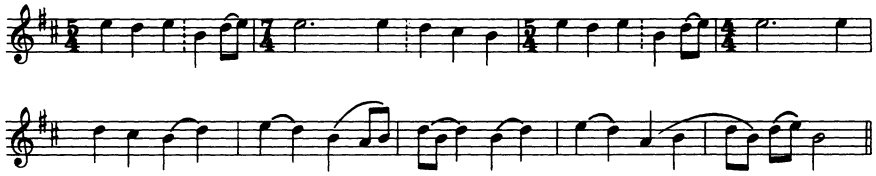
[63] van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky*, 170.

of folk music? It will remain for us a riddle, as many other things in the phenomenon of Stravinsky's personality."[64]

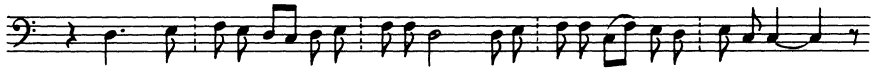
The Ohio State University

Appendix

1. Khorovod song. Anatolii Liadov. "Sbornik russkikh narodnykh pesen," op. 43, no. 29

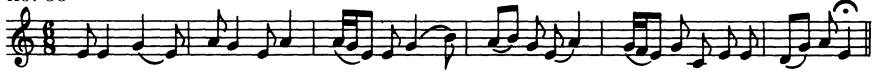


2. Bylina. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, "Sto russkikh narodnykh pesen," op. 24, no. 1

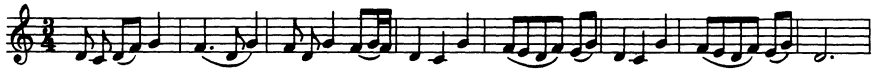


3. Maslenichnaia. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, "Sto russkikh narodnykh pesen," op. 24, no. 46

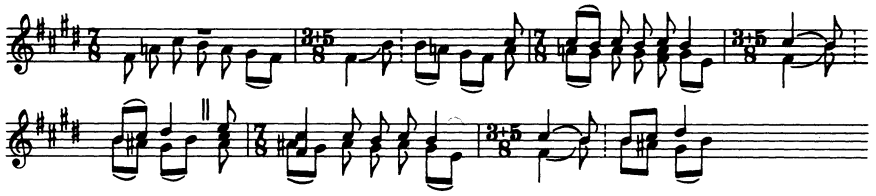
4. Wedding song. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, "Sto russkikh narodnykh pesen," op. 24, no. 88



5. Wedding song. Milii Balakirev, "Sbornik russkikh narodnykh pesen," no. 1

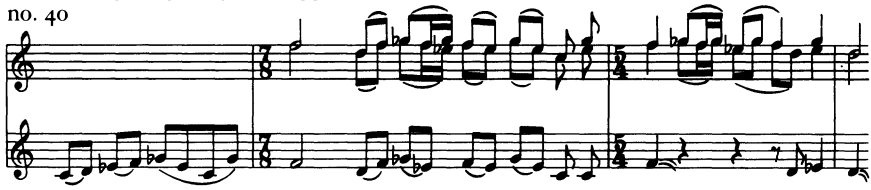


6. Wedding song recorded in the Prokhov district, formerly of the Pskov province. A variant of this song was published by Kireevsky (1911, no. 150). Feodosii Rubtsov and Anna Astakhova, eds., *Russkie narodnye pesni* (Leningrad, 1950), no. 281

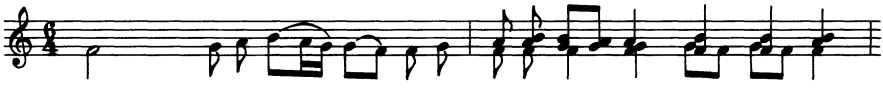


[64] Druskin, *Igor Stravinskii*, 44.

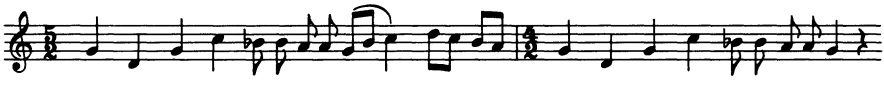
7. Wedding song. Evgenii Gippius and Zinaida Evald, *Pesni Pinezh'ia* (Moscow, 1938), no. 40



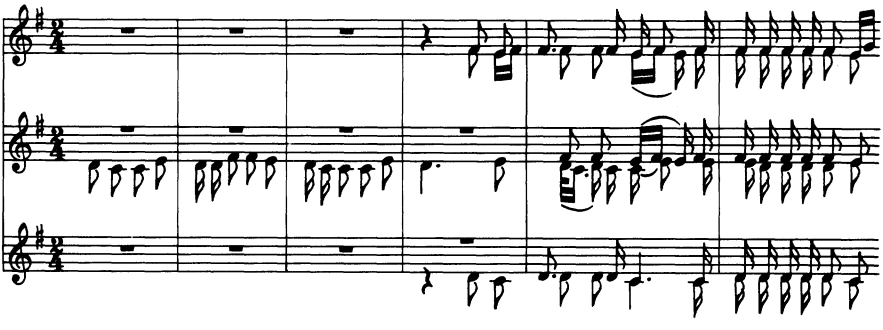
8. Khorovod song. Anna Rudneva, *Kurskie tanki i karagody* (Moscow, 1975), p. 280



9. Lyric song performed during the *Devichnik* if the bride is an orphan. Recorded in the Smolemnsk province in 1965



10. Wedding song from the Belgorod province. Anna Rudneva, Viacheslav Shchurov, and Svetlana Pushkina, *Russkie narodnye pesni v mnogomikrofonnoi zapisi* (Moscow, 1979), p. 142



List of Works Cited

Agreneva-Slavianskaia, Olga. *Opisanie russkoi krest'ianskoi svad'by s textom i pesniami* (A Description of Russian Peasant Wedding with Texts and Songs). 3 vols. Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Tver, 1887–89.

Alfeevskaia, Galina, and Irina Vershinina, eds. *I.F. Stravinskii. Stat'i i vospominaniia* (I.F. Stravinsky. Articles and Memoirs). Moscow, 1985.

Alekseev, Eduard. *Rannefol'klornoe intonirovanie* (The Pitch Nature in Early-Traditional Singing). Moscow, 1986.

Asafiev, Boris (Igor Glebov). *A Book about Stravinsky*. Translated by Richard F. French. Ann Arbor, 1982.

Bachinskaia, Nina. *Narodnye pesni v tvorchestve russkikh kompozitorov* (Folk Songs in Works by Russian Composers). Moscow, 1962.

Belaiev, Victor. *Igor Stravinsky's "Les Noces:" The Outline*. Translated by S. Pring. London, 1928.

Balakirev, Milii. *Sbornik russkikh narodnykh pesen* (Collection of Russian Folk Songs). St. Petersburg, 1866.

Birkan, Rafail. "O poeticheskom texte *Svadebki* Stravinskogo" (On Poetic Text of Stravinsky's *Les Noces*). In *Russkaia muzyka na rubezhe 20 veka* (Russian Music at the Threshold of the 20th Century), edited by Mikhail Mikhailov and Elena Orlova, 239–52. Moscow-Leningrad, 1966.

_____. "O tematizme 'Svadebki' Stravinskogo" (On Thematicism of Stravinsky's *Svadebka*). In *Iz istorii muzyki XX veka* (Russian Music History of the 20th Century), edited by Semen Ginzburg and Mikhail Druskin, 169–89. Moscow, 1971.

Brazhnikov, Maxim. *Drevnerusskaia teoriia muzyki* (Old-Russian Musical Theory). Leningrad, 1972.

Craft, Robert, and William Harkins. "Stravinsky's Svadebka (*Les Noces*)." *The New York Review of Books*, 14 December 1972.

Diachkova, L., compiler. *I.F. Stravinskii. Stat'i i materialy*. Moscow, 1973.

Druskin, Mikhail. *Igor Stravinskii. Lichnost', tvorchestvo, vzgliady* (I. Stravinsky: Personality, Works, Concepts). 3rd ed. Leningrad, 1982.

Genchev, S. "Lamentation at Deaths, at Weddings and When Seeing People Off in Bulgaria and Russia." *Belgarska etnografiia* 2 (1983): 14–29.

Gippius, Evgenii, and Zinaida Evald. *Pesni Pinezh'ia* (Songs of Pinega). Moscow, 1938.

Golovinsky, Grigorii. *Kompozitor i Folklor*. Moscow, 1981.

Grigoriev, Alexander. *Arkhangel'skie byliny i istoricheskie pesni, sobrannye A.D. Grigor'evym v 1899–1901 gg* (*Byliny* and Historical Songs from the Arkhaangelsk Region Collected by Grigoriev in 1899–1901). 3 vols. Vols. 1 and 3: St. Petersburg, 1904, 1910; Vol. 2: Prague, 1939. (Songs were collected by Grigoriev and transcribed by I. Tezarovsky.)

Istomin, Feodor, and Georgii Diutsh. *Pesni Russkogo naroda sobrannye v Arkhangel'skoi i Olonetskoi guberniiakh v 1886 godu* (Songs of the Russian People Collected in Arkhangelsk and Olonets Provinces in 1886). St. Petersburg, 1894.

Istomin, Feodor, and Sergei Liapunov. *Pesni Russkogo naroda sobrannye v Vologodskoi, Viatskoi i Kostromskoi guberniiakh v 1893 godu* (Songs of the Russian People Collected in Vologda, Viatka, and Kostroma Provinces in 1893). St. Petersburg, 1899.

Karlinsky, Simon. "Igor Stravinsky and Russian Preliterate Theater." In *Confronting Stravinsky: Man, Musician, and Modernist*, edited by Jann Pasler, 3–15. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1986.

Kastalsky, Alexander. *Osnovy narodnogo mnogogolosiia* (The Basis of Folk Polyphony). Moscow, 1948.

_____. *Stat'i. vospominaniia. materialy* (Articles, Memoirs, Materials). Moscow, 1960.

Kholopova, Valentina. *Voprosy ritma v tvorchestve kompozitorov XX veka* (Issues on Rhythm in Music of the Twentieth-century Composers). Moscow, 1971.

Kireevsky, Piotr. *Pesni sobrannye P. V. Kireevskim, Novaia seriia* (Songs Collected by Kireevsky, New Series). Edited by V. Miller and M. Speransky. Part 1: Ritual songs. Moscow, 1911.

Liadov, Anatolii. *Sbornik russkikh narodnykh pesen* (Collection of Russian Folk Songs), op. 43. Leipzig, 1898.

Lineva, Evgeniia. *Velikorusskie pesni v narodnoi garmonizatsii.* 2 vols. St. Petersburg, 1904, 1909. With translation of the preface: *The Peasant Songs of Great Russia As They Are in the Folk's Harmonization: Collected and Transcribed from Phonograms by Eugenie Lineff.* St. Petersburg, 1905–12.

_____. "Psalms and Religious Songs of Russian Sectarians in the Caucasus." *International Musical Society Congress Reports, 4th Congress,* 187–201. London, 1911.

Mazo, Margarita. *Nikol'skie pesni* (Songs of Nikol'sk district). Leningrad, 1975.

_____. "Nikol'skie prichitaniia i ikh sviazi s drugimi zhanrami mestnoi pesennosti" (Nikol'sk Laments and Their Relationships with Other Genres of the Local Tradition). In *Muzykal'naia Folkloristika* (Musical Folklore Studies), edited by Alexander Banin, vol. 2, 213–36. Moscow, 1978.

_____. "The Collection of Russian Folk Songs by Nikolai Lvov and Ivan Prach." In *A Collection of Russian Folk Songs by Nikolai Lvov and Ivan Prach,* edited by Malcolm H. Brown, xi-xv, 3–83. Ann Arbor, 1987.

Mekhnetsov, A. *Narodnye pesni Vologodskoi oblasti* (Folk Songs of the Vologda Province). Leningrad, 1981.

Mel'gunov, Yulii. *Russkie narodnye pesni neposredstvenno s golosov naroda zapisannye* (Russian Folk Songs Transcribed Directly from the Voices of the People). 2 vols. Moscow, 1879–85.

Paliashvili, Zakharii. *Kartuli khalkhurisimgerebi.* Tiflis, 1910.

Pal'chikov, Nikolai. *Krest'ianskie pesni zapisannye v s. Nikolaevke Menzelinskogo uezda Ufimskoi gubernii* (Peasant Songs Transcribed in the Village Nikolaevka of the Ufa Province). Moscow, 1888.

Piatnitsky, Mitrofan. *Konserty M. E. Piatnitskogo s Krest'ianami* (Concerts of M.E. Piatnitsky with Peasants). Moscow, 1914.

Popova, Tat'iana. *Osnovy russkoi narodnoi muzyki* (Basics of Russian Folk Music). Moscow, 1977.

Propp, Vladimir. *Istoricheskie korni volshebnoi skazki* (Historical Roots of the Wondertale). Leningrad, 1946.

_____. *Theory and History of Folklore.* Edited by Anatoly Liberman. Minneapolis, 1984.

Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolai. *Sto russkikh narodnykh pesen* (One Hundred Russian Folk Songs), op. 24. St. Petersburg, 1876.

Roerich, Nikolai. *Iz literaturnogo naslediia* (From Literary Legacy). Moscow, 1974.

Rubtsov, Feodosii. *Osnovy ladovogo stroeniia russkikh narodnykh pesen* (Principles of Modal Structures in Russian Folk Songs). Leningrad, 1964.

_____, and Anna Astakhova, eds. *Russkie narodnye pesni* (Russian Folk Songs). Leningrad, 1950.

Rudneva, Anna. *Kurskie tanki i karagody* (Kursk *Tanki* and *Khorovods*). Moscow, 1975.

_____, Viacheslav Shchurov, and Svetlana Pushkina. *Russkie narodnye pesni v mnogomikrofonnoi zapisi* (Russian Folk Songs in Multi-Channel Recordings). Moscow, 1979.

Skvortsova, Zoia. "O prichitaniiakh v svadebnom obriade" (About Laments in the Wedding Ritual). In *Folklor i Etnografiia* (Folklor and Ethnography), edited by Boris Putilov, 244–51. Leningrad, 1974.

Stravinsky, Igor. *An Autobiography*. 1936. Reprint. New York and London, 1962.

_____. *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*. Translated by Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl. 1947. Reprint. Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1982.

Stravinsky, Igor, and Craft, Robert. *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*. 1959. Reprint. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980.

_____. *Dialogues*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982. Original title *Dialogues and A Diary*. New York, 1963.

_____. *Expositions and Developments*. 1962. Reprint. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1981.

_____. *Memories and Commentaries*. 1960. Reprint. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1981.

_____. *Retrospectives and Conclusions*. New York, 1969.

_____. *Themes and Conclusions*. 1966. Reprint. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982.

Taruskin, Richard. "From Subject to Style: Stravinsky and the Painters." In *Confronting Stravinsky: Man, Musician, and Modernist*, edited by Jann Pasler, 16–39. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1986.

_____. "Russian Folk Melodies in *The Rite of Spring*." This JOURNAL 33 (1980): 501–3.

_____. "Stravinsky and the Traditions: Why the Memory Hole." *Opus* 3, no. 4 (June 1987): 10–18.

_____. "Stravinsky's 'Rejoicing Discovery' and What It Meant: In Defence of His Notorious Text Setting." In *Stravinsky Retrospectives*, edited by Ethan Haimo and Paul Johnson, 162–99. Lincoln and London, 1987.

Trudy muzykal'no-etnograficheskoi komissii. 5 vols. (Works by Musical-Ethnographic Commission). *Izvestiia Obshchestva Liubiteley Estestvoznaniia, Antropologii i Etnografii*, vols. 113, 114, 115, 118, 120. Moscow, 1906–16.

Uspensky, Nikolai. *Obraztsy drevne-russkogo pevcheskogo iskusstva* (Examples of Old Russian Art of Singing). Leningrad, 1968.

van den Toorn, Pieter C. *The Music of Igor Stravinsky*. New Haven and London, 1983.

Vershinina, Irina. *Rannie balety Stravinskogo* (Stravinsky's Early Ballets). Moscow, 1967.

Vostokov, A. "Opyt o russkom stikhoslozhenii" (A Study on Russian Versification). St. Petersburg, 1817.

Yarustovsky, Boris. *Igor Stravinskii*. 3rd ed. Leningrad, 1982.

Yastrebtsev, Vasilii. *Rimsky-Korsakov. Vospominaniia V.V. Yastrebtseva. (Rimsky-Korsakov. Reminiscences by V.V. Yastrebtsev)*. 2 vols. Leningrad, 1960.

White, Eric Walter. *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*. 2nd ed. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1979.

ABSTRACT

This study presents Stravinsky's well-known ballet *Les Noces* as seen by an ethnomusicologist familiar with wedding rituals and, particularly, laments of

Russian villages. The music of *Les Noces*, statements made by the composer himself, and the data gleaned from published sources of folk music (those Stravinsky is known to have come in contact with or those accessible to him) are juxtaposed with observations obtained in field interviews with Russian villagers who themselves were participants in wedding rituals and performers of wedding laments. The conceptual and structural ideas of *Les Noces* are compared to those of the village ritual. The examination of the role of laments and songs in the unfolding of the ritual, the use of ostinato, the analysis of the manner of singing and voice quality in laments, and an inquiry into the polyphonic forms based on polymorphic texture enable a fresh insight into *Les Noces* and the way Stravinsky handled materials derived from folk practice. The general conceptualization of the composition with its coalescence of high emotional intensity and, at the same time, personal detachment is traced to folk ritual where the episodes, being part of the ritual, embody primarily impersonal responses to the requirements of a ritualized situation, even though they are presented as highly tense and emotionally charged.