

## Music as Text in the Works of Bulgakov

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Volume 35, Number 1, 2015

J. M. Lotman

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1050986ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1050986ar>

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Publisher(s)

Association canadienne de sémiotique / Canadian Semiotic Association

ISSN

0229-8651 (print)

1923-9920 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Andrews, E. & Lowry, Y. (2015). Review of [Music as Text in the Works of Bulgakov]. *Recherches sémiotiques / Semiotic Inquiry*, 35(1), 41–61.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1050986ar>

Article abstract

The present article is a modest introduction to a larger theme that analyzes the use of music as *text* in the plays, short stories and novels of Mixail Bulgakov. The important contribution of Juri Lotman's theoretical work on artistic space, the semiosphere, and the role of incorporating "texts within texts" (текст в тексте) is fundamental to our explication of the process of understanding Bulgakov's use of *music* as text in a variety of its manifestations, resulting in an integrated and full-bodied textual structure that generates meanings critical to the works in which it is embedded. This analysis will focus on defining what "music as text" is for Bulgakov and specifically consider the use of music in the play, *Zoya's Apartment* (Зойкина квартира).

# Music as Text in the Works of Bulgakov

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“Текст в тексте – это специфическое риторическое построение при котором различие в закодированности разных частей текста делается в я в л е н н ы м фактором авторского построения и читательского восприятия текста. Переключение из одной системы семиотического осознания текста в другую на каком-то внутреннем структурном рубеже составляет в этом случае основу генерирования смысла”. Ю.М. Лотман (1992а : 110)

*“Text within a text is a special rhetorical construction where the difference in the codification of various parts of the text is the critical factor in understanding the author’s vision and the reader’s response to and perception of the text. In this instance, switching from one system of semiotic comprehension of the text to another across something like an internal structural boundary provides the basis for the generation of meaning”. - Juri Lotman (translation by authors)<sup>1</sup>*

We begin our analysis with a quote from Lotman’s seminal article, “Text within a text”, in which he explores the phenomenon as an important system-level, semiospheric notion, as well as a key to understanding artistic (художественный) and cultural texts and their ability to generate multiplicities of meaning. This is particularly interesting in the context of examining Bulgakov’s use of what we will refer to as *musical texts*.

One of the fundamental principles of the Tartu-Moscow school of semiotics focuses on defining *culture texts*, a structure through which cultural information about the self and the surrounding context are acquired (Ivanov *et al.* 1973/1998 : 3.0-3.1). Culture texts are broadly conceived to include not only artistic forms of literary/visual/sound texts, but also simple speech acts and other meaning-generating systems (Andrews 2003 : 165). Lotman's later work on artistic textual space and *artistic texts* is contingent upon at least two basic principles of semiospheric organization : (1) all semiospheres<sup>2</sup> are a multiplicity of variegated, potentially hierarchical and multileveled languages and culture texts, and (2) the codes correlated with specific texts may be lost if the text is inadequately contextualized in a given semiospheric space, and thus may be "untranslatable" at given moments on the space-time continuum (Lotman 1992b : I. 11-24). The distinguishing properties of the *artistic text* from other text types are given at the structural level, where the text must be organized such that the reader perceives semantic signals pointing to the artistic text (Lotman 1992b : 1.204-5). Lotman is very keen on the notion that, in distinction to other textual types, the artistic text presents a complex of conflicting indices as a result of its essence, which is to represent the general principles of a culture's organization :

Только художественные тексты могут быть предметом взаимоисключающих аксиологических оценок. Хотя художественным текстам в общей иерархии культуры отводится определенное место, они постоянно проявляют тенденцию к расположению на противоположных концах лестницы, то есть в исходной позиции задают некоторый конфликт, создающий потенциальную возможность дальнейшей нейтрализации в некоторых амбивалентных текстах.... Внутренняя организация художественной литературы... изоморфна культуре как таковой, повторяет общие принципы ее организации. Литература никогда не представляет собой аморфно-однородной суммы текстов : она не только организация, но и самоорганизующийся механизм. На самой высокой ступени организации она выделяет группу текстов более абстрактного, чем вся остальная масса текстов, уровня, то есть метатекстов.

Only the artistic text may be the object of mutually exclusive axiomatic values. Even though artistic texts in the general hierarchy of culture have a particular place, they are constantly demonstrating tendencies toward movement to the opposite end of the spectrum, *i.e.*, in their initial point there already exists a specific conflict that creates the potential for further neutralization in ambivalent texts... The internal organization of literature is isomorphic to culture as such and repeats the general principles of [cultural] organization. Literature never presents itself as an amorphous, unilateral sum of texts : It is not only organizing, but a self-organizing mechanism. At the highest level of organization literature selects the group of more abstract texts, that is, metatexts. (1992b : I. 206-7; translated in Andrews 2003 : 79)

The notion of music as text in Bulgakov is central to understanding his *oeuvre*, is fully integrated into the verbal and aesthetic functions of his work, and is best understood from the perspective of Lotman's notion of text within a text. As Lotman explains, what may appear to be an intrusion of a fragment<sup>3</sup> into a "foreign" language may become a generator of new meanings (1992a : 110) :

Вторжение “обломка” текста на чужом языке может играть роль генератора новых смыслов. Это подчеркивается, например, возможностью введения говорений на “никаком” языке, которые, однако, оказываются червчывчайно насыщенными смыслом.

The intrusion of a fragment of text into a foreign language may become a generator of new meanings. This process is emphasized, for example, by the possibility of introducing speech in “not any kind of” language, which, however, turns out to be exceedingly saturated with meaning.

This is precisely what we see as a variety of musical texts “intrude” into the artistic space-time continuum of Bulgakov’s works. In the case of *Zoya’s Apartment*, (henceforth abbreviated as *ZK*), we will demonstrate how the interaction of musical and verbal texts leads to a fascinating and unexpected re-evaluation of the narrative.

The manifestation of musical texts for Bulgakov includes not only a wide variety of genres (operatic arias, art songs, folk songs, popular and military melodies, children’s songs and liturgical music), but also an interesting array of realizations of music, where (1) musical works are played at particular moments in the text, (2) characters perform a piece of music in real time or refer to a musical piece they had performed in a different context, (3) musical scores and lyric are present in the text, (4) specific instruments are present in the text, (5) the source of the background music is specified in the text, (6) characters bear the names of famous composers or musical instruments, and (7) even the name of the performer of the musical piece is specified (*cf.* Chaliapin is singing Mephistopheles’ aria from Gounod’s *Faust* at the beginning of *Zoya’s Apartment*).

Bulgakov’s usage of *music as text* as described above is found in all of his major works, and is a powerful, dynamic characteristic of polysemic meaning generation. It also presents an interactive challenge to the reader that compels him or her to actively participate in the narrative. That is, if the reader takes up the challenge, then the narrative becomes more synthetic and “explodes” multidimensionally in its realization. There are altogether nineteen occurrences that qualify as examples of *music as text* in *Zoya’s Apartment* (compared with 16 in *Days of the Turbins*). Fifty percent of the musical examples in *Zoya’s Apartment* (henceforth alternatively referred to as *ZK*) are based on 2 works : Rachmaninov’s *Ne poj, krasavica*, and the aria *Parigi o cara* from Verdi’s *La Traviata*. In the following sections, we will examine each of the examples from *Zoya’s Apartment* in terms of the types of *music as text* in order to demonstrate how Bulgakov creates, through his use of music and musical imagery, a parallel textual world that can be “read” on par with the verbal text.

### *Zoya’s Apartment* (1926/1997)

We will not summarize the entire storyline of *Zoya’s Apartment* here (relevant lyrics and musical notation are given in Appendix A), but we would like to remind the readers that this play, listed as a “tragicomedy”,

has been enjoyed on theatrical stages around the world time and again until the present day, despite the fact that, as Proffer notes, it was not seen as an especially innovative play that broke new ground (1984 : 228-234).<sup>4</sup> Bulgakov himself noted his affection for his characters (including Zoya, Obolyaninov, Ametistov, Xeruvim, Manusya, Goose, Alla), flawed as they may be, and his disagreements with the stage director, Andrej Popov, concerning the major themes of the play – “depravity and comedy” (пошлость и комизм) (Petelin 2007 : 8). Bulgakov specifically notes in disbelief that Popov wanted the “musical and noise coloring” to reinforce precisely these themes. What we will demonstrate in the following analysis is that Bulgakov did not abandon his vision and used music as text for a very different purpose.

### Central Musical Texts of *Zoya's Apartment* : Gounod, Liszt, Rachmaninov, Verdi

*ZK* (Act I, Scene 1) opens with specific set directions and music : Mephistopheles' aria about human greed and adoration of “The Golden Calf” from Gounod's opera *Faust* (Act II, Scene 3), the first lines of the first and second verses (“На земле весь род людской, Читт один кумир священный... , В умилении сердечном, прославляя истукан...” [All people on the earth worship one holy idol..., with tenderness in the heart, glorifying the calf...] (1997 : 52)) sung by Fyodor Chaliapin. It is well attested that Bulgakov was an avid opera lover and often went to the opera in Kiev beginning early in his life (Proffer 1984). His favorite opera was Gounod's *Faust*, and he would have heard it and others translated into Russian as that was the convention of the day.<sup>5</sup> Not only are the opera, specific aria and text important, but also the fact that the performer is designated.

The second and third musical examples (1997 : 57), also from Act I, Scene 1, refer to Franz Liszt's *Rhapsodie Hongroise No. II* and Sergei Rachmaninov's *Ne poj, krasavica* (*Sing No More, My Lovely Woman*) :

Рояль где-то отдаленно и бравурно играет Вторую рапсодию Листа.

Рояль внезапно обрывает бравурное место, начинает романс Рахманинова. Нежный голос поет : Не пой, красавица, при мне, Ты песен Грузии печальной...<sup>6</sup>

**On the background, a grand piano is playing the Second Rhapsody by Liszt.**

**The piano abruptly stops during a fast passage, and begins playing Rachmaninov's art song. A tender voice sings : “Sing no more, my lovely woman, in my presence, your sad songs of Georgia...”**

Here again, Bulgakov is careful to specify the works and even how they are played (*cf.* бравурно). Rachmaninov's art song, *Ne poj, krasavica*, is one of two central musical texts evoked throughout the entire play. There are 12 specific references to this important piece (lyrics based on a poem by A.S. Pushkin) in Act I, Scene 1, Act I, Scene 3, and Act III,

## Scene 1 (1997 : 58-59, 61, 63-64, 72, 100, 117) :

Акт первый, картина первая (стр. 58-59)

З о я. Ложитесь, ложитесь, Павлик. Я вам сейчас валерианки дам. Может быть, вина?

О б о л ь я н и н о в. К черту вино и валерианку! Разве мне поможет валерианка?

**Zoya : Lie down, lie down, Pavlik. I will bring you Valerian right away. Perhaps some wine?**

**Obolyaninov : To hell with Valerian and wine! Do you think Valerian will help me?**

...

*Голос поет : "...Напоминают мне они другую жизнь и берег дальний..."*

**The voice sings : "...they remind me of another life and far away shore..."**

...

О б о л ь я н и н о в. Нет, Зоя Денисовна! Пусть он сам сюда придет и при мне разведет. Он мошенник. Вообще в Москве нет ни одного порядочного человека. Все жулики. Никому нельзя верить. И голос этот льется, как горячее масло за шею... Напоминают мне они... другую жизнь и берег дальний...

**Obolyaninov : No, Zoya Denisovna! He must come here, and prepare it right in front of me. He is a cheat! In general, there is not a single decent person in Moscow. They are all con artists. No one can be trusted. And this voice is pouring out like hot oil on your neck... they remind me of another life and far away shore...**

...

З о я. Павлик, родненький, потерпите, потерпите. Сейчас она его привезет.

*Голос упорно поет : "... Напоминают мне они..."*

О б о л ь я н и н о в. Напоминают... мне они... другую жизнь. У вас в доме проклятый двор.

**Zoya : Pavlik, my dear, be strong, be strong. She will go and get him immediately.**

**The voice persistently sings : " ....they remind me..."**

**Obolyaninov : They remind....of another life. Your house is on a cursed street...**

...

Акт первый, картина третья (стр. 61, 63-64, 72)

Обольянинов. Вот. (Оживает.) Вот. (Ожил.) Вот. Напоминают мне они... иную жизнь и берег дальний... Зачем же, Зойка, скрыли закат? Я так и не повидал его. Откройте шторы, откройте. Зоя. Да, да... (Открывает шторы.)

**Act I, Scene 3 (p. 61, 63-64, 72)**

**Obolyaninov : Yes (coming to life). Yes (having come back to life). Yes. They remind me... of another life and far away shore... Zoya, why did you cover up the sunset? I didn't get a chance to see it. Open the curtains, open them.**

**Zoya : Okay, okay... (opens the curtains.)**

...

*В окне густой майский вечер. Окна зажигаются одно за другим. Очень отдаленно музыка в "Аквариуме".*

Обольянинов. Как хорошо, гляньте... У вас очень интересный двор... И берег дальний... Какой дивный голос пел это...

**A May evening outside. One by one the windows light up. Somewhere far away is music in "The Aquarium."**

**Obolyaninov : How nice, look...You have a very nice yard...and far away shore...What a wonderful voice sung this...**

...

(стр. 63-64)

Обольянинов (в гостиной). Напоминают мне они...

Зоя. Павлик, а Павлик. Я достала бумагу. (Пауза.) Граф, следует даме что-нибудь ответить, не мне вас этому учить.

Обольянинов. Напоминают... Простите, ради бога, я замечтался. Так вы говорите граф. Ах, Зоя, пожалуйста, не называйте меня графом с сегодняшнего дня.

**(p. 63-64)**

**Obolyaninov (in the living room) : They remind me...**

**Zoya : Pavlik, Pavlik. I got the document (pause). Count, it is only good manners to answer the lady. I am not the one who should be teaching you that.**

**Obolyaninov : They remind me...Please forgive me for God's sake, I was dreaming. You are saying – count. Oh, Zoya, please do not call me count anymore.**

...

Зоя. Придется, видно, Лизаньку или Мымру прописать, ах, как бы мне этого не хотелось! Ну, ладно. Ответьте, Павлик, на предприятие вы согласны? Имейте в виду, мы разорены.

Оболянинов. Согласен. Напоминают мне они...

**Zoya : I might have to register Lizanika or Mumra in this apartment, and I really would not wish to do it! Oh well. Please answer me, Pavlik, do you agree to go into business with me? Keep in mind, we have no money.**

**Obolyaninov : I agree. They remind me...**

...

(стр. 72)

Аметистов. Увлеклись воспоминаниями детства. Ведь мы росли с Зочкой. Я сейчас прямо рыдал.

Оболянинов (смотря на брюки). Напоминают мне они...

(р. 72)

**Ametistov : We got carried away with recollections of our childhood. We grew up together with Zoya. I was literally sobbing just now.**

**Obolyanov (looking at his pants) : They remind me...**

...

Акт третий, картина первая (стр. 100)

### **Act III, Scene 1 (p.100)**

Оболянинов. Я не люблю карт, я люблю лошадей. Фараон. В тринадцатом году в Петербурге он взял гран-при. Напоминают мне они...

**Obolyaninov : I do not like playing cards, I like horses. Pharaoh. In 1913, in Petersburg, he won the Grand Prix. They remind me...**

Голос глухо поет : “Напоминают мне оне...”<sup>7</sup>

**A hollow voice / : “They remind me...”**

...

Акт третий, картина вторая (стр. 117)

Аметистов (появляется). Маэстро, прошу в залу к роялю. Гости просят уан-стэп.

Оболянинов. Хорошо.

Зоя. Павлик, Павлик, потерпите, потерпите.

Оболянинов. Я терплю. Напоминают мне они.

### **Act III, Scene 2 (p. 117)**

**Ametistov (comes in) : Maestro, please come and play the piano in the**



**living room. The guests are asking for a “one step.”**

**Obolyaninov : Fine.**

**Zoya : Pavlik, Pavlik, stay strong, stay strong.**

**Obolyaninov : I am trying. They remind me...**

As these examples clearly show, there is a very strong textual tie between Obolyaninov, the melancholic superfluous former aristocrat and lover of Zoya, and Rachmaninov’s music and Pushkin’s verse – “напоминают мне одну другую жизнь и берег дальний” (“*they remind me of another life and far away shore*”).<sup>8</sup>

The second major musical text that begins in Act I, Scene 3 (1997 : 65) and reappears multiple times, through Act III, Scene 2 (1997 : 86, 124), is the famous duet of Violetta and Alfred from Verdi’s *La Traviata*.<sup>9</sup> However, Bulgakov makes an interesting change to the lyrics. Compare the following :

Verdi/Piave : (original Italian) Parigi o cara noi lasceremo, La vita uniti trascorreremo. De’ corsi affanni compenso avrai, La tua salute rifiorirà. Sospiro e luce tu mi sarai tutto il futuro ne arriderà. (We’ll leave Paris, my dearest, Together we’ll go through life. In reward for your past sorrows, You’ll bloom into health again. Breath of life, sunshine you’ll be to me, All the years to come will smile on us.)

Verdi/Piave : (standard Russian libretto translation of original Italian) Париж покинем, где так страдали, где было столько мук и печали; мир светлый счастья вновь к нам вернется в тихом приюте дальней страны. Там снова радость нам улыбнется, и наше горе забудет мы!

Bulgakov : “Покинем, покинем край, где мы так страдали...” (*We will abandon the land where we have suffered so terribly*)

Bulgakov repeats this specific musical passage three times throughout the play. All three times are associated with Obolyaninov and Zoya, and the final appearance of this aria near the end of the play is particularly interesting as it is sung by Mymra in the “play within the play” staged in Zoya’s apartment. If we examine the first two instances carefully, we see that they are (1) almost identical in presentation and (2) both are directly related to being in Paris by Christmas :

Зоя. Ах, Павлик, вас действительно нужно поместить в музей. А вы берите, берите. Пусть дадут. Каждая копейка дорога.

*Голос глухо и нежно где-то поет под рояль : “Покинем, покинем край, где мы так страдали...” Потом обрывается.*

*В Париж! К Рождеству мы будем иметь миллион франков, я вам ручаюсь. (1997 : 65)*

**Zoya : Oh, Pavlik, you should be put in a museum. You should take the money. Let them pay. Every penny counts.**

**A hollow and tender voice is singing somewhere with a piano : “We will abandon the land where we have suffered so terribly...” Then stops abruptly.**

**To Paris! By Christmas we will have one million francs, I guarantee it.**

...

Зоя. До Рождества только четыре месяца. К Рождеству вы свободны как птица, в кармане у вас виза и не сто пятьдесят червонцев, а втрое, вчетверо больше, я не буду контролировать вас и никто... никогда. Слышите, никто не узнает как Алла работала манекенщицей... Весной вы увидите Большие бульвары. На небе над Парижем весною сиреневый отсвет, точь-в-точь такой. (*Выбрасывает из шкафа сиреневую материю.*)

Голос под рояль поет глухо : “Покинем, покинем край, где мы так страдали...”

Знаю, знаю... В Париже любимый человек. (1997 : 85-6)

**Zoya : There are only four months until Christmas. By Christmas you will be free as a bird, and in your pocket you will have a visa and not just one hundred fifty gold coins, but three times, four times more. I will never control you and no one...ever will. Do you hear me? No one will find out that Alla worked as a model... In the spring, you will see the big avenues. In the spring there is a purple reflection in the Paris sky, just like this (gets out of the closet some purple fabric).**

**A hollow voice sings : “We will abandon the land where we have suffered so terribly...”**

**I know, I know...your beloved is in Paris.**

In all three instances, Bulgakov makes an important change to the original libretto. In *La Traviata*, Violetta and Alfred sing of leaving Paris, a place where they had suffered, and moving to a new place where they can be happy and healthy. In *ZK*, Zoya and Pavel talk of leaving *for* Paris to start a new life and leaving Moscow, a place where they have suffered. This significant *revision* is a key to revealing an entire network of connections between the musical texts and the theme of emigration. And it is not just any emigration, but emigration to Paris.

In fact, all of the artists mentioned by Bulgakov, whether they be performer or composer or both, had fates that involved emigration from their homelands (Chaliapin and Rachmaninov left Moscow in 1917 and had residences and summer homes in Paris, Liszt emigrated to Paris in 1823 with his family). Additionally, Liszt and Rachmaninov were known as two of the greatest pianists in the world in their respective centuries, both having very large hands. Obolyaninov is also a pianist.

The importance of Franz Liszt as a figure relevant to Bulgakov’s play is fascinating. There are several facts from Liszt’s biography that make Bulgakov’s choice quite compelling. For example, Liszt composed the famous *Faust-Symphonie* in 1854. (The importance of *Faust* [Goethe’s and Gounod’s] cannot be overestimated in Bulgakov’s *oeuvre*.) As Walker

states (Walker 2001 GMO : Liszt 16) :

Liszt had been introduced to Goethe's *Faust* by Berlioz in 1830, and had long nourished a desire to reflect that literary masterwork in music. (Appropriately, Liszt's score is dedicated to Berlioz.) For many years his itinerant lifestyle had placed one obstacle after another in his path, and had prevented the realization of his plan. Once settled in Weimar, however, a city which still resonated with Goethe's presence, the work took possession of him and he put the best of himself into it.

Frank Dawes (2001 GMO : Piano Duet) discusses Liszt's important contribution to piano duets, and here again there is an interesting connection to Gounod's *Faust* :

Liszt arranged his orchestral rhapsodies, all his symphonic poems and even *Via crucis*; and such intractable or seemingly intractable works as Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Verdi's *Requiem*, all Strauss' tone poems and symphonies, as well as complete operas (e.g. Wagner's entire *Ring* cycle and *Tristan*, Gounod's *Faust*), appeared in duet form. It was at one time possible to buy almost the complete works of Saint-Saëns as duets.<sup>10</sup>

But there is also a connection between Rachmaninov, Liszt and Gounod's *Faust* (see Rachmaninov's performance diary (<http://gmlile.com/rach-diary/listingroleD.aspx?d=true>)). Specifically, Rachmaninov performed the Gounod/Liszt Waltz from *Faust* many times, beginning in Moscow on January 30, 1892, with numerous performances in 1919-20, 1924-25 and 1938-39.

The connections between Rachmaninov and Liszt do not end here. There is a famous gramophone recording of Rachmaninov playing Liszt's *Rhapsodie Hongroise No. II* from April 23, 1919 recorded in New York by Edison Recordings (<https://musescore.com/node/86340>).<sup>11</sup> Both Rachmaninov and Liszt produced brilliant works inspired by Paganini, Chaliapin and Liszt have strong connections to Gounod's *Faust*, Rachmaninov and Chaliapin were very close friends, and all three have important connections to Paris. Gounod's *Faust* premiered in Paris on March 19, 1859 at the Théâtre Lyrique.

There is one other moment from Liszt's biography that is potentially interesting. Liszt was not admitted to the Paris Conservatory because he was a foreigner, and was interviewed unsuccessfully by the conservatory's director, Luigi Cherubini (Walker 2001 : Liszt 2). The similarity of the names Cherubini, who Walker notes was also "a foreigner," and Bulgakov's Chinese character Xeruvim/Cherubim is intriguing. Liszt performed in Kiev in February, 1847 and spent 3 months at Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein's home in Voronitsi/Woronince (autumn 1847 to January 1848) (Walker 2001 : Liszt 11).

Secondary Musical Texts in *Zoya's Apartment* : Chopin, Peterson, Radoshevskaya, Liturgical, and Folk Music

There are four more musical references that include specific lyrics

that occur once each : Karl Aleksandrovich Peterson's famous Christmas verse/song, *The Orphan* (*Сиротка*) (1997 : 65-66), the well-known liturgical piece, *Many Years* (*Многая лета*) (1997 : 74), Radoshevskaya's romance *Chrysanthemums* (*Хризантемы*) (1997 : 89), and the Russian folk song *Quarter Moon is Shining* (*Светит месяц*) (1997 : 96).<sup>12</sup> There is also a reference to the famous Gypsy folk song, *Two Guitars*, in Act III, Scene 2, where Lizan'ka is singing and Ametistov is playing the guitar, but with comical substitutions of the lyrics.<sup>13</sup>

Peterson's song is used to introduce Ametistov into the play in Act I, Scene 3 (1997 : 65-66). The title of the piece, *The Orphan*, is an interesting commentary on Ametistov and his questionable origins. This piece is played on a "broken-down piano" («под аккомпанемент разбитого фортепиано» [1997 : 65]); it also has a close connection to Christmas and is referred to in Russian as a *Christmas Verse* (*святочное стихотворение*). It is precisely the connection of this piece with Christmas that ties it into the usage of Verdi's *La Traviata*. The dialogue surrounding the appearance of Violetta and Alfredo's duet not only includes mention of running away to Paris, but doing it "by Christmas" (1997 : 65, 86 [examples given in previous section]).

Finally, a Chopin "Nocturne" is mentioned, but we do not know which one Bulgakov has in mind. There are two very interesting moments in Chopin's biography that suggest that it is Chopin himself who is most important in this reference and not the specific nocturne. First, Chopin emigrated from Poland in 1831, and while he was initially in Vienna, his destination was Paris (Michałowski & Samson : Chopin 2 *GMO*). Chopin, like Liszt and Rachmaninov, was a world-renowned pianist of the romantic tradition and child prodigy. Obolyaninov is playing Chopin's nocturne on piano with Ametistov on violin (Act II, Scene 2, 1997 : 95).

"Для Булгакова, как для Пушкина  
1830-х гг., культура неотделима от  
интимной, сокровенной жизни".  
- J. Lotman (1992b : I, 462)

### Home/Anti-Home/Homelessness (Дом/Антидом/Бездомье) in Musical and Verbal Text

Lotman's essays on Bulgakov clearly situate him in the tradition of Pushkin and Gogol. And one of Lotman's strongest examples of this connection is revealed in Bulgakov's use of what Lotman refers to as the opposition *home/anti-home*, which is one of the "universal themes of world folklore" (1992b : I. 457-463).<sup>14</sup> Lotman provides examples of Pushkin's focus on "home" and Gogol's focus on the contrast of *home/anti-home* and *homelessness*; and demonstrates how the "symbolism of *home/anti-home* becomes an organizing principle of all of [Bulgakov's] works" (1992b : I. 458).

Andrews (2003 : 74-77) argues in favor of expanding Lotman's

binary opposition of *home/anti-home* to an irreducible triadic relationship of *home/anti-home/homelessness*. Such a shift enriches the oppositional relationships between the three semiotic spaces, and also attributes more significance to *homelessness*, as both a *state* and a *process* (*ibid.*). Furthermore, a shift to triadic structures paves the way for yet another organizing principle of Bulgakov's artistic-textual space, namely the *road*.<sup>15</sup> As Andrews states (2003 : 76), "It is precisely through homelessness that the plane of spatial development shifts to the road and its various structural types. Here, Bulgakov's textual space is more of the nature of multiple planes as opposed to points or lines" (*ibid.*)

Another focus noted by Lotman is Bulgakov's use of what he calls "false home" (ложный дом) in *The Master and Margarita*. Examples from Bulgakov's last novel include communal apartments, the insane asylum (сумасшедший дом), the Griboedov House (Дом Грибоедова), Margarita's stately home (особняк, особнячок), Pilate's palace in *Jershalaim*, and even Hell. The false home is juxtaposed to the "true home", apartments where we hear the sounds of a piano (as opposed to a gramophone), and rooms of apartments where there are books, a fireplace or stove, and bronze lamps with shades, etc.<sup>16</sup> Lotman specifically identifies *Zoya's Apartment* as one of many Bulgakov plays and works whose central structure is built around the *home/anti-home* opposition (1992b : I. 462-3). Lotman also characterizes *ZK* at the "lowest point" on the curve of the quintessential "anti-home" (1992b : I. 463). This interpretation is not surprising when one includes an active reading of the musical texts. Clearly, the play opens with Mephistopheles' aria from Gounod's *Faust*, where he sings about human greed, golden idols and how Satan is leading the ball (see Appendix A).

The example of the sound of piano vs. gramophone is one of the contrasts that occurs frequently in *ZK*. It is only when we hear classical *fortepiano* music, see the sheet music from *Faust* and other operas (as in *Days of the Turbins*) that we have contact with the notion of home and, in the case of *Zoya's Apartment*, the remnants of a former *home*. The sounds of the broken-down piano and gramophone tell the reader that they are in a very different world in Moscow of the NEP period than we find the Turbin family in Kiev on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution.

If we bring together all of the musical textual examples that are found in *ZK* discussed above, it becomes clear that these musical images form a coherent and very compelling textual narrative. Whether we look at the composers themselves, the performers, the lyrics or the actual musical pieces, we consistently run into one of the "nameless" main characters of the play : Paris. Paris as a potential "new home", serving as an escape from the Moscow "anti-home". Paris as an artistic haven for aesthetic realization – the home of the premiere of Gounod's *Faust*, the city where Liszt, Chopin, Rachmaninov, Chaliapin performed and lived. Paris as a haven where we will once again celebrate Christmas.

(Consider Bulgakov's focus on Christmas and his refusal to agree to the Bolshevik law to abolish it in 1918.) Paris where loving couples can realize their dreams (Zoya and Obolyaninov) or be reunited with their loved ones (Alla and her beau).

The tragedy of Paris is emphasized by the appearance of Verdi's *La Traviata* and Bulgakov's modifications of the original lyrics. *Parigi o cara* is sung in the opera *La Traviata* as Violetta is dying. Alfredo and Violetta both know that they will never be able to leave Paris and move to a new land where they can be happy. This musical text belongs to Zoya and Obolyaninov in *ZK*. Zoya and Obolyaninov are not physically dying, as is Violetta. Their death is a spiritual one, where the life they are destined to live is one bound together with "homelessness" and "anti-homes" and not with a true, Bulgakovian "home". Obolyaninov will never enjoy the opportunity of playing his music in Paris. Thus, in the end, *Zoya's Apartment* is the prelude to the loss of home entirely, homelessness, a future of "wandering" (странствие) and a constant longing to emigrate.

Our analysis of the presence of music-as-text in *Zoya's Apartment* shows that it is through the musical texts that the reader can apprehend the true tragedy of Bulgakov's play – the longing for a "true home", a "home" that is profoundly given in Pushkin, and Bulgakov allows Pushkin once again to be the spokesperson for this "home" through Rachmaninov's heart-wrenching melody :

Не пой, красавица, при мне	<b>Sing no more, my lovely woman, in my presence</b>
Ты песен Грузии печальной	<b>Your sad songs of Georgia/Gruziya.</b>
Напоминают мне другую жизнь	<b>They remind me of another life(time)</b>
И берег дальной.	<b>And far-away shore.</b>

APPENDIX A : Music and Lyric Found in *Zoya's Apartment*

GOUNOD, C. (1859 [1958]). *Kuplety Mefistofelia iz opery "Faust"* [Mephistopheles' Verses from the Opera *Faust*]. P. Kalashnikov (Trans). Moscow : Gosudarstvennoe muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo,

МЕФИСТОФЕЛЬ:

На зем - ле весь род людской читт о -  
и - зол зо - ло - той во - лю

- дин ку мир свя - щен - ный, си ца -  
не ба пре - зи - ра - ет, на - ше -

На земле весь род людской  
Чтит один кумир священный,  
Он царит над всей вселенной,  
Тот кумир — телец золотой!  
В умилении сердечном  
Прославляя истукан  
Люди разных каст и стран  
Пляшут в круге бесконечном  
Окружая пьедестал,  
Окружая пьедестал!

**All people on the earth  
Worship the one holy idol,  
He rains over the entire universe,  
That idol is the golden calf!  
With tenderness in the heart,  
Glorifying the golden calf  
People of all casts and countries  
Dance in the eternal circle  
Surrounding the pedestal,  
Surrounding the pedestal!**

Сатана там правит бал,  
Там правит бал!  
Сатана там правит бал,  
Там правит бал!

**There, Satan conducts the  
ball, conducts the ball!  
There, Satan conducts the  
ball, conducts the ball!**

Этот идол золотой  
Волю неба презирает,  
Насмехаясь изменяет  
Он небес закон святой!

**This golden idol  
Despises the will of heaven,  
Laughingly, he changes the holy law  
of the heavens!**

В угождение богу злата  
 Край на край встаёт войной;  
 И людская кровь рекой  
 По клинку течёт булата!  
 Люди гибнут за металл,  
 Люди гибнут за металл!

**To please the god of gold  
 Regions fight with each other  
 And human blood like a river  
 Flows on the blade of steel  
 People perish for the metal,  
 People perish for the metal!**

*The Orphan/Сиротка*

PETERSON, K.A. (1843/1997). "Sirotkа". In *Russkaja poezija det'am*, (Russian Poetry for Children) Vol. 1 : 148-149. E.O. Putilova (Ed.). Saint Petersburg : Akademičeskij projekt.

Вечер был, сверкали звёзды;  
 На дворе мороз трещал;  
 Шёл по улице малютка –  
 Посинел и весь дрожал.

**Evening it was, the stars were sparkling;  
 Frost was crackling on the street;  
 A little child was walking –  
 He was shivering and blue from the cold.**

– Боже! – говорил малютка, –  
 Я прозяб и есть хочу;  
 Кто ж согреет и накормит,  
 Боже добрый, сироту?

**Lord! – said the little child,–  
 I am cold and hungry;  
 Who is going to warm and feed,  
 Kind Lord, the orphan?**

Шла дорогой той старушка –  
 Услыхала сироту;  
 Приютила и согрела  
 И поесть дала ему;

**An old woman was walking on the same street –  
 She heard the orphan;  
 Offered him shelter, warmed him  
 And gave him food;**

Положила спать в постельку.  
 – Как тепло! – промолвил он.  
 Запер глазки... улыбнулся...  
 И заснул... спокойный сон!

**She put him to bed.  
 How warm! – he said.  
 He closed his eyes...smiled  
 And fell asleep...calm sleep!**

Бог и птичку в поле кормит,  
 И кропит росой цветок,  
 Бесприютного сиротку  
 Также не оставит Бог!

**God feeds even a bird in the field,  
 And sprinkles dew on the flower,  
 God will also not leave  
 A homeless orphan!**



LISZT, F. (1847 [2005]). *Ungarische Rhapsodie Nr. 2* [Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2]. Munich : G. Henle.

**RHAPSODIE HONGROISE N° II.**

Revised, fingered & CADENZA by A. D. MILLS. FR. LISZT.

Lento a capriccio.

PIANO.

*marcato.* *poco rit.* *piu ritentato.*

LASSAN.  
Andante mesto. *molto espresso.*

*p* *accompagnamento pesante.*

RACHMANINOV, S. (1893 [1969]). *Ne poi, krasavitsa...* [Sing not Ome, Beautiful Maiden...]. Opus 4, no.4. Moscow : Muzyka.

[a tempo] *ten.*

Но по-и-ра-са-ви-ца, при

*rit.* *ppp*

*dim.* *pp* *ten.*

мне ты песен Гру-зи-и по-чуж-дой на-по-ми-

Не пой, красавица, при мне	<b>Sing no more, my lovely woman, in my presence</b>
Ты песен Грузии печальной :	<b>Your sad songs of Georgia/Gruziya :</b>
Напоминают мне оне	<b>They remind me of another life (time)</b>
Другую жизнь и берег дальный.	<b>And far away shore.</b>

Увы! напоминают мне  
Твои жестокие напевы  
И степь, и ночь — и при луне  
Черты далекой, бедной девы!..

**Alas! Your cruel songs  
Remind me  
The steppe, and night and by moonlight  
Traces of a distant, poor maiden!...**

Я призрак милый, роковой,  
Тебя увидев, забываю;  
Но ты поешь — и предо мной  
Его я вновь воображаю.

**I forget this dear fatal phantom  
When I see you;  
But when you sing,  
I imagine it before me again.**

Не пой красавица, при мне  
Ты песен Грузии печальной :  
Напоминают мне оне  
Другую жизнь и берег дальный

**Sing no more, my lovely woman, in my presence  
Your sad songs of Georgia/Gruziya :  
They remind me of another life (time)  
And far away shore.**

VERDI, G. (1983). *Traviata*. Clavier with literary redaction of Russian translation by A. Efremenkov. Moskva : Muzyka.

Andante mosso (♩ = 112) *dolciss. a mezza voce*

А. Па-риж по-ки-ном,  
А. Га-ри-го, са-ра,

А. где так стра-да-ли, где бы-ло столь-ко мук и пе-  
А. нот та-е-ге-но, та-ви-там-ни-и та-ко-ре-

А. ча-ли, мнр овет-ный сча-сть-я вновь к нам вор-нет-ся  
А. ге-но... де' со-зи-а-фан-ни сон-рен, та-да-ва-и,

*p*

*stacc. sempre*

Париж покинем, где так страдали,	<b>We shall leave Paris, where we have suffered,</b>
Где было столько мук и печали,	<b>Where there was so much torment and sorrow.</b>
Мир светлый счастья вновь к нам вернётся	<b>The world of happiness will come back to us</b>
В тихом приюте дальней страны!	<b>In a quiet refuge of a far-away country!</b>
Там снова радость нам улыбнётся	<b>There, joy will smile at us again,</b>
И наше горе забудем мы!	<b>And we will forget our grieving!</b>

BORTNIANSKY, D. (arr. 1810s [2005]). *Mnogaia leta* [Many Years]. In *The Divine Liturgy* : 459-460. David Drillock (Ed.). Crestwood, N.Y. : St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

*Svetit mes'ac* (Shining Moon). In *Russkie narodnye pesni : melodii i teksty* [Russian folk songs : melodies and texts]. Moscow : Muzyka (1987).

## Notes

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Russians are ours.
2. Lotman defines the semiosphere as “the semiotic space necessary for the existence and functioning of languages, not the sum total of different languages; in a sense the semiosphere has a prior existence and is in constant interaction with languages[...] a generator of information (1990 : 123, 127). For an in-depth discussion of the semiosphere, see Andrews 2003 : 42-69.
3. A more literal translation of *обломок*, which might be more helpful in this context, is *a broken off bit/ piece*. This gives a more accurate representation of Lotman's idea, where this “broken off bit” of another text “intrudes” into the larger text.
4. The 1935 version of the play includes the notation “*трагический фарс*” (a tragic farce) under the title. This is not the case for the 1926 version. It is also relevant

- to note that the 1935 version is shorter, with fewer characters and with several scenes changed or deleted entirely (Proffer 1984 : 226), the central musical texts of Gounod, Rachmaninov, Verdi and Peterson discussed in this analysis remain.
5. The reintroduction of opera performances in the original languages occurred in 2007 in the Russian Federation.
  6. There are approximately 50 musical versions of this Pushkin verse by very distinguished composers, including Rimsky-Korsakov, Balakirev, Glinka, A. Glyazunov, A. Rubiństein. However, Bulgakov chose Rachmaninov for his play. As the analysis will show, this was not an accident.
  7. Note the older form of “they” (о́не) given in the third act text. This is the original form from Pushkin’s poem and from Rachmaninov’s original text, but the modern Russian form (они́) is sometimes substituted in modern performances of the piece. Another substitution that Bulgakov makes is the ending of the adjectival form *дальной* (original form) to *дальний* (modern Russian form). The original form is most often sung in contemporary renditions of this piece. It is also important to note that Obolyanin in one instance changes one of the words to another with a similar meaning (*другую жизнь/иную жизнь*) [another life].
  8. Pushkin’s verse is found in many of Bulgakov’s works. In some cases, Bulgakov names Pushkin overtly, but there are many instances where Pushkin’s verses occur as lyric to musical texts are included with no mention of Pushkin himself. One of the most powerful examples of this is found in the play, *Day of the Turbins* : Скажи мне, кудесник, любимец богов.... (Tell me, magician, the one favored by the Gods...)
  9. The context of Violetta and Alfredo’s duet is important in understanding Bulgakov’s use of the text. In *La Traviata*, Violetta is on her death bed when Alfredo returns to her and sings the aria “Parigi o caro”. He sings with her of a future that they both know they will never have.
  10. Frank Dawes (2001) also notes that Rachmaninov, like Liszt, also arranged piano duets for educational value.
  11. For a complete listing of all of Rachmaninov’s performances, see <http://gmlile.com/rachdiary/index.aspx>.
  12. The folk song “Светит месяц” “The Waning Crescent Moon is Shining” also occurs in other works by Bulgakov. It is especially interesting in the novella, *A Dog’s Heart/Соба́чье се́рдце*, and is associated with Bulgakov’s imagery of “anti-home”.
  13. Textual references to types of music also occur and include the following types : marches, fox trot (on and off over much of Act III), and the waltz.
  14. For an expansion of this opposition and the inclusion of “homelessness” as a full partner in constructing a triadic model with “home” and “anti-home”, see Andrews 2003 : 74-92.
  15. Lotman (1992b : I. 414-421) offers four basic spatial characteristics by which any artistic space may be defined, and they are *point*, *line*, *plane*, and *volume*. Examples of these different types noted in Lotman come from Gogol and Bulgakov (*ibid.*). Lotman also makes a distinction between different types of *road – doroga/doroga* (as a certain type of artistic space) and *путь/put’* (as “the realization [complete or incomplete] or non-realization of *doroga*” (1992b : I. 445).
  16. Lotman also talks about the bronze lamp with a lampshade and books that smell like chocolate in reference to the play, *Days of the Turbins* (Дни Турбинных). *Days of the Turbins* was playing in Stanislavsky’s MXAT when *Zoya’s Apartment* premieres in the Vaxtangov Theatre on October 28, 1926 (Petelin 2007 : 21).

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## Abstract

The present article is a modest introduction to a larger theme that analyzes the use of music as *text* in the plays, short stories and novels of Mixail Bulgakov. The important contribution of Juri Lotman's theoretical work on artistic space, the semiosphere, and the role of incorporating "texts within texts" (текст в тексте) is fundamental to our explication of the process of understanding Bulgakov's use of *music* as text in a variety of its manifestations, resulting in an integrated and full-bodied textual structure that generates meanings critical to the works in which it is embedded. This

analysis will focus on defining what “music as text” is for Bulgakov and specifically consider the use of music in the play, *Zoya’s Apartment* (Зойкина квартира).

**Keywords** : Bulgakov; Music as Text; Culture Text; Lotman; *Zoya’s Apartment*.

## Résumé

Cet article est une modeste introduction à une problématique de recherche plus vaste qui porte sur la “mise en texte” de la musique dans l’oeuvre littéraire et théâtrale de Mikhaïl Boulgakov. Ce projet s’inspire des travaux de Juri Lotman, dont les contributions sur l’espace artistique, la sémiosphère, et sur les rapports d’intégration textuelles (intégration d’un texte au sein d’un autre texte), nous aident à bien cerner les différentes manifestations d’une “textualisation” de la musique chez Boulgakov. L’étude de ce phénomène permet de mettre au jour une structure textuelle complexe alors que l’intégration de la musique ajoute une strate sémantique au texte qui l’accueille. Pour les fins du présent article nous portons notre attention sur la pièce *L’appartement de Zoya*.

**Mots-clés** : Bulgakov; musique comme texte; culture comme texte; Lotman; *L’appartement de Zoya*.

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