

**NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S USE OF THE *BYLINY*
(RUSSIAN ORAL EPIC NARRATIVES) IN HIS OPERA
*SADKO***

Brian Reeve, MA

**Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

September 2005





IMAGING SERVICES NORTH

Boston Spa, Wetherby
West Yorkshire, LS23 7BQ
www.bl.uk

UNABLE TO COPY AT THE REQUEST OF THE UNIVERSITY

Appendix II

Appendix III

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This thesis analyses the background in folk music, folk literature and folk art of Rimsky-Korsakov's sixth opera *Sadko* (1897). Attention is especially focused on the folk genre of the *bylina*, or Russian legendary and mythical oral epic narrative, from the field of which, uniquely in Russian opera, the plot of the opera is drawn. Furthermore, many incidental details of libretto and staging are derived from these epics, and, too, lengthy vocal extracts declaimed in the style of a typical Russian peasant bard. Rimsky-Korsakov also drew, however, on many other genres of folk music and folk art for his opera, and this thesis demonstrates that there is hardly one detail of this work, including cast list and stage directions, which does not derive from the Russian folk tradition. However, some critics have maintained that the measured oral unfolding of an epic narrative does not lend itself readily to adaptation for the stage, and that there are long periods of stasis in the action of the opera. The thesis rebuts this assertion by examining Rimsky-Korsakov's artistic and aesthetic conceptions, and by demonstrating that, through his adaptation of such epic material for the musical theatre, the composer was attempting to create a new genre of stage art, in which the conventional dramatic canons were to be set aside.

This thesis, therefore, firstly analyses the genre of the *bylina* in detail, then studies Rimsky-Korsakov's background in the culture of his period, which led to his profound immersion in Russian folk culture. Subsequent to this, the other major sources of the opera *Sadko* are examined, as are Rimsky-Korsakov's collaboration with Mamontov's Private Opera Company, which premiered this work, owing to the composer's difficulties with the Imperial Theatres. Following an analysis of the score and libretto to ascertain how the composer incorporated his sources into his work, the thesis concludes with an evaluation of the alleged dramatic weakness and static quality of the score, and an analysis of whether the attempt to transfer an

oral linear narrative to the stage was in fact successful.

SYSTEM OF CITATION AND TRANSLITERATION USED THROUGHOUT THE THESIS

Generally speaking, full sourcing for any reference - that is, author's surname and initials, title, place of publication, publisher, date, page number - is given in full in the footnotes on first citation; any subsequent use of a reference is given by author surname alone, followed by page number. When there is more than one author with the same surname - such as Miller V, or O, - the initial too is given in all subsequent references to any text. A few authors such as Propp and Speranskii have more than one work cited; when this occurs, the work will be referred to in the footnotes, after the first reference, by author-name and date of publication.

All translations are by the writer of this thesis, including extracts from works which have already been translated into English, either wholly, such as Rimsky-Korsakov's memoirs, or in part, such as Iastrebtsev's reminiscences of the composer.

The transliteration of titles from Russian which were first published before the orthographic reform of 1918, and then in further editions subsequent to this reform, presents certain problems of consistency, both in terms of orthography and grammar. This also applies to authors' names. For example, on the title-page of the first edition of Gil'ferding's collection of epics of 1873, the title and collector's name are rendered: *Onezhskiiia byliny, zapisannia Alexandrom Thedorovichem Gil'ferdingom* etc (the initial letter of the middle name is the now obsolete letter *Ѣ*). However, the third edition of 1949-51 is entitled *Onezhskie byliny, zapisannye Alexandrom Fedorovichem Gil'ferdingom* etc. Similarly, on the title page of the first edition of Bessonov's collection of religious epics (1861-63), the author's name is rendered Bezsonov; however, of course, post-1918 editions print the name with an 's' replacing the 'z'.

Wherever these types of inconsistency have occurred, the post-1918 spelling has been tacitly

adhered to throughout. However, if no edition exists post-1918, or if no reference is made to such an edition in this thesis, the original spellings are maintained.

Furthermore, it is customary to indicate place of publication, and name of publishing house, for any item in a bibliography on first citation. However, many of the early collections of Russian folk-songs were published over a period of several years in numerous instalments (*vypuski*), often in different towns. Moreover, both these collections, and many of the scholarly articles dealing with them, seem to have been published privately, in 'print-shops' (*tipografii*), rather than by large-scale commercial publishers. For instance, Rybnikov's collection was published between 1861 and 1867, in four instalments, at different print-shops, in different locations. Where this piecemeal or private publication has occurred, names of print-shops and places of publication have been omitted.

Further confusion arises when these 'instalments' were subsequently collated by publishers or libraries into 'volumes' (*tomy*) which were then further combined into 'parts' (*chasti*) - or vice-versa. For instance, we may find two volumes, the first marked *tom I, chast' I* (volume I, part I), and the second *tom I, chast' 2*; OR the books may be designated *chast' I, tom I*, or *chast I, tom 2*. Where this type of inconsistency has occurred, the particular terminology has simply been retained, since to alter it to consistency would have produced confusion for any future readers searching for the volumes.

Generally, the system of transliteration from Russian used in this thesis has been that of the British Library post-1975.¹ It is the usual practice in transliterating Russian into English to render both 'e' and 'ë' by the use of 'e', since usually no distinction is made between these two letters in Russian language volumes. However, frequently throughout our thesis we have employed 'ë' to render the latter, since even in Russian-language collections of folk-songs

¹ 'Transliteration of Cyrillic'; *Humanities Reader Guide* No 7 (London: British Library, 1999).

(including modern editions), this letter is commonly printed in full to indicate the correct pronunciation of dialect and archaic words, such as *sině morě* ('blue sea'), and of obsolete personal names such as 'Khotěn' and 'Plěnko'. Where Russian-language editions have felt the need for this letter to be printed in full, we too have transliterated it as such.

However, Russian names which have passed into English usage in a different rendering, and have become established, such as 'Rimsky-Korsakov', 'Tchaikovsky', or 'Cesar Cui' have been left in the familiar form.

The rendering 'Musorgsky' is adhered to in this thesis, since it is now considered preferable to earlier illogical forms such as 'Mussorgsky', 'Moussorgsky', etc.

Familiar non-Russian names found in Russian sources are given their original spelling, rather than transliterated - eg, Franz Liszt rather than Frants List, Mozart rather than Motsart, and Richard Wagner rather than Rikhard Vagner.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANSSSR *Akademiia Nauk Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik* (from 1991 the RAN - see below).

BLSA British Library Sound Archive (till Oct 2003, NSA: National Sound Archive), London, UK.

GMI *Gosudarstvennoe muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo*.

ed(s). editor(s).

edn(s). edition(s).

IAN *Imperatorskaia Akademiia Nauk*.

NSA National Sound Archive (British Library, London). (See BLSA above).

RAN *Rossiiskaia Akademiia Nauk*.

RMG *Rusaskaia muzykal'naia gazeta*.

SM *Sovetskaia muzyka*.

NOTES

(1)

Dates in Russia in the 19th century were 12 days behind those of the west, therefore on the few occasions on which Russian dates are mentioned in the text, appropriate adjustment should be made to arrive at the current date in the west. For example, the premiere of *Sadko* was given on 26th December 1897 Russian Style, 7th January 1898 Western Style. Until 1918, dates in the 20th century were 13 days behind the west.

(2) The frontispiece to this thesis, showing a *skomorokh*, or Russian strolling player, playing a *gusli*, prefaced both the 1897 full score and piano reduction of the opera *Sadko* (see page 55 for full discussion).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge my gratitude here to Dr Cynthia Marsh, of the Department of Russian, and Dr Robert Adlington, Department of Music, University of Nottingham. Also I wish to express my gratitude to the staff of the British Library and of Cambridge University Library.

О ПЕЧА-БЫТИНА



СВЯТЫЙ КАРТИНЪ
ПРИМСКАГО-КОРСЯКОВА

Д. М. П. БѢЛЫХЪ ВЪ ЛЕЙПЦИГѢ

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	11-21
--------------	-------

SECTIONS

(1) THE <i>BYLINA</i> : DEFINITION, REDISCOVERY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, TYPOLOGY, AND ANALYSIS OF POETICS	22-44
(2) THE ORIGINAL SINGERS AND DISSEMINATORS OF THE <i>STARINY</i> : THE <i>SKOMOROKHI</i> AND <i>KALIKI PEREKHOZHIE</i> ; THE LITERARY AND MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE EPICS	45-83
(3) MAJOR INFLUENCES ON RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S COMPOSITIONAL AESTHETIC	84-103
(4) THE SOURCES OF RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S OPERA <i>SADKO</i>	104-128
(5) THE MOSCOW PRIVATE THEATRE, AND ITS ROLE IN CREATING THE OPERA- <i>BYLINA SADKO</i>	129-136
(6) RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S ADAPTATION OF HIS FOLK SOURCES FOR HIS OPERA- <i>BYLINA SADKO</i>	137-156
(7) DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE FOLK SOURCES OF THE MUSIC AND	

LIBRETTO OF *SADKO*

157-281

(8) SUMMARY, CONSIDERATIONS, REFLECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS

282-307

APPENDICES

(I) SYNOPSIS OF RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S OPERA *SADKO* 309-313(II) FULL RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH TEXTS OF STAGE DIRECTIONS
DEALT WITH IN THE THESIS 314-321(III) MUSICAL EXAMPLES REFERRED TO IN TEXT OF
THESIS 322-351(IV) SOURCES OF MAJOR VARIANTS OF *BYLINA SADKO* 352(V) RUSSIAN OPERAS MENTIONED IN THE THESIS, INCLUDING ALL
OF RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S COMPLETED WORKS IN THE GENRE
353-355

BIBLIOGRAPHY 356-380

INTRODUCTION

*'The trouble [with Rimsky-Korsakov's operas] has always been the amount of sub-text required for full comprehension. ... His work is a semiotician's dream, and a critic's nightmare.'*¹

On 26th December 1897 the premiere was given, at the Mamontov Private Opera Theatre in Moscow, of Rimsky-Korsakov's sixth opera *Sadko*, the libretto of which was based on certain of the *byliny*, or Russian oral epic narratives. This opera recounted the adventures of the folk musician Sadko in ancient Novgorod and on the bed of the sea, in the *Podvodnoe Tsarstvo*, or 'Underwater Realm'.² Rimsky-Korsakov entitled this work '*Sadko - opera-bylina*', and the conclusion might be drawn that this title is intended purely to signal the opera's derivation from these epics. However, we shall demonstrate in this thesis that the composer wished to signify by this title that the work was a new type of musical stage production altogether, which derived its apparent lack of action and slow forward movement from folk- and literary epic, rather than conventional stage or dramatic, models.

Although this premiere, according to Rimsky-Korsakov in his memoirs, '*.... u publiki imela gromadnyi uspekh ...*'³ and also achieved a very favourable critical response,⁴ subsequent

¹ Taruskin, Richard, 'Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay Andreyevich' *New Grove Dictionary of Opera* ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992) III, 1331-1341 (1337).

² A detailed synopsis of this opera is given in Appendix One of this thesis.

³ '... had a tremendous success with the public ...'. Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., ed. A. V. Ossovskii, *Letopis' moei muzykal'noi zhizni* (Moscow: 'GMI' 1955), p. 9. This is volume I of: N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii (Literaturnye proizvedeniia i perepiska)*, 8 vols. ed. A. V. Ossovskii (Moscow: 'GMI', 1955-1982). This will subsequently be referred to as: (literary) *Poln. sob. soch.*

⁴ Eg Tzesar' Kiui (normally transliterated as Cesar Cui), review in *Novosti i birzhevaia gazeta*, no 544, 24 Feb 1898; quoted in Solovtsov, A. A., *Zhizn' i tvorchestvo N. A. Rimskogo-Korsakova* (Moscow: 'Izdatel'stvo muzyki', 1964), p. 391. See also Rimsky-Korsakov, A. N., *N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov - zhizn' i tvorchestvo*, 5 vols (Moscow: 'GMI', 1933-1946); vol 4 (1937) pp. 95-96.

evaluation, by both Russian and British critics, has been mixed. While generally extolling the high quality of the music, commentators have pointed to what V. A. Tsukkerman calls the *slabyi dramatizm* ('poor dramatic quality') of the work.¹ Tsukkerman draws particular attention to the long-drawn-out and static quality of some episodes, and to the extraordinary and highly improbable speed of others.

These incongruities would seem to be a result of the fact that the oral epic is a slow-moving linear form, in which descriptive details are disclosed progressively by the narrator to set the scene for the next stage of the story; yet, in a stage work, when the curtain rises at the commencement of an act or scene, all such details are visible instantly, apparently implying that 'all' that is left within that particular section of the work is such forward movement of the plot, which would have to take place immediately and continuously to avoid stasis. Therefore the two genres of epic and stage drama would seem to be fundamentally opposed in intention and creative devices, and a literal transposition of epic to stage, with leisurely progression from detail to detail and incident to incident, would appear to be a misguided and unfeasible project.

None of the extant literature deals with this problem in detail, and often displays little awareness of the characteristics of the epic forms from which the composer principally drew his libretto, or how he was attempting to transmute them into a stage work. The major biographies and memoirs of Rimsky-Korsakov's life – all of them originally in Russian – deal with events throughout the composer's life, or else during a certain period; individual operas such as *Sadko* are treated inevitably in a few pages or a short chapter (see Bibliography, section 3, pp. 358-359).

¹ Tsukkerman, V. A., 'O s'uzhete i muzykal'nom iazyke opery Rimskogo-Korsakova 'Sadko', *Sovetskaia muzyka* (Moscow: 'Sovetskii kompozitor'), no 3 (March) 1933, pp. 49-73, esp. 72-73. For a highly critical British perspective on the music see Abraham, G., *Studies in Russian Music* (London: William Reeves, 1969), chap xi, 'Sadko', pp. 221-245. On pages 238-239 Abraham talks of Rimsky-Korsakov's 'poverty of invention' and his 'tendency to repeat [an idea] unmercifully with little variation'. These, Abraham claims, are ubiquitous features of the composer's style, which are exemplified in *Sadko*.

As demonstrated further in this introduction, and in our concluding Section (Eight), even Russians who were sympathetic to the composer and his music frequently seemed to be unfamiliar with the epic sources of *Sadko*, leading to puzzlement over the form of the opera-*bylina* (see Bibliography, section 2, pp. 357-358), and no full-length detailed study has ever been attempted of the opera's sources or background in Russian or English.

The author of this thesis has for many years been involved in study of the Russian epic narratives, and Russian folk-literature and -lore in general; furthermore he has studied in detail 19th-century Russian culture, and principally the music of Rimsky-Korsakov. Accordingly this thesis is, we believe, the first full-length scholarly examination of the opera *Sadko* – the cultural and historical background, the history of its composition, and its musical and textual sources in the Russian folk background – principally oral epic narrative.¹

Throughout this thesis, we shall argue that the 'poor dramatic quality' cited on page 12 is precisely the result of Rimsky-Korsakov's adherence to the narrative structure and poetic conventions of Russian oral epic, and of his attempts to imitate in the opera the means by which the *skaziteli* (declaimers of epic narratives) would achieve their effects. Furthermore, he insisted throughout his artistic career that opera was a specific type of artistic production, possessing its own aesthetic and its own dramatic laws, distinguishing it from the aesthetic and laws of the dramatic theatre.² He stressed repeatedly that the music of an opera was more

¹ It should be noted here that, although we analyse the text of the opera extremely thoroughly, and discuss the origin of every reference in folk literature, and also examine how it contributes to the story of the opera, we do not enter into a similar analysis of the numerous quotations from folk music. We point out their occurrence and origin, but we do not examine the typical melodic and harmonic characteristics of Russian folk music in depth, nor do we discuss the adaptation by the composer of these extracts of folk music, to Western 'art-music' harmony and compositional conventions.

² Ossovskii, A. V., 'N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov - khudozhnik-myslitel' ' (in) Ossovskii, *Vospominaniia, Issledovaniia* (Leningrad: 'Muzyka', 1968) pp. 275-341 (p. 328). Ossovskii knew Rimsky-Korsakov from the late 1880s to the latter's death in 1908, and his reminiscences are not precisely dated, but are composed of general impressions recorded many years later. We shall deal in more detail with the composer's aesthetic views in Section Three.

important than the action, and he repeated this point in the prefaces to all his operas starting from his fourth, *Mlada*, (1890), including *Sadko* (1897). In the preface to his ninth opera *Serviliia*, premièred in 1902, he specifically forbade in performance any 'resources considered as dramatic, but lying outside the boundaries of musical art, such as whispering, laughing, shouting, and so on; the artists, when not singing, should not distract the audience's attention by superfluous acting and movements'.¹ According to Rimsky-Korsakov's pupil and associate Ossovskii (1871-1957), the composer was resolutely opposed to naturalism in any genre of art.²

Following the first few performances of *Sadko* in 1897-8, those critics who formed part of Rimsky-Korsakov's circle, and had long known his aesthetic views, reacted sympathetically to the unconventional dramaturgy of the work, but others, who seemed to be unfamiliar with the epic sources, displayed profound bewilderment. These reviews will be treated in more detail in Section Eight, both as regards their observations on the music of the opera, and also upon the production, and the highly original stage sets. We shall simply note here that Cui described the wildly enthusiastic public response at every performance, and that N. D. Kashkin called the opera the greatest embodiment of the Russian national folk spirit since Glinka, and utterly unique – an apotheosis of Russian song from beginning to end.³ Furthermore, in a later article, Kashkin informs us that a number of items in the opera were encored, and, at the third performance – the first he was able to attend – the composer was consistently the recipient of

¹ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A. 'Vmesto predisloviia', ('In place of a Foreword') Item 9, in *Sadko - opera-bylina v semi kartinakh*, full score (Leipzig: M. P. Belaieff, 1897). Edn.: 3 vols. (a, b, v, in Russian; hereinafter 'vol 6, a, b, or c'), ed. A. L. Lokshin (Moscow, Leningrad: 'GMI', 1952). These volumes form part 6 of the 50-part full collection of the composer's musical works (*Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*) issued by the same publisher between 1946 and 1970. This is not to be confused with the full edition of the composer's literary works and letters referred to in note 3, page 9. The full score of the opera *Serviliia* forms vol 11 (2 parts) (1964, ed. G. V. Kirkor) of this full edition, and the above ref. is from 11a, 'Zamechaniia ob ispolnenii' (no page no.).

For a complete list of Rimsky-Korsakov's operas, and of other significant Russian operas of the 19th century, see Appendix V of this thesis.

² Ossovskii, *Vospominaniia*, p. 288.

³ Cui, in Solovtsov, *Zhizn'*, p. 391. Kashkin N. D., '*Russkoe Iskusstvo*', 1897, no 357, quoted Gozenpud, A. A., *Russkii opernyi teatr na rubezhe xix-xx vekov i F. Shaliapin (1890-1904)* (Leningrad: 'Muzyka' 1974) p. 176. See this latter publication (*ibid*) for other excellent reviews of *Sadko*.

spontaneous applause, and was called out on stage after the first and third tableaux.

However, even this sympathetic critic, in this later article, displays a lack of understanding both of the composer's aesthetic views, and of the work's sources. He observes that the overall narrative thread linking the tableaux is weak, (although the *music* presents a 'rare coherence as a whole'), and he dismisses the 'Songs of the Three Foreign Merchants' from the conclusion of Tableau Four as an utterly irrelevant 'international exhibition'.¹ However, we shall demonstrate in this thesis that these songs also derive their subject-matter from ancient Russian sources, and are an integral part of the 'folk-lore background' of the opera.

This lack of understanding of the work was demonstrated most strongly by M. M. Ivanov.² He compared *Sadko* unfavourably with Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelungs*, and Rimsky-Korsakov's associate and mentor, Vladimir Stasov, in an article entitled 'A Laughable Musical Fault-finder', accused Ivanov of being totally uninformed on the *byliny*, of being ignorant of Russian history, and of not realising that Rimsky-Korsakov had not set out to dramatise a German legend, but to write a Russian epic saga, with its own special forms of expression.³

Even some sympathetic Russian critics of *Sadko*, therefore, seemed not to be completely familiar with the epic sources of the opera, nor with the narrative conventions, structure, and world-view, of the Russian epos. Section Two of this thesis will accordingly be devoted to defining the *bylina*, analysing its structure and poetics, and describing its range and subject-matter, so that an understanding may be gained of the manner in which these relate to the opera, and to Rimsky-Korsakov's attempt to create an original art form - an *opera-bylina* - with - in Stasov's formulation - 'its own special forms of expression'. This will follow an account

¹ Kashkin, N. D., 'Sadko - opera-bylina v semi deistviakh', *Russkoe obozrenie*, (Moscow), Jan 1898, pp 563-577 (p. 573).

² Ivanov, M. M., 'Sadko - opera-bylina N. Rimskogo-Korsakova v semi kartinakh', *Novoe vremia*, no. 7906, 2 March 1898. Not seen by us - known only from Stasov's attack on it (see below).

³ Stasov, V. V., 'Umoritel'nyi muzykal'nyi kritikan', *Novosti i birzhevaia gazeta*, no 61, 3 March 1898. Repr. Stasov, V. V., *Stat'i o Rimskom-Korsakove*, (Moscow: 'GMI', 1953) pp. 62-70 (p. 65).

(Section One) of the history of the rediscovery of Russian oral narrative in the mid-19th century in Russia's far north, and of the characteristics of the people who sang these tales, insofar as this is relevant to Rimsky-Korsakov's use of epic subject matter in *Sadko*. The musicologist B. V. Asaf'ev maintains that the major defining characteristic of Rimsky-Korsakov's operas is '*postoiannoe oshchutimoe prisutstvie rapsoda - skazitelia, pevtsa, chi'i veshchie usta 'znaiut' uzhe khod veshchei i spokojno-velichavo o nikh povestvuiut*'.¹ Rimsky-Korsakov saw at least one of these folk-bards perform when several of them visited St Petersburg and Moscow in the early 1890s, just before he commenced work on his opera-*bylina*.

In *Sadko* Rimsky-Korsakov employed not only the *bylina* strand of Russian folk epic creativity, but also incorporated extracts from the *dukhovnye stikhi* and *skomoroshina*.² This too is in imitation of the practices of both the singers of *byliny*, and of the performers of these other types of narrative chant, for whom, very often, figures from Scripture or the Orthodox religious tradition would appear in the *byliny*, and sometimes even be described as *bogatyri*, or epic heroes.³ Therefore, in Section Two of this thesis, besides analysing the poetics of the *byliny*, we shall also briefly describe these other epic forms, and the groups of singers principally associated with them, since the composer allots substantial incidental roles to them in his opera-*bylina*. This second Section will conclude with a description of the melodic lines of the

¹ '..... the constant palpable presence of a rhapsode – a declaimer of epics, a singer, whose prophetic lips already 'know' the course of events, and which relate them serenely and majestically.' See Asaf'ev, B. V., 'Muzyka Rimskogo-Korsakova v aspekte narodno-poeticheskoi slavianskoi kul'tury i mifologii', *Sovetskaia muzyka*, (Moscow: 'Sovetskii Kompozitor') 1946, no 7, pp. 67-79 (p. 76). Kawabata points out that this underlying narrative voice also extends to such orchestral works as *Sheherazade*, in which harp arpeggios represent the voice of the bard telling the story of the Sultan and Sheherazade, while the solo violin plays the part of Sheherazade narrating her nightly stories to her husband (Kawabata, Maiko, 'The Narrating Voice in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade*', *Women & Music*, vol 4, (2000), pp. 18-39).

² The *dukhovnye stikhi* or 'religious verses' were songs sung by wandering pilgrims or cripples to earn a living, and ranged from long narratives recording episodes from scripture, to shorter exhortatory verses giving counsel on how to live a righteous life. The *skomoroshina* were humorous, and frequently scatological, songs, sung to amuse their audience by the *skomorokhi*, or strolling players of old Russia (see Section Two for full account of the *skomorokhi*).

³ Incidentally, in some of the original *byliny* concerning *Sadko*, St Nicholas of Myra appears, and Rimsky-Korsakov imitated this usage in his opera-*bylina*. This role will be examined in Section Seven of this thesis.

Russian epics, and of the favoured instrument of folk-bards in ancient Russia, the *gusli*. In accordance with Russian operatic tradition, Rimsky-Korsakov imitates this folk instrument throughout *Sadko* by means of chords and arpeggios on harp and piano.

Section Three will be devoted to an examination of the factors in the composer's psychological and historical background which led him to compose a work based on the Russian folk epos, and to try to achieve thereby a distillation of the Russian folk spirit. In fact, he attempted to represent the Russian spirit in his art throughout his long composing career (1862-1907), for, of his fifteen operas, only four (*Mozart i Salieri*, *Serviliia*, *Pan Voevoda*, *Zolotoi petushok* ('The Golden Cockerel')), were not based on Russian themes, whether episodes from Russian history, or folk material, or else on Russian literary material with a folk background of subject and setting. For example, his third opera *Snegurochka* ('Snow-Maiden') of 1881 was based on the *p'esa-skazka* ('fairy-tale in play form') of the same name by A. N. Ostrovsky, which had been premiered in 1873. This was the only work by this prolific writer that Rimsky-Korsakov set to music, and V. F. Fedorova observes that this play was the playwright's sole work in which a harmonic world was portrayed, poetic and radiant, where all live by the laws of justice, and where love transforms.¹ It was also the only play by this author with a fairy-tale theme. The composer's selection of this specific play from the whole range of Ostrovsky's works as the basis for one of his own creations reinforces Ossovskii's assertions that, for Rimsky-Korsakov, life had to be shown in an artistically transformed state, raised above reality, even idealised. For the composer, the truth of everyday life was different from the truth of art.²

In addition to the various forms of narrative tale, the composer utilised matter from Russian lyrical folk songs, lamentations, folk tales, and wedding rituals; he even inserts two lines from the major early Russian written epic, *Slovo o polku Igoreve* (usually translated as 'The Song of

¹ Fedorova, V. F., *Russkii teatr XIX veka* (Moscow: 'Znanie', 1983), p. 88.

² Ossovskii, p. 288.

Igor's Campaign'). Indeed, there is hardly one detail of language or subject matter in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko* that does not derive from Russian traditional sources, and the composer stated in his memoirs that the opera possessed a 'national' character which could be fully appreciated only by a Russian.¹ Accordingly, the first part of Section Four will be devoted to an analysis of the subject-matter and world view of the principal sources of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Sadko*, the *byliny*, while the second part of this section will deal in detail with the other forms of folk genre employed by the composer.

The opera-*bylina* was significant both in Rimsky-Korsakov's own career, and in the field of Russian cultural history. *Sadko* was his sixth opera, and was his fifth in succession to be based on Slavonic or Russian folk subjects (his first, we recall, 'The Maid of Pskov', was based on a Russian historical subject). He notes in his memoirs (p. 206) that his previous two operas, *Mlada* and *Christmas Eve*, had seemed, retrospectively, to be two large-scale sketches preceding *Sadko*, which had proved to be the summation of this previous endeavour, and to be the peak and conclusion of this period of his operatic creativity. Possibly because he wished for new artistic challenges, or because he felt that he would not be able to achieve the heights of *Sadko* in another folk-based opera without much effort, his next opera, the one-act *Mozart and Salieri* (1897), followed a new experimental path, not derived from folk sources. He did not return to pure folk story for his sources until his 12th opera of 1901, *Kashchei bessmertnyi* ('Kashchei the Deathless') - the same source which Stravinsky employed for his *Firebird*.

The opera *Sadko* is of special importance in Russian cultural history for the fact that, following its rejection for performance in the Imperial Theatres by Tsar Nicholas II in person, it was the first new opera staged by Savva Mamontov's Moscow Private Opera Company. The designers

¹ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, p. 205.

and scene-painters for the production were members of Mamontov's Abramtsevo circle of artists, who, inspired by the resurgence of interest in folk art, were trying to create works of art in national style, as opposed to the Imperial Theatres which staged all their productions in classical style, including works based on Russian folk sources - for instance, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Snegurochka* (Snow-Maiden). These artists attempted graphically to reinforce Rimsky-Korsakov's vision of an idealised semi-mythical Russian world and his distillation of the Russian folk spirit by creating a unified production in which all elements - costumes, scenery, music, - derived from folk sources. The causes of the composer's final break with the Imperial Theatres, and his subsequent involvement with the Moscow Private Opera, especially as regards its production of *Sadko*, will therefore be examined in Section Five.

Section Six will be devoted to an analysis of the composer's adaptation of the numerous sources discussed in Section Four to form a coherent opera libretto, while Section Seven will deal with the use of these sources in the opera. We hope to elucidate by this examination some of the immensely complex 'sub-text required for full comprehension',¹ and also to demonstrate the way Rimsky-Korsakov has fulfilled the role of the 'bard-behind-the bard' of Asaf'ev's formulation by his adaptation of his sources.

Throughout these sections we shall demonstrate our contention that in *Sadko* the composer was attempting to create an entirely new art form not based on conventional models. However, he was not simply filling the role of a folk-bard proclaiming an epic, as maintained by Asaf'ev, but was also showing how the bard fitted into his/her world. By portraying on stage how the bard or the common people could spontaneously create new epic songs on the basis of extant models (see Section Seven), Rimsky-Korsakov was himself playing the part of a 'bard behind the bard', a 'meta-bard', or a grandparent to the tale rather than a parent. We have observed

¹ Taruskin (ref. p. 10, note 1).

above that the composer viewed opera as an art form with its own aesthetic and laws, and we shall maintain that, by this holding of himself at one remove from the sources, and setting them to 'art' music, he was in fact creating a new genre deriving from his artistic credo and from his position in his artistic and historic milieu. In so doing, he employed an extraordinary range of historical, literary, and folk sources, fusing them and idealising their content. The resulting work is not an 'opera' to be judged by any conventional standards, but is precisely an 'opera-bylina' - an epic Russian chanted tale deriving from the illiterate rural levels of society, with declamatory vocal lines drawn from this same tradition, projected to an educated urban audience by means of the instrumental resources and tonal language of Western 'art' music.¹ This work must be viewed and evaluated with entirely different standards from the conventional stage works of the time. The composer's creation of a new genre even extends to the list of *dramatis personae* and the stage directions, which are all couched in archaic and unconventional language deriving from the epics. This procedure might, however, be viewed as a pointless exercise in regard to anybody viewing the opera, for, if they had not seen the full score beforehand, they would have had no idea of this extra-musical framework written in the language of ancient models, unless the cast-list and stage-directions were printed in the programme. The same is true of the extraordinary concentration of folk-lore motifs from many genres of Russian folklore intricately interwoven throughout *Sadko*, for, without a profound study beforehand of the sources of the opera, the spectator will fail to grasp more than a minute proportion of the textual underlay. Attention will therefore be drawn at numerous points throughout our thesis to instances where the audience would presumably be unaware of more than a small proportion of the interwoven musical and literary themes and references. The

¹ As discussed in the thesis (see principally page 161-2, and Section Seven *passim*) Rimsky-Korsakov used a different tonal language throughout his career for his operatic scenes based in the human world, and those which depicted the supernatural or magical realm. The former is based primarily on the pentatonic and modal resources of folk music, whereas the latter - even if the libretto at this point derives from folk material - uses exotic tone-rows derived from 'art' music such as octatonic and whole-row progressions. Since we are concerned in this thesis with the opera-bylina's basis in folk-lore and folk-music, we shall not pay nearly so much attention to the music of the scenes of the opera set in the 'magical' world - principally scenes two, six, and part of seven - although we shall still examine in detail the folk-story elements of the libretto

reader will notice many others.

However, it could be argued that Rimsky-Korsakov did not expect his audience to have an extremely profound knowledge of such topics. Precisely because he was creating a new genre, a synthesis of artistic currents from all strata of Russian society, it was this synthesis, this new art-form, which he hoped his audience would respond to, in terms of overall enjoyment of the experience, and in their development of a new cultural consciousness which would be aware of, and evolve further, this newly-created artistic form, and other modern genres, of Russian art. It may also be argued that Rimsky-Korsakov's use of a frontispiece to the score taken from ancient Russian sources, and cast-lists and stage-directions written in archaic language taken from the epics, was not necessarily intended to be seen by the audience, but was part of the composer's intention to ensure that the physical score constituted a rigorous framework for a 'Platonic archetypal ideal' performance, which would guide and inform all subsequent performances of this opera in epic form. Furthermore, we may deduce, he was fully aware that the 'meta-bardic persona' which he assumed throughout his career, was not identical with that of the folk bard, who recreated slightly new variants of each epic at each performance (see Section Two), and who knew that any variant would vanish instantly in detail from people's memory once the entertainment was over, leaving only a general impression of enjoyment, and a grasp of the fundamental plot. Rimsky-Korsakov's organising ego, on the other hand, was concentrated on producing in both his physical and performed score a record of his intentions that would remain more or less unvarying for ever, and would possibly provide an impetus for a whole range of further such works.

The concluding Section Eight ('Summary, Considerations, Reflections and Conclusions') will therefore summarise our contentions made throughout the thesis, that *Sadko* is an entirely original art form, derived from the composer's place in the social history of the time, and from his artistic and aesthetic views. We will further discuss whether Rimsky-Korsakov's attempt to

set such a tale to music, and his attempt to frame the whole work in an epic atmosphere by means of an intense distillation of textual and musical motifs, plus written additions such as the archaic language of the stage directions, which any spectator would almost certainly not see, is in fact successful. We will further, in connection with this discussion, refer regularly throughout the thesis to such topics as whether an entirely original artistic genre such as the *opera-bylina* may succeed in creating an impression with an audience through its profound creation of atmosphere, even if the audience do not fully understand its attempt to base the work on a bedrock of authenticity. We shall also briefly consider whether any recreation of such a work can ever be said to be totally faithful to any author's intentions. Finally, we shall revert in our concluding section to the issue of whether the persona of Rimsky-Korsakov's 'meta-bard' can be said to be the same as the organising consciousness of the folk-bard declaiming his or her epics.

SECTION ONE

THE *BYLINA*: DEFINITION, REDISCOVERY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, TYPOLOGY, AND ANALYSIS OF POETICS.

INTRODUCTION

In order to elucidate subsequent references to the epic narrative of *Sadko* upon which Rimsky-Korsakov based his opera-*bylina* of the same name, we shall in this section first define the term *bylina* (plural *byliny*) and give an account of *byliny* of varying periods and categories. Rimsky-Korsakov drew extracts and turns of phrase from an extremely wide range of *byliny*, in addition to that of *Sadko*, in order to create the atmosphere of a world which was part historical and part mythical, and not wholly Christianised, but was still to a large extent under the sway of a pagan world-view. In this society epic poetry was still an integral component of everyday life and entertainment, and the singers and listeners believed unquestioningly in the deeds thus narrated.

We shall then detail the history of the rediscovery of these oral epics in Russia in the 19th century, and the effect they had on educated society, in order to comprehend why creative artists such as Pushkin and Rimsky-Korsakov were inspired by them. Furthermore, we shall describe the life and manner of performance of the typical peasant narrator of epic tales of the period, for the composer specifically claims in his memoirs that his opera-*bylina* *Sadko* incorporates *bylina*-like recitative of the type to be found in the declamations of such singers. He continues that his use of this recitative was 'unprecedentedly distinctive' and that it distinguished *Sadko* from all his other operas, and in fact from all other works in the genre.¹

¹ *Letopis'*, p. 205. The original Russian here is '*nebyvalo svoeobrazno*', and a better translation might be

Section One will be divided into the following sub-sections:

- (1) Definition of *bylina*.
- (2) Classification of *byliny* by subject and locus of action.
- (3) The rediscovery of the epic sagas in Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century.
- (4) Characteristics of the peasant singers of *stariny*.

(1) DEFINITION OF *BYLINA*

The *bylina* was one of the forms of oral folk narrative which dealt with mythic or legendary material. Collections of them had appeared in print in the 18th and 19th centuries, but they were only rediscovered as a living genre in the 1860s. They were still being sung in the far north of Russia in the 1920s, but by the 1960s, with the coming of radio and television even to the remotest households of Russia, the desire to go to the village assembly hall or pub to listen to long chanted epic narratives had disappeared; furthermore, not only did practically nobody possess the ability to chant these epics any more, but very few people were even familiar with the story-lines of these narratives.¹

Since the publication between 1860 of Petr Kireevskii's collection of folk poetry it has been customary to divide Russian epic into the three major genres of *byliny*, *dukhovnye stikhi*, and *istoricheskie pesni*.² The *byliny* and *dukhovnye stikhi* ('religious verses') have already been defined. The *istoricheskie pesni* ('historical songs') consisted of declamatory chants on themes from Russian history from the time of the first Tatar incursion into Rus', until as late as the

'unprecedentedly *sui generis*', and it is noticeable here how Rimsky-Korsakov's use of the term '*bylina* recitative' (*bylinnyi rechitativ*), with its juxtaposition of terms from folk literature and conventional opera, emphasises his aim of fusing together both these traditions in his opera to provide a new form of stage work.

¹ Pomerantseva, E. V. 'Sud'by russkogo bylevogo eposa v poslevoennye gody', (in) *Russkaia literatura* (Leningrad) no 4, (1963) pp. 119-124. Translated as 'The State of the *Bylina* in the Post-War Years', (in) *The Study of Russian Folklore*, eds. Oinas, Felix J., and Soudakoff, Stephen, (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1975) pp. 291-301.

² Kireevskii, P. V., ed. P. Bezsonov, *Pesni sobrannia P. V. Kireevskim*, 10 instalments (Moscow: 1860-1874).

Crimean War. There is another smaller genre of chanted narrative which is found in some anthologies of Russian epic verse, but in far from all, since many researchers do not consider them 'epic' material at all; these are the *skomoroshina*, or comic songs of the *skomorokhi* - the itinerant entertainers of old Russia.

It seems that the term *bylina* was not originally used by the folk singers themselves.¹ When the epic collectors visited the north of Russia in the 1860s, they found that the mythical epics were subsumed by these peasant narrators, along with the historical songs, spiritual songs, and *skomoroshina*, under the blanket term *stariny* (singular *starina*), which signifies roughly here 'songs of olden times'.

It is commonly stated that it was the ethnographer and literary critic Ivan Petrovich Sakharov (1807-1863) who first used the term *bylina* in this context.²

Although the epics were rediscovered as a living genre only in the 1860s and 1870s, collections of them had appeared in print in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Working on these collections of what were assumed to be extinct types of Russian folk poetry, Sakharov in the 1830s and '40s began to designate in his works those epics which contained mythical or semi-mythical material, by the term *bylina*.³ Scholars have maintained that he had appropriated this term from the 12th-century written epic poem *Slovo o polku Igoreve* ('The Song of Igor's Campaign').⁴ At the beginning of this poem we read:

¹ Chicherov, B., 'Byliny', *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, Senior Ed. Surkov, A. A., (Moscow: 'Sovetskaia Rossiia' 1962-1978), I, 801-803. See also Speranskii, M. N., *Byliny*, 2 vols (Moscow: vol I 1916, vol II 1919), I, lii.

² See eg Speranskii, *Byliny*, I, li-iii; also Fasmer, Maks, *Etimologicheskii slovar' Russkogo iazyka*, 4 vols (Moscow: 'Progress', 1964-1973), 'bylina', I, 239. This work is a translation into Russian, and expansion, by O. N. Trubachëv, of: Vasmer, Max, *Russisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 1950-1958).

³ See eg his *Pesni russkago naroda* (St Petersburg, 1839), part 5, xl-xvi, and his *Russkii narodnyi skazki* (St Petersburg, 1841) iii-iv.

⁴ Speranskii, *Byliny*, vol I, li.

Не лепо ли ны бяшеть, братие, ...

Начати же ся той песни по былинам сего времени

А не по замышлению Бояна? ¹

It is the archaic word *bylinam* that we have translated in note 1 below as 'happenings', and it is generally agreed by modern scholars that this is what it signifies.² However, at the time Sakharov was writing, only some thirty years after the rediscovery of this ancient poem, it was believed on the evidence of the above-cited lines, that *bylinam* was equivalent to the word that follows shortly after – *zamyshleniiu*: poetic inventions of the sort created by a court scop, as Boian evidently had been.

It has become the accepted opinion among scholars that Sakharov applied this term *byliny* to describe the oral narrative epics he was studying which seemed to contain non-historic material, and that it soon became common currency among Sakharov's contemporaries.³ However, Felix J. Oinas cautiously maintains that the word *bylina* (which he defines as 'what happened in the past') is a scholarly term which came into use in the 1830s.⁴ When Sakharov's works are consulted, it appears that he was not formally introducing the word himself, but that he was using it in a sense already current.⁵ The peasant singers themselves learnt the word from the collectors, but still retained their own term *starina* to designate these epics based on legendary material.⁶

¹ 'Would't not be fitting, O brethren
to strike up that song upon the happenings of our own time,
and not upon the inventions of Boian?'

(*Slovo o polku Igoreve*, ed. F. P. Filin (Moscow: 'Sovetskaia Rossiia', 1981) p. 91.

² Filin, *Slovo*, p. 240. See also Fasmer, I, 259.

³ Speranskii, *Byliny*, vol I, ii, and Fasmer, I, 259.

⁴ Oinas, Felix J., 'Bylina', (in) *Handbook of Russian Literature*, ed. Victor Terras (New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 1985) pp. 66-70 (p. 66).

⁵ Sakharov, eg. *Russkiiia narodnyia skazki*, (St Petersburg: 1841) xiii.

⁶ Speranskii, M. N., *Russkaia ustnaia slovesnost'* (Moscow: A. M. Mikhailov, 1917), p. 178, footnote 1.

Rimsky-Korsakov, incidentally, uses the word *starina* on several occasions in his opera-*bylina*, most notably in his closing chorus, which is derived from the concluding few lines of various epic stories. By so doing, he is preserving, in his role of a 'meta-bard' the air of archaism in the epic background as envisioned by the original singers, before folk song collectors began their investigations.

Where, then, did the term *bylina* arise from? What was its original significance? The word is derived by scholars of linguistics and lexicographers¹ from the Slavonic stem *by-*, from which is formed the infinitive and past tenses of the verb 'to be' in Russian; therefore, from its morphological formation and philological derivation, *bylina* appears to suggest 'that which was', or 'what really happened'. Certainly, as one of the first collectors of these epics, Gil'ferding, noted in the preface to his collection, the peasant folk singers believed implicitly in the truth of the epic they were declaiming.²

Since 'oral epic mythical narrative' is a clumsy equivalent for *bylina*, the Russian term will generally be used in this thesis when referring to one of these long Russian oral poetic compositions.

One further point of terminology: the heroes of the *byliny* are termed *bogatyri* (singular *bogatyř*); this word has been derived from a bewildering variety of languages including Old Slavonic, Estonian, Tatar, and Sanskrit.³ Suffice it to say that this term is commonly, but misleadingly, translated into English as 'knight'. This rendering is presumably because many of the later epics have crystallised round the semi-legendary figure of Prince Vladimir I of Kiev;

¹ Fasmer, 'bylina', I, 239.

² Gil'ferding, A. F., ed. P. Gil'tebrandt, *Onezhkii byliny zapisannyye Aleksandrom Gil'ferdingom 1871 goda* (St Petersburg: 1873). 4th edn, with title conforming to modern Russian spelling, 3 vols, eds. A. I. Nikiforov and G. S. Vinogradov, with introduction by V. G. Bazanov (Leningrad: 'ANSSSR' 1949-51), I, 35-36.

³ See eg the article 'Bogatyř', *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* (Leipzig and St Petersburg: Brokgauz (ie. Brokhaus) i Efron, 1890-1904), VII, (1891) pp. 147-157.

in these epics he despatches his *bogatyri* from his court to fight dragons and invaders, and to right wrongs. However, these epics are of quite late provenance when compared with those whose heroes - also termed *bogatyri* - are Merlin-like figures such as Volkh Vseslavich, who conquers his enemies by means of magic, or else who appear, like Sviatogor ('Holy Mountain') to be autochthonous personifications of natural forces or features. In his work on Slavonic pagan beliefs, and in his collections of Russian folk tales, Afanas'ev refers to characters with such titles as the *buria-bogatyř*, or 'Storm *Bogatyř*' – a personification of this Titanic force of nature.¹ Furthermore, a few of the epics concerning Sadko, the folk singer of Novgorod, refer to him too as a *bogatyř*, because of the prodigious wealth he acquires as a merchant. In Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*, the composer has the folk of Novgorod finally bestowing *bogatyř* status on the folk musician as a result of his Orpheus-like artistic ability (see Section Seven).

The term 'knight', therefore, is misleading semantically, since the Russian term implies much more a character who is a hero either through prodigious strength and heroism, or else by the possession of some other quality in great abundance. 'Knight' is also incongruous textually, since it might immediately evoke for the English-speaking world a universe - largely created by such writers as Chaucer, Malory and Tennyson - of chivalry and courtly love taking place against a shimmering landscape set in iridescent primary colours like a pre-Raphaelite painting or tapestry. However, the thought-world of the primeval Russian epics is radically different. Therefore, when talking of any of the *bogatyri*, who generally speaking are more akin to Beowulf than to Sir Lancelot or Gawain, I shall retain the Russian term, with its evocation of the primeval world of the Russian epics.

¹ Afanas'ev, A. N., *Poeticheskiia vozzreniia slavian na prirodu*, 3 vols (Moscow: 1865, 1868, 1869), vol II, 533-534; and: *Russkiiia narodnyiia skazki* (8 instalments, 1855-1863). Edn.: ed. Gruzinskii A. E., 2 vols (Moscow; 1897), vol 2, no 76, p. 154. Pushkin, in his imitation of epic narrative *Ruslan and Liudmila* (1817-1820), inspired partly by the *stariny*, very rarely uses the term *bogatyř* to denote any of the knights issuing from Prince Vladimir's court to rescue Liudmila, but far more commonly employs the title *vitiiaz* – an old Russian word specifically signifying 'knight' which is never to be found in the *stariny*.

Owing to the large numbers of epics belonging to each genre, anthologists have compiled works - frequently running into more than one volume - devoted exclusively either to *byliny*, or *istoricheskie pesni*, or *dukhovnye stikhi*. The one exception to this rule are the *skomoroshina*: due to the comparative paucity of recorded texts, and doubts as to whether the humorous and frequently scatological content of these songs may be considered 'epic' at all, they are not generally included in such anthologies.¹

Since the majority of the 'historical songs' derive from a later period than what Rimsky-Korsakov termed the *polu-skazochnuu-polu-istoricheskuiu epokhu*² of his *Sadko*, the composer must have judged that this genre was out of place in his work, in terms of matter, chronology, and atmosphere; at any rate, this is the only category of Russian epic not used by him in this opera. However, not only does he draw on the genres of *byliny*, *dukhovnye stikhi*, and *skomoroshina*: he also introduces lyrical folk songs, extracts of prose legends, references to folk tales, and other forms of oral folk creation. Indeed - as this thesis will demonstrate - there is hardly one detail throughout the entire work (including the archaic language of the stage directions and list of *dramatis personae*) that does not derive from the Russian folk tradition. By this procedure, and by showing how these folk sources and bards fit into the historical milieu, the composer is himself attempting to fulfil the role of a 'bard behind the bard' in his determination to recreate the entire world of imagination of Russian folklore, and the historical environment of that world, out of an enormous range of appropriate textual and background sources.

¹ For a selection of *skomorokh* songs see eg Propp, V. Ia., and Putilov, B. N., *Byliny*, 2 vols (Moscow: 'Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury', 1958), II, 391-456. For the *istoricheskie pesni*, see: Astakhova, A. M., et al eds., *Istoricheskie pesni s XIII do XIX vv.*, 4 vols (Moscow, Leningrad: 'ANSSSR', 1960-73). Anthologies of *dukhovnye stikhi* have begun to appear only since the collapse of communism in the early 1990s, since the Soviet authorities did not countenance any manifestation of religion. See eg Selivanov, F. M., *Stikhi dukhovnye* (Moscow: 'Sovetskaia Rossiia', 1991).

² 'semi-fairy-tale-semi-historical epoch'; Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., 'Vmesto predisloviia,' ('In Place of a Foreword'), Item 2; *Sadko*, full score, (1952) vol 6a (no page number).

(2) CLASSIFICATION OF *BYLINY* BY SUBJECT AND LOCUS OF ACTION

Commentators and anthologists have identified numerous classes of *byliny*, and have based their typologies on, firstly, the subject matter of each epic, and then have further sub-divided them by the geographical area of early Russia in which the tale is set.

Although Rimsky-Korsakov based his opera-*bylina* *Sadko* on the epic subject of that name, which is set in ancient Novgorod, he employs details and motifs, both musical and textual, from a number of other *byliny*, drawn from the entire range of such narratives. He also drew on the *dukhovnye stikhi* and *skomoroshiny*. This distillation of such motifs in the work imitates the narrative techniques and resources of the *skaziteli*, to be discussed later in this section, and in the process intensifies the 'semi-legendary' atmosphere of the opera-*bylina*, by creating the illusion of a world in which – as in the *stariny* – epic heroics were the norm.

Firstly, the *byliny* may be divided into those concerning the deeds of the *Starshie bogatyri* ('Elder Heroes') and *Mladshie bogatyri* ('Junior Heroes').¹

The *starshie bogatyri* figure in epics which cannot be ascribed to any time or place: these heroes derive from the most autochthonous stage of a magical and mythical world-view - for example, Volkh Vseslavich, who vanquishes his enemies by his magical powers, and the superhumanly strong Sviatogor ('Holy Mountain'), who appears to be a personification of a natural feature of the landscape, a mountain range. Rimsky-Korsakov incorporates sizeable extracts from the former song about Volkh Vseslavich in Tableau One of his opera-*bylina*.²

¹ See eg Speranskii M. N., *Russkaia ustnaia slovesnost'* (Moscow: 1917), p. 199.

² Full references for epics used by Rimsky-Korsakov will be given in Section Six, in which they will be analysed in detail. Incidentally, there are no 'acts' (*deistviia*) in this opera, but seven 'scenes' (*kartiny*). Rimsky-Korsakov noted in his memoirs that the opera is divided into *sem' kartin skazochnogo soderzhaniiia* ('seven scenes of a fairy-tale character') (*Letopis'*, p. 255). Although the Russian term *kartina* does indeed mean 'scene' when used in reference to a stage work, its primary meaning is 'picture', 'illustration', and the translation 'scene' seems inadequate and too formal here, where the lack of any 'acts' emphasises the fact that the entire opera consists of vivid representations, almost in the form of a folk chapbook, of episodes drawn from an epic narrative. In fact, according to Gozenpud (*Russkii opernyi teatr* (1974), p. 171) some critics of the first production of *Sadko* accused

The *mladshie bogatyri* ('Junior Heroes') are figures who, although possessing stupendous Herculean strength, are still definitely human beings. They are grouped primarily around the semi-legendary figure of Prince Vladimir I of Kiev (reigned c. 980-1015), who like King Arthur, despatches them from his court to fight serpents and Russia's historical enemies such as the Tatars and the Livonians. The three pre-eminent *mladshie bogatyri* are Il'ia Muromets, Dobrynia Nikitich, and Alësha Popovich. Rimsky-Korsakov derives not only numerous textual extracts from these epics for incorporation into the libretto of his *Sadko*, but in addition, from one of the *byliny* about Dobrynia - *Dobrynia i Alësha* ('Dobrynia and Alësha') - he draws details of the deportment of the *skomorokhi* at feasts of royalty, nobility and rich merchants, of the kind with which he commences the opera *Sadko* (see our Section Seven).

There is a further sub-division of epic song - that of locus of action. As we have seen, the songs of the 'Elder Heroes' are not linked with any definable time or region, whereas the 'Junior Heroes' are predominantly associated with ancient Kiev. However, a further, smaller category of songs has as its background life in mediaeval Novgorod. The two major subject-areas of these Novgorod *byliny* are, firstly, those concerning the folk musician Sadko, and secondly, those relating the exploits of one Vasilii Buslaev. In his opera *Sadko*, Rimsky-Korsakov adroitly links the two Novgorod subjects by implying that Sadko is married to Vasilii

the stage designer Konstantin Korovin of ignoring the laws of perspective, failing to realise that he had based himself on the arts of icon-painting and of the *lubok*, (cheap and gaudy popular prints), where perspective is absent (see Section Five). Kashkin, however, found this lack of perspective, deriving from the folk tradition, highly original and suitable for a *bylina* (Kashkin, N. D., *Russkie vedomosti*, no 6, cited Gozenpud, *Russkii opernyi teatr*, (1974), p. 171). We have considered translating *kartina* as *lubok*, but since this form of Russian folk art is largely unfamiliar to non-Russians, we have finally chosen Abraham's term 'Tableau', which is not only familiar, but, in its suggestion of stasis, fits to a certain extent the slow-moving unfolding, in epic style, of the opera-*bylina* (Abraham, Gerald, (1969), *Studies In Russian Music*, pp. 221-245 *passim*).

It may be noted here that in a few instances, other Russian composers of the time had also sub-divided their operas into 'scenes' rather than acts – most notably Tchaikovsky, who subtitled his *Eugene Onegin* (premiered 1879) 'Lyric Scenes from Pushkin', and the word he used – *kartina* – was the same as that used by Rimsky-Korsakov in regard to *Sadko*. But 'scene' does seem to be the correct translation when discussing Tchaikovsky's opera, since the composer was trying to imply that he had not attempted to reproduce in his music the original poem's superb depictions of nature or Russian life, but was simply presenting scenes from the story of Pushkin's 'novel in verse' which all educated Russians would have had an intimate knowledge of.

Buslaev's sister, and by introducing into his work the enigmatic figure to be found in some of the songs about Vasilii - *Starchishche pilgrimishche* - roughly, 'The Great Pilgrim Monastic Elder'.¹

These last two epic subjects do not concern the adventures of enormously strong individuals struggling against external enemies. Sadko is a musician who becomes a wealthy merchant, while Vasilii is a hooligan who leads his band in bloody brawls throughout Novgorod, and then, repenting, goes on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land where he dies. There are, too, a number of other such 'non-martial' epics set in Kiev or other early Russian cities, such as those concerning Solovei Budimirovich, Khotën Bludovich, and Churilo Plënkovich. With this consideration in mind, V. F. Miller proposed a further sub-categorisation of the *byliny* - into what he termed *boevye* ('martial') *byliny* and *byliny-novelly* ('*novelle* in *bylina* form').²

As we shall see (Section Seven) the composer utilises the exordium to the 'epic *novella*' about Solovei Budimirovich – in the form found in the collection of Danilov – to conclude Tableau Four of his opera *Sadko*. In addition, he adapts details from the depiction of Solovei's ship for the stage directions concerning the appearance of Sadko's vessel in Tableaux Four and Five.

We have already noted that the *bogatyř* Sviatogor ('Holy Mountain') seems to be a personification of a natural feature. A motif of the same sort to be found in a small number of the *byliny* is the creation of Russian rivers from the blood of dying *bogatyři*. Such epics are

¹ It may be noted here that there is uncertainty both in the epic sources and in commentaries, as to whether, and how, the name Sadko is to be declined. Some singers and writers treat the name as indeclinable; others treat it as an ordinary Russian masculine/neuter noun with eg genitive form 'Sadka', while in a few sources we find anomalous forms, such as the genitive 'Sadki', which adds what is in modern Russian exclusively a feminine ending, to a masculine proper name (which is neuter in form). This combination, which derives from archaic Russian, is not to be found in the modern standard language, and is preserved entirely in dialect, and in folk poetry. The composer introduces this last form on several occasions into his opera, thus emphasising the folk provenance of the libretto and subject-matter. Oddly (or intentionally, to illustrate the variety of forms in his sources?) the composer, when discussing his 1867 tone-poem *Sadko* in his memoirs, manages to use all three forms on one page. The hero is referred to in the genitive indifferently as 'Sadko' or 'Sadka', while the form 'Sadki' is reserved for the work (eg ... *forma Sadki* .. 'the form of *Sadko*'). There is no justification for such differentiation in the sources. (Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'* (1955), p. 48).

² Miller, V. F., *Ocherki russkoi narodnoi slovesnosti: Byliny* (Moscow: 1897) p. 30.

those, concerning, for example, the heroes Don, Dunai, and Nepra (ie Dniepr).

Although Rimsky-Korsakov does not use any of these *byliny* in his opera, he employs this motif to try to elucidate in his work a theme that is not clear in any of his epic sources. At the close of many of the *bylina* variants concerning Sadko's adventures on the sea-bed, the folk musician marries a daughter of the Sea Tsar in the depths of the ocean, and then, the following morning, wakes up just outside Novgorod, with one foot on dry land, and one in the Volkhov, the river which flows through the city, or one of its tributaries. The Sea Maiden whom Sadko marries is never named Volkhov, or Volkhova, in the epic sources, although the composer gives her this latter name in his opera. A link is implied in the original epics between the Sea Maiden and the river, which had apparently been lost through time. However, in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, we are informed in Tableau One that Novgorod has no river, making it extremely difficult for the merchants of that city to ply their trade. The river Volkhov only appears at the very end of the opera, when Sadko's sea-bride, who is here named Volkhova (stressed on the final syllable), voluntarily dissolves and turns into this river. Since this idea is not to be found in any of the collected variants of *Sadko*, Rimsky-Korsakov seems to have derived this original motif from the above-mentioned epics depicting the creation of great Russian rivers from legendary heroes and too, as he acknowledges in the preface to his score, from Afanas'ev's discussion of this epic theme.¹ We may speculate here that the composer was not simply attempting to clarify the original theme, but also, in his quest to originate a new artistic form, a composite of *bylina* and opera, not to be judged by ordinary dramatic standards, he was trying almost to create a new epic narrative, in imitation of the manner in which new epics seemed to be created spontaneously by singers, on extant models.

¹ The relevant variants of the epic of *Sadko* will be discussed in Section Six. A. Afanas'ev deals with this topic in his *Poetichesklia vozreniia slavian*, II, 220. The composer acknowledges his debt to Afanas'ev's treatment of the theme in his prefatory material to *Sadko*, Item 3.

(3) THE REDISCOVERY OF THE EPIC SAGAS IN RUSSIA IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In Item One of the prefatory material to the score of his opera-*bylina* *Sadko*, Rimsky-Korsakov notes that the contents of this work are derived in the main from diverse variants of the *bylina* of *Sadko bogatyi gost'* ('Sadko the Rich Merchant') to be found in the collections of Kirsha Danilov, Rybnikov, and 'others'.¹

What were these collections, and how did they come to be compiled?

It was discovered only in the second half of the 19th century that the *stariny* still existed as a living genre of oral folk art. Up until then they had been known purely in manuscripts and in printed collections, and it had been assumed that they were no longer declaimed by folk singers as part of a living tradition.²

Apart from these printed compilations of manuscript sources, the composer would have been familiar with four major sets of *stariny* which had been published before he embarked on the creation of *Sadko* in 1895 - those of Danilov, Kireevskii, Rybnikov, and Gil'ferding. These, however, were not compiled exclusively from manuscripts: the volumes by Danilov, Rybnikov, and Gil'ferding, had been transcribed totally, and those by Kireevskii partly, directly from the declamation of the singers.

¹ Danilov, Kirsha, ed. Iakubovich, A., *Drevniia russkiiia stikhotvoreniia* (Moscow, 1804). Reissued in 1818, in an expanded form, with musical notation, under the title *Drevniia rossiskiiia stikhotvoreniia* ed. Kalaidovich, K., (Moscow 1818). Edn. eds. Putilov, B. N., and Evgen'eva, A. P., (Moscow, Leningrad: 'Nauka', 1977). The two songs concerning Sadko, *Sadko bogatoi* (sic) *gost'* ('Sadko the Riche Merchaunt') and *Sadkov korabl' stal na more* ('Sadko's ship stood still [ie was becalmed] upon the sea') were not contained in the original volume, but appeared in 1818, the former as no. 26, the latter as 44. In edn. 1977 they appear as nos. 28 (pp. 142-147) and 47 (pp. 178-182) respectively. Rybnikov, P. N., *Pesni sobrannyya P. N. Rybnikovym*, 4 vols (1861-1867). 2nd edn. 3 vols ed. Gruzinskii, A. E., (Moscow, 1909-1910).

² See eg Sakharov I. P., *Pesni russkago naroda*, 15 fascicles bound in 3 volumes (St Petersburg 1838-1839); the *byliny* are concentrated in vol III, part 5. See also Sakharov's *Russkiiia narodnyia skazki*, 2 vols (St Petersburg 1841). Both titles provide bibliographies of volumes and manuscripts from which the respective anthology is compiled. For a comprehensive list of Russian folk-song collections from 1776 to 1958, see Swan, Alfred, *Russian Music and its Sources in Chant and Folk-Song* (London: John Barker, 1973), pp. 206-207.

The first such volume containing epic narratives - and one that, as we have observed, Rimsky-Korsakov specifically denotes as being one of his sources - was Kirsha Danilov's *Drevniia ruskiia stikhotvoreniia* ('Ancient Russian Verse Compositions'), first published in 1804 by A. F. Iakubovich, then reissued in 1818 by the philologist Konstantin Kalaidovich, with the addition of 35 new songs and tales in verse, plus musical notation for each, drawn from the original manuscript. The 1818 volume contains 71 items, of which about 25 are *byliny*. Scholarly opinion concurs that it was compiled in the first half of the 18th century, most probably in Western Siberia.¹ It is usually considered that the collection derives from the transcription of the repertoire of a group of *skomorokhi*, since it contains a number of humorous songs of the type known to have been sung by these strolling players of ancient Russia.² In his opera *Sadko*, Rimsky-Korsakov utilised not only specimens of this repertoire, but also - besides the *bylina* of *Sadko* - elements of the epics *Volkh Vseslavich* and *Solovei Budimirovich*, all drawn from Danilov's collection. Who precisely this Danilov was is unknown; the original manuscript had passed through the hands of a great number of people before finally, with the growth of interest in Russian folk art among the Russian educated classes, it came to be published.³ Pushkin had a copy in his library,⁴ and wrote a number of works which were based on folk epic models of the sort to be found in Danilov. Glinka set one of these imitation epics of the poet to music (*Ruslan and Liudmila*), as subsequently Rimsky-Korsakov was to do (*The Tale of Tsar Saltan*).

The first known major collector of epic songs was the Slavophile Petr Vasil'evich Kireevskii (1809-1856). He not only collected the songs himself, but urged his relatives and acquaintances (who included Pushkin, Gogol' and Kol'tsov), to transcribe any oral folk

¹ Propp and Putilov, *Byliny*, vol I, v.

² Propp and Putilov, *Byliny*, *ibid*.

³ On the identification of Kirsha Danilov, see Gorelov, A. A., 'Kem byl avtor sbornik 'Drevnie rossiiskie stikhotvoreniia'?', *Russkii fol'klor: Materialy i issledovaniia*, vol VII (Moscow, Leningrad: 'ANSSSR', 1962). For a list of some of the people who had had possession of the manuscript, see Danilov, 1818, i-iii.

⁴ Danilov, (1977), p. 366.

creations they might hear. As a result he amassed a vast collection of folk songs, including *stariny*. The narrative songs from this collection were published after his death by the collector P. Bezsonov, in ten instalments, from 1860-1874. The first five instalments contain *byliny* and ballads, the second five are devoted primarily to historical songs. These volumes contain no musical notation, however.¹

The most remarkable collection of epic songs of the 19th century, and the one which inaugurated all subsequent field research into this genre, was that published by Pavel Rybnikov (1832-1885). This is the second work cited by the composer in his introductory notes as one of his sources for *Sadko*. Rybnikov was the son of a religious dissenter: he himself developed a strong interest in the *raskol* (a religious schism which took place in Russia in the mid-17th century). In the late 1850s he travelled round settlements of religious schismatics to gather data on them and on their way of life. On his journeyings, in 1859, he was arrested on charges of fomenting social unrest, and was exiled to the town of Petrozavodsk, on Lake Onega, in the Olonets Province (*Olonetskaia Guberniia*), in the far north of Russia. During his sentence, however, he was given the opportunity of entering government service in this town, and was allocated to the administrative department of the Governor of the province, first as an official in charge of special assignments, and then as Secretary to the Statistical Committee. In this latter capacity he toured throughout the province, gathering statistical data, and it was on these trips, for the first time, that he heard the *byliny* being sung, realised that the epic narratives still existed as a living oral tradition, and proceeded energetically to transcribe them whenever he encountered them on his travels. Incidentally, the first epic that Rybnikov by chance heard being sung, which led to his rediscovery of living oral *stariny*, was that concerning the Rich

¹ See p. 23 note 2 for full ref. to Kireevskii. See also Soimonov, A. D., *P.V. Kireevskii i ego sobranie narodnykh pesen* (Leningrad: 'Nauka', 1971), and Gershenzon, M., *Obrazy proshlago* (Moscow: 'Levenson', 1912) pp. 85-141.

Merchant Sadko - precisely the subject that Rimsky-Korsakov was to adapt subsequently for his opera.

As a political exile Rybnikov was not legally permitted to publish his compendium himself. It therefore appeared, in four volumes, between 1861 and 1867 under the editorship of that same Bezsonov who was at the time in the process of bringing out Kireevskii's collection. Besides the *byliny* they contained a considerable number of religious epics, historical songs, wedding songs, laments, and other forms of folk song, and Rimsky-Korsakov employed all of these genres, apart from the historical songs, in his opera *Sadko* - although to a lesser extent than the *byliny*. The *byliny* were set out in this first edition (the only one published during the composer's lifetime) in what Rybnikov and Bezsonov imagined to be the historical sequence of origin of the individual subjects. In addition, since the songs had been collected and published over a number of years, the individual genres were not separated, but were intermingled throughout all four volumes. There was no information about the singers in the first two volumes. However, the public rapidly expressed an interest in the peasant narrators themselves, in their lifestyles and economic conditions, and therefore to the third instalment (1864) of his publication Rybnikov added his *Zametki sobiratel'ia* ('Notes of the Collector'), in which he described his journeyings and the epic singers he had met, and gave an account of how the songs had been transcribed. Rybnikov did not, however, give any musical transcriptions for the texts in his volume.¹

The final major compendium of epic narratives with which Rimsky-Korsakov would have been familiar (although not specifically referred to by him in his prefatory material to the score of *Sadko*) was that produced by Alexander Gil'ferding (1831-1872), who, in 1871, ten years after the appearance of the first volume of Rybnikov's collection, set out for the same region of north

¹ For an account of Rybnikov's life and collecting activities see Razumova, A. P., *Iz istorii russkoi fol'kloristiki* (Moscow: ANSSSR 1954) esp pp. 17-74.

Russia which Rybnikov had explored, with the intention of unearthing further epic songs. This was a natural result of his linguistic and anthropological interests, since, as a Slavic scholar and Slavophile, he had acquired a reading knowledge of all the Slavonic languages, and had already studied other Slavonic epic cycles such as those of Bosnia, Serbia, and Herzegovina.¹

He consulted with Rybnikov, and, having received valuable data from him, set off in summer 1871 to the Russian far north. In a period of two months, he managed to note down over 300 texts. A few extra epic songs he transcribed subsequently from singers who travelled to St Petersburg. He published a substantial number of these items at his own expense, in five instalments. In summer 1872 he once more set off to the same regions to carry out further research into the Russian epics, but on the way he contracted typhus and died. His St. Petersburg colleague Petr Gil'tebrandt published all his findings (some 318 texts) in one volume in 1873, and prefaced it with a lengthy article by the collector entitled *Olonetskaia guberniia i ee narodnyiia rapsody* ('The Olonets Province and its Folk Rhapsodes') which had been published in the March 1872 edition of the journal *Vestnik Evropy*. This gives extensive details of the settlements which Gil'ferding visited, and of the work which the typical 'rhapsode' did.² There is no music, but Gil'tebrandt inserts into the volume two transcriptions of songs sung by the folk singer Trofim Riabinin, who had visited St Petersburg to declaim his epics in 1871, and whose songs had been transcribed by, among others, Rimsky-Korsakov's colleague, the composer Modest Musorgsky.

¹ For an account of Slavophilism see inter alia Walicki, Andrzej, (transl. Hilda Andrew-Rusiecki), *The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975).

² Gil'ferding, A. F., ed. Gil'tebrandt, P., *Onezhskiiia byliny zapisannyyia Aleksandrom Gil'ferdingom 1871 goda* (St Petersburg 1873). 4th edn, 3 vols, eds. Nikiforov, A. I., and Vinogradov, G. S., with introduction by V. G. Bazanov (Leningrad: ANSSSR, 1949-51). Gil'ferding was educated in the classics, and in his introduction he compares the Russian singers' methods of declamation and of verse-formation with those employed in the Homeric epics. It is from this classical Greek background that he drew the word 'rhapsode' (Greek 'ραψωδός'). This misleading term was replaced by subsequent collectors and commentators with the Russian word the singers used for themselves: *skazitel'* (fem. *skazitel'nitsa*). These latter terms are now used in Russian scholarly works to denote epic singers of any tradition or nationality (Putilov, B. N., *Epicheskoe skazitel'stvo: Tipologiia i etnicheskaia spetsifika*, Moscow: RAN, 1997), p. 290.

Throughout the 19th century there had in fact emerged in educated Russian society interest not only in the *stariny*, but in all genres of oral literature of the Russian peasantry. Collections were published of every type of folk song and tale. One of these collections in particular, Afanas'ev's *Narodnyiia russkiiia skazki* ('Tales of the Russian People', 1853-66), is of particular interest to our study, since Rimsky-Korsakov adapted one of the sub-themes of his opera *Sadko* (that of the Sea Tsar and the Sea Tsarevna ('Princess') Volkhova) from its pages, as our analysis will show.

The above-mentioned collections of *stariny* are those with which the composer would principally have been familiar. However, as we have noted, only Danilov's contained any musical transcriptions, and even these appear to have been artificially adapted to conventional 'art' music notation, and key- and time-signatures. Therefore it is extremely difficult to know quite what Rimsky-Korsakov and his fellow composers heard musically when folk singers such as the Riabinins and others visited St Petersburg and Moscow to declaim. It was from the vocal lines of these singers that the composer drew some of the distinctive features for use in his opera-bylina *Sadko*, such as the unusual rhythms (eg 11/4, and 9/4, 6/4, and 3/2 constantly fluctuating within the same vocal number). However, phonograph recordings were made of Ivan Riabinin's declamations when he visited St Petersburg in 1893. Furthermore, between 1899 and 1901, just a few years after this opera had been premiered in 1897, A. D. Grigor'ev mounted an expedition to collect further epic songs in the Arkhangel'sk Province (*Arkhangel'skaia Guberniia*), to the north of the regions where Rybnikov and Gil'ferding had engaged in their collecting activities. He took a phonograph with him, and his three volumes have copious transcriptions exemplifying precisely the kind of rhythms that we find in the opera-bylina. Therefore, reference will also be made to this collection and these musical

transcriptions when we come to discuss the melodic lines of the *byliny* below, and to analyse Rimsky-Korsakov's utilisation of them.¹

(4) CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PEASANT SINGERS OF *STARINY*.

As we have observed, in an attempt to underline the air of verisimilitude of his opera, Rimsky-Korsakov allots substantial incidental parts in *Sadko* to the pilgrims and strolling players of old Russia, both of which groups were known to have been disseminators of the *stariny*. Therefore we shall give characterisations of these two groups of performers in subsequent sections. The composer also inserts a minor solo role for a professional bard of the type that the Boian of *Slovo o polku Igoreve* seems to have been.² However, he does not give any role, either solo or choral, to the folk singers from whom Gil'ferding and Rybnikov principally gathered their epic narratives – the peasants of Russia's far north. This lack of a role for these peasant performers is predominantly because the peasantry are never mentioned in ancient literature as being singers of these epics, and, besides, they do not appear in the *byliny* concerning *Sadko*, and therefore there is no reason to give them any kind of place in the opera. However, we shall still describe briefly their lifestyle and performing skills because Rimsky-Korsakov notes in his memoirs that the 'unprecedentedly distinctive' recitatives which run through the opera *Sadko* are based on the *bylina* declamation of the two peasant singers, the Riabinins, father and son. The critic Kashkin termed the use of this narrative technique in an opera a *sovsem novoe iavlenie* ('a totally new phenomenon'), constituting not merely a stylised declamatory link between sung sections, as was the usual practice in opera and cantata, but displaying a more coherent and distinctive melodic structure, which still, however, did not achieve the full form of song or aria.³ Furthermore, we have already noted Asaf'ev's

¹ Grigor'ev A. D., *Arkhangel'skiia byliny i istoricheskii pesni, sobrannia A. D. Grigor'evym v 1899-1901, s napevami, zapisannymi posredstvom fonografa*, 3 vols (Moscow: Imperatorskaia Akademiia nauk, vols I (1904) and III (1910), and Prague: vol II, 1939 (*sic*)); 2nd edn. ed. Gorelov, A. A., 3 vols (Moscow: 'Tropa Troianova', 2003).

² Filin, *Slovo*, p. 91.

³ Kashkin, N.D., *Russkoe obozrenie* (Jan 1898), p. 576.

insight that the major defining characteristic of Rimsky-Korsakov's operas is the constant sense of the presence of a bard behind the scenes 'narrating' the action. One example of this is the composer's use of material from other epics, besides *Sadko*, in his opera-*bylina*, to create a new, more coherent narrative than the original sources. This is an imitation of the manner in which the folk singers themselves frequently, in one epic story, would introduce references to other epic characters; and, as we shall see later, there were formulaic passages which the singer could use at will in almost any story to link narrative sections, creating an impression of a cohesive epic world, in which all the heroes existed, however anachronistically. Indeed, the composer himself noted, in reference to his inclusion of the songs of the Three Foreign Merchants (a Viking, an Indian, and a Venetian) in Tableau Four, that although, historically, a Viking and Venetian would not have been found together in the same era: 'The *byliny* abound in anachronisms of all kinds'.¹ Furthermore epics seem to be grouped around certain themes, leading scholars to speculate that new epics were often created on existing models.²

It is not clear whether Asaf'ev, in his mention of a bard behind the scenes, has in mind a courtly scop such as Boian, or a peasant narrator such as those whom the 19th-century song collectors encountered. However, since Rimsky-Korsakov specifically notes the influence of the Riabinins in his memoirs (though there is some doubt as to whether he heard either of them sing) it is clear that he had the style of rendition of at least one of these *skaziteli* in mind when composing *Sadko*.

What kind of life would these epic narrators have led? Rybnikov gave in his *Zametki sobiratel'ia* copious details of the life of the northern peasantry, which were supplemented by Gil'ferding after his expedition to the same areas. Both collectors noted that the following conditions were important for the preservation of folk poetry among these people: the fact, firstly, that they

¹ Item 7, 'Vmesto predisloviia', *Sadko*, full score.

² Miller, V. F., *Ocherki*, p. 219.

were 'self-employed' peasants, and, secondly, that the jobs that the singers themselves did were of the kind (such as fishing) which left them a great deal of leisure time, especially during the long frozen winter days.

The peasantry of the Russian far north was mainly self-employed: the reason for this was that the Russian peasantry had been, broadly speaking, divided into two major categories: *pomeshchichie krest'iane* ('privately-owned' peasants – that is, peasants who until 1861 were considered to be the private property of the privileged classes), and *kazënnye* or *gosudarstvennye krest'iane* ('state peasants'). These latter were chiefly composed of those who lived in areas such as the far north and eastern Siberia, which had been colonised late by the Russians, and in which the land was too poor for large-scale agriculture, and had therefore not been appropriated to form part of the estates of the nobility and gentry.

Gil'ferding notes that most of the singers did work which, although extremely onerous at certain periods, gave them a great deal of spare time at others, such as hunting. In addition, most of the singers were illiterate and had never been outside their own region of the far north, therefore had been entirely uncorrupted by the latest literature and ways of life.¹

Both Rybnikov and Gil'ferding agreed that the singer Trofim Grigor'evich Riabinin (1791-1885) was among the most talented of the singers.² The art of epic declamation was frequently handed down through families and, subsequently, Trofim's son Ivan (1844-1909) became equally renowned as a *skazitel'*. Both singers visited St Petersburg to declaim their epics: the father in December 1871 at the invitation of the Ethnographical Section of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, and the son in the early 1890s.³ Both father and son earned a living

¹ Gil'ferding, 1949, I, 31, 35, 41.

² For a comprehensive life history of Riabinin the father, see Speranskii, *Byliny*, II, xxiii-xxxii.

³ *Otchet za 1871 goda Imperatorskago Russkago Geograficheskago Obshchestva*, ed. Baron F. R. Osten-Saken, glava 14 (Otdel etnografii), (St Petersburg, 1872), p. 70, note 1.

partly as agriculturalists, but, in the main, as fishermen.

Rimsky-Korsakov states in his memoirs that his opera *Sadko* incorporates recitative *pervoobraz kotorogo mozžno naiti v deklamatsii riabininskikh bylin* ('the prototype of which may be found in the declamations of the Riabinin *byliny*').¹ However, the word *riabininskikh* is ambiguous: it can mean either Riabinin's or Riabinins'. It is not clear whether Rimsky-Korsakov saw both, one, or neither, of the two singers perform. When the father declaimed in St Petersburg in 1871, Musorgsky took down several songs from his recitation, including some epic narratives, at least one of which he communicated to Rimsky-Korsakov.² The latter does not himself appear to have been present; we learn from his autobiography that, in November 1871, he was required to go to collect the body of his elder brother Voin, who had died in Pisa, Italy. Rimsky-Korsakov left Pisa on November 17th (November 5th old Russian Style), having sent the corpse on ahead, and he spent 'a couple of days' (*dnia na dva*) in Venice. It is not clear when he finally arrived back in St Petersburg.³ However, Trofim Grigorevich performed apparently once only in public, on 3rd December, and Rimsky-Korsakov makes no mention in his memoirs of having been present at this important event in St Petersburg cultural life.⁴ Additionally, the question must be asked – if Rimsky-Korsakov had indeed seen Trofim Riabinin perform, why did he have to collect a sample of the latter's epic narration from

¹ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, p. 353.

² The first two songs in Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sbornik russkikh narodnykh pesen sostavlennyya N. A. Rimskim-Korsakovym* (Saint Petersburg: 1877), are Olonets *byliny* communicated to Rimsky-Korsakov by Musorgsky. The footnote to no 1 (page 1), *Pir u Kniazia Vladimira* ('Feast at Prince Vladimir's Court'), merely states that this was *Olonetskaia bylina zapisana M. P. Musorgskim* ('Olonets *bylina* transcribed by M. P. Musorgsky'); however, the footnote to no. 2, (page 2), *Volga i Mikula* ('Volga and Mikula'), maintains that this epic was '*zapisana M. P. Musorgskim s golosa Olonetskago skazitelia T. G. Riabinina*' ('transcribed by M. P. Musorgsky from the performance of the Olonets *skazitel'* T. G. Riabinin').

³ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, p. 138.

⁴ *Otchët za 1871*, p 70.

Trofim Riabinin apparently stayed in St Petersburg till December 4th, and gave private renditions at the flat of A. F. Gilferding the collector, including once again to Musorgsky, on unspecified dates. (see Orlova, A., *Trudy i dni M. P. Musorgskogo* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1963)), p. 232. Yet neither here, nor in the comprehensive companion work on Rimsky-Korsakov, is there any mention of the latter composer hearing Riabinin the father at any time (Orlova, A. A., and Rimsky-Korsakov, V. N., *Stranitsy zhizni N. A. Rimskogo-Korsakova - Letopis' zhizni i tvorchestva*, 4 vols (Moscow: 'GMI', 1969-1973)). We may only assume that he was still in official mourning for his brother, and possibly felt it inappropriate to attend such an event.

Musorgsky?

Later, when Trofim's son Ivan had become equally famous as a *skazitel'*, he declaimed in St Petersburg in 1893 and in Moscow in 1894,¹ just a few months before Rimsky-Korsakov set to work on his opera *Sadko* in 1895, and the composer must have made every attempt to see the son perform, and to observe his manner of declamation so that he could incorporate this into any future opera of his based on the *byliny* - for at various periods of his life, Rimsky-Korsakov contemplated operas based, not only on the theme of *Sadko*, but also on the epic stories concerning *Il'ia Muromets* and *Dobrynia Nikitich*. Yet, once again, no source mentions that the composer saw Riabinin the son perform.² However, some of Ivan's songs were recorded onto wax cylinders, and, even if the composer did not succeed in hearing either singer in person, he would almost certainly have heard these recordings.

Furthermore, although Rimsky-Korsakov mentions only the 'lines of the Riabinins' in his memoirs, he definitely saw other singers perform, notably the aged singer of lamentations (*plakatel'nitsa*), Irina Fedosova, and certainly drew a number of the 'non-*bylina*' elements in his opera from her singing, including funeral lamentations.³

¹ Liatskii, E. A., 'Skazitel' I. P. Riabinin i ego byliny', *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie* No. 4 1894 ed. Ianchuk, N. A., (Moscow: Etnograficheskii Otdel Imperatorskago Obshchestva liubitelei estestvoznaniia, antropologii i etnografii) pp 105-151; with transcriptions of a few of the *skazitel'*'s songs, and comments on their musical lines, by A. N. Arensky, pp. 152-153. The imprecise information about the dates of the singer's declamations in the two cities is given on p. 111.

² Orlova, A. A., and Rimsky-Korsakov, V. N., (*Stranitsy zhizni N. A. Rimskogo-Korsakova*) make no mention of the son in their work. There were several other, more distantly related, singers of *byliny* in the Riabinin family, stretching over several generations, and an analysis of the differing repertoires and means of declamation of a number of them is contained *passim* in Zakharova, O. B., *Byliny: Poetika Siuzheta* (Petrozavodsk: Izd. Petrozavodskogo universiteta, 1997).

³ Iastrebtsev, vol I, in his entries for 9th and 13th Jan, 1895, (pp. 252 and 254), maintains that Fedosova performed publicly several times in St Petersburg, that Rimsky-Korsakov visited her declamations on 8th and 10th Jan., and that, on the latter occasion, he transcribed five songs as she sang. Chistov and Lobanov, however, claim that he noted down nine such songs (Chistov, K. V., and Lobanov, M. A., 'Zapis' ot I. A. Fedosovoi na fonograf v 1896 goda', *Russkii sever - problemy etnografii i fol'klora*, eds. Chistov and Lobanov, (Leningrad: 'Nauka', 1981) pp. 207-218 (p. 218).

In conclusion, Rimsky-Korsakov employed turns of phrase and subject-matter from the whole range of *byliny* throughout his opera-*bylina*, including the list of *dramatis personae* and stage directions. By so doing, and by incorporating into the work material from other folk genres sung by the wandering pilgrims and strolling players of old Russia (all of which will be studied in the next section), the composer was striving to create a wholly new artistic form, incorporating both 'art' music and folk elements. By his recreation on stage, through the use of such sources, of the atmosphere of the epics, and of a 'semi-fairy-tale--semi-historical' era of Novgorod's past, the composer, we contend, was striving to create a new art form, a distillation of the Russian national spirit as represented by the thought and interests of both educated urban society and by illiterate creators from distant rural areas of Russia.

SECTION TWO

THE ORIGINAL SINGERS AND DISSEMINATORS OF THE *STARINY*: THE *SKOMOROKHI* AND *KALIKI PEREKHOZHIE*; THE LITERARY AND MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE EPICS

Having glanced briefly at the characteristics of the peasant singers of the epics, we shall now give an account of the two major earlier groups of disseminators of these narratives – the *skomorokhi* or strolling players, of ancient Russia, and the *kaliki perekhozhie*, or wandering pilgrims. These two groups of singers were especially prominent in the early Novgorod city-state, in which the epic of *Sadko* is set. Rimsky-Korsakov allots both of these classes of singers significant musical parts in *Sadko*, allowing him to introduce specimens of both the *skomoroshina* and *dukhovnye stikhi* into this new musical genre he was trying to create. In this manner he could both emphasise the folk world-view of the subject-matter of his opera-*bylina*, and also create a convincing portrayal on stage of the historical era in which this material originated. In this section, we shall also include a brief description of the major folk instrument of early Russia, the *gusli*, since our composer imitates it extensively in the orchestral writing throughout his *Sadko*.

We shall conclude this section with an analysis of the characteristic declamatory musical lines of the *stariny*. These lines are common to all genres of Russian epic, and Rimsky-Korsakov used the typical features of tonality and melodic turns of such lines, throughout his opera

The sub-divisions of this section are:

- (1) The *skomorokhi*.
- (2) The itinerant pilgrims, and cripples.

- (3) The Russian folk instrument, the *gusli*.
- (4) The poetics and structure of the *stariny*.
- (5) The musical lines of the *stariny*.

(1) THE SKOMOROKHI

Regarding the peasant singers of the far north, the folklorist Vsevolod Miller (1844-1913) stated that: '*Krest'iane byli tol'ko poslednimi khraniteliami (neredko i iskaziteliami) bylinago repertuara.*'¹ But, he continues, the *byliny* were originally created in a very different milieu, and were worked out in an environment of professional singers. He then proposes the thesis that these 'professional singers' were, in the main, the ancient Russian *skomorokhi*, who are frequently in folk literature, including the epics, termed the *vesëlye liudi*, or 'merry folk'. Rimsky-Korsakov employs this latter term both in the cast list and several times in his libretto for *Sadko* when referring to these itinerant entertainers.

What was the origin of these Russian strolling players? They appear originally to have had links both with the German *Spielmänner* and the Byzantine itinerant entertainers.² Indeed, the German word *Spielmann* appears in Russian manuscripts in Cyrillic script as early as the year 1284, and continues to be found in writings as late as the 17th century. The word was still current in peasant circles when Vladimir Dal' was researching his dictionary in the 1840s-60s, in the form *shpyn* which Dal' defines as a *shut* or *balagur* (both of which mean 'buffoon' or 'joker').³ These entertainers, in Germany, in Byzantium, and in other European countries such as France, (*les jongleurs*), were not only itinerant singers but, like their Russian counterparts,

¹ 'The peasants were merely the latest bearers (and not infrequently, the distorters) of the *bylina* repertoire'. Miller, V. F., *Ocherki*, (1897) p. 52.

² Miller, V. F., *Ocherki*, pp. 53-55.

³ Dal', V., *Tolkovy slovar' zhivago Velikorusskago iazyka*, 3rd edn., 4 vols in 11 parts (Moscow & St Petersburg: various publishers, 1903-1910) vol 4.2, part 8, p. 1470.

were adepts on a wide range of musical instruments, and were in addition dancers, jugglers, and conjurers, actors, and tight-rope walkers; they appeared not only at festive gatherings and banquets, but also at christenings, weddings, and funerals. According to Vsevolod Miller, they seemed to be representatives almost of a pre-Christian spiritual world-view, and they disseminated spells, incantations, and tales of magic. Consequently they aroused the ire of the Church, had restrictions placed on their legal rights, and were frequently forbidden to receive Communion.

Later, by the 15th century, the repertoire of these *Spielmänner* and *Jongleurs* had become far more sophisticated and literary: they incorporated into their repertoire epic and historical songs, and this area of their activities corresponded to a great extent with that of the German *Minnesinger*, or minstrels, who were frequently of aristocratic background, and who would compose literary epics such as *Parzival*. The *Jongleurs* would sing *chansons de geste*, and became welcome guests at aristocratic gatherings.¹

Therefore, by the 13-14th centuries, a contrast had developed between those western European travelling entertainers who filled more the role of buffoons, and those who occupied themselves with higher spheres of literature and art. These latter composed songs and even complex narrative poems themselves.

Itinerant entertainers with a similar diversity of repertoire also appeared early in the Slavic and Russian worlds, under various names. The fact that the word *Spielmann* is to be found in Russian manuscripts in the 13th century, implies not only that the word was already commonly understood, but that representatives of this kind of entertainer had entered Rus' early from

¹ For further details on the *Minnesinger* see eg McMahon, James, *The Music of Early Minnesang* (Columbia: Camden House, 1990), and for the *Jongleurs*: Riot, Claude, *Chants et Instruments: Trouvères et Jongleurs au Moyen Âge* (Paris: R.E.M.P.A.R.T., 1995).

Northern Europe.

But about this time too in the early Slavonic sources appears the word *skomrakh* (Russian *skomorokh*), signifying the same idea. The term has been derived by scholars from several different languages, including Greek and Arabic. A link has been suggested between the origin of the term *skomorokh* and that of the name of the *Commedia del' Arte* figure Scaramuccia.¹

Whatever the derivation of the title *skomorokh*, these itinerant entertainers were without a doubt regarded as foreigners as, among other things, their non-Russian garb attests. According to Vsevolod Miller, the chronicler of Suzdal' speaks of their *latinskii kostium*, that is their 'western' outfit, with its short skirts, in distinction to the long coats, usually of fur, worn by the Russian populace, both peasants and nobles, of the time.² These *skomorokhi* swiftly settled in, and commenced to recruit for their troupes willing Russians, with the result that although they maintained their traditional typical dress and methods of their art, the content of these old forms soon became closely intertwined with those of Russian folk art.

The very earliest portrayals of *skomorokhi* are to be found in the frescoes dating from the 11th century in the St Sofiia Cathedral in Kiev, which are the sole surviving portrayal of secular activity in the monumental art of Kievan Rus'. In these frescoes are portrayed actors, musicians, clowns, acrobats and jesters. The actors are in traditional *skomorokh* attire – short tunics with slit hems – while the instrumentalists are in long kaftans drawn in by a waistband. These musicians are depicted playing the instruments associated with them by tradition. Besides the *gusli*, these include the fiddle, pipe and tabor, imitations of which Rimsky-Korsakov introduced into the *skomorokh* songs and dances in Tableau One of his opera-*bylina*.³

¹ Fasmer, III, 648-649. See also Zguta, Russell, *Russian Minstrels - A History of the Skomorokhi* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) pp. 1-2.

² Miller, V. F., *Ocherki*, p. 55.

³ Krestal'nyi, N. I., *Sofiia Kievskaiia* (Moscow: 'Iskusstvo', 1962). For reproductions of these frescoes see: Findeizen, N., 'Skomorosh'e delo na Rusi' *Ocherki po istorii muzyki v Rossii s drevneishikh vremen do kontsa*

Owing to their apparent association with a pre-Christian world view, and because of their association with folk merrymaking, the *skomorokhi*, like their European counterparts, were hounded by the Church, especially during the 16th and 17th centuries.¹ Finally, following a series of edicts during the reign of the pious Tsar Aleksei Romanov (1645-1676), which proscribed their activities, and ordered the destruction of their costumes and of their musical instruments,² the entertainers (in common with religious dissidents) fled from the heartlands of Russia to the as yet remote unexplored regions of Russia such as the far north. These were precisely those regions in which, centuries later, researchers such as Rybnikov and Gil'ferding discovered that the *stariny* were still thriving. However, no ethnographic researcher of the far north has ever mentioned finding any other traces of *skomorokh* activity such as troupes of itinerant actors, and the singing of the *stariny* by the peasant *skaziteli* was never accompanied by any musical instrument. It is considerations such as these which led such commentators as Miller to draw the conclusion quoted above, that the peasants were merely the most recent bearers and distorters of a repertoire which had been elaborated in a *skomorokh* milieu.

The figures of the *skomorokhi* had been employed in Russian opera before Rimsky-Korsakov, most notably in Borodin's opera based on the 'Song of Igor's Campaign' - *Kniaz'* ('Prince') *Igor'* (1890). Rimsky-Korsakov had already himself, before *Sadko*, given them a role as entertainers at folk festivals in his third opera *Snegurochka* ('Snow Maiden', 1882).

In his opera-byline *Sadko*, they are portrayed not only as professional entertainers playing traditional instruments, and as clowns and acrobats, but are also allotted a couple of humorous songs. These are drawn directly from Kirsha Danilov's collection, which, as noted above is

XVIII veka, 2 vols (Moscow, Leningrad: 'Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, Muzykal'nyi sektor', 1928) I, 145-233. See also Zguta, pp. 67-68.

¹ Eg see *Stoglav*, ed. Kozhanchikov, D. E., (St Petersburg: 'Imperatorskaia Akademiia nauk', 1863) glava *ma* (ie 41) vopros *si* (ie 16), pp. 135-136. The numbering at the head of this section (glava *ma*, p 128), does not coincide with that of the contents page, which gives it as glava *m* - ie chap. 40.

² Miller, V., *Ocherki*, (1897), pp. 55-58.

generally considered by researchers to be derived from the *skomorokh* repertoire. The composer, in his attempt to achieve an idealisation of the Russian national spirit in his composite operatic epic, divorced from the naturalistic dramatic considerations to which he was so averse, portrays the entertainers as highly talented representatives of their art. Yet, as he commented to Ossovskii, although he had depicted the *skomorokhi* on various occasions in his music, it would be interesting to have seen just how they had looked in reality - which would probably have been not at all attractive.¹

(2) THE ITINERANT PILGRIMS, AND CRIPPLES²

Another set of singers who performed the *stariny* were the wandering pilgrims, or *kaliki perekhozie*, and the cripples (*kaleki*) and the blind. The term *kalika* seems originally to have been used exclusively to denote a pilgrim, and *kaleka* to signify a cripple. However, by the time Dal' came to publish his Dictionary in the 1860s, he could note in the definition for *kalika* that this term had, in the north, come to be confused with *kaleka*. We are including these disseminators of epic songs – principally of the *stikhi dukhovnye* ('religious verses') – in our survey, because Rimsky-Korsakov gives a chorus of pilgrims (though not of cripples) an incidental role in his opera *Sadko*. However, the work from which he principally drew his quotations of *stikhi dukhovnye* in *Sadko* was Bessonov's 2-volume compilation of 1861-63, entitled *Kaleki perekhozie* ('The Wandering Cripples'), and the first volume contains a frontispiece of such handicapped people with their begging-bowls, plus a further similar illustration on p. 232. This exclusion of such individuals from his opera demonstrates again the composer's attempt to escape from naturalism and ugliness and to achieve an artistic

¹ Ossovskii, *Vospominaniia*, p. 288.

² The information in this section has been gleaned mainly from: Bezsonov, P., *Kaleki Perekhozie*, 2 vols (Moscow: vol I, Semen, 1861; vol II, Bakhmetev, 1863). Also: Liatskii, E. A., *Rus' Strazhdushchaia* (Stockholm: 'Severnye Ognii', 1920). See also Selivanov, F. M., *Stikhi dukhovnye* (Moscow: 'Sovetskaia Rossiia' 1993) pp. 3-26.

idealisation of the Russian national spirit, in both the music and libretto of his opera (although, of course, directors may still depict such people in their productions, in the interests of historic verisimilitude, even though this would seem to be contrary to the composer's intentions).

By the mid-19th century, then, *kalika* might signify – at least in the north of Russia, where the epic tradition was primarily still to be found – either a cripple or blind person, or a pilgrim, who sang *dukhovnye stikhi* at fairs and busy cross-roads to earn a living.¹ However, in ancient Russia, *kalika* signified not somebody with an infirmity, but a person who had wandered round Russia visiting shrines, or had even journeyed to the Holy Land. For instance, such 'palmer's' are referred to in Abbott Daniil's description of his journey to Jerusalem (1106-07), and in the records of Stefan of Novgorod (around 1360).² The provenance of this latter authority is significant, for, of course, the *bylina* of *Sadko* is set in and around Novgorod, and there was a great tradition of groups of pilgrims journeying to the Holy Land from ancient Novgorod.³ Pilgrimages also form the subject-matter of two major *byliny* - *Sorok kalika so kalikoiu* ('The Forty and One Palmers'),⁴ and *Vasilii Buslaev molit'sia ezdil* ('Vasilii Buslaev set forth for to pray').⁵ As we have observed, the set of epic songs concerning this Vasilii forms the other major complex of epics, besides those dealing with *Sadko*, deriving from, and set in, old Novgorod. Although Vasilii is never mentioned in the songs concerning *Sadko*, Rimsky-Korsakov refers obliquely to this set of narratives by calling *Sadko's* wife *Liubava Buslaevna* - which patronymic could be taken as implying that *Liubava* is *Vasilii's* sister. Furthermore, the name *Liubava* is to be found in two variants of the *bylina* *Solovei Budimirovich* as the name of the maiden whom *Solovei* has sailed in to Kiev to woo. By this deft interweaving of references

¹ Speranskii, *Byliny*, (1919), II, 53-54.

² 'Puteshestvie Igumena Daniil po sviatym mestam', and 'Puteshestvie Stefana Novgorodtsa', *Puteshestviia russkikh liudei po sviatoi zemle*, ed. Sakharov, I. P., (Saint Petersburg, 1839).

³ Speranskii, *Byliny*, II, pp. 53-54.

⁴ For specimen *byliny* on this theme see eg. Danilov (1977), no 224, pp. 121-129, and Gil'ferding (1949), I, no 72, pp. 680-689.

⁵ All the *byliny* dealing with Vasilii Buslaev are to be found in: Smirnov, Iu. I., and Smolitskii, V. G., *Novgorodskie byliny* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1978) nos 1-26, pp. 5-141. The first 18 variants deal with the theme of Vasilii and his *druzhina* (retinue, bodyguard, gang), in Novgorod, and the rest with their pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

from various epics, and by his use later of extracts of this latter epic, both musical and textual, taken directly from Kirsha Danilov, the composer is presumably attempting to create, in folk-bard style, the illusion of a coherent and all-embracing epic universe.

While in the holy places, the Russian pilgrims would of course have encountered pilgrims from other countries singing songs concerning their own saints, and would have heard in addition many religious legends and apocryphal traditions retailed by groups of Christian believers whom the mainstream church held to possess heretical doctrines. Basing his conclusions on the fact that many of the *dukhovnye stikhi* contain material seemingly derived from biblical apocrypha or Gnostic sources, Veselovskii believes the Russian pilgrims' repertoire of religious songs may have been influenced at a very early stage by Bogomil, Cathar, or Manichaean palmers whom the Russians had encountered during their wanderings.¹

Many of these pilgrims would remain in the Holy Land for life, while those who returned to Russia would frequently enter on a life of itinerant supplication for alms. They would sing religious songs containing material unfamiliar to their audience that they had acquired abroad, and which was often unacceptable to the mainstream church authorities.

This point is being introduced for consideration here, because the pilgrims in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Sadko* declaim some verses from the nominally Christian, but theologically heterodox religious narrative, *Golubinaia kniga* (either 'The Book of the Dove' or possibly 'The Book of Profundity'), and the composer also makes extensive use of the words of this *dukhovnyi stikh* for the Songs of the Three Foreign Merchants – a Viking, an Indian, and a Venetian – near the close of Tableau Four of his opera-bylina. By so doing he is communicating to the audience the background of the work in Russian folk creativity. Vikings,

¹ Veselovskii, A. N., 'Kaliki perekhozhie i bogomil'skie stranniki', *Vestnik Evropy*, April 1872 (vol IV) no 533, pp. 682-722.

Indians, and Venetians, are all mentioned in the Russian epos, but the peasant singers of the 19th century seemed to have no idea where they actually hailed from; they are always portrayed in terms derived from Russian folk life. Once again, the composer here is intensifying the illusion of the self-contained world of Russian folk fantasy, and distilling its essence in his operatic crystallisation.

(3) THE RUSSIAN FOLK INSTRUMENT, THE *GUSLI*

The most popular stringed instrument in old Russia in all strata of society was the *gusli*, and a short account of this instrument is appropriate here, since Sadko, the epic character who is the musician-hero of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, is an adept on this instrument, as too, is the minor character Nezhata, a professional bard.

The *gusli* was indeed to be found not only among the common folk and the *skomorokhi*, but also among the aristocracy, and minstrels who could play this instrument were part of the retinue of a boyar's or prince's court. One piece of evidence for this is the mention of the court bard Boian in the *Slovo o polku Igoreve*, in which he is described as playing what scholars have deduced is a ten-string variant of the *gusli*:

:

Боян же братие, не десять соколов на стадо лебедей пущаще,

Нъ своя вещия пръсты на живая струны воскладаше,

Они же сами князем славу рокотаху.¹

¹ 'But Boian, oh my brethren,
Ten hawks did not loose
Upon a flock of swans
But he lay his enchanter's fingers
Upon the living strings
Which then themselves sounded forth glory to the Princes.'
(Russian text drawn from Filin, p. 91).

A further indication that the *gusli* was to be found in aristocratic circles derives from the *byliny* themselves. We are told in the epics that playing this instrument was among the courtly accomplishments of some of the *bogatyri* in the retinue of Prince Vladimir I of Kiev, most notably Dobrynia Nikitich, and Rimsky-Korsakov quotes extensively from the epics concerning this character in his libretto (see Section Seven).

The word *gusli* is derived by scholars from the Old Slavonic root *gud* 'play', usually on a stringed instrument; a player on any such instrument was termed a *gudets*.¹

The ancient Russian *gusli* is generally held to have derived from the Finnish *kantele*, although some scholars maintain that the Finns in fact adapted their instrument from the Novgorodian *gusli*.² According to Findeizen, writing in the mid 1890s, the *kantele* was still to be found in the *Karel'skii Ujezd* ('District of Karelia') in the far north-west of Russia, bordering on the semi-autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland; Karelia had, from the 12th to the 16th centuries, been considered part of the Novgorod city-state, and then, after the unification of Russia under Moscow in the 17th century, part of the Novgorod Province (*guberniia*).³ This Finnish five-stringed instrument – attested to in the collection of Finnish folk epics, the *Kalevala* – was identical to the Novgorod *gusli*, which also originally had five strings corresponding to the pentatonic structure of the primordial Russian song. From Novgorod this instrument penetrated into the Principedom of Kiev, and subsequently to the other Russian regions. This primitive type of five-stringed instrument was, according to Findeizen, still in use until the early 19th century.⁴

The best *gusli* were constructed from sycamore wood (from the tree *acer pseudoplatanus*), since the atomic structure and radiating fibres of this wood yielded a particularly resonant

¹ Findeizen, I, p. 218.

² Findeizen, I, pp. 218-219.

³ Findeizen, *ibid*.

⁴ Findeizen, *ibid*. An illustration of a five-stringed *gusli* appears on p. 219.

sound. Indeed, the *gusli* is always designated in the *byliny*, and, consequently, in Rimsky-Korsakov's libretto for *Sadko*, by the 'stock epithet' *iarovchatye* ('of sycamore'), frequently with the addition of the adjective *zvonchatye* ('resounding').¹ The instrument - usually either triangular or helmet-shaped - normally had the bottom edge resting on the knees, with the top angle or cone resting on the chest. The strings were strummed or plucked, usually without a plectrum.

From illustrations and miniatures, it is apparent that the number of strings on the *gusli* gradually increased, leading to alterations in the instrument's shape and structure. We have already seen that the bard Boian is described in the 12th century epic recounting the story of Prince Igor's campaign as playing a ten-stringed instrument. The title-page of the 1897 score of *Sadko* reproduced at the head of this thesis (between pages 7 and 8) shows the folk musician playing a *gusli* with thirteen strings.²

However, by the time the folk-song collectors commenced their activities in Russia in the latter part of the 19th century, the performance of the *stariny* was never accompanied by any musical instrument.

Rimsky-Korsakov was not the first Russian composer to introduce a representation of the sound of a *gusli* into his work; this was Glinka, in his *Ruslan i Liudmila* (1842), in which the

¹ See eg Danilov (1977), *Sadko bogatoi gost'*, no 5, p. 40, and Rybnikov, II, no 134, p. 243.

² The inspiration for this illustration of a *skomorokh* playing a multi-stringed *gusli* seems to have been derived from the section dealing with 14th century Novgorodian illuminated capital letters in a collection issued by Rimsky-Korsakov's mentor, Vladimir Stasov: his *Slavianskii i vostochnyi ornament* (St Petersburg, 1887). Item 25 of plate LXXVIII shows a Cyrillic upper-case *Д* constructed around a *skomorokh* playing such an instrument. This illumination, according to Stasov's notes on p. 25, derives from a 14th century Novgorod Missal. Owing to its date and provenance, this illustration is of course singularly apposite to the theme of *Sadko*. On the title-page of the opera-byline, the artist A. Antipov has ingeniously woven the name 'Sadko' around this *Д* illuminated with a *skomorokh* and *gusli*. Since, as we shall analyse in Section Seven, Rimsky-Korsakov, the 'bard behind the bard' set about creating the atmosphere of the mediaeval Russian epic of Novgorod in his opera-byline not simply through music and libretto, but even through the language of the cast-list and stage-directions, we may surmise that this creation of epic atmosphere is intentionally commenced with this title-page.

composer inaugurated the tradition of imitating this instrument's timbre by simultaneous chords and arpeggios on the harp and piano in the orchestra; Borodin continued this custom in *Kniaz' Igor'*, (1890), and Rimsky-Korsakov himself - who was influenced greatly in his early career by Glinka (see Section Three), - used the same orchestral forces to represent the *gusli* in his third opera *Snegurochka*, (1882) and, subsequently, in *Sadko*. However, although Rimsky-Korsakov's imitation of the *gusli* in *Sadko* links this opera to the previous works, and although the *gusli* did indeed form the major instrument in the repertoire of the *skomorokhi*, this imitation is justified in the opera-byлина principally by the fact that, in the epic sources, the hero is a folk musician and adept on this instrument.

According to Spiegelman, from the 18th century onwards western music and instruments started to penetrate into Russia on a large scale. Music began to be composed for harpsichord and piano, often in notation resembling *gusli* fingering. During the 1780s production of pianos and harpsichords began in St Petersburg, and little by little these instruments came to replace the *gusli* as the favoured instrument for domestic music-making.¹

There were other instruments employed to a much smaller extent by the *skomorokhi*, and, in order to heighten the verisimilitude and authentic atmosphere of his opera, Rimsky-Korsakov, in his settings of songs from Kirsha Danilov's collection for the *skomorokhi* in his opera, has the flutes imitate the primitive folk fife, while there are 'naïve' parts for drum and tambourine – all of which instruments are attested as forming part of the strolling players' accoutrements.² Furthermore he employs deliberately primitive harmonies – principally block fifths (see Section Seven).

¹ Spiegelman, Joel, 'Style formation in early Russian Keyboard Music', (in) *The Eighteenth Century in Russia*, ed. J. G. Gerrard (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1973), chap. 11b, pp. 311-320.

² Eg. Belkin, A. A., *Russkie skomorokhi* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1975), pp. 45, 113, 121.

The question arises: why did the above-mentioned composers of the Russian 'nationalist' school not employ real *gusli* and other folk instruments in the orchestra or even on stage? We must assume that in sonority, these instruments could not compete with a full symphony orchestra, that their timbre did not gell with that of the conventional art music ensemble, and that, finally, due to the declining popularity of the instrument outlined above, not enough players could be found to create a *gusli* section equal to the other sections of the orchestra.

However, in his penultimate opera *The Legend of the Invisible city of Kitezh*, premiered in 1907, Rimsky-Korsakov at last composed a short episode (Act Two) in which as many as thirty Russian stringed folk instruments were to play for a few minutes, on stage, with the accompaniment of the conventional orchestra in the pit. This episode was designed to accompany a wedding procession on stage, and to represent the activities of the surrounding merry-makers. Rimsky-Korsakov specifies in his preface to the opera that other folk instruments needing little skill to play, such as tambourines, triangles, small cymbals, various kinds of small drum, and jingles (*sonagli*) of all types, were also to be used *ad libitum* here by the revellers.

However, instructively, the string parts of this episode were not for the *gusli*, but for the newly-popular folk instruments of domras and balalaikas, implying that not enough skilled *gusli* players could now be found to make a *gusli* section viable.

This unprecedented experiment in orchestration, however, although still to be found in modern scores of the opera, was abandoned by the composer following a rehearsal at the Mariinsky Theatre in December 1906. When the virtuoso balalaika player V. Andreev, founder of a popular orchestra of folk instruments, wrote to Rimsky-Korsakov expressing his disappointment, the composer replied that the volume of the 26 domras and balalaikas he had managed to unearth was still not sufficient to compete with the rest of the orchestra playing

with them simultaneously, nor did the timbre gell with that of the orchestra at this point. Accordingly, he had abandoned the experiment with great reluctance.¹

Incidentally, although the balalaika is now considered the Russian national instrument, Rimsky-Korsakov feels it necessary in the notes to his opera to define it (as 'similar to a triangular three-stringed guitar played *pizzicato*') for his urban educated audience. He also defines here the domra. This seems to indicate that even some seventy years after the commencement by Glinka of Russian opera in national style, and the assiduous cultivation and portrayal of the Russian national spirit by artists of all genres in their works over this period, their audience was still not well-acquainted with folk creativity and did not seem to have been inspired by the artists to familiarise themselves with their culture's folk roots. The dispiriting conclusion seems to be that - at least in the case of 'national' music - the audience regarded it as an evening's entertainment, and had not been stimulated to probe any deeper into the well-springs from which it had been derived.

To return to Rimsky-Korsakov's unsuccessful experiment in *Kitezh*: the content of Rimsky-Korsakov's final opera, *Zolotoi petushok* ('The Golden Cockerel' - premiered 1908), does not require genuine folk instruments. There is no means of knowing whether, if the composer had survived to compose further operas on national themes, he would have attempted to introduce folk instruments again, but with different scoring for the rest of the orchestra, to produce a more harmonious texture.

To conclude this sub-section: although the *gusli* was the best-known popular instrument in old Russia, and was widely used by the *skomorokhi*, the instrument's timbre in works depicting

¹ Andreev's letter is dated 15 Jan 1907, and the composer replied the following day. The entire exchange is contained in: Baranov, Iurii, *Vasilii Andreev* (Tver': 'Russkaia provintsia', 2001), pp. 107-8. The folk band parts may be found in Act Two, '*Skazanie o nevidimom grade Kitezhe*', (Musical) *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol 14a, pp. 216-223 (orchestral nos 101-103), and pp. 252-261 (orch.nos 117-120).

these strolling players, and folk bards such as Sadko, had to be represented in the orchestra by the 'art' instruments of harp and piano. This was presumably because, firstly, no composer until Rimsky-Korsakov in 1906 had had the courage to follow the use of folk sources to its logical conclusion by undertaking the unprecedented step of introducing folk instruments into his works. Furthermore, as regards the *gusli*, there were presumably not enough skilled players on this instrument by the time of Rimsky-Korsakov's late career to make it a viable orchestral instrument. Finally, the composer's first tentative experiment in the use of such instruments had proved unsuccessful, and we can now never know whether he could subsequently have achieved a successful synthesis of them and conventional orchestral instruments in his works.

(4) THE STRUCTURE AND POETICS OF THE *STARINY*.

As stated above, Rimsky-Korsakov noted in his prefatory material to the score of his opera-*bylina Sadko* that he had adapted the subject-matter from the variants of this epic available to him in the collections of Danilov, Rybnikov, and others. However, in order to create the authentic epic atmosphere in this work, he drew up the libretto, and even the cast list and stage directions, from utterances to be found not only in the *byliny*, but in the *skomorokh* songs and spiritual verses too. By so doing, he is demonstrating that he is not simply slavishly setting an ancient epic to music, but is recreating the story in his own manner, and that the opera is itself a new musical genre, to be understood in different dramatic terms from that of a conventional stage production of the time. He also introduced long *bylina*-like musical recitatives and shorter melodic fragments derived from the epics, into the musical texture of the opera. We shall examine these borrowings and these musical lines in detail later in this section, and in Section Eight. Here, we shall analyse briefly the characteristic textual structures, rhythms, and poetical

devices of the *bylina* which Rimsky-Korsakov employed in *Sadko*.¹

Firstly, we might ask – why did Rimsky-Korsakov have so many variants of *Sadko* to work with?² This is because any epic might change in detail from performance to performance. The singers unearthed by the collectors included many (the best, in Gil'ferding's view³) who would take the frame-work of any story-line, which they knew by heart, and then, while adhering broadly to this outline, would vary each performance by means of the poetical and melodic devices to be discussed below, and also would omit some details, add others, change the order of lines and sections, and so forth; they would in addition vary the musical outline. However, other *skaziteli* would memorise each narrative word for word and note for note as if it were a conventional folk song, and would declaim it in precisely the same fashion at every performance. There were too, Gil'ferding observed, singers who, as a result of a poor memory or of incompetence, failed to keep separate story-lines differentiated, with the result that characters and incidents from one epic would turn up totally incongruously in a *bylina* declamation on another subject.

Although the composer based himself mainly on the extremely detailed variant of *Sadko* sung by the *skazitel'* Andrei Sorokin, to be found in Rybnikov,⁴ he also included anomalous details from other variants, to be found in both Danilov and elsewhere in Rybnikov, in order, one

¹ In-depth studies are to be found in: Arant, P., *Compositional Techniques of the Russian Oral Epic, the Bylina* (New York and London: Garland, 1990), *passim*; Jones, Roy, *Language and Prosody of the Russian Folk Epic* (Paris & The Hague: Mouton, 1972), *passim*, and Zhirmunskii, V. M., *Vvedenie v metriku* (Leningrad: 'Academia', 1925) pp. 242-257.

² There are two variants to be found in Danilov, one in Kireevskii, six in Rybnikov, and three in Gil'ferding. This is not counting the narrations of the epic in Gil'ferding which are almost exact repetitions by a singer of the version he had sung to Rybnikov some ten years previously. All known variants of *Sadko* are assembled in Smirnov and Smolitskii, *Novgorodskie Byliny*, nos. 27-53, pp. 148-231. For the purposes of this study, we shall ignore the *byliny Sviatogor i Sadko* (Gil'ferding, II, no. 119, pp 307-312), and *Sadko, Vol'ga i Mikula* (Gil'ferding, I, no. 2, pp. 101-110), since these are confabulations of totally unrelated epic-story lines produced by an incompetent narrator of the type described by Gil'ferding (see below).

³ Gil'ferding, I, (1949), p. 50.

⁴ Rybnikov, II, no 134, pp. 243-254.

speculates, to show precisely this differentiation of detail among the better singers. One criticism that may be raised here is that the music, and libretto, once written, are not fundamentally alterable: although conductors may choose different *tempi* from performance to performance, and although production details may vary from director to director, the music and details of the libretto cannot realistically be shifted to a different place in the work, without leading to incoherence. Furthermore, although cuts may be made, as they frequently are in longer dramatic works, extra scenes and passages of libretto may not be added, in *skazitel'* style, unless the director ventures on a total reinterpretation of the work – eg, Sadko as a rock musician in Chicago. Neither can the music be radically altered, unless extracts are brought in from other Rimsky-Korsakov works, or else are even specially written by somebody else. An attempt to answer this criticism will be made in Section Eight, but we may simply point out here that, as stated, some epic singers declaimed the epics virtually unchanged from performance to performance, and so the invariability of the music and libretto of the opera may be said to be imitative of the techniques of these slightly inferior folk bards.

Regarding the fluid musical line of many of these singers, Rybnikov remarks that he tried many times to capture in conventional musical notation a few of the epic melodies, but he never quite succeeded; experienced singers would sing the same epic narrative to him several times, yet, because the melody seemed to change every time, he never quite managed to note it down; he concludes that he believes that there is only one fundamental *bylina* line which the singer varied depending on the predominating mood of the epic she or he was singing.¹

It will be recalled that the only musical transcriptions of the *stariny* in the four major collections with which Rimsky-Korsakov worked, were to be found in Danilov's volume; neither Rybnikov nor Gil'ferding's work contained any such transcribed melodies (except, in the latter case, the

¹ Rybnikov, I, (1909), xciii-xciv.

already-mentioned insertion of Musorgsky's transcriptions from Trofim Riabinin). Therefore, the melodic epic lines which the composer used in *Sadko* are drawn from Danilov, or else are based on transcriptions from folk singers such as the Riabinins and Irina Fedosova who visited St Petersburg, and whom Rimsky-Korsakov or his colleagues such as Musorgsky, heard perform.

Rybnikov pointed out that a *bylina* subject had no specific chant-melody linked to it; besides, many performances by the best singers were improvised on the spot around a consistent framework: therefore, the text must, on each occasion, be altered in various ways to suit the melodic line selected by the singer.¹

This melodic line (*napev* in Russian) consisted of a kind of rhythmic chant to which the words of the epic were moulded. These chants varied in mood: some were sad, some solemn, some merry. According to Rybnikov, the majority of the singers knew three chants at most.² However, skilled performers could broaden their range of expressive possibilities by singing the same melody at different speeds and in differing vocal styles; in addition, they could employ a wide range of vocal ornamentation to vary their delivery. Furthermore, Rybnikov continues, the same narrator might declaim the same epic subject to a different *napev* from performance to performance, or else intone different story-lines to one and the same melody.

Since the Russian epos was intended for oral declamation before an audience, and was designed to grip an audience's attention over a long period, it is, both in terms of metre and language, deeply rhythmical, whichever *napev* is being used, in order to create an incantatory, and, indeed, almost hypnotic effect. The *bylina* line (*stikh* in Russian) consists of a number of stresses – most frequently three, but also often two or four – separated by an unfixed number

¹ Rybnikov, *ibid*, xciii. For a selection of these melodic lines, see Danilov, (1977), pp. 227-35.

² Rybnikov, *ibid*.

of unstressed syllables; the number of stressed and unstressed syllables may well vary from line to line, depending on the *napev* being used, and on the way the narrator has decided to tell her/his story.¹ Examples of the way Rimsky-Korsakov employed and varied this basic epic line will be studied in Section Seven.

If each line, depending on content and melodic contour, is variably stressed and of differing length from declamation to declamation, how does the *skazitel'/nitsa* (male or female epic narrator) achieve this? Firstly, by means of what may be termed 'filler particles' – that is, sounds virtually empty of semantic content – to maintain the rhythm; for example, in the Russian epos *ai, okh, a*, and so forth. These perform the same function as *δε, με, or γε* do in Classical Greek. Rough equivalents in British English would be 'och', 'aye', and 'a', this last in such usages as 'here we come a-wassailing' and 'a-maying'. To this category of 'filler particles' in the Russian epic, we may add such words as *nun', tut, ved', da*, ('now', 'here', 'y'know', 'yea'), which, although containing some significance in ordinary speech, possess practically none in folk poetry. As a specimen of this in English, one might quote such a phrase as 'all in the month of maying', where 'all' bears no semantic content whatever, but is employed principally to maintain the metre and to link passages. Of course, which particular filler-items are used in any line from performance to performance depends on the narrator. These semantically almost vacuous lexemes are also employed abundantly by Rimsky-Korsakov in *Sadko*. The composer specifically notes in his prefatory material to *Sadko* (*Vmesto predisloviia*, Item 8) his use of these particles, and he gives examples of this usage such as *a* and *a i*; in normal usage, 'a' means 'but' and 'i' means 'and'; but in folk poetry they often express nothing, and frequently are even found together to maintain the rhythm (see line two of the extract below). We may quote as an example from the libretto here:

¹ For a highly technical discussion of the *bylina* line see Jones, Roy, *Language and Prosody*, (*passim*). See also Chettéoui, Wilfred, *Un Rapsode Russe - Rjabinin le Père - La byline au XIXe Siècle* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1942), pp. 35-46.

Уж как по морю, морю синему,
А и все корабли что соколы летят

and the opening line of the concluding chorus of Tableau Four drawn directly from Danilov (see Section Seven (B)): *Vysota li, vysota podnebesnaia*, etc.¹

Another cluster of words used constantly to maintain rhythm is *tot, to, ta, or te* – that is to say, the various forms of the Russian signifier for ‘that’ and ‘those’. Neither the definite nor the indefinite article exist in Russian, and generally in the spoken or written language the lack is not felt, since the context almost always indicates whether a noun is definite or not.

The very ubiquity of the articles in English renders them invaluable as maintainers of flow and rhythm in English-language poetry and song. Since, however, the epic narrator cannot fall back on these two words in Russian, the various forms of the Russian demonstrative pronoun are used to express the definite article, and to maintain rhythm (normally no equivalent is employed for the missing indefinite article, which is tacitly understood). Yet here, too, as with the previously-discussed ‘filler-particles’, the Russian forms of ‘that’, when used in epic song, almost invariably possess no semantic content whatever, but are used simply as another meaningless insertion to assist the rhythmic flow. We may adduce here, as examples of the use of these fillers and of ‘that’ the following extracts:

Да и ходили-то калики перехожие,
А и лапотики на ножках-то шелковенки.

¹ The first extract derives from the opening of Tableau Five (*Sadko*, full score, part 6c, pp. 9-10, bars 38-47), and may be translated: ‘And now over the sea, the deep-blue sea, yea, Sadko’s ships fly like falcon-birds’. The words translated ‘and now’ and ‘yea’ add nothing in Russian. The second example is almost untranslatable, but may be rendered ‘The heights, yea the heights beneath the heavens’ (Tableau Four, part 6b, p. 221, bars 1209-1212).

А и у них подсумки-та сшиты с черна бархату ...¹

and:

И брови-то у ней черна соболя.

А ведь очи-то у ней да ясна сокола

И на косициях у ней звезды частыя.²

Rimsky-Korsakov does not employ these equivalents of the definite article in his libretto for *Sadko* as frequently as the almost meaningless filler-particles. Rather more often, he uses another device employed by the narrators to maintain the rhythm of the Russian folk epic, which is totally unreproduceable in English: this is the repeated utilisation of prepositions such as *do* ('to'), or *v(o)* and *na* plus the locative case ('in', 'on',), or else followed by the accusative case ('into' 'onto'), eg:

Как **во** той ли **во** Индией **во** богатой,

Как **во** той ли Карелии **во** упямой

Как **во** том ли **во** городе Волынце,

Жил-был молодой боярский сын . . .'³

¹ Gil'ferding, II, (1950), no 86, *Sorok kalik* ('Forty Pilgrims') p. 140:

'Yea, and off they roamed, those wandering palmers,
Aye, and the bast sandals on their footies were all of silk (*sic*),
And their scrips were of black velvet y-woven ...'

² Gil'ferding, II, (1950), no. 23, *Dobrynia i zmei* ('Dobrynia and the Serpent') p. 342:

'And her browes were like unto sable swart,
And her eyen were those, y-wis, of a bright falcon-bird,
And thickly 'pon her locks were stars y-strewn'...

³ Gil'ferding, II, no 115, *Diuk* ('Diuk' - not a title, but the name of the hero of the *bylina*) p. 284:

'Within that wealthy land, it was, within that land of Inde,
within that Karelia, within that Karelia the stiff-necked,
within that town, that town of Volynets,
there lived 'pon a time a young lording's son ...'

The use of *kak* and *li* as semantically redundant fillers in the first three lines of the above may also be noted here. Incidentally, 'India' was a convenience label in the Russian epos and in prose legend for any exotic, distant, wealthy land: the best-known tune from the opera *Sadko* - 'The Song of the Indian Merchant' - is a setting of words from a mediaeval legend concerning the fabulously wealthy land of India.

In addition to these filler-particles, another device used to mould text to rhythm is fluctuating stress of any word depending on the rhythmical context: for example, 'Kiev' may be accentuated on either syllable, as may 'Il'ia', while 'Muromets', 'Vladimir', and *bogatyř*, may be stressed on any one of their three syllables. In addition, words, in a manner impossible to be represented on the printed page, may be dragged out, broken up into syllables, have extra vowels inserted between consonants, and even have their pronunciation drastically altered. For example, in recordings of *byliny* (made on an expedition of 1955 to the Russian far north), the name of the *bogatyř* Dobrynia (usually stressed on the second syllable), is regularly intoned as 'Da-ba-ryń-ni-a', while 'Alësha' becomes 'Al-ee-ósh-ee-ia'.¹ Rimsky-Korsakov, in apparent imitation of this usage, employs the locution 'Sad-Sadko' at several places in his opera.² This form of the name Sadko does not appear in any printed version, and so one must assume that the composer derived it from the epic narrators he had heard perform at various times, especially in the early 1890s, shortly before he set to work on his opera-*bylina*.

End-rhymes – or near-rhymes – are very infrequently used; they are employed mainly to create a surprise effect, or even to finish off a *bylina*: Rimsky-Korsakov uses a confabulation of several of these endings to produce the verse concluding his own opera *Sadko*:

Та старина слава, то и деянье,

¹ National Sound Archive, British Library: two LP records, call-marks: D-024791 and D-02577-8.

² Eg., Tableau One, vol 6a, pp. 130-131, bars 619-621, and Tableau Seven, vol 6c, p. 388, bars 461-462.

Старцам угрюмым на потешенье,
 Молодцам, девицам на поученье,
 Всем нам на услышанье.¹

The most common and characteristic poetic device of the epics, which is utilised by the composer comprehensively throughout the libretto, is the 'stock epithet' (*postoiannyi epitet*). This locution signifies two or three words – usually a noun and one or two qualifying adjectives – which are almost always found together in the *stariny*, and, indeed, in all genres of Russian folk-song and folk-tale, to form one unified stereotypical idea. The only such commonly occurring conjunctions in English folk poetry are 'milk-white' as applied to 'steeds', and 'blue' or 'high' in conjunction with 'sea(s)'. In Russian such formulae are far more common. An example of this – to be found on numerous occasions in the libretto of *Sadko* – is *sinee more* ('deep-blue sea'); frequently too in folk literature we find the combination *okean-more* ('ocean-sea'); very commonly furthermore the whole phrase is prefaced with *glubokoe* ('deep'), to form the semantic item *glubokoe sinee okean-more* ('deep deep-blue ocean-sea'). Most notably Rimsky-Korsakov uses this combination as the title of his short Prelude to the opera, in the form *Okian-more sinee* ('The Ocianne-Sea Deep-blue'), in which the word 'Ocean' is given in a non-standard form frequently to be found in the epics, and in which, also in folk and archaic style, the adjective follows the noun.

A horse in the *stariny* is invariably a 'goodly steed', (*dobryi kon'*), while hands, feet, legs, arms, and faces, are always 'fair and white' (*belye* or its folk diminutive *belekhonekie*). The sun is

¹ 'That glorious old song, aye those exploits, (or possibly 'those glorious old songs, they really happened'),
 [and] are sung to amuse gloomy old men,
 and to teach the young lads and lassies,
 and for all of us to hearken unto.'
 (*Sadko*, vol 6c, Tableau Seven, conclusion)

always 'beauteous and bright' (*krasnoe solnyshko*), a head is 'turbulent', (*buinuia golovushka*) while the *gusli*, as we have already mentioned, is always 'sonorous' (*zvonchatye*), and very frequently 'of sycamore wood' (*iarovchatye*). Rimsky-Korsakov drew up a list of these epithets in preparation for writing his opera-*bylina*,¹ and all the examples cited here are to be found throughout the libretto of *Sadko*, plus other less frequent such conjunctions, which will be dealt with as they occur in our analysis of the opera below *passim*.

A parallel stylistic device is the use of what Gilferding termed 'transferable formulae' (*tipicheskie mesta*).² These are composed of stereotypical formulaic descriptions of actions or deeds, usually not connected directly with any one story-line, comprised of from one to as many as approximately thirty lines, which are used to flesh out the bare bones of the tale and, too, to give the performer mental respites during which to plan the next section of the narrative; these passages may be used at will in any *bylina*. Gilferding contrasts these *tipicheskie mesta* with what he terms *perekhodnye mesta* ('transitional locations'), which contain the action specific to a particular epic story-line. However, it must be emphasised that even these formulaic transferable sections of the *bylina* were not necessarily intended to be memorised word for word and declaimed identically on each occasion, but, like the story itself were to be reinvented at each performance around a uniform framework, both by the use of differing vocabulary and filler-particles, and also by the lengthening of the passage by line after line of the above-discussed permissible stereotypical formulae. Typical of this procedure is the most widely-employed of such passages: a ritualised opening scene of many of the *byliny* depicting a feast in great detail. Several of the variants of the first subject of the *Sadko* epic - that of the folk musician's acquisition of great wealth - either begin with such a feast, or else inform us

¹ Gozenpud, A. A., 'Rimsky-Korsakov v rabote nad opernym libretto' (in) Kabalevskii (ed.), I, pp. 208-251 (p. 238).

² Eg Gilferding, I, (1949), p. 57. The Russian translates as 'typical (ie of a certain literary type) locations'. However, since this formula is meaningless in English, I have rendered it freely as 'transferable formulae', or 'transferable bridging passages'.

that, for several days running, Sadko has not been invited to entertain at such a feast. Consequently, Rimsky-Korsakov commences his opera with just such an episode, at which the merchants of Novgorod are portrayed sitting around drinking and bragging in their merchants' Guild Hall. This opening scene is also employed to commence many of the epic songs of the Kiev cycle. Typically, we are shown a feast at the court of Prince Vladimir I of Kiev. Mention is made first of all the people feasting, normally in descending order of social standing; for example, *kniazi* ('princes'), *boiary* ('nobles'), *bogatyri*, and rich merchants; this opening usually leads into several more formulaic lines portraying the *boiary* and *bogatyri* bragging drunkenly about their possessions or achievements.¹ This vainglorious self-vaunting very often then conducts us into the main action of the *bylina*, since, as a result of his unwise boasting, a hero is committed by the other guests to some heroic adventure, or else is commanded to carry out a dangerous mission for the Prince. In the Novgorodian epic of *Sadko*, in the most complete variants, the wealthy merchants refuse the poor folk-musician Sadko entry to their feast (usually nine times) until ultimately, he enters to wager them that there are 'fish made of gold' in Lake Il'men'.²

This opening scene may run to as many as thirty lines; however, in practice, it is often shorter, since, at the discretion of the singer, not all of the social classes at the feast, nor all of the boasting, need be mentioned. If the singer so desires, only one *bogatyri* may speak at Prince Vladimir's feast, and this will launch the story straight into the main action.

¹ Pushkin begins his imitation of Russian epic, *Ruslan and Liudmilla*, with a feast at Prince Vladimir's court, and accordingly Glinka too commences his operatic setting of this theme with such a feast. Rimsky-Korsakov (see Section Three) was greatly influenced throughout his career by Glinka. Incidentally, Stasov advised Rimsky-Korsakov to ensure that the feast in *Sadko* was understood to be 'republican, Novgorodian', where there was no Prince, and all participants were equal (Stasov, V. V., letter to N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov, 7 July 1894, quoted in Iankovsii, M. O., 'Stasov i Rimsky-Korsakov', *Muzykal'noe nasledstvo* ed. Kabalevskii, I, pp. 337-403 (p. 379)). For an explanation of the republican status of early Novgorod, and of Rimsky-Korsakov's emphasis on this in the merchant's feast, see Section Four.

² Eg., Rybnikov, II, pp. 243-254. It is not clear whether Sadko is refused entry to the same feast nine times, or to nine different feasts. Rimsky-Korsakov in Tableau Four (vol 6b, p. 32, bars 146-150) implies that Sadko has in fact been entertaining at other feasts too, and has been declaiming there the same poetical and visionary sentiments which the merchants find so unsettling in Tableau One. In other words, he is a threat to the old order in Novgorod.

As mentioned above, after a short orchestral prelude, Rimsky-Korsakov leads into his opera *Sadko* with a Tableau (*kartina*) depicting a feast. However, in the introduction to this thesis, it was pointed out that *Sadko* has been criticised for its 'poor dramatic quality'. This opening scene has been singled out for particular criticism for its static nature. For some fourteen minutes until *Sadko*'s entry, nothing happens on stage apart from the merchants and Nezhata, the bard from Kiev, eating and singing.¹ However, as we also noted in our Introduction, Rimsky-Korsakov was always insistent that his operas were not to be understood in terms of normal dramatic considerations, and that the music must always be considered to be pre-eminent. Bearing this stipulation of the composer in mind, an attempt will be made to defend this scene against the charge of static non-dramatism in Sections Seven and Eight.²

Although the Novgorodian feast is indeed a 'republican feast', Rimsky-Korsakov makes an oblique reference to the 'Junior Heroes' cycle of Novgorod by having the merchants refer at the very beginning of Tableau One to Kiev's 'bogatyran deeds' (*'dela bogatyrskie'*) and to that city's '*Laskovyi Kniaz*' ('Gracious Prince') - a stock description of Prince Vladimir to be found throughout the Russian epics. This motif of an opening feast also links *Sadko* to the tradition of Russian epic opera exemplified by Glinka and Borodin - the former in the above-mentioned opening feast in *Ruslan and Liudmilla*, and the latter in the drunken carousal at the court of Prince Galitskii in Act II of *Prince Igor*.

Another feature of Russian epic language, which is used only sparingly by the composer, is the use of two words or stock epithets signifying approximately the same thing in combination

¹ All timings for the opera in this thesis are based on the Philips 1993 Kirov recording conducted by Valery Gergiev ('SADKO', Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, 'Opera-bylina in seven tableaux', Kirov Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Valery Gergiev, Philips 442 138-2, 1994). Tsukkerman castigates the slow pace of Act One in *SM* 3, 1933, p. 49.

² For a representative selection of samples of this opening formula, of very different length, in the *byliny*, see eg: Danilov, 1977, no 11, 'O zhenit'be Kniazia Vladimira ('Prince Vladimir's Betrothal')', p. 54; Rybnikov (1909), I, no. 14, 'Staver', p. 90; II, no 104, 'Danila Ignatevich i Mikhaila Danil'evich', pp. 5-6; and Gil'ferding (1950), II, no. 150, 'Mikhailo Potyk', pp. 485-486.

or in swift succession, for instance, *khodili-guliali* ('they walked, they roamed'), *sokhodilis'-sobiralis'* ('They gathered, came together'), *zhurit'-branit'* ('to swear, to curse'). Rimsky-Korsakov's major use of this type of combination is *znaiu-vedaiu* ('I know, I wot'), drawn from the *bylina Sadkov korabl' stal na more* ('Sadko's Ship Stood Still upon the Sea') in Danilov's collection.¹ The composer employs this usage in his Tableaux Four and Seven.²

A stock combination of nouns and adjectives forming a very frequent exclamation of wonder throughout all of Russian folk lore, is '*Chudo chudnoe, divo divnoe!*' ('Wonder of wonders, marvel of marvels!'), and this exclamation recurs constantly throughout the composer's opera-*bylina*.

Finally, in old literature dealing with Novgorod, and in the *byliny* dealing with that town, (the name of which literally means 'New-Town'), both elements are commonly grammatically declined (and moreover *gorod* is frequently reduced to the older form *grad*), eg, Nova-grada (of Novgorod), Novu-gorodu (to Novgorod), and so on. Rimsky-Korsakov follows this usage throughout his *Sadko*.

As regards the overall structure of the song, this commonly consists, firstly, of an introduction setting the scene and leading into the main action, such as the above-described feast. Then follows the story-line, which, as we have seen, may be fleshed out by transferable formulaic passages. This beginning is occasionally elaborated by an exordium addressed to the audience, such as the paeon in praise of various localities in Russia which is found at the commencement of the *bylina* concerning the hero Solovei Budimirovich in Danilov's collection.¹³ Such preludes are rare in the printed collections, but could presumably have

¹ Danilov, (1977), no 47, pp. 178-182 (p. 179).

² Eg. Tableau Four, vol 6b, pp. 78-80, bars 370-377.

³ Danilov, (1977), *Pro Solov'ia Budimirovicha* ('About Solovei Budimirovich') no 1, p. 9.

been used to introduce any song in performance, and may have served as a call to attention to the audience, functioning as the equivalent of an operatic overture.

We shall examine this exordium to the epic about Solovei in detail later in this study, since Rimsky-Korsakov used it to *conclude* the Fourth Tableau of his *Sadko* with an extended arrangement of it for soloists, full chorus, and orchestra. Furthermore, the short orchestral prelude to the opera, depicting the sea, and entitled, in true epic style '*Okian-more Sinee*' ('The Ocean Sea Deep-Blue'), may also be understood as such an exordium.

Very frequently, as a conclusion to the narration of an epic, we find a 'transferable' verse with end rhymes, or near-rhymes, (resembling that already quoted (p. 66-67) which Rimsky-Korsakov used to round off his opera), to emphasise that the song is now ended. Possibly, when the song was sung originally by the *skomorokhi* or *kaliki*, this concluding verse also served as a hint that the hat would be passed around at this point! ¹

There are, in fact, no elements of the language and structure of the old Russian epic chants which the composer does not make greater or lesser use of in his opera. The same is true of the musical lines, which we shall now also briefly analyse

(5) THE MUSICAL LINES OF THE *STARINY*.

We have seen that the composer had heard live performances of *byliny* from such singers as Irina Fedosova, and he *may* have heard either or both of the Riabinins, though there is no definite evidence for this. We also know (see Section 3), that, during his childhood in Tikhvin, 120 miles north of Novgorod, in the 1840s and '50s, he would have heard pilgrims and cripples

¹ Eg. see the conclusion of *Diuk Stepanovich* (Danilov, (1977), no 3, p. 24), and of *Alesha Popovich* (Danilov, no 20, p. 106).

declaiming religious narratives (*dukhovnye stikhi*) to earn a living, and it was these long-drawn-out declamatory lines which he adapted or imitated for use in isolated numbers in such operas previous to *Sadko* as *Snegurochka*.¹ However, although at various stages of his career he had contemplated writing an opera on a *bylina* story,² it was only with *Sadko* in 1894-96 that he finally began work on an 'opera-bylina' making use of the distinctive epic line which he claimed in his memoirs he derived from that of the Riabinins.

Our understanding of what precisely the melodic lines of the original singers sounded like is hampered by the fact that either the early collectors whom the composer would have been familiar with (such as Rybnikov and Gil'ferding) did not transcribe the tunes, or else (eg Prach, Stakhovich, Danilov), wrote down these peasant songs in conventional 'art music' notation as regards time and key, disregarding the fact that folk song does not conform to conventional tone rows or rhythms. Danilov's transcriptions will be examined below; the first complete edition of Gil'ferding (1873) contained an insertion of a transcription of two songs from the singing of Riabinin (the father) made on his visit to St Petersburg in 1871, by Musorgsky. Yet these still have conventional key and time signatures, and bar-lines.³ Even when later collectors and commentators such as Arensky, Lineva, and Grigor'ev were able to employ phonograph recordings, their transcriptions still inevitably seriously misrepresented the infinitely flexible original. Rimsky-Korsakov noted in his memoirs that one of the items that made his *Sadko* distinctively Russian was '*odinnatsatidol'nyi khor*' ('the chorus with 11 beats to the bar' - ie the 11/4 chorus in Tableau One);⁴ yet no transcriptions until Arensky, Agreneva-

¹ Eg in such items as the 'Song of the Blind *Gusli*-Players' at the beginning of Act Two of *Snow-Maiden*

² Such as *Il'ia Muromets*, *Dobrynia Nikitich*, and *Solovei Budimirovich*. See Gozenpud, A. A., 'Iz nabliudenii nad tvorchestvom protsesse Rimskogo-Korsakova: (i) Zapisnye knizhki kompozitora [pp 145-207]; (ii) Rimsky-Korsakov v rabote nad opernym libretto' [pp. 207-251], (in) *Rimsky-Korsakov: Muzykal'noe nasledstvo*, ed. Kabalevskii, D. B., I, pp. 145-251 *passim*. See also Tiumentev, I. F., 'Vospominaniia o N. A. Rimskom-Korsakove', (in) Kabalevskii, *ibid*, II, pp. 177-247 (pp. 240-247).

³ Gil'ferding, ed. Gil'tebrandt, 1873. This book is divided into columns (two per page) rather than pages, and the insertion is to be found between columns 436 and 437, at the beginning of the section containing the declamations of Trofim Riabinin. It is contained between pp. 80-81 in Gil'ferding 1949. Rimsky-Korsakov made use of these two tunes in his *Sbornik* (1877).

⁴ *Letopis'*, p. 208.

Slavianskaia, and Grigor'ev (see below) make any prolonged attempt to reproduce this rhythmic oddity by the use of such rare time-signatures as 7/4, 5/4, 11/8, which frequently fluctuate from bar to bar depending on the rhythmic requirements of the declaimed line - a feature that the composer tries to represent to a limited extent in his *Sadko*. Even Rimsky-Korsakov himself, in his youthful collection of Russian folk tunes of 1877, gave almost all the *byliny* in his anthology in conventional rhythms, such as 3/4 and 4/4. Neither Danilov's, nor Musorgsky's transcriptions, nor collections of songs such as Rimsky-Korsakov's and Balakirev's, take account of the constantly fluctuating rhythm which Rimsky-Korsakov attempts to imitate in *Sadko*, nor do they represent the pentatonic or modal configuration of the original tunes. Indeed, the music for the epics given in Danilov seems to have been transposed for a stringed instrument (possibly a violin), and is not an authentic representation of the vocal line at all.¹ Moreover, of course, any transcription implies that the given variant represents the fixed text and melody for any song. However, as we have noted above, no *bylina* melody was necessarily linked to any specific tale, and whichever melody was chosen by the singer on any occasion could be varied almost infinitely round a central framework at his or her will. Therefore, there is no way of knowing precisely what Rimsky-Korsakov and the other Russian composers heard at the rendition of such folk bards as Riabinin and Fedosova. We may only gain an approximate idea from the collectors' transcriptions, from recordings, and from the attempts the composers themselves, including Rimsky-Korsakov in his *Sadko*, made to represent what they had heard.

It was only following the improvement in phonograph technology in the mid-1890s that collectors and commentators such as Arensky, Lineva and Grigor'ev could make more accurate transcriptions as regards rhythm (although they still do not dispense with key signatures).

¹ Dobrovol'skii, B. M., 'O notnykh zapisiakh v 'Sbornike Kirshi Danilova'', (in) Danilov (1977), pp. 405-413 (p. 410). V. M. Beliaev has made an attempt to reconstruct the vocal lines of the songs: *Sbornik Kirshi Danilova - Opyt rekonstruktsii pesen Kirshi Danilova*, (Moscow: 'Sovetskii Kompozitor', 1969). For examples of melodic lines from Danilov, see Appendix III Example 1.

Lineva's collection (1904-9) and Grigor'ev's (1899-1901) were made after Rimsky-Korsakov had written *Sadko*, yet it seems certain that, owing to the innate conservatism of the epic tradition, the lines which they transcribed were very similar to those the composer heard when he attended Fedosova's performances in 1895; indeed, they are very close to possibly the earliest epic lines transcribed from phonograph cylinders: the notation by Arensky of songs sung by Riabinin (the son) when the latter visited St Petersburg to declaim in 1892.¹ Even if Rimsky-Korsakov did not manage to hear either of the Riabinins perform, he would almost certainly have heard these recordings, since Arensky was a pupil and close associate of his. Furthermore, we recall that Gil'ferding claims that one class of epic singer did not vary the songs a great deal, but would sing what they had heard almost unchanged, out of respect for the tradition. Commentators such as Speranskii, in his biographical sketch of Riabinin the son, observe that he altered his songs but little from traditional models, and showed limited individual creativity,² and in this respect it is instructive to note that the first item of Musorgsky's transcription from Riabinin the father, to be found in the insertion in Rybnikov's anthology in 1873, is almost note for note identical with the son's declamation of the same song over 20 years later, which was recorded on a phonograph and transcribed by Arensky.³ Through his familiarity with the Musorgsky notations, and by either hearing the son, or by hearing these

¹ According to Chistov, K. V., *Russkie skazitel' Karelii: Ocherki i vospominaniia* (Petrozavodsk: 'Kareliia', 1980), p. 90, when Ivan Riabinin performed on 8 Jan 1892 at the premises of the Russian Geographical Society, some of his songs were recorded on a phonograph by a representative of the Edison Phonograph Company, and were later played at the World Exhibition in Chicago (1893). The Russian Iu. A. Blok also recorded some of his songs, and it was from these that Arensky principally made his transcriptions. According to the same writer, and his co-author M. A. Lobanov, in 'Zapis' ot I. A. Fedosovoi na fonograf v 1896,' *Russkii sever - problemy etnografii i fol'klora* (Leningrad: 'Nauka' 1981), pp. 207-218, this same Blok, who apparently was the owner of a phonograph shop on Kuznetskii Most, Moscow, also recorded a number of Fedosova's songs in 1896. These recordings and those of Riabinin, are now to be found in the Fonogramarkhiv Instituta Russkoi literatury (Pushkinskii Dom), of the ANSSSR in St Petersburg (access mark FV 5972). We have not heard these, since they, and other extremely early recordings in the collection, are not accessible to the public at the moment, as they are extremely fragile and are the subject of research by specialists to attempt to clarify the original sound through such means as laser technology and digital remastering (private communication).

² Speranskii, *Byliny*, II, xxxv-xxxvi.

³ For a selection of Arensky's transcriptions, see Appendix III, Ex. 2. Incidentally the same tune is sung almost identically on a recording dating from 1926 of Ivan Riabinin's stepson, Petr Riabinin-Andreev, providing further proof of the conservatism of the tradition ('Vol'ga i Mikula' on CD: 'Russian Epics', Series Two, *The Russian Folk Tradition* (New York: Norman Ross Publishers, 2000), track six.

phonograph recordings, Rimsky-Korsakov must have observed that the son's lines were similar to the father's, and drawn the conclusion that he, the composer, was hearing a close approximation to what the father had sung as well, in the performances in Petersburg which he had had to miss because he was collecting his brother's body from Italy. Therefore, the ambiguous line in his memoirs which we have examined above regarding the *Riabininskie* ('Riabinin's' or 'Riabinins') epic lines, may well be taken to be plural, *Riabinins'*, even though the composer might never have heard either of them in the flesh.

Of course, the composer must have been aware when listening to Riabinin the son either in person or on a wax cylinder, that, since the son sang all the items in his repertoire identically on each occasion, while his father varied the basic skeleton of each item both in terms of ornamental-melodic and vocal devices, then what he, the composer, was hearing was merely one from a potentially vast number of variants. The same is true, of course, of any phonograph recording, not merely of *byliny*, but of other forms of folk songs.

Lineva (whose collection contains no *byliny*, but principally lyrical folk-songs) points out that any phonographic recording presents just one specific variant. Yet, she says, folk-song cannot be brought within the boundaries of musical rules; its polyphonic structure differs markedly from the choral form of 'art' music. She continues that a Russian folk song generally begins with the principal melody sung by one singer, called the *zapevala*. Each member of the chorus provides his or her own *podgolosok* ('undervoice') which s/he varies *ad libitum* in each verse, and at each performance. Of course, each 'undervoice' will also harmonise with the main tune, which the *zapevala* will more or less adhere to throughout, with merely minor alterations depending on the whim of the moment.¹ Rimsky-Korsakov in fact makes an attempt to imitate

¹ Lineva, E., *Velikorusskii pesni v narodnoi garmonizatsii*, 2 instalments (St Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Akademiiia nauk., inst. 1, 1904, inst. 2, 1909). Translated as: *The Peasant Songs of Great Russia as they are in the Folk's Harmonization*, 2 series (series 1, St Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1905; series 2, Moscow: same publisher, 1911).

this variation technique of choral singing with his setting of the exordium from the *bylina* about Solovei Budimirovich which concludes Tableau Four.

Lineva maintains, furthermore, that folk song is based on the intervals of the natural scales, with no temperament, for the precise notation of which no means exist – or existed then – in the western 'art music' tradition. As we have observed in connection with the *byliny* above, Lineva also states that the varying rhythmical accent of the words (which can be on any syllable depending on the requirements of the line), and of each line, can only with difficulty be fitted into uniform and consistent time-signatures.¹

Incidentally, a contemporary eyewitness of one of Riabinin the father's performances also emphasises that, although the constantly reiterated simple melodic line, to which any line of text was sung, always remained broadly identical, it would alter slightly each time in order to contain the differences in length and syllabification of each line of text. Moreover, the performer sang every *starina* to the same melodic outline, regardless of any difference in subject-matter. The rhythms fluctuated, and included, for example, such unconventional metres as 7/4 and 10/4. The songs seemed all to be declaimed in the Dorian Mode.²

We have already observed that earlier collections of folk-song had appeared, which had included examples of what they termed '*byliny*'; but these had almost all incorporated epic

¹ Lineva, *Velikoruskii pesni*, inst. I, p. 125. See G. Golovinskii's discussion of what he terms the 'asymmetry' of Russian folk music: *Musorgskii i fol'klor* (Moscow: 'Muzyka' 1994) pp. 9-10. For a brief discussion of asymmetrical Russian musical rhythms in English, see Taruskin, Richard, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, I, 726-734.

² Chistov, K. V., *Russkie skaziteli severa – ocherki i vospominaniia* (Petrozavodsk: 'Kareliia', 1980) pp. 76-77. The passage cited above is from the *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*; no precise date is given. For those without musical training, the Dorian Mode is the ancient tone-row running from D to D over the white notes of a modern keyboard. It is associated with European folk music in general; one recalls Ralph Vaughan Williams's observation that, when he first published his transcriptions of English folk-songs at the beginning of the 20th century, musical critics expressed scepticism that unlettered folk singers could apparently be so conversant with the Dorian Mode (Vaughan Williams, R., 'Address at Yale University upon his being awarded the Henry Elias Holland Memorial Prize', Dec 1954 (National Sound Archives, London, 1CD R0002055 BD9 NSA) (41 minutes in).

songs broken up into traditional bar-lines, with consistent and conventional time-signatures (eg 3/4, 2/4, 6/8), and with accompaniment for piano. None had shown any attempt to represent the constantly fluctuating rhythm described by Arensky, Lineva, and Grigor'ev. Only two collections show any attempt to give an epic line without bar-lines or key-signatures, - those of Rimsky-Korsakov himself (1877) and Ol'ga Agreneva-Slavianskaia (1877-1890).¹ The first ten items of Rimsky-Korsakov's anthology are *stariny*, including (no. 6) a variant of the *Dobrynia* story; while no. 3, *Solovei Budimirovich*, is a setting of the same exordium from Danilov which the composer was to use to round off Tableau Four of his opera-*bylina* some 20 years later. Almost all these items have traditional bar-lines, with non-fluctuating time-signatures, and with conventional key-signatures. The only manner in which the composer strives to imitate the possible 'folk' derivation, and primitive accompaniment of these epic lines, is by block chords - usually minims - on the piano, with almost no contrapuntal movement. Only the first number in this collection seems to make a serious attempt to represent the lack of consistent rhythm or conventional key of the original: this item, strikingly, is a variant of the first item transcribed by Musorgsky from Trofim Riabinin's singing included by the editor in the 1873 posthumous volume of Gil'ferding's collection. Rimsky-Korsakov simply notes at the end of this first song that it was *soobshcheno M. P. Musorgskim* ('Communicated by M. P. Musorgsky'), and it is unclear to whom precisely this variant was 'communicated' - whether to the editor of Gil'ferding's collection, or to Rimsky-Korsakov himself, or to a third person. It is unclear too, whether the variant 'communicated' by Musorgsky is the same as that appearing in Gil'ferding, which Rimsky-Korsakov had substantially reworked in his collection, or whether it is a different variant which Musorgsky had heard from Riabinin, or from another singer. The reworking is entirely Rimsky-Korsakov's own: there are no bar-lines, and the entirely non-contrapuntal accompaniment consists of massive block chords containing minims, dotted minims,

¹ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Sbomik russkikh narodnykh pesen*, op. 24 (St Petersburg: M. V. Bessel' and Co, 1877). Agreneva-Slavianskaia, O. Kh., *Opisanie russkoi krestianskoi svad'by s tekstom i pesniami* 3 vols (Moscow & Tver': 1887-91). Despite the title of this latter work it also contains *stariny* and lamentations.

semibreves and even dotted semibreves. There is no key-signature, and the lines have a strong flavour of that Dorian mode which we have encountered above in relation to the songs of Riabinin the father. Yet no 2 of Rimsky-Korsakov's collection, which corresponds to the second item in the Musorgsky transcriptions in Gil'ferding (1873), is in a four-square 4/4 time, and in A flat major: as we have noted, the rest of the *stariny* in this volume also have indications of key and pulse.¹

Perhaps the young composer gave this first example, with its simple block harmonisation, out of anthropological interest, as an example of the 'genuine article', before proceeding to render the others more fit for drawing-room singing. Maybe, however, he thought he had already been too daring in giving such an example, and should adhere to more conventional models subsequently. It was only three years previous to this compilation, in 1873, at the age of 29, that, embarrassed by his lack of professional musical training, he had undertaken a period of intense study of harmony and counterpoint - study which he felt was concluded satisfactorily only in 1875 - the year he began work on his anthology of Russian folk tunes.² We can only speculate that, still under the influence of his study of classical musical theory, Rimsky-Korsakov felt embarrassed at approaching too near the unconventional folk pitches and rhythms of the original models.

To summarise our conclusions thus far on the vocal line: there are several major sources by means of which we may attempt to assess the original vocal lines. These consist of the melodies in Danilov, and the transcriptions made by Arensky from phonograph recordings in

¹ The first item in Gil'ferding is entitled *Pir u kniazia Vladimira* ('Feast at Prince Vladimir's Palace'). Rimsky-Korsakov, however, calls it by its first line: *Kak vo gorode stol'no-kievskom* ('Thus it was in that throne-town [[ie 'capital']] of Kiev'); incidentally, whereas Rimsky-Korsakov merely notes in his volume that item one was 'communicated by Musorgsky', he specifically states that item two *Pro Vol'gu i Mikulu* ('About Vol'ga [a hero, not the river], and Mikula') was communicated by Musorgsky 'from the singing of T. G. Riabinin' implying that the first item had possibly been taken down from another epic singer visiting Petersburg in the early '70s. For the first song of Rimsky-Korsakov's 1877 anthology discussed above, see Appendix III, Ex. 3.

² Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, pp. 88-89.

the early and mid 1890s - the period when Rimsky-Korsakov was heavily involved in composing his opera-*bylina*. Slightly later than *Sadko* were transcriptions made from phonograph recordings by Lineva and Grigor'ev. Owing to the innate conservatism of the tradition of epic declamation, these transcriptions may still be taken as representative of what Rimsky-Korsakov was familiar with at the time of his composition of the opera-*bylina*.

To conclude this section: although there is no definite proof that Rimsky-Korsakov saw either of the Riabinins perform, despite his reference to their epic line in his memoirs, there is no doubt that he heard Irina Fedosova when she visited St Petersburg several times to declaim, and according to Iastrebtsev, Rimsky-Korsakov and Balakirev attended her performances on the 8th and 10th Jan 1895 and Rimsky-Korsakov took down five songs at her dictation.¹ Among these are a funeral lament of a widow for her husband, and a variant of *Dobrynia*. The singer was, in fact, famed more as a singer of such laments rather than as a declaimer of epics, and the composer made extensive use of these keenings in the music he gives to *Sadko's* abandoned young wife, Liubava. Incidentally, Chistov claims that Fedosova also seemed to create all her material anew at each declamation.²

Fedosova's repertoire was already well-known to scholars of Russian folk music as a result of Ol'ga Agreneva-Slavianskaia's collection of 1887-91, the greater part of which had been transcribed from Fedosova.³ The musical transcription for each item is extremely unpolished: there are no bar-lines, key- or time-signatures, and the first line, or few lines, are given, with the relevant pitch marked in the stave, usually one beat to one syllable: some reviewers and commentators have maintained that this is because of the compiler's lack of musical skill.⁴

¹ Iastrebtsev, I., 9 and 13 Jan 1895, pp. 252 & 254. Chistov, K. V., and Lobanov M. A., 1981, claim that in fact Rimsky-Korsakov transcribed nine songs from Fedosova (pp. 207-218 (p. 218)).

² Chistov, K. V., ed. *I. A. Fedosova - Izbrannoe* (Petrozavodsk: 'Kareliia', 1981) p. 4.

³ Agreneva-Slavianskaia, O. Kh., *Opisanie russkoi krest'ianskoi svad'by s tekstom i pesniami*, 3 vols (Moscow & Tver', 1887-1891).

⁴ Chistov, K. V., 'Tekstologicheskie problemy poeticheskogo naslediiia I. A. Fedosovoi', (in) *Fol'klor i etnografiia*

However, she may very well have been attempting to break away from conventional musical notation, in order to demonstrate that it is each individual textual line of song or epic, often differing considerably in length and number of syllables, that is the bearer and definer of the rhythm, rather than the Procrustean bed of 'predetermined' markings which somehow are meant to hold good for all lines of whatever length and rhythm.

With the advent of phonograph technology in the 1880s and '90s, and the attempts at more accurate transcriptions of the phonograms of epic song made by researchers, we may gain a clearer idea of the nature of the epic chant, in particular, the fluctuating rhythms of each line of text, and the fact that conventional bar-lines do not seem to bear much relevance. It is the *bylina* textual line itself - of varying length and number of syllables - which determines the rhythm of any 'bar'. Where bar-lines *are* used, the textual line almost always begins in mid-bar; after stretching over several bars, each with a different time-signature to accommodate the syllabic structure of the words within that bar, this line will generally conclude in mid-bar. There is a preponderance of one note to one syllable, whether it be minim, crotchet, or, rarely, quaver; only infrequently is a syllable split up between two notes of differing pitches.

This is presumably what the composer was trying to imitate in his extracts from *byliny* such as *Volkh Vseslavich* and *Solovei Budimirovich* in *Sadko*, with their fluctuating rhythm, and in his 11/4 chorus in Tableau One.

Finally, we may use as sources the attempts made by composers of the time, such as Musorgsky, Anton Arensky, and Rimsky-Korsakov himself, to represent the epic line in their compositions.¹

russskogo severa, eds. Putilov, B. N., and Chistov, K. V., (Leningrad: ANSSSR, 1973), pp. 150-172. For examples of some of these songs from Agreneva-Slavianskaia's volumes, transcribed from the singing of Irina Fedosova, see Appendix III, Exs. 4 and 13.

¹ *Pro Vol'gu i Mikulu* is to be found as the chant of the two renegade monks in the act 'Near the town of Kromy' of

As we shall see in our full analysis of the opera, even Rimsky-Korsakov's attempts to imitate the *bylina* line in this work are restricted, possibly because the composer was still a product of his time and training; he does not attempt the wildly fluctuating rhythms to be found in the sources – for example, between 7/4, 9/4, and 3/2, in three consecutive bars.¹ The *bylina* about Volkh Vseslavich in Tableau I alternates from bar to bar between 3/2 and 6/4, while the *Skazka* and *Priskazka* ('Folk-Tale' and 'Folk-Tale Lead-in') in Tableau IV fluctuates consistently between 9/4 and 6/4. The 11/4 chorus, although, according to Engel 'unprecedented' before Rimsky-Korsakov,² still maintains this rhythm unvaryingly: it does not fluctuate between, say, eleven beats in a bar, then thirteen, nine, seven, and so forth as do the sources (or more correctly, the sources fluctuate between these beats to a vocal line rather than to a bar, because as we have seen, it is the textual line, rather than the music, which is the definer of the rhythm of the declamation). Possibly Rimsky-Korsakov considered that, not only was the world not ready for radical compositions imitating the eccentric rhythms and tone-rows of folk music, but that the orchestral players and singers might balk at them too: we are not yet in the world of Bartók, Janáček, or of Rimsky-Korsakov's pupil Stravinsky, in such works as *Svadebka* ('The Peasant Wedding', formerly known as *Les Noces*) of 1923, which fluctuates wildly throughout the work, from bar to bar, among such rhythms as 3/8, 2/8, 5/8, 6/8, and others.

This, then, was the raw material of Russian epic narrative which Rimsky-Korsakov utilised and fused with 'art' music in his composition of a new art-form, an opera which conformed not to the

Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, which may be the final or penultimate act.

In 1899 Anton Arensky composed a *Fantaziia na temy I. T. Riabinina* ('Fantasia on Themes of I. T. Riabinin') op. 148. This short piece (eight minutes) consists of a set of variations for piano and orchestra on two of Riabinin's melodies. Unfortunately for researchers, one of them is precisely that used by Musorgsky in *Boris Godunov*. There is at present one commercial recording of this work, by the Russian State Symphony Orchestra under Valeri Polyansky [sic] on CD Chandos Chan 10086 'Anton Arensky' (track 6) (2003). The pianist is Tatiana Polyanskaya [sic].

¹ For examples of these fluctuating rhythms transcribed by Grigor'ev, see App. III, Ex. 5.

² Engel' Iu. D., ed. Kunin, I., *Glazami sovremenika - Izbrannye stat'i o Russkoi muzyke 1898-1918* (Moscow: 'Sovetskii Kompozitor', 1971) p. 173.

accepted dramatic conventions of the time, but which in poetic, dramatic, and musical structure and pace was to be viewed and understood as an oral folk epic. We shall examine below in Section Seven how Rimsky-Korsakov attempted to represent this epic line, which, while in essence very elementary and almost unchanging, was in practice, rhythmically and in vocal ornamentation almost infinitely flexible and variable.

From this analysis of the literary and musical raw material from which Rimsky-Korsakov fashioned his opera-*bylina*, we shall now turn to an examination of the historical, environmental, and psychological factors which attracted the composer to this subject, and which inspired his re-envisioning of this archaic theme for his own time and culture.

SECTION THREE

MAJOR INFLUENCES ON RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S COMPOSITIONAL AESTHETIC

Rimsky-Korsakov's pupil and colleague Ossovskii informs us that the most important premise in Rimsky-Korsakov's artistic credo was that impressions of life had to be embodied in an artistically transformed manner, to be elevated above reality, even idealised. Rimsky-Korsakov differentiated between the truth of everyday existence, and the truth of art.¹ In order better to understand what drew Rimsky-Korsakov to create a series of major works throughout his long composing career (1865-1907) which are a highly concentrated distillation of Russian national folk art (including his opera derived from the folk epic of *Sadko*), his position in the cultural milieu of his time should briefly be analysed, as too should the factors in his early environment, and in his own particular psyche.

As we have noted in our Introduction, all but four of Rimsky-Korsakov's fifteen operas were based directly on either stories from the Russian folk tradition (such as *Sadko* and *Skazanie o nevidimom grade Kitezhe* ('The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh'), or on literary works deriving their motifs and idiom from this folk tradition (for instance, *Snegurochka* ('Snow Maiden')), derived from the play of the same name by Ostrovsky, or *Skazka o Tsare Saltane* ('The Tale of Tsar Saltan'), after Pushkin; or else on episodes from early Russian history - for example, *Pskovitianka* ('The Maid of Pskov') and *Tsarskaia Nevesta* ('The Tsar's Betrothed') – both dealing with romanticised incidents which allegedly took place during the reign of Ivan IV (1533-1584).

¹ Ossovskii, *Vospominaniia*, p. 288.

From what sources did the composer derive his profound involvement in legendary and historical early Russia, and what impelled him to base almost his entire oeuvre of around 100 works upon this Russian cultural bedrock? ¹

In order to explore this theme, the contents of this section are divided into five sub-sections:

- (1) The historical, philosophical, and cultural influences current in Rimsky-Korsakov's childhood and youth.
- (2) Family influences on Rimsky-Korsakov's familiarity with the Russian folk tradition, and the composer's psyche.
- (3) Later major influences on the composer.
- (4) Acquaintance with the Stasov circle of musicians, and their work based on folk influences.
- (5) The opera-*bylina*'s place in the composer's career.

(1) THE HISTORICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES CURRENT IN RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

The composer was born in 1844, and although the philosophical influences which had reigned in the earlier part of the 19th century were now waning in power, they had been the stimulus for a large output of literary, artistic, and musical work in the Russian Empire, which helped to form the intellectual atmosphere of the composer's early years. The most important of these influences was German Romantic philosophy, predominantly the systems of Schelling and Hegel. These philosophies had taken root in the occult speculations of Higher Order Freemasonry which had been widespread among the Russian educated classes at the end of

¹ For a full list of Rimsky-Korsakov's compositions, see Solovtsov, A. A., *Zhizn' i tvorchestvo N. A. Rimskogo-Korsakova* (Moscow: 'Muzyka' 1964) pp. 664-668.

the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries. Although totally superseded in social importance by the time the composer was born, Freemasonry may well have formed an important role in the development of his personality.¹

Rimsky-Korsakov's father was a prominent Mason, and studied Masonic teachings and the Masonic quest for a higher spiritual truth to the end of his life.

Under the influence of the philosophy of Hegel and Schelling, which supplanted Freemasonry, Russian educated society shifted from the inner-directed spiritual and philosophical quest for personal perfection as exemplified in Masonry, and began rather to contemplate the meaning and goal of history and culture: the philosophy of Schelling in particular provided an assurance that there was an ultimate unifying purpose behind life and history.² At the same time, it introduced into Russian thought the pantheistic notion of the organic unity of all nature – and this too might well have produced a strong impression on the young composer, since, although he was never conventionally religious, he always acknowledged an extremely strong pantheistic tendency in his worldview, and strove to idealise reality in his works. Furthermore, one of the principal advocates of Schelling's thought in Russia was Prince V. F. Odoevsky (1803-1869), who was an enthusiastic advocate of Glinka's music, which influenced Rimsky-Korsakov so greatly in his childhood and youth, and also had such an influence on the group of young composers known as the 'Mighty Handful' of which Rimsky-Korsakov subsequently became the youngest adherent.³

¹ For general information on Russian Freemasonry see for example, Telepnev, Boris, *An Outline of the History of Russian Freemasonry* (London: no publisher indicated, 1928), and Telepnev (sic), Boris, *Freemasonry in Russia* (London: Quatuor Coronati Lodge, 1922).

² On Schelling see 'Schelling i Rossiia', *Fridrikh Vil'gelm Iozef Shelling*, ed. A. V., Gulyga, 2 vols (Moscow: 'ANSSSR', 1987 & 1989), I, pp. 35-38. On Hegel see eg Koyré, Alexandre, 'Hegel en Russie' *Etudes sur l'histoire de la pensée philosophique en Russie* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique, 1950) pp. 103-170.

³ Taruskin, Richard, *Defining Russia Musically - Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997) pp. 106-107. There is no evidence that Rimsky-Korsakov ever met Odoevsky, who died when the composer was 24. However, Odoevsky had been in constant contact with Glinka and Stasov and, from the mid 1850s, with Balakirev, and must have discussed his own philosophy, and the aesthetic views of Glinka, with these latter two, who would have passed them on to the younger members of the Stasov circle or

The composer was, therefore, brought up as a child in a family atmosphere where Freemasonry and its spiritual quest was the norm, and subsequently as a young man was exposed to the thought of Schelling's disciples, emphasising as it did the purpose and unity behind all existence and history. Therefore, it is not surprising that in his works he tried to idealise reality, and that, in such operas as *Sadko*, he strove to unify history, myth, folk culture, and 'art' music.

The interest of the educated strata of Russian society in the history of their country, and the meaning, if any, behind this history, had grown rapidly since the defeat of Napoleon in 1812, and the subsequent reconstruction of Moscow. Multi-volume histories of Russia had been written for the first time,¹ while, between Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* (1828) and Glinka's *Zhizn' za Tsaria* ('A Life for the Tsar' (1836), which was the first opera Rimsky-Korsakov ever saw, at the age of 14, and was a formative influence in his musical development), a number of new Russian dramatic works, frequently dealing with Russian history, were performed in theatres which previously had given mainly foreign material. Furthermore, Russian writers had begun to produce works dealing with contemporary Russian life, albeit in an idealised or satirical manner (eg Pushkin's *Evgeny Onegin* (published in instalments between 1823-1832), or Gogol's *Dead Souls* (vol. I, 1842 & vol. II, 1847).

Schelling's philosophy gives emphasis to this interest in history, with its premise that the world is in a continual state of 'becoming', and that national histories and psyches are part of the

artists of all genres. On Odoevsky's links with Glinka, see: Campbell, John Stuart, *V. F. Odoevsky and the Formation of Russian Musical Taste in the Nineteenth Century* (New York and London: 'Garland', 1989) pp. 192-214, and for his links with Stasov and Balakirev, see *ibid. passim*. Odoevsky in fact mentions Rimsky-Korsakov just once in his journals. He had heard the youthful composer's op. 5 tone-poem *Sadko* two months before his death in 1869, and he subsequently made a short enthusiastic entry in his journal, prophesying a great future for the composer (Campbell, John Stuart, *ibid.*, p. 235).

¹ Eg. Karamzin, N. K., *Istoriia gosudarstva rossiiskago*, 10 vols (St Petersburg: 1815-24). This had gone into six editions by 1851. Mention may also be made of S. M. Solov'ev's 29-volume *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen* (Moscow: 1851-1879), and of M. P. Pogodin's *Izsledovaniia, zamechaniia, i leksil o russkoi istorii*, 3 vols (Moscow: 1846).

unfolding of the plan behind creation. This emphasis on Russia's destiny was further dealt with in the writings of such Russian thinkers as Chaadaev, Herzen, and Belinskii, and it may well have been the reading of this latter writer in his years at sea which crystallised the young composer's interest in creating works which were portrayals of Russian themes.

It was into this milieu, then, of ubiquitous analysis of, and speculation upon, Russia's history and culture, and their occult significance, that Rimsky-Korsakov was born, and in which he developed.

The most significant polemic ignited in the first half of the 19th century by this debate on Russia's destiny, was that between the so-called 'Slavophiles' and 'Westernisers'. The first group, broadly speaking, believed that Russia had its own historical destiny, and should not open itself up to western influences; they maintained that Peter the Great's westernising reforms had been a malign influence, and had taken Russia from its true path. The Westernisers, on the other hand, maintained that Russia should open itself up to western philosophies, scholarship, and models of democratic government. However, even many supporters of this latter position did not consider that such adoption of western ideas should, or would, entail the loss of the Russian people's underlying concept of its own national spirit and culture. Belinskii observed that a Russian in a frock-coat who drank champagne was still as much of a Russian as one who dressed in a kaftan and drank vodka.¹

The Slavophiles, influenced by Schelling's philosophy, held that the 'spirit of the people' was a driving force in history, and that this spirit was manifested in the culture and institutions of the Russian peasantry, who, in the depths of the countryside, had remained largely untouched by

¹ On Slavophilism see eg Christoff P. K., *An Introduction to 19th Century Russian Slavophilism: A study in Ideas*, 2 vols (vol I: 's-Gravehage: Mouton and Co, 1961; vol II: The Hague and Paris, Mouton, 1972). The Belinskii observations on Russian nationality are to be found *passim* in the first 15 pages of the article quoted in note 2 to the following page.

western-style reforms. This idealisation of peasant culture was one of the stimuli for the growth in research into Russian oral folk forms, including the *stariny*. Vladimir Dal', lexicographer and collector of Russian proverbs, Afanas'ev, collector of Russian folk tales (whose works Rimsky-Korsakov had been familiar with since his childhood), and Kireevskii and Gil'ferding, the compilers of anthologies of Russian folk songs of various genres whose collections Rimsky-Korsakov, as we have seen, made extensive use of, were all ardent Slavophiles.¹

However, the 'westerniser' Belinskii rejected this position as 'mysticism'. He pointed out that, for the critic, the adjectives 'national' and 'folk' must mean the same; yet very often, 'folk' (*narodnyi*) was taken as relating to the uneducated lower classes of society, whereas 'national' (*natsional'nyi*) encompassed all levels of society. Art, he said should be faithful to reality in its depiction of lower, middle, and upper classes.² Rimsky-Korsakov claimed to have read all of Belinskii's work at sea, and may well have evolved then the idea of creating new art forms, such as his opera-*bylina*, which were a synthesis of Russian 'folk' themes, historically authentic detail, and means of expression usually associated with the educated urban classes.

By the time of Rimsky-Korsakov's childhood and youth (the 1840s and '50s), the debate between the Westernisers and Slavophiles was past its peak, although it continued to form part of the political and cultural atmosphere of Russia, until the Bol'shevik Revolution of 1917. The composer took no part in the controversy, and there is no evidence that he ever attempted to read German philosophy in his youth. But the cultural milieu of the period was still strongly affected by the debates on national character which had become familiar to Russian educated

¹ See bibliography for titles and dates of these authors' numerous works.

² Belinskii, V. G., 'Evgenii Onegin', *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow & St Petersburg: ANSSR, 1955) XII, 71-114 (80-82). Original article 1844-45.

society in the previous decades.¹

Influenced, then, by this newly-discovered interest in the significance of history, national spirit, and of the culture of the common people, Russian artists in all fields created numerous works dealing with Russian history or legend. In literature, Pushkin's already-mentioned historical drama *Boris Godunov*, and his imitation of folk epic *Ruslan i Liudmila*, are two of the better-known examples. Both these works influenced Russian music. Glinka, the major precursor of the group of Russian composers known as 'The Five' – of which Rimsky-Korsakov was the youngest – wrote an opera based on *Ruslan* (1842), which, as we have observed, was one of the earliest operas Rimsky-Korsakov saw, and which influenced him profoundly; while the member of The Five to whom Rimsky-Korsakov was closest, Musorgsky, composed an opera derived from *Boris Godunov* (first version 1869, second - 1872).²

These, then, were the major cultural and philosophical currents at work in society during Rimsky-Korsakov's formative years, and which continued to operate on him through the medium of the cultural circle grouped around Stasov and Balakirev into which he was introduced in 1861, at the age of 17, during his naval training.

However, we shall defer detailed analysis of the influence of this circle until we have given an account of the future composer's childhood environment, and of the elements which made up his psyche.

¹ For a detailed analysis of the development of the intellectual atmosphere of the period from the mid-19th century to 1917, see Billington, James, *The Icon and the Axe* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966).

² Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, p. 54. A full list of Rimsky-Korsakov's operas, and other significant operas of the time, with dates, is given in Appendix V of this thesis. Besides Rimsky-Korsakov 'The Five' consisted of Milyi Balakirev (1836-1910), Alexander Borodin (1833-1887), Modest Musorgsky (1839-1881), and the now little-known Cesar Cui (1835-1918). For a full discussion of Russian opera's treatment of the past, see Taruskin, Richard, 'The Present in the Past - Russian Opera and Russian Historiography', (in) *Russian and Soviet Music: Essays for Boris Schwarz*, ed. Malcolm Hamrick Brown, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1984), pp. 77-146.

(2) FAMILY INFLUENCES ON RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S FAMILIARITY WITH THE RUSSIAN FOLK TRADITION, AND THE COMPOSER'S PSYCHE

Rimsky-Korsakov's mother Sofiia Vasil'evna was of peasant stock. Among other qualities she had a superb musical ear and recall. She could recite by heart many folk songs, and Rimsky-Korsakov acquired a few of the tunes included in his 1876 collection of Russian folk melodies from her performances.¹

With the family lived an uncle, Petr Petrovich, whom Rimsky-Korsakov's son Andrei Nikolaevich describes as 'having the wits and heart of a real child .. a simpleton ..'.² However, he, like the future composer's mother, was also a lover of folk songs, and some of the tunes he sang also found their way into his anthology.

Both the composer's mother, and his father, Andrei Petrovich, held a belief in a transcendent order: Sofiia Vasil'evna was a conventional Christian (specifically Russian Orthodox), while his father's faith in a supermundane reality was derived from his involvement in Higher Freemasonry. Although Rimsky-Korsakov was never a traditional believer, there was an extremely strong vein of pantheism and wonder at nature in his make-up, which may have been reinforced by his parents' spiritual worldviews. This pantheism was expressed in a whole series of operas throughout his career, from *Snegurochka* (1881) to *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh* (1907), and including *Sadko*, with its pervading evocation of the elemental force of water (Lake Il'men', the sea, the Volkhov River).

A further very strong influence on the composer's formative years were the songs and music he heard in his childhood home near the town of Tikhvin, some 120 miles north-west of Novgorod. Most germane for our study of the opera *Sadko* are the religious chanting he heard in the

¹ Rimsky-Korsakov A. N., *Inst.* 1, p. 33.

² Rimsky-Korsakov A. N., *loc cit*, p. 38, and Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, p. 5.

monasteries and the songs sung by the cripples and pilgrims gathered round the monasteries asking for alms. The wandering pilgrims of Old Russia play a substantial incidental role in *Sadko*, while the *Starchishche-Moguch-Bogatyr*, ('The Mighty *Bogatyr*' Monastic Elder'), in his only appearance, in Tableau Six of *Sadko*, as a sort of *Deus ex machina*, declaims a vocal line based on an early monastic chant.

The composer's son Andrei emphasises the impression that the church bells, processions, icons, and monastic chanting must have had on the sensitive and musically gifted Nikolai Andreevich,¹ and the composer himself acknowledges the sensations he derived in his childhood in the vicinity of the Tikhvin Monastery.²

The composer's son also cites a graphic account of the 'innumerable' alms-seekers gathered round the monastery, dating from 1854 - when the composer would have been ten years old, and highly impressionable to such sights. According to this account the streets around the monastery were overflowing with paupers, orphans, 'holy fools' (*iurodivye*), the blind, cripples, the feeble-minded, the insane, those of no fixed abode, and others, of every age. A number of them would earn their living by asking for doles at every monastery from the Solovetskii in Russia's far north, right the way to Jerusalem; some wore cassocks, some long peasant shirts, some rags, and most bore the traditional srips and staves.³ This demonstrates Dal's assertion (quoted by us in Section Two), that, in the north of Russia, there was by the 19th century no longer any real difference in meaning between *kaleka* (person with physical and mental handicaps) and *kalika* (pilgrim).

What raw material did these family influences and environment have to work on? Of course,

¹ Rimsky-Korsakov A. N., Inst. 1, p. 37.

² Rimsky-Korsakov A. N., *ibid*, pp. 37-38.

³ Anon, 'Tikhvinskie Monastyri' (Saint Petersburg: 1854), quoted in Rimsky-Korsakov A. N., Inst. 1, pp. 34.

one can only speculate as to the preconscious strata of another human being's psyche. As Quentin Bell said regarding the subject of his biography: 'To know the psyche of Virginia Woolf, ... one would have to be either God or Virginia ...'.¹ However, having taken this proviso into account, we may note that, most commonly in discussing Rimsky-Korsakov's world-view, commentators have alluded to the composer's intense sensibility to the natural environment, expressed almost in a pantheistic world-view, which resulted in his music in an extraordinarily detailed and concrete depiction of the natural world in sound.² This awareness of natural phenomena is displayed in the glowing letters he sent home to his family from the Maritime Training College (*Morskoi Korpus*); in these letters he asks with immense precision of recall for details of how the manifold berries, plants, trees, and flowers in the family garden are blossoming, and of how the family's numerous animals and birds are faring.³ Ossovskii remembers the composer some 40-50 years later still exclaiming ecstatically upon how much beauty there was in tree-blossoms and in the colouring of butterflies and birds, and how wonderful were the hues of the fur and wool of animals, both tame and wild.⁴

The composer's memoirs too contain poetical accounts of the sea, including the phosphorescently glimmering tropical ocean, which Rimsky-Korsakov, writing in 1893, some 30 years later, could still recall from his naval service undertaken as a young man between the ages of 18 and 21 (1862-1865) (he is imprecise as to his exact location; he appears to have been somewhere in the Gulf Stream off the coast of Latin America).⁵

¹ Bell, Quentin, *Virginia Woolf - A Biography*, 2 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1972) II, 109.

² See eg Kremlev Iu. A., *Estetika prirody v tvorchestve N. A. Rimskogo-Korsakova* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1962) *passim*.

³ Short extracts from these letters are given in Rimsky-Korsakov, A. N., Inst 1, p. 55. They are dated from 1856-58 (only the year is given).

⁴ Ossovskii, *Vospominaniia*, p. 304. Ossovskii knew the composer from the late 1880s to the latter's death in 1908, and his reminiscences are not precisely dated; the composer's supposed utterances on certain topics may well be an amalgam of various such declarations over the years. On the composer's pantheism, see Korzukhin, I. A., *N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov i Richard Wagner* (Berlin?, approx 1920), esp. pp. 36-42.

⁵ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, pp. 32-33.

This heightened sensibility to the phenomena of nature, with its concomitant awareness of the eternal succession of the seasons, is expressed most intensely in the music of his third opera *Snegurochka* (1880-81), which the composer sub-titled *Vesenniaia skazka* ('A Spring Tale'), and he specifically notes in his memoirs his pantheistic state of mind while composing this work.¹ We have already observed in our Introduction that this opera is based upon the most poetical and radiant of Ostrovsky's plays, in which the playwright depicts a fairy-tale land where all live in peace, justice and harmony. Furthermore, the composer told Iastrebtsev in August 1895 - precisely when he was becoming deeply involved with the preliminary sketches for *Sadko* - that, even without taking their music into consideration, his operas were religious in their very essence since everywhere in them he displayed reverence to nature or else extolled such reverence.²

Depictions of the water element of nature particularly, in the form of sea, lake, and river, abound in Rimsky-Korsakov's music, most notably in the orchestral suite *Sheherazade* (1888), the opera *Tsar Saltan* (1900), in the short 'Musical Illustration' (*Muzykal'naia kartina*) *Sadko*, which the composer wrote in 1867, at the age of 21, and in *Sadko*, the opera-bylina.

Rimsky-Korsakov maintained this pantheism to the end of his life; his penultimate opera (premiered in 1907 - the year before his death), the full title of which is 'The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh, and of the Maiden Fevroniia' is an amalgamation and reworking of several originally unlinked Russian religious legends. In this opera the composer and his librettist V. I. Bel'skii transform Fevroniia into a St Francis-like character who is at one with all nature, including wild animals and birds, which surround her as she wanders through the forest. Yet she is not a conventional Christian: among the first words that she sings in the opera, are that she sees God everywhere and in everything, and that the forest is her church. The almost

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

² Iastrebtsev, I, 304 (15 August 1895).

hallucinatory intensity of vision and apprehension of the universe behind *Snegurochka* (1881) and *Kítezh* (1907) was maintained, therefore, throughout the composer's career.

Of foremost importance too in Rimsky-Korsakov's psychological make-up, and his representations of external phenomena in sound, was his innate highly-developed synaesthetic apprehension of the world - synaesthetic in the specific sense defined by F W Myers: ...'a special sound .. accompanied by a special sensation of colour or light'.¹ The composer discussed this sense of his on several occasions with Iastrebtsev, who gives a detailed list of the composer's automatic association of certain tone-rows with certain hues - for instance, E major was always associated for Rimsky-Korsakov with a dark-blue, sapphire tint, while A major bore a radiant, rosy, spring-like hue, and C sharp minor brought to his mind a sinister, tragic, crimson colouring.² This point will be examined in more detail subsequently, for in the opera *Sadko* the predominant key is E major. Associated as it is for the composer with deep blue, it is used extensively by him in the Introduction and 'sea' episodes of his opera.

(3) LATER MAJOR INFLUENCES ON THE COMPOSER

Later influences on the young Rimsky-Korsakov's development were his discovery of opera, and the cultural and political influences to which he was exposed, firstly, during his naval service, and, subsequently, during his acquaintance with the St Petersburg group of composers

¹ Myers, F. W. H., *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, 2 vols (New York, London & Bombay: Longman, Green and Co., 1904) I, xxix.

² For a comprehensive list of Rimsky-Korsakov's associations of tones and colours, see Iastrebtsev, V. V., *N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov - Vospominaniia*, 2 vols (Leningrad: vol I, 1959, vol II, 1960). (I, 82-83). It should be emphasised that this innate sense, which is possessed by many composers and musicians (eg Olivier Messiaen), has nothing in common with the artificial linking of colour with sound which was popular in Russian artistic circles in the late 19th and early 20th centuries - most notoriously in the works of Alexander Skryabin (1872-1915), for whom the enterprise was a consequence of his bizarre mystical beliefs, which led him to attempt a synthesis of all the arts. Incidentally, although Rimsky-Korsakov recognised Skryabin's talent, he detested his music, regarding it as 'as foul as a Limburg cheese' (Iastrebtsev II, 230, 6 April 1904), 'impossibly unhealthy' (*ibid*, p. 392, 27 Sept, 1906), and 'approaching the music of the mad-house', (II, 423, 27 May, 1907).

headed by Balakirev.

At the age of 12, in 1856, in line with family tradition, Rimsky-Korsakov was sent for his schooling to the Maritime Training College (*Morskoi Korpus*) in St Petersburg; from September 1857 he began to attend opera performances in that city. The first such works he saw were by Flotow, Verdi, and Donizetti, and he wrote home enthusiastically to his parents and uncle about the experience, giving detailed analyses of the scenery, orchestral playing, and singing.

The major event in his musical development, however, was his exposure from an early age to the music of Glinka. His mother had sung arias from this latter composer's operas at home, and in April 1858 Rimsky-Korsakov saw for the first time a production of Glinka's *Zhizn' za Tsaria* ('A Life for the Tsar'). He saw it again in November of the same year, and was overwhelmed. He studied piano reductions of both this work and Glinka's second opera *Ruslan i Liudmila*, and familiarised himself with other Glinka works.¹ The latter composer's use of native Russian themes, and his employment of folk rhythms, musical cadences, and speech intonations, affected Rimsky-Korsakov greatly in his choice of subject and musical language for his own works. Although there is no precise information as to when the young Rimsky-Korsakov began to develop an interest in the Russian epics, Glinka's *Ruslan and Liudmila*, based as it is on Pushkin's imitation of folk epic mentioned above, almost certainly was an influence on Rimsky-Korsakov's nascent interest in the *byliny*, which resulted in his composition, in 1867, at the age of 23, of the short 'Musical Illustration' (*Muzykal'naia kartina*) *Sadko* (his Opus Five), and in his opera-*bylina* on the same theme some 30 years later. Kandinskii observes that such operas as *Sadko* were further developments of the 'monumental national epic operatic genre created by Glinka in *Ruslan and Liudmila*,' and he further comments that the opera *Sadko* was a continuation of a tradition that had already been formed.²

¹ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, pp. 33-35.

² Kandinskii, A. N., 'O muzykal'nykh kharakteristikakh v tvorchestve Rimskogo-Korsakova 90x godov', (in)

An additional formative influence on Rimsky-Korsakov's development and choice of subject for his operatic work was his reading both in his childhood, and on board the ship - the clipper *Almaz* - on which he saw three years' service (1862-1865). He had read and reread in the ship's library twenty five plays by Shakespeare, the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, and a great number of works by historians and philosophers of history such as Macaulay, John Stuart Mill, and Buckle. He also read the works of the major Russian literary and political figures of the time, including the entire works of Belinskii.¹ Rimsky-Korsakov specifically notes, in a letter from 1863, that he especially valued the latter critic's review of Danilov's *Sbornik drevnikh rossiiskikh stikhotvorenii*,² and it was possibly this review that first drew the composer's attention to the *stariny*. Since he wrote his short musical sketch *Sadko* in 1867, he must obviously have already been familiar with the variant of this epic in Danilov's volume, and possibly also with the variants in the recently-published volumes of Rybnikov. Although, as noted, there is no evidence that the young composer ever read German Idealist philosophy, the first part of Belinskii's four-part review touched on the views of Schelling, Schlegel, and Hegel, and contained a discussion of the development of national spirit from ancient Greek and Roman times, right through to 19th-century Russia and Pushkin. The critic maintains in the first instalment of this article that a true artist is 'effortlessly nationalistic and of the people', that he senses this national feeling within himself, and lays the impress of it on all his works.³ Therefore the composer had obviously become acquainted with these ideas through his reading at least as early as his late teens and early twenties. Ossovskii points out that Rimsky-Korsakov was always drawn to the ancient world, especially that of Rome and Greece. He wrote a cantata *Iz Gomera* ('From Homer' op. 60 - 1901) and he had at various times

Rimsky-Korsakov - Muzykal'noe nasledstvo, ed Kabalevskii, D., I, 80.

¹ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, p. 26.

² Letter from N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov to M. I. Balakirev (New York, 27-28 Sept 1863), in: N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov, (literary) *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, V, 70. The four-part Belinskii review to which Rimsky-Korsakov refers is: Belinskii, V. G., 'Drevniia rossiiskii stikhotvoreniia sobrannia Kirsheiu Danilovym', *Otechestvennye zapiski*, 1841. edn: *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii V. G. Belinskago*, 12 vols (St Petersburg/Petrograd/ Leningrad 1900-1926) vol 6 (1903) no 544, pp 293-312, 333-349, 357-426, 439-484. The composer presumably read this article in the 1861 complete edition of Belinskii.

³ Belinskii, (1900-1926), *ibid* p. 305.

considered writing operas on episodes from the *Iliad*, or on the themes of *Prometheus* or *The Death of Euridice*.¹ We have already noted Asaf'ev's contention that the defining characteristic of the composer's operas is the sense of the presence of an unseen and unheard bard behind the action, inexorably unfolding events. We may conjecture that it was while at sea, with his reading of the works of the great national poets and chroniclers of Ancient Greece and Britain, and his absorption of the ideas of the philosophy of history, and of the link between the artist and the development of a national self-image derived from all levels of society, that Rimsky-Korsakov formed the intention of becoming the bard of the Russian people, fusing all the elements of Russian creativity into a new distillation of this national spirit.

Possibly because he was a native of the city of Tikhvin, just 120 miles from Novgorod, and falling within the Novgorod Province (*Novgorodskaiia Guberniia*), Rimsky-Korsakov was especially interested in the early Russian 'free cities' of Pskov and Novgorod, which were governed, not by Princes, but by democratic assemblies (consisting exclusively of males of property!). This was why his first opera, *The Maid of Pskov*, dealt with a quasi-historical episode in the early history of that city, and presumably why he felt drawn to the epic of *Sadko*, set as it was in early mediaeval Novgorod. For his ninth opera, the one-act *Boiarynia Vera Sheloga*, ('Lady Vera Sheloga') composed in 1898, he was again drawn to a theme from semi-historical Pskov.

(4) ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE STASOV CIRCLE OF MUSICIANS, AND WITH THEIR WORK BASED ON FOLK INFLUENCES

These tendencies in Rimsky-Korsakov's psyche and world-view were strengthened when, in November 1861, at the age of 17, he made the acquaintance in St Petersburg of a group of

¹ Ossovskii, *Vospominaniia*, p. 299.

young composers headed by Milyi Balakirev, and including Musorgsky and Borodin, which, inspired by Glinka, and taking its lead from the major cultural figure Vladimir Stasov (1824-1906), had already set itself the task of writing compositions based on Russian folk motifs, with music which utilised turns and cadences derived from Russian folk music. It was this group which, with the inclusion of the now little-known César Cui, and with the subsequent adherence of Rimsky-Korsakov himself, formed the nucleus of what Stasov dubbed the 'Mighty Handful' (*Moguchaia kuchka*).¹ Stasov had known Glinka, worshipped his music, and inculcated his musical ideals into his younger musical protégé(e)s.

Vladimir Stasov had, as mentioned above, been an associate of Odoevsky, the champion of Schelling's views in Russia, and thus may have become a further conduit for the German philosopher's views for the young composer, besides his reading of Belinskii on board ship noted above. From 1847 onwards Stasov had published a huge number of articles on folklore, Russian and foreign music, graphic art, architecture, folk handicraft, and on every other type of artistic endeavour, all of which propagated the view that the national spirit, as exemplified in the productions of the common people, should form the basis of art. On his 70th birthday (2nd January 1894) Rimsky-Korsakov, in an oration, declared that Stasov had, for over half a century, stood at the head of the movements in 'Russian art, sculpture, wood-carving, and music'.²

At Stasov's soirées, representatives from all these spheres of art mingled, including the graphic artists of the *Peredvizhniki* (Wanderers) group, who, under Stasov's influence, had rebelled against western models, and had returned to Russian history and folk traditions for their subjects. In 1863, as their assignment for the long summer vacation, a group of students at

¹ The phrase occurs for the first time in the last sentence of Stasov's article 'Slavianskii kontsert g. Balakireva', *Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti*, 1867 no 130, edn: *Sobranie sochinenii V. V. Stasova*, 1847-1886, 3 vols, (St Petersburg: 1894) III, columns 217-219.

² Quoted in Lebedev, A. I., and Solodovnikov, A. V., *V. V. Stasov* (Moscow: 'Iskusstvo', 1982), p. 8.

the St Petersburg Academy of Art had been asked to create compositions on the theme of 'A Feast in Valhalla', and had left the institution in protest. Subsequently, in the 1870s and '80s, they produced a whole series of works deriving from their Russian background. For instance, Victor Vasnetsov painted a canvas entitled *Bogatyri* (1881-98), depicting the three principal Kiev heroes, Il'ia of Murom, Dobrynia Nikitich, and Alesha Popovich, on horseback gazing over the expanses of Russia, while V. I. Surikov painted a series of monumental works derived from Russian history, such as *The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsy* (1878-1881), and *Lady [Boiarynia] Morozova* (1881-87).¹ Stasov himself claimed in an article written over several instalments between 1882 and 1883 that in the previous 25 years (since Glinka's death), Russian art, as exemplified by the *Peredvizhniki*, had succeeded in liberating itself from western European models through the evolution of a sensation of national spirit which revolted against academicism.²

We have noted above that, under this prevailing intellectual atmosphere of rediscovery of Russia's past, Rimsky-Korsakov and Musorgsky had simultaneously, in the late 1860s, begun to compose historical operas (*Pskovitianka* and *Boris Godunov*), while, at almost the same time, another member of this group of composers, Alexander Borodin, had also begun to compose an opera on an episode of Russian history presented in literary epic form, - *Prince*

¹ On Stasov's influence on Russian artistic life, including the *Peredvizhniki* and the 'Mighty Handful', see Gordeeva, E. M., *Kompozitory moguchei kuchki* (Moscow: 'Muzyka', 1985), *passim*. The incident of the students' secession from the Academy of Art is detailed on p. 160, and the following twenty pages detail their subsequent artistic activities. Also see Lebedev, A. K., *Stasov i Russkie khudozhniki* (Moscow: 'Izd. akademii khudozhestva SSSR', 1961). A good selection of reproductions of *Peredvizhniki* works may be found in: Roginskaia, F. S., ed., *Peredvizhniki* (Moscow: 'Art-Rodnik', 1997). This rebellion against formal academicism was, of course, taking place at the same time, under the same philosophical influences, elsewhere in Europe. For instance, in Britain, the group that ultimately dubbed itself the pre-Raphaelites held their first meeting in 1848 in protest against what they saw as the tired conventionalism of the Royal Academy of Arts, while in France in the 1860s a group gathered round Manet whose works had been rejected by the Salon, leading them to set up their own 'Salon des Refusés'.

² Stasov, V. V., '25 let russkogo iskusstva', (*Vestnik Evropy* 1882-1883) repr. *Izbrannye sochineniia*, 3 vols, (Moscow: 'Iskusstvo', 1952) vol II, 391-568. Summarised in Taruskin, *Stravinsky*, I, 23-28.

Igor.

Apart from these influences on choice of theme, what other, specifically musical influences, might this return to Russian national sources have exercised on the musicians who formed part of Stasov's circle? One possible result may have been the utilisation of 'archaic' language in their works. *The Maid of Pskov* is full of such archaisms, and, almost 40 years later, every line of the opera-bylina *Sadko* is drawn directly from, or based on, folk sources, implying deep study on the composer's part. One further consequence is in the use of unusual and asymmetrical rhythms. We have already noted that Rimsky-Korsakov utilised fluctuating rhythms, and the probably unprecedented metre of $11/4$ in his *Sadko*, and the members of this group, plus other composers close to them in artistic intention, had already experimented in the use of such unusual metres. As far back as 1866-67, Rimsky-Korsakov had been interested in what he calls the ' $7/4$ chorus' in A. N. Serov's opera *Rogneda* (1865).¹ This is a Hunting Chorus in Act Three. Yet, if this chorus is examined, we find that the first orchestral bar is in $7/4$, but then the time signature switches to $3/4$. However, it is the *text* which consistently contains 7 syllables, and seven musical beats, to a line, and this 7-beat text is spread over three bars, in the constant proportion of $1+4+2$. It may be recalled from our analysis in Section Two that the epic line very frequently consisted of one syllable to one beat, and that it could not be pinned down to conventional bar-lines and time signatures, but often itself seemed to dictate the rhythm of any bar, and that bar-lines were frequently in fact an irrelevance. Therefore Serov was following such oral folk usage as early as the 1860s. Furthermore, in Act Five of this Opera, there is a Pilgrims' Burial Chorus which fluctuates almost from bar to bar between $3/2$ and $2/2$.

Some of Borodin's early songs too contain unusual rhythms such as $7/4$ and $5/4$.² In fact,

¹ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, Chap VII, '1866-67', p. 43. The composer here (p. 44) characterises Serov as somebody who had at the time been close to the Balakirev circle, but then severed himself from them, and ultimately finished up attacking them in the press.

² On this subject of Russian asymmetrical rhythm see eg Kholopova, V. N., *Russkaia muzykal'naia ritmika*

Musorgsky in 1867 had even experimented with an 11 syllable text, although this was not given an 11/4 time signature, as Rimsky-Korsakov was to do in *Sadko*, but was sub-divided between bars in 3/2 and 5/4. Musorgsky sent a few bars of this song in a letter to Rimsky-Korsakov, who in his response expressed his interest in and liking for this rhythm.¹

Therefore the young composer, at the beginning of his career, had come under the influence of a social and artistic circle which was already beginning to experiment with compositions utilising unconventional procedures which did not derive from western 'art' music.

Even the original idea of writing a composition on the theme of *Sadko* seems to have derived from Stasov. Among his literary interests were the *stariny*: he wrote an article entitled *Proiskhozhdenie russkikh bylin* ('The Origin of the Russian *Byliny*').² Stasov also apparently first suggested to the young composers grouped around him the idea of a musical work based on the Novgorod legend.³

This epic narrative from Danilov's collection provides our composer, both in his orchestral work of 1867, and in his opera of 1895-7, with inspiration for his above-mentioned artistic characteristics: his depiction of nature in sound - both the water element, and the bushes and meadows beside Lake Il'men', - and his expression of the Russian national spirit. The original *bylina* theme allows him too to idealise the Russian folk musician of the title into a Russian Orpheus figure who by his musical art has power to transform the natural world, even to the extent of creating a new river, the Volkhov. The composer may well have viewed himself too

(Moscow: Sovetskii Kompozitor, 1984), esp Ch. 4 'Ritmika russkoi muzyki xix veka', pp. 165-219.

¹ Musorgsky to Rimsky-Korsakov, 1-2 Oct, 1867; Rimsky-Korsakov to Musorgsky, 8 Oct 1867; vol 5, (literary) *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 300-302. Musorgsky's song was a setting of a poem by A Kol'tsov, 'Krestian'skaia pirushka' ('The Peasant Feast').

² Stasov, V. V., 'Proiskhozhdenie russkikh bylin', *Vestnik Evropy* 1868, nos 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, edn. as note 1, p. 99 above, vol III, columns 948-1259.

³ Iankovskii, M. O., 'Stasov i Rimsky-Korsakov', *Rimsky-Korsakov: Muzykal'noe nasledstvo*, ed. Kabalevskii, vol I, pp. 337-408 (p. 403).

as such a figure, a representative of the idealising and transformative power of art.

Furthermore, in the sacrifice of the Sea Tsarevna Volkhova through transmuting herself into this river after her marriage to Sadko - a motif nowhere made explicit in the *bylina* sources - Rimsky-Korsakov is linking her with a series of idealised emblematic self-sacrificing female figures in his operas. For example Snow Maiden, a personification of the wintry element of nature, melts when she feels love for the first time, thus allowing the Sun-God to reappear in the fairytale kingdom for the first time for sixteen years; while the saintly Fevroniia falls asleep at the end of *Kítezh*, and wakes up in Kítezh/Heaven.

To summarise our conclusions in this section: the composer possessed an innate quality of intensely vivid apprehension of his environment; he had, in addition, been born at a stage in which the Russian national spirit, as formed by the country's history and culture, and as manifested and recreated in the art of all layers of society, played a leading role in the national consciousness. It is hardly surprising, then, that he should choose throughout his career to represent in sound themes from Russian folk literature, and to utilise in so doing characteristic features of Russian folk music. Furthermore, given the fact of his birth in the Novgorod Province, and his maritime background, Rimsky-Korsakov's lifelong interest in the *byliny* concerning the Novgorod merchant Sadko and his adventures at sea, seems entirely natural.

However, the numerous variants of this epic subject which the composer used in his opera, are often unclear and unmotivated in the original sources, and required considerable reworking to produce a coherent libretto. We will examine the composer's elaboration of his sources in our next section.

SECTION FOUR

THE SOURCES OF RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S OPERA *SADKO*.

This section will examine the text and background of the following range of sources from which the composer drew details for his opera-*bylina*

- 1) The *Byliny*.
 - a) The *Bylina* of *Sadko*.
 - b) Other *bylina* sources for Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*.
- 2) Non-*bylina* sources.
 - a) The songs of the *skomorokhi* and *kaliki perekhozhie*.
 - b) Other sources in folk-song, folk-story, and legend.

1) THE *BYLINY*

It will be recalled from Section One that numerous different types of *bylina* existed, and that researchers have classified them by subject-matter and by scene of action. Regarding subject-matter, the *byliny* have been classified into those narrating the deeds of the Elder *bogatyri* and Junior *bogatyri*, and the material of these may be sub-divided into 'martial' and 'non-martial' narratives. Furthermore, the stories are almost all either centred round Kiev or Novgorod.

Rimsky-Korsakov, although his opera-*bylina* is a setting of a Novgorod non-martial topic, intensifies the epic world-view of his opera by introducing extracts from, or references to, all the other categories of *bylina*. Accordingly, we shall in this sub-section examine all the *byliny*

from which the composer principally adapted his sources.

a) *The Bylina of Sadko*.

The variants of this epic narrative are by far the major source of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera-*bylina*, and so the bulk of this section will be concerned with this subject. The story, despite its magical elements, is set in mediaeval Novgorod at the height of its trading power, and contains many authentic details of that period's history which the composer incorporates into his opera. Despite the inference in some variants that Sadko was not originally a native of Novgorod, he is always launched into the adventures which form the subject of the epic in and around that city, and always returns there following his exploits at sea. The variants of the *bylina* narrate two distinct adventures in which the hero is involved, which are linked to form one coherent story in a few variants only. The first is concerned with Sadko's early life as a poor itinerant musician entertaining the rich merchants at their feasts in Novgorod; by dint of his musical ability he charms the Sea Tsar (sometimes called the 'Water (*Vodianoi*) Tsar'), and with his help becomes enormously wealthy. The second adventure concerns Sadko as a wealthy merchant, rather than as a musician: during one of his frequent trading voyages with his fleet of thirty (or thirty one) ships (a traditional epic number), this fleet is becalmed because he has never repaid the Sea Tsar for the latter's help in providing him with wealth. After a series of adventures on the bed of the sea, Sadko arrives back in Novgorod, and promises to renounce sailing abroad for ever. V. Miller expresses the view that the ancient folk legend of a talented folk musician who, like Orpheus, possessed power over nature through his art, became interwoven in early mediaeval Novgorod with the much more mundane and less heroic story of a Novgorod Croesus, whose image had gripped the public imagination.¹

Since the story of Sadko is set in recognisably historic times, we shall accordingly deal below

¹ Miller, V., *Ocherki*, (1897) p. 287.

not simply with the fantastical elements, but shall also give an outline of the history of Novgorod at this period, in so far as it is reflected in the sources and in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera.

In late 19th-century Russia, the epic of *Sadko* aroused the interest, not only of musicians, but of graphic artists and literary critics too.¹ In addition, cultural historians also made use of this epic, since it supplied (along with its companion Novgorod *bylina* subject, *Vasilii Buslaev*) details of life in early mediaeval Novgorod.

Besides Rimsky-Korsakov, composers who contemplated writing a work on the subject included not only Balakirev and Musorgsky: in the early 1880s, Tchaikovsky too considered composing an opera based on this epic. However, he did not proceed owing to lack of time.² Rimsky-Korsakov was, in fact, the only composer to achieve such a project.

The epic of *Sadko* was largely brought to Russian intellectual awareness, however, by literary critics such as Belinskii, and by the cultural historian Nikolai Kostomarov (1817-1885). In his 1841 review of Danilov's collection of epics, Belinskii had devoted special attention to that of *Sadko*, seeing it as a poetic representation of the old historical milieu of Novgorod the Great, with its distinctive social structure, and traditional freedom from feudal princely rule.³ Similarly, rather later, Kostomarov, in a work on the North Russian cities ruled by folk-right (*narodopravstvo*) and folk-moots (*vecha*; sing. *veche*) rather than by individuals, devoted a section exclusively to *Sadko*.⁴ The same writer also delivered lectures on the subject of early North Russian jurisprudence at St Petersburg University in 1860-61, in which once again he

¹ Ėg Il'ia Repin (who later became a notable member of Mamontov's Abramtsevo Circle – (see Section Four)); in 1876, he completed an illustration of *Sadko* on the sea-bed, which now hangs in the State Russian Museum (*Gosudarstvennyi Russkii Muzei*) in Saint Petersburg.

² See eg Tchaikovsky's letter to his brother M. I. Tchaikovsky, dated 1 April 1882, quoted in the latter's *Zhizn' Petra Il'icha Chaikovskogo*, 3 vols (Moscow, Leipzig: P Jurgenson, 1903) II, 528.

³ Belinskii (1900-1926), vol. 6, pp. 457-462.

⁴ Kostomarov, N. I., *Russkaia respublika - Severorusskie narodopravstva vo vremena udel'no-vechevogo uklada. Istoriia Novgoroda, Pskova, i Viatki* 1863 (edn. Moscow: 'Smiadyn'. 1994). Chap. 8 Section 9 (pp. 411-419) is devoted to *Sadko*, while Chapter 7 Section 10 (pp. 337-354) deals with *Vasilii Buslaev*.

repeatedly referred to the epic of *Sadko*.¹

Kostomarov was in close contact with Vladimir Stasov at this stage: the historian often attended the Sunday gatherings of cultural celebrities, including all the well-known composers of the time, which Stasov regularly arranged at his house in the capital.² Significantly, Kostomarov noted in a letter to an acquaintance that *Sadko* would make a superb subject for an opera,³ and Stasov might well primarily have adopted the idea of this epic as a subject for a musical work from the historian. In a letter to Balakirev from 1861, Stasov implies that he had only recently (*na dniakh*) discovered this epic song, and he comments on the fresh and atmospheric components of the subject, such as ancient Russian paganism, Christian worship, and life on board old trading ships.⁴ However, the most significant motif of all, he comments, is that of ancient Novgorod and its river, the Volkhov.

Stasov first proposed the *bylina* of *Sadko* to his acolytes (principally Balakirev, Borodin, Musorgsky, and later, Rimsky-Korsakov) as a subject for representation in music in 1861. This proposal was finally taken up by Rimsky-Korsakov alone in 1867, in his short opus five, the *Muzykal'naia kartina*, '*Sadko*' ('Musical Tableau - '*Sadko*'). Danilov's variant of this epic would have been the sole specimen widely-known: however, by the time the composer engaged himself to write an opera on the subject in 1895, some 11 variants were available in the principal collections of the period, of which, in his prefatory material to the score (Item One), he makes specific mention of Danilov and Rybnikov.

¹ See Iankovskii, M. O., 'Bylinnye istoki opery '*Sadko*' N. A. Rimskogo-Korsakova' (in) *Uchenye Zapiski*, II, ed. Sokhor A. N., (Saint Petersburg: 'Gosudarstvennyi nauchno-issledovatel'skii institut teatra, muzyki i kinematografii', 1958) pp. 319-352 (p. 320).

² Iankovskii, *ibid.*

³ Kostomarov, N. I., in a letter to Grafina (Countess) Bludova, 12 April 1861; quoted in Rimsky-Korsakov A. N., *Inst.* IV, 63.

⁴ *M. A. Balakirev i V. V. Stasov: Peregovory*, ed. Liapunova, A. S., 2 vols (Moscow: 'Muzyka', 1970-71) I, no 65, pp. 121-124 (p. 123).

The character of Sadko is in addition mentioned in two other narratives: in one he acts in concert with the superhumanly strong 'Elder *bogatyř*' Sviatogor, while in another he participates in the story with the other autochthonous *bylina* heroes, Vol'ga and Mikula Selianinovich.¹

These epic narratives were the result of the interweaving of disparate and incongruous story-lines by inferior narrators with defective memories. Yet this interweaving implies that Sadko, although not possessing Herculean primordial strength, still, by reason of his musical skill and the enormous wealth he acquires thereby, was held in the narrators' estimation to be on the same level of epic heroism as the other *bogatyři* mentioned. Furthermore, in a variant of the epics concerning Dobrynia Nikitich, Dobrynia's mother explicitly compares Sadko's wealth as a boon of equal standing with the strength and daring of other *bogatyři*:

Дитя ты мое родимое!
 Я хотела тебя спородити добрым молодцом
 Щастками-богатством в Садко купца богатого,
 Красотою-басотою в Осип Прекрасного,
 Сильно хотела тебя спородити в Илью Муромца,
 А смелостью в Олешу Попович.²

and Kostomarov comments that 'the merchant, in the view of the ordinary people, takes on the

¹ *Sviatogor i Sadko*, Gil'ferding, II, no. 119, pp. 307-312. *Sadko, Vol'ga, i Mikula*, Gil'ferding, I, no. 2, pp. 101-114.

² 'My own dear bairn!

Fain would I have borne thee as a bold young hero -
 With the boon of the riches of Sadko the wealthy merchant,
 With the comeliness and beauty of Joseph the Fair,
 Exceeding fain would I have borne thee as Il'ia of Murom,
 And with the daring of Alesha Popovich.'

(*Dobrynia v ot'ezde*, Rybnikov, vol II, no 155, pp. 375-382 (p. 376). Joseph the Fair (Genesis 37-50) has strayed in from the 'spiritual verses' (eg see Bezsonov, I, nos. 37-44, pp. 155-205).

character of an epic *bogatyr*'¹.

From the details of a *gusli*-player's life in ancient Novgorod contained in the first part of the *Sadko* narrative, Kostomarov draws the conclusion that these folk musicians must obviously have been a necessity at feasts and merry-makings in ancient Russia; furthermore, they were not - as such musicians were to become later - blind, crippled, or extremely old, and forced to utilise any minimal skills they might have to eke out a living. They were, on the contrary, highly adept musically, and had obviously devoted themselves to attaining an extremely high standard in their profession. Kostomarov continues that this vocation, with its concomitant virtuosity, seems to have been held by the common people to be a miraculous gift, for the *byliny* concerning *Sadko* portray the folk musician as being able, by his artistic prowess, to call up other-worldly powers (the Sea Tsar) and to influence nature in ways such as arousing and calming storms.²

However, even when wealthy, *Sadko* the artist does not abandon his instrument: he takes his *gusli* with him on voyages, and, in all variants of the second epic subject, bears it with him to the bed of the sea.

It was motifs such as this, then, which so captivated cultural figures of the 19th century, and which encapsulated the 'national spirit' which authors, graphic artists and musicians were striving to express in their works.

Most *byliny* concerning *Sadko* narrated just one of the above stories: only a few of the declamations in the volumes with which Rimsky-Korsakov would have been familiar link the two in one composite story. We shall analyse principally in this thesis two such composite epic

¹ Kostomarov, *Russkaia respublika*, p. 411.

² Kostomarov, *Russkaia respublika*, pp. 412-413.

narratives concerning *Sadko* from Rybnikov's volumes, since they contain most of the elements which the composer finally incorporated into his libretto.¹ Other versions, although not differing essentially in the narrative, may contain varying or extra details, which we shall comment upon only when Rimsky-Korsakov employs these too in his libretto.

Iankovskii isolates a number of major motifs of these composite songs: among those which would have appealed to Rimsky-Korsakov are, firstly, Sadko's power as an artist and musician to bring into thrall the forces of nature, to overcome the antagonistic materialistic elements of his society (ie, the rich merchants who drive him scornfully from their feast), and to attain wealth by his art; secondly, Sadko's sea voyages; and finally, the realistic backdrop of early mediaeval Novgorod.² In terms of power over nature, Rimsky-Korsakov did not rest content with depicting the epics' portrayal of Sadko's creation of storms by his playing for the Sea Tsar; the composer, as we have noted, introduced the extra motif of this folk musician's creation of the River Volkhov by his playing.

This interest in an epic concerned so closely with a lake, a river, and the sea, may have derived from the maritime tradition in Rimsky-Korsakov's family. The composer's elder brother, Voin Andreevich, was already a high-ranking naval officer in Nikolai Andreevich's youth, and ultimately became an Admiral. The composer himself had been a sea cadet and sailor for a number of years himself, between 1856 and 1871. Therefore, he was always intrigued by the challenge of depicting the sea musically: besides *Sadko*, he displayed this interest in such compositions as the orchestral *suite Sheherazade*, and in his opera *Tsar Saltan*. In an analogous fashion to the sea themes in Benjamin Britten's opera *Peter Grimes*, the opera *Sadko* too commences with motifs representing the rocking motion of the waves, and the surging of the breakers, and these recur constantly, in manifold guises, throughout the work,

¹ Rybnikov, II, no. 107 pp. 24-31 (*Sadko kupets*), and no 134, pp. 243-254 (*Sadko*).

² Iankovskii, (1958), pp. 324-328.

and reappear at the end of the final tableau, forming a framework for the composition, and reflecting the environment of the original sources - both the historical background of Novgorod as a great trading city, and the location of the fantastic part of the story, on the sea-bed.

The mythical theme of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, and of the original folk sources, is set against a backdrop of early mediaeval Novgorod, in what Rimsky-Korsakov called in the prefatory notes to his score (Item 2) 'semi-legendary-semi-historical times'. The composer had already written an opera - his first, 'The Maid of Pskov', - in 1872 on an incident from the history of a Northern city closely linked in social structure with Novgorod, in that both were '*vol'nye*', that is, 'free', in the sense of not being ruled by a Prince, but by a *veche*, or folk-moot. The Novgorodian background of the epics concerning Sadko yielded the composer another opportunity to portray the folk life of such a city: his opera interweaves multiple parts for chorus and soloists, representing the Merchants' Guild, the crowd, the *skomorokhi*, pilgrims, warlocks (*volkhvy*), and foreign merchants - all of whom were common sights in ancient Novgorod. The crowd in Tableau Four of the opera refer to themselves explicitly several times as *liudi vol'nye* ('unfettered folk') - the term used by the early Novgorod chronicles, by historians, and in the Novgorod *byliny* to refer to the inhabitants of the northern proto-democracies.

An interest in these northern 'free cities' run by folk-moots had occupied the Russian educated classes since the late 18th century, and the theme continued to exercise Russian artists and writers during the mid-19th century. We recall that, during this period, the prevailing philosophical atmosphere maintained that history had meaning. Russian culture was trying therefore to find in old Russia an explanation for its contemporary development, and to formulate an answer as to whether Peter the Great's westernising reforms had deflected Russia from its true historical course.

In 1860, for instance, the poet and dramatist Lev Alexandrovich Mei (1822-62) wrote the drama

Pskovitianka ('The Maid of Pskov') concerning Novgorod's so-termed republican 'younger brother', Pskov. The major scene of this play is devoted to a session of the Pskov *veche*, and attention is focused on the town's struggle against Tsar Ivan IV of Moscow, and his attempt finally to subjugate Pskov totally and impose his imperial rule. It was this play which Rimsky-Korsakov turned into his first opera in 1872, at the age of 28. Furthermore, at the age of 23, he had also written a musical sketch upon themes from the epic concerning Sadko, and so he had clearly developed an early interest in these Russian proto-democracies. The fact that his birth-place near the town of Tikhvin was in the Novgorod Province (*Novgorodskaiia Guberniia*), just 120 miles from Novgorod, can only have increased the composer's interest in this subject.

By the time he addressed himself to these themes, historians, stimulated by the prevailing intellectual and philosophical climate, had carried out extensive research on early Russian history. For instance, the Slavophile M. P. Pogodin issued his seven volumes of researches into Russian history in the 1840s,¹ while S. M. Solov'ev published his 29-volume work on the same subject between 1851 and 1879; this latter scholar had already, in 1846, devoted a volume to ancient Novgorod.² In 1860 and 1861, Kostomarov published his above-cited works on the early Russian republics. Anti-monarchist radicals such as Chernyshevskii and Dobroliubov also concerned themselves with this theme in their writings. By producing works, both literary and historical, on ancient Russian republics, Russian cultural figures of the 18th and 19th centuries could, to a certain extent, obliquely hint at the social structure of their own time, which, if commented upon directly, would have invoked state censorship.

Rimsky-Korsakov employed in his sixth opera *Sadko* motifs of early Novgorodian history, such as its 'freedom' (*vol'nitsa*), and its position as an important trading centre. As mentioned, the

¹ Pogodin M. P., *Izsledovaniia, zamechaniia, i lektsii o russkoi istorii*, 7 instalments. Edn. 3 vols (Moscow: 1846).

² Solov'ev S. M., *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen*, 29 vols (Moscow: 1851-1879). The author's volume on Novgorod is: *Ob otnosheniakh Novgoroda k Velikim Kniaz'iam* (Moscow: 1846).

crowd in Tableau Four (see below), which takes place amidst the stalls and shops on the quay at Novgorod on market day, explicitly refer to themselves on numerous occasions as *liudi vol'nye*, while, as indicators of the city's mercantile significance, we may also observe that the opera commences with a feast of one of the merchants' fraternities (*bratchiny*) at the merchants' Guild-Hall, and that, furthermore, one of the set-pieces of the opera is the suite of songs of the visiting Viking, Indian, and Venetian guest-traders (*gosti*) in Tableau Four. To elucidate these and other historical references in the opera, it is germane here to give an outline of the history of early Novgorod insofar as it is reflected in the *byliny* and in the opera.

Until the end of the 15th century Novgorod was one of the pre-eminent commercial centres of Europe, since, as a result of the confluence of major waterways in its vicinity, it formed a transit point between Western Europe, Russia, and, ultimately, the Byzantine Empire. This semi-historical background, although interwoven with a tale of fantasy, frames both the epic stories concerning Sadko, and consequently also forms the backdrop for the opera. Rimsky-Korsakov, as we recall, tried to make sense of these somewhat incoherent sources by introducing the motif of the creation of the River Volkhov, which does not come into existence till the end of his opera. This lack of a river would, of course, have rendered Novgorod's pre-eminence as a trading city impossible.

This mercantile power caused the city to develop a relatively democratic non-monarchic executive structure, and this too is reflected both in the *byliny* and in the opera.

Before its gradual development into an economic force, Novgorod had been considered loosely to be part of the Principedom of Kiev. However, with the fragmentation and decline of the Kievan principality in the early 11th century, the Novgorodians began to struggle for self-rule, as a result of which they obtained certain rights, the most important of which was the privilege of having their own *posadnik*, or governor - a regent of the ruler of Kiev - chosen by the

Novgorodians themselves in an election; the granting of this right meant that the final arbiter in Novgorod was *de facto* the *veche*, and all executive posts were to be chosen by this council. From 1156 onwards, this even included the post of the Bishop of Novgorod. The Church too, besides the merchants, also enjoyed tremendous wealth and power in Novgorod, and Rimsky-Korsakov emphasises this fact by his interweaving of church chants with the themes of the merchants.

To what extent is this social and executive structure of old Novgorod reflected in the *byliny* and in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera? Firstly, it should be noted that the two major officials of the city, the *Posadnik* and his deputy the *Tysiatskii*, are nowhere given these historical titles in the Novgorod *byliny*, but - where any governing figures are mentioned at all - are replaced by two figures entitled *kniazi* ('Princes'), or *nastoiateli* ('chiefs', 'elders'). The latter term is never encountered in early Novgorodian records, but is of Moscow origin and presumably, with the subsuming of the Novgorod republic by the Moscow Principality in 1570, all such specifically Novgorodian terms were lost to folk memory and replaced by later equivalents. The composer acknowledges precisely this point when he notes in the prefatory material (Item 5) to his score of *Sadko* that: 'The *nastoiateli* (sometimes termed in the *byliny* the Princes (*kniazi*) of Novgorod), are apparently the Elders (*starshiny*) of the city'.

The *veche* was not fully democratic, consisting as it did only of certain classes of men. The predominant class was that of the wealthy merchants, who had enormous prestige and influence. These merchants formed 'Guilds' or 'Brotherhoods', (*Bratchiny*) which regularly held feasts, and one of the brotherhoods specifically referred to in some of the variants of *Sadko*, and in Rimsky-Korsakov's libretto, is that of St Nicholas (*Nikol'shchina*), which held banquets on the 6 May and 6 December.¹ When consulting with the composer on the compilation of the

¹ See eg Danilov (1977), no. 28, *Sadko bogatoi* (sic) *gost'*, pp. 142-147 (p. 143).. The two dates mentioned above are the two feasts of St Nicholas, termed in Russian '*Letnii*' and '*Zimnii*' *Nikolin den'* ie Summer and

libretto, Stasov advised him to commence with a feast, but, in contradistinction to the feasts at Prince Vladimir's court commencing many epics of the Kiev cycle, the critic counselled Rimsky-Korsakov to depict a 'Novgorodian, republican, feast, where none is greater than another.'¹ It is indeed with a feast of the *Nikol'shchina* Fraternity, celebrating their independence, that Rimsky-Korsakov begins his opera. The remaining 'free' persons, were the artisans and smaller traders of the town, and it is these who form the crowd on the Quay of Novgorod during Tableau Four of the opera, and who address each other as *liudi vol'nye* ('free folk'). However, there were other classes of people who had lost their voting rights as a result of indebtedness, plus the usual serf class (*kholopy*). It is presumably from these people that Sadko draws the crew for his fleet when he wins his wager and becomes wealthy at the end of the same Tableau: he terms them '*goli kabatskie*' ('beggarly pub riff-raff'), and '*menshie liudi*' ('lesser folk') and both these terms are found regularly, not only in the Novgorod epics, but throughout the whole epos, to denote the lowest classes of society.

As observed above, the Church in the old Novgorod city-state was enormously prosperous and powerful, and accordingly it expended great wealth on building and decorating its cathedrals and churches. The rich merchants too considered it a duty and an honour to endow such buildings, and, according to the Novgorod chronicles, one of the chief names associated with the building of the church of St Boris and St Gleb in Novgorod is that of one Sadko Sytinets, who, in the year 6675 (ie 1167 CE) provided the funding for this construction.² This historical figure may well have provided the prototype for the figure in the second set of stories concerning Sadko - those in which the folk musician is now a wealthy trader. In several variants of the first story (narrating how the poor artist became wealthy), Sadko promises to

Winter St Nicholas's Day. Since the stage directions in Tableau Two state that Sadko, after being driven forth from the merchants' guild in Tableau One, sings by Lake Il'men' on a '*svetlaia letniaia noch*' ('a bright summer's night'), the summer date must be intended in the opera here.

¹ Stasov, V. V., to Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., 7 July 1894 (in) Iankovskii, M. O., 'Stasov i Rimsky-Korsakov', (in) ed. Kabalevskii I, pp. 337-403 (p. 379).

² Miller, V., *Ocherki*, p. 287.

donate money for the lavish decoration of churches.¹ Consequently, in Tableau One of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera too, Sadko declares, that, if he were ever to become wealthy, he would erect 'God's churches' (*tserkvi bozh'ia* - a typical stock adjective and noun combination of the *byliny*), gild the crosses and cupolas with pure gold, and stud the icons with pearls, precious stones and crystals.

However, although Sadko the poor musician becomes wealthy in the first story, he still does not abandon his *gusli* in the second set of narratives, but takes it with him to the sea-bed. We may surmise here that the historical Sadko may too have been a talented player on the *gusli*, although, of course, he would not have needed to hire himself out as an entertainer to make a living.

From the above evidence, therefore, the conclusions may be drawn that the primeval folk legend of a talented folk musician, or possibly even a shamanic figure, who has Prospero-like power over nature through his art, became linked with the historical memory of a hugely wealthy Novgorod merchant, who was in addition a talented musician, and whose image had gripped the popular imagination.

This combination of themes may further have been stimulated in the folk consciousness by the memory of the earlier *bylina* concerning Solovei Budimirovich, who is also extremely rich, and is an adept on the *gusli*. In fact, the composer introduced substantial extracts from this latter epic into his opera, and we shall now proceed to examine both this, and the other *byliny*, in addition to those of *Sadko*, which the composer utilises in this work.

¹ Eg Danilov, no 28, *Sadko bogatoi gost'*, describes Sadko, in precisely identical phraseology at three separate places in the narrative as constructing, firstly, the Church of Stephen the Archdeacon, then that of Nikolai Mozhaiskii (St Nicholas of Myra), and, finally, that of Sofia the Most-wise (*Premudraia*). He also provides on each occasion the money to gild the crosses, cupolas, and Royal Gates (*Tsarskie Voroty*), and to set the icons in pearls.

b) Other *bylina* sources for Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*.

Besides the epic variants of *Sadko*, Rimsky-Korsakov incorporates into his opera lengthy fragments from the two epics of *Volkh Vseslavich*, and *Solovei Budimirovich* - both in the variants to be found in the edition of Kirsha Danilov. In addition, he drew extracts and details of text from the epic entitled *Ivan Gostinyi Syn* ('Ivan the Merchant's Son'), from the various tales concerning the courtly *bogatyř* Dobrynia Nikitich, and from the other major cycle of Novgorod epics, those concerning Vasiliı Buslaev. In fact, throughout, the composer is utilising his material in the fashion of a true folk epic narrator: he recreates a specific epic theme with language, vocabulary, turns of phrase, and 'stock epithets' drawn from the whole range of his epic knowledge.

The choice of *byliny* from which the composer opted to quote is not random: *Volkh Vseslavich* is drawn from the 'Elder *bogatyř*' cycle, while *Solovei* is derived from the 'non-martial' *byliny*, apparently based on fairy-tale. Shorter sections of text are interpolated throughout the opera from such Kievan 'Junior *bogatyř*' epics as *Dobrynia Nikitich*. Therefore the composer is incorporating into the web of his opera references to every category of *bylina*. Moreover, this selection of allusions is designed to emphasise that *Sadko* is an epic of early Novgorod, for, despite their *a priori* non-Novgorod provenance, the view has been expressed by various commentators, both during Rimsky-Korsakov's lifetime and since, that the major epics from which the composer quotes directly (*Volkh* and *Solovei*) both originally derived from Novgorod.¹ A Novgorodian origin has also been suggested for *Ivan Gostinyi Syn*,² from which the composer adapted certain details of libretto for *Sadko*, such as features of the feast which commences the opera. In other words, the songs would have been familiar to the common people of ancient Novgorod whom Rimsky-Korsakov depicts in his opera, and these songs would have formed part of the tapestry of their everyday entertainment. The composer

¹ Eg. Miller, *Ocherki*, pp. 200-211.

² Miller, *Ocherki*, pp. 246-247.

employed such epics in his work in order to maximise the verisimilitude of his portrayal of the historical life of the city.

In addition, the inclusion of an extract from the *bylina* *Volkh Vseslavich*, foreshadows the climax of the opera (the Princess Volkhova's transformation of herself into the river that flows through Novgorod), since, in folk tradition, this river derived its name from a warlock called Volkh who lived in its waters.

Furthermore, both *Solovei* and *Ivan Gostinyi Syn* allude to the theme of making wealth by trade, which features so largely in the songs about *Sadko*.

Finally, *Solovei*, which narrates the voyage to Kiev of a rich merchant from beyond the seas to seek the hand of the daughter of Prince Vladimir I of Kiev, introduces the theme of marriage, which is suggested in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera in the motif of Sadko's betrothal to the Sea Princess Volkhova. This theme is also touched on in the song of the 'Venetian Guest-Trader' in Tableau Four, which mentions the traditional annual marriage of the Doge of Venice to the sea.

We may remind ourselves here of the question posed in our Introduction, and which is relevant throughout our thesis: did the composer, who had been engrossed in the study of folk-lore since his youth, not comprehend that the educated urban opera-goers of the 1890s, although they would certainly have heard of the *byliny* concerning Sadko, Vasilii Buslaev, Volkh, Solovei, *et al.*, would almost equally certainly not have carried out a detailed study of the sources, nor have had a profound knowledge of the history of mediaeval Novgorod? They would presumably have picked up relatively few of the densely-packed references. This objection will be dealt with in our concluding Section (Eight).

However, although most of the audience at the first performances would have picked up only a minute proportion of the poetic and musical references, the work was obviously appreciated even without these, for, as we observed in our introduction, Rimsky-Korsakov noted in his memoirs that the first performance of his opera *Sadko* 'enjoyed enormous success with the public'.¹ Therefore, we will recur in our Section Eight to the consideration that an audience may attend a performance of a stage work with different expectations from those of the author, and may undergo a completely different experience from that which the author intended - but will still come away having enjoyed the spectacle, and been illuminated and uplifted.

Let us now proceed to analyse individually the *byliny* listed above as sources, other than those of *Sadko*.

The first such epic declamation from which the composer quotes at length (in Tableau One) is that of *Volkh Vseslavich*. This *bylina* is extremely rare, and is to be found associated with a hero of this name only in Danilov among the sources with which Rimsky-Korsakov would have been familiar.² The name *Volkh* is similar in form to the Russian term *volkhv* (sorcerer, magus), - and indeed *Volkh Vseslavich*, by his magical arts, succeeds in conquering the 'Tsardom of India'. The epic appears in both subject-matter and in the location of this matter to belong to the 'Elder *bogatyr*' cycle, and to have no connection with the later Kiev and Novgorod cycles. However, Miller cites approvingly the view of previous scholars that the epic concerning *Volkh* should be ascribed to Novgorod provenance.³ Another commentator of the period, F. I. Buslaev (1818-1897), maintains that that there was a tradition that *Volkh*, a *besougodnyi charodei, liut v liudiakh* ('a warlock pleasing to the Devil, and ferocious against folk') would lie at the bottom of the river that flowed through Novgorod (then called the *Mutnyi*,

¹ *Letopis'*, p. 209.

² Danilov (1977), no. 6, pp. 32-36.

³ Miller, V., 'K bylinam o Vol'ge i Mikule', *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniia*, 1894 no 11; repr. in: Miller, V., *Ocherki*, (1897) pp.166-186 (pp. 166-167).

or 'Turbid'), in the form of a water-monster, barring the way of those who would not pay him homage: some he would devour, others he would drown. Buslaev notes that Volkh was worshipped as an avatar of the old Russian thunder-god, Grom or Perun, in whose honour a huge temple had been erected on the banks of the Volkhov. During Christian times this pagan god was transformed into a representative of evil who took the form of a serpent.¹ Significantly, the *bylina* *Volkh Vseslavich* tells us that the hero was born of a union between a serpent and a human, and it is precisely this section of this epic from which the composer quotes directly in the first Tableau of his opera.

Therefore, by quoting this epic, Rimsky-Korsakov has added yet another set of references to the deeply-packed texture here, since, besides possibly being a further *bylina* from Novgorod, it too is concerned with the ancient mythical history of the Volkhov River, and of beliefs in pagan deities in semi-historical times, when Christianity still had not achieved full sway. Furthermore, as we have noted, Volkh, once an avatar of deity, was downgraded in Christian times to become a symbol of evil. In the opera, this is mirrored by the quotation from *Volkh* in Tableau One, and by the apparent Christianisation of pagan Novgorod at the climax of the opera-*bylina*, following the vanquishing of the pagan 'Underwater Realm' of the Sea Tsar by the 'Mighty *Bogatyř* Monastic Elder'. This character (*Starchishche moguch-bogatyř*) is borrowed from the Novgorod epics of *Vasilii Buslaev*, and is a substitute for the St Nicholas who fulfils this function in the *Sadko* legends, who could not be represented on stage owing to the ban by the Russian censors on displaying major religious figures on stage. Therefore Volkh/the Sea Tsar/paganism has been vanquished by a representative of the new religion (see Section Seven).

A further link between this theme and that of the naming of rivers is that another primeval epic

¹ Buslaev, F. I., *Istoricheskie ocherki russkoi narodnoi slovesnosti*, 2 vols (St Petersburg: 1861) II, 8.

hero is named Volgá, and, although the narratives connected with this figure have nothing in common with those of Volkh, the two names were often confused in narrators' minds, so that they appeared as the heroes of each other's adventures. Therefore the link of Volkh with another river in addition to the Volkhov, would have been apparent to the minds of well-informed viewers of the first performances, and to others who, subsequently, decided to study the opera's sources in depth.

The other major *bylina* from which Rimsky-Korsakov quotes at length, and from which he adopts many details of Sadko's ship, is *Solovei Budimirovich*. The theme of this epic is the sailing from overseas of the fabulously wealthy 'Solovei *Bogatyi Gost*' ('Nightingale the Rich Merchant') to claim the hand of the daughter of Prince Vladimir of Kiev. Solovei ('Nightingale') is stated in Danilov's variant to hail from the town of 'Ledenets' while in Rybnikov,¹ this becomes 'zemli Vedenetskiia' ('The Venetian Lands'). Both of these designations, in old Russian, meant Venice, one of Novgorod's major trading partners of the 13th-15th centuries. In Rimsky-Korsakov's opera one of the merchant guests who sings a cameo piece at the end of Tableau Four is from Venice, and it is to this port that Sadko finally sets sail.²

V. F. Miller and others have claimed that, despite its reference to Prince Vladimir of Kiev and his daughter, *Solovei* is also of Novgorodian origin, and, indeed, that the *bylina* of *Sadko* may have been created around the already existing model of *Solovei*. Rimsky-Korsakov, in his role of the 'bard behind the bard' attempts to demonstrate this process in Tableau Four. The crowd here gradually transform the *bylina* they have been singing about Solovei to one extolling the

¹ Rybnikov, II, no. 132.

² Incidentally, although 'Solovei Budimirovich' (which may be understood as 'Nightingale Rouse-the-World's-Son') is by far the most common variant of the hero's name in the epics, his surname in some variants is *Gudimirovich* ('Stringed-instrument-Player's-Son'), prompting speculation that this may have been his original name, which was gradually altered over the centuries as isolated performers forgot the original significance of the root *gud*. And indeed, Solovei, like Sadko, is an adept on the *gusli*. Solovei bears the patronymic 'Gudimirovich' in eg. Rybnikov, II, no. 163, pp. 420-425.

victorious Sadko, who has become wealthy through winning his wager against the merchants

2) NON-BYLINA SOURCES FOR RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S OPERA *SADKO*

a) The songs of the *skomorokhi* and *kaliki perekhozhie*.

Rimsky-Korsakov notes in his prefatory material (Item One) to the score of *Sadko* that he has adapted details of his opera from the religious song, *Golubinaia kniga*, from the *skomorokh* song *Terentii Gost'* ('Terentii the Merchant'), and 'others'. *Terentii Gost'* is a tale of a rich merchant who is assisted in discovering his wife's infidelity by the *skomorokhi*. The form in which the composer utilises the tale, is drawn directly from Danilov's anthology. Among the 'other' such items in his opera to which Rimsky-Korsakov alludes are two *skomorokh* songs, also based on entries to be found in Danilov's compendium: the song in the first tableau, *'Zhil-by!' duren'*, ('There once lived an addlepate') and the song sung by the *skomorokhi* in the fourth tableau, which draws elements from a song to be found in Danilov's anthology, a parody of folk epic entitled *Agafonushka*. The title of this latter is formed from the rare Russian name 'Agafon' on the analogy of *Dobryniushka* from *Dobrynia*, or *Il'iushka* from *Il'ia*, and the song satirises the deeds of the *bogatyri* in quite obscene terms.¹

A precise analysis of the text and the music of these songs borrowed almost directly from Danilov will be postponed till Section Seven, but it should be noted here that the narrative of *Terentii gost'* is explicitly set in Novgorod. It therefore also forms part of the suite of songs which the composer employs to evoke the background of that city in his opera. Rimsky-

¹ *Pro gostia Terentisha* (sic) is no. 2 in Danilov (1977) pp. 15-19; *Pro dumia* is no. 59 (pp. 202-208), while *Agafonushka* is no. 27 (pp. 141-142). Up to, and including, 1977, all editions had obscenities removed. An edition of Danilov published in 2000 (ed. Gorelov, A. A., Moscow: 'Tropa Troianova') is inferior in scholarly apparatus to 1977, and therefore has not been used in this thesis. However, this later volume possesses the one advantage that it is unexpurgated. There is no information as to whether the composer ever saw the original manuscript of Danilov, complete with crudities, or simply utilised the bowdlerised version available to him.

Korsakov is - as in the case of the *byliny* treated above - introducing into his text songs which, according to the scholarly consensus of his time, emanated from Novgorod, and therefore would also have formed part of the everyday life of the ordinary Novgorodian citizens of the city and the opera.

The same consideration applies to the snatch of religious song sung by the wandering pilgrims in *Sadko*. This consists of verses on the struggle between *Pravda* ('Truth', 'Righteousness'), and *Krivda* ('Falsehood', 'Evil'), to be found in some variants of the long narrative religious poem, *Golubinaia kniga*. This depicts the descent to Earth onto Mount Tabor (or Golgotha, or other holy mountains) of a massive volume (Danilov's variant says it is 40 *piaden's* in length, 20 in width, and 30 thick).¹ Only Tsar David (or, in other versions, Solomon), can interpret the book. It contains a decidedly 'non-Nicene' history of the Creation of the Universe, and cosmogony, apparently derived from Christian apocryphal or even pagan sources, and woven into a conventional Christian religious framework.² The name '*Kniga golubinaia*' apparently means 'The Book of the Dove' (*Golub* in Russian), since the Dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and the book may be understood to be a manifestation of this Spirit on earth. However, the hypothesis has been propounded that *Golubinaia* is a distortion of *Glubinnaia* - 'profound', and that the title rather means 'Book of Profundity'.³

Analogously to his employment of the *byliny* and *skomorokh* songs touched on above, Rimsky-Korsakov's use of this particular religious song may have derived from the fact that several researchers had suggested that this theme too had originated in the Novgorod city-state.⁴

¹ *Piaden'*, or *piad'* - 'An old Russian measure of length, equal to the distance between the tips of the outstretched thumb and index finger', Selivanov F. M., ed. *Stikhi dukhovnye*, (Moscow: 'Sovetskaia Rossia' 1991) p. 330.

Assuming this distance to be on average 6 inches, the book would therefore be 20 ft x 10 ft x 15 ft.

² Selivanov, *Stikhi dukhovnye*, pp. 8-9; Veselovskii, A. N., *Sobranie sochinenii* (Petrograd: 1921) vol 8, pp. 177-179.

³ 'Golubinaia kniga', *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, XVIII (1893) pp. 116-117.

⁴ Mochul'skii, V., *Istoriko-literaturnyi analiz stikha o Golubinoi Knige* (Warsaw: 1887) p. 133.

It will be recalled, from our mention of the *bylina* theme of the Forty One Pilgrims (Section Two) that Novgorod had a great tradition of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and it has been conjectured that this particular epic song, despite its apparently Kievan setting, also derived from Novgorod.¹ Furthermore, the hero of the other major cycle of Novgorod songs, Vasilii Buslaev (whom, as we have noted above, Rimsky-Korsakov implies in the opera is Sadko's brother-in-law) sails to the Holy Land with his retinue to expiate his sins, and there dies.² In this too, therefore, we have a further accentuation of the Novgorodian background of the opera.

The idea of incorporating an extract from this particular religious narrative apparently derived from the composer himself. In a letter to his associate V I Bel'skii, he asks him to supply detailed extracts from the *Golubinaia kniga*.³

A further reason for the composer's introduction of this religious epic into his narrative may well have been that, as noted above, in parallel with the *bylina* of *Volkh*, and the legend of the wizard of the same name, the 'Book of Profound Wisdom' also includes details of an ancient pagan cosmogony, which fits in well with the 'semi-historical-semi-legendary' background of the opera.

Gozenpud makes the additional point that this religious epic provides a source for certain details contained in the three songs of the merchants from overseas (specifically, a Viking, an Indian, and a Venetian).⁴ The composer, in his prefatory material (Item 7) to the opera, justifies the appearance of these merchants in mediaeval Novgorod by saying that, although their appearance at the same time is clearly an anachronism, *bol'shaia chast' bylin obyknovenno napolnena anakhronizmami vsiakogo roda* ('The majority of the *byliny* are usually full of

¹ Speranskii, *Byliny*, II, 51-55.

² See eg. Vasilii Buslaev *molit'sia ezdil*, Danilov no. 19, pp. 91-98.

³ N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov, letter to V. I. Bel'skii, 15 July 1896; quoted in Gozenpud, A. A., *Rimsky-Korsakov - Temy i idei ego opernogo tvorchestva* (Moscow: 'GMI' 1957) p. 92.

⁴ Gozenpud, *op cit*, pp. 90-94.

anachronisms of every kind'). There may here be further references to other *byliny*: it will be recalled that Solovei Budimirovich is described as hailing from Venice, while Volkh struggles against the Indian (ie 'Eastern') Tsardom.

Incidentally, the episode of the struggle between Good and Evil which the composer incorporates into his work is not found in Danilov's variant, and both this combat, and some of the details incorporated into the foreign traders' songs, are apparently derived from the major volume of religious verses published in the 19th century - Bezsonov's *Kaleki perekhozhiiia* (see Section Two).¹

b) Other sources in folk-song, folk-story, and legend.

In order to clarify the role of the maiden to whom Sadko is betrothed on the sea bed, the composer incorporates motifs from the magical tale of '*Morskoi Tsar' i Vasilisa Premudraia*' ('The Sea Tsar and Vasilisa the Most-Wise') derived from Afanas'ev's volumes.² Alexander Nikolaevich Afanas'ev (1826-1871) was an adherent of the school of 'comparative mythology' which maintained that myths and legends were attempts by ancient peoples to understand the manifestations of nature around them, and that the apparent common archetypal motifs to be found in the folk tales of cultures world-wide were to be explained by the attempts by all races in their infancy to explain the same phenomena. In regard to the *byliny*, Afanas'ev maintained that the *bogatyri* were euhemerisms of old gods or mighty supernatural figures, who had themselves been personifications of natural forces: for instance, Il'ia of Murom was a later representation of the old Slavonic God of thunder, Grom or Perun, the ale he drank to gain his supernatural strength is a metaphor for rain, while the enemies he defeats are destructive

¹ Eg. Bezsonov, *Kaleki Perezhozhie*, eg: vol I, nos. 76, 78, 79, 81, pp. 269-281.

² '*Morskoi Tsar' i Vasilisa Premudraia*', edn. *Narodnyia Russkiiia Skazki*, 4 vols ed. Afanas'ev, A. N., (Moscow: 1873), II, nos. 125 a-g, pp. 313-368.

natural climatic phenomena, and the '*zolota kazna*' ('store of gold' - a consistent adjective and noun combination found constantly in the *byliny*, including those of *Sadko*, to describe wealth), is the harvest in summertime. *Sadko* himself, since his miraculous musicianship whips up the great Ocean-Sea, has also, Afanas'ev maintains, 'obviously taken the place in legends of the extremely ancient God of Thunder and the Winds'. In the howlings of a storm, he continues, the ancients must have heard the magical sounds of a self-playing *gusli* (*gusli-samogud* - an instrument which, in Russian folk-tales, begins playing spontaneously, and forces everybody hearing it to dance). *Sadko's* marriage on the sea-bed must originally have represented the union of the thunder-gods with a 'cloud nymph' (*oblachnaia nimfa*), while *Sadko's* ship is a storm-cloud. In order to quell the storm, the Storm God/*Sadko* must break the strings of his instrument and cease to play.¹

Although Rimsky-Korsakov expressed scepticism about these theories, he adopted from Afanas'ev the concept of the personification of the waters, and his analysis of the figures of the Sea Tsar, and the water spirits.² Afanas'ev points out the close affinity of the *Sadko* epics with the folk tales concerning the Ruler of the Waters³ - whom he terms a 'Slavic Neptune', - and his wise daughter, Vasilisa Premudraia ('Vasilisa the Most-wise'), who saves a character - usually Ivan Tsarevich ('Ivan Tsar's-son') - from her father's anger.

To emphasise his own invented motif that the River Volkhov which has been called forth by *Sadko's* playing, has been created from such a daughter of the King, Rimsky-Korsakov names the Sea-King's daughter Volkhova in his opera. He points out in his prefatory material (Item 4) that, according to Afanas'ev, the River Volkhov was once known by this feminine form. Afanas'ev stresses the fact that, in some variants of this tale, Vasilisa the Most-Wise is in fact

¹ Afanas'ev, A. N., *Poeticheskiia vozzreniia slavian*, II, 211-215.

² Afanas'ev, *ibid*, II, 214-215. For Rimsky-Korsakov's reservations as to Afanas'ev's speculations, see eg. Iastrebtsev, vol I, entry for 7 Sept 1895, p. 306.

³ Afanas'ev, *ibid*, II, 215. The author also observes here that this 'Ruler of the Waters' is variously called the *Morskoi* / *Vodianoi* / *Poddonyi Tsar* ('Sea/Water/Sea-Bed Tsar'),

called *Lebed'-Ptitsa Krasnaia Devitsa* ('Swan-Bird Beautiful Maiden'), and he claims that such Swan Maidens are also to be understood as daughters of the Sea and inhabitants of the waters. The composer utilises this detail in Tableau Two of his opera, where Volkhova and her maidens first appear as swans and grey ducks (a commonplace of the epics, where *bogatyri* are frequently described as hunting for these birds), before transforming themselves into humans. At the end of this scene, as dawn breaks, they once more become water birds and swim off.

Even such individual 'cameo-songs' as 'The Song of The Indian Merchant' (Tableau Four) which has nothing to do with the plot of *Sadko*, and might appear to have been introduced into the opera-*bylina* purely gratuitously, derive certain details, to be examined in Section Seven, from ancient Russian prose legends such as *Skazanie ob Indiiskom Tsarstve* ('Legend of the Tsardom of India') which describes the fabulous wealth of the Indian Kingdom.

Further shorter borrowings in the opera *Sadko*, from both Russian oral creativity (for instance, the lament of Sadko's wife for her lost husband), and early written sources (such as '*Slovo o Polku Igoreve*'), will also be dealt with in our treatment of the score, as will references to folk beliefs not specific to any tale, such as the broom bushes round which Sadko and Volkhova are married at the end of Tableau Six.

However, in summary we may simply observe here that almost all of the adaptations of folk sources dealt with so far in relation to Rimsky-Korsakov's opera-*bylina* are considered by scholars to derive from the Novgorod region. Together with historical details of mediaeval Novgorodian life, these sources are employed by the composer in his opera-*bylina* not merely to craft an authentic representation of the early life of that city, but, too, to develop a profound psychological recreation of the atmosphere of those semi-Christian, semi-pagan epic times as reflected in such *stariny* as *Sadko*, when - to quote Gil'ferding once more - 'epic welled forth

like a spring'.¹

Before studying in detail Rimsky-Korsakov's elaboration of his sources to produce a coherent libretto (Section Six), we shall glance briefly (Section Five) at the composer's association with Savva Mamontov's private opera company, since the production of *Sadko* by this company in December 1897 was the first premiere to be undertaken by a private company in either Petersburg or Moscow following the lifting of the monopoly of the Imperial Theatres on theatrical performances.

¹ Gil'ferding, I, 37.

SECTION FIVE

THE MOSCOW PRIVATE THEATRE, AND ITS ROLE IN CREATING THE OPERA-BY/LINA SADKO

Sadko is notable in Russian musical history because, on Dec 26th 1897, it became the first Russian opera to be premiered by the renowned private opera and drama company which had been set up by the magnate Savva Mamontov in late 1883.

Mamontov had previously, in the 1870s, established an artistic circle at his country estate of Abramtsevo, devoted to creating works of art of all kinds in Russian folk style. For his earlier stagings of Russian dramas or operas, including some of Rimsky-Korsakov's operas previous to *Sadko*, such as *Snow Maiden*, which had already been premiered by the Imperial Theatres, he had recruited designers and scene-painters from this artistic circle, in order to create a unified ensemble of scenery and text. This was one of the major reasons leading the composer to offer his sixth opera, *Sadko*, to Mamontov's theatre, on its rejection by the Imperial Theatres (indeed, by Tsar Nicholas II himself), since the composer had experienced great frustration at these latter theatres' staging and décor, which was usually totally inappropriate for the aura of Russian folk spirit that he was trying to recreate and distil in his works.

Before dealing with the reasons for Rimsky-Korsakov's increasing dissatisfaction with the Imperial Theatres, we shall briefly study in more detail the principles behind Mamontov's productions, which ultimately led to the composer's collaboration with him.

The Imperial Theatres (*Imperial'nye teatry*), otherwise known as the Crown Theatres

(*Kazennye teatry* - principally the Bol'shoi and Maly in Moscow and the Mariinsky and Alexandrinsky in St Petersburg) had maintained a legally enforced monopoly on performances of stage works in Moscow and Petersburg until 1882, when the prohibition on private theatres in these two cities was relaxed. The schedule of works to be presented at these theatres had literally to be approved by the Tsar in person.

Even before the lifting of these restrictions, the millionaire industrialist Savva Mamontov (1841-1918), who, besides being an entrepreneur, had wide-ranging artistic interests, set up on his country estate at Abramtsevo, 57 versts from Moscow, artistic studios and accommodation for a whole range of artists. They were united by deriving their inspiration from the newly-popular national folk style, in fields ranging from graphic art, through sculpture, pottery, woodwork, and others.¹ In the field of graphic art, this artistic community included, at various periods of its existence, such outstanding painters as Vrubel', Levitan, Repin, and the two Vasnetsov brothers, Victor and Apollinari.²

As part of this artistic endeavour, Mamontov had set up a theatre at Abramtsevo to present all kinds of stage-works (musical and non-musical, Russian and foreign) as early as the late 1870s - although the first attempt at opera (the third act of Gounod's *Faust*) was not made until 1882.³ But this enterprise suffered financial and artistic setbacks in the first few years of its existence, so was reconstituted in 1896, under the title of the 'Moscow Private Russian Opera' (*Moskovskaia chastnaia russkaia opera*), with the principal intention of popularising Russian opera. A gifted director, Mamontov created many of these opera productions himself, and, unlike the directors of the Imperial Theatres, aimed first and foremost at a unified ensemble of

¹ On Mamontov's life and work see eg Arenzon, E. R., *Savva Mamontov* (Moscow: 'Russkaia Kniga', 1995).

² On the Abramtsevo community see eg Arenzon, E. R., et al., eds., *Abramtsevo* (Leningrad: 'Khudozhnik RSFSR', 1988).

³ On the early years of Mamontov's theatre, see Stanislavskii, K. S., *Moia zhizn' v iskusstve* (Berlin: 'Petropolis', 1926) pp. 109-113.

stage setting, libretto, and music.¹ It was the lack of unity of conception in the official theatres which had caused most exasperation among Russian artists of the time, including calling forth strong criticism from Rimsky-Korsakov himself following performances of his earlier operas.

Among the Rimsky-Korsakov works which Mamontov's theatre had mounted, (although not premiered) were *The Maid of Pskov*, *Snow Maiden*, and *Mlada*, the performances and productions of which in the Imperial Theatres had driven the composer to the brink of despair. The production of *Snow Maiden* at the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg (where it had been premiered in 1882), in particular, showed no awareness or knowledge of the opera's background in Russian myth. The composer records in his memoirs that the stage settings and costumes were totally inappropriate for a Russian fairy tale; Ded Moroz ('Grandfather Frost') looked like Neptune, the shepherd piper Lel' (a Slavonic Pan-figure), resembled the classical character Paris, while Snow Maiden, the village maiden Kupava, and the fairy-tale ruler Tsar Berendei, were all dressed in the same classical fashion. The architecture of the Tsar's palace, and of the village of Berendei, was totally incongruous, and, in short, the whole thing, the composer maintained, reflected the French mythological interests of the director of the various Petersburg Imperial Theatres, I. A. Vsevolozhskii.²

However, for the first production of *Snow Maiden* at his newly-established theatre, in 1885, Mamontov commissioned one of the most outstanding artists from his Abramtsevo community, Victor Mikhailovich Vasnetsov. He was responsible for every detail of the production (which was to be in appropriate Russian folk style), ranging from the back-drops and scenery, right through to the smallest details of the embroidery of the costumes, thus remaining not only true to the folk-spirit vision underpinning Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, but also creating a unity of

¹ Iakovlev, V. V., 'N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov i opernyi teatr S. I. Mamontova', (in) *Teatral'nyi al'manakh* (Moscow: Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo, 1946) kn. 2, pp. 300-326 (p. 303).

² Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, p. 212.

conception.¹ Vasnetsov's designs met with great approval from the public, critics, and from the composer himself.²

From the beginning of his enterprise, in fact, Mamontov had sought to unify graphic with dramatic art,³ and his productions included bringing in stage designers on equal terms with the director. These early productions had sometimes been collaborative efforts of the entire cast, for, although now the director is of indispensable importance, it was not always so. In Russia the foundations of such modern principles of theatrical directorship were laid down only with the opening of the Moscow Art Theatre in 1898. Before then, in line with Western European practice, rehearsals were conducted either by the author of the work, or by the senior actors.⁴

As regards the unity of overall conception, Mamontov may have been influenced by the Meiningen Theatre's tour of Europe between 1874 and 1890, including two tours of Russia in 1885 and 1890. This company placed great stress on unity of conception. Stanislavskii, who was instrumental in establishing the Moscow Art Theatre in 1898, comments that, during the Meiningen Troupe's 1885 tour of Russia, the Moscow public had the opportunity for the first time of seeing and hearing a production historically true to the epoch of the action, with superbly conceived crowd scenes, and with a disciplined company.⁵ Regarding Mamontov's production of *Sadko*, the critic Petrovskii noted likewise that 'enormous care had been taken in the interplay of the static groups and individuals and the chorus. Many choral groups displayed a 'hitherto unprecedented degree of expression'.⁶

¹ Iakovlev, V. V., *op. cit.* (note 1, p. 131), p. 303.

² On Vasnetsov, see 'V. M. Vasnetsov i ego polotna na bylinno-skazochnye siuzhety' (in) Kirichenko, E. I., *Russkii Stil'* (Moscow: 'Galar' 1997) pp. 240-245. English version: Kirichenko, Evgenia, compiled by Michael Anikst, *The Russian Style* (London: Laurence King, 1991). See also Kirichenko, *ibid.*, (Russian), 'Neorusskii stil' v dekoratsiakh mamontovskogo kruzhka v Russkoi chastnoi opere', pp. 247-253.

³ Arenzon, *Savva Mamontov*, pp. 169-170.

⁴ Vladimirov, S. V., 'Ob istoricheskikh predposylkakh vozniknoveniia rezhissury' (in) *U istokov rezhissury - ocherki iz istorii russkoi rezhissury kontsa xix-xx veka* ed. E. Khvalenskaia (Leningrad: Leningradskii Gosudarstvennyi Institut teatra, muzyki, i kinematografii, 1976) pp. 13-66.

⁵ Stanislavskii, *Moia zhizn' v isskustve*, p. 148.

⁶ Petrovskii, E., 'Russkaia muzykal'naia gazeta' 1898, no. 3, p. 288; quoted in Gozenpud, *Russkii opernyi teatr na*

The composer grew more and more dissatisfied with the performances of his operas at the Imperial Theatres over the years, and finally, following the rejection of his *Sadko* in January 1897, by Tsar Nicholas II in person (the latter is alleged to have told the directors of the Imperial Theatres to 'put on something a bit more jolly (*poveseelee*)'),¹ Rimsky-Korsakov, despite some doubts as to the quality of the orchestral and vocal ensembles of Mamontov's musicians, agreed to permit his theatre to premiere the work. Accordingly, Mamontov appointed the rising young Abramtsevo artists K. A. Korovin (1861-1939) and S. V. Maliutin (1859-1937), to oversee the entire graphic ensemble of the work, and, as with Vasnetsov's labour over *Snow Maiden*, to preserve the Russian national character underpinning the composer's artistic vision.²

However, although both the public and the composer responded well to the spectacle as a whole, and although the soloists were excellent (including, from the third performance onward, Fedor Shaliapin in the role of the Viking Merchant), Rimsky-Korsakov had doubts as to the musical quality of Mamontov's orchestral players and chorus. The composer had always considered the music to be the most important component of any opera, yet Mamontov was always concerned far more with the appearance of a spectacle. Rimsky-Korsakov accordingly requested his associate Kruglikov in a letter to try to influence Mamontov to provide a full orchestra, a sufficient number of rehearsals, and good musical coaching.³

The composer did not manage to travel from St Petersburg to see the premiere, but arrived in Moscow only in time for the third performance on 30th December. His worst fears were

rubezhe (1974) p. 171.

¹ Solovtsov, (1964), p. 375.

² On the participation of these two artists in the preparation of *Sadko*, see: Giliarovskaia, N. V., 'Rimsky-Korsakov i khudozhniki - materialy k stenicheskoi istorii oper Rimskogo-Korsakova' (in) *Rimsky-Korsakov - Muzykal'noe nasledstvo*, ed Kabalevskii, D., II, pp. 261-318 (p. 288-284).

³ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., letter to Kruglikov, S. N., 18 June 1897 (quoted in Rimsky-Korsakov, A. N., Inst. IV, 83-84). See also Gozenpud, *Russkii opernyi teatr kontsa XIX veka*, p. 105.

realised. He notes in his memoirs that the opera had been 'disgracefully prepared' (*razuchena pozomo*), that there was not the requisite number of some instruments, the orchestral playing lacked precision, the chorus did not know their parts, and that in the first tableau, the male chorus, singing the parts of the feasting merchants, had to hold their scores in front of them, feigning to the audience that they were scanning the bills of fare. ¹

These negative impressions are confirmed by the composer and conductor M. M. Ippolitov-Ivanov. He writes that the chorus and orchestra were totally unprepared, and it was amazing that Mamontov had resolved to go ahead with performances at all. He continues that everything proceeded in total disarray, and of the composer's 'lace-like scoring' (*kruzhevnaia partitura*), there remained not a trace in the orchestral playing.²

However, as noted earlier, the composer claimed that the work had had tremendous success with the public, and he was called out numerous times before the audience. Such renowned critics as N. D. Kashkin wrote that Russian music had not possessed such an exalted embodiment of the Russian national style since the time of Glinka.³

The artistic sketches for the original production have not survived, therefore we may only judge from contemporary accounts. Kashkin informs us that views on the scenery were varied: some accused Korovin of decadence, others accused him of ignoring the laws of perspective. Yet, Kashkin maintains, Korovin had deliberately based himself on the arts of icon-painting and the *lubok* (gaudy popular print), in which perspective is missing, thereby producing a lack of perspective in his stage sets which derives from the archaic folk tradition, and is therefore

¹ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, p. 209.

² Ippolitov-Ivanov, M. M., *50 let russkoi muzyki v moikh vospominaniakh* (Moscow: 'GMI' 1934) p. 95.

³ Kashkin, N. D., 'Russkie vedomosti', 1898, 7 Jan, no. 7, quoted in: Kunin, I., ed., *N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov - zhizn' i tvorchestvo v vospominaniakh, pis'makh i kriticheskikh otzyvakh* (Moscow: 'Sovetskii Kompozitor' 1974) p. 180.

highly original and suitable for a *bylina*.¹

In February 1898, Mamontov's company took *Sadko* (and three other operas by Rimsky-Korsakov - *The Maid of Pskov*, *Snow Maiden*, and *May Night*) to Petersburg, where the composer rehearsed the entire ensemble himself, with the result that the performances were of a much higher standard.² According to César Cui, the St Petersburg public responded very warmly to *Sadko*, and the hall was filled to overflowing.³

Mamontov's theatre produced five further operas of Rimsky-Korsakov, until in 1904, financial difficulties forced the company to close.⁴

Despite the generally favourable reception, referred to above, of the staging and sets of *Sadko*, the musical standards of the company never fully satisfied the composer. Sergei Rakhmaninov, in the late 1890s and early 20th century a conductor of the Mamontov company, notes the 'total chaos' that reigned at times in the theatre, and he observes that the majority of the singers were incompetent.⁵ By 1902, Rimsky-Korsakov was beginning to transfer his work back to the Imperial Theatres, albeit such works as *Serviliia*, dealing with events in ancient Rome, and thereby more in keeping with those theatres' classical bias. However, the directorate of the Imperial Theatres had by this time begun to become aware of the popularity of Russian works staged in national style, and, in February 1907, the Imperial Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg could premiere with great success Rimsky-Korsakov's opera based on folk motifs, *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh, and of the Maiden Fevroniia*. The set

¹ Kashkin, N. D., 'Moskovskiiia vedomosti' (1898), no. 6, quoted in Gozenpud, *Russkii opernyi teatr*, p. 171. For further details of the first production of *Sadko* by Mamontov's company, see Paston, Eleonora, *Abramtsevo: Iskustvo i zhizn'*, (Moscow: 'Iskusstvo', 2003), esp. pp. 236-242.

² Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, p. 209.

³ Cui, C., 'Novosti i Birzhevaia gazeta', 1898, 24 Feb, no. 54 (quoted in Solovtsov (1964) p. 391).

⁴ Arenzon, E. R., *Savva Mamontov* (Moscow: 'Russkaia kniga', 1995) pp. 182-194.

⁵ Rakhmaninov, Sergei V., letter 116, to L. D. Skalon, 22 Nov 1897, (in) Rakhmaninov, Sergei V., ed. *Apetiants, Z., Pis'ma* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1955) p. 154.

designers were two former members of Mamontov's Abramtsevo circle: Apollinari Vasnetsov, and that same Konstantin Korovin who had been one of the designers of the set of *Sadko*.

In conclusion: we have noted above Belinskii's dictum that Russian 'national' art should derive its material from all classes of society. Rimsky-Korsakov may well have been influenced by this view when he read all of Belinskii's works in the 1860s in his ship's library, leading him to create works throughout his career which were concentrated syntheses of such 'urban art' forms as opera, and rural folk genres such as *byliny* and legends. Furthermore, (see Section Three), the prevailing cultural view in Rimsky-Korsakov's formative years had been Schelling's view (as mediated by, *inter alia*, Glinka's associate and devotee, Prince Odoevsky), of the 'unity' behind all history, culture, and existence. At last, it might be said that, by having *Kítezh*, a 'Legend' with the entire musical, textual, and graphic ensemble, in folk style, premiered on the stage of one of the urban Imperial Opera Theatres, the composer had succeeded not only in unifying art forms from all levels of society, as with *Sadko*. He had also finally made such new syntheses acceptable to those levels of cultural society which before had rejected them, preferring models of western society, culture, and art. The composer, with his syncretistic stage works, was succeeding therefore, by this late stage of his career, in reinforcing for future generations the Russian cultural self-image which he had been attempting to recreate and distil throughout his artistic life.

Following this brief excursus into the manner in which those concerned with the first performances of *Sadko* attempted to reinforce the Russian folk elements of the libretto and score through their stage designs, we shall return to our analysis of Rimsky-Korsakov's sources for *Sadko*, and in particular the way in which he elaborated these sources to produce a coherent narrative.

SECTION SIX

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S ADAPTATION OF HIS FOLK SOURCES FOR HIS OPERA-BYLINA SADKO

INTRODUCTION

In this section we shall analyse in depth the manner in which the composer adapted the major variants of the *bylina Sadko* discussed in Section Four for insertion into his opera of the same name. As we proceed, we shall also take note of how the composer's reworking of the original themes and development of the leading roles was motivated by considerations such as dramatic coherence, elucidation of an unclear story-line in the original, by the composer's world-view which we have outlined in Section Three, and, finally, by the suggestions of his collaborators in the preparation of his libretto, notably Vladimir Stasov.

The *byliny* concerning Sadko comprise two major story-lines: firstly, that of Sadko the poor musician who, by dint of his art, attracts the gratitude of the Sea Tsar, and becomes wealthy through the latter's good offices: and the following theme, that of Sadko, now a wealthy merchant, becoming becalmed at sea due to his never having paid tribute to the source of his good fortune, his adventures in the Sea Tsar's realm, his marriage to one of the Sea Tsar's daughters, and his final return to Novgorod.

Rimsky-Korsakov's first composition on this theme, his opus five, dating from 1867, when he was 23, was, as we have noted, a short orchestral tone-poem based on the *bylina* of *Sadko*. Since he returned to this theme for his opera almost thirty years later, it is evident that this subject had exercised a career-long fascination for him; however, in the earlier composition, he restricted himself entirely to depicting in sound the second theme - that of the hero's

adventures at sea. This was not because, at the time, variants were lacking of the Novgorod strand of the story. At the time of the appearance of his opus five, the composer would have been familiar not only with Danilov's collections of 1804 and 1818, but also with three of the instalments of Rybnikov's compendium, which appeared in four volumes between 1861 and 1867. Danilov's expanded 1818 collection (although not its 1804 precursor) contains two songs concerning Sadko - one upon each theme,¹ while Rybnikov's publications also contain variants of both themes.²

This early self-restriction by the composer to the 'fantastic' motifs of the story is instructive in that, in 1895, when he commenced work on his opera-*bylina*, his first intention was to compose an opera which would also have been comprised almost entirely of the fantastic 'folk-tale' elements of Sadko's dealings with the Water Realm. However, Stasov, on being presented in 1894 with the composer's first variant of his libretto, drawn up in collaboration with his associate N. M. Shtrup, made the comment that the action ... *vsë vremia proiskhodit tol'ko u vody i pod vodoiu ... Zemli vovse net ili pochti vovse net. .*³, and despatched to the composer a much longer draft libretto containing the other *bylina* theme commencing with Sadko's origin as a poor folk musician in Novgorod.⁴ Stasov had also been instrumental in bringing to the attention of 'The Five', in the late 1860s, the second theme of the *byliny*

¹ Danilov, (1977), *Sadko - bogatoi (sic) gost'* (no. 28, pp. 142-147), concerns the Novgorod theme, and *Sadkov korabl' stal' na more* (no 47, pp. 178-182) deals with his adventures at sea.

² Rybnikov (1909), I, no. 18, (pp. 114-115), deals exclusively with the Novgorod theme, although possibly this variant can hardly be taken into consideration, as it is only half a page long. Rybnikov informs us in a note that the singer, Trofim Riabinin, could not remember any more. Rybnikov I, no. 54 (pp. 332-335) links both themes, although, at the commencement in Novgorod, Sadko is already a rich merchant; the motif of his origin as a poor musician is excluded. Much the same linking of both themes occurs in Rybnikov I, no. 66 (pp. 376-379), II, no. 107 (pp. 24-31), and no. 124 (pp. 128-130; this variant is completely incoherent); only II, no. 134 (pp. 243-254) combines both themes coherently, and this last variant alone deals at length with Sadko's having once been a poor folk musician.

³ '..... the action takes place the whole time only by the water and under the water There's no dry land at all, or practically none.' Letter from Stasov to Rimsky-Korsakov, 7th July, 1894, quoted in Solovtsov (1964), p. 330.

⁴ For an exhaustive survey of the compilation of the libretto of *Sadko*, see Iankovskii, M. O., 'Stasov i Rimsky-Korsakov', (in) *Rimsky-Korsakov - Muzykal'noe nasledstvo*, ed D. B. Kabalevskii (q.v), I, pp. 375-387; this ref pp. 314-319. This includes extracts from the correspondence between Stasov and the composer, which are too lengthy to be dealt with fully above.

concerning Sadko as suitable for a musical composition. When finally the young Rimsky-Korsakov took the idea up, Stasov was delighted with the composition, implying that both he and his protégé(s) at the time did not consider the first theme of Sadko the folk musician, set as it was in the semi-historical world of mediaeval Novgorod, to be compatible with a 'fantastic' theme in one short orchestral work. However, it appears that Stasov, by the mid-1890s, had come to the realisation that, not only could the two *bylina* stories concerning Sadko be dealt with in a full-length opera, but that, in fact, the opera form required this interplay between the contrasting universes of the two tales to avoid monotony.

The composer's op. 5 is comprised of the following sections: an introduction, entitled *Sinee more* ('The Deep-blue Sea'), Sadko's descent to the sea-bed, his betrothal feast and the sea-creatures' dance leading to the storm at sea, the strings of Sadko's *gusli* snapping, and his reawakening outside Novgorod. It is striking to note that the musical themes used in each episode recur almost unaltered some thirty years later, at the corresponding points of the narrative. This similarity even extends to the descending three-note motif which portrays the surge of the sea, and which forms the nucleus of many of the leitmotifs of the opera. Furthermore, the 'exotic' tone-rows which the composer was to use throughout his career to evoke other-worldly atmospheres, such as whole-tone scales, and, particularly, the octatonic, or 'tone - semi-tone - tone - semi-tone' scale, which the composer was to make particularly his own, are already present in his op. 5, implying that, although his artistic skill increased over the years, his underlying apprehension of the function of certain tones and scales, and their link - as we have noted - with certain colourings, such as the blue of the sea, remained remarkably consistent throughout his career.¹

¹ For an account of the composer's synaesthetic sense see Section Three. For a musical analysis of the 1867 orchestral *Sadko*, see Griffiths, Steven, *A Critical Study of the Music of Rimsky-Korsakov 1844-1890*, (New York, London: 'Garland', 1988), pp. 78-91. The composer acknowledges in his *Memoirs (Letopis'*, 1955, p. 48), that he had derived the whole-tone scale from a passage in Glinka's *Ruslan and Liudmila*, depicting Liudmila's abduction by Chernomor; furthermore, he observes that certain harmonic and modulatory elements were influenced by Liszt's 'Ce qu'on entend sur la Montagne', and the Mephisto Walzes. Rimsky-Korsakov continues that he had not

BACKGROUND

The analysis will be comprised of these sub-sections:

(a) THE COMPOSER'S ADAPTATION OF HIS SOURCES TO FORM A COHERENT LIBRETTO.

This will briefly touch on the confused and occasionally contradictory sources that the composer was familiar with, and lead to sub-section (b).

(b) MAJOR CHARACTERS IN THE SOURCES AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT BY THE COMPOSER

(i) Sadko

(ii) The Sea Princess

(iii) The Sea Tsar'

(a) THE COMPOSER'S ADAPTATION OF HIS SOURCES TO FORM A COHERENT LIBRETTO

Rimsky-Korsakov had to adapt his sources radically to produce a coherent opera. We have noted that only two of the variants of Sadko with which the composer would have been familiar link the two themes of Sadko the poor musician's becoming wealthy through his wager with the merchants of Novgorod, and the second theme of Sadko the rich merchant's adventures on the sea bed. Many individual narratives of *bylina* subjects in the collections with which Rimsky-Korsakov would have been familiar are incoherent, or else certain elements of plot seem to

yet found his own voice, and that, when he began to develop his own style, less influenced by Liszt, Balakirev, the leader of the 'Mighty Handful', who was highly enthusiastic about Liszt's work, began to cool towards him. This may have been one of the contributory factors leading to the gradual dissolution of the group in the early 1870s. On Rimsky-Korsakov's use of unusual harmonies and tone-rows, see Taruskin, Richard, 'Chernomor to Kashchei: Harmonic Sorcery', *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, 2 vols (Oxford: OUP, 1996), Ch. 4, pp. 255-306. On Liszt's influence on the early *Sadko* see *ibid* pp. 265-272. incidentally, according to the article on the octatonic scale by Charles Wilson in *New Grove*, vol 18, pp 326-327, the term 'octatonic' was first coined in the early 1960s. Rimsky-Korsakov himself simply referred to it as the 'tone-semi-tone-tone-semitone' scale (eg. *Letopis'*, p. 48).

lack motivation: it is very often necessary to read all variants of any subject, to try to form an idea of what the original primeval plot line was. By the time the collectors reached the outlying areas of Russia in the 19th century, either the original meaning of many of the stories had been lost in the minds of the peasant singers, or else it was assumed by these singers that the audience, through life-long exposure to these epics, would know the story in detail, and would automatically supply missing details themselves. This variation resulted in sometimes rather baffling narrative lines. *Sadko* is no exception. Some of the variants are incoherent, suggesting the narrator either did not remember, or else fully understand the story. Others omit details, or else include insufficiently motivated aspects of the tale. Rimsky-Korsakov was possibly actually attempting to imitate this incoherence of plot when he stated that his opera-*bylina* consisted, not of acts, but of seven tableaux (*kartiny*) of folk-tale content. It was not necessarily intended to be a totally logically-connected story, and the audience, from their knowledge of epic and other folk sources, would have been expected to supply the underlying links. However, again here we may wonder whether the composer realised that his urban audience would not possess his own profound knowledge of the sources, and would not necessarily have been able to supply any missing links, or to understand anything that lacked clarity. But perhaps once more we should stress here that, if the composer was consciously attempting to forge a new form altogether, he may have realised this perfectly well, and thought of himself as trying to create a new genre where the educated audience would appreciate the music and spectacle in their own way, and would supply missing threads in the plot by their own reading of Danilov, (which, as we have noted, had been produced by Suvorov in a cheap edition for the mass market in 1892) and also by their reading of the concert programme, review notes, articles in the press, and through conversations with other educated people. In other words, the composer may have been attempting not only to create new art-forms, but to forge a new cultural and artistic sensibility which would be able to appreciate and evaluate these forms.

To return to our analysis: in some variants of the *bylina*, Sadko is presented as already wealthy, and even possibly having come from elsewhere (a detail the composer hints at in his libretto). Only in two variants does Sadko's wealth derive from his playing for the Sea Tsar. Nowhere in any variant of this first theme of the Sadko story is there a mention of the folk musician's playing leading to the daughter of the Sea Tsar becoming enamoured with him and wishing to marry him. Therefore, the second theme of the *Sadko* tale - that of his marriage on the bed of the sea to one of the Sea Tsar's daughter's - remains totally unmotivated and unclear. Furthermore, the Princess whom Sadko marries is never called Volkhova, as in the opera-*bylina*: she is either never named at all, or else, on just two occasions, is given a different name altogether. However, *Sadko*, in all variants of the second theme, following the hero's marriage on the sea-bed, concludes with his waking up just outside Novgorod with one foot or arm in the river Volkhov, or one of its tributaries, leading to speculation that the original primeval tale may have concerned the marriage of a human artist, or even a Russian Orpheus figure, to a water-goddess, leading to the creation of a river on the physical plane. This is analogous to the way in which other Russian *byliny*, such as those concerning the heroes Dunai and Don explicitly portray the creation of a river from the blood of these wounded *bogatyr*.¹

The composer and his collaborators were therefore compelled to attempt to produce a coherent plot-line from all of the variants, from the use of other sources such as Afanas'ev, and from intelligent speculation based on these other *bylina* stories, as to the original story of *Sadko*. Sadko's character is made psychologically deeper by the composer: he is portrayed in the opera as an artist, a Russian Orpheus, who has dreams of travelling the world, seeing foreign climes, and making Novgorod even richer, and who, through his artistic prowess, serves as an intermediary between humanity and nature.²

¹ Afanas'ev, II, 220-229.

² Iastrebtsev recounts that one day, at a dinner party at the Rimsky-Korsakovs', 'somebody said' (*govorili*) that

Furthermore, Sadko's marriage to one of the Sea-Tsar's daughters is made more logical by the composer's introduction of the motif of the Sea-King's favourite daughter Volkhova becoming enamoured of him due to his artistic skill, and enabling him to become a rich merchant.

We shall therefore examine below the characters of Sadko, the Sea Princess, and the Sea Tsar, in the original sources, and as Rimsky-Korsakov developed them for his opera. Minor roles, or roles where the characters appear once only in the opera, will be dealt with as they occur in our detailed analysis of the opera in Section Seven. These will include the 'Mighty *Bogatyr*' Monastic Elder' (*Starchishche Moguch-bogatyr*), Sadko's wife Liubava Buslaevna, the two Novgorod 'Elders' (*Nastoiateli*), and the soothsayers (*Volkhvy*). Groups of performers who have been dealt with in previous sections, such as the *skomorokhi* and *kaliki perekhozhie*, will not be described in detail again.

(b) MAJOR CHARACTERS IN THE SOURCES AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT BY THE COMPOSER

(i) Sadko.

(ii) The Sea Princess (*Morskaia Tsarevna*) Volkhova.

(iii) The Sea Tsar (*Morskoi Tsar*).

(i) Sadko

We have already noted (p. 115) that a historical character called Sadko (or Sotko) Sytinets existed who endowed a stone cathedral in Novgorod in the year 1167. Since most buildings,

Sadko was a Russian Orpheus, and the composer's opera on this theme was a Russian 'Ring of the Nibelungs', or even a Slavonic 'Twilight of the Gods' (17 Feb 1897; I, 441). Infuriatingly, not only does he not inform us who actually made these remarks, but he does not even mention who else was there.

including many churches and cathedrals of the time, were built of wood, anybody who could have endowed a construction of stone must have been phenomenally wealthy. Sadko is a variant of Sadok, the early Russian form of the ancient Hebrew name Zadok,¹ prompting speculation that Sadko Sytinets was of Jewish origin.² We can only speculate why, if so, he endowed a Christian cathedral: possibilities are that he, or his forebears, had been converted to Christianity, or that he endowed a Christian cathedral to remain in good favour with the majority Christian population. Findeizen points out that Kiev had a large Jewish population, and that Dobrynia, the courtly aristocratic Kiev *bogatyr* who numbers among his accomplishments great skill on the *gusli*, is described in one of the variants of the tale concerning him (that of the long-absent Dobrynia's presence in *skomorokh* disguise at the betrothal feast of his wife) as playing Jewish melodies:³

Начал в гусли наигрывать,
Первый раз он играл от Царя-града,
Другой раз играл от Иерусалима.⁴

Solovei Budimirovich in some variants of the epics devoted to him is also described as playing tunes from Novgorod and Jerusalem on his *gusli*.⁵

This seems to suggest that the Jewish population of ancient Russia were highly esteemed for

¹ Kondrat'eva, T. N., *Metamorfoza sobstvennogo imeni* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo universiteta, 1982), p. 87.

² Smirnov, Iu, K., and Smolitskii, V. B., *Novgorodskie byliny*, p. 390. See also the article by Kate Blakey, 'Folk Tales of Ancient Lord Novgorod the Great,' *Slavonic Review*, III, (London: School of Slavonic Studies, 1924-5) pp. 52-62. To her translation of *Sadko* (unsourced - it appears to be a composite of several variants) Blakey has given a short introduction (p. 57) which unpleasantly and gratuitously claims 'The *bylina* on Sadko with a few masterly strokes outlines the characteristics which all the world over mark out the Judaic trader'.

³ Findeizen, I, 72.

⁴ 'He began for to play upon the *gusli*;
The first time he played from Tsar's-town [ie Byzantium, Constantinople],
The second time he played from Jerusalem.'

(Rybnikov, II, no. 178, *Dobrynia v ot'ezde*, pp. 518-524 (p. 522).

⁵ Eg Rybnikov, II, no. 149, pp. 344-351 (p. 345).

their musical prowess, and leads naturally to the conclusion that Sadko Sytinets, the wealthy endower of the cathedral in early Novgorod, if he were indeed Jewish, was very probably also an excellent musician. If the epic hero Sadko is derived from the shadowy memory of this figure, this would explain why he is both a skilled musician and (ultimately) rich - two characteristics not always combined! However, there is no hint in any of the *byliny* that Sadko is Jewish. Apparently, by the 19th century, such a factor had long been forgotten in the folk singers' minds. However, we should recall here that some of the variants of the epic state that Sadko comes from 'elsewhere', and possibly the historical Sadko's ancient non-Russian origin might have been the long-forgotten inspiration for this motif, which Rimsky-Korsakov introduces in the first tableau of his opera-*bylina*.¹

Rimsky-Korsakov would undoubtedly have been aware of the speculations regarding Sadko's origins, and this may well have even heightened the character's interest for him, for he was one of the few Russian artists of the time who seemed to be genuinely non-anti-Semitic. Taruskin, while condemning roundly the anti-Semitism of Glinka, Balakirev, Musorgsky, Tchaikovsky, and Stravinsky, points out that Rimsky-Korsakov was delighted when one of his daughters expressed a wish to marry his favourite pupil, the Jewish Maximilian Steinberg, and wholeheartedly encouraged the match.² Furthermore, Ossovskii recounts in his memoirs an incident which must have taken place in 1906 or '07. At one of the regular musical evenings in Rimsky-Korsakov's flat, a chamber performance was given for the composer, with piano accompaniment, of Rakhmaninov's new opera based on Pushkin's work of 1830, *Skupoi rytsar'* ('The Miserly Knight') (1906), which Rimsky-Korsakov had not yet heard. One of the minor roles is that of a stereotypical villainous Jewish money-lender, who is described both in the cast-list and throughout the work by the distasteful term *Zhid* ('The Yid'). Ossovskii recounts

¹ Danilov, 1977, no. 28, p. 142.

² Taruskin, Richard, *Defining Russia Musically - Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 454-456.

that Rimsky-Korsakov and his wife, as a result of this, were furious at the end of the performance, and the composer could not even bring himself to pronounce the offensive word, but, when he had to refer to the role at all, just about managed to say 'Evrei' ('The Jewish man').¹

Whatever the original Sadko, or Sadok's origins, the early Russians - as they did to many such imported names - added the Slavonic suffix 'ko' to form a Russian name.² The root syllable would have been understood to be 'Sad', with the following suffix optional (we have noted above that, several times in the opera, Sadko is referred to as 'Sad-Sadko').

As already observed, the composer deepened the character of the folk musician psychologically. In the *byliny*, Sadko's character has almost no psychological depth, no mental 'hinterland'. No motives are given for his actions. In some of the variants of the Novgorod theme (eg. Rybnikov, vol I, no 54, pp. 332-335, and vol II, no 107, pp. 24-31), he is already a rich merchant from the outset of the story, and not a folk-musician; although with his wealth he is depicted as buying up all the goods in Novgorod and rigging out a fleet, the motif of the folk musician outwagering the merchants who do not allow him into the feast is missing. Incidentally, in the latter example, Sadko is described in passing as being from elsewhere, though it is never specified from where, and, similarly, in the first variant in Danilov (1977, no 28), Sadko is specifically stated to have come from the Volga Region: we are informed he 'roamed' (*gulial*) along the Volga for 12 years, and knew the River from its mouth right down to the 'Lower Tsardom of Astrakhan'. This period of 12 years is, of course, computed in 'epic time'; Dobrynia is away from home for 12 years in the *bylina* referred to above (p. 142, no. 4),

¹ Ossovskii, (1968) p. 45. For further information on Rimsky-Korsakov's encouragement of his Jewish pupils, see Saminsky, Lazare, (ed. Charles Weisser), 'Lazare Saminsky's Years in Russia and Palestine - Excerpts from an unpublished Autobiography', *Musica Judaica*, (NY), vol II, 1977-78, no. 1, pp. 1-20 (p. 7-10 and 20).

² Baecklund, Astrid, *Personal Names in Medieval Velikij Novgorod*; vol I: *Common Names* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell 1959). See pp. 70-73 on the use of 'ko'. This volume deals only with names adopted into Russian from Greek (*kalendarnye imena*), so does not mention 'Sadko'. No more volumes were published.

while in the second variant of *Sadko* in Danilov (no. 28), Sadko is described as having been at sea for 12 years - a detail reproduced in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, where 12 years are said to have elapsed between the end of Tableau Four and the commencement of Tableau Five. In the first variant in Danilov, the river Volga commands Sadko to go to Novgorod, and bow down in greeting from her (ie the Volga) to her brother, Lake Il'men', the lake which lies a short distance from Novgorod. Sadko does so, and the lake rewards him with netfulls of golden fish, which after three days turn into gold coins, making Sadko a rich man. Following this incident, Sadko becomes a member of the Nikol'shchina Fraternity, buys up all the goods in Novgorod, and gives the money for constructing cathedrals. At no time is there any mention of the Sea Tsar.

In accordance with his origin in the Volga region, he is called specifically in Danilov (1977, no. 28, p. 145), 'Volskii Sur' and Rimsky-Korsakov follows this by allowing Sadko in his opera to call himself the 'son of Sur Volozhanin'. What is the meaning of the title in Danilov, and its origin? Various theories have been proposed. For instance, F. I. Buslaev maintains that *sur* means *rezvyi*, *shalun*, *zabiavka* ('a spirited lad') - a view supported by P. B. Bezsonov. However, Orest Miller claims that the name derives from the town of Surozh.¹ If this latter explanation is indeed the case, there would seem to have been a link in the primeval *bylina* tradition, apparently lost by the time of the peasant narrators of the nineteenth century, between the tale of Sadko the Rich Merchant and the *byliny* denoting the exploits in Kiev of another fabulously wealthy hero, Churilo Plėnkovich, who is described explicitly in the *byliny* concerning him as being the son of the extremely wealthy merchant Plėnko Sorožhanin (or Surožhenin, etc).² Vsevolod Miller held that this *bylina*, plus others with an apparently Kievan setting, such as Solovei Budimirovich, which Rimsky-Korsakov made such extensive use of in

¹ For a full discussion of these references, see Miller, O., *Il'ia Muromets i bogatyrstvo kievskoe* (St Petersburg, 1869) pp. 564-565.

² For Churilo, see eg Danilov (1977), *Churila* (sic) *Plėnkovich*, no. 18, pp. 86-91.

his opera-*bylina*, are in fact of Novgorodian origin, and this may well have prompted the composer deliberately to introduce this reference to 'Sur Volozhanin' as yet another thread to build up the background of early mediaeval semi-legendary Novgorod, along with the references to the other *byliny* discussed *passim* in this thesis. Sadko is in fact addressed in the opera twice as *gostinyi syn* ('merchant's son').¹ This description does not derive from any variant of the *byliny* on this theme, but may have been imported by the composer either from the above-mentioned Churilo, or else from the rare epic *Ivan Gostinyi Syn* – also held by some researchers to have been of Novgorodian origin.

To return to the derivation of Surozhanin: this was a surname or epithet which denotes that Churilo's father belonged to the extremely wealthy guild of merchants based in various towns of Russia called the Surozhane who traded with the town of Surozh (present-day Sudak) on the Black Sea. As a consequence of this town's favourable location, it could operate as intermediary between the Byzantine Empire and the East and the proto-Russian states, and so became extremely wealthy, as did the guilds of merchants who dealt in their goods (predominantly silks) within the hinterlands of Russia.²

By allowing Sadko in his opera to call himself the son of 'Sur Volozhanin' – a title nowhere found in the *byliny* – the composer is trying to make sense of Sadko's entitling of himself, in Danilov, 'Volskii Sur'; Rimsky-Korsakov has done this, by reinterpreting Sadko's reference to himself in Danilov in the light of the similar name in the *bylina* of Churilo Plënkovich, also in Danilov, and thus he maintains the link between the themes of rich merchants: Churilo is the son of one such (Plëngo Surozhenin), and the phrase 'Volskii Sur' in Danilov might well imply that Sadko either was the son of a wealthy merchant who traded with or along the Volga, (never explicitly spelled out), or else was himself a merchant who became rich in Novgorod.

¹ 6a, Tableau One, p131, bars 621-622, and 6b, Tableau Four, p. 102, bars 468-471.

² *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'*, Brokgauz i Efron, XXXII, 100.

We recall that the other Danilov *bylina* which V. F. Miller maintains was of Novgorod origin, that of *Solovei Budimirovich*, is also concerned with a very wealthy merchant who comes from afar seeking a bride, while the composer notes in his prefatory remarks to the score of his opera that he has taken details of the feast at the Merchants' Guild Hall from the *bylina* of *Ivan Gostinyi Syn* ('Ivan the Merchant's Son') - another epic narrative which, like *Solovei Budimirovich*, although loosely connected to the Kiev cycle and the court of Prince Vladimir, may in fact, according to V. Miller, be ascribed to Novgorod origin.¹ We shall survey in Section Seven the content of these epics which, although apparently forming part of the legendary 'bogatyri' Kiev cycle, are concerned with later, non-heroic 'mercantile' themes, and are therefore claimed by some commentators to have derived from Novgorod. Such researchers included Vsevolod Miller, Orest Miller, and Fedor Buslaev, with whose works Rimsky-Korsakov would certainly have been familiar given his extensive study of Russian folk music and mythology from his early years. As a result of this alleged provenance, the composer weaves into, or alludes to, these motifs, in his opera.

Incidentally, in the cast-list, Sadko is described as *gusliar i pevets v Novgorode* ('gusli-player and singer in Novgorod') whereas Nezhata, the visiting bard, is said to be a *molodoi gusliar iz Kiev-grada* ('young gusli-player from Kiev-town'). The implication seems to be that, whereas Nezhata is definitely 'from' Kiev, Sadko operates in Novgorod, but may not actually be a native of that town. By this description, the composer has underpinned the impression given in Danilov and elsewhere that Sadko is not of Novgorodian origin.

We have noted that in one variant of the epic of Dobrynia, Sadko is held to be on a par, at least for the narrator, with the *bogatyri* of other *byliny* by reason of his wealth: he is never claimed in the original sources to have acquired *bogatyri* status through his musical abilities.

¹ Miller, V., F., *Ocherki*, p. 219.

However, although not completely unknown, it is traditionally against both literary and musical convention to have a rich person as hero of an artistic work. Rather, a wealthy person is usually the villain of the piece, whether it be Dives, Count Almaviva, or Melmotte. The composer would as a result of his liberal social views, have found such a hero distasteful. Besides, in what does such 'heroism' consist? It would have been extremely difficult on stage to depict in what manner the hero's wealth constituted the *raison d'être* of his heroism! The composer, therefore, in order to make sense of the narrative, and to introduce a figure whose heroism is understood to derive from his artistic ability, makes of the folk-musician who is not invited to entertain at the Merchants' Guild in the folk sources, a Russian Orpheus figure. His ability to enchant the sea-beings and to influence climatic conditions by his playing (Tableaux IV and VI), is already present in the sources, prompting the speculation noted above that Sadko was indeed originally such a Slavonic Orpheus-being, and that the original significance of the tale has been lost. We recall that a number of *byliny* in the collections, and not just those concerning Sadko, conclude with a rhyming verse such as:

То старина то и деянье,
 Синему морю на утешенье,
 Быстрым рекам слава до моря,
 А добрым на послушанье,
 Веселым молодцам на потешенье.¹

Such a verse could apparently have been used to conclude any song, leading one to surmise also that the chanting of magical tales at one stage may have had a ritualistic function of

¹ Those old tales, they really happened:
 [They are sung] to calm the deep-blue sea,
 And to give glory to the swift rivers right down to the sea,
 And for good folks to hearken to,
 And to bring merry young folk amusement.
 (Danilov (1977), no 3, *Diuk Stepanovich*, pp. 21-24 (p. 24).

influencing the elements. Moreover, it is found frequently concluding the tales of other *bylina* heroes (for instance, the courtly and chivalrous Kiev *bogatyr* Dobrynia¹) who are described as adepts on the *gusli* as an incidental detail. This linking of tales concerning *gusli* players with such a closing couplet may have indicated an original link between the *gusli* and such magical musical functions.

The composer further emphasises this Orpheus-like aspect of the *bylina* hero by inserting into the final scene, in which the returned Sadko is telling the people of Novgorod of his adventures, the words:

В сторонах гулял я дальних,
Пел, играл земли раздолью,
Звери, птицы собиралися,
Трава, деревья склонялись.²

We recall that, in the opera, Sadko is stated on the contents-page to have been abroad for twelve years [epic time] between Tableaux IV and V, and this fact is further emphasised by Sadko himself at the commencement of Tableau V. However, neither in the sources nor in the opera are we given any details of these 'extra-librettic' wanderings of Sadko's, or of this power over nature. Incidentally, the phrase about 'grasses and trees inclining' is derived both from oral epic and from the literary *Song of Igor's Campaign*, but it is not associated with the magical power of art: it is a 'pathetic fallacy', as the natural world, including trees and grasses, is described as joining in mourning the death of a *bogatyr*, or else the defeat of Prince Igor's

¹ See also Danilov, *Tri goda Dobryniushka stol'nichal* ('Three years did Dobrynia wait at table'), pp. 42-47 (p. 47).

² 'Through distant lands did I roam,
Sang, played to the earth's expanses,
Beasts, birds, gathered together,
And grasses and trees leaned to listen.'

troops.¹

The composer presumably emphasised very strongly this ability of the folk musician to influence nature (including his insertion of such details as those referred to above which are never mentioned either in the opera or the sources), in order more fully to motivate his other major plot insertion, which, although not made explicit in any of the sources, forms the climactic moment of the work, and, indeed, the entire point toward which the opera has been moving: that this Russian Orpheus has by his gifts, attracted a major river to flow through his native city.

(ii) The Sea Princess (*Morskaia Tsarevna*) Volkhova.

She is named in the cast-list *Volkhova. Tsarevna prekrasnaia, ego [ie Morskogo Tsaria] doch' molodshaia, liubimaia* ('Princess most beauteous, his [ie the Sea Tsar's] daughter the youngest and best-beloved'). The composer's use here of archaic and 'folk' language is noteworthy - the adjectives follow the noun, in contradistinction to modern Russian, and the form *molodshaia* is the ancient and poetic form of *mladshaia*.

In the epic sources, Sadko wakes up after his adventures on the sea-bed with his foot or hand in the river Volkhov or one of its tributaries, with the sea maiden he has married nowhere to be seen. As mentioned above, the daughter of the sea whom Sadko marries is never so named in the epics, and is often not named at all; at no time is there any reference in the epics to the river in question being created from Sadko's bride. Sadko's waking on the river bank in such close proximity to a river is never clearly explained. Sadko's sea maiden bride is named only twice - in versions both from the same singer, Andrei Sorokin, sung at an interval of ten years to Rybnikov and then Gilferding,² and she is far from being the 'beautiful and beloved'

¹ See eg Filin, p. 96, lines 188-189.

² Rybnikov, II, no. 134, pp. 243-254, and Gil'ferding, I, no. 70, pp. 640-657.

Tsarevna of the opera, but is normally the most minor of the Sea Tsar's 30, 300, or even 900, daughters. In the most complete version of all, (that of Sorokin in Rybnikov), which presumably has preserved most of the original meaning of the story, Sadko's bride is called Chernavushka, and he wakes up on the bank of the 'river Chernava', and sees his fleet sailing back to Novgorod along the Volkhov.¹ To try to make sense of all this, the composer has inserted the motif, apparently invented by himself and his collaborators, of a river's creation from an epic hero, and, before we examine the derivation of the name Chernava, and whether there ever was a river Chernava near Novgorod, we shall examine the origins of this motif in Rimsky-Korsakov's sources. There are several *byliny* detailing such a creation of a river from the blood of a wounded epic hero, for example those dealing with the *bogatyr*i Dunai, Dniepr, and Don.² Moreover, in Rimsky-Korsakov's principal source-book for several of his 'fantastic' operas, Afanas'ev's *Poeticheskie vozzreniia slavian na prirodu*, the notion of the Volkhov's possible such creation is treated in a section dealing with this theme, and using the *byliny* on this topic as evidence.³

But who exactly is Chernavushka? In the variants of the first theme about Sadko, either the Sea Tsarina, or, more commonly, St Nicholas, advises Sadko to choose as his bride the 'least comely' damsel of all the Sea King's daughters. The name Chernavushka appears to derive from the Russian root *chern/chorn* - black - and the word *chernava* in ordinary Old Russian, was the word used commonly to mean a 'maid of all work', one who did such work as cleaning the hearth, and so consequently finished up filthy. Among other meanings for this word, Dal's dictionary gives as one definition for *chernava*: '*zolushka*', the word used normally to translate *Cendrillon* ('Cinderella'), and indeed the meaning of the word in Russian is that of the most humble of domestic serving-maids whose duties clearing the hearth have made her filthy

¹ Rybnikov, as above; also see Gil'ferding, as above.

² Eg *Dunai-svat*, Rybnikov, I, no. 9, pp. 70-78, *Nepra* (sic) *i Don*, Rybnikov, II, no. 121, pp. 113-116.

³ Afanas'ev, II, pp. 211-234.

with ashes. Although never encountered in *Sadko*, the name *Chemava/Chemavushka* is found in the other major cycle of Novgorod *byliny*, that concerning Vasilii Buslaev. The first theme of this cycle, we recall, is that of Vasilii and his retinue (*druzhina*) engaging in a vicious brawl with other factions of Novgorodians on the bridges over the Volkhov. These skirmishes are historically attested to in the chronicles.¹ In some of these confrontations, Vasilii, either during the struggle itself, or when he is captured by his opponents, is aided by his faithful serving-girl, Chemava, to outwit his enemies; often, she is described as fighting alongside Vasilii and his band, and displaying Amazonian strength. There are a number of such connections between the Novgorod epic cycles of Vasilii Buslaev and *Sadko*, such as the mention of the Nikol'shchina drinking fraternity, and the Novgorod 'Elders' by name in both. Either this implies that there was at one time a link, now lost, between the two themes, or, more likely, that the peasant narrator, to give more verisimilitude to the plot, allows minor characters from one Novgorod *bylina* to make cameo appearances in another. Rimsky-Korsakov tries to imitate this device, not only by retaining the references to the elders and to the Nikol'shchina, but also, as we have noted above, by calling *Sadko's* wife (never named at all in the epic sources) Liubava Buslaevna - implying she is Vasilii Buslaev's sister and that therefore *Sadko* is Vasilii's brother-in-law. Furthermore, he introduces the figure of the *Bogatyr* Monastic Elder, also from Vasilii Buslaev, as a *deus ex machina* in Tableau Six.

However, the presence of such a 'maid of all work, Chemava' as one of the Sea Tsar's daughters possesses no logical motivation, unless one assumes that she was indeed originally the 'Cinderella' of all the water maidens. Her marriage to *Sadko* is also puzzling, especially as he wakes up next to the Volkhov, or else even with a part of his body in the river. There is indeed a 'Black Stream' (*Chernyi ruchei*) discharging into Lake Il'men', but it is not a tributary of the Volkhov, and it is unclear why this stream appears to be confused with the Volkhov at this

¹ Smirnov and Smolitskii, *Novgorodskie byliny*, pp. 367-371.

point in the relevant sources. This has led commentators to surmise that, in fact, the name Chernava has crept into *Sadko* from *Vasilii Buslaev*, as over the centuries singers lost sight of the original significance of the plot of the story.¹ However, we may recall too that the Volkhov was at one time, owing to its silty colour, called the Mutnyi - 'Turbid', or 'Opaque', and it was possibly an unclear folk recollection of this characteristic that led to the confusion in the mind of the singer, Sorokin, with the 'Black Stream'.

It seems very likely therefore, from the above evidence, that Afanas'ev is correct that the oral sources of *Sadko* did originally narrate a mythical chain of events leading to the creation of Novgorod's river, and Rimsky-Korsakov, basing himself on Afanas'ev, is attempting to reconstitute in his opera the original lost essence of the narrative.

(iii) The Sea Tsar (*Morskoi Tsar*)

The Sea Tsar in the sources is generally called the *Tsar' Okian-More* ('Ocean-Sea') - or *Okean-More*, or some such variant. This is a permanent combination in Russian folk lore, and Rimsky-Korsakov adopts the first form for his operatic Sea-Monarch. We have been informed in the cast list that his twelve oldest daughters are rivers (*reki*) who are married to the *sinie moria* ('deep-blue seas') over which he presumably holds sway. The streams (*rechki*) are his grand-children. Not only does this refer us to Afanas'ev and his conception of the personification of waterways in folk legend, including the epics, but also to the *Golubinaia kniga*, where Tsar Solomon, or David, or whoever, is asked to explicate which town, mountain, river, and so on, is the mother of all (ie most pre-eminent); there we are told that '*Okian-more vsem moriam mati*' ('Unto all seas is Ocean-Sea the Mother').² In this variant of Danilov's, we are further informed that the Sea Tsar is the father of all seas because 'all seas are given forth from him and all rivers have bowed down to him'. Presumably he is meant here in the opera

¹ Smimov and Smolitskii, *Novgorodskie byliny*, p. 400.

² Danilov, no. 60, *Golubina kniga soroka piaden'*, pp. 208-215.

too to be a personification of the pagan world which Christianity, embodied by the Mighty *Bogatyr'* Monastic Elder (ie St Nicholas), finally overthrows.

These are the major roles deriving from the *byliny* of *Sadko* which the composer has adapted to form a more coherent libretto for his sixth opera. As noted, other minor roles and their assimilation into the opera will be dealt with as they occur in our analysis of the score in the next section.

SECTION SEVEN

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE FOLK SOURCES OF THE MUSIC AND LIBRETTO OF *SADKO*

We have noted in our Introduction Taruskin's observation that a major barrier to acceptance of Rimsky-Korsakov's operas outside Russia 'has always been the amount of subtext required for full comprehension'. We may add that even for educated Russians of Rimsky-Korsakov's time full comprehension of the extraordinarily complex interweaving of motifs and sources, both textual and musical, must have been almost impossible without intensive study of the sources. This is especially true of *Sadko*, which requires a knowledge of the entire Russian epos, of the musical particularities of the epic narratives, of Russian folk music in general, and of Novgorodian history, on a par with Rimsky-Korsakov's own, acquired after a life-time of study.

We were undecided at first whether in this section to list the literary and musical sources of *Sadko*, analyse them, and then point out where they were employed in the opera, or whether to proceed linearly through the work, indicating what sources are used in which musical numbers and lines of the libretto. Finally, we resolved on the latter course, even though it might at times lead to repetition and referring back on numerous occasions to the same source. Our reasons for this procedure were that, as we have observed throughout this thesis, there is hardly one line of the libretto of the opera, or one textual reference, and (outside the 'fantastic' scenes concerned with the Sea Tsar and his family and creatures (mainly tableaux two and six)), hardly one bar of music, that is not drawn from an extraordinarily wide number of sources - not just the epics, but almost every genre of early Russian oral and literary epic, legend, and song. Some sources, such as the *byliny* concerning Dobrynia, or the *Slovo o Polku Igoreve*, are reflected in a few lines of libretto only. To list every one of these very numerous sources in

turn and then to indicate and examine the often widely-separated lines and bars on which each source had exercised an influence, would have led to tedium, and a very rapid loss of the thread of the overall story of the opera, and, especially, of a grasp of how each episode fitted into the whole.

We could, of course, have omitted many of these minor sources. However, the intention of this thesis is to defend the opera-*bylina* against criticisms of dramatic weakness and incoherence. Our aim is to demonstrate that the work is an opera adapted to accommodate an extraordinarily wide spectrum of Russian folk sources, rather than those sources being made to fit operatic convention, leading to a work that is *sui generis* and not to be judged by traditional operatic or dramatic models. This goal can only be accomplished, we consider, by explicating in exhaustive and comprehensive detail the 'sub-text required for full comprehension', which again can only be achieved by dealing in depth with every reference to folk -music, -literature, and -lore, in the opera.

We have therefore adopted the course of a linear progression through the opera, analysing each source as we come to it, both so that grasp may be maintained of the overall story, and also so that all sources, however minor, may be mentioned. Furthermore, by this method too, we may gain an idea of the composer's extraordinary grasp of and involvement with his material, and his organic vision (see Section Three) of the universe. He recreated this vision in *Sadko* and other works by utilising every line and every bar, in true bardic fashion, to forge an impression of a world where the pagan world-view still had not vanished, and where epic was created spontaneously among the common people.

This motif of spontaneously created song is only one of those that recur throughout the opera and form one of Rimsky-Korsakov's major points of interest and emphasis. Other major motifs are the over-arching and all-embracing water element against which the narrative is played out;

Sadko the artist's role as an intermediary between the human realm, nature, and the supernatural; Sadko's progressive development to full *bogatyr'* status in the eyes of the people by means of his art; and the victory of Christianity over paganism in mediaeval Rus' which seems to be one of the implications of the plot of the original incoherent sources. In regard to this last point, it is to be understood, of course, that Rimsky-Korsakov, as a sceptic who was elated by paganism, and who possessed throughout his life a pantheistic world-view (see Section Three), was not expressing any view as to the relative merits of Christianity or other religions in his opera, but was simply making explicit what seems to be implicit in the sources, and was too, an objective fact in the history of Russia - the final disappearance of paganism.

As we progress with our analysis of the score, we shall indicate where relevant how these motifs are drawn out by the composer's use of his sources.

This Section is sub-divided as follows:

(I) Overview

- (a) Summary of our findings thus far
- (b) Methodology

(2) Analysis of score and libretto

- (a) Foundations
- (b) Frontispiece, cast list, stage directions
- (c) Score and libretto
 - (i) Location of analysis of each Tableau
 - (ii) Linear analysis of the opera-*bylina*

(1) OVERVIEW

(a) Summary of our findings thus far.

By reason of his place in Russian cultural history, and his own psyche and world-view, Rimsky-Korsakov was drawn throughout his long composing career (1862-1907) to compose a series of works based on themes drawn from Russian history, life, folk-lore, and literature. By the time he came to commence writing his sixth opera, *Sadko*, in 1895, he had already composed an opera on an episode from early Russian history ('The Maid of Pskov'), an opera set in a Utopian magical realm ('Snow-Maiden'), and two other operas drawn from folk-tale-like themes to be found in the works of Gogol ('May Night' and 'Christmas Eve'). To underpin the Russian and folk-like origins of these operas, he drew up libretti and composed music based to an extraordinary extent on motifs derived from Russian folk music and folk-lore, both of which he had been exposed to from childhood, and which, subsequently, he had studied intensively.

For *Sadko*, he immersed himself in a study of Russian epics of all genres, early Russian literature, both oral and written, and in a study of Novgorodian history. For this study, he collaborated principally with his colleague and mentor, Vladimir Stasov, who assisted him greatly in drawing up the libretto.

In *Sadko*, by use of folk materials, principally 'heroic epic' sources, he strove to create an opera which would be such an epic (*bylina*) in its own right, not to be judged by conventional operatic standards. In so doing, he attempted to create the archaic world-view of the Russian epic by an extraordinarily compressed and concentrated distillation of the characteristic versification, diction, phraseology, imagery, and melodic declamation, of the original epic singers, which we have studied above.

(b) Methodology

Since we are concerned in this thesis principally with the folk sources of Rimsky-Korsakov's sixth opera, we shall analyse in this section the libretto and music only where they derive from these sources: we shall not examine examples of brilliant or original orchestration or plot construction, interesting though they undoubtedly are, if they have no background in Russian oral folk art. Similarly, features of Rimsky-Korsakov's musical language such as exotic octatonic and whole-tone scales, chromatic progressions, extended tonality and tonal colouring, and so forth, will be glanced at only in passing, since they do not derive from folk music. We have noted (Section Three), that the composer had used such colourings almost exclusively throughout his career, ever since his op 5, the 1867 *Sadko*, to evoke the non-human world of fairy-tale and magic, whereas scenes set in the human world (whether of Russian history or in fairy-tale) derived their musical expression more from the pentatonic and modal devices of Russian traditional folk song. Since the 1867 work is entirely concerned with the episode of the tale at sea and on the sea bed, the folk-song element is entirely missing. The music of Volkhova and her father, the Sea Tsar, is particularly associated with the octatonic scale, which, because it has no tonic, and does not seem to resolve towards anything, produces a feeling of insubstantiality and evanescence. Incidentally, although the various folk and exotic 'art-music' tone-rows are contrasted in this way throughout the composer's career, in *Sadko* they may have an extra function in that they sharply differentiate the two strands of the *Sadko* story: Tableaux One to Four narrate the folk musician's acquisition of wealth in Novgorod, and thus are composed almost entirely of rhythms and cadences based on folk tradition. The only exception is the comparatively short Tableau Two, in which Sadko first meets Volkhova by the shores of Lake Ilmen'. However, the final three tableaux tell the story of Sadko's adventures on, and under the sea, and so are presented in terms of exotic tone-rows. The solid folk-song tonality only reasserts itself on Sadko's return in the final tableau to Novgorod, and upon the disappearance of his sea-bride as she transmutes

herself into the river Volkhov.¹

Likewise, only selected details of plot will be mentioned as we progress through our analysis. Appendix I contains a detailed summary of the story-line and scenic lay-out of the opera, which may be consulted by an interested reader. Not every vocal number will be scrutinised in detail: it will be understood that every chorus contains 'filler particles', stock epithet-noun combinations, and other typical verbal *bylina* features of the types analysed in Section Two. It will also be understood that the city-name Novgorod has its two constituent elements (Novgorod - 'New-Town') grammatically declined in archaic style whenever it is mentioned in the opera - eg *Novu-gorodu* ('to Novgorod'), *o Nove-gorode* ('about Novgorod').

Only especially interesting examples of such epic language will therefore be mentioned below. We shall however deal extensively with references to other *byliny* apart from *Sadko* in the opera, and to other forms of folk oral materials such as the *dukhovnye stikhi*, *skomoroshina*, and prose legends.

Sub-headings throughout our analysis in capitals (eg. 'THE ACTION BEGINS', or 'THE FOLK-SINGER-HERO ENTERS') are interpolations from the writer of this thesis to make for ease of reading and orientation, and are not directions from the composer.

¹ For articles on the various kind of tone-row mentioned above, see under the entry 'Scales' in the final section of our Bibliography. Tsukkerman devotes a considerable section of one of his volumes to a description of Rimsky-Korsakov's use of ancient scales, conventional art-music scales, and what the author terms 'complex scales' (*slozhnye ladi*) (Tsukkerman, V., *Muzykal'nye-teoreticheskie ocherki i etyudy: O muzykal'noi rechi N. A. Rimskogo-Korsakova*, 2 vols (Moscow: 'Sovetskii Kompozitor', 1975)), vol II, pp. 150-291. The author discusses the composer's use of the octatonic scale on pp. 216-257, and analyses its use in relation to Volkhova and her Underwater Realm on pp. 224-5 and p. 234. For an extremely comprehensive and technical analysis of the music of *Sadko*, see: Gilse van der Pals, N., *N. A. Rimsky-Korssakow: Opemschaffen nebst Skizzen über Leben und Wirken* (Paris and Leipzig: W. Bessel & Co., 1929) pp. 262-346. This analysis is carried out entirely in the language of western 'art' music and there is very little reference to folk sources either of music or libretto. See also: P - skii, E., 'Tematicheskii analiz opery 'Sadko'', *RMG* 9 (Sept), 1898, pp. 796-800. The author is presumably the writer and critic E. M. Petrovskii.

(2) ANALYSIS OF SCORE AND LIBRETTO

(a) Foundations

We have already noted that the composer had intentionally divided his opera-*bylina* into 'scenes' or 'illustrations' (*kartiny*) rather than acts (*deistviia*). Furthermore, he tells us in his memoirs that the opera consists of seven *kartiny* of a 'magic-tale character' (*skazochnogo sodержaniia*).¹ However, he stresses that, if felt to be necessary, these *kartiny* may be said naturally to compose two acts: the first four tableaux, recounting the first theme from the Sadko cycle of *byliny* (that of the poor musician's acquiring his wealth by his entertaining the Sea Tsar with his playing); and the remaining three scenes (which narrate the theme of the now-rich merchant Sadko's adventures on the sea-bed, and his final return to Novgorod).

The choice of a predominant key for the opera is not purely accidental. As we have noted (Section Three) Rimsky-Korsakov had a very highly-developed innate sense of the inter-relationship between colour and sound, and so the key of E-major dominates throughout the 'aquatic' scenes of the work, especially those set on or under the sea, bringing to mind for the composer various hues of blue. Similarly, throughout the work, typical long-drawn-out epic tempi predominate, such as 3/2, 6/4, and 9/4, very frequently, again in typical folk style, fluctuating from bar to bar within each vocal number. There is even one chorus in the highly unusual rhythm of 11/4 - a tempo derived from folk music which the composer had already used for the closing chorus, in praise of the Sun God Iarilo, of *Snegurochka*. Indications of speed such as *lento* and *largo*, also predominate throughout the opera, and it is these expansive tempi and metres which give to the work its characteristic quality of long-drawn-out epic narration.

The score, as noted *passim* throughout this thesis, is prefaced by a series of notes entitled

¹ *Letopis'*, (1955), p. 205.

Vmesto predisloviia ('In place of a Foreword'), consisting of nine points, the major ones of which for our analysis are the derivation of the opera's theme from Danilov, Rybnikov, and 'others'; the opera's setting in 'semi-legendary-semi-historical' Novgorod, when paganism still held sway, and Christianity had not yet displaced it; the derivation of elements in the portrayal of the Sea Tsar and Tsarevna Volkhova from the works of Afanas'ev; the use throughout the libretto of 'filler particles' characteristic of *bylina* style, and finally, the fact - also derived from Afanas'ev - that the river Volkhov was at one time titled Volkhova.

(b) Title-page, cast list, and stage directions

As we have noted in our previous section, the descriptions of the characters of Sadko, the Sea Princess, and the Sea Tsar in the cast list are written in phraseology deriving directly from Russian folk language. All the other, more minor characters too are designated by such non-conventional language. Titles of musical numbers and the copious stage directions too are written in such language,¹ signifying that the composer extended his unwavering authorial control, and his concentration to every detail of the work, even to such aspects as would not be visible to the audience unless they had studied the score beforehand. This unblinking vision of the whole may even have commenced with the title-page to both the original score and piano reduction (both 1897), which figures as the frontispiece of this thesis. As we have noted (Section Two) this illustration of a medieval Novgorod *gusli*-player was drawn from a work by Vladimir Stasov, who had contributed substantially to the drawing-up of the libretto of *Sadko*. The inference may legitimately be drawn that, here too, the composer consulted with his mentor on an illustration which would provide an appropriate introduction to the work. Presumably the cast-list would be printed in any programme, and so the descriptions in non-conventional Russian would be seen by the public. However, at first sight, the inclusion of

¹ These stage directions are gathered in Appendix Two in both Russian and English. We shall deal with these stage directions individually in our progress through the work.

such a frontispiece and stage directions, which would be unknown to anybody without a score, would seem pointless. Was the composer unaware of this? We may surmise that such 'extra-librettic' details may well have been aimed primarily at performers and scene-designers. Such an introductory illustration would immediately conduct any singer, player, or scene-designer, into the requisite thought-world. This introduction would be reinforced by the cast-list in epic language, and finally, by the stage-directions and titles of numbers. By these written and graphic additions to the work, the composer has focused even more intently on the background of the work in Russian folk sources. We may conjecture yet further that he wished to demonstrate by these insertions that this folk ethos and atmosphere should be adhered to scrupulously throughout, and that all performers too should immerse themselves in the well-springs of the work.

We have already noted Rimsky-Korsakov's aversion to naturalism, and his constant striving to idealise reality. We may therefore finally surmise here that, by this meticulous attention to detail from the very first, non-musical page of the score, the composer might have been indicating that the score represents his conception of what may almost be called a Platonic archetypal ideal performance, and that no production in the physical world may ever be termed perfect or definitive. This problem of probable lack of complete awareness of the 'physical score', and of most of the textual references, on the part of the audience, is one which arises with almost every bar of the opera, and so therefore will not be mentioned again in our analysis, but will be considered in depth in our concluding Section.

(c) The score and the libretto

Since our analysis of *Sadko* is extremely long and detailed, it will be divided into three sub-sections, the first (A) dealing with the Introduction and the first three tableaux, the second (B) treating the very long fourth tableau, and the third (C) examining the last three tableaux.

(i) Location of analysis of each Tableau (a synopsis of the opera is to be found in Appendix One).

Sub-section A

Introduction: *Sinee More Okian More* ('The Ocean Sea Deep-blue') 167-169

Tableau One 170-194

Tableau Two 195-199

Tableau Three 200-205

Sub-section B

Tableau Four 206-254

Sub-section C

Tableau Five 255-259

Tableau Six 259-272

Tableau Seven 272-281

(ii) Linear analysis of the opera-*bylina* 167-281

(ii) Linear analysis of the opera-*bylina***Sub-Section A****Introduction and Tableaux One to Three****(1)****THE INTRODUCTION (VSTUPLЕНИЕ)*****OKIAN-MORE SINEE***

The work begins with a short prelude entitled *Okian-More Sinee* ('The Ocean-Sea Deep-blue'). This introduction evokes the moods of the ocean with which the composer would have become well-acquainted during his years at sea as a young naval cadet and officer (1856-1865), and which he also depicts in his op. 5 of 1867 (the tone poem *Sadko*) in his suite *Sheherazade* (1888), and in such other works as his tenth opera *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* (1899-1900).

This introduction is in E flat major. This is the key that, for the composer, was associated mentally with a 'dark-blue, sapphire' hue and is employed by him, in the works mentioned above, for the portrayal in sound of the sea. Initially, too, the introduction is in a broad, expansive, 6/4 marked *largo*; therefore, in key signature, this introduction immediately presents us with the work's background in the waters of Lake Il'men', and in the Realm of the Sea Tsar, while its steady, long-phrased rhythm, typical of epic chant, evokes the world of Russian folk narrative declamation.

Furthermore, the opera commences with a descending three-note 'motto', App. III, Ex. 6, which is to be found in several of the *byliny* transcriptions in Danilov's collection, in the volumes of Agreneva-Slavianskaia, and too in some of the phonograph transcriptions from Grigor'ev's expedition of 1899-1901. Although undertaken later than the composition of Rimsky-Korsakov's

opera, these transcriptions would still, owing to the conservatism of the Russian epic tradition, have been little if at all altered from the variants heard, but not recorded, by collectors with whose volumes the composer would have been familiar, such as Rybnikov and Gil'ferding.¹

However, as we have observed above, the first major known *bylina* collector Rybnikov claimed that the number of melodies was extremely few, and that possibly one melody underlay all the *bylina* declamations, regardless of the subject matter. In Danilov's collection too, this three-note descending figure is to be found in a substantial number of these melodies.

This motif, then, as may be seen from these examples, is one of the characteristic 'nuclei' or 'cells' of the Russian epic melodic line, and it recurs in a number of guises throughout the opera. This ubiquity parallels the manner in which it may be found as a nucleus of differing epic lines dealing with all manner of subjects of contrasting mood and theme. It may be said to form part of the leitmotif both of the sea, and - in a declamatory, staccato form - that of Sadko, the folk musician who ultimately marries the Sea King's daughter. This short phrase - and the rocking rhythm of the violin and cello accompaniment here - also form the embryo of many other leitmotifs in the opera. The eminent Russian musicologist Boris Asafev wrote:

'Throughout the whole massive unfolding of the opera Sadko, the 'phenomenon of the pounding sea' forms a subtext of the action of the *bylina*, and even constitutes its own peculiar kind of dramatic image - like another character. This image is created by extremely simple means: the measured rhythm of a repeated motion of three sounds: yet this measured quality contains within itself, now the roaring of the waves, now serene lapping, now forward surgings and menacing assaults, now power, now contentment, now tenderness, now severity!'²

¹ Examples of such three-note nuclei in the collections of folk-songs mentioned above may be found *passim* in App III, Examples 1, 4 and 5.

² Asafev, B. V., *Izbrannye stat'i*, II, (Moscow: 'Muzgiz', 1952) p. 28.

Here, this repeated descending largo figure on the celli and violas may be said to represent the unhurried surging of the depths of the oceans; after 2 bars the violins counterpose to the crotchets of the celli their own light rocking motion in quavers, to portray the breakers scudding over the surface.^{App III, Ex 6} This configuration of notes too may be found in many of the *byliny* in Danilov's collection; although not in the music of either of the *Sadko* narratives to be found in this volume, it is to be encountered in, among others, several *byliny* from which the composer drew some of the other textual motifs from his opera, such as *Churilo Plėnkovich*.¹ Furthermore, it forms part of one of the tunes which Musorgsky took down from the declamation of the folk singer Trofim Grigorevich Riabinin when the latter visited St Petersburg in 1873 - that concerning the *bogatyri* Dobrynia Nikitich and Vasilii Kazimirov.²

We have noted in Section One that the first few lines of *Solovei Budimirovich* in Danilov's collection seem as if they may be used to open any epic narration. It is a 'call to attention' like an operatic overture, and leads into the main action, the first episode of which is frequently a feast. Therefore, we may say that Rimsky-Korsakov's oceanic orchestral prelude is not simply a conventional operatic overture, but is a reflection of the epic singers' device of introducing some narratives with such preludes. Furthermore, in typical *bylina* fashion, it leads without a break into a feast in Novgorod.

¹ Danilov, (1977), p. 270. See also Grigor'ev *passim*, I, 653-688, II, 489-511, and III, pp. vii-xxvii.

² A transcription is to be found in an insertion in Gil'ferding, 1873, between columns 436 and 437, along with Musorgsky's transcription of Trofim Riabinin's *Pro Vol'gu i Mikulu* ('About Vol'ga [an epic hero, not the river] and Mikula') (in Gil'ferding, (1951), II, between pp. 80-81). These also form the first two items in Rimsky-Korsakov's 1876 collection of Russian folk tunes.

The tune of Vol'ga was utilised by Musorgsky in *Boris Godunov* for the chant of the two recreant monks Varlaam and Misail: Musorgsky, M. P., *Boris Godunov - narodnaia muzykal'naia drama*, full score, in the performing edition of Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., eds. Iordan, I, and Kirkor, G., (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo, 1959) Act 4, scene 1, (*Pod Kromami* - 'Near Kromy') pp. 623-629 figure 204. The tune was also used by Anton Arensky in his *Fantaisie sur les chants épiques russes chantés par I. T. Riabinin*, op 48, (Moscow, St Petersburg, Leipzig: P. Jurgenson, no date - probably 1899-1900, since the work was composed in 1899.

(2)

TABLEAU ONE

The composer immediately begins to create the epic atmosphere of his *Sadko*, firstly by the opening stage direction, by numerous references to all genres of *byliny* within the first few minutes of the opening episode, then by introducing a genuine extract of epic chant, and a chorus in 11/4 time.

(3)

THE FIRST STAGE DIRECTION

The curtain rises: the detailed and lengthy stage direction¹ informs us, in archaic language drawn from the epics, that we are at a feast in the hall (*khormy*) of the Nikol'shchina fraternity of merchants, and then tells us that the *skomorokhi* are in their rightful place 'upon the glaze-tiled stove'. This stage direction states that the *khorma* belongs to the Nikol'shchina ('St Nicholas') *bratchina* ('Brotherhood', 'Guild', 'Drinking-Club'). The tableau opens with the *gosti Novgorodskie* ('the marchaunts Novgorodian') feasting there. Throughout the opera the guests are referred to by the archaic term *gosti* (guests), with the occasional addition, even if not needed for clarity, of *torgovye* ('trading') – a combination to be found commonly in the epics. It is not clear whether these merchants actually are the Nikol'shchina *bratchina*, or whether they are other merchants who have hired the hall. The archaic term *khormy* and other words for buildings from the epic, such as *terem* and *dvorets* seem to be used interchangeably and imprecisely: it is frequently unclear whether they imply an entire building, or a specific room. We shall return to this later when we encounter the word *terem* in Tableau Three. As regards *khormy*, Brokgaus and Efron's Encyclopedia states that in ancient Rus', this term signified a fairly large building; the most substantial ones were surrounded by a courtyard.² However, it is often uncertain both in the epics and in the opera whether *khormy*

¹ For full Russian and English text of stage directions see Appendix II. The above is App II no 1.

² 'Khoromy', *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'*, XXXVII, (Brokgaus i Efron: 1903) p. 579.

means either an entire building, or a large assembly-room within a building. The possible English translations 'hall' or 'assembly rooms' have the same ambiguity. ¹

The servants waiting on the merchants are termed in this stage direction *cheliad'* - another archaic word denoting household servants, normally of the serf class. A further stock epithet and noun combination here is *pochesten pir* ('a feast of honour'). This phrase is to be found universally in the opening scene of many of the Kiev epics, referring to the feast at the court of Prince Vladimir. It is also very commonly employed in the Novgorod *byliny* both of *Sadko* and *Vasilii Buslaev* to describe the feasts of the merchants of that town. Rimsky-Korsakov adds the diminutive *pirovanitse* to form a longer combination also to be found in some of the portrayals of feasts: *pirovanitse pochesten pir* ('A lovely feast, a feast of honour'). Other descriptions of the furnishings and decor in this direction also derive from many of the opening scenes of feasts in the epic sources - for instance, the 'oaken tables covered with embroidered tablecloths'. The *Gosti* are being served with viands (*iastvy* - an archaic term), and drinks (*napitki*), including ale (*braga* - another archaic word) and wine. This refers to a stock phrase from the epics '*sakhamye iastva i p'iane napitki*'. ('sugar-sweet viands and tipsy-making drinks'). Adjectives generally follow nouns in this lengthy stage direction (eg *gosti torgovye*) a device of poetic and archaic Russian. Immediately, therefore, with the wording of the cast list examined in Section Six, the title of the orchestral introduction, and this stage direction, we are in the world of ancient Russia and of Russian oral folk poetry. ²

¹ For an attempt to disentangle the original significance of all these terms, and, too, *terem*, *gridnitsa*, and *svetlitsa*, see Smolitski, V. G., *Rus' Izbianaia* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe respublikanskii tsentr Russkogo fol'klora, 1993), chapter I, 'Izba, dvorets, dom, terem', pp. 63-66. The term *terem* is used in Tableaux One, Three and Six of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera-*bylina* with three very different meanings.

² The composer notes in the first item of his prefatory material to the score of *Sadko* that he drew some details for his opera from the *bylina*, *Ivan Gostinyi Syn*. The composer seems to have made especial use of this narrative for details of the opening feast (eg see Danilov, no. 8, pp 39-42, and Rybnikov I, no. 97, pp. 486-491). The title of this epic means 'Ivan the Merchant's Son', and so possibly the reference to this *bylina* specifically as the source for the details of the feast is yet another attempt by the composer to stress the mercantile background of the opera. For the function of the feast in the epics, see Lipets, E., 'Piry - ikh struktura i funktsii' *Epos i drevniaia Rus'* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1969) pp. 120-152.

The information as to the position of the *skomorokhi* on the stove derives directly from the Kiev *bylina* concerning *Dobrynia's* travels. This lengthy *bylina* informs us that Dobrynia is sent on business by Prince Vladimir for twelve years (epic time, of course - as we remember, Sadko is stated in the cast list to be at sea for twelve years between Tableaux Four and Five). However, before he goes, Dobrynia tells his wife not to marry the cunning *bogatyr'* Alësha if he, Dobrynia, is not back by the end of this period. He is delayed, Alësha contracts a marriage with her, and Dobrynia turns up in the middle of the betrothal feast, before they go to 'God's holy church' to marry. Dobrynia, the courtly *bogatyr'* who is described as being an adept on the *gusli*, disguises himself as a *skomorokh*, and enters the feast to offer his services to the assembled guests presided over by Prince Vladimir. He is unrecognised: if this sounds implausible, we should note that masks were frequently part of a *skomorokh's* attire, and presumably Dobrynia wore such a mask. Dobrynia asks where the *skomorokhs'* place is, and the Prince then informs him:

Що ваше место скоморошкое

На той ли печке на муравленой,

На муравленой печке и на запечке ... ¹

¹ 'Verily your *skomorokh's* place
Is upon that glaze-tiled stove,
Upon that glaze-tiled stove,
And in the space between the stove and the wall.'
(*Dobrynia i Alësha*, Rybnikov I, no. 26, p. 168).

All the variants of this epic are gathered in *Dobrynia Nikitich i Alësha Popovich*, eds. Smirnov, Iu. I and Smolitskii V. G., (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1974) pp. 229-326. The Russian stove was to be found in one corner of the main room of any dwelling, whether *izba* (peasant's cabin) or palace. It was a large structure, and in winter people could sleep directly on top of it, or on shelves above it, to keep warm. It generally stood at an angle of 45° to the corner, with the door facing outward, leaving a large space (*zapechka*) on either side. Originally, the stoves were made of brick, clay, or packed earth; however, by the second half of the 17th century, glazed tiles (often of Dutch make) began to spread throughout Russia, first making their appearance in aristocratic homes and churches. (Smolitskii, *Rus' izbianaia*, pp. 32 and 71-72). It is the frequent use of such stock formulae as *muravlenaia pech'* (glaze-tiled stove) in the epics that has lead some commentators to the conclusion that the *byliny* originated in aristocratic circles – either with such noble *gusliars* as the *bogatyr'* Dobrynia Nikitich, or else amid strolling players such as the *skomorokhi*, who, like the itinerant actors in *Hamlet*, seem to have been welcome entertainers at upper-class gatherings, and would have noticed their surroundings. However, they were still considered menials, and had to wait – as the above discussion suggests – in their rightful place in the corner by the stove, before being called forward. See eg Oinas, Felix J., 'The Problem of the Aristocratic Origin of the *Byliny*', *Slavic Review*, 30

Therefore, by this detail of the *skomorokhi* sitting around the stove, the composer who is setting to music a Novgorod non-martial *bylina*, establishes a link in the very first stage direction to the scene at the commencement of the opera, with one of the principal Kiev 'martial junior *bogatyř*' epics, and thus with the entire Kiev martial cycle. As we have noted, throughout the opera, the composer brings in references to every kind of *bylina*, which we shall treat where appropriate below, and which presumably would have been familiar to the people of mediaeval Novgorod.

(4)

THE NOVGOROD MERCHANTS

During the opening chorus, the Novgorodian merchants, played by the male chorus, specifically mention the glorious city of Kiev with its gracious Prince (*laskovyi Kniaz'*) – a stock description of Prince Vladimir of Kiev in the Kiev cycle of epics. However, he is never mentioned in the Novgorod *byliny*. The merchants also extol Kiev's *dela bogatyřskie*. ('bogatyřean deeds'). Novgorod is glorious, though, (they sing) not for its princes, but for its trading wealth and its freedom (*vol'nitsa*), which we have touched on in Section Four.

Therefore, the reference to the Kiev epics implied in the opening stage direction is here made explicit: Novgorod, it is suggested, has as yet no epic heroic tradition, and no *bogatyř* of its own. The merchants therefore call on the young *gusli*-player Nezhata, who is visiting Novgorod, to sing one of the old songs. Their invitation to him '*Strunku k strunachku natiagivai*' ('Tune one string unto another') is reminiscent of the epics of Dobrynia once again:

Натягивал тетивочки шолковая,

(1971), pp. 513-522.

On the use of masks by the *skomorokhi*, see; 'Skomorokhi v bylinakh', (in) Novichkova, T. A., *Epos i Mif*, (Saint Petersburg: 'RAN', 2001), pp. 59-82 (pp. 67-68).

На тѣя струночки золоченыя,
Учал по стрункам похаживать . .¹

By introducing a professional *gusli*-player at the commencement of proceedings, the composer is creating a link with the major Russian ancient written epic *Slovo o polku Igoreve* (The Song of Igor's Campaign') and its bard Boian - a link which is to be emphasised shortly by a direct quotation from this source. In addition, by this device he also connects his opera-*bylina* with Glinka's opera *Ruslan and Liudmila*, based on Pushkin's imitation of epic poetry, which also opens in the hall (*gridnitsa*) of Prince Vladimir, where the guests are drinking ale and wine, and where Baian (*sic*) too is portrayed as playing on the 'zvонkie gusli' ('resounding *gusli*').

Through these devices the composer is consciously locating his work not only within the Russian literary tradition, but also within the Russian musical tradition of epic opera exemplified by *Ruslan and Liudmila* (1842), and Borodin's *Prince Igor* (1890). Since the source of this latter work, the 'Song of Igor's Campaign', is a written Russian literary 'martial' epic, Rimsky-Korsakov has already established, in the first few minutes of his opera-*bylina*, a clear connection between the literary and musical content of *Sadko*, and Russian folk epic, literary epic, and Russian opera based on epic material.

Nezhata is a 'trouser role', that is, a male role here sung by a mezzo-soprano. The composer had utilised this device before, in his third opera, *Snegurochka* (1881), where the shepherd

¹ 'He tightened (ie tuned) those silken cords,
Those silken strings,
And 'gan for to roam all over those strings ..'
(*Dobrynia i Alesha*, Rybnikov, I, no. 26, p. 169).

Oddly, the phrase 'silken cords' which has crept in here, is usually a stock combination to describe bow-strings in the martial epics, and there may a suggestion here that the musical instrument is like a powerful weapon in the hands of a skilled performer. See, for example, *Solovei Razboinik* ('Nightingale the Brigand'), Rybnikov, vol I, no. 4, pp. 15-22 (p. 17):

Natyagival tetivochku shelkovenku
('He tautened that silken (bow-) string').

Lel', his 'representative of folk art', although a male role, is sung by an alto. However, whereas Lel' plays a major male role in this latter work, Nezhata is only once specifically referred to in the third person singular, in the lines derived from the 'Song of Igor's Campaign' (see below), and the name Nezhata, despite the fact that it signifies a male character here, bears the feminine ending 'a', (as with many such names from early Rus' (eg the names of the two Kiev *bogatyri* Dobrynia and Il'ia Muromets)) and may be construed as either masculine or feminine. We recall that many of the folk bards were female: therefore we may surmise that the composer might have wished to draw attention by means of this sexually ambiguous figure to the fact that the peasant singers of the original sources which he is now going to commence to quote, could be of either sex.

(5)

THE BYLINA OF VOLKH VSESLAVICH

Nezhata declaims the first genuine extract of *bylina* in the opera: the chant concerning Volkh Vseslavich from Danilov's collection.¹ Volkh is one of the 'Ancient Heroes', and thus already, within six minutes of stage action,² we have been introduced to the two major classes of pre-Novgorod *bylina*: those of the 'Elder Heroes' and 'Junior Heroes'.

Nezhata's declamation is accompanied by harp and piano chords. This was the traditional representation of the *gusli* in the Russian opera; which had been introduced by Glinka in *Ruslan and Liudmila*, imitated by Borodin in *Prince Igor*, and by Rimsky-Korsakov himself in

¹ Danilov, (1977), no 6, pp. 32-36. The composer's extract from this epic is to be found in *Sadko* (full score) part 6, 3 vols (a,b, c), ed. A. L. Lokshin (Moscow and Leningrad: GMI. 1955), vol 6a, pp. 71-87, bars 357-474. These volumes are part of the full set of the composer's works: Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Poln. sob. soch.*, 1948-70).

² All timings in this thesis are based on the recorded performance by the Kirov under Valery Gergiev: 'SADKO', Kirov Chorus and Orchestra, St Petersburg, conducted by Valery Gergiev, (Philips, 1994, 4422 138-2). This is also available as a laser-disc (Philips 077004391). Incidentally, Gerald Abraham (*Studies in Russian Music*, 1935 and 1969, both p. 235), erroneously states that Volkh is a hero of the Novgorod epics.

Snow-Maiden.

The time signature constantly alternates throughout this *bylina* extract between 6/4 and 3/2.^{App}

III, Ex 7

This does not in fact correspond with the only known musical transcription of this *bylina*, in Danilov. However, Lineva – among other commentators – observes that one of the characteristics of many Russian folk songs is that they continually fluctuate in rhythm, and that their words are constantly stressed on varying syllables, to fit the requirements of this rhythm at any point. Furthermore, the underlying choral accompaniment also alters from performance to performance, in a manner which cannot be reproduced by any transcription or sound recording, which would reproduce only one out of an almost infinite number of variants.¹

Grigor'ev's volumes similarly contain numerous transcriptions of such alternating time-signatures, as do Agreneva-Slavianskaia's. Such fluctuating rhythms would undoubtedly have been what Rimsky-Korsakov heard when he saw Irina Fedosova and (possibly) Ivan Riabinin declaim in 1895. A musical transcription by the composer Anton Arensky (1861-1906) of several songs of Ivan Riabinin's does appear in his appendix to an article of Liatskii's on this *skazitel'*, and there the composer notes, (as does Lineva), that phrases in these transcriptions stretch across conventional barlines, and frequently long vocal lines must, in order to be transcribed comprehensibly, be artificially sub-divided into such pulses as 3/8, 6/4, 13/8, 14/8, 2/4, 4/4, 3/2, and so on. As an example: the brief extract from Ivan Riabinin's *Il'ia Muromets* appended to Liatskii, contains sub-divisions in 7/8, 6/8 and 5/8.²

¹ Lineva. E., *Velikorusskie pesni v narodnoi garmonizatsii, zapisany E. Linevoi* (2 instalments) (Saint Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Akademiia nauk, 1904). First instalment, pp. xv-xvii. Translated as: Lineff, Eugénie, *The Peasant Songs of Great Russia as they are in the Folk's Harmonization* (Imperial Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg, 1905, and (2nd instalment) Moscow 1911).

² For a full discussion of the *bylina* rhythm, and references, see our Section Two. For Arensky's transcription of I. T. Riabinin's *Il'ia Muromets*, see App. III Ex 2, and for other examples of fluctuating rhythm, or text stretching across conventional bar-lines, from the above-mentioned collectors, see App III, Exs 3, and 5.

For the first time in the opera, the composer here encounters the problem that a more or less uniform narrative declamation, varied only by vocal ornamentation, which might be hypnotic when sung by a village bard in the assembly hall or village pub after a hard day's work, soon becomes monotonous when sung in a concert hall on a stage. Moreover, the composer cannot set the whole tale to music in the context of an opera on another subject. Therefore, his solution is firstly, to select a few episodes from the original which allow scope for vivid and energetic orchestral scene-painting, and then, to vary the forces delivering the music. He divides the selected episodes into four verses, depicting, firstly, Volkh's miraculous birth from a union between a Russian princess and a serpent, and the earthquakes and other natural phenomena which accompanied this event. The second verse tells how, at his birth, all the creatures of the sea and the forest fled away. The third describes his supernaturally fast growth, and how, aged only an hour and a half (*sic*), he took a club weighing 300 *poods* (10, 800 Imperial lbs) in his hand as one of his heroic armaments (we shall examine this stock epic motif of colossal cudgels later, when it recurs in Tableau Four). The final verse tells us how Volkh chose himself a 'valiant retinue' (*druzhina khorobraia*: another stock phrase to be examined later, for Sadko, even though a 'poor musician' also has such a retinue); and with this entourage, Nezhata tells us, Volkh conquered the 'Tsardom of India'.

We shall not give here a detailed musical analysis of the orchestral accompaniment to each image, since the harmonic and melodic language does not derive from folk music. Neither does it employ any of the complex scales which the composer employed for his magical episodes. Suffice it to say, for example, that, as in Haydn's *Creation*, where the composer imitates the movements of each newly-fashioned creature by orchestral means, Rimsky-Korsakov, in verse two, has the woodwind and strings reproducing the movements of the various creatures fleeing in terror. Furthermore, to provide variation, there is a brief interpolation from the assembled merchants after this second verse, as they sing in awed pianissimo lines adapted from the 'Song of Igor's Campaign'. They emphasise Boian's/Nezhata's magical artistic

powers, and liken their art to that of Volkh's enchantments. Finally, during the third and fourth verses, gradually crescendoing conventional chromatic progressions accompany the description of Volkh's increasing power, and his heroic exploits in conquering the 'Tsardom of India'.

Of course, variations on a given 'leading' theme, and embroiderings of that theme, are standard compositional procedures in western musical practice. However, the device is fully consonant with that of Russian choral folk song too, for, as Lineva notes, the *podgoloski* or subsidiary vocal parts, may all vary subtly from performance to performance, as long as they remain in harmony with the major theme. Occasionally too, even the principal theme may be varied somewhat during the course of the performance.

Therefore the composer may well have felt that the conventional 'classical' variation form fitted in very effectively with the background of the opera in folk music practices. However, although this procedure was common during the choral singing of lyric folk songs, it was never found during the singing of epics. As we have noted, when the collectors visited the north of Russia to collect *stariny* in the 19th century, they were all sung solo by the peasant *skazitel'/nitsa*. Therefore, in the interests of maintaining the interest of the opera's audience, who would have been far more aware of the conventions and demands of art music, the composer has sacrificed authenticity and consequently to an extent distorted the conventions of the epic folk background he was familiar with. A similar procedure is followed when the composer closes Tableau Four, and the recounting of the first theme of the *Sadko* story, with a declamation of an extract from the *bylina* of *Solovei Budimirovich* by the entire vocal ensemble.¹

¹ On the composer's use of the variation form in his operas in general, see Sosnovtseva, O., 'O variantnoi forme u Rimskogo-Korsakova' (in) Kandinskii, A. N., ed. *Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov* (Moscow: 'Moskovskaia gosudarstvennaia konservatoriia', 2001) pp. 114-121.

As we have noted above, between the first and second verse of Nezhata's rendition of *Volkh Vseslavich* the link between Nezhata and Boian is made explicit. The opera-*bylina* based on folk-epic in the oral tradition is intentionally linked to Russian written 'literary' epic, as the merchants exclaim in hushed tones:

Мыслью по лесу растекается,
Серым волком он по земле бежит,
А под оболочки орлом летит . ¹

These lines are a very close paraphrase (albeit in rather less archaic Russian) of the opening lines of the *Song of Igor's Campaign*. ²

There may be a further reason for a reference to this written epic narrative here – for mention is made extensively in *Igor's Campaign* to Novgorod (eg *Truby trubiat v Novegrade* – 'Trumpets trumpet in Novgorod' ³); and Prince Igor' was Prince of this city-state. It was of course, not the city of Great Novgorod which *Sadko* is set in, but Novgorod-Seversk, to the west of Russia, and there is possibly a humorous reference to another 'Novgorod' epic here.

It is unclear why Rimsky-Korsakov chose the name Nezhata for his epic singer from Kiev; there is no reference to any so-named figure in any *bylina*. The name is extremely rare in Russian history, and although one *posadnik*, or Elder of Novgorod, was called Nezhata, there is no

¹ 'In thought [or: 'like a thought'] he [ie Boian] rangeth through the wood,
Like a grey wolf he raceth o'er the earth,
And beneath the clouds he flyeth like an eagle'
(*Sadko*, (full score), 6a, pp. 84-86, bars 421-429).

Incidentally, *Volkh Vseslavich* (Danilov no 6, pp. 32-36), as part of his magic and shamanic craft, can also turn himself into a grey wolf (p. 36). The composer has therefore introduced another link here both between the Russian written epic and the most primitive strand of *bylina*.

² *Slovo o polku Igoreve*, ed. Filin, F. P., p. 91, lines 7-9.

³ *Loc cit*, p. 92, line 54.

evidence that he was a musician.¹ However, the composer could be trying to weave into his complex system of references yet another oblique mention of a Kiev *bogatyr*, the courtly Dobrynia Nikitich, who was also an adept on the *gusli*, who often went on long journeys. For 'Dobrynia' derives from the Slavonic root 'd-b-r', which implies 'good', 'kind'. 'Nezhata' originates from the root 'neg' which suggests 'gracious, generous, affectionate' and so on. Therefore, in name, in skill on the *gusli*, and in his being on a visit from Kiev to Novgorod, Nezhata seems to be a reminiscence of the Kiev epic hero Dobrynia Nikitich.

At the end of Nezhata's *bylina*, the merchants launch into a chorus, in the highly unusual metre of 11/4, lauding the glories of life in Novgorod.² The opening words of this chorus are drawn from the various stock descriptions of feasts which open numerous Kiev epics:

Будет красен день в половину дня,
Будет пир у нас в полупире ...³

The sole English translation of Rimsky-Korsakov's memoirs represents the composer at this point as observing that 'the 11/4 chorus, Nezhata's *bylina*,', etc, are characteristic of Russian folk music.⁴ However, the original Russian reads 'Odinnatsatidol'nyi khor, *bylina* Nezhaty,'⁵ etc, and this reference actually signifies an '11-beat' chorus, rather than one consisting specifically of 11 crotchet beats.

¹ Ianin, V. L., *Novgorodskie posadniki*, pp. 100-102 and 381. According to this volume one Nezhata Tverdiatich was *Posadnik* of Novgorod twice from 1144-6, and then 1160-1.

² Engel' claims that this measure was 'unprecedented' ('*nebyvalyi*') before Rimsky-Korsakov: Engel', Iu. D., ed. Kunin, I., *Glazami sovremennika - izbrannye stat'i o Russkoi muzyke 1898-1918* (Moscow: 'Sovetskii Kompozitor', 1971), p. 174.

³ 'The beauteous day be'eth at the mid-point of the day,
Our feast be'eth at the mid-feast

(*Sadko*, full score, 6a, pp. 99-108, bars 475-504).

⁴ Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay Andreyevich, *My Musical Life*, transl. Judah A. Joffe, ed. Carl van Vechten (London: Eulenberg Books, 1974). P. 365.

⁵ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, p. 205.

Moreover, no time signature of 11/4 time appears in any of the collections of Russian folk tunes discussed *passim* in our thesis. Yet, as we have noted, although commentators such as Arensky, Lineva, and Grigor'ev who transcribed songs from phonograph recordings still maintained conventional bar-lines – albeit bars with constantly fluctuating time-signatures – it is noticeable that the individual textual lines, the 'sentences', of their songs often begin in mid-bar, carry on over several bars, and finish in the middle of another bar. These long-drawn-out phrases contain anything from around seven to 15 syllables. Furthermore, one syllable is as a rule allotted one beat, and generally one pitch – a syllable extending over, say, two crotchets or quavers of different pitches is uncommon. The rhythm, therefore, derives directly from the text, which, as we have noted may fluctuate drastically in metre from line to line. This procedure is, of course, in complete contrast to the rhythmic character and procedures of western 'art' music until the early 20th century, where vocal lines were normally drawn from texts with metrically similar and stable lines, and in which the words were generally made to fit against the Procrustean bed of the constant time-signature.

Many of Agreneva-Slavianskaia's songs were transcribed from that same Irina Fedosova whom Rimsky-Korsakov saw perform in 1895, and we may note that she has in her collection numerous 11-, 12-, and 13-syllable phrases, but with no time signature or bar lines. We have given an example ^(App III Ex 4) from a variant of the 'spiritual song' the *Golubinaia kniga*, with 11 syllables in the first vocal line and 12 in the second. The tempo marking is *dovol'no protiazhno* (quite slow and long-drawn-out), and the use of crotchets or quavers rather, than say, minims and semi-breves, seems to be a matter of convenience and personal choice, rather than indicating a rapid tempo.

In the 11/4 chorus in *Sadko* Rimsky-Korsakov seems to be following this folk tradition of making the long-drawn-out phrase the measure of the metre, rather than imposing any artificial and arbitrary more conventional metre necessitating two irrelevant bar lines (if the chorus was

in 4/4) or even three (if the time signature is 3/4) throughout the phrase. The bar-lines here, in this eleven-beat chorus, apparently perform no other function than denoting the conclusion of each vocal phrase. (App. III Ex 8). 1

The composer had already used this extremely unusual, perhaps even unprecedented, metre in the final chorus of his third opera *Snow-Maiden*, in the hymn in praise of the Sun-God *Iarilo*. But, although the 11-beat rhythm is derived from folk music, it still has to be indicated in a certain manner to the performers by a conductor in a concert hall or opera theatre. Furthermore it can be conducted in a number of different ways, depending on the character of the chorus. At the head of his majestic paeon to *Iarilo*, the composer indicates that it is to be conducted as 2+3+2+2+2, while for portrayal of the hidebound and self-satisfied merchants in *Sadko*, the beat is to be sub-divided as 2+2+2+2+3. This indication of a more conventional pulse underlying the 11/4 rhythm, seems to imply that the composer, even though breaking with art-music norms by making the long phrase the natural rhythmic division, leading to highly distinctive time signatures, still, at this period of musical history, had to compromise with these conventions, in order to convey the precise character of any chorus in such a rhythm, and to make his material conductable and performable. The composer, however forward-looking, was not yet ready mentally to go the way of his pupil Stravinsky in his later settings of folk verses.

(6)

THE FOLK SINGER HERO ENTERS

Now that the composer has comprehensively created the epic and semi-legendary background of the opera by his 'Blue Sea' introduction, by his stage direction, and by his references to

¹ Kiui (Cui), in an article on *Sadko* written shortly after its premiere, describes this chorus as being in 11/8 time, which appears to demonstrate that the conventional underlying *musical* pulse - as opposed to the textual rhythm - was purely contingent and a matter of subjective apprehension. Kiui, Ts. A., 'Sadko' - Opera-bylina Rimskago-Korsakova', *Novosti i birzhevaia gazeta*, no 64, (6 March 1898); repr. in Kiui, Ts. A., *Izbrannye stat'i*, ed. Gusin, I. L., (Leningrad: 'GMI', 1952) pp. 472-479.

other epic genres, including an extract from *Volkh*, it is time for the protagonist of the opera-*bylina* to appear. The composer has given him visionary and poetical longings, which he displays here, to create a deeper and more motivated figure than the shadowy and, at times, puzzling, figure in the sources. Through the course of the work, he will grow in stature, and gradually achieve the status of *bogatyř*, worthy of having *byliny* devoted to his exploits. In the concluding Tableau Seven, he will finally explicitly be designated a '*bogatyř*'; in the eyes of the people of Novgorod. However, here, at the commencement of the opera, he is still a figure of derision to many, and is finally driven forth with contempt by the merchants and *skomorokhi*.

Once again, at Sadko's entry, we have a stage direction drawn verbatim from the *byliny*, for, whenever any character in the Russian epics enters a room, he does so in the manner Sadko does here: *Vkhodit Sadko kladia krest po pisanomu i poklon vedia po uchenomu*. We are further informed that he is carrying his *gusel'ki iarovchaty* (bonny *gusli* of sycamore).¹

The ritual described here is that, whenever a person in Old Russia entered a dwelling or a room within that dwelling, he or she would bow to the icon which would be kept in the corner opposite the door (normally the right-hand side), make the sign of the cross, and possibly say a silent prayer. She or he would then bow to the host and hostess, or to the most senior people present, and, if there was company assembled, s/he would then bow down to all sides of the room.²

¹ 'Sadko entereth in; he maketh [the sign of] the cross as it is written, he boweth down as we are taught.' see App II no 2.

² Smolitskii, V. G., *Rus' izbianaia*, p. 53. For just one variant of this extremely common motif of the Russian epics see eg *Dobrynia i Vasilii Kazimirov* (Rybnikov, I, no. 8, pp. 43-69), p. 52.

'Оны господу богу помолилися,
Крест-от клали по писаному,
Вели оны поклоны по ученому,
На все на три, на четыре сторонки поклонялись'.
(*'Unto the Lord God did they pray,
The cross they signed as it is written,
The bows they made as it is taught -
yea, unto three, unto all four sides, did they bow'*).

As Sadko looks on, the merchants, (still in 11/4), in other 'transferable formulae' drawn from the *byliny*, make ritualised boasts, to be found in many of the opening scenes of feasts: for instance, in the Kiev cycle, one *bogatyř* may boast of his unlimited 'gold-hoard' (*zolota kazna*), one may vaunt his martial skill and prowess, another his 'goodly steed' (*dobryi kon'*) and so on. This bragging is also described in some variants of the Novgorod *byliny* as taking place at the gatherings of the Nikol'shchina *bratchina*,¹ and therefore Rimsky-Korsakov's utilisation of this theme here is fully motivated.

Sadko now sings for the first time in the opera the declamatory recitative line that follows him through the work, in various guises, as a leitmotif.^{App III, Ex 9}

The prototype of this line may be noticed in numerous *byliny*. It is made up of primitive 'cells' of pitch and rhythm, such as the constantly repeated descending and ascending three consecutive notes, and the closing falls at the end of each phrase of thirds and fourths. We have already noted that the composer claims in his memoirs that the prototype of his epic recitative-line in this opera is the songs of the Riabinins, and, significantly, these cells and cadences are to be found throughout Arensky's transcriptions of the phonograph recordings of Riabinin the son made in 1895. These 'nuclei' or primitive building-blocks of the *bylina* line may be found too in Agreneva's transcriptions of epic narratives from Irina Fedosova, whose performances the composer attended in 1895 and from whom he noted down nine songs of varying types.² The descending three notes, although differing in interval from those commencing both the *Sinee more* (Deep-Blue Sea) prelude and the merchants' 11/4 chorus, are identical to it in rhythm. Therefore, with Sadko's declamation and repetition of this primitive epic 'leit-rhythm', the composer has already, within the first fourteen minutes of the first tableau

¹ Eg Rybnikov, II, no. 134, p. 246, for bragging in a variant of *Sadko*; for the Kiev cycle, see eg *Danila Ignat'evich i Mikhaila Danil'evich*, Rybnikov, II, no. 104, pp. 3-14 (p. 6).

² See Appendix III, Ex. 4 and 13.

of his opera-*bylina*, linked, firstly, the sea and the merchants of Novgorod who wish to trade overseas, but find themselves hampered in their ambitions by the lack of a navigable river. Secondly he has connected to these plot elements the folk musician who will marry a daughter of the Sea Tsar, and by so doing bring such a river to Novgorod and open a way to the sea for the merchants. We may speculate that, by this using of the same 'ur-rhythm' and nucleus in connection with so many different motifs in the opera, the composer was attempting to imitate epic bardic practice, for these singers, we recall, would have sung an entire *bylina* to the same basic melodic framework, with very little vocal variation whatever was happening in the narrative.

This procedure, deriving from folk practice, is at variance with the system of leitmotifs as normally practised in western music. It is well-known that, for instance, in the later operas of Wagner, most of the characters and significant objects are allotted their own distinctive melodic outline, and, very frequently, when these characters or objects appear together on stage then the appropriate motifs are interwoven harmonically and rhythmically, often with extraordinary complexity and ingenuity. However, by his use of this simple descending three-note phrase in relation to so many plot motifs, in the first half of the first tableau, Rimsky-Korsakov has already clearly declared that his opera is not to be judged by the conventions of western music-drama, but by its own standards deriving from Russian oral sources. Through his constant use of this simple epic nucleus, he is also demonstrating that he is a 'bard behind the original bard of the tale'. and that he is using the musical and textual methods of the epic folk narrator, to recreate the story of the original narrative afresh yet again.

(7)

THE LANGUAGE OF SADKO'S DECLAMATION

The word *Kaby* ('If') in the first line is archaic, and the noun-epithet combination *zolota kazna* ('store of gold', 'wealth'), is a commonplace throughout the epics. The phrase is an exact

doublet of the Anglo-Saxon 'gold-heord', and Sadko tells us that, had he such a 'hoard of gold' he would rig out thirty and one 'ship-boats' (*busy-korabli*).¹ He then, for the first time makes clear to the audience the major theme of the opera - that God has not given the city a river. Therefore he, like the merchants, would have to sail from Lake Il'men', some distance from the city, and drag his ships overland to the nearest river.²

The vocal line '*Kaby byla u menia zolota kazna*' ('If that I did but have a hoard of gold') consists of 12 syllables, divided as 11 crotchets and a concluding minim on the last syllable. However, the declamatory rhythm of this, and other such subsequent phrases of Sadko's characteristic recitative-like phrasing, is divided into 3/2 bars, to allow for ease of conducting, and to permit instrumental accompaniment, which follows more conventional rhythmical phrasing.

Richard Taruskin claims that Rimsky-Korsakov based Sadko's characteristic 'leit-rhythm' on a chant to the *bylina* of Sadko taken down, either by Rybnikov, or by a colleague, in October 1862, from Leontii Bogdanov, the first *skazitel'* whom the collector had heard when he discovered that the *stariny* still existed as a living genre.³ There are no musical transcriptions

¹ As already noted, thirty one' is a stock epic number, and is, moreover the number of ships specified in several of the variants of *Sadko*, such as Danilov no 47, *Sadkov korabl' stal na more*, (pp. 178-182), p. 178. Furthermore, we read in Danilov's variant of that other Novgorod theme, the adventures of Vasilii Buslaev, that Vasilii's *druzhina* ('retinue' or perhaps here 'gang' - see below), also consists of 30, with Vasilii himself making the total thirty one (Danilov, 1977, no 10. '*Pro Vasil'ia Buslaeva*, (pp. 48-54)) p. 49-50. The phrase *busy-korabli* is also stock epic. The word *busy* is generally understood by commentators to derive from the archaic term *busa* - a large ship; therefore the combinations *busy-korabli* may simply be epic formulaic repetition meaning something like 'ship-boats', or 'vessel-boats' - a doublet similar to those discussed in Section Two. ('Busa', D'iachenko G., *Polnyi Tserkovno-slavianskii slovar'* (1898) (edn. Moscow: 'Izdatel'skii Otdel Moskovskogo Patriarkhata', 1993), p. 62. 'One' here is *edin* in Rimsky-Korsakov's libretto, and this is an archaic and folk Russian form also to be found throughout the epics.

² Rimsky-Korsakov emphasises this point in the Prefatory Material to his opera (*Vmesto Predisloviia*), Item 6, in which he observes that, in his opera, Sadko could only gain access to the outside world by sailing across Lake Il'men', then dragging his *busy-korabli* ('ship-boats') by means of hawsers to one of the rivers which discharge into the Black Sea.

³ Taruskin, Richard, 'Sadko' *New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed Stanley Sadie, vol 4 (London: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 120-122 (p. 122). On the same page Dr Taruskin also makes the claim that Bogdanov's declamation is a 'lection tone'. If this term is to be understood in its precise significance as an established rhythm for chanting psalms and canticles in church services, we have found no evidence for this statement. Bogdanov's chant

in Rybnikov's collection, and this *bylina* chant appears to have been taken down later at the request of the famous philologist and ethnographer I. I. Sreznevskii (1812-1880), since it is to be found in a letter to him from Rybnikov.¹ It is difficult to know whether Taruskin is speculating here. The transcriptions from Bogdanov have no indication of rhythm or key-signature (App. III Ex. 10a - *Sadko* is the first item), and V. V. Korguzalov has made three attempts at reconstructing the original rhythm and beat-syllabification, between 1959 and 1981, all of which are rather different from each other (see App III Ex 10b-d). There is indeed a resemblance to the rhythm of the operatic *Sadko*'s characteristic declamation at this point, but, since, as we recall, Rybnikov considered there were three underlying *bylina* melodies at most, it is difficult to determine whether this similarity is due to their being variants of one basic structure, rather than the latter being a deliberate imitation of the former. The composer may well have picked up similar rhythms from singers such as Fedosova whom he had heard declaim, and from the Riabinins, whom he may either have heard personally, or else seen transcriptions of their performances from Musorgsky. It may be noted in passing here that the second item down in the transcription from Bogdanov, from the *bylina* of Khoten Bludovich, also seems to bear a resemblance to the rhythm of *Sadko*'s declaration.

A further difficulty is that, according to Kolesnitskaia, writing in 1954, the short correspondence between Sreznevskii and Rybnikov had only just been discovered in the Sreznevskii Archive in Moscow, and had been hitherto unknown.² Rimsky-Korsakov would have been just 19 when the relevant letter was written in 1863, and there is no evidence in any of the sources that he ever met Sreznevskii, so how would he have known about this transcription? If Taruskin is

appears to us to be a typical epic declamatory line, and Dr Taruskin may simply be using the term 'lection tone' imprecisely to mean any established traditional chant.

¹ Kolesnitskaia, I. M., 'Pis'ma P. N. Rybnikova k I. I. Sreznevskomy' *Russkii fol'klor - materialy i issledovaniia* (Moscow & Leningrad: ANSSSR, 1954), IV, ed. A. M. Astakhova, pp. 281-304. The transcriptions from Bogdanov are to be found on p. 302, and an attempt to reconstruct the underlying rhythm, by V. V. Korguzalov, on p. 304. Apparently Bogdanov was asked merely to sing the *napev*, and the words were added later, from Rybnikov I, no. 54, 'Sadko', pp. 332-335. These had been taken from Bogdanov, with no melody, two years previously, in 1860.

² Kolesnitskaia, 'Pis'ma P. N. Rybnikova', *Russkii Fol'klor* (1954), p. 281-2.

correct as to the provenance of Sadko's leit-rhythm, we can now only speculate that Sreznevskii, as Professor of Slavonic Philology at St Petersburg University, would almost certainly have known Kostomarov, Professor of Russian History at the same institution, and would, along with the latter, have been invited to Stasov's cultural gatherings. He would almost certainly have met there the group of young composers trying to create works in the folk idiom, and, on finding in 1867 that Rimsky-Korsakov was intending to write a tone-poem on the theme of *Sadko*, could have shown him Rybnikov's letter containing Bogdanov's chant to this tune. However, even if this were so, Rimsky-Korsakov did not use this declamatory motif in his 1867 composition, because, as we have noted, it is entirely confined to the 'fantastic' episodes of the story, and creates atmosphere by the use of exotic 'art' music tone-rows, such as the whole-tone and the octatonic.

Since, firstly, Sadko's leit-rhythm in the opera bears resemblances to other *bylina* lines besides those of *Sadko*; secondly, the transcription from Bogdanov may be rhythmically interpreted in different ways; and, finally, there appears to be no direct evidence that Rimsky-Korsakov knew of Rybnikov's letter to Sreznevskii, we would like to say either that Taruskin's claims, although interesting, must be said, on present evidence, to be purely surmise, or else that possibly he has had access to sources of information unknown to us.

To return to Sadko's declamation: it will be noticed both here and in the 11/4 chorus that there is an overwhelming preponderance, in these declamations taken from folk sources, of one crotchet beat to one syllable; minims are rare in the musical sources and are employed mainly to commence and - as here, in Sadko's opening declamation - to conclude a vocal phrase. For a single crotchet beat/syllable to be split into quavers is rare, and smaller sub-divisions of a beat are almost never to be found in the vocal line. This kind of primitive declamatory '*sprechgesang*', in the long-breathed and fluctuating metres of 3/2, 6/4, and 11/4, which have predominated so far in the opera-*bylina*, derive, as we have seen, from the vocal lines of the

Russian *skaziteli*.

We have noted in Section Six that the composer deepened the psychological background of the rather characterless cypher of the original sources. It is at this point for the first time that the composer begins to demonstrate that his hero is a visionary and poet. Sadko proclaims his dreams of travelling abroad and seeing *chudes nevidannykh* ('wonders ere now ne'er seen'), and accumulating vast wealth, precious stones, and expensive cloth - all in terms drawn from the epics. This aspect of Sadko's nature is nowhere made explicit in the *byliny*: the juxtaposition of a poetic nature which wishes to expand its horizons, with the hidebound and restricted mentality of the merchants of Novgorod, is an invention of the composer and his associates, who presumably decided to elaborate the motif which is tacit in the sources, of the folk musician who is a hero through his art (and subsequently, his wealth), and who uses this artistic prowess to expand the consciousness of the common people, and possibly to raise their material level too. Furthermore, he is making clear here his conviction that the artist is the intermediary between humanity and nature: by displaying these depths of Sadko's psyche, the composer is preparing us for the folk musician's subsequent contacts with the supernatural beings personifying the seas, lakes and rivers of the world, and for his role in creating a new river for Novgorod by means of his artistic prowess.

Finally, Sadko states in this opening declamation, that he would build 'divine churches' (*tserkvi bozhii* – a stock combination), and would decorate them: *la by povyzolotil kresty, makovitsy, chistym zolotom*, ('The crosses and domes would I gild with pure gold'). He continues that he would adorn the icons with precious stones: it will be recalled that, in several versions of the sources, Sadko is described as fulfilling precisely this role in regard to churches and cathedrals.¹ Moreover the historical figure Sadko Sytinets was mentioned in the chronicles as

¹ Eg Danilov, (1977), no. 28, *Sadko bogatoi gost'*, p. 146.

having endowed a church. Although the construction of the church is never depicted in the opera-*bylina*, this mention of Sadko's intentions once again links the opera with the written and oral sources.

Here too, Sadko makes for the first time reference to his *druzhina khorobraia* - his 'bold retinue' or 'guard'. The term originally historically implied a Prince's or aristocrat's guard, and it is used regularly throughout the epics to denote a *bogatyř*'s guard, or his fighting force. For instance, we are told that Volkh Vseslavich (about whose birth Nezhata has just sung) invades India with his *druzhina*.¹

Sadko is in fact described as having a *druzhina khorobraia* in the most complete version of the tale (Rybnikov II, no 134 (p. 248)). Sadko, then, is once again linked, both in the peasant narrators' minds, and in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, with the martial epic heroes of the Kiev cycle. However, because Sadko, as a rich merchant, does not need such a force, it is perhaps better to render the term here as his 'retinue'. Reference is made, too, while Sadko is aboard ship in the sources to his *korabel'shchiki*, or 'shipmen', but it is never quite certain whether these are identical with the 'retinue'. In Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, Sadko orders them to rig out his fleet, so it seems as if they are hired subordinates. There is an enigma here in the sources which the composer preserves: how does a poor musician come to have a retinue? Possibly a more suitable translation here would be 'gang', or even 'crew' in both senses, so that Sadko's disreputable 'crew' later become his crew on board ship. The other Novgorod cycle also mentions Vasilii Buslaev's *druzhina*, and they are the collection of his companions who engage in drunken brawls on the bridges over the Volkhov, and so certainly the term 'gang' seems more suitable here.²

¹ Danilov, (1977). no. 3, pp. 32-3.

² Danilov, (1977), (*Pro*) Vasil'ia Buslaeva, no. 10, pp. 48-54, *passim*. Incidentally, we may once again note here, both in the sources and in the opera, the archaic placing of the noun before the adjective, and the now obsolete form *khorobraia* (Modern Russian *khrobraia* - 'bold').

To a reprise of the 11/4 chorus, the merchants jeer at Sadko: in this chorus they refer to Sadko as 'Sad-Sadko', and this usage occurs several times in the work. Although this piece of apparent childishness is not to be found in any of the written sources, such names as Dobrynia or Il'ia could be spread out over melismata of several notes per syllable in order to fit the rhythm. We have no means of knowing whether the composer broke the name Sadko in this fashion in imitation of such melismata, or whether one of the folk singers who had visited Moscow and Petersburg in 1895 and whom he may have heard, introduced this rhythmic variant of the name into their declamations.

Sadko contemptuously tells the merchants they can't continue to live in the past - a detail nowhere to be found in the sources. The second elder, still in 11/4, adds the detail, also nowhere made explicit in the sources, that Sadko has been wandering round other *bratchiny* ('fraternities') for three days already, and has been declaring his dreams there too, and in addition has been stirring up the *goli kabatskie* - the 'beggarly pub riffraff' - in the public areas of the city. Firstly, the reference in the opera to his wandering round other feasts for 'three days' may be an oblique hint at Sadko's 'not being invited to sing at a feast' for nine days in succession.¹ The Russian in the last-cited source, which was used extensively by the composer, is ambiguous: it is not clear whether Sadko has not been invited to sing at *any* feast for this period, or the same one nine days running. That Sadko has been standing in public places declaring his dreams is nowhere attested to in the original epics. The term 'beggarly pub riffraff' is found constantly throughout the sources, and in some variants of the Novgorod epics about Vasili Buslaev, Vasili is depicted as selecting his *druzhina* from these people. In Tableau Four (see below) Sadko, having humiliated the rich merchants and the elders, and having become wealthy, calls forth his retinue from the crowd to become his crew, and they too

¹ Eg Rybnikov, II, no. 134, pp. 243-254 (pp. 243-244). 'Nine' is, of course, three times three, and in this variant Sadko is not invited to sing for three days, three times running; at the end of each three days he repairs to Lake Il'men' and sings and plays his instrument disconsolately to the waters; on his doing so for the third time, the Sea Tsar appears and promises to reward him for his singing.

are explicitly said to be drawn from this social group, a detail nowhere made clear in the *byliny*. Stasov, when drawing up a plan for the opera originally, had suggested displaying the heated social conflicts and quarrels of early Novgorod.¹ Rimsky-Korsakov rejected this suggestion as a major plot element, but, by introducing this detail of Sadko's wandering round other public places and *bratchiny*, and behaving in an inflammatory manner, the composer does seem to be trying obliquely to represent the heated social atmosphere of the time. As a further manifestation of this attempt, in the reprise of the 11/4 chorus, the chorus is divided, with most of the merchants jeering at Sadko, but with some exclaiming '*Kol' prav Sadko*' ('What if Sadko's right?') implying that even within the wealthy and solidly conservative trading fraternities there are disagreements.

(8)

SADKO EXITS: THE SKOMOROKHI ARE SUMMONED TO PERFORM

Sadko declares in disgust that he will leave, and play his *gusli* to Lake Il'men' and the *rechki svetlye* (radiant streams and rivers), thus pointing forward to his ultimate marriage with the Sea Princess, the River Volkhov(a). He storms out with his *gusli*.

The feast continues and the elders summon the *skomorokhi* to come from their position 'on and by the stove' to entertain them. The stage direction (App II no 3). informs us that 'Duda, Sopel' and other spirited *skomorokhi* (*skomoroshiny udalye* - a stock combination) run out and dance, while others play the *gudok* (a primitive three-stringed instrument played with a bow), *sopel'* ('fife'), *duda* ('reed-pipe') and *bubny* ('tambourine'). The stage direction further states that, while Duda and Sopel' sing a humorous song, the other *skomorokhi* imitate the actions of the song in dumb show. This direction too is written in archaic syntax, with terminology deriving from the *byliny*. Incidentally, the verb 'to dance' employed here is *pliasat'*, and this verb is used

¹ Stasov, V. V., letter to Rimsky-Korsakov, 7th July, 1894, quoted in Iankovskii, M. O., 'Stasov i Rimsky-Korsakov', (in) *Muzykal'noe Nasledstvo*, ed. D. Kabalevskii, I, pp. 337-403 (p. 378).

throughout the opera for 'dancing', including that of the Sea Tsar and his creatures in Tableau Six. This verb implies dancing in Russian fashion, whereas the verb *tanzovat'* (drawn originally from German through Polish) rather suggested dancing in a western style, including ballet.

(9)

CONCLUSION OF TABLEAU ONE: *SKOMOROKH* SONGS AND DANCES; GENERAL DRUNKEN REVELRY

The *skomorokhs'* humorous song is a very close textual and musical adaptation of an item from the collection of Danilov, which commences:

А жил-был дурень,
А жил-был бабин,
Вздумал он, дурень,
На Русь гуляти,
Людей видати ...¹.

The first few lines of the operatic adaptation closely imitate those of Danilov. However, subsequent verses sung by the scoffing *skomorokhi* are adapted to describe him as playing his *gusli*, and wandering from feast to feast declaiming his dream of attaining wealth, even though he is penniless. Obviously this all refers to Sadko.

In order to convey the primitive composition and timbre of the *skomorokh* ensemble, the

¹ 'Once upon a time there dwelt a fool,
Yea, once there lived a numskull,
Who took it into his head, that fool,
To roam o'er Rus'
To see the folk.'

(Danilov, (1977), *Pro dumia* ('About a Fool'), no 59, pp. 202-208 (p. 202). Similar songs are very common in books of Russian folk materia, eg Shein, P. V., no. 1009, 'Pro khmel'ia', *Velikorus' v svoikh obriadakh, obychaiakh, verovaniakh, skazkakh, legendakh, i. t. p.* Tom I (no more printed), (Saint Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Akademiia Nauk, 1898) p. 295.

composer uses woodwind, with special emphasis on piccolos and oboes to represent the reed-pipes of the folk entertainers, and he also employs here in a *faux-naïf* fashion, a large battery of triangles, tambourines, cymbals, timpani, and bass drums. There is almost no contrapuntal movement in the strings, which mainly play unsophisticated sustained fifths and octaves.¹ The entire Tableau ends in a general drunken dance as the merchants arise from behind their tables and join in the *skomorokhs'* revelries.

SUMMARY

Therefore, in the orchestral introduction, and in this first tableau of his opera, the composer, by means of references to all types of *byliny*, by the introduction of declamatory *bylina* musical phrases, by his extracts from a *bylina* and a *skomorokh* song from Danilov, by his stage directions written in epic language, and by the other devices and references outlined above, has created the world-view of the epic narrator whose vast storehouse of musical and literary devices he is trying to imitate and adapt in his opera-*bylina*.

He has also drawn attention to Sadko's poetical skill, and has prepared the way for his own original plot motif of Sadko's influence on nature through his art, and his consequent provision of a river for Novgorod at the conclusion of the story.

¹ For Danilov's version of this song see App. III, Ex 1h, and for Rimsky-Korsakov's, App. III, Ex 11.

TABLEAU TWO

(1)

ON THE SHORES OF LAKE IL'MEN'

SADKO'S FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE MAGICAL WORLD

The scene is prefaced by a stage direction which immediately draws us into the world of the epics and of folk belief. However, unless the direction is seen, and its derivation from the *byliny* recognised, numerous references, both textual and visual, will remain unrecognised and apparently unmotivated. We are informed, *inter alia* : *Il'men'-ozero. Na beregu bel-goriuch kamen'* ('Lake Il'men': On the shore is a white-burning stone'). Sadko enters with his *gusli* and sits on this stone, or rather, large boulder.¹ The reference here seems to derive specifically from Rybnikov's description of Sadko being turned away from 'a feast' nine times; on each of these occasions he retires to lake Il'men', sits on such a stone, and begins to play his *gusli*.²

What is this 'white-burning stone'? It is mentioned in a considerable number of the Russian epics, and the reference is never fully explained. This stone is often found in Russian folk lore with such names as *latyr'-kamen*, *alaty'-kamen*, etc, and scholars have deduced that the phrase may well signify a gigantic piece of amber. The idea derives from pagan times, when this substance was worshipped as magical, bringing benefits to mankind, and when possibly altars were created from it for the celebration of pagan rites.³ The stone occurs too in variants of the *Golubinaia kniga*,⁴ and in several of these we are told that it was over this gigantic stone that Christ gave his teachings to his disciples and others. Afanas'ev speculates that the stone is a symbol of the sun. According to this author too, in his volume on the Slavs' poetical views

¹ For full text of this stage direction see App. II, no. 4.

² Rybnikov, II, no. 134, pp. 234-5.

³ See the entry *Alaty'-kamen'* in D'iachenko (p. 869) for a full discussion.

⁴ See eg Bezsonov, *Kaleki perekhozhie*, II, nos. 81, pp. 293-299, *inter alia*. The wandering pilgrims in Tableau Four mention this stone in their chants, and we shall discuss this motif in more detail there.

of nature, from which Rimsky-Korsakov derived so many of his ideas throughout his career, the 'white burning *alatyr' kamen'* ' is closely bound up with the idea of the Russian mystical Island of Buian, which lies in the midst of the 'Ocean-Sea', or else even appears to be that island. It possesses, in some variants of the *Golubinaia kniga*, miraculous powers of healing, and of warding off one's enemies.¹ We shall return to this theme in our analysis of Tableau Four, since several details of the warlocks' offer there to create spells seem to derive from this section in Afanas'ev.²

Sadko now strikes up a '*protiazhnaia pesnia*', or 'slow, long-drawn-out song' or 'elegy', the first line of which is *Ol tyi, tēmnaia dubravushka* ('Oh thou, beautiful dark oak-grove'). This is one of the commonest types of Russian lyrical song. The *protiazhnye pesni* are generally concerned with sad reflections, or lyrical thoughts upon nature. The 'conventional' musical marking here is *adagio*, and the metronome marking for this song is a measured 56 beats per minute..

(2) THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE SEA PRINCESS

As he sings this song, Sadko strums on his *gusli* – a sound represented in the orchestra by the traditional piano and harp chords. The surface of the lake stirs, and, in a lengthy episode accompanied in the orchestra by exotic harmonies and tone-rows not derived from Russian folk music, white swans and grey ducks appear on the water, which land on the shore and turn into maidens. The leader of these is the Princess (Tsarevna) Volkhova, and we learn as she sings that the maidens are all daughters of the Sea Tsar'.

'White swans and grey ducks' is a stock formula of the *byliny*. Normally *bogatyni* are portrayed as hunting for these birds.³ They are not mentioned, however, in any of the variants of *Sadko*.

¹ Eg, in Bezsonov, *op cit*, I, no 87, p. 367, we are informed that swift rivers flow from beneath this stone all over the earth and throughout the universe to bring healing and nourishment to the world.

² Afanas'ev, *Poeticheskiia vozzreniia*, II, 142-149.

³ There are also references to them in other types of song: eg. Danilov (1977), *Sorok kalik so kalikoju* ("The Forty and One Pilgrims a-Wandering"), no. 24, pp. 121-129. Prince Vladimir is described (p. 121) as hunting these

Rimsky-Korsakov adopted the motif of the rivers and streams of the world being the offspring of the Water Tsar from Afanas'ev.¹ However, the idea of linking them with the swans and grey ducks of the epics seems to be his alone. Sadko exclaims '*Chudo chudnoe, divo divnoe*' ('Wonder of wonders, marvel of marvels') as the birds change into maidens. This exclamation occurs in every genre of Russian folk-lore, and at regular intervals throughout this opera.

Almost the whole of the remainder of the music of this Tableau is constructed, not so much around folk material, as around more conventional key- and time signatures, and exotic 'art music' tone-rows such as the octatonic, which the composer customarily employed in his 'fantasy' scenes. As we have noted above, a further use of these scales in the opera-bylina may be strongly to differentiate the two strands of the Sadko tale, since non-traditional and non-conventional tone-rows predominate in Tableaux Five-Seven - those concerned with Sadko's adventures at sea - whereas the folk element predominates in One-Four, which are based in the historical world of ancient Novgorod. There is a brief use of unusual tone-rows in Tableau Four, where the voice of the Sea Princess is heard renewing her pledge to make Sadko wealthy, but the only other use of these in the operatic narrative of the first Sadko story is here in Tableau Two. Therefore we shall not analyse it in detail. The only other major folk-song borrowing here is Sadko's *Khorovodnaia pesnia* ('Round-dance Song'). The folk musician strums his *gusli*, and sings, to the accompaniment of piano arpeggios and harp glissandi, while the Sea-Tsar's daughters perform a Russian round-dance (*khoro vod*) in a sprightly 2/4 rhythm. The nonsense refrain to each verse: '*Lëli lëli lëli*' or some such variant is of very frequent occurrence in Russian folk song.² Towards the end of the Tableau, the Sea Princess promises to enrich Sadko, and to marry him '*vokrug rakitova kusta*' ('around the broom bush'). This ceremony takes place in Tableau Six, and the sources of this phrase in Russian folk art,

birds with his retinue outside Kiev.

¹ Afanas'ev, *Poeticheskiia vozzreniia*, vol II, 221-220.

² For *lëli*, *lëli*, *liuli*, and other such formulations, see eg Shein (1898), nos. 1246-7 and 1251-3.

including the *byliny*, will be examined there.

At the Sea Tsar's behest, the maidens turn back into swans and ducks, and swim off. Their voices are heard from behind the scenes singing of their father's 'palace' (*terem*) which is to be found in a '*lukomor'a zel'naia*' ('green curved sea-shore'), a phrase which would immediately recall the opening line of Pushkin's epic poem of 1820, based on folk sources, '*Ruslan and Liudmila*': *U lukomor'ia dub zel'nyi* ('By the curved sea-shore there stands a green oak'). It would also have recalled Glinka's opera of 1842 based on Pushkin's poem. As we have noted Rimsky-Korsakov was specifically attempting to place his opera-*bylina* in the tradition of such Russian 'operatic epic', and this appears to be another deliberate echo of Glinka's work. However, it is possibly a reference also to the song about Solovei Budimirovich to be found in Danilov, used extensively by the composer:

Тридцать кораблей и один корабль

Из-за моря, моря синева,

Из глухоморя зеленова,

Из славного города Леденца¹

Incidentally, the detail seems to be anomalous in the opera, since although one variant source does uniquely describe the Sea Tsar as living, not in a palace on the sea-bed, but in an *izba*, or Russian peasant's log-cabin, on a sea-shore,² this shore is not a *lukomore* and in the opera-*bylina* too, following all the other *bylina* sources, the palace is depicted as being situated on the bed of the sea in the depths of the ocean. However, in Tableau Seven, the *skomorokhi* sing

¹ Thirty shippen and yet one ship,
From beyond that sea, that deep-blue sea,
From out that curven sea-shore green,
From that glorious town of Ledenets [[[ie Venice]]].
(Danilov (1977), no. 1, pp. 9-15 (15). *Glukhomoria* is a non-standard form of *lukomoria*.)

² Danilov (1977), no. 47, *Sadkov korabl' stal na more* (Sadko's ship stood still [[[ie was becalmed]]] upon the sea'), p. 180.

another anomalous detail regarding the Sea Tsar, to be found in one variant only. The composer seems therefore to have been attempting not simply to base himself on the most complete and comprehensible versions, but to be striving to incorporate details from a whole range of variants. By so doing, he may well have been trying to imitate once again his original sources which, as we have noted above, were often incomprehensible, necessitating a study of all variants of any one *bylina* subject to try to piece together the original narrative.

As the curtain falls, the sun rises, to a massive unison C major chord. The stage direction reads' *Krasno solnyshko vskhodit'* (The beauteous bright Sun ariseth'), a stock formula, in folk language, to be found in all branches of Russian oral art, including the *byliny*.

(3)

SUMMARY

In this tableau, then, the references to the background of the tale in folk-lore introduced in the first tableau have been reinforced by the introduction of elegiac (*protiazhnye*) songs and round-dance (*khoro vod*) songs, and the references to motifs such as the 'white-burning stone' and the broom bush.

Furthermore, the major motif of elemental beings becoming enchanted by the human artist's musical skill, leading to his marriage with one of them, and the bringing forth thereby of a natural feature, a major river for Novgorod, has now been introduced.

TABLEAU THREE

(1)

SADKO'S WIFE LAMENTS HIS ABSENCE: ANOTHER FOLK FORM, THE 'LAMENT' IS INTRODUCED

Once again the tableau is prefaced by a stage direction written in archaic language, with formulae derived from the epics.^{App. II no 6} Here too, as in Tableau One, we are faced with terms for rooms, halls, and dwellings, which seem to be confused in meaning. 'The interior of the main room/hall (*svetlitsa*) in Sadko's house/mansion (*terem*). Early morning. [Sadko's] young wife, Liubava Buslaevna, alone, by the carved windowlet (*okontso*).' As used in the epics, *terem* may mean either a room at the top of a rich man's house, specially designated for the womenfolk, or the mansion itself, or even a royal palace (the Sea Tsar's palace in Tableau Six is termed the *lazorevyi terem* 'the azure palace'). It can also mean a tower in the grounds of such a large aristocratic building. Sadko's status, both in the opera, and in the sources, seems to be confused: he is described in the epics as being a poor folk-musician, yet he apparently possesses a *druzhina* or 'retinue'. In the opera, not only does he possess a *druzhina*, but a *terem* too. Possibly *terem* in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera is simply vaguely meant to signify a 'dwelling'. The precise definition of *svetlitsa* too is unclear. It can either mean the main room in a mansion, or a hall in such a building. Presumably the 19th-century epic singer from isolated villages in the far north of the Russian Empire, would have had no clear conception of the original meaning of any of these words, and possibly the composer is intentionally imitating this vagueness of terminology.

The formula *koshchato okontso* (carved window-(frame)) is a stock formula from the *byliny*. Windows had at one time been purely outlets for smoke; they were either holes in the wall, or narrow strips of mica, or later, glass, held together by a network of iron with rudimentary frames which could be opened when necessary. However, over time, the windows acquired ornately

carved and decorated frames. Although this tradition must have commenced in aristocratic dwellings, the peasant singer of the Russian north, with its tradition of *dereviannoe zodchestvo*, or wood-carving, took great delight in transmitting some of the fantastic details of such windows which the tradition had handed down to them.¹

Later in this tableau a stage direction states that Liubava 'gazeth through the wind-eye' (*smotrit v okoshko*). *Okoshko* is a diminutive for 'window' (*okno*) found widely in folk poetry. Although many in the audience might not be aware of the derivation of such details of the stage-set as carved window frames in folk poetry, set designers would presumably have been inspired by such instructions as this, and those already dealt with in Tableau One, to carry out research into the furnishing and architecture of ancient Rus' so that they could produce authentic backdrops conforming to the composer's very precisely described vision.

Incidentally, Smolitskii notes that the place by the window was traditional for maidens in folk songs, in which they are normally portrayed sunk in sad thought gazing from it.²

As regards her given name and patronymic: the name Liubava is archaic. It means 'beloved', and is yet another cross-reference to the epic of *Solovei Budimirovich*, for the Princess whom Solovei has come to woo is, in some variants, named Liubava. As we have noted, Liubava's unusual patronymic indicates that she is the sister of the hero of the other cycle of Novgorod epics - those concerning Vasilii Buslaev, who is also called Vasilii Buslaevich, Buslai, or other similar variants, and who is frequently described as being the son of a father who passes away

¹ Eg see the descriptions of the windows in the *terem* of Marinka the Sorceress (*Dobrynia i Marinka*, Rybnikov, II, no 143, pp. 315-317), with their crossbeams of silver, and carvings of male and female doves. For illustrations of over 30 different types of early Russian window, see Opolovnikov, A. V., *Russkoe dereviannoe zodchestvo*, (Moscow: 'Iskra', 1983, plate 100 (p. 98); see also plate 114, p. 108). For information on these windows, see pp. 101-103. See also Shambinago, S. K., 'Drevnerusskoe zhiishche po bylinam', (in) *Iubileinyi Sbornik v chest' Vsevoloda Millera*, ed. Ianchuk, N. A., (Moscow: 1900), pp. 129-149 (pp. 139-140).

² Smolitskii, *Rus' izbianaia*, p. 83.

in deep old age, (eg see Danilov, (1977) no 10, p. 48) where he is said to have lived to 90).¹

This deft linking of the epic stories of *Solovei*, *Vasilii*, and *Sadko*, is entirely an idea of the composer and his associates, and is nowhere attested to in any of the *bylina* sources. However, it is in fact extremely feasible that such a marriage had taken place in 11th century Novgorod. We have mentioned earlier (p. 115) that, according to the chronicles, a certain extremely wealthy merchant, Sadko Sytinets, lived in Novgorod around 1167. However, we have never seen a link made in this connection to the fact that for the year of 1171 a certain Vaska Buslaev was *Posadnik* of Novgorod. Apart from this bare fact, there is no other information about him, and scholars have disputed whether the epics detail episodes from the life of this character, or whether the *Posadnik* was a different person altogether. However, it is certainly possible that, in the upper mercantile and administrative classes of Novgorod, the sister of a major dignitary should marry an extremely wealthy merchant. Possibly the composer had noted in his studies of the history of Novgorod preparatory to writing his opera, the chronological closeness of the two characters who were possible prototypes of the *bylina* characters, and decided to link them.²

To return to Sadko's wife: she is, in fact, mentioned only twice in the collections of epics, and nowhere by name. The idea of including this figure occurred to the composer after he had finished the other Tableaux - it was not part of the original plan.³ However, he used the words of this Tableau to clarify some points in the story-line. We recall that, in Tableau One, Nezhata, the *gusli*-player from Kiev, is described in words closely imitating a passage from the *Song of Igor's Campaign*, thus linking him/her with Boian. Liubava for the first time now makes it

¹ For 'Liubava' see eg Rybnikov, II, *Solovei Budimirovich*, no. 123, pp. 121-128, *passim*, and *loc cit*, *Solovei Budimirovich*, no. 132, pp. 223-232. This latter variant was sung by the same singer, Andrei Sorokin, of whose version of *Sadko* (II, no. 134), the composer made very extensive use.

² Eg: Mirzoev, V. G., *'Byliny i letopis': Pamiatniki russkoi istoricheskoi mysli* (Moscow: 'Mysl', 1978). On Sadko, see pp. 65-67 and *passim*, and on Vasilii Buslaev, 60-61, and *passim*.

³ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, p. 200.

explicit that Sadko, the Novgorod folk musician, has an analogous imagination, placing him too in the line of ancient Russian visionary bards. However, Sadko (Liubava sings), wishes not simply to narrate such deeds, in the manner of Nezhata, but wishes himself to become a *bogatyř*: such as are described in Nezhata's songs. This is the first hint of the direction the story-line will take, when Sadko becomes an epic hero of Novgorod, first of all at the climax of Tableau Four, by means of his wealth, and then again at the end of Tableau Seven, by dint of his artistic genius.

She sings in this regard: *'Nesětsia mysliu on, chto belyi krechet v chuzhi kraia, na sinie moria. O podvigakh bol'shikh, o slave bogatyrskoi vsě думаet on dumu* ('He bears himself off in thought he, like a white gyrfalcon (flyeth) to distant lands, to deep-blue seas About great exploits, about a bogatyrean glory, thinketh he always a thought'). The phrases *belyi krechet* ('white gyrfalcon') and *думаet dumu* ('think a thought') are also stock folk oral phrases; *belyi krechet* is to be found, for example, in the second variant of the Sadko theme to be found in Danilov (1977) (no. 47, *Sadkov korabl' stal na more*, p. 186).

Sadko enters, his head still full of his experiences by the lake. He ignores his despairing wife. She wails, in a phrase to be found in Russian funeral laments *'Zakopai menia vo syru zemliu'* ('Bury me in the damp earth') and such mentions of the 'damp earth' are to be found throughout Russian folk poetry, including the epics. In fact, more commonly, the phrase is to be found in the form *Mat' syra zemlia* ('Damp Mother Earth'), which Liubava employs in her despairing cries at the conclusion of Tableau Four, as Sadko prepares to sail away and leave her. These laments will be examined in more detail in our discussion of that Tableau, including the phrase 'Damp Mother Earth', which some commentators have stated is a reference to the Mother Goddess of the Old Slavonic pantheon.

Just before this point, Liubava uses another set motif from the epics: she asks Sadko why he is

returning from the feast grieving? Did the goblet not come to him in his turn, was his place not his usual one according to his rank, or did any drunkard jeer at him? Sadko responds that indeed the goblet was not offered to him, there was no place for him, and that drunken merchants jeered at him. This derives from such *byliny* as (eg) *Ivan Godinovich*, where the *bogatyř* Ivan, having boasted egregiously at a royal feast, is given a dangerous mission by Prince Vladimir. He returns downcast to his home, and either his wife or mother then asks him whether the goblet passed him by, and so forth.¹ However, in contradistinction to Sadko, who has simply been describing accurately what happened at the *bratchina*, the *bogatyř* will then reply that the goblet *did* come to him, he *was* sat in his rightful place, and so on, but that he is sad because he has been entrusted with a dangerous mission.

Sadko, his head still full of his experiences by Lake Il'men', rushes forward to Vozdvizhensk Place [see Sub-section B for explanation], where he will 'wager a great wager (*velikii zaklad*)... and stake his stormy (*buinaia*) head' ... This is the normal formula for wagers in *the byliny*, where wagers are always 'great' and heads are always 'stormy' (ie tempestuous, turbulent in mood). He declares '*Znaiu ia, vedaiu ia ..* ('I know, I wot [viz., that there are fish with golden fins in Lake Il'men']' ...). This use of two near synonyms is an example of the typical epic filling out of a phrase.

Finally, as he storms out, Sadko's role as a *bogatyř*, with great skill on the *gusli*, is recalled to us again by his singing a couplet in reproach to Liubava, taken directly from the epic narrating the episode of Dobrynia, the cultured *gusli*-playing Kievan *bogatyř*, at the 'marriage' of his wife, after he has been absent for twelve years. Upbraiding his wife, Dobrynia uses words which are echoed *verbatim* by Sadko in *his* strictures against *his* wife (words which could not be included in any modern opera libretto!): '*Ne divlius' ia razumu zhenskomu - Volos dolog u nikh, da um*

¹ See eg *Ivan Godinovich*, Rybnikov, II, no. 145, pp. 326-332.

korotok!' ('I don't wonder at women's wits – their hair may be long, but their mind [ie intelligence] is short!').¹

(2)

SUMMARY

Thus in this tableau, which was composed as an afterthought, Rimsky-Korsakov has, firstly, through the figure of Sadko's wife, once again brought in reminders of other Novgorod *bylina* narratives such as those concerning Solovei Budimirovich and Vasilii Buslaev. He has furthermore emphasised throughout the theme that Sadko, although not yet recognised in epic story, by his artistic skill is on a par with the *bylina* hero Dobrynia Nikitich, and the bard of written epic, Boian. He has also stressed yet further the musician's poetic nature and desire to be an epic hero in his own right.

We have noted in Tableau One that the visiting *gusliar* from Kiev, Nezhata, is equated too with Boian, and also that his/her name may be an oblique reference to Dobrynia. In the tableau just concluded, the composer seems to be implying that Sadko, the Novgorodian artist, since he too is on a par with Dobrynia and Boian, is at least equal in skill with the representative of Kievan art, Nezhata, and that it is now historically and culturally time for the powerful city-state of Novgorod to acquire its own epic heroes.

There is no evidence that these clarifications of some of the underlying motifs of the opera were a factor in the composer's deciding to insert such a scene at a very late stage. However, the text of this short tableau is extremely important in deepening our understanding of Sadko's psychology, and foreshadowing the two denouements of Tableaux Four and Seven.

¹ *Dobrynia v ot'ezde*, Rybnikov, I, no 20, pp. 162-172 (p. 170).

Sub-Section B

TABLEAU FOUR

(1)

OVERVIEW

This central tableau is by far the longest of the opera (44 minutes). Since it concludes the first theme of the *Sadko* tale, and sets the scene for the second story, it may be said to form the key-stone of the arch of the entire narrative. It gives the composer an opportunity to produce a kaleidoscopic portrayal of mediaeval 'free' Novgorod at the height of its trading power, when Christianity and paganism were still vying for supremacy, and contains interpolations from the 'free' folk of Novgorod, Christian pilgrims, pagan soothsayers, and *skomorokhi*, all declaiming from the epics and songs they would have been familiar with, to increase the atmosphere of verisimilitude. Sadko becomes a great merchant by the aid of the sea powers whom he has delighted with his playing at Lake Il'men', and he sets off to sail over the sea and fulfil his dreams.

In his memoirs, Rimsky-Korsakov claimed that this Tableau was among the most outstanding passages of his music, and Vasilenko informs us that the normally extremely reserved composer S. I. Taneev called the scene an 'unprecedented masterpiece' (*neslykhannyi shedevr*), extolled its wealth of part-writing, and described it as like an enhanced Orlando Lassus or Josquin des Prés.¹

¹ Vasilenko, S., *Stranitsy vospominaniia*, (Moscow: 'GMI', 1948) pp. 53-54. Rimsky-Korsakov's comments are to be found in *Letopis'*, p. 205.

(2)

SETTING THE SCENE

The stage direction informs us that we are 'On the quay at Novgorod, by Vozdvizhensk [Church], on the shore of Lake Il'men'.^{App II no 8} Since, of course, Novgorod is in reality some four miles from Lake Il'men', this detail once again makes explicit to the audience that, in this semi-legendary time, the River Volkhov did not yet exist. Around the quay lie *busy-korabli* ('ship-boats'). Once again the stage direction contains archaic grammar and word forms; the Novgorodian merchants are termed '*gosti Novgorodskie*' ('Merchants Novgorodian'), and we are told that the stage is thronged with all kinds of 'common-folk' (*vsiakii liud*) - where the archaic singular *liud* is used for 'folk' instead of the now universal plural *liudi*. Numerous foreign merchants are crying their wares - a detail fully attested to in history, since mediaeval Novgorod, as noted previously, was a major trading port and had close ties with the Hanseatic League.

Among the foreign merchants are a Viking, an Indian, and a Venetian; these three merchants are called upon by Sadko at the end of this Tableau to sing songs describing their native lands. The choice of these three to sing cameo roles was not arbitrary. Rimsky-Korsakov had at one time considered the possibility of portraying merchants from, among other places, the Hanseatic League, Persia, and Byzantium. However, the Hanseatic League is never mentioned in the *byliny*, and Persia and Byzantium (this latter always called 'Tsargrad' – 'Tsar's-town') but rarely, and so the composer settled for merchants from areas quite frequently mentioned in the epics, even if the peasant singers seemed somewhat unclear about where these places actually were. The appearance of a Viking (*Variag*) and a Venetian (*Vedenetskii*) at the same time is an anachronism; but, as the composer noted in his prefatory material to this opera, the epics abound in such anachronisms.¹ There are also two Warlocks, or *Volkhvy*,

¹ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., 'Vместо предисловия', Item 7, *Sadko*, vol 6a (no page no.). Gozenpud, *Temy i idei ego opernogo tvorchestva*, (p. 93), mentions the original plans for the other merchants.

among the crowd.

(3)

THE FREE FOLK OF NOVGOROD

This tableau is an intermingling of concrete historical reality and fantasy based on legendary sources, many of them deriving from old Novgorod. Accordingly, the composer commences by having the crowd refer to themselves several times in the opening chorus by the historically attested phrase *liudi vol'nye* ('free folk'). As we have observed, both they and the people of Pskov at this time were not ruled by princes, nor were they under the authority of any other city-state, but decisions were taken at the *veche*, or folk-moot.

The folk then inform each other that the Indian merchant's goods are the most luxurious of all. He is offering, among other things, elephant ivory and 'large smooth pearls' (*zhemchugi skatnye*). The 'smooth pearls' are a commonplace of the epics, where normally they are to be found in such a formula as *krasnoe zoloto, chistoe srebro i zhemchugi skatnye* ('red [ie the purest] gold, pure silver, and large smooth pearls'). This entire formula occurs in Tableau Five, where Sadko, to appease the Sea Tsar, and thus to allow his becalmed flag-ship to start moving again, hurls three barrels into the sea, one containing gold, and the other two silver and pearls respectively.¹

However, the term 'elephant ivory' (*slonovaia kost'*) is very rarely encountered in the epics. Normally the locution is *rybii zub* ('fishes' fangs') and this implies either whale-bone, or, more commonly, walrus-bone.² At the end of this Tableau, when Sadko has become a rich

¹ 'Skatnye' ('large, round, and smooth') pearls were those of the highest value, and the most prized in old Russia (see quotation from Fersman under *skatnyi* in *Slovar' sovremennogo Russkogo iazyka* (Moscow: ANSSSR, 1950-1965), vol 13, (1962), p. 903.

² Ukhanova, I. N., *Rez'by po kosti v Rossii XVIII-XIX vv* (Moscow: Khudozhnik RSFSR, 1981), p. 6. According to this source the art of 'bone-carving' was particularly highly developed in ancient Novgorod.

merchant, and a hero in the people's eyes, he takes his seat on his Falcon-Ship (*Sokol-Korabl'*) (ie the flag-ship of his fleet) upon a 'bench of precious fishen-fangs y-fet' (*saditsia na besedu dorog rybii zub*).

The reference to the 'elephant ivory' which the crowd mentions here, may derive from the same source as the details of the Indian Merchant's song which we shall examine later in our analysis of this tableau – the *Skazanie ob Indiiskom Tsarstve* ('The Legend of the Realm of India') which, among the other wonders of this land, describes the fabulous numbers of beasts such as elephants, camels, and crocodiles. Therefore, in connection with the wares of an Indian merchant, such a phrase seems admissible.

However, in his prefatory material to the full score of his opera-*bylina* (Item 1), the composer notes that one of the *byliny* from which he has drawn incidental details is *Terentishche* ('Terrible Terry'), and in Danilov's version of this song, we are humorously told both that Terentishche, as a sign of his great and ostentatious wealth, has a 'gate-flap of fish-fangs' (*podvorotnia rybei zub*) and too, that he has a 'bedstead of elephant ivory' (*krovat' slonovykh kostei*).¹ This somewhat ribald *skomorokh* song in epic form, concerning the infidelity of the Rich Merchant Terentii's wife, and the role of the *skomorokhi* in helping him to discover it, is set in Novgorod. It is from this song too, that the detail of the market in this scene being set 'by Vozdvizhensk [church]' (*y Vozdvizhenska*) is derived, for we read there that Terentishche meets the *skomorokhi* 'u chestna kresta Vozdvizhen'ia' ('by the worshipful cross of Vozdvizhen'e') and there was indeed a Vozdvizhensk ('Exhaltation of the Cross') church in old Novgorod on Iur'evskaia Street.²

The excited crowd further point out the chess-boards the Indian Merchant is selling:

¹ Danilov (1977), no 2, [*Pro*] *gostia Terentishcha*, pp. 15-19 (both refs p. 15).

² Danilov p. 430.

Доски шахматые со тавлеями,
А тавлеи-то чист золото ... ¹

Chess is mentioned in a number of the epics, and the courtly Dobrynia is apparently highly skilled at this game. ²

Although chess as a game plays no part in the epics concerning Sadko, the reference to these chess-boards in the opera may be a deliberate reminiscence of a bizarre detail to be found in one single variant of Sadko – no 47 in Danilov – that, when Sadko descends from his becalmed ship to meet his fate at the Sea Tsar's hands, *he embarks on a golden chess-board which he uses as a raft*. ³ No satisfactory explanation has ever been adduced as regards this entirely anomalous detail, and it is not used in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera. But the insertion of this passing reference to chess-boards here demonstrates the composer's apparent resolve to weave in as many motifs of the Sadko theme as possible, even if they deviate from the normally accepted story-line. We have already mentioned one such in our analysis of Section Two, and a similar detail, to be found in one variant only, occurs in Tableau Seven. By this procedure the composer may well have been trying to imitate the practice of the peasant singers, who while having an entire story with all its innumerable details in their memory, may not have reproduced every detail at every performance, leading occasionally to baffling references and incoherent narratives.

¹ 'Boards for chess, with chessmen too,
And those chessmen be of gold most pure'.
² Eg see Dobrynia i Vasilii Kazimirov, Rybnikov I, no. 8 [pp. 53-54].

³ 'И берет он шахмотицу дорогу ...
Спускался он на сине море,
Садился на шахмотицу золоту ..'
(*'He taketh a precious chess-board ...
He lowered himself down to the deep-blue sea,
He sate upon that golden chess-board'*) ...
(*Sadkov korabl' stal na more*, Danilov 1977, no 47, pp. 178-182), (p. 180)).

This short introductory episode of the crowd's exclaiming in delight at the wares on offer demonstrates closely the composer's familiarity with the sources, since, as we have shown, every detail of the text derives from them. However, he is also indicating how in mediaeval times in a historical city, a crowd would have been imbued with such folk literature, and could seemingly instantly create new songs on old models from the stock of their knowledge of these models. This is explicitly demonstrated near the end of this tableau when the crowd apparently spontaneously transform the *bylina* about Solovei Budimirovich into one concerning the new hero, Sadko.

Furthermore, by showing the Novgorod folk's profound familiarity with the epics, many of them deriving from a pre-Christian world-view, he is demonstrating that they would still have possessed a semi-pagan outlook, despite the influence of Christianity. This prepares us for the episode, later in this tableau, when the Sea-Beings aid Sadko to become the wealthiest merchant of Novgorod, and the crowd accept this occurrence unquestioningly. They receive the event with awe, but with no disbelief, since it is obviously not contradictory to their world-view.

(4)

THE WANDERING PILGRIMS SING AN EXTRACT FROM THE *GOLUBINAIA KNIGA*.

The *kaliki perekhozhie* (wandering pilgrims - the composer stipulates 6-10 basses) who are described in the cast list and stage direction as *ugriumye stariki* ('gloomy old men') enter from one side, singing an extract from the *Golubinaia kniga*, which religious epic we have dealt with in Section Two. The composer is emphasising by the appearance of these Christians the unsettled spiritual belief of the mediaeval Novgorod city-state, for they appear to be opposed in outlook to the folk, whose utterances are drawn from the pagan world-view of the epics we have analysed above. Yet the confusion of the prevailing belief-systems is emphasised still further by the words the pilgrims sing, for, as we have seen, the *Golubinaia kniga* seems to be

decidedly unorthodox, and even heretical, in its theme and details.

The composer told Iastrebtsev that these lines of religious verse were one of the comparatively few genuine musical extracts from folk sources in the opera, and the chant derives almost unaltered from his collection of songs transcribed from the singing of T. I. Filippov in 1892.^{App III}

Ex 12

The term *ugriumye stariki* ('gloomy old men') does not in fact appear in the epic sources in relation to the pilgrims. However, it does occur in numerous couplets closing the epics: as we have indicated above, Rimsky-Korsakov uses just such a phrase at the close of his opera-*bylina*, in imitation of the epics. However, the composer has presumably adopted the phrase *ugriumye stariki* to describe these itinerant palmers in order to contrast them explicitly with the '*veselye molodtsy*' ('merry younglings'), the stereotypical formula for the *skomorokhi*, who now appear from the opposite side of the stage.

(5)

THE SKOMOROKHI COUNTERPOSE AGAINST THE PILGRIMS A DRINKING SONG FROM DANILOV

The pilgrims sing of the primeval contest between Falsehood (*Krivda*) and Truth (*Pravda*); this theme is not to be found in the variant of this religious epic in Danilov (no 60, pp. 208-213), but is encountered in very many forms in Bezsonov's collection.¹

As regards the *skomorokhi*, the stage direction informs us that '*Duda, Sopel*' i drugie *skomorokhi udalye - veselye molodtsy, s gudkami, dudami, sopel'iami i bubnami shumno vkhodiat s drugoi storony, pripliasyvaia* ('Duda, Sopel', and other spirited *skomorokhi* (as they

¹ Eg Bezsonov I, no. 76, p. 273, and no. 92 (pp. 342-378 - a composite of many variants), pp. 374-376. For an analysis of the motif of this struggle see Mochul'skii, (1877), pp. 187-231.

are called, the 'merry younglings'), with primitive fiddles, fifes, reed-pipes and tambourines, enter noisily from the other side, dancing in Russian fashion').

The names of the two major *skomorokhi*, Duda and Sopol' (those who sing the solos - the others dance and mime the actions described in the songs) mean, respectively 'fife' and 'reed-pipe'. These descriptive names are nowhere found in the epics referring to *skomorokhi*; but seem to be an invention of the composer's.¹ The conventional folk descriptions of the strolling players (*skomorokhi udalye – veselye molodtsy* ('spirited *skomorokhi* – merry younglings')) which is found widely in the *byliny*, may be noted here. The two senior *skomorokhi*, Duda and Sopol', are never actually referred to in the sung words of the opera by their descriptive names, but only in the cast-list and stage directions. Unless the programme contains the entire detailed description of the roles from this cast-list, a spectator will remain ignorant of them. The entire score, if studied in detail from the title-page and the cast list right through to the final curtain, including stage-directions, certainly creates the impression of an extraordinarily unified and cohesive artistic work. However, if many of these unifying references are not available to the audience, one must ask whether the work ultimately fails in terms of audience comprehension.

However, the composer, as we have noted *passim*, has tried to imitate the procedures of peasant folk singers throughout in his work, and possibly even thought of himself as in the role of such a bard, recreating yet another variant of an epic story. Yet the peasant singer could rely on his audience knowing all the details of any story from having heard the same narrative innumerable times from many different singers, and therefore being able to remedy any incoherence or deficiency in a story from their own knowledge. Possibly the composer was so

¹ Examples of both of these wind instruments have been discovered in archaeological excavations in Novgorod: see Povestkin, V. I., 'Mir muzyki drevnikh novgorodtsev: Arkheologicheskie otkrytiia', (in) Andreev, V F., ed., *Proshloe Novgoroda i Novgorodskoi Zemli*, 2 vols (Velikii Novgorod: 'Novgorodskii gosudarstvennyi universitet', 2002), pp. 23-29.

familiar with the sources from a lifetime of study that he did not realise that a member of the audience would almost certainly not possess this knowledge, and would not be able immediately to supply textual and cultural contexts for any character and referent. Furthermore, although any production of a stage work is open to many different productions and interpretations, the composer, by his detailed descriptions of the characters, and stage directions in phraseology drawn directly from folk sources, and by his titling his work an opera-*bylina*, seems to be intentionally precluding the possibility of any wholly original production and interpretation. All these points will be considered in Section Eight.

To return to our analysis: the *skomorokhi* scoffingly ask who wants to hear about the pilgrims' 'Truth and Falsehood': it's '*luchshe slushati pro khmel'ia iarogo*'.¹ The stock formula '*khmel' iaryi*', and the archaic-folk form of 'listen' ('*slushati*') are noteworthy here.

They then strike up a drinking song which is a close imitation of an item in Danilov's collection (no 18:).^{App III ex 1 a.} The refrain to every verse of this song in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera-*bylina* is '*Oi Dunai, syn Ivanovich Dunai*' ('Oi, Dunai, Ivan's son (or possibly 'Ivanov's son', or even 'Ivan's grandson'), which means precisely nothing. Close variants of this refrain are found in many folk-songs of all genres, and as the concluding couplet of a number of *byliny*. Often the name is to be found in such a concluding format as:

Ох Дунай, ох Дунай,

И больше еще не знай!²

¹ 'It's better to hear about the ardent [or possibly 'drunk-making', or 'sparkling' - opinions differ!] hop'

² 'Okh Dunai, okh Dunai,

No more of this song don't know !!

(Eg 'Solovei Budimirovich', Rybnikov II, no. 132, p. 232.

Incidentally, almost all of the eleven songs sung by A. P. Sorokin in Rybnikov, II, nos. 127-127, pp. 146-290, (the singer of the most complete of all the variants of Sadko, no 134, which the composer drew on extensively)' end in very similar variants of this 'signing-off' motif, (although *Sadko* itself does not).

The 'Dunai' mentioned here has no relationship whatsoever, or course, with the *bogatyr*' of that name, but seems to have been introduced entirely for its value in providing rhymes for an ending. However, as shown, several *byliny* detail how, from the blood of dying *bogatyr*' rivers were created, including the Dunai.¹ Could the composer have introduced this name here, in this refrain, to foreshadow the conclusion of this opera? This conclusion is an invention of his own, based on epic models, to which the whole opera is leading: the creation of the River Volkhov from the Sea Princess Volkhova.

(6)

MORE EPIC FORMULAE AND MOTIFS; REFERENCES TO YET MORE BYLINY, PRINCIPALLY NON-MARTIAL

Meanwhile the enthralled crowd are still examining the goods on offer: they describe them with phrases taken straight from various *byliny* not having anything to do with *Sadko*: eg '*khrushchata kamka*' ('rustling damask'), '*ryta barkhata*', ('fine-embroidered velvet'), '*kaftan skarlat sukno*', ('kaftans of scarlet embroidered cloth') and '*lapotki semi shelkov shemakhanskikh*' ('bast sandals made of seven silks from Shemakha'); and all of these are 'of cunning embroidery' (*uzor khiter*).² These silks and fabrics are epic commonplaces; they also emphasise the importance of Kievan Rus' and, later, of the Novgorod city-state, as trading centres: for instance, *kamka* ('damask') was imported into Rus', usually from Constantinople, often through the agency of Venetian merchants,³ and we find a reference to *doroga*

¹ Eg *Dunai*, Rybnikov, I, no 42, pp. 277-286 (p. 277).

² The town Shemakha was the capital of the State of Sharvan, in the south-west Caucasus; it was renowned from ancient times for its wares, especially embroidered cloths. It enjoyed very close trading relations with the various Russian city-states from the 13th-15th centuries (Dzhiddi, G. A., *Srednevekovyi gorod Shemakha IX-XVII veka* (Baku: 'ELM', 1981), p. 68. Of course, the folk singer would have had no clear idea of the precise meaning of this term; it would, like 'India' signify any exotic wealthy location. Pushkin, in imitation of folk usage, employs the term with his introduction of the sinister 'Queen of Shemakha' in his '*Tale of the Golden Cockere*' (which formed the basis of Rimsky-Korsakov's last opera (1908)).

³ *Byliny*, ed Chicherov, V. I., (Moscow: 'Detskaia Literatura', 1969), p. 218. For further descriptions of this cloth, and of the other items referred to above, see Savvaitov, P. A., *Opisanie starinnykh russkikh utvarej, odezhd, oruzh'ia, ratnykh dospekhov i konskogo pribora v azbuchnom poriadke paspolozhennoe* (St Petersburg: 1896). The reference to *doroga kamochka* is to be found in *Solovei Budimirovich*, Danilov, 1977, no 1, p.10.

kamochka - uzor khiter ('precious damask, cunningly embroidered'), in the Danilov variant of *Solovei Budimirovich* - a 'rich merchant' from overseas, possibly Venice. The crowd now exclaim excitedly at the:

Сапожки зелен сафян

На гвоздочках золотых.¹

This description of such footwear derives from the non-martial *byliny* about the dandy, Diuk Stepanovich; the songs about this rich man-about-town, with his flamboyant clothing, usually described to the point of satire by the *bylina*-narrator,² are also, despite their Kievan setting, considered by some commentators to derive originally from Novgorod.³ Incidentally, one set of such *byliny* delight in describing the competition in dandyism between Diuk, and Churilo Plënkovich, whom we have already met, in reference to Sadko's description of himself as the son of Sur Volozhanin in Tableau One. Thus, by these continual quotations from, and hints at, epic narratives which at first sight seem in no way connected with the story of Sadko, the composer is building up a picture of the fabulous wealth of mediaeval Novgorod. He is also imitating the folk bard's technique of weaving in references to other stories so as to create the idea of a fantastic world in which all the *bogatyi* lived, and which the common folk of early Russia would have believed in implicitly. We have already noted that the composer has linked Sadko to the hero of the other major cycle of Novgorod *byliny*, Vasilii Buslaev, by marriage - a detail nowhere attested to in the sources. Rimsky-Korsakov now seems to be implying that it is to this city too that such dandies as Churilo and Diuk can repair to buy their 'boots of green Maroc y-wrought', and other extravagantly foppish clothing. Porfiridov notes that shoe-making was indeed one of the major trades of Novgorod from ancient times, and that just such a 'shoe

¹ 'Boots of green Maroc
'pon studs of gold'. (6b, p. 29, bars 127-128).

² Eg Rybnikov, I, no. 16, pp. 98-111.

³ Eg see Miller, V. F., 'K bylinam o Churile Plenkovich', *Ocherki*, pp. 187-200 (p. 200).

of green Maroc leather' dating from mediaeval times has been found in Lake Il'men'.¹

A few bars later the members of the crowd call to each other:

Выбирайте-ка вы червлёный вяз –

Целый пуд свинцу в нем налито!²

This prodigious cudgel is never mentioned in any of the sources of *Sadko*, but is to be found in many of the heroic *byliny* as part of the accoutrements of any well-dressed *bogatyri* about town. In fact, 'a whole pood' is quite insignificant compared to some of these cudgels: for, instance, Volkh Vseslavich is described as bearing a cudgel of 300 poods (a fact alluded to in Tableau One, in Nezhata's rendition of selected verses from this epic).³

Once again, there is a link here not only with the heroic *bogatyri*, but also with the other major protagonist of the Novgorod *byliny*, Vasilii Buslaev; for when this latter selects his retinue (*druzhina*) from the 'beggarly pub riff-raff' (*goli kabatskie*) of Novgorod, as Sadko does in the opera-*bylina*, Vasilii is described as hiding behind a door. When the various toughs turn up for interview:

Василий тут его опробовал;

Стал его бить червлёным вязом -

Весом тот вяз был во двенадцать пуд ...⁴

¹ Porfiridov, N. G., *Drevnii Novgorod*, (Moscow: ANSSR, 1947), pp. 66-67.

² 'Just choose out for yourself a cudgel vermilion,
Of a whole pood (ie 36 Imperial lbs) of lead is it cast!' (6b, p. 37, bars 173-178).

³ Volkh Vseslavich, Danilov, (1977), no 6, pp. 32-37 (p. 33).

⁴ 'Vasilii then and there put him to the test;
he began to batter him with a cudgel vermilion -
in weight was that cudgel twelve poods [[432 Imperial lbs]].'
(Danilov, (1977), no. 10, pp. 48-54 (p. 49).

Those who withstand this unorthodox selection procedure 'and do not tremble', Vasili selects for his *druzhina*.

This bar-by-bar analysis of the crowd's songs in just the first few moments of this tableau demonstrates the extraordinary accumulation of formulae from different *byliny*, and Rimsky-Korsakov's profound grasp of his sources. He endeavours to create the impression of a pagan universe where heroic and magical exploits were held to be commonplace, and where *bogatyri*, whether considered to be so by means of magic, heroism, wealth, or artistic prowess, were to be found on every street corner. This is surely an indication for any stage designer or scene choreographer to include among the people of Novgorod, both here and in the final tableau, some non-singing *bogatyri*, perhaps on stilts, or with shoulder padding, and possibly some fantastically dressed dandies in the style of Diuk and Churilo.

(7)

THE TOWN ELDERS: HISTORICAL REALITY AND MINOR EPIC CHARACTERS

At the height of the festivities the two Town Elders (*nastoiateli*), Foma Nazarich and Luka Zinovich, enter. These 'elders' of Novgorod are not only a historical reality, but are also mentioned in several epics of *Sadko*. Who were they, and what was their original status?

As we have discussed in Section Four, the Novgorod city-state was a republic: decisions were taken by a folk-moot and the executive functions were carried out by two *posadniki*, or 'Elders'. These Elders are referred to in two of the variants of the Novgorod *byliny*, one concerning Vasili Buslaev, and one about *Sadko*, and, in both these variants we actually find them named.

Furthermore, the names of the elders are strikingly similar in both cycles: in *Vasilii Buslaev*,¹ the two *posadniki* are named Nikolai Zinov'ev and Foma Rodionovich, while in *Sadko*,² the elders are called Foma Nazarev and Luka Zinov'ev. The variant of *Vasilii* was sung by an unnamed *Iodochnik* (boatman) from the Shala River, while that of *Sadko* was sung by Andrei Sorokin, that same singer who introduced the name of the river Chernava/Chernavushka into his songs about Sadko. He was a husbandman some 12 miles north of this river. The fact that two *skaziteli* from such different locations and walks of life use such similar names, implies either an underlying historical memory of real figures in ancient Novgorod, or else wide-spread dissemination of certain variants of the *byliny*, or possibly simply a sense on the narrators' part that, since both *Vasilii* and *Sadko* take place in Novgorod in 'ancient times' the same minor characters might be appropriate for cameo roles in each cycle: and this is a feeling that, as we have seen, the composer tries to emphasise by weaving together several different strands from the various Novgorod *byliny*. It is the two latter names, from *Sadko* (Foma Nazarev and Luka Zinov'ev) that the composer adapts for his opera-*bylina*, in which they are called Foma Nazarich and Luka Zinovich. They perform the function in the opera (as they do, whether named or not, in several variants of the *byliny*), of forming a major part of the opposition to Sadko at the Merchants' Guild when he declares his intentions. He plans to travel to distant parts, to amass great wealth, and by so doing, shake the Novgorod merchants out of their old complacency and stagnation. The two Elders are portrayed later in this Tableau of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera-*bylina* as trying to gain a spell from the warlocks to aid them to overcome a vile foe - presumably Sadko, though never explicitly named as such. In the final Tableau the Elders, now contrite, join the chorus of praise to the new *bogatyr'* musician whose magical deeds have brought a river to their town. Incidentally, the Elders also join in the opposition to Vasilii Buslaev in many of the variants of the first Vasilii theme.³

¹ Rybnikov II, no. 150.

² Rybnikov II, no.134.

³ Eg Rybnikov II, no. 150, *Vasilii Buslaev*.

Are these names to be found in Novgorodian history, and how did they come to be included in the *byliny* of the peasant narrators in the far north of Russia? There is a definite echo of historical reality in Rybnikov, II, 150; as discussed in Section Four, the two *posadniki* fulfilled the functions respectively of *Voevoda* (Military Governor) and *Starshina* (Senior Civic Leader), and Rybnikov's *bylina* tells us:

Приходя князя Новгородския,
Воевода Николай Зиновьевич,
Старшина Фома Родионович ... ¹

However the singer obviously had forgotten, or had never known, that Novgorod had been a republic. Besides, the word *posadnik* was by the 19th century obsolete, therefore the two Elders are termed by the peasant singer 'Princes'. Indeed, in his prefatory material (Item 5) to the score the composer describes these two individuals by the modern Russian term *nastoiateli* ('Deans', 'Doyens') and then feels compelled to add a gloss that these people are sometimes termed in the *byliny* the 'Princes' (*kniazi*) of Novgorod, and are 'presumably the powers-that-be (*starshiny*) of the town'.

Did these two particular *posadniki* in fact exist, and how did their names come to be used in the sources? There seem to have been none with these exact names, though various 'Rodions', 'Fomas', 'Fominiches', and 'Zinov'evs' are to be found. Interestingly, almost all of these held office in the 1470s – the last years before Novgorod's final bloody subjugation by Ivan IV (the Terrible). We may surmise that, during the years of Novgorod's collapse, many of its population fled to the remote areas of the north, bearing with them historical reminiscences

¹ 'The Princes Novgorodian are come unto them,
The voevoda Nikolai Zinovevich,
And the *starshina* Foma Rodionovich'
(Rybnikov, II, no. 150, p. 356).

of the eminent figures of the time in that town, which found their way into the narratives composed by folk singers on the legends of that town. Over the centuries, the precise names were forgotten and confused.¹

(8)

THE VOLKHAVY (WARLOCKS): A (NON-EPIC) PAGAN COUNTERBALANCE TO ENCROACHING CHRISTIANITY

In accordance with his setting of the opera-*bylina* in legendary, half-pagan, half-Christian Novgorod, the composer inserts a minor role for two 'warlocks' as a counterpoise to the chorus of wandering Christian pilgrims who are singing their religious chant. The appearance of these wizards is nowhere motivated by the *bylina* sources. Before we examine who precisely these magicians were, let us note that the Russian word employed here for a person who claims to possess supernatural abilities is *volkhv*. There is too an ancient female variant *vlŭkhva*. We are reminded immediately that the heroine of the opera who transforms herself into the river Volkhov bears the name Volkhova. We may recall too that, by tradition, this river in fact derived its name from an ancient evil wizard; that the river Volkhov is called the 'Volk' in the first variant of *Sadko* in Danilov (no 27); and, finally, that the composer introduces into his opera at an early stage in Tableau One the *bylina* of the magician Volkh Vseslavich - also derived from Danilov, and probably of Novgorod origin. In other words, by choosing this word in Russian to denote these magicians, the composer has once again linked ancient Novgorod and the river Volkhov with the supernatural.²

Who were these *Volkhvy*? Afanas'ev states that in ancient times they were people who claimed to possess knowledge of the supernatural, to whom the common folk resorted in times

¹ Iarin, V. L., *Novgorodskie posadniki*, pp. 377-384 (*index of posadniki*).

² There are numerous other terms he could have chosen, such as *eg koldun*, *charodei*, *kudesnik*, *volshėbnik*, and others. As with English equivalents such as magician, wizard, warlock, conjurer (in the original sense), it is impossible to assign any real difference of meaning among these titles.

of need: these magi recited spells, carried out purificatory rituals and healing, and foretold the future.¹ The word *volkhvy* does not appear to have carried negative connotations in ancient times when Christianity was first brought to Russia: the Three 'Magi' in the New Testament, Matthew 2.i. are termed *vol'svi* in the Church Slavonic/Old Russian translation: ('... *se vol'svi ot vostok priidoshe ..* ' ; '... there came wise men from the east ' ; (King James version)).

These magicians certainly existed in Novgorod, the location of *Sadko*, until very late: Afanas'ev notes that mothers would bring sick children to them, and not to the Christian priests, for healing.² Furthermore, on at least one occasion the magi appear to have led a popular insurrection against the rulers and the church leaders of Novgorod.³

Although Rus' had formally adopted Christianity in 988 the ancient beliefs still retained their force for centuries, and the common people continued to practise old rituals, even if only in secret. There inevitably resulted a strange mixture of beliefs: traditions relating to the ancient pantheon and cosmogony were transferred to the Christian God, Christ, Mary, and the Christian saints. The church and state issued constant denunciations against these pagan wizards who, in their eyes, were a danger to public order.⁴

However, as we have noted, the content of the most famous of the *dukhovnye stikhi*, that of the *Golubinaia kniga*, from which Rimsky-Korsakov derives the material for his pilgrims' chorus, and other numbers to be analysed below, is also decidedly heterodox theologically, and seems to have been drawn from Dualist, Gnostic, and pagan elements.

Although he was not conventionally religious, the composer represents the historical reality of

¹ Afanas'ev, *Poeticheskiia vozzreniia slavian*, (1868), II, 599-603.

² Afanas'ev, III, 430-431.

³ Afanas'ev, II, 599.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 600-602.

the final victory of Christianity over paganism by the banishing of the Sea-Tsar's realm to outer darkness in Tableau Six by the Mighty *Bogatyr'* Monastic Elder (*Starchishche Moguch-bogatyr'*). In the opera the latter replaces the St Nicholas of many of the original sources, as a consequence of the Orthodox Church's disapproval of the representation of figures of Christian worship on stage. It is perhaps as a further sign of this vanquishing of paganism that, in the final tableau of his opera-*bylina*, set in Novgorod on Sadko's return from his voyagings, all the characters and groups from the crowd scene in Tableau Four - including the wandering pilgrims - reappear to join in the final choruses, except the *volkhvy*, who seem to have disappeared from the proceedings!

(9)

THE MYSTICAL ISLE OF RUSSIAN FOLK-LORE

The *posadniki* declaim that Sadko is still roaming the streets rousing the '*goli kabatskie*', and accordingly they approach the *volkhvy* to enlist their aid in casting a spell on a foe, presumably the folk musician. The composer uses the warlocks' chant to introduce a reference to the Russian 'mystical isle', Buian - which is nowhere referred to in the epics of *Sadko*. This island is mentioned, however, in numerous other *byliny*, and is frequently alluded to in all genres of Russian folk-lore. There may be a reference here too to the mystical island on which the Phoenix-bird of the *Golubinaia kniga* lives. Furthermore in some variants of this religious song, the Phoenix-bird is described as having eyes of *iakhont* (precious stones of various colours), and the warlocks in the opera promise the crowd that they are capable of producing a fetish figure with just such eyes to destroy anyone's enemies. Furthermore, the warlocks promise to release a 'mighty power' (*sila moguchaia*) from this island, and, as we have noted above, in our analysis of Tableau Two, the island contained, often concealed under a 'white burning stone' (*bel-goriuch-kamen'*), a mighty power, although oriented toward nutrition and healing, rather than evil purposes.

As if to emphasise this reference to the Isle of Buian, with its magical stone, the pilgrims resume their *dukhovnyi stikh* (religious song), telling us that the 'Alatyr' stone is the mother of all stones, Lake Il'men' is the mother of all lakes, and the 'Ocean Sea is the mother of all seas'. The theme of the magical island is reintroduced later in the Song of the Indian Merchant.

Therefore, this reference to the Mystical Isle of Russian folk lore once again reinforces the verisimilitude of the composer's organic vision. The impression is created that historical Novgorod is indissolubly linked to and part of a mythical timeless universe in which all the characters and motifs from different genres of Russian folk belief co-exist.

Nezhata, the bard from Kiev, now joins in with '*Slava Novu-Gorodu*' ('Glory to the New-Town'); as we have noted, *Nov-gorod* means 'New-Town', and a mark of the epics is that both items are usually declined, as they are throughout Rimsky-Korsakov's opera-*bylina*. The same is true of other town names in early Russian, even where '*gorod*' or '*grad*' (town) does not form part of the name. For example, Nezhata is referred to in the list of characters as '*iz Kieva-grada*' (from Kiev-town).

(10)

MORE ANOMALOUS DETAILS FROM VARIANTS OF SADKO; THE FOLK MUSICIAN ENTERS AND MAKES A WAGER

The *skomorokhi* conclude their drunken song drawn from Danilov, and then both they and the Elders lament mockingly that '*Sadko bogatoi gost*' ('Sadko, the Rich Merchant'), as they ironically and yet presciently term him, is not present, since he could buy up all the goods, both good and bad. However, since he is not there, they have brought some wares for him which he will be able to afford when he appears: '*cherepany bity da gnily gorshki, prigodiat'sia detiam v cherepki igrat*' ('shards broken, rotten pots, fit for kids to play at bones with'). These references too are drawn from the epics. In certain variants the newly-rich Sadko tells his *druzhina* to go

into the town and buy up all the wares, both good and bad. In one version, after his retinue has bought up all the goods in Novgorod, he scoffs that all that is left to the merchants of that town now are indeed 'cherepany bity ' and so on; indeed these contemptuous lines from the opera are modelled very closely on this variant. However, the result of the contest with the town merchants varies: in a few narratives, after Sadko has sent out his retinue over three consecutive days to buy up all the goods appearing on the stalls newly-imported that day from overseas, he finally acknowledges that '*pobogache menia slavnyi Novgorod*' ('Glorious Novgorod is wealthier than me'). This variant is reflected in Tableau Seven by a remark of Sadko's on his return from abroad.¹ This is a further demonstration of the point made above that the composer has striven to include motifs and references from as many variants of the tale as possible, even if they are anomalous or contradictory.

The *kaliki* resume their declamation, again in lines drawn directly from some variants of the *Golubinaia kniga*, that:

Малый Индрик-зверь всем зверям мати,
А Страфель-птица птицам всем мать.²

This cosmogony is followed through all the variants of the *Golubinaia kniga*, as we are told that, for example, the whale is the mother of all fishes, and so on. This theme reappears in the

¹ '*Cherepany bity*.' etc is drawn from Danilov, 1977, no 27, '*Sadko bogatoi gost*', p. 147, while *khudye tovary i dobrye* ('goods both good and bad') and the phrase *pobogache menia slavnyi Novgorod* are both drawn from Rybnikov, II, no. 134, p. 247. Sadko still remains extraordinarily wealthy of course, despite this reverse, by means of the fish of gold he has drawn from Lake Il'men', and through ownership of the goods he has already bought up.

² 'The little Indrik-beast is the mother of all beasts,
The Strafel'-bird is the mother of all birds.'
(6b, pp. 69-70, bars 324-331).

The exact significance of 'Indrik' and 'Strafel' is disputed. Among other suggestions are that 'Indrik' means a hippopotamus, and the 'Strafel' is an ostrich, neither of which creatures the north Russian peasant folk singer would have been overly familiar with. For discussion, see Mochul'skii, pp. 140-157.

Indian Merchant's song near the conclusion of this Tableau, since he refers to the Phoenix- bird on its island in similar terms taken directly from some of the versions of the *Golubinaia kniga*.

At the height of this extraordinary interweaving of themes, in which the crowd of common Novgorod folk, the Elders, the *skomorokhi*, pilgrims, and warlocks all contribute their very distinctive vocal parts to create a vibrant impression of Novgorod at the height of its trading power, Sadko enters and, to general mockery, exclaims:

Знаю я про чудо чудное,
Ведаю про диво дивное ...¹

The merchants respond that 'no, he *doesn't* know of such a wonder of wonders, nor does he wot of a marvel of marvels!' This entire exchange is taken *verbatim* from Rybnikov's collection.²

In this couplet may be noted not only the reappearance of the folkloric 'stock formula' *chudo chudnoe, divo divnoe* ('wonder of wonders, marvel of marvels') but once again the use in close proximity of two other words falling roughly within the same sphere of meaning: '*znaiu*' and '*vedaiu*' ('know', 'wot', 'ken' 'wysse', and the like).

Sadko makes a great wager (*velik zaklad*): he wagers his stormy head (*buinuiu golovu*) against the Elders' shops or stalls (*lavki*) with all their goods, that there are fish of gold in the lake. Although the phrases *velik zaklad* and *buinaia golova* are indeed to be found in variants of *Sadko*, they too are epic commonplaces.

¹ 'I do know of a wonder of wonders,
I do wot of a marvel of marvels.'

² Rybnikov, II, no. 134, p. 245.

The chorus now tell Sadko he will lose his stormy head: it will roll down from his broad shoulders. This too is an epic formula: shoulders are always either 'broad' (*shirokie*) or 'mighty' (*moguchie*), and *bogatyri* who wage their stormy heads are regularly warned that it will roll down from their shoulders.

The chorus command boatmen to sail into Lake Il'men' and to cast a 'set' *shelkovuiu* ('a silken net'), a detail drawn from the sources. The Sea Princess's voice is heard from the waters, renewing her pledge to make Sadko wealthy and happy. The fish of gold are dragged from the water, as the orchestration reaches an extraordinary height of brilliance.¹ The fish (non-vocal roles normally played by dancers) turn into ingots to the accompaniment of a short ballet not based on folk themes.

However, although the crowd exclaim at length at the golden fish and their transformation, they never comment on the mysterious voice emanating from the waters. Such reticence prompts the speculation that the voice can only be heard by the folk musician himself. Throughout the entire opera, no other human apparently ever sees or hears any of the water creatures - or at least, the composer never makes this explicit. We may only surmise that this might possibly signify the unique sensitivity of the artistic temperament to natural phenomena, or that Sadko's sensitivity renders him, like a shaman of the Volkh Vseslavich type, aware of other-worldly presences, or even, possibly, that all these phenomena have no objective reality, but that Sadko is driven by his purely subjective artistic vision of the universe to undertake his wanderings abroad. If so, the question might be asked – how does he manage to create the river Volkhov from nothing (unless, of course, the river was there all the time and this creation

¹ For a detailed analysis in terms of western 'art' music of the orchestration of this episode, which is not drawn from folk sources, see Gilse van der Pals, pp. 314-316. The Sea Princess's short ethereal declamation, and the accompanying orchestration, uses octatonic progressions, and this is the only example in this long tableau of Rimsky-Korsakov's 'magical' musical language.

too is a fantasy of the folk musician, who is mentally deranged, and the whole opera consists of his delusions).

However, to re-emphasise our earlier observation, the prototype of Sadko may have been an early enormously wealthy merchant of the same name, who could play the *gusli*, and this figure could well have become confused with the story of a Novgorod musician of the same name, who indeed married a Water Princess, and by so doing brought a river into being, and thus became enormously wealthy. This is a theme which has disappeared from the extant variants, but which Rimsky-Korsakov reintroduces.

(11)

SADKO BECOMES A RICH MERCHANT AND SUMMONS HIS RETINUE.

The crowd declare that the 'red gold' (*'chisto zoloto'*) glows like fire. Sadko is now, they say, the *pervyi gost' v Novegrade* ('The first merchant in the town, in New-Town'), while the leaders are now the *goli poslednie* (the most utter paupers of all), another epic stock formula.

Sadko now tells his *druzhina*, to step forth from the crowd:

Гой, сходишь сюда братья молодшая,
Вы ходитеесь сюда, люди меньшие.¹

Both the formulae '*brat'ia molodshaia*' and '*liudi men'shie*' are further commonplaces from the epics. They are to be found not only in Sadko: the protagonist of the other major Novgorod *bylina* cycle, Vasilii Buslaev, describes his disreputable *druzhina* in the same terms.

¹ 'Gather ye here, ye younger (ie 'lower') brethren,
Come ye hither, ye lesser folk.'
(*Sadko*, full score, 6b, p. 128, bars 562-564).

The stage direction at this point reads *Iz sredy naroda vystupaet družhina Sadki, odeto bedno* ('From out of the crowd step Sadko's *družhina*, poorly dressed').

There is a mystery here. Sadko is referred to in Tableaux One and Four of the opera, as being an indigent folk musician, and in this the composer is following the sources. Yet he is also mentioned in a few of these sources as possessing a *družhina*.¹ It is not quite clear from any of the *byliny* variants whether Sadko at this stage picks his *družhina*, or else already possesses such a retinue - hardly appropriate for a poor musician. However, we now recall that, by having the musician claim in Tableau One that his father is 'Sur Volozhanin' – (possibly 'rich merchant from the Volga'), the composer seems to suggest that he does in fact have some money, or possibly had money, then fell on hard times. He is in addition termed twice in the opera *gostinyi syn* ('merchant's son'). We may recollect too that some of the variants of the epics declare that Sadko had his adventures by Lake Il'men' after he had not been invited to perform at 'feasts of honour' for nine whole days. After each day's non-work, he has gone to the shore of the Lake to play his instrument and sing disconsolately, till finally the Sea Tsar appears to promise him a reward.² Obviously, this implies that Sadko in fact, up till then, did have work, and was indeed a respected entertainer, receiving substantial payment. He is after all, rich enough in the opera to possess a *terem* (Tableau Two). However, possibly this is an overscrupulous reading and interpretation of the details of the story. Such illogicalities abound in the epics. Indeed, as we have noted, by his insertion of the motif of the creation of a river from the death of a sea-maiden, the composer is already, from other sources, trying to clarify a theme that is not clear, but appears to have lost its original coherence through the ages.

In the 'democratic city state' of old Novgorod, there existed a substantial underclass with no

¹ Eg Rybnikov, II, no. 134, p. 247.

² Rybnikov, *ibid.*, no. 134, pp. 234-5.

voting rights who were little more than slaves. Possibly by having the musician choose his 'retinue' from what appears to be this class, the composer was attempting to increase the air of verisimilitude in his depiction of Novgorod in the 'semi-legendary, semi-historical time' of the opera's setting.

Perhaps a more accurate translation of *druzhina* in the *byliny* of both *Sadko* and *Vasilii Buslaev*, would be not 'guard' or 'retinue', but 'gang'. Certainly, as we have seen above *Vasilii's* *druzhina* seems to be composed entirely of thugs who engage in brawls in the streets and on the bridges of Novgorod.

Addressing his retinue as '*druzhina khorobraia*' ('bold retinue' a stock formula – note the archaic form of 'bold', which, in modern Russian is *khrobraia*), *Sadko* tells them to go through all the '*riady gostinye*' (trading rows), and to buy up all the wares in Novgorod, both good and bad, with the gold which he has gained. *Sadko's* epic phrase 'all the wares, both good and bad', also derives from the epics, but is also, of course, an ironical reversal of the *skomorokhs'* scoffing earlier in this Tableau. The phrase *riady gostinye* (note the archaic following of noun by adjective), is a historical term used to denote the 'rows' of trading booths or stalls set out in commercial centres either along the streets or else on market squares.¹

He tells his retinue to dress themselves up in '*plat'e nariadnoe*' ('sumptuous ceremonial clothing' - another stock formula), and to rig out and load the '*korabli chervlëny*' ('ships vermilion') with goods and with a stock of gold (*zolota kazna* - as we have noted, an epic formula found throughout the epics, and equivalent to the Anglo-Saxon 'gold-heord').

What is the origin of the stock formula 'vermillion ships'? Commentators have linked the

¹ For an account of the numerous artisans' and merchants' rows of old Novgorod, see Porfiridov, pp. 58-62.

portrayal of Sadko's and Solovei Budimirovich's ships in the epics with the characteristic appearance of early Viking ships, which were carved to look like wild beasts, with fearsome prows, and vividly decorated, to frighten off the spirits of the deep. All variants of *Solovei Budimirovich* contain detailed and instructive descriptions of old Russian sailing ships, with their:

Нос, корма – по-туриному,
Бока взведены по-звериному.¹

Vermilion must have been a favoured colour in old Rus' not only for ships, but for armaments too; we have already noted the reference to a 'vermilion cudgel' at the beginning of this Tableau, and there are too references to 'vermilion shields' in *Slovo o polku Igoreve*.²

Sadko tells his retinue in an untranslatable phrase drawn from folk literature '*Stanet vecher vecheriaetsia, solntse zakataetsia*' ('The evening beginneth to even on [ie draw on towards evening], the sun setteth').³ The chorus, apparently not having heard the voice of the Sea Tsarevna from the depths previously in this tableau, now declare for the first time, that the '*Grozen Tsar' Morskoï*' ('the Dread Sea Tsar'), must love Sadko for his playing and singing. In this manner they not only provide an explanation for the appearance of the fish of gold, but also prepare the way for the second strand of the Sadko legends which commences in Tableau Five

¹ 'The prow and the poop were like unto an aurochs,
The sides were builded up like unto wild beasts.'

(Danilov (1977), *Pro Solov'ia Budimirovicha*, no 1, pp. 9-15 (pp. 9-10). The aurochs (*Bos primogenitus*) was a kind of wild ox, now extinct, frequently mentioned in the epics, although the term later on came to be applied to the *zubr* ('bison') also extinct now in Russia. On the cult of this animal in old Russia, see Lipets, R. S., 'Obraz drevnego tura i otgoloski ego kul'ta v bylinakh', (in) Putilov, B. N., & Sokolova, V. K., *Slavianskii fol'klor* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1972). On the connection of Viking ships and those in *Solovei Budimirovich*, see Spender-Petersen, Adolf, 'La Théorie de l'origine varègue de la byline russe', *Varangica*, (Aarhus: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri, 1953), Ch. XIII, pp. 217-240 (pp. 222-227).

² Filin, p. 94, line 96.

³ Eg see Danilov (1977), *Tsar Saul Levanidovich*, no. 26, pp. 134-141 (p. 141).

- that of the Rich Merchant's adventures in the Underwater Realm.

The *druzhina* march off with Sadko, declaring, in a whole series of stock epic formulae, that upon these *busy-korabli* they will raise large sails, to sail over the *sine more*.

(12)

MORE ANOMALOUS DETAILS

Now Nezhata, the *gusli*-player visiting from Novgorod, to the accompaniment of the traditional piano and harp chords to represent the *gusli*, and to a rhythm constantly alternating, in true epic style, between 9/4 and 6/4, proceeds to declaim what is apparently a *bylina* about the epic hero Solovei Budimirovich. We have already described this *bylina* at length, and noted that many commentators not only consider it to have been of Novgorod origin, but possibly to have influenced the development of the *bylina* of Sadko. As we remarked, Solovei is also a rich merchant and an adept *gusli*-player. However, although the name Solovei is that used throughout this *bylina*-like narrative recitative of Nezhata's, the material is derived from the anomalous variant of the first Sadko theme to be found in Rybnikov,¹ which we have dealt with earlier. Nezhata declaims how a Nightingale (*Solovei*) from Novgorod flew to the Sea Tsar's *izba* (cabin) on the shores of Lake Il'men', and delighted him with his singing, following which the Sea Tsar rewarded this Nightingale with golden fish. Nezhata then narrates how the Nightingale wagered a 'great wager' with the merchants of Novgorod, how he won, and how the merchants became poor, and the Nightingale became a rich merchant.

This variant in which Sadko the Rich Merchant meets the Sea Tsar in a hut by the sea is unique, yet the composer has used it extensively here, once again underlining his intention to weave into his work as many strands of the epic as possible, even if anomalous or

¹ Rybnikov, II, no. 134, p. 251.

contradictory.

But it is at this point that one of Rimsky-Korsakov's possible unspoken aims in this operatic epic becomes manifest. He is not simply retelling an epic tale in music, but is also portraying an environment in which folk art is still very much alive, as in the early Novgorod of his opera, and in which *skomorokhi*, pilgrims, *bylina* singers, and so forth, were all everyday sights: in which, to quote the folk collector Gil'ferding once again, 'epic still wells forth like a spring'.¹ In this environment an outstanding event in the people's lives was speedily and spontaneously transformed into an epic or folk song, possibly based on an already extant model, leading to the formation of whole bodies of narratives grouped round seemingly related heroes and themes. By doing so, the composer was presumably acting as a 'bard' for his urban audience. He was not simply recreating a *bylina*, as the peasant bards did, but, in his new genre, the opera-*bylina*, was trying to *educate* his audience too as to the manner in which these narratives had originated in the first place.

But why is the name of Solovei still being used here? Why is Sadko not already the hero of his own epic sung by Nezhata? Sadko, by reason of his wealth, was held to be an epic hero (*bogatyř*) in the minds of some peasant narrators. However, possibly the composer is trying to demonstrate that Sadko is even at this point, although he has become rich, still not in his, the composer's, own estimation, a hero: he should become a *bogatyř* by reason of his musical art. This is a theme that is nowhere made explicit in the epics, yet in Tableau Seven at the conclusion of Sadko the Rich Merchant's adventures at sea, and his return to Novgorod with a freshly-created river, the composer has Nezhata expressly state that it is Sadko's *bogatyřskaia pesnia* ('epic-heroic singing') which has evoked such a miracle. In other words, Rimsky-Korsakov has altered the focus of his original sources to imply that Sadko has become an epic

¹ Gil'ferding (1949), I, p. 37.

hero, a *bogatyr*, worthy to have epics sung about him in traditional style, as a representative of high art, a Russian Orpheus figure, rather than as a Croesus.

Here, in Tableau Four, although the common folk are beginning to sing about Sadko's marvellous exploits, they are still being linked to the name of another hero. He is not yet worthy to be considered on the same level as Solovei, Il'ia, or Dobrynia, but his transformation to full epic heroic status is now definitely in progress.

Sadko and his *druzhina* return, dressed in their newly-acquired 'sumptuous ceremonial attire' (*plat'e nariadnoe*). In the space of six minutes they have managed to buy up all the goods in Novgorod, plus a fleet of thirty one ships, and to rig out and freight those ships - another apparent example of bizarre chronology which would make no sense to anybody unfamiliar with the epic background.¹

Of course, this purchase of Sadko's fleet is very rarely mentioned in the epics, because, as we have remarked above, the vast majority of the variants of this *bylina* deal with one or other theme of this story - either that of the poor musician's becoming wealthy, or that of the wealthy merchant's adventures on the sea-bed. The acquisition of his fleet and freight, which must obviously have taken several months, falls 'in between' the two stories. Even in the two composite *byliny*, which combine both strands, this aspect of the story is passed over in six lines, because, obviously, it is not particularly interesting in itself, and, being purely technical and mundane, has no relevance to the fantastic epic theme.²

¹ Tsukkerman comments explicitly on the bewildering and '*golovokruzhitel'naia bystrota*' ('head-spinning rapidity') of this episode (SM 3, 1933), p. 49.

² Both 'composite' *byliny* of Sadko were sung by the same *skazitel'*, A. P. Sorokin, firstly to Rybnikov, then ten years later to Gil'ferding, with some slight change of language, but very little alteration of narrative detail (Rybnikov, II, pp. 243-254, and Gil'ferding, I, pp. 640-657).

In emphasising this fabulously fast transition from one theme to the other in his opera-*bylina*, Rimsky-Korsakov is therefore imitating the practice of the epic singers themselves.

Sadko magnanimously returns the merchants' wealth that he won in his wager. The gold he has received from the Sea Tsar' will be more than enough for him, he says. This gesture is nowhere to be found in the sources. The crowd exclaim at this display of mercy, the generosity of which raises Sadko now to the level of a hero through his ethical stature, as well as through his artistic prowess and newly-acquired wealth.

As noted in Section Six, the characters of both Sadko and the Sea Princess are poorly developed in the sources, but the composer has reinvented the theme. His operatic human hero has now evolved to become a being of extraordinary artistic talent, wealth, integrity and magnanimity, worthy to wed the senior daughter of the Sea Tsar, and thereby to produce a miracle of creation.

However, before the Tableau concludes, and Sadko sails away to begin the second narrative theme of the epics concerning him, the composer interposes cameo songs from three of the foreign merchants. As noted in our Introduction, the critic Kashkin, whose review of the premiere of Sadko was extremely sympathetic, dismissed these three songs as an utterly irrelevant 'International Exhibition' (*mezhdunarodnaia vystavka*), and it might be argued that Rimsky-Korsakov was simply following musical stage tradition in depicting people from various nationalities on stage. Composers from as far back as Purcell (*The Indian Queen*, 1695), and Rameau (*Les Indes Galantes*, 1735) had taken the opportunity offered them by their story to introduce characters from exotic locations into their narrative, thus giving them the chance to compose imaginative music, frequently including songs and dances, which those characters would perform. In his fourth opera *Mlada* of 1890 (sub-titled 'An Opera-ballet (*Opera-balet*)', set in an imaginary ninth-century Slavonic Kingdom, Rimsky-Korsakov himself had included,

among others, a Bohemian, Lithuanian, and Indian Dance. Furthermore, Tchaikovsky, in his 'Nutcracker' (1892) had introduced a suite of dances including ones composed in mock Arabic and Chinese style. Yet, even the texts of the songs of these three 'guest merchants from overseas' in fact derive from ancient Russian sources, both written and oral, as we shall demonstrate below.

(13)

THE THREE FOREIGN *GOSTI TORGOVYE* ('MERCHANT GUESTS')

Incomers from exotic foreign lands are mentioned widely in the Russian epics. Visiting merchants were referred to as *gosti* ('guests'); from the earliest times in Russia, this word also possessed the significance of 'merchants' ¹ (not necessarily of foreign origin, or even from another city of Russia, for as we have observed in regard to Tableau One, the merchants of Novgorod both in the sources and in the opera-*bylina*, are also termed *gosti*). Although cameo songs are allotted specifically in the opera-*bylina* to a Variag, (Varangian or early Viking), an Indian, and a 'Vedenetsian', or Venetian, at this point, the stage direction notes that 'other' foreign merchants are to be seen selling their wares, presumably acted by chorus members or extras. This reflects Novgorod's position as a central trade junction between Byzantium, with its imports from farther east, and Western Europe. As we have observed, the composer notes in his prefatory material (Item 7) to the opera that it is an anachronism to find a Varangian in early mediaeval Novgorod, particularly on the same stage as a merchant from Venice, but, he continues, 'the *byliny* abound in anachronisms of this sort'.

Before analysing their songs, and the content of their words, let us examine where the idea of these merchants came from in the sources, and whether in fact the words 'Varangian', 'Indian', and 'Venetian' meant anything geographically precise to the far northern epic singers, and what

¹ Fasmer, I, p. 447, and Brokgauz i Efron, IX, (1893), p. 396.

part these nationalities played in the Russian folk consciousness. The music of these songs will not be extensively treated; they are the only items in the 'dry-land' sequences of the opera not deriving from the Russian milieu, and consequently the composer gave them features redolent rather of their country of origin. However, the words of these three songs, which we shall examine below, do derive to a large extent from Russian folk sources. They all have one theme in common: their evocations of the seas of their own native regions, which give the merchants their living. This theme also surrounds and encapsulates the whole *bylina* of *Sadko*, and obviously resonated deeply with the composer as a result of his early maritime background.

(13. 1)

THE VIKING MERCHANT

In ancient times the Novgorodians were subject to the Varangians, and had to pay them tribute. Although the Novgorodians managed to free themselves for a time, the Novgorod chieftains maintained a long internecine strife, and, at last, unable to resolve their quarrels, invited the Variags to come and rule them. In addition, in the ninth century, Scandinavian warriors began to play an increasing role in the defence of the Byzantine Empire, and the major route from Scandinavia to Byzantium was through the waterways of Russia.¹ As we have noted above, certain scholars have maintained that the highly-carved and decorated ships described in the *byliny* concerning Solovei Budimirovich and Sadko, derive from Viking models. The North Russians began to use the term *Variag* to distinguish anybody living near the sea, and the Roman Catholic Church came to be called the 'Varangian faith' (*Variazhskaia vera*), while a Catholic priest was termed a 'Varangian Priest' (*Variazhskii pop*). By the 13th century the term

¹ For the history of Vikings in early Rus', see Stender-Petersen, A. D., *Varangica* (Aarhus: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri, 1953), principally 'La Théorie de l'Origine Varègue de la byline Russe', (pp 217-224), and 'Chetyre etapa russkovariazhskikh otnoshenii' (pp 241-262). The above information is to be found on pp 245-248.

Varangian seems to have meant any Western European.¹

(13..2)

THE INDIAN MERCHANT

The term 'India' began to appear in Russian documents from the 11th century. In addition, written tales penetrating Rus' from the Byzantine Empire no later than the 13th century, such as the *Povest'* (or *Skazanie*) *ob Indiiskom Tsarstve* ('Tale of the Tsardom of India'), or '*Fiziolog*' ('The Physiologist'), familiarised the public with the ethnic term. The former gives a fantastic description of the flora and fauna, and in particular, of the fabulous riches, of this Indian realm. These are all details which our composer made full use of in his libretto.² This tale of uncountable wealth may also have influenced the composition of the *byliny* concerning Diuk Stepanovich and Plenko which some scholars also have speculated may have derived from Novgorod. Up until the 15th century, however, there seems to have been no clear idea where this fabulous land was; some documents state that it belongs to Egypt, some that it is near Persia, or even that it is in Africa, or 'east of Eden'.³ When Volkh Vseslavich sets off to conquer the '*Indiiskoe Tsarstvo*' (Danilov, no. 6, pp. 32-36), the Tsar of this realm is given Tatar names (Saltyk Stavrul'evich), implying that 'India' meant any exotic eastern land. Even more confusingly, the narrator of the *bylina* of Diuk Stepanovich informs us:

Во той ли во Индей во богатой,

Во той ли во Карелии во упрямой,

В том ли во городе Волоныце,

Жил-был молодой боярский сын Дюк Степанович. ⁴

¹ 'Variagi' and 'Variazhskii vopros', (both in) *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, (Brokgauz i Efron), vol 10, pp. 570 – 573.

² Speranskii, V. I., 'India v staroi russkoi pismennosti,' *Sergeiu Fedorovichu Ol'denburgu - k piatidesiatiletiu nauchno-obshchestvennoi deiatel'nosti, 1882-1932 - sbornik statei* (Leningrad: ANSSSR, 1934), pp. 463-470.

³ *Ibid*, previous note, p. 466.

⁴ 'In that there India, in that India the Wealthy,
In that there Karelia, Karelia the stiff-necked,

Of course, the province of Karelia lay to the north-east of Russia, while the no longer extant city of Volyn' (here called Volynets), lay to the west, in the old *Volynskia zemlia*, which bordered on Poland.

(13.3)

THE VENETIAN MERCHANT

The composer may have derived the idea of a Venetian merchant from the song about Solovei Budimirovich, which as we have seen *passim* in this thesis, also deals with a rich merchant from overseas. The composer also derived details of Sadko's ship, plus the words for the major chorus which finishes this Tableau, and thus, concludes the first narrative thread of the entire opera-*bylina*, from this source. Solovei ('Nightingale') is described as hailing either from 'Ledenets' or 'Vedenets'. These designations are usually taken to mean 'Venetian', and this is how the composer wishes the term Vedenetskii to be understood in his opera, as the words of his song make plain. However, the term has been interpreted very differently by scholars, and Solovei has been variously identified as Scandinavian, Icelandic, Estonian, or other nationalities.¹

(13.4)

THE WORDS OF THE SONGS

We shall begin here with an overview of the possible inspiration of the words of all three songs, then proceed to a detailed study of the words of each. Some scholars by Rimsky-Korsakov's time had proposed that the *Golubinaia kniga* was also of Novgorodian origin, and possibly as a

Within that town, within that Volynets,
There lived, there dwelt, a young boyar's son,
Diuk Stepanovich was he y-clept'.

(Rybnikov, I, no 63, pp. 355-368), p. 355.

('Karelia the Stiff-necked' is an epic commonplace, never fully explained).

¹ See eg Miliukov, P. N., 'Chto takoe 'More Virianskoe' i 'gorod Ledenets' – spravka k voprosu o vremeni i meste proiskhozhdeniia byliny o Solov'e Budimiroviche', (in) Miller, V. F. – *Iubileinyi sbornik*, ed. Ianchuk, N. A., pp. 314-316, and Vilinbakhov, V. G., 'Bylina o Solov'e Budimiroviche', *Russkii Folk'lor*, XII, sen ed. Gusev, V. E., (Leningrad; 'Nauka', 1971), pp. 226-229.

result of this the composer has already made extensive use of this long religious poem in his Novgorodian opera-*bylina* in the declamations of the wandering pilgrims in Tableau One. With its decidedly non-conventional Christian theme, this epic too provides numerous details for the portrayal of his own native land given by each merchant in his song.

Possibly this is because the Vikings, Indians and Venetians all came from cosmogonic 'world-views' different from that of semi-pagan semi-Christian Russia. The Viking sings in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera of the God Odin, while the Indian merchant presumably is a Hindu (though his song is definitely mythological and fantastic in content, with its mentions of phoenixes and uncountable jewels). Although the Venetian merchant is almost certainly a Roman Catholic Christian (or possibly, bearing Shakespeare in mind, Jewish!), his song too contains very clear pagan elements such as the marriage of the Doge to the sea. By this introduction of Vikings, Indians, and Venetians, with either non-Christian or unconventional Christian beliefs anachronistically together in early mediaeval Novgorod, the composer creates an impression of an entire world that, parallel to Novgorod, is also in a semi-pagan, semi-'conventionally-religious' state. We recall that the *Golubinaia kniga* possesses elements that are almost entirely 'non-Nicene', and derive from heretical mediaeval Christian movements such as the Bogomils and Cathars. By introducing elements from this Russian religious song which possibly derived from Novgorod into his depiction of the three foreign guest merchants, the composer appears, firstly to emphasise the all-encompassing semi-pagan universe of his opera, and secondly, to show that they are not authentic Vikings, Indians, and so on, but are representatives of these nations seen through Russian peasant eyes.

Let us now analyse the words of each foreign merchant's song in detail.

(13.5)

THE SONG OF THE VARANGIAN MERCHANT

The Viking declares his paganism by declaring of his people that '*velik ih Odin bog*' (Great is their God Odin).¹ He describes his people as hailing from the 'midnight lands', which is counterposed to the Indian merchant's description of the sea of his homeland as the 'midday sea'. This use of *polunochnoi* (midnight) to mean 'northern' and *poludennoi* (midday) to mean 'southern' was common in the language of northern Russia, where the *byliny* were rediscovered in the nineteenth century.²

What images are derived from the *Golubinaia kniga* here? In Bezsonov's collection, we read:

Наши помыслы от облац небесных,
Кости крепкие от камени,
Кровь-руда наша от Черня моря.³

In Rimsky-Korsakov's 'Song of the Viking Merchant', this becomes:

От скал тех каменных у нас, Варягов, кости,
От той волны морской у нас кровь-руда пошла,
А мысли тайные – от туманов.⁴

¹ 'Odin' is stressed on the first syllable, in contradistinction to the Russian numeral *odin* ('one') which is stressed on the second.

² See eg Dal', *Slovar'*, under *polgoda* (sic) (column 646), *poludennyi* (column 679), and *polunochnoi* (column 682), vol. 3.1.1.

³ 'Our thoughts are from the clouds of the heavens,
Our firm bones from the stones,
Our blood, our gore, from the Black Sea.'

(Bezsonov, I, no. 82, p. 301. Numerous variants of the *Golubinaia kniga* are assembled in this first volume (nos. 76-92, pp. 269-378); no. 92 is a long compendium of very many other versions. (*Krov'-ruda* ('blood-gore') is a stock epic combination).

⁴ 'From those stone cliffs do come our Varangian bones,
From the ocean wave our blood, our gore,
And our secret thoughts - from the mists.'

In other words, the fearsome Vikings of historical reality are here transformed into archetypal beings deriving from the Russian world-view.

Incidentally, in this song, the Viking describes his people's swords as being *mechi bulatnye* 'swords of damask steel'. This is another noun-epithet conjunction throughout the Russian epics, where all *bogatyri* are described as having such swords.

(13.6)

THE SONG OF THE INDIAN MERCHANT

In the first volume of Bezsonov's *Dukhovnye stikhi*, in a variant of the *Golubinaia kniga*, we find the image of a '*prekrasnoilikoï ptitsy feniks, poiushchei na more*' (a beauteous-visaged Pheonix-bird, a-singing on the sea). Furthermore, when the wise Tsar explicates the origin of all natural phenomena, and which city is the mother of all cities, which beast the mother of all beasts, (ie, which is pre-eminent in creation), and so on throughout numerous manifestations of being, we are informed that the Phoenix is the mother of all birds, and her singing will make any hearer forget everything:

Лица у ней как [у] девицы,
И когда поет гласом,
И человек услышит ее песни,
Забудет отца и мать.¹

¹ 'Her face is like unto the face of a maiden,
And wherever she singeth aloud,
Any person hearing her song
Will forget both father and mother.'
(Bezsonov, I, no. 89, p. 338).

We are further informed that this bird spreads its wings which are stronger than damask steel (*bulat*), and can cut through bones and stones (*kosti i kamni*). 'Damask steel', 'bones' and 'stones' are terms that have already occurred in the song of the Viking merchant, and so here we have further reinforcement of details of that song derived from a variant of the *Golubinaia kniga*.

For the Indian merchant's portrayal of his country, Rimsky-Korsakov has adapted the above extract to read:

..... феникс
 Птицом с ликом девы;
 Райские все песни,
 Славно распевает,

 Кто ту птицу слышит,
 Все позабывает. ¹

This is in fact the only time that the phoenix is so called in any variant of this religious poem. The bird is usually entitled *estafil-ptitsa*, *strafil-ptits*, or some such variant, and we have noted above that the precise significance of these terms is a matter of debate. We are usually informed that this bird lives upon the 'deep-blue sea', and when it shakes itself the ocean foams, with catastrophic results for seafarers:

¹ 'The Phoenix-bird hath a damsel's visage;
 Heavenly are all her songs,
 Gloriously doth she intone,

 And whoever that bird heareth,
 Everything will they forget'.

Потопляет море корабли гостиные

Со товарами драгоценными

И топит гостей, гостей торговых

Побивает судна, судна поморския.¹

And this foreshadows the cataclysm near the end of the *byliny* narrating the second strand of the Sadko story, and Rimsky-Korsakov's opera (Tableau Six), in both of which, as a result of the Sea-Tsar's dancing, the sea foams, storms arise, and ships founder.

Further details of the Indian Merchant's song are taken from two ancient prose works, the *Skazanie ob Indiiskom Tsarstve* ('The Tale of the Indian Tsardom') and *Fiziolog* ('The Physiologist').² The former work purports to be a description of his realm by the Tsar of India himself (whose name is Ioann, the old Russian form of Ivan) describing the vastness of his realm, the exotic wildlife and peoples living there, the enormous dimensions and luxurious appurtenances of his court and palace, which take 'five days to walk around', and the quantity of precious stones to be found in this tsardom. The idea of the size of his court, and its wealth, is surmised by many scholars to have influenced the description of the court of Churilo Plënkovich's father, the colossally rich merchant Plëngo Surozhenin, in the *bylina* which we have examined above in connection with Sadko's being described as a son of 'Sur Volozhanin' in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera. The Indian Merchant's song begins too with an evocation of such numberless precious stones, and then he tells us that in the middle of the sea is a *chudnyi*

¹ 'The sea o'erwhelms the merchants' ships,
With all their goods most precious,
It drowneth those merchants, those trading merchant guests,
And shivereth asunder their sea-going craft.'
(Bezsonov, I, no. 92, p. 370).

² 'Skazanie ob Indiiskom Tsarstve' (with translation into modern Russian by G. M. Prokhorov, in *Pamiatniki literatury Drevnei Rusi XIII v*, Senior Eds. L. A. Dmitriev, and Likhachev D. S., (Moscow: 'Khudozhestvennaia literatura', 1981) pp. 466-473. 'Fiziolog - Slovo i Skazanie o zverekh i ptakhakh' (with translation into modern Russian by O. A. Belobrova) *loc. cit.*, pp. 475-485.

kamen' iakhont' ('a wondrous precious stone') upon which the Phoenix sits. In the *Golubinaia kniga* the bird is described as sitting on a white stone, which appears to be a reminiscence of the magical 'white burning stone' of the *byliny*, which we have encountered in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera in Tableau Two.

However, this mention of a precious stone may be derived from the *Skazanie ob Indiiskom Tsarstve*, where, in an echo of the *Golubnaia kniga*, informing us which natural object is pre-eminent in its own realm of creation, Tsar Ioann declares that in his realm there is a *karmakaul* stone, which of all precious stones is the Lord (*gospodin*): 'in the night it gloweth, as a fire doth burn'. The precise meaning of *karmakaul* is uncertain, but it would appear from the context that it is a ruby. This motif could well have prompted the composer's idea of a giant jewel in the midst of the sea.¹

Incidentally, in the *Skazanie ob Indiiskom Tsarstve*, Tsar Ioann describes, among other exotic beasts, the elephants and rhinoceroses to be found in his realm, and Bel'skii's first draft of this song contained references to these animals. The composer rejected this draft, and the final version of the song belongs to him alone.²

The detail in the Indian Merchant's song, of the Phoenix's covering the sea with his/her wings may well derive from the ancient prose work *Fiziolog* (The Physiologist), a kind of Bestiary, in which the Phoenix is described as dwelling on top of Cedars of Lebanon for five hundred years, and spreading sweet fragrances through her outstretched wings.³

¹ Incidentally, the word *iakhont*, used in the Indian Merchant's song (and also by the two warlocks earlier in this tableau) simply in fact means a precious stone, but it is predominantly used to suggest a ruby.

² Gozenpud, *Temy i idei*, (p. 93). Bel'skii's first draft of the libretto contained references not only to the above-mentioned animals, but also to the Himalayas, the river Ganges, Brahmins, the God Brahma, and the Rg-Veda. However, none of these apart from the animals are mentioned in Russian legend or song. We may surmise that the composer rejected this draft of the song precisely because it did not represent an early Russian view of India: he wanted all details in his opera-byline to derive from Russian sources.

³ 'Fiziolog', *Pamiatniki literatury Drevnei Rusi*, pp. 476-478.

(13.7)

THE TWO SONGS OF THE VENETIAN MERCHANT

The Vedenetsian merchant sings two songs comprising one number, which musically are both in western style. In fact, reflecting his origin, the second song is in the form of a barcarolle, and is accompanied in the orchestra by lute-like pizzicati on the strings, giving a director *carte blanche* to have him apparently strum such an instrument while singing.

However, the composer employs details from the Russian religious poem, the *Golubinaia kniga*, even in the songs of this merchant who derives from a concrete 'non-mythical' period in Novgorod's history - that of its links with the Hanseatic League and its major importance as a trading city.

In the *Golubinaia kniga*, the wise Tsar is asked to explicate *inter alia* which city is the 'mother of all cities'. The answer given is usually Jerusalem, because it contains the holy places of Christendom. Several variants of the *Kniga* contain an account of a cathedral dedicated to Saint Clement rising in the midst of the sea. For example:

Посреди моря Океанского,
Выходила церковь соборная,
Соборная, богомольная,
Святого Климента попа римского.¹

In the first line of his song, in a syntactic formulation derived once again from the *Golubinaia kniga*, the Venetian Merchant describes his city as *gorodam vsem mat'* ('the mother of all

¹ 'Amiddlemost the Ocean-Sea
Hath arisen a Cathedral Church,
A Cathedral Church for praying to God,
[The Cathedral of] Saint Clement, Pope of Rome.' Bezsonov, vol I, no. 92, p. 362.

cities'), and he narrates to the listening Novgorodians how, once a year, a wondrous church emerges from the deep-blue sea. The composer here introduces the authentic Venetian tradition in which the Doge (whom the Merchant terms the *Moguchii kniaz'* – 'Mighty Prince') - is married to the sea. Although this is an authentic Venetian custom, it also points forward, of course, to Sadko's own betrothal to the Sea Princess in Tableau Six. This designation of the Doge by a Russian title and the linking even of this Venetian custom with the main theme of his opera demonstrates the composer's remarkable control of every detail of the content of his opera-*bylina*.

The unifying feature of these three cameo songs, as we have noted above, is the evocation of the sea in different states, and in this they reinforce the pelagic framework of the opera. The pre-eminent ocean of the world is personified in the work as '*Tsar' Morskoi - Okian-More*', ('The Sea-Tsar – Ocean-Sea') and the term *Okian-More* (or similar variants such as *Okean-More*) ('Ocean-sea') is to be found in all genres of Russian oral folk poetry, and not exclusively in the *byliny*.

The title *Okean-More* is employed extensively too throughout all the variants of the *Golubinaia kniga*; for instance, in one characteristic variant, the wise Tsar, when asked which sea is the Mother of all Seas, replies that it is the Ocean-Sea, because it encircles the earth:

Окиян-Море морям всем мать

Обошло тое море окол все земли.¹

By his inclusion of the Sea Tsar *Okian-More*, and by his depiction of the sea itself, which 'encircles' his opera, from the three-bar descending phrase in the introduction, to the closing

¹ Bezsonov, I, no. 92, pp. 359-362, for this and similar formulations.

bars, the composer was presumably trying to reflect this universal and all-embracing quality. The former sailor was further attempting to emphasise the significance of the sea for all humanity by making it a principal element in the songs of all his foreign merchants.

We have noted above the composer's introduction of the Ocean-Sea as the mother of all seas in the pilgrims' chorus earlier in this tableau. The pilgrims also, we recall, sang of Lake Il'men' as the mother of all lakes.

Mochul'skii considered that the *Golubinaia kniga* originated in ancient times from the Novgorod region. Among other reasons he adduces are that, in a few variants, when the wise Tsar is asked which is the mother of all lakes, he gives the response 'Il'men', the very lake which Sadko visits, and from which he summons the Sea Princess by his playing. The composer has emphasised in his opera that the Il'men' is indeed for Novgorod the 'mother of all lakes' by implying that, since the River Volkhova does not yet exist, then the city has to rely on the lake for its wealth.

The crowd, terrified by the Varangian's ferocity, and fearful that Sadko will 'forget everything' if he goes to India, advise Sadko to wend his way to Venice, and ply his trade there.

(14)

LIUBAVA'S LAMENT, AND SADKO'S SONG OF FAREWELL

Sadko boards his Falcon-ship ('*Sokol-korabl'*' - ie his flagship), and tells the Elders (whom he here specifically refers to by the historically correct terms drawn from the epics, '*starshina*' and '*voevoda*') to 'serve him with a faithful service' (*sosluzhite zhe mne sluzhbu vernuiu*) - another stock epic formula - in taking care of his young wife, who is now a *vdova siraia*. The term *vdova* (widow) is often to be found in Russian laments signifying a woman whose husband is

not necessarily dead, but has abandoned her, or has been taken as a recruit into the army. Frequently it is encountered in combination with the words *sirota*, or, as here, *siraia*, which, although commonly translated as 'orphan', and 'orphaned', possess the basic meaning 'having few, or no relations'.¹ We have already observed that Liubava's surname seems to suggest that she is related to the other hero of the Novgorodian *byliny*, Vasilii Buslaev, and that various epics concerning Vasilii state that his father died in advanced old age. Furthermore, in the second strand of Vasilii stories (those concerning his pilgrimage to Jerusalem to expiate his sins) he too is depicted as dying as a result of his blasphemy there on the Holy Mountain. Would it be too overscrupulous a reading of details here to suggest that, by having Sadko call Liubava a 'total widow', the composer is drawing our attention to the epics of the Vasilii cycle, and reminding us that, according to them, both her father and brother are already dead?

This gives the cue for Liubava herself to rush in and sing a lament drawn from Russian funeral lamentations and recruit songs. The declamation is in an epic 9/4 time, and begins: *Zakatihsia svetel mesiats za oblaka zakhodiachie*, (The radiant moon has set behind the low clouds) *Moia ladushka liubimaia ostavliaet menia na veki vekovechnye* (My beloved deerelyng ... is abandoning me for ever and ever). The prototype of such phrases is to be found in numerous funeral laments of a wife for a husband.² She then continues *Kuda ty sobiraesh'sia? Uzh kuda ty snariazhaesh'sia? V kakoi narod? V kaku (sic) storony* (Whither art thou bending thy way? Whither art thou arrayed (to go)? Unto what people, into which land'). Once again, the prototype of such phrases is found commonly either in funeral keens, where the wife walks beside her husband's body as, arrayed for burial, it is carried from the house, or else in recruit

¹ Barsov, E. V., *Prichitaniia severnago kraia*, 2 vols (vol I, Moscow 1872, vol II, Moscow 1882), I, p. 6.

² Eg Barsov, vol I *passim*; eg pp. 1, 41 and 48. Incidentally, 'beneath the 'low' (*zakhodiachie*) or 'passing' (*khodiachie*) clouds is a consistent formula found in various genres of Russian folk song, including the *byliny*; very commonly, to display their strength and prowess, *bogatyr*i are portrayed as galloping across the open plain (*otkrytoe pole*), hurling their vermilion cudgels weighing 300 poods (10,800 Imperial lbs) 'just lower than the passing clouds' and catching them again in mid-gallop (eg *Sviatogor*, Gil'ferding III, no. 265, pp. 388-391 (p. 389).

songs, where the wife, mother, sister, or some other female relative, laments a man's forcible conscription into army service, which could last as long as twenty years (there were no such things as married quarters, of course, for the common soldier).¹ The words and rhythm of Liubava's lament bear an extremely close resemblance to items in Agreneva-Slavianskaia's transcriptions from the singing of Irina Fedosova, the *plakatel'nitsa*, or singer of laments, whom Rimsky-Korsakov heard sing in 1895, and from whom, as we know, he noted down several items.²

We have already noted above in Tableau Three, the lamenting Liubava's reference to the 'damp earth'. Here, in Tableau Four, in her final reproach to the departing Sadko, his wife uses the phrase in its more common and fuller form 'Damp Mother Earth':

Расступися ты, мать сыра земля,
Вдову сиркою, ты сокрой меня.³

This whole couplet too is derived from the laments of widows for their husbands.⁴

Sadko tells her the swan cannot restrain the Bright Falcon (*iasen sokol* - a stock description of a *bogatyr*), but also to be found in funeral songs⁵), and sings to the folk of Novgorod the phrase '*prosti proshchai*', which could be translated as 'Forgive me, and farewell'. In effect it is a further consistent formula consisting of two words derived from the same root to emphasise

¹ Eg Shein, (1898), no. 2505, p. 781, for such a funeral lament, and, for a recruit song, Agreneva-Slavianskaia, vol III, otdel III, pp. 71-86 (*Goloshenie po rekrutam i rekrutskie pesni*), 71.

² See App. III, Ex. 13.

³ 'Open up, Damp Mother Earth,
An orphaned widow [ie with no relations left], cover me o'er'.

⁴ Eg Shein (1898), no. 2512, p. 784. It has been surmised that the numerous references to 'Mother Earth' in Russian folk literature are a reminiscence of the old forgotten Russian Pantheon - eg see Fedotov, G., *Stikhi dukhovnye - Russkaia narodnaia vera po dukhovnym stikham* (Moscow: 'Gnozis' 1991), pp. 65-78 and pp. 173-75.

⁵ Eg Shein (1898), no. 2512, p. 784.

the primary meaning of 'farewell'. On boarding the Falcon-Ship, Sadko leads off the great chorus, *Vysota li vysota podnebesnaia* ('The heights, the heights, beneath the skies') with which Tableau Four ends, and thus concludes the first strand of the *Sadko* story in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera-*bylina*. The words and melody of this chorus are drawn directly from Danilov, and form the exordium, and first few lines of the narrative, of the variant therein of *Solovei Budimirovich*, which is supposed by many to derive from Novgorod, and to have influenced the creation of the epic concerning Sadko. This introduction to *Solovei* takes the form of a paean in praise of nature and of localities in Russia.

A variant of this introduction is also found in Danilov at the head of another song, implying that it could be moved from *bylina* to *bylina* at will, as a kind of 'call to attention' to the audience. Such an introduction especially seems to be very closely linked with the story of Solovei, as it is found with other variants of this song too.¹

However, in this context, it is also obviously a riposte from Sadko the Rich Trader, to the foreign merchants who have been extolling their lands. When on his ship, according to the stage direction Sadko '*saditsia na besede dorog rybii zub*' – (sitteth him down upon a bench of precious fishen fangs (ie walrus or whale bone)). As we have observed, this detail of precious goods being carved from ivory is commonplace in the epics, and possession of such goods was in mediaeval times a sign of great wealth. However, Sadko is again explicitly equated here with Solovei Budimirovich, for this detail of the 'bench of ivory' is drawn from the *bylina* of the latter, in which Solovei too is described as sitting on such a bench. Once more, the composer is demonstrating the manner in which in ancient times new heroes had epics composed about them based on old models, with stock details transferred from one to another.

¹ Eg Rybnikov II, no. 123, p. 121, and no. 132, p. 223. In Danilov, as well as opening *Solovei* (no. I) it is to be found at the head of the fragmentary and confused song, no. 58, simply entitled '*Vysota li vysota podnebesnaia*', pp. 201-202 (p. 201). For Rimsky-Korsakov's version see App. III Ex 14.

Once again, the composer is faced with the difficulty which we have noted above, in our analysis of Nezhata's *bylina* in Tableau One. The simple incantatory rhythm of a *bylina* line may enthrall the audience when employed by a peasant *skazitel'/nitsa* in the village pub, especially when they have all had several glasses of vodka, or, in earlier, shamanic times, been eating hallucinogenic mushrooms, but, declaimed over a prolonged period to a sophisticated urban middle-class audience, it would soon become tedious. Therefore the composer, while altering the rhythmically forceful theme little over the following verses, varies the accompaniment considerably. For instance, Sadko sings the first four lines solo and unaccompanied. Then, at the next lines '*Kak iz-za moria, moria sineva*', (From beyond that sea, that deep-blue sea), he is joined by the male chorus who sing a simple chordal accompaniment. On the third variation, *Khorosho korabli izukrashenny* (Right well are those ships y-dight), the chorus sing the theme, while Sadko weaves around it contrapuntally.¹

As we know, the composer had already adopted this method of variation by the accompanying forces, while maintaining the solo line largely unchanged, in his setting of verses from *Volkh Vseslavich* in Tableau One, and this may well have been in imitation of genuine folk practice.

Sadko sails away as the chorus comes to an end, and the first part of the composite Sadko legend ends.

(15)

SUMMARY

We have attempted, by a painstaking examination of every number, and almost every line of text, in this central tableau, to emphasise the composer's extraordinary knowledge of his

¹ For a full analysis (in western musical terminology) of the music of this chorus, see Gilse van der Pals, pp. 323-324.

sources, and his attempt apparently to concentrate as much meaning into every textual reference as possible. We may even speculate whether some of this linking was unconscious; we have noted above that the newly-created river through Novgorod is called Volkhov/a, that the evil wizard of pagan mythology who dwelt on the bed of this river before it received its present name was called Volk, that Rimsky-Korsakov introduces into his opera an extract from the *bylina* of the shaman-like figure Volkh/Volk, who is sometimes called Volga (ie a reference to another river), and that, in Tableau Four, he introduces two wizards, or *volkhvy*, even though there is no justification for this in the epic sources. Was the similarity of names and titles intentional, or were they suggested to the composer by a purely unconscious process of association? Similarly, we remember that Sadko's wife is called Liubava Buslaevna, which seems to link her with the Novgorod *byliny* of Vasilii Buslaev, and we have stated that, by having Liubava term herself *siraia vdova*, the composer may have been intending to remind us that in these latter *byliny*, both her father and her brother Vasilii have died, and so Sadko is now leaving her totally alone. But again - was this density of reference intentional, or unconscious?

It will be recollected from our Introduction that Richard Taruskin called Rimsky-Korsakov's operas a 'semiotician's dream'. This attempt to compress an extraordinary number of references into every line, indeed every word, is reminiscent of such artists as James Joyce, in *Ulysses* and, particularly, *Finnegan's Wake*, where the writer strove consciously over twelve years (1927-1939) to pack as much multi-layered meaning as possible into every word and phrase. It is for this reason that we have attempted in our analysis of the first *Sadko* story in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera to demonstrate the composer's similar methods of working - whether fully intentional or partly unconscious - by our very painstaking, almost bar-to-bar and line-to-line analysis, especially in the extremely long and complex Tableau Four.

Possibly the composer introduced such a wealth of reference to music from the folk tradition in

his fourth tableau, because the final three tableaux are concerned almost exclusively with Sadko's adventures in a magical world, and so require different musical resources from him (Rimsky-Korsakov). Therefore, we shall examine the last three tableaux, dealing with the story of Sadko the Rich Merchant on the sea bed, much more cursorily, because we have now met most of the stock noun-adjective combinations and motifs, and have been introduced to all the characters apart from the *Starchishche Moguch-Bogatyr'* (*Bogatyr'* Monastic Elder) who appears as a *Deus ex machina* in Tableau Six.

Sub-Section C

Tableaux Five to Seven.

TABLEAU FIVE

(1)

THE SECOND STRAND OF THE SADKO LEGEND BEGINS; SADKO THE RICH MERCHANT IS BECALMED AT SEA

Sadko, although he still has his *gusli* with him, is now a wealthy merchant. The stage direction, and presumably any programme to a performance, informs us that Sadko has been sailing the seas for 12 years.

This very long and detailed stage direction is made up of several of the stock epic formulae we have already met (see App. II, no. 13 for full text). In summary, this stage direction tells us that, upon the Ocean-Sea Sadko the Rich Merchant's Falcon-ship appears. Evening is drawing on (*vecher vecheriaetsia*), the beauteous bright sun is setting. Sadko is on the ship with his *druzhina*. He is seated upon his bench of precious fishes'-fangs, covered o'er with embroidered velvet; the ship is becalmed: yet in the distance other ship-boats (presumably the other thirty ships of Sadko's fleet) sail by with no problem.

The crew, in a sinister G sharp minor version of the melody of the closing chorus of Tableau Four, in words drawn directly from the opening of the second Sadko narrative in Danilov (*Sadkov korabl' stal na more* – 'Sadko's ship stood still at sea') inform us disconsolately that Sadko's *sokol-korabl'* is becalmed. The *druzhina* cast three barrels into the sea, one each of red (ie purest) gold (*krasno zoloto*), pure silver (*chisto zoloto*), and large smooth pearls (*skatnyi zhemchug*). As we have seen, these three precious items, with their concomitant fixed epithets are met with constantly throughout the epics. However, this detail of the offering of

such tribute to the Sea Tsar is unique to the *byliny* of Sadko, and the composer was possibly further impelled to insert this detail, by the fact that Afanas'ev' mentions such sacrifices being made to the spirits of the waters to achieve successful voyages.¹

Sadko now proceeds to explain that he, Sad-Sadko, has been sailing the seas for 12 years, without paying the Sea-Tsar either taxes or tribute. Twelve years is, of course epic time: compare the numerous variants of the tales concerning Dobrynia in which he is described as spending twelve years on his travels.² The phrase 'taxes and tribute' (*dani i poshliny*) is also formulaic.³ Yet still, despite this offering of gold, silver, and pearls, it is Sadko's Falcon-Ship alone that remains becalmed.

Sadko declares that he, Sad-Sadko, knows and wots, that the Sea Tsar requires a human sacrifice. He commands his bodyguard to draw lots for this honour. In the sources lots are often drawn, in folk-tale fashion, three times, as Sadko, who also casts in his lot, tries to falsify the result three times before accepting the inevitable. For instance, in Danilov, (no. 47, p. 179) the crew first cast in lots of willow-wood, while Sadko throws in a hop-leaf: the sacrifice will be selected from those whose lots sink. Sadko's leaf sinks, while the wood remains afloat; the second time round, the lots are reversed, but this time Sadko's wood sinks, while the leaves float; finally, when the crew throw in lots of white-willow (*vetla*), Sadko casts a 'lot of damask steel' (*zherebei bulatnyi*) weighing ten *poods* (360 Imperial lbs) which floats while everybody else's lots sink.

This three-fold repetition of events or actions is common practice in the sources. A folk narrator would presumably have all evening in the village hall to entertain his audience, and the

¹ Afanas'ev, *Poeticheskiia Vozzreniia*, II, 230-231; for references to gold, silver, and pearls being offered as sacrifices to the Sea-Tsar in Sadko, see eg Rybnikov, II, p. 25, and pp. 248-249.

² Eg, *Dobrynia v ot'ezde*, Rybnikov, I, pp. 162-172.

³ Eg *Dobrynia i Vasilii Kazimirov*, Rybnikov, II, pp. 43-69 (p. 45).

repetition would serve to create a hypnotic effect. Besides, the stereotypical repetition would enable him or her to plan the next section of the tale.

However, this three-fold repetition would be tedious on stage, besides extending still further what is already a notably long work. Even if the composer had incorporated multiple repetition here, producers given a time-limit for the length of a performance by the theatre would have automatically cut this section down before making any other excisions. Therefore the composer presumably thought it advisable to sacrifice authenticity, and only one set of lots is cast in the opera. Sadko enjoins his retinue to cut their lots from willow-wood (*'rezh'te zhereb'ia volzheny'*). Whoever's lot sinks must be the victim. However, we have already seen in Tableau Four that Sadko has achieved epic status as a moral hero in the eyes of the people by his magnanimous returning of everything he has won to the merchants. Rimsky-Korsakov emphasises once more here, in the second strand of the story, that Sadko has achieved heroic status, and is beloved by his crewmen and *druzhina*. He is not the crafty character of many of the sources: for it his own retinue and crewmen who tell him to make his lot a 'hop-leaf' (*khmelevo pero*), so that his will float. Predictably, Sadko's hop-leaf sinks; the willow-wood lots float, as the crewmen exclaim, *'kak by iary gogoli po zavod'am* ('like radiant golden-eyes [a species of duck] upon the creeks'). This phrase is commonplace in the epics.¹ The *gogol'* must have been common in ancient Rus', and have made an impression with its striking appearance, for in *Slovo o polku Igoreve*, too, we read that Prince Igor escapes from the Polovtsian hosts *'.. belym gogolem na vodu'* ('like a white golden-eye upon the water').²

Sadko, in another *protiazhnaia pesnia*, (slow, long-drawn-out elegiac song), in 2/4 time, in the form of a Russian funeral lament, bids farewell to his shipmates, his retinue. He commands

¹ Eg see the two variants of *Sadko* to be found in Rybnikov, II, no. 134, p. 249, and Danilov, no. 47, p. 179.

² Filin, p. 104, line 436. For a colour illustration of this bird, see *Ducks of the World in Full-Color Paintings by Allan Brooks and other artists*, (New York: Dover, 1989), colour plate XLIX.

them to bring his '*gusli zvonchatye*' (resounding *gusli*), and to let down the silver gangplank, another stereotypical formula in the epics.¹ He tells them to cast an oaken raft upon the waters for himself, and to return to Novgorod and ask his young wife 'not to think ill of him' – phrases drawn almost wholly from Rybnikov.² As he steps onto the raft (not the chessboard variant noted in our analysis of Tableau Four) the sails fill, and the Falcon-Ship speeds off. The voices of the men's chorus are heard as the ship sails away, lamenting, in 3/2 time, that Sadko has been apparently abandoned to his doom:

Как по морюшку синему
Бежит-побегаёт Сокол-корабль,
А беседа пуста стоит;
Не сидит на ней соловей Садко.³

Not only may we observe here the folk diminutive of 'sea' (*moriushko*), and the two conjoined variants of *begat'* (to speed) in typical epic fashion for emphasis; but, for the second time in the opera, Sadko is explicitly called *solovei* (nightingale) which, although lower case here, equates him with once more with Solovei Budimirovich, and once again demonstrates how this poor *gusli*-player who has achieved rich merchant status, and now has been chosen by the Sea Tsar as a victim, is increasing in stature as an epic hero as the opera progresses.

Sadko strums his *gusli* (piano and harp in the orchestra), and, to the accompaniment of off-stage female chorus, and the voice of the Sea Tsarevna calling him to her, Sadko and his raft

¹ See eg *Sadkov korabl' stal na more*, Danilov, no. 47, p. 180, and *Solovei Budimirovich*, Rybnikov, II, pp. 344-351 (p. 346).

² See eg Rybnikov, II, no. 134, p. 250.

³ 'Across the lovely deep-blue sea,
There speedeth, there fleeteth, the Falcon-Ship,
But the bench standeth empty
The nightingale Sadko sitteth not upon it'.

sink. Sadko, the Russian Orpheus, who is now wealthy and beloved by the common folk, is ready for his marriage to the Sea Princess.

TABLEAU SIX

(1)

SADKO ON THE SEA BED: SADKO'S PAGAN MARRIAGE

Although the plot of this section follows that of most of the major variants of the story of Sadko the Rich Merchant, there are fewer borrowings from the *byliny* here than previously. Since we are now on the bed of the sea, the exotic scales and harmonies of modern western art music which the composer used for his fantasy scenes predominate greatly over the folk element. However, the composer inserts songs derived from the Russian wedding ritual, and dance tunes, which we shall examine below.

To an accompanying orchestral intermezzo Sadko reaches the seabed and, according to the stage direction ' ... *iz temnoi temeni, vystupaet prozrachnyi, lazorevyi terem. Posered' ego chast rakitov kust* (from out of darkness dark appeareth a transparent azure *terem*, in the midst of which is a dense broom bush). The phrase '*iz temnoi temeni*' (from out of darkness dark), although in epic style, does not seem to occur in the *byliny* themselves, and may be an invention of the composer's. Likewise, the azure *terem* is not to be found in any variant, although the word *lazorevyi* is common in Russian lyrical song, usually as a description of flowers, such as cornflowers.¹ Once again the precise meaning of *terem* is uncertain. It may mean a large aristocratic mansion, or a tower. Here, since it is the residence of the Sea Tsar and Tsarina, it is probably best translated as 'palace'. The broom bush growing in the centre of the palace is a bizarre detail, and is not found in any variant of Sadko, although it does occur in

¹ Eg see Shein (1898), no. 4882, p. 119, and no. 680, p. 177.

other epics, most notably in those concerning Dobrynia. We shall analyse its precise significance later.

The details of Sadko's entry into the *terem* on a sea-shell pulled by dolphins also seem to be an invention of the composer.¹ The Sea Tsar greets Sadko with the traditional greeting found throughout the epics 'Goi esi' (or, in some variants 'Goi tyi esi'), which, although obscure, Russian scholars generally have assumed to mean 'May thou be healthy'!² He is enraged that Sadko has coursed the seas for twelve years without paying him tribute, yet Volkhova manages to pacify him, and asks the Sea Tsar to persuade the folk musician to perform on his instrument and sing. At the Sea Tsar's command, Sadko strikes up a *velichal'naia pesnia* (Song of Praise) in 6/4 time - one of the long-drawn-out epic rhythms which predominate in this work.

Sadko's description of the Sea Tsar's *terem* is a stock formula, and derives from the fashionable decoration of boyars' mansions with heavenly bodies:

На небе солнце, в тереме солнце,
 На небе месяц, в тереме месяц,
 На небе звезды, в тереме звезды.³

This is an accurate portrayal: in the arched construction of large rooms in old Russia, the upper

¹ The word used here for 'dolphin' is *kasatka*, and the libretto to the Philips recording under Gergiev mistranslates this as 'swallows'. *Kasatka*, although it does indeed signify 'swallow', also means a grampus-like species of dolphin (*Orcinus orca*), and the composer emphasised in a letter to Iastrebtsev (5 July 1895) that this is the intended meaning here (quoted in A. N. Rimsky-Korsakov, IV, 69-70). It may here be noted in parentheses that the translation to the Gergiev recording frequently appears to be somewhat less than accurate.

² Fasmer, I, 427.

³ 'In the sky is the sun, in the *terem* is the sun,
 In the sky is the moon, in the *terem* is the moon,
 In the sky are the stars, in the *terem* are the stars.'

For such formulations in the epic sources, see eg. *Pro Solov'e Budimiroviche*, Danilov, no. 1, p. 12.

section of the arches was normally decorated with the sky bestrewn with stars and the moon, while in the centre was the sun, radiating rays picked out with gold leaf. ¹

The next two lines '*Na nebe zori, v tereme zori, Na nebe grozy, v tereme grozy*' (In the sky are lightning flashes, in the *terem* lightning flashes, In the sky are tempests, in the *terem* are tempests) seem to be an invention of the composer's, in that they are not found in any *bylina*. However, the mention of storms here in connection with the Sea Tsar foreshadows the storms caused by his dancing at the end of this Tableau.

Some of the attributes of the Sea Tsar, Tsarina, and Volkhova, which Sadko declaims in his Song of Praise derive from descriptions of the creation of the universe in the *Golubinaia kniga*. The musician declares that the sun, moon, and stars are all parts of the bodies of divine or supernatural beings:

То светло солнце – лик владыки,
Ясен месяц – кудры Царицы,
Частые звезды – очи царевны.

and so on.²

In numerous variants of the *Golubinaia kniga* the wise Tsar, explicating the creation of the universe from the book, explains that the sun is God's face, and the moon or stars are His eyes. ³

¹ Chicherov, V. I. and Ukhov, P. D., pp. 217-218, and Khalanskii, M., *Velikorusskii byliny Kievskago tsikla* (Warsaw: 1885), pp. 196-198.

² 'That shining sun bith the visage of the Ruler [or 'Lord'],
The radiant moon bith the locks of the Tsaritsa,
The thick-strewn stars bith the eyen of the Tsarevna',
and so on.

³ See eg Bezsonov, I, no. 92, p. 355.

We recall that, according to the composer in the prefatory notes to his opera (Item 2), this work is set in 'semi-legendary semi-historical times' when Christianity still did not hold sway. Possibly the composer, with his sceptical attitude to religion, but love of ancient pagan traditions and pantheism, is making the point here that attributes of the old pagan deities were transferred to the Christian God when that religion finally supplanted paganism.

The Sea Tsar, in extolling Sadko's singing and playing, declares that '*Svetloi mysliu, slovno chaikou beloi, po-nad morem samim on parit*' (Like a radiant thought [or 'in radiant thought'], like unto a white gull-bird, he soareth o'er the sea itself). In Tableau One Nezhata, the *gusli*-player from Kiev, was also described as 'ranging in thought', linking him with the bard Boian of the *Song of Igor's Campaign* whose visionary qualities are portrayed similarly. Sadko, too, in this description of the sea-bird has achieved this status of epic bard of the Russian people, equal in status to Boian. The Sea Tsar declares that he will marry off his daughter Volkhova to Sadko. However, Sadko must live in the *terem* for ever if he does so.

(2)

THE MARRIAGE BETWEEN THE HUMAN ARTIST AND THE ELEMENTAL CREATURE

The Sea Tsar then calls upon the various sea creatures to fulfil the roles of the functionaries at a traditional Russian wedding: for instance, the 'evil pike' will be the matchmaker, the burbot will be the best men (*druzhki*), the perches will be the maids of honour (*sennye devitsy*), and so on.¹ Following this, there is a Procession of Sea Wonders, a wedding song, a dance of the rivers and streams, and a dance of the 'Gold-finned (*zolotoperye*) and 'silver-scaled' (*serebrocheshuinye*) fish.²

¹ For an account of the extraordinarily complex Russian wedding ritual, see the details included *passim* throughout Shein (1898), section: '*Pesni obriadovyiia i svadebnaia*', nos. 1284--2501, pp. 377-777.

² Incomprehensibly, and with no acknowledgement, the Gergiev recording cuts straight from the Sea Tsar's appointment of the wedding functionaries (vol c, p. 114 full score, p. 380 piano reduction) to the dance of the fish (p. 171 full score, and p. 402 piano score), thus omitting the central symbolic episode of the opera - the marriage of a human artist to an elemental being, resulting in the creation of a natural feature.

Although this episode does not seem to derive from any folk song sources, reference is made in folk songs to silver- and gold-scaled fish of various kinds. Most strikingly for our purposes here, a short song in Lopatin's collection of 1885 describes a pike from Novgorod with silver and gold scales:

Щука шла из Новагорода,
.....

Как на щука чешуйка серебряная,
Что серебряная, позолоченная.¹

Sadko strikes up a dance on his *gusli*, and parades with the bride and the wedding procession three times round the broom bush which is growing in the middle of the *terem* on the bed of the sea. This is only marginally more absurd than the ash-tree growing in the middle of Hunding's living room and protruding through the roof in Act One of *Die Walküre*, and there may indeed be a humorous reference to this Wagnerian image here, for Wagner's Ring Cycle had been performed for the first time in Russia in its entirety only as late as 1889, by the touring German Opera of Prague; Rimsky-Korsakov (together with Glazunov) had attended every rehearsal, following the score, had been greatly impressed, and the memory must have been still very vivid for him.²

What is the significance of this broom bush? The composer has inserted it here as a reference to pagan wedding tradition, and, once again, to the *byliny*, especially those of Dobrynia, the

¹ 'A pike came forth from Novgorod,
Upon that pike were scales of silver,
Scales of silver and of gold'.

Lopatin, Nikolai, *Polnyi narodnyi pesennik*, (Moscow: 'Gramotnost', 1885), no. 183, pp. 215-216. This falls in the section *Pesni podbliudnaia* (Plate Songs), pp. 213-217. The note on p. 213 informs us that these songs were sung at ritual fortune-telling sessions at Christmas. The above song ushers in wealth.

² Rimsky-Korsakov, *Letopis'*, (1955), p. 169. For a comprehensive coverage of Wagner's influence in Russia, see Bartlett, Rosamund, *Wagner in Russia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

courtly *Kievan bogatyr'* who is an adept on the *gusli*. Marriage around the broom bush ((vo)krug rakitova kusta) was a sign of a non-church 'common law' wedding, with a hint at a pagan wedding tradition.¹ For example, Dobrynia, under enchantment by the sorceress Marina, takes part in such a wedding round a broom bush:

Оне в чистом поле женилися,

Круг ракитова куста венчались. ²

The composer has possibly introduced this motif here because, of course, since the marriage between Sadko the Sea Princess takes place in a kingdom ruled by a pagan deity, then a Christian marriage is out of the question. However, we recall that Sadko already has one wife, Liubava, in the 'real', nominally Christian world, and therefore the composer is possibly attempting to deflect criticism from the church and civil authorities that he is depicting bigamy in his opera, by picturing here a non-valid wedding ritual. ³

The dance becomes ever more frantic, as Sadko strums increasingly wildly: finally the Sea Tsar steps from his throne and *pripiasyvaet* or dances in the traditional Russian fashion. In other words, the composer is emphasising that the Sea Tsar is a true Russian deity (as we know, in Danilov's first variant, he lives in an *izba*, or peasant log cabin), and he conducts the weddings of his realm in true Russian peasant style.

¹ Mikhel'son M. I., *Russkaia mysl' i rech'*, 2 vols, (St Petersburg: Imp. Ak. Nauk, 1902-3), I, p. 173, section B767.

² 'Thaye wed out in the open plain,
Thaye married around the broom bush.'

(Danilov, no 9, *Tri goda Dobryniushka stol'nichal* ('Three years did Dobrynia wait at table'), p. 47.

³ Stephen Muir, in his 'Rimsky-Korsakov, Sadko, and the Byliny', *British Postgraduate Musicology* (Cambridge, UK: Wolfson College, 1997), I, pp. 5-13 (p. 13) claims that it is left indeterminate as to whether Sadko and Volkhova actually marry. However, the stage direction definitely states that they are 'led round the broom bush three times by the Sea Tsar and his Queen', and it is this ritual that constitutes the pagan wedding (it is a parodic imitation of the triple circumambulation of the altar in a Russian Orthodox church wedding). Furthermore, the direction states that they all parade round the bush *pod penie svadebnoi pesni* ('to the singing of a wedding song'), and that the bride's sisters follow the 'pair who are being married' (*venchaiushchikhsia*).

The Sea Tsar calls upon the swift rivers to overflow their banks and sink the *busy-korabli'*, and to destroy 'Christian folke' (*pravoslavnyi liud*). This seems to be an invention of the composer's, for the most complete sources¹ simply tell us that, as the Sea Tsar dances, many ships founder at sea, and many Christian folk drown. We are specifically informed in this Rybnikov variant that Christian folk pray to St Nicholas of Mozhaisk for deliverance.

(3)

THE LAST CHARACTER TO BE INTRODUCED: THE MIGHTY BOGATYR MONASTIC ELDER/ST NICHOLAS

At the frenzied height of the dance on the sea-bed in Tableau Six, which results in the seas and rivers bursting their banks, and in violent storms which cause ships to sink, Rimsky-Korsakov introduces a character (a baritone role) to declaim majestically, in a chant-rhythm derived from the *obikhod*, or Russian Orthodox Psalter. He commands Sadko to cease his playing, deprives the Sea-Tsar of his power, and orders both him and his entire realm to disappear for ever. Having then decreed that Sadko and his new bride Volkhova should rise to the surface, and Volkhova transform herself into a river for the benefit of the people of Novgorod, he himself vanishes permanently from the opera. This character is termed in the opera's prefatory list of characters *Starchishche moguch bogatyr' v obraze kaliki perekhozhego* (roughly, 'Mighty Bogatyr' Monastic Elder in the form of a wandering pilgrim'). However, in the score, this role is simply titled *Videnie* (Apparition or Vision), and the accompanying stage direction informs us that this apparition is *Starchishche nevedomyi v odeianii kaliki perekhozhego* ('Mighty Unknown Monastic Elder in the raiment of a wandering pilgrim'). He smashes Sadko's *gusli* with his pilgrim's staff. This personage never appears as such, under this title, in the *byliny* concerning Sadko. Sadko is, in rare variants, ordered to cease his playing by the Sea Tsar's

¹ Eg Rybnikov, II, no. 134.

wife. On just a couple of occasions he is commanded to do so by an unknown old man who suddenly appears.¹ However, as noted, we are told in some variants that the people have been praying to St Nicholas to save them. Moreover, in the vast majority of the sources at this point, we are informed quite specifically that it is St Nicholas who appears to end the turbulent events taking place on the surface of the sea and on dry land as a result of the turmoil on the sea-bed.

What is this character's significance in the opera at this point? There were several St Nicholases ('Nikolai', 'Nikola', or 'Mikola', in Russian) held in popular veneration in Russia, each with differing sacred functions. Their cults appear to have been a result of the assimilation into early Russia of the legends surrounding the figure of St Nicholas of Myra, the 4th century Bishop of Myra in Lycaea, who was the patron saint of sea-farers. Originally, in Russia, St Nikolai Zaraiskii assumed this function of protecting sailors, while St Nikolai Mozhaiskii defended cities. The cult of St Nikolai of Mozhaisk was brought to Novgorod as late as the mid-15th-century, and he subsequently became the patron saint of that city. We recall that Rimsky-Korsakov's opera opens with a feast of the *Nikol'shchina*, or *St Nicholas Fraternity*, apparently held on Summer St Nicholas's Day, May 6. In Danilov no 28, Sadko enters into his wager with the merchants of the same Guild, at a banquet presumably held on the same day. Moreover, the *bylina* Sadko pays for the construction and endowment of a church dedicated to St Nikolai Mozhaiskii,² while the folk musician of the opera in an almost exact repetition of the words from Rybnikov (II no 134), although never specifically mentioning St Nikolai Mozhaiskii, promises in Tableau One that, if he becomes wealthy, he will 'build divine churches, gild the crosses and domes, and set the icons in pearls and precious stones'. By the 19th century, when the *byliny* were rediscovered, the folk singers of the Russian far north had forgotten this particular saint's original function, and his great popularity had superseded

¹ Rybnikov, II, no. 134, p. 150, and Gil'ferding, I, no. 70, p. 653, both sung by the same singer, Andrei Sorokin.

² Eg Rybnikov, II, no. 134.

that of all the other 'Nicholas-cults'.¹

However Rimsky-Korsakov replaced this figure, possibly inspired by the 'unknown old man' of Rybnikov's no 134, by a supernatural 'monastic elder'. There were conventions, strictly upheld by the imperial censors, that neither members of the Romanov dynasty, nor major religious figures, could be represented on stage. The composer had already had problems with the censors in trying to represent Catherine the Great on stage in his opera directly preceding *Sadko, Noch' pered Rozhdestvom* ('Christmas Eve') of 1894-5, and he acknowledged to his associates that he would almost certainly have similar trouble in assigning a role to a major religious figure in *Sadko*.²

Rimsky-Korsakov imported the idea of a '*bogaty*r' monk' from the other major Novgorod cycle of *byliny*, those concerning Vasilii Buslaev. We have already noted that one of the methods by which the composer tried to create a unified and comprehensive picture of 'semi-legendary, semi-historic Novgorod' was the weaving of references to other Novgorod *byliny* and tales into his opera-*bylina*: this importation of a '*bogaty*r' monk to replace St Nicholas is a prime example of such an attempt.

This enigmatic figure is named variously throughout the variants of Vasilii Buslaev as *Starchishche Piligrimische*, *Starchischche Peregriumishche*, *Starets Preugriumishche*, and other similar formulations. It is difficult to make precise sense of these terms. The root *star* in Russian signifies 'old', and the term *starets* means, a monk not necessarily superior to others in rank, but a 'monastic elder' in terms of his spiritual wisdom and insight.³ The suffix *-ishche*

¹ Smolitskii and Smimov, *Novgorodskie byliny*, p. 399.

² See Iastrebtsev, I, 24 Nov, 1895, p. 323. The censors did indeed refuse such permission, and the composer resignedly declared (*ibid* 20 Feb, 1897, p. 442), that he would have to alter the libretto in regard to St Nicholas 'as a result of which the entire idea of Christianity's victory over paganism is distorted'. It is unclear whether this latter comment is the composer's own, or Iastrebtsev's gloss on the situation.

³ The concept of a *starets* will be familiar to readers from Dostoyevsky's *Karamazov Brothers* (1879-80 - many translations), in which the testimony and spiritual counsel of the *Starets* Zosima are expounded over some forty

strictly speaking imparts to the root noun a sense of great size, with an occasional implication too of grossness. However, when used in folk literature, the suffix frequently appears to add nothing to the meaning whatever, except possibly a slightly humorous tinge. We have already met this suffix in the title of the *skomorokh* song from Danilov's collection,¹ *Terentishche*, which the composer claimed was one of his sources for his opera-*bylina*. *Terentishche* may mean 'Terrible Terry', 'Great Big Terry', or simply 'Terence': in other words, the suffix in the last case adds nothing to the meaning at all. The apparition's title *Starchishche moguch-bogatyř* (Mighty *Bogatyř*' Monastic Elder), his majestic, supernatural appearance, and his declamation to a rhythm from the *Obikhod* or Psalter seem to have been a device of Rimsky-Korsakov's to bring to the audience's mind the awareness that the character is actually meant to represent St Nicholas. He does not seem to be the figure who appears in the *byliny*, who is often represented as being rather unpleasant, and sometimes even as a figure of mirth.²

The monk of the *byliny* is Vasilii Buslaev's godfather (*diad'ko krestnyi batiushka*) and he is summoned to attempt to pacify Vasilii and his rioting followers in the first strand of the story. Marxist commentators have maintained that this figure is an embodiment of the old hide-bound Novgorod against which Vasilii Buslaev is leading the struggle.³ Vasilii and his followers totally ignore the monk and in one variant, Vasilii actually batters his monastic god-parent to death.⁴ It is explicitly stated, in some variants of the second group of songs concerning Vasilii (that narrating his sailing on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with his *druzhina*) that he is going there to expiate this appalling crime.

We recall here too, that, in some variants of the only *bylina* dealing with such a pilgrimage, 'The Forty and One Palmers a-Wandering', also held by some to be of Novgorod origin, the pilgrims

pages (Part II, Book Six).

¹ Danilov, (1977), no 2, pp. 15-19.

² Eg Danilov, no 10, and Rybnikov, II, nos. 150 and 169.

³ Eg Propp, *Russkii geroicheskiĭ epos*, p. 445.

⁴ Rybnikov, II, p. 198.

are *bogatyri* who are going on pilgrimage to the Holy Land to atone for their bloodletting.¹ Could the 'Bogatyr' monastic elder' be such a figure who was once an epic hero, but then went on a pilgrimage, returned, and entered a monastery to atone for his sins?

The composer would obviously have desired to avoid any negative connotations attached to this figure, and, besides, to bring home to the audience that the Apparition was in fact a coded reference to a major religious personage. Therefore, not only does the composer introduce for the single appearance of this figure the majestic declamatory line based on church chants, but he emphasises further that the *Starchishche* is an emissary of the Divine, for the Apparition declares: '*Vlasti nad morem konets tvoyey*' (Thy power o'er the sea is now at an end), thus eliminating another strand of pagan opposition in mediaeval Novgorod to Christianity.

In the final Tableau, while the returned Sadko is describing his adventures to the incredulous people of Novgorod, he specifically states that the 'Mighty Elder' has promised to protect the people of Novgorod, which in fact was **not** stated in the Apparition's declamation on the seabed in Tableau Six. Sadko then, in a hymn of praise to the *Starchishche*, calls the Apparition '*Za chestnoi narod zastupitel*' - 'Intercessor for his honourable people' - and 'Intercessor' was, and is, a term used in relation to major Christian religious figures, such as Mary and the Saints.

Therefore, the composer makes quite clear by a series of indications that this mysterious Apparition, cloaked under a cognomen suggested by the Novgorod *bylina* cycle of Vasiliï Buslaev, is the St Nikolai of the *byliny*, who could not appear on stage owing to considerations of religious censorship.

¹ Eg Gil'ferding, I, no. 72, pp. 670-684, (pp. 670-671).

(4)

THE VISION'S MUSIC

We have observed that the Apparition's declamation is a close imitation rhythmically, and in pitch, of Russian Orthodox chant.^{App III, Ex 15a} The rhythm of this chant is reminiscent especially of the chants to the words '*Gospodi, vozzvakh Tebe, uslyshi mia*' (Lord, I have called unto thee: hearken unto me).¹ Such a choice is very appropriate in view of the fact that, as patron saint of sea-farers, Nicholas is acting as Intercessor on behalf of those who have prayed so desperately to him. Even more strikingly, the Vision's declamation bears a marked rhythmic resemblance to the solemn chant from the Russian Easter Vigil with which the composer commences his overture *Svetlyi prazdnik* (usually translated as 'The Russian Easter Festival Overture') of 1888 (op. 36).^{App III 15b} The composer prefaces this work with a 'programme' drawn from Scripture and the Liturgy, and the Biblical quotation setting the scene for this introductory theme is from Psalm 67/68: *Da voskresnet Bog, i rastochatsia vrazi ego* (Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered).² This line is extraordinarily significant in view of the fact that now, at last, in this 'semi-legendary-semi-historical world' Christianity is to triumph. Rimsky-Korsakov emphasised this point in one of his meetings with lastrebtsev.³ This chant is also very similar to that employed for Easter Sunday to the words '*Volnoiu morskoiu skryshago drevle gonitel'ia*' ('Of old, thou didst bury the pursuer [or 'tyrant'] with the waves of

¹ *Obikhod notnago tserkovnago peniia dlia chetyrekhgolosnago smeshannago khora*, (Graz: Sviataia sinoda pravoslavnoi Tserkvi v Pol'she, 1978), pp. 4-28.

² Psalm 67 in the Orthodox Churches corresponds to Psalm 68 for the Western churches. Therefore the translation above is from Psalm 68 (King James Version).

³ lastrebtsev II, 11 Jan 1898 (p. 7) - that is, just a fortnight after the opera had been premiered. The composer commented here that the critic Veinberg had understood this scene perfectly, when he said that the organ accompaniment stipulated by the composer here produced the atmosphere of an ecclesiastical chorale, and thus produced the required impression of a radiant higher power which was obeyed by the 'dark forces of nature'. The organ is, in fact, not a traditional part of Russian church worship, and we may surmise that this instrument usually associated with western religious music was introduced here to give yet another indication to the audience that this mysterious unknown figure was in fact a Christian saint. Incidentally, lastrebtsev claims (I, 20 Feb 1897, p. 442), that this was the first use of a pedal organ in Russian music.

The review by Veinberg which Rimsky-Korsakov spoke so highly of is to be found (under the byline 'V'), in the *Moskovskie vedomosti*, no 350, 1897. Other critics had found this use of a non-Russian-traditional instrument in a story based on a theme from Russian folk-lore an incomprehensible mistake (eg: Lipaev, Ivan, 'Sadko' - Opera-byлина N. A. Rimskago-Kosakova [sic] na Moskovskoi stsene', *RMG*, Jan (no 1), 1898, pp. 69-77 (p. 76).

the sea') which forms the bass line of Rimsky-Korsakov's own 4-part harmonisation of this theme for the Court Chapel Choir (1883-84).¹ The relevance to this scene showing the representative of a higher spiritual power vanquishing the Sea Tsar is obvious.

As he denounces the Sea Tsar, the Apparition declares that his dancing is bringing destruction to the world above:

Сине море всколебалось,
Топит многи бусы-корабли.

These lines are lines taken directly not only from variants of the epic of *Sadko*, but, too, from the *Golubinaia kniga*, in which we are informed that when the Strafil bird/Phoenix, and so on, flaps its wings, the sea boils, overflows, and sinks many ships.² The Vision, as a representative of the Christian God, now deprives the Sea Tsar of his power and commands him and his realm to vanish for ever: Christianity has triumphed in old Russia. As noted above, he commands the folk singer Sadko to return to the surface and to serve with his songs: his new Sea Princess wife too must rise with him, and become a river for ever. Sadko and Volkhova rise to the surface in the same manner as they came, but this time drawn by swans, and as the scene ends in darkness, the creatures of the pagan Sea Kingdom, now vanishing for ever, beg Sadko to remember them in his songs. In other words, we, the audience, have watched the seed being planted of the set of *byliny* dealing with the second Sadko legend, that of the Rich Merchant's adventures on the bed of the sea. We may recall, that, in an analogous fashion, the composer also demonstrated at the end of Tableau Four, the manner in

¹ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., ed. Morosan, Vladimir, *Pamiatniki russkoi dukhovnoi muzyki - Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Polnoe sobranie dukhovno-muzykal'nykh proizvedenii* (Madison, CT, USA: Russkaia Musica/Musica Russica, 2000) pp. 278-9. For the chant on which the composer's harmonisation is based, see p. 348, part of which is reproduced in Appendix III Ex 15c of the thesis..

² 'The deep-blue sea overfloweth,
O'erwhelmeth many ship-boats.'

See eg Bezsonov, no. 76, pp. 269-74 (273), and no. 92, pp. 341-378 (pp. 369-370).

which the *byliny* concerning the first Sadko theme arose. In that particular case, they evolved spontaneously from a previous model, that of the epics concerning Solovei Budimirovich.

TABLEAU SEVEN

(1)

THE MAJOR THEMES REACH THEIR CONCLUSION: SADKO IS NOVGOROD'S FIRST BOGATYR', AN EPIC HERO; CHRISTIANITY TRIUMPHS IN OLD NOVGOROD, AND THE CITY ACQUIRES A RIVER.

The stage direction reads: 'The curtain rises. A pleasant green meadow (*zelenoi* (sic) *luzhok*) by the edge of Lake Il'men' (*Il'men'-ozero* - the usual archaic folk form found in the *byliny* of Sadko). Early dawn. Sadko is asleep upon the beautiful steep bank (*krutoi berezhok*).'
Krutoi bereg (*berezhok*) is a stock combination found throughout the epics, and frequently occurs in combination with the idea of a 'silver gangplank'. Later, Sadko's returning crew-members do indeed, as this Tableau and the entire opera draw to a conclusion, descend from their ship down a silver gangplank (which of course Sadko also used to descend into the sea in Tableau Five), onto the 'steep bank' of the newly-created River Volkhov.

The rest of the tableau is filled with many of the stock formulae and motifs we have already met, almost as if the composer is consciously bidding farewell to the audience and concluding his work by reminding us of the details and style of the story which have brought us here.

Volkhova leans over Sadko, and sings a lullaby, in a gentle rocking 6/8 rhythm; the words, consisting of a dialogue between Sleep (*Son*) and Dream (*Drema*), and the frequent haunting repetition of *baiushku-baiu* (the Russian 'hush-a-bye' formula) are drawn directly from folk

models.¹ The composer observed in his memoirs (1955, p. 206) that this lullaby, the farewell to Sadko, and Volkhova's disappearance, are among the best pages of his 'fantastic' music, and few would disagree.

Volkhova dissolves into a scarlet morning mist covering the meadow, thus forming a counterpart to the figure of Snow-Maiden, who in the composer's third opera dissolves, allowing the sun to return to the land. From offstage is heard once again Liubava, Sadko's wife, lamenting in a style very similar to her outpouring of grief in Tableau Three. However, Sadko tells her that she is no longer a '*vdova, sirota pregor'kaia*' (a widow, an orphan most bitter - see Tableau Four) and, in another consistent formula occurring in numerous *byliny*, he assures her that now she does have somebody '*s kem vek skorotati*' (with whom to shorten a whole age - ie to pass the time with!).

The mist clears: the stage direction tells us that the broad Volkhova River is visible, linked to Lake Il'men', illuminated by the arising beauteous bright sun (*krasnoe solnyshko* - the stock formula for the sun). The usual cries of '*Chudo chudnoe! Divo divnoe*' follow, and Sadko declares that this is the river Volkhova. We have already noted that, although the river that flows through Novgorod is now called the Volkhov (a masculine form), the composer was basing himself here on Afanas'ev's assertion that at one time it was indeed termed the Volkhova.

Upon the river appears Sadko's fleet of thirty one ships with his Falcon-ship in the forefront, and with his *druzhina* on board. They exclaim in amazement at the sight of Sadko waiting with his young wife on the steep bank. They descend by the silver gangplank. Once again, as the opera draws to a close, we return to the earliest set of *byliny* the composer would have been

¹ Eg Shein, 1898, nos. 6-17, pp. 4-7. For an analysis of the lullaby in Rimsky-Korsakov's music in general, see Neff, Lyle, *While the Bear Sleeps*, web-site: <http://phd.indiana.edu/neff/papers/bear.txt.html>. (1994).

familiar with, and what might be termed the primary source of Russian folk epic for 19th-century educated society: this is the anthology of Kirsha Danilov, since the words of this entire section are drawn almost *verbatim* from the variant of the second *Sadko* theme in this collection (no 47), while the 'silver gangplank' is drawn from *Solovei Budimirovich* (no 1). The entire crowd of the *Novgorodskii liud* (Novgorodian folke), plus the Elders, foreign merchants and all the previous participants, stream on. The one exception appears to be the Warlocks: at least there is no singing role at this point for them alone out of all the participants of Tableau Four. The probable reason for this non-appearance is that, in this final Tableau, now that paganism has been vanquished by Christianity, the Warlocks have no further place in Novgorod.

The final apotheosis of *Sadko* as an epic hero begins: parallel to the conclusion of Tableau Four, the Rich Merchant is now seen becoming the hero of a further *bylina* devoted to his exploits, in a demonstration by the composer of how such epics and folk song sprang up spontaneously in times past.

Nezhata, the First Elder and the Indian Merchant now declare that by his singing *Sadko* has enticed a deep river from afar for the glory of Novgorod.

In a theme that has not been mentioned before, and is likewise nowhere to be found in the sources, the crowd inform *Sadko* that they '*vse stoskovalisia*' (were always bored and sad) without him and his *umil'nykh pesnei* (pleasing songs). They further sing that without his declamations they had no 'truth' among them (*Bez rechei tvoikh pravdy net u nas*). All of these lines seem to be authorial inventions, firstly designed to emphasise the composer's notion of the artist as an intermediary between nature and humanity, and secondly to indicate *Sadko*'s symbolism in the composer's mind as a representative of art and its magical powers to bring happiness to the human race.

The crowd now declare to Sadko that he is the greatest merchant of all, and he informs them, in a reversion to the first theme of the Sadko legend, that he, Sad-Sadko, is able to sing, and has nothing else noteworthy about him, but '*povyshe menia slavyi Novgorod*' (glorious Novgorod is greater than me). This line derives from a variant in Rybnikov's collection,¹ in which Sadko, after sending his *druzhina* for three whole days to buy up all the goods in Novgorod, and faced by yet more appearing, declares that Novgorod is greater than him. This strand of the story ended in different ways in the sources: either Sadko contemptuously buys up all the goods in Novgorod, and leaves only old bits of broken pots, or else, he realises that Novgorod is greater than him, and he cannot buy up all the new wares appearing in the Novgorod markets day after day for ever. Both denouements of the first narrative are represented, therefore, in the opera-*bylina*, and this is a demonstration that the composer strove to use as many variants of the tale as possible, even if they are anomalous or contradictory.

In a further emphasis of Sadko as a Russian Orpheus, Rimsky-Korsakov has the folk-musician Sadko describe his adventures in different climes (we may recall that he has been sailing for 'twelve years' in epic time). He tells us how his musical prowess influenced the natural world:

Пел, играл земли раздолью,
Звери, птицы собиралися,
Трава, деревья склонялись.²

Of course, these wanderings over the earth have not been described in the the opera, nor in the sources.

¹ Rybnikov, II, no. 134, line 165.

² 'I sang, I played, to the Earth's expanses,
The beasts and the birds gathered together,
The grasses and the trees bowed down'.

The phrase '*zemli razdol'iu*' (to the Earth's expanses), recalls the phrase from the closing chorus of Tableau Four, and is a commonplace epic description of the Earth. The gathering of the beasts and the birds reminds us of the Novgorod epic of *Volkh Vseslavich*, the shaman-figure whom we met in Nezhata's rendition of the epic concerning him at the commencement of Tableau One, while the 'grass and trees bowing down' is a stock phrase used in the *byliny* (although to indicate sorrow rather than in order to listen to a singer); once again too there is a reference here to the *Song of Igor's Campaign*, since, when Igor's troops are massacred, we are told that the grass and trees display their grief in this fashion:

Ничить трава жалощами,

А древо с тугою к земли преклонилось.¹

Nezhata specifically now terms Sadko's singing '*bogatyrskaia*' (bogatyrean), and once again we are reminded of Tableau One, at the very commencement of which, the Novgorodian merchants talk of the 'bogatyrean' deeds of Kiev, and lament that they have no such heroes of their own. The wheel has come full circle: Novgorod now has its own *bogatyri*, equal to any Kievan martial hero, by reason of his musical prowess. He is also equal to the magic of the 'Ancient *bogatyri*', the shaman/wizard *Volkh Vseslavich*, through the power of this artistic skill. The pilgrims strike up a chorus in praise of God, and significantly too, of all mighty *bogatyri*. Whereas, at the beginning of the opera, the world-view was still 'semi-pagan', now, at the work's climax, with the overthrow of paganism in the form of the Sea Tsar, the *bogatyri* have been transformed into Christian heroes, and the pilgrims explicitly term them 'intercessors for Russia and for its people', a description normally reserved for Christian saints.

¹ 'The grass inclined with grief,
The trees with sorrow bowed down to the earth.'
Filin, p. 96, lines 188-189.

There may also conceivably be here a final linking of the opera-*bylina* with the major early Russian literary epic, for the final three lines of *Igor's Campaign* represent the joyful populace of Novgorod-Seversk as singing: :

Здрави князи и дружина,
 Побарая за христьяны поганья полки!
 Княземь слава а дружине!
 Амин. ¹

The Indian merchant declares that Sadko's singing is now sweeter and more mighty than that of the Phoenix bird which he described in his song in Tableau Four – possibly another sign that paganism has been vanquished.

Sadko, in calling for a chorus of praise in honour of the Great Monastic Elder who appeared at the height of the storm and vanquished the Sea Tsar's power, informs the crowd that the Vision '*obeshchal zashchitit' Novgorodskii liud'* (vowed to protect the Novgorodian folke), a promise that in fact is *not* made in the opera, and does not appear in any of the sources. This would serve to underline the fact to the audience that the apparition was indeed St Nicholas, patron saint of sailors and of Novgorod.

Duda the *skomorokh*, singing mockingly of the now-vanquished Sea Tsar declares '*Golova tvoia chto sena kopna'* (Thy head is like a hay-stook), an anomalous detail drawn from Rybnikov.² We have already noted above that Nezhata has declaimed material in Tableau

¹ 'All health be unto the Princes and their retinue,
 Fighting for Christians against the pagan cohorts!
 To the Princes, and to the retinue - Glory!
 Amen.'
 (Filin, p. 106).

² Rybnikov, II, no 134, p. 251.

Four, drawn from Danilov (no 47) which is unique and anomalous in the sources: that the Sea Tsar lives not in a palace on the bed of the sea, but in a Russian peasant cabin (*izba*) on the dry land. This further reference here to a detail found only once is further proof of the composer's deep study of his sources, of his familiarity with all the variants available to him at the time, and of his attempt to introduce as many motifs as possible from these sources.

Nezhata, to finish off the entire work, declaims the verse analysed in Section One, which is based on traditional concluding epic formulae:

Та старина спава, то и деянье,
 Старцам угрюмым на потешенье,
 Молодцам, девицам на поученье,
 Всем нам на услышанье.¹

However, when we consider that one of the major themes of this opera is the pacifying of the sea realm, we may speculate whether also present in the composer's mind was the frequently encountered closing line, in which we are told that the song has been sung to calm the deep-blue sea (*sinemu moriu na uteshenie*).² From this line it appears that singing such epic songs may indeed at one time have represented a magical method of pacifying the waters, and it is possibly from this motif that the idea of the adventures of Sadko the sea-farer musician who is an intermediary between humanity and nature originally came.

The opera concludes with all the *dramatis personae*, including the chorus, (with the exception, apparently, of the Warlocks), singing in praise of the River Volkhova, and the Ocean-Sea Deep-Blue. As the opera comes to an end, we once again hear, repeated *fortissimo* in the

¹ See page 66-67, note 1, for translation.

² Eg *Diuk Stepanovich*, Danilov, no 3, pp. 20-24 (24).

orchestra, the simple *bylina*-derived three descending notes forming the 'sea motif', with which the work opened, reminding us of Novgorod's sea-based glory, and of the epic theme which encompasses the entire work.

Asafev in fact claims to have suggested to the composer that he conclude the opera with a reprise of the chorus from *Solovei Budimirovich* in Danilov which concludes Tableau Four so spectacularly. But after some thought Rimsky-Korsakov rejected the idea, informing him that the departure of the poet-dreamer on his travels was one thing, but that his return after twelve years in foreign climes was utterly different: he would return a different person, and therefore '*prezhnie sredstva samovыrazheniia dlia nego uzhe ne podkhodiat* (the former means of self-expression are no longer fitting for him)'.¹

Therefore, not only has the composer been intent on deepening the characterisation of this Russian Orpheus, in contrast to the pallid figure found in the sources, but he has, too, shown the character develop to full *bogatyř*' status throughout the entire opera. Sadko at the end of Act Four cannot achieve full heroic rank merely by his newly-acquired wealth. However, in the same Tableau, he acquires status by his display of mercy in returning his gains, and by the beginning of Tableau Six is obviously much loved by his crewmen, who do not wish him to be sacrificed. He finally achieves full *bogatyř*' status by means of the exercise of his magical artistic power at the end of the opera to reshape nature for the good of the people of Novgorod.

¹ Pokrovskii, B. A., *Stupeni professii* (Moscow: Vsesoiuznoe Teatral'noe Obshchestvo, 1984), pp. 122-123.

Although Pokrovskii makes quite clear that he is referring to Boris Vladimirovich Asafev (1884-1949) he gives no context to the above claim, and Asafev would have been between ten and thirteen years old during the period of the composition of *Sadko*. However, Asafev studied composition under Rimsky-Korsakov (and subsequently under Liadov) at the St Petersburg Conservatoire from 1904-1910, and one can only surmise either that Rimsky-Korsakov had mentioned to his students that he had considered revising the finale of the opera-*bylina*, and invited suggestions, or that the subject of opera composition came up for discussion as part of the course, and that Rimsky-Korsakov used his own works as examples, leading to Asafev's suggestion quoted above.

(2)

SUMMARY

Our analysis of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera-*bylina* is concluded. Throughout this thesis we have attempted to demonstrate the sources of the opera firstly in Rimsky-Korsakov's historical and cultural position, and his world-view, and, secondly, in the folk sources of the time, principally the Russian epic narratives, but also in other folk material of all genres. By our line-by-line analysis in the above Section of Rimsky-Korsakov's extraordinarily concentrated utilisation of these sources, we have striven to demonstrate how the composer attempted to create a narrative which was not to be viewed by the standards of conventional western musical stage works, but was an attempt to engender a new form altogether. It is an amalgam of folk narrative, music based both on folk models, and western 'art' music practice. Throughout the narrative, Rimsky-Korsakov has maintained as some of his underlying goals the depiction of a world where a pagan world view still held sway, and where epic and song were still spontaneously created by the common people. Further aims were to portray Sadko, the musician, as an intermediary between the human world and other levels of experience, and his growth to epic heroic status in the eyes of the common people, by virtue of his art. Finally, the composer has striven to depict the historical reality of the victory of Christianity over paganism in ancient Russia, which may have been one of the lost meanings of his incoherent sources. From the title-page of the printed score, to the final note of the opera-*bylina*, the composer has employed all the techniques of an extremely clear-sighted and mentally focussed 'bard-behind-the-bard' in interweaving his sources in an extraordinarily complex manner in order to emphasise the artistic intentions behind the work that we have outlined in this paragraph.

By focusing on the composer's highly concentrated utilisation of his sources, and on his artistic intentions, we have attempted to rebut the allegations of 'poor dramatic quality' and 'incoherence' referred to in the introduction.

But the question must still be asked: does the work succeed dramatically? Most of the urban audience of 1897 would not possess the composer's familiarity with many of the sources, either legendary or historical, and furthermore would not be able to see the composer's authorial interpolations in the form of detailed stage directions in epic style, and often in language derived directly from those epics. Furthermore, unless they were specifically informed by a programme-note that the opera-*bylina* was not to be judged by conventional standards, and given some convincing reasons why, they would be unaware of this, and would still come to view the work with preconceptions based on their former opera-viewing, which would have been mainly of Italian and French works at the Imperial Theatres.

Therefore in our final section we shall attempt to evaluate whether the work does indeed succeed as a work of art, either as an opera in conventional terms, or even as a new genre, or whether the strictures levelled against it by some of the critics who saw the early performances are justified.

SECTION EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONSIDERATIONS, REFLECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS.

The intention of this concluding section is to analyse the possible purposes that Rimsky-Korsakov had set himself in creating a folk epic in operatic stage form, and to examine whether the enterprise of transposing one artistic genre to another so radically different succeeds. The *bylina* is a linear artistic form, in which scenic details slowly unfold one after the other in narrative sequence, as they are declaimed by the *skazitel'/nitsa*; the listener hears these details, and, to use a stock epic formula, *kazhdyi po-osobomu* (each in their own way) progressively visualises the content of the epic story. However, in a stage work, the curtain rises on any scene, and a number of such details are revealed instantly, in the director's conceptualisation. Although certain details of the scenery may be left indistinct at first, in order to stimulate the imagination of the audience, and their significance may only become clear later with an alteration of lighting, or with the development of the plot, this is still not the equivalent of the slow and leisurely unfolding of the narrative in every detail that we find in long epic narratives. Furthermore, one of the major traditional requirements in presenting drama on stage is action: the conventional wisdom maintains that, if there are prolonged static periods in a drama, then the audience will lose interest. Yet, as Rimsky-Korsakov's opera tries to imitate the unhurried progress of the *bylina* genre, with its linear disclosure of details both of plot and furthermore of the story's background, this results in long episodes without any forward movement of the story. An example is the opening scene in the Guild Hall of the Novgorodian merchants, where they sing at each other across banqueting-tables for several minutes until Nezhata, the *gusli* player from Kiev, begins to declaim an extract from the *bylina* of Volkh

Vseslavich found in Danilov's collection.¹ Even then, nothing dramatic happens until, some fourteen minutes after the start of this Tableau, Sadko enters.

Let us first try to penetrate what the composer's intentions might have been in creating such a work. How did he view his role? It is germane here to recall Asaf'ev's comment that the major defining characteristic of Rimsky-Korsakov's operas is 'the constant palpable [*oshchutimoe* - possibly a better translation is 'sense-able'] presence of a rhapsode, that is, a declaimer of epics, a singer ...', and, in *Sadko*, as we have seen in this thesis, the composer certainly saw himself as the creator of an epic narrative in music by means of the application in stylised form of a range of devices and subject-matter as utilised by a genuine folk singer. *Sadko* was the composer's sixth opera, and he had already given three of his earlier 'folk-tale' operas supplementary titles to indicate which genre of folk creativity had inspired them. His third opera, *Snegurochka*, ('Snow-Maiden', 1880-81) he sub-titled *Vesenniaia skazka*, (A Spring Folk-tale²), and *Noch pered Rozhdestvom* ('Christmas Eve' 1894-1895), his fifth opera, which immediately preceded *Sadko*, he had designated a *Byl'-koliada* (A Tale in the Form of a Wassail-Song).³ After composing his opera-*bylina* *Sadko*, he continued the process with such works as *Kashchei bessmertnyi* (*Kashchei the Deathless*, 1901), which he describes on the title-page of the score as '*Oseniaia skazochka* (A Little Autumn Folk-Story), while the word *skazanie* ('legend') is contained in the title of his fourteenth opera *Skazanie o nevidimom grade Kitezhe i deve Fevronii* (Legend of the Invisible city of Kitezh, and of the Maiden Fevronia, 1907). Finally, his last opera, *Zolotoi Petushok* (The Golden Cockerel, 1908), although based

¹ Nezhata begins to sing about six minutes into the opera.

² This supplementary title, although valid in the context of Rimsky-Korsakov's life-work, was in fact derived from Ostrovsky, who had given the play on which the opera is based precisely the same sub-title. Rimsky-Korsakov presumably retained it because it denoted the background of the tale in folk motifs.

³ This theme of folk creativity includes stories derived from Russian literature written on 'folk' themes, or in folk style; for instance, the composer's operas 'May Night' (*Maikaia Noch'* - 1878) and 'Christmas Eve' (*Noch pered Rozhdestvom* - 1894-5) are derived principally from Gogol's stories of the same names concerning magical doings in a Ukrainian village on these nights (both are contained in Part One of the author's *Vechera na khutore bliz Dikan'ki* ('Evenings on a Farm near Dikan'ka') of 1832).

loosely on Pushkin's *Skazka o zolotom petushke* of 1834, is sub-titled '*Nebylitsa v litsakh*' (An Acted-out Nonsense Story). The *nebylitsa*, or nonsensical story, was in fact a folk form, often told in verse. Some examples are to be found in Kirsha Danilov's collection of 1804, of which the composer had made such extensive use for his opera-*bylina*.¹ This sub-title does not derive from Pushkin, and so the decision to relate the opera to yet another genre of folk creativity is original, and entirely the composer's own.

There is no indication that the composer at the start of his career had consciously set out to compose operas derived from a wide range of folk material, as he was subsequently to do, devoting one opera to each genre as far as possible. However, we have noted that as far back as 1867, when he was 23, he had produced as his opus five a short tone poem depicting Sadko's adventures at sea. This predated his first opera, *Pskovitianka* (1868-1872), and so the genre of the *bylina* as a viable vehicle for a musical composition was in his mind from very early on in his career. The composer reorchestrated this early composition in 1891-92, demonstrating that he was still fascinated not only by the tale of Sadko, but by the entire genre of epic narrative. We have already noted that, at different stages of his career, he had considered composing operas on the epics concerning Dobrynia Nikitich, Il'ia Muromets, Solovei Budimirovich and others. One may only speculate that one of the reasons why none of these projects progressed beyond the stage of fragmentary sketches, was that the composer had possibly considered as too complex the problem of reconciling such a slowly-unfolding linear oral form as the epic, with the dramaturgical imperatives of a fully-fledged stage work of operatic dimensions.

However, these uncompleted projects, together with the early orchestral setting of *Sadko*,

¹ Eg nos. 19 (pp. 141-142), *Agafonushka* ('Bonny Wee Agafon'), and no. 67 (pp. 221-222), *Svin'i khriu, porosiata khriu* (loosely translated, 'Piggies, piglets, squeal, squeal!'). These Russian verse-nonsense-narratives are often reminiscent of such English-language children's rhymes as 'One fine day in the middle of the night, / Two dead men got up to fight', etc. etc.

demonstrate that the composer was already familiar with the genre, and, we may be sure that, with his usual thoroughness, he would have studied their characteristic poetics, conventions, and means of expression. Certainly, when he embarked on writing the opera-*bylina* in 1895, he entered on an intense period of study of the source-variants of *Sadko* and the other epics, and painstakingly noted down lists of 'fixed epithets' to use in the work.¹ He would also have been familiar, both from the singers he had heard, and from the collections of such epics as he had studied over the years, with the use of 'transferable passages' in a whole series of different epics, and with the idea of *bogatyri* from one story being mentioned in passing in others. All these were devices used extensively in the operatic version of *Sadko*, as we have attempted to demonstrate.

Therefore, it is our contention that, from the very germination of the idea of this opera, the composer decided to act as much as a folk *skazitel'/nitsa* as a sophisticated composer of 'art' music. Asaf'ev's insight concerning the 'palpable presence of a folk epic-singer' behind Rimsky-Korsakov's operas has been referred to above. The composer, despite his help from a series of collaborators, was himself finally very largely responsible for the libretto, in his determined attempt to fulfil the role of a folk-creator. This creation of the *bylina* atmosphere in the manner of a folk-bard even extends, as we have seen, to the cast list and stage directions of *Sadko*, which are written in typical *bylina* style, and in some cases derive directly from them. This would seem to be a pointless exercise unless the spectator had already studied the entire score thoroughly, including this non-musical material.

The composer accordingly, we believe, in his assumed capacity of *skazitel'/nitsa*, set himself the task, in characteristic folk-bard style, of interweaving intertextual references to many other epics, and employing a very wide range of poetic devices. He managed the task of embracing

¹ Gozenpud, A. A., 'Iz nabliudenii nad tvorcheskimi protsessami Rimskogo-Korsakova', (in) Kabalevskii, D. B., (ed.), *Muzykal'noe nasledstvo - Rimsky-Korsakov*, I, 145-251, (238).

and evoking the world of Russian epic, and of the world in which those epics would have been sung, by bringing in direct extracts from, as well as hinting at, an extremely broad range of such narratives. We have discussed above the direct quotations from the 'ancient *bogatyr*' *bylina* concerning Volkh Vseslavich, and from the much later *bylina* in the style of a folk fabliau, *Solovei Budimirovich*. We have already noted the reference to the *bogatyrskie dela* (bogatyrean deeds) and *laskovyi kniaz'* (Gracious Prince) of Kiev in the very first minutes of the opera, and the lines modelled on those from *byliny* of the 'Junior *bogatyr*' cycles such as the songs concerning Dobrynia. The introduction of the wandering pilgrims declaiming an extract from the *Golubinaia kniga* in Tableau Four is likewise not as gratuitous as might appear: characters from one genre of *stariny* frequently appeared in another. For example, Sviatogor, the phenomenally strong giant of the 'Ancient *bogatyr*' class of epics, is occasionally termed 'Samson' in the stories concerning him,¹ and, as we have seen, Joseph the Fair (Genesis 37-50) is mentioned in one of the variants of the story of Dobrynia.

The introduction of the *skomorokhi* is similarly not gratuitous in that references to these comic strolling players of old Russia are to be found in the *byliny*, most notably in the above-discussed epic theme of Dobrynia Nikitich at the betrothal feast of his wife,² from which the graphic scenic details of the position of the *skomorokhi* 'on the stove and by the stove' are taken.

As we have observed, only two versions of *Sadko* in the printed collections with which the composer would have been familiar linked both themes of the story: firstly, that of his being a poor folk musician in Novgorod who becomes rich, and secondly, the account of his adventures in the Sea Realm. Yet even these composite *Sadko* variants do not make complete sense of the story, implying that, as with many *bylina* stories, some important narrative links have been

¹ Propp, *Russkii geroicheskiĭ epos*, p. 523. Eg Rybnikov, I, pp. 4-8, 'Samson *bogatyr*'.

² Eg Rybnikov, I, no 26, p. 168, 'Dobrynia i Alesha'.

lost over the centuries of telling and retelling.

Therefore the composer, however much he had set himself the task of creation in the manner of a peasant singer of epics, still faced the problem of making sense of the theme for an educated and sophisticated urban audience. For this purpose, he utilised 'extra-epic' material such as Afanas'ev's linking of the themes of Sadko and those of the Sea Tsar. In addition, also basing himself on Afanas'ev,¹ he imported the motif to be found in other epics than those concerning Sadko, that is, of the miraculous formation of rivers from the blood of *bogatyri*.

This introduction of the itinerant pilgrims and the *skomorokhi*, both of whom would have been commonplace sights in ancient Rus', plus the role allotted to Nezhata, the Boian-like *gusli* player from Kiev, similarly points up the composer's intention of creating a realistic portrait of what he terms 'semi-historical, semi-legendary Novgorod', since the pilgrims, *skomorokhi*, folk musicians, and the other groups assembled in that city for market day in Tableau Four, such as the warlocks and foreign merchants, would have been familiar everyday phenomena in old Novgorod. This search for contemporary details also accounts for the composer's use of such realistic details from the sources as the Nikol'shchina Guild, and the two civic elders.

However, the composer, by introducing these performers and their characteristic songs, is also, we believe, choosing to emphasise the way in which, to quote Gil'ferding again, 'epic poetry wells forth like a spring' (see p.128). Not only are there two extracts in the opera from the ready-formed *bylina* repertoire (those from *Volkh* and *Solovei*), but also we twice witness the apparent emergence of two new songs, or rather, new songs derived from old models. The first example is the adaptation of the humorous song from Danilov's collection in Tableau One [*Pro*] *Dur'nia* ('[About] a Fool') to fit the situation of Sadko the poor folk musician, when he is

¹ Afanas'ev, *Poeticheskiia vozzreniia*, II, p. 220.

an object of derision to the merchants. The second, in Tableau Four, after he has won his wager against the merchants, specifically ascribes Sadko's deeds to those of the epic hero Solovei, from the epic concerning whom Rimsky-Korsakov draws both the concluding chorus of this tableau (*Vysota li vysota*), and also details of Sadko's ship. We have already observed that commentators have remarked on the similarities of the themes of *Sadko* and *Solovei*, and that some have considered the *bylina* of Solovei also to derive from Novgorod. Finally, as this concluding chorus of Tableau Four reaches its height, the transformation of Solovei into Sadko is made dramatically and also verbally specific. In Danilov's anthology, the passage portraying Solovei contains the lines:

На беседе-то сидел купав молодец,
Молодой Соловей Будимерович (*sic*) . .

while the singers in the opera declare that:

На беседе сидит купав молодец,
Да не Соловей Будимирович,
А и славный богатый торговый гость:
Молодой соловей Садко.¹

In other words, in the theatre, the literate urban spectators have witnessed an on-stage demonstration of the process by which folk song and narratives about epic heroes are created

¹ The lines from Danilov (1977), no. 1, pp. 9-15, (p. 10), mean:

'Pon that bench sitteth a comely young man,
The young Solovei Budimerovich (*sic*)'

while the passage in the opera (vol 6b, pp. 222-223, bars 1256-1272), signifies:

"Pon that bench sitteth a comely young man,
But 'tis not that Solovei [Nightingale] Budimirovich -
'Tis that glorious wealthy trading merchant guest,
That young solovei [nightingale] - Sadko.'

(*Molodoi* - 'young', can also mean 'daring' or 'heroic' in Russian, and *molodets* - 'young man', 'youth', also implies 'dashing hero').

in a pre-literate, isolated world where epic poetry and a belief in the supernatural was still the norm. An ordinary poor Novgorodian has, by miraculous means, become extraordinarily rich, and has thus acquired *bogatyr'* status, coming to deserve, in the people's view, to have an epic sung about him. We will recall here that, in the epic concerning Dobrynia and the Serpent discussed earlier, Sadko is portrayed as being on a level with Dobrynia and Il'ia of Murom as an epic hero by reason of his wealth, and therefore must have been so considered by the narrator, and indeed by the people of early Novgorod who, we may presume, held townsfolk of theirs such as the Croesus-like Sadko Sytinets in a certain awe.

The first four tableaux depict the first theme of the *Sadko* story, by which Sadko attains great wealth and thus becomes an epic hero. In the final three tableaux he is already, therefore, regarded as having the status and qualities of such a hero. We may recall here Boris Pokrovskii's mention of the fact that Boris Asaf'ev had told him that the composer had rejected his, Asaf'ev's, suggestion that he end his opera-*bylina* with a repeat of the concluding chorus of Tableau Four, drawn from *Solovei Budimirovich*, '*Vysota li vysota*', because Sadko was now very different in character. His *bogatyrstvo* (heroic status) at the conclusion of the work consists not so much in the fabulous wealth described in the song about Solovei, which has been appropriated in the newly created song to Sadko, but in the latter's wondrous musicianship, which has acted on the natural world to bring a river to Novgorod. The loss of his artistic ability to the people of Novgorod during his absence is also emphasised, as the chorus sings on his return from his voyages at the close of Tableau Seven:

Без тебя мы все стосковались.

Без умильных твоих песней,

Без речей твоих правда нет у нас.¹

¹ Vol 6c, Tableau Seven, pp. 335-38.

'Without you we all grew a-wearied and bored.

Rimsky-Korsakov is reproducing here then, not only the motif attested to in the sources that the folk musician has achieved heroic status, worthy to be a *bylina* hero, by his wealth, but he is also introducing an idea nowhere overtly stated in the sources: namely, that he has also achieved epic heroic status through his ability as an 'inspired' singer and instrumentalist.

We may conclude, then, as a synthesis of all we have written earlier, that, through his extraordinary distillation into his opera of such a vast variety of folk motifs and themes from a great diversity of sources, the composer is imitating the folk *skazitel'/nitsa* in trying to create a fully coherent epic background, comprehensible both in terms of theme and also of motivation of character. Yet he is also attempting to impart to the story a symbolic significance: that of a great folk scop achieving archetypal status in the unconscious mind of the common people in antiquity through his apotheosis as an avatar of pure art, and his miraculous influence thereby on the human psyche and on the environment, for the betterment of humanity.

Yet Rimsky-Korsakov the composer is also striving to link his work into the tradition of Russian classic 'epic' opera. We have noted above Asaf'ev's remark that *Sadko* (premiered 1897) is in the tradition of Russian epic opera stretching from Glinka's *Ruslan and Liudmila* (1842), through Borodin's *Prince Igor* (begun 1869; premiered 1890).

Following his literary source, Pushkin, Glinka introduces the bard Boian (altering his name to 'Baian') into the first scene of his opera. This scene, like the introductory tableau of *Sadko*, consists of a feast (specifically in *Ruslan* at Prince Vladimir's palace). Pushkin's long narrative poem of 1820 is itself written in imitation of the Russian epics, with which he would have been familiar from the collections of Danilov and Kireevskii (the latter was a friend of the poet's, and

Without your touching songs,
Without your declamations, there is no truth among us.'

Pushkin possessed a copy of Danilov's volume).¹ Boian is imported from the *Song of Igor's Campaign* by the poet presumably in order to link *Ruslan and Liudmila* explicitly to the ancient written epic, in addition to the connection to the folk oral sources which gave rise to many of the poetic devices and motifs employed by Pushkin. Rimsky-Korsakov follows this precedent by having the merchants in Tableau One of his *Sadko* sing two lines which are a very close echo of lines from *Igor's Campaign* (see Section Seven (A)) in relation to Nezhata, the visiting *gusli* player from Kiev, which seem to equate Nezhata with Boian. By this device he has not only explicitly connected the world of Russian oral folk epic with that of written courtly epic, but has also consciously established a link for his *bylina* in dramatised musical form with the tradition of Russian opera based on epic or literary imitation epic sources.

Another such overt and conscious connection is Rimsky-Korsakov's employment of harp and piano chords and *glissandi* to represent the numerous '*gusli*' numbers in his work. This procedure is in direct imitation of Glinka's representation of this instrument in his *Ruslan*, and this precedent was followed by Borodin in *Prince Igor*.

A further possible conscious reference to the world of literary epic may be Rimsky-Korsakov's final concluding verse for Nezhata at the end of *Sadko*.

Pushkin's poem *Ruslan and Liudmila* ends with a typical phrase of the type used to conclude many *byliny*. The poet in fact introduces and concludes the narrative section of his poem with the selfsame couplet:

Дела давно минувших дней,
Преданья старины глубокой

¹ Danilov, (1977), p. 366.

(The deeds of long-past days,
The traditions of deep antiquity).

Glinka also commences his opera (though he does not conclude it) with this couplet sung by Baian and the male chorus.

Rimsky-Korsakov concludes (though does not begin) his opera with just such a characteristic phrase, also introducing the word *stariny*, (which here means rather 'old tales' than 'old times'). 'Deeds' are also referred to, though with a different word: *deian'ia* rather than *dela*.

The composer, therefore, was clearly making a conscious effort to link his opera-*bylina* into the tradition of verbal and musical, folk and 'art', Russian epic narrative.

The question must be asked whether this effort is successful, or whether, as we have suggested above *passim*, the effort to transpose an essentially slow-moving, linear, verbal genre, which unfolds detail by detail, to a spectacular visual medium, where all the details of any particular episode become visible at once, was misguided from the outset? We have already alluded in our Introduction to Tsukkerman's comment on the *slabyi dramatizm* (poor dramatic quality) of the work. The composer may well have hoped that at least some in his audience would possess a reasonably deep knowledge of the sources, and thus would be able to grasp what was happening on stage in terms of the epic unfolding of the original tale. Danilov's volume, which had first appeared over 70 years previously, had been reprinted in 1878, and then, in a mass-market cheap edition in 1892, and so many in the audience may well have been familiar with this source book.¹ Yet Rybnikov's volumes, which contained the

¹ Danilov, Kirsha, etc (Moscow: A. A. Torletskii, 1878). The 1892 edition was published in Moscow by the major publisher and book-shop owner A. S. Suvorin, in his 'Cheap Library' (*Deshevaia biblioteka*) series. Suvorin not only owned book shops in all the major towns of Russia, but also possessed the monopoly on railway-station sales in the country, and so presumably Danilov's volume may well have been read on trains by travellers who

most complete and coherent versions of the *Sadko* story, had appeared in the 1860s and had not been reprinted at all; while Gil'ferding's collection had appeared in full in 1873, and had been reprinted just once, in three volumes, in a limited edition by a scholarly society (the first two volumes in 1894 and 1896, and the final one in 1900, some years after the premiere of *Sadko*).¹ Although the middle-class educated audience of 1897 - the date of the premiere of *Sadko* - might have seen the original volumes, and some might even have had them still on their shelves, very few of these people would have had as detailed a knowledge of Russian epic, or indeed of any of the other sources, such as the *Golubinaia kniga*, *skomorokh* songs, and the learned analyses of folklore of such writers as Afanas'ev, which the composer, through his engrossing interest in folk tradition, had been immersed in since his youth in the 1850s and '60s.

Is the cavilling of the commentators on the poor dramatic quality of the work justified? The criticism is directed primarily against the first episode of Tableau One - the introduction to the scene at the Merchants' Hall - where for the first 13-14 minutes, the merchants sit at their tables feasting. This episode is varied solely by Nezhata's singing the extracts from the *bylina* about Volkh Vseslavich. The stasis of the action is only broken finally by Sadko's dramatic entry. Yet the composer and his collaborators had in the past displayed excellent judgment in translating literary sources to the stage. We may therefore speculate that the composer believed that the interest of the spectacle could indeed be maintained for the spectator, not only by the power of the music, but possibly too by directorial stratagems. One wonders whether the composer envisaged that the *skomorokhi*, the *udalye molodtsy*, would really be left doing nothing in their place 'on and by the stove' till they were finally called out to perform following Sadko's exit some 20 minutes after the beginning of the opera. We may speculate

had purchased it to pass the time on their journey. This latter volume is now extremely rare, because, as it was a cheap, mass-market edition, it was printed on flimsy, poor quality paper, with binding that would come apart after a very short period.

¹ Gil'ferding, vol 59 (1894), vol 60 (1896), and vol 61 (1900) of *Sbornik otdeleniia Russkago iazyka i slovesnosti* (St Petersburg: Imp. Ak. Nauk).

that he took it as given that they too could be employed by the director in performing humorous antics for the benefit of the merchants and theatre audience, and in imitating in dumb-show the actions of Volkh Vseslavich when Nezhata sings extracts from that epic, precisely as they do for the song about the fool drawn from Danilov which rounds off this Tableau.

It is difficult to gain any idea of Mamontov's original production from reviews, since those of the time concentrate primarily on the superb music of this new opera from a famous composer, then devote attention to Korovin's excellent scenery (implying that there the spectacle made a significant visual impact), and only in passing describe what is happening on stage.¹

Where later reviews mention stage action, it is to criticise individual infelicities, rather than give any idea of the overall conception. For instance, Igor' Glebov, writing in 1920 of a new performance at the Mariinsky Theatre, observes that the appearance of the Princess and her water maidens in Tableau Two resembles a 'School for teaching swimming' (*Shkola plavaniia*), while the dances of the Sea Creatures are crudely choreographed. The production has not solved (the critic maintains) the problem of bringing to realisation the images in sound created by Rimsky-Korsakov's imagination.²

Reviews of the opera from the 1930s onward are vitiated by inevitable ideological distortion. For instance, I. Il'in, writing in 1949, declares that in the opera, 'Novgorod is the 'representative of the glorious Russian people'. However, he gives no detailed account of the stage

¹ Eg Lipaev, I, ' 'Sadko' - Opera-byлина N Rimskago-Kosakova [sic] na Moskovskoi stsene', *RMG*, 1, (Jan) 1898, pp. 69-77, spends almost his entire article describing the music of the opera, and the performance. He notes the superb music and scenery, but states that the musical forces seemed too small, and the stage of the Solodovnikov theatre, where Mamontov's company were presenting the work, was inadequate. However he gives almost no idea of the stage action itself.

² Glebov, Igor' [pseudonym of Boris Asaf'ev], ' 'Sadko' - Mariinskii Teatr' *Zhizn' iskusstva*, 566-567, (25-26 Sept (ie two numbers printed in one on Saturday for the weekend), 1920) pp. 2-3.

action.¹ Nest'ev, writing in 1951 of what may be the same production, maintains that the production (by Boris Pokrovskii), emphasises the class conflict of old Novgorod, between the dissolute and boastful merchants, who are all dressed in kaftans and are bearded, in the old style, and Sadko, who, with his pride and independence, is the embodiment of the 'energy of the progressive Russian people'.² But there is no information on how Sadko himself is dressed, nor how the social conflict is highlighted any more forcefully than in previous productions.

Other reviews have concentrated on the varying speeds at which the work has been taken, and on cuts in the music, rather than on the dramatic action. For instance, Khubov, writing of the same production yet again, states that the conductor, Golovanov, has avoided stasis by taking the whole work extremely fast, which was only out of place once: during the finale of Tableau Four, '*Vysota li vysota*', which, owing to the extremely rapid pace, was not sufficiently majestic.³

Kandinskii, writing critically and frankly in 1969 on distortions in opera production in Russia due either to ideological or mistaken artistic principles, notes that in a recent production at the Kirov (formerly, and now once again, the Mariinsky) in Leningrad, the parts of the *Starchishche*, Nezhata, Liubava, and the soothsayers, had all been cut, making nonsense of large elements of the plot. In fact, it appears from this article that the production has returned the story-line, which Rimsky-Korsakov had striven so hard to clarify, to the incoherence of the original sources. Furthermore, the musical framework of the opera, with its logical harmonic progressions, was disrupted, leading to musically jarring juxtapositions.⁴ In fact, this disruption of the musical and textual plan of the opera, leading to incoherence and incomprehension, reinforces what we have been attempting to demonstrate in this thesis: that the entire work is

¹ Il'in, I., 'Sadko' na stsene Bol'shogo Teatra', *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 9, (Sept, 1949), pp. 90-95.

² Nest'ev, N., 'Novoe prochtenie klassiki', *Teatr*, 5, (May, 1951), pp. 52-66.

³ Khubov, G., "Sadko" - Opera Rimskogo-Korsakova v Bol'shom Teatre', *Pravda*, (24 June 1949); repr. Khubov, G., *O muzyke i muzykantakh* (Moscow: 'Sovetskii kompozitor', 1959), pp. 141-146.

⁴ Kandinskii, A., 'Kogda molchat klassiki', *SM*, 6, (1969), pp. 32-39.

an extraordinarily unified and interwoven creation, and apparently can suffer very little interference without losing this sense of unity and coherence.¹

To return to details of staging in a modern production: the laser-disc film of the 1994 Kirov production of *Sadko* conducted by Valerii Gergiev shows that the director does not have the merchants seated the whole time as they eat and drink. Either the entire chorus, or smaller groups, or individuals, stand, walk round, argue, or dance tipsily. The merchants are all male, and so the director uses a large number of female chorus members during this episode to play the roles (apparently) of non-singing female *skomorokhi* who roam around the stage and dance either with each other or with the men. In fact, if one were to judge from this video recording, it seems that the director has striven so much to counteract the stasis of the first ten minutes or so of this act, that in this production too much is going on: it all seems rather chaotic at times.

But this directorial over-compensation highlights the very point we wish to make here: the apparent long stases in an opera may quite well be counteracted by the stratagems of an ingenious director. This kind of practical dramatic invention is precisely what Rimsky-Korsakov

¹ When seeking to make cuts, directors have generally first of all resorted to excising Tableau Three (mainly depicting Sadko's grieving wife, Liubava), and omitting the short passages in which she appears at the end of Tableaux Four and Seven. If any cuts had to be made at all, this procedure would certainly appear to be the least objectionable, and would certainly make more sense than the wholesale omissions detailed above, and the extraordinary excision of part of the marriage on the sea bed in the Gergiev recording, noted in Section Seven (C). As discussed in Section Seven (A), Tableau Three and the role of Liubava overall, were afterthoughts, and, although the text of this tableau clarifies a few details of the story, this episode is not necessary to the logical coherence of the plot. It would be fully dramatically justified for Sadko, after having received the Sea Princess's pledge to make him wealthy in Tableau Two, to rush immediately to Novgorod and strike his wager with the merchants in Tableau Four. Yet the composer was against even this cut. In 1907 the theatrical director Sergei Diaghilev (usually known in the west in the French form 'Serge Diaghilev'), wrote to the composer regarding a projected staging of *Sadko* in Paris with his *Ballets Russes* company, proposing to cut the role of Liubava (who apparently in the French translation was throughout called 'Madame Sadko!'). Rimsky-Korsakov irritably replied that under such circumstances he would not allow the staging to take place, and proposed in its place either his *Maid of Pskov*, *Mlada*, or *Kashchei the Deathless*, since they are all much shorter than *Sadko*. If Diaghilev didn't like that, continued the composer, he could just put on somebody else's work altogether. The performances of *Sadko* did not take place till October 1908, four months after the composer's death. See Zilbershtein, I. S., and Samkov, V. A., *Sergei Diaghilev i russkoe iskusstvo*, 2 vols (Moscow: Izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo', 1982), vol II. Diaghilev to Rimsky-Korsakov, 11th August 1907 (pp. 104-5); the composer's reply, dated 'before 26 August' is on p.106.

might well have expected, as long as it was controlled and did not distract from the music and forward movement of the narrative.¹ We have noted above that Gilferding observed that the best epic singers varied their *byliny* by employing a whole range of different devices at every narration, such as variations of vocal style, ornamentation, phraseology, and musical delivery. And could we not here understand the opera-*bylina*'s directors as fulfilling just such a role? These directors ensure that, from production to production, albeit not necessarily from performance to performance, there are variations in visual setting and details of stage movement, which would fulfil in the theatre the role played in the linear verbal *bylina* genre by the differing devices of oral folk performance.²

The director too would of course be expected to have a deep knowledge of Russian folk creativity in general, and, for a staging of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*, of the *starina* genre in particular. We may also note here, in this regard, that, in Tableau One of the 1994 laser-disc recording of the Kirov production, when Nezhata sings the extract from *Volkh Vseslavich* to the assembled merchants, they are depicted in the main as gazing thoughtfully at the table, although some rise in awe at the young musician's singing as they acknowledge his inspiration.

¹ As noted in Section Five, the all-powerful director is a comparatively new phenomenon, and until the 1880s-90s, productions were often planned by the director in conjunction with the senior actors and stage designers. Therefore possibly, for the premiere of *Sadko* in 1897, the composer expected ingenious stratagems of production, not just from Mamontov, but from a range of senior individuals.

² Productions may, of course, differ from performance to performance, if the director so wishes. The writer of this thesis performed in 1987 at the first complete performance in France of Berlioz's five-hour-long opera, *Les Troyens*. Like *Sadko*, this opera requires a huge cast of singers and extras, to represent the people of Troy and Carthage, and the directors, Patrice Caurier and Moshe Leiser, stipulated that they did not wish the cast to behave like a regimented conventional dramatic cast, but to behave as the spirit took them, to move where they wished, and to enter the stage from whichever entrance was nearest. This meant that, from performance to performance, the stage movement was totally different, and that each cast member would finish up on an entirely different part of the stage, next to different people, and making different gestures to accompany the score, depending on whether he or she was feeling cheerful, bored, energetic, apathetic, or whatever, that day.

Any director could therefore presumably introduce such an 'aleatory' style for *Sadko*, in imitation of the folk-singers who varied their declamations both textually and musically from performance to performance. However, this is a risky strategy, which could well result in drastically varying quality of each performance, and even chaos on stage at times. Furthermore, with Rimsky-Korsakov's emphasis on the pre-eminence of the music over the action in his operas, and his dislike of naturalism (see our Introduction), one wonders whether this type of production, which, in imitation of 'reality', was ever-changing, would have been at all to his liking, or would have conformed with his intentions.

We may speculate that this is a directorial reference to the line cited below from a variant of *Dobrynia v ot'ezde*, the *bylina* from which Rimsky-Korsakov has drawn the information concerning the allotted position of the *skomorokhi* around the stove. The courtly Kiev *bogatyř* Dobrynia Nikitich has returned home after twelve years adventuring abroad to find his wife at a betrothal feast. She has been persuaded that Dobrynia is dead, and has agreed to marry the scheming *bogatyř* Alësha Popovich. Dobrynia accordingly dresses himself as a *skomorokh* (presumably this includes donning a mask), and, entering the feast, he proceeds to play on his *gusli zvonchatye*:

Натягивал тетивочки шелковые,
 На тыя струночки золоченыя,
 Учал по струночкам похаживать,
 Учал он голосом поваживать

.....

Они от старого всех до малого
 Тут все на пиры призамолкнули.¹

Furthermore, according to Chudnovskii, describing Pokrovskii's 1949 production of *Sadko* at the Bol'shoi, throughout Tableau Four *bogatyři* who had nothing to do with the action could be seen trying out gigantic cudgels (see our Section Seven (B) for this motif) that were being offered for sale by the traders, while the common folk fled in terror before the 'wizards'. The word Chudnovskii uses for 'wizards' is *koldun'ia*, not *volkhvy*, and it is not clear whether these

¹ 'He tautened [ie tuned] the silken cords,
 And upon those engilded strings
 He 'gan for to strum
 And with his voice he struck up a tune

.....
 And they all, from the eldest to the youngest
 There at that feast fell into deep silence.'
 (Rybnikov, I, no 26, pp. 162-171) (p. 169).

are the *volkhvy* who have a minor singing role in this Tableau, or others whom the director has introduced to create an authentic background. Moreover, although not called for by the score, lines of 'blind' people would file across the stage at intervals, presumably as a reminder of the close connection between the *kaleki* ('disabled') and *kaliki* ('pilgrims'), and of the fact that such disabled people were a feature at fairs, where they would sing to earn a crust. Furthermore, some of the traders were selling coloured footwear - and we recall that shoe-making was one of the major trades of ancient Novgorod.¹ By this intermingling of historical reality and folk-tale detail, the director, displaying a deep knowledge of both the epic sources and the historical background, has reinforced the composer's prefatory note, that the opera is taking place in 'semi-legendary, semi-historical times'.

Incidentally, the director of the 1994 Kirov production, Alexei Stepaniuk, also enlivens other visually static moments of the production by using means drawn from the artistic conventions of the stage. Dances are only specifically called for by the composer in Tableau Four, when the golden fish turn into ingots of gold, and in Tableau Six, during the marriage on the sea bed. Yet Stepaniuk also introduces considerable background movement and staged dances during the songs of the three foreign merchants at the conclusion of Tableau Four. These songs take up some 13 minutes, and, although the music is superb, some movement is necessary to enliven the spectacle. Therefore, during the Viking's song, a host of extras dressed as Vikings, and somewhat resembling refugees from The Ring Cycle, march on with swords aloft and line up looking ferocious, although not doing much else, behind the singer, thus giving visual reinforcement to the words of his song. During the Indian Merchant's song, several couples in 'authentic' Indian dress perform a sinuous 'Indian' dance, while the Venetian Merchant's song is given added colour by the dance troupe, dressed in Renaissance Italian attire, performing an imitation of a courtly western dance of the period. At this point, pizzicato strings in the orchestra

¹ Chudnovskii, M. A., *Rezhisser stavit operu* (Moscow: 'Isskustvo', 1967) pp. 72-73.

imitate the plucking of a lute, and in the Kirov production, the Venetian merchant is indeed 'playing' such an instrument while singing, and is thus supposedly giving the measure for the dance.

The objection might still be raised: how genuinely can such a relatively fixed genre as opera represent the almost endlessly fluid *bylina* form? In fact, when we recall Lineva's remarks (Section 2) that the Russian folk tune in general is almost infinitely variable, at least in terms of its harmonisation, one might ask whether any opera attempting to recreate the world of Russian folk music can have any validity at all? Certainly as regards *Sadko*, although details of staging might differ considerably from production to production, they will very rarely change drastically from performance to performance, in the manner described some pages ago. They will stay essentially the same during any run of the same production, and, unless there are cuts, the text will also remain identical. Furthermore, the music - apart from the occasional variation of tempo and volume, depending on the whim of any individual conductor - will also remain at approximately the same tempi and dynamics indicated in the score throughout the work's performing history. This might be an echo of the practice of the peasant bards who did indeed declaim their *byliny* identically at every performance, but it will be recalled that some collectors, such as Gil'ferding, regarded these singers as inferior to those who could spontaneously vary their narratives from performance to performance.

Was Rimsky-Korsakov really unaware of these contradictions? We have already suggested that he was not merely retelling musically the story of *Sadko*, but was, in addition, trying to demonstrate how folk music could be created almost spontaneously in a primitive world. We recall, moreover, that the composer, in a way which would have been beyond the means of the ordinary folk bard, had already striven to make sense of the theme by introducing motifs from Russian mythology (eg *The Sea Tsar*) drawn from learned volumes. In addition, in the 'fantastic' scenes (ie those on the sea-bed, and those connected with the *Tsarevna Volkhova*),

he had departed from characteristic folk-song tone-rows and time-signatures, and had used such exotic 'art music' scales as octatonic and whole-tone rows. He had, furthermore, sacrificed authenticity and fidelity to the folk originals where they would not have fitted easily with the 'art' music requirements of his new genre (see pps. 178 and 255-257). He also endeavoured to create a semi-realistic picture of historic Novgorod, with details drawn from scholarly works, rather than, as in his youthful tone-poem *Sadko* (1867) confining himself to the 'magical' aspects of the tale. This access to detailed historical portrayals of the period in which an epic narrative is supposed to have taken place, is another aspect of creation which would have been unavailable to the typical peasant folk bard, both by reason of his or her remoteness from civilisation in the isolated Russian north, and by the almost ubiquitous illiteracy of these singers.¹

He was, therefore, in composing his opera-*bylina*, not simply taking on the role of a folk bard declaiming an epic, but was also showing how the bard him/herself fitted into this world, and portraying her/his milieu. He was, as we have termed it, the 'bard behind the bard', or a grandparent to the tale rather than a parent. We might even surmise that he could have been consciously distancing himself even more from the original sources, and that he in fact, while creating an operatic variant of the *Sadko* epic, viewed himself, not as a musician transposing one artistic genre to another, but as a musical and literary artist creating a totally different genre. This was a genre which, in its literary and musical setting, formed a new dynamic and dramatic hybrid of folk music and art music, folk oral themes and epic scenarios, and such written works as *Igor's Campaign* and *The Legend of India the Wealthy*. At the same time, in order to complete the narrative, textual, and contextual synthesis, he incorporated a recognisable historical Russian background in which the original folk creative traditions could have flourished.

¹ Gil'ferding, I, p. 41.

It is our contention, then, that, by pointedly naming his composition an opera-*bylina*, the composer was signifying not that he was simply transposing one genre to another, or creating a hybrid, but that he was in fact moulding an entirely new, self-standing and independent artistic form, which would have to be viewed, interpreted, and responded to by the urban educated audience in a radically different manner from anything they had seen before. It was a form which would unite both the traditions of art- and folk-music, and art- and folk literature, and which would present the materials of the epic tradition to an urban middle-class audience who would have had but little chance to witness the original peasant singers and hear the epics in their original form or context. This new synthetic and syncretistic art genre would, by bringing the Russian epic tradition, with its narrative devices, and slow-moving, sometimes almost static¹ 'non-dramatic' form into the mainstream of Russian educated culture, form a stepping-stone for the further development of this new genre and this kind of musical-dramatic experience it made possible by future writers and composers. The composer may even have viewed this transmission of his new cultural genre as a further function of his role as a 'meta-bard', since it parallels the process which we have described in Section One, of the transmission of the oral epic tradition from one generation of peasant bards to the next. The most original folk singers of each new generation, we will recall, would then declaim the basic story-line of each narrative, but vary it at each performance by certain traditional formulae. Rimsky-Korsakov might well have intended that future composers and writers, inspired by his

¹ It should be emphasised that this 'static' and 'non-dramatic' quality is not that of earlier Russian operas such as *Prince Igor*, or of certain moments in *Boris Godunov*. The first is caused by the necessity to pad out the original story – Russian prince goes to war, is captured, escapes – with dancing, *skomorokh* antics, and an inconsequential love affair. The music is superb, but could just as easily be played as concert music. One notorious moment in *Boris Godunov*, deriving directly from Pushkin's verse drama of the same name, is Boris's six-minute-long 'interior monologue' at his coronation; all the onlookers have to 'freeze' while he declaims, or sings, this monologue, and then resume the action from where it left off immediately afterwards. The words are in the top rank of poetry, but Pushkin lacked 'stage sense' here, and Musorgsky blindly imitated his source. However, the extremely slow movement, or even stasis, of most of *Sadko* is one of the characteristics of the original epic sources, which the composer is *deliberately* employing to help to create his new genre, an opera-*bylina*, or epic narrative in staged art-music form.

'meta-bardic' musical and literary synthesis, would retell folkloric stories by a similar use of a traditional plot, recreated, however, by a new reworking of the traditional literary motifs and current musical language, which could then inspire further generations of creative artists throughout the ages.

We may therefore speculate, at this point, whether Rimsky-Korsakov, although expecting his audience to be reasonably familiar with the sources, would have actually intended the extraordinarily concentrated fusion of traditional literary motifs and references, and musical styles, to be aimed rather at future artists, who could transmit and transmute the tradition further.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Even if the composer understood that the distillation of sources in his opera-*bylina* was going to be accessible only to specialists, he may well have assumed that future audiences of such a spectacle (even if not those who viewed the first performances) would have acquired the realisation from such sources as reviews, that they would have to adjust their conventional operatic expectations, and accept that such non-dramatic episodes as the long stases - if not mediated by directors – and the lack of dramatic cohesion between tableaux, were a *sine qua non* of the new genre. However, the audience would certainly need to have done some research beforehand - into both folk and 'art' sources, such as ancient Russian literature, and the works of Pushkin, Glinka, and Borodin, - in order to develop their understanding of the deeper import of what they were seeing, and also to penetrate the 'national spirit' infusing it, drawn both from the unlettered and from the learned strata of society. Indeed, this opera-*bylina* is an extraordinarily concentrated distillation of the Russian national style and spirit, which, as the composer stated in the quotation cited in our Introduction, can be fully appreciated only by a Russian. Therefore the composer was creating with this new genre not just a medium of theatre entertainment for the urban middle-classes, which they could view passively, but one

which – like the original interaction between the *skazitel'nitsa* and his/her peasant audience – demanded ideally, the emotional and imaginative participation, and knowledge of the sources, of every individual member of the audience to be brought to bear in creating the full significance for themselves as individuals of what they were seeing and hearing. Furthermore, by his unwavering control of every authorial detail of the physical score, from the frontispiece, through the cast-list, stage-directions, and titles of numbers, in authentic style, the composer was, we believe, in his role of a meta-bard, creating an 'archetypical' ideal representation of the action, which must, in traditional epic fashion, be adhered to strictly as a framework. No transplantation of the story to a different period or class of people could be countenanced. However, the composer must have been aware that every staging would be mediated by differing directorial details, styles of scene painting and choice of colours, slightly different interpretations of musical markings of dynamics and tempo, and differing timbres of instruments and voices. Therefore, we believe, Rimsky-Korsakov did not equate his own organising consciousness and intentions with those of the peasant bards. He was aware that their role would be played by the director, designers, and performers, specific to each staging, who, while adhering strictly to the outline of the tale, might alter details drastically - although in accordance with formulaic models. The composer, on the other hand, was, we contend, with his rigorously controlled 'paper' score of *Sadko*, and similar scores of his other stage works, consciously identifying his creative consciousness with the 'collective national spirit' behind the entire folk tradition of Russia, which could then be mediated to audiences over time. This would explain why he attached to many of his stage-works the sub-titles from folk tradition mentioned earlier: each extremely precisely envisioned and strictly controlled 'physical' score represents an idealised version of a different genre of Russian folk tradition, combined with the 'art' music tradition of the educated urban middle classes, to create a new 'collective national spirit' - an idealised combination of the best artistic traditions from all levels of Russian society.¹

¹ Since an examination of the orchestration of *Sadko* has been of secondary importance in this thesis, we have not dealt with the issue of changing performance practice. But since manner of performance seems to change

Furthermore, although he must have been aware that not many of his audience would have an in-depth knowledge of the folk sources, or possibly of musical theory, he, we may speculate, in his role of representative of the new collective national spirit, transcending classes, viewed himself as creator over the years, through his works, of a new public awareness and understanding, not so much of the old sources, but of the new artistic genres created by a fusion of those sources.

It must be asked – did the composer succeed in establishing these new artistic genres in the national consciousness? Did *Sadko*, in particular, inspire any further such experiments? The answer would seem to be negative, not because the project of an opera-*bylina* itself was misguided, but because, around the turn of the 20th century, and until the 1914-18 War, Russian educated society was itself beginning to become more interested in and influenced by western models of democratic government and new experimental western artistic forms – for instance, Symbolism in poetry and graphic art; interest in native Russian forms deriving from the common folk, while not being displaced, now had to take its place in Russia within a newly-

from generation to generation, we may ask whether any performance can ever be said to be authentic. For instance, Robert Philip points out that, to judge from recordings from early in the 20th century to around 1940, 'lavish portamento and sparing vibrato' were the norm, whereas by the 1950s, vibrato was prominent and the use of portamento was very sparing (Philip, Robert, '1900-1940', (in) *Performance Practice*, ed. Sadie, Stanley, 2 vols, (New York and Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1990, II, pp. 461-482 (pp. 462 and 480)). See also Kern Holoman, D, '19th Century: Introduction', *ibid* II, pp. 323-345 *passim*. An idea of the 'lavish portamento' of the early 20th century may be acquired by listening to, for instance, W. H. Squire's 1930 recording of Elgar's 'Cello Concerto, with the Halle Orchestra conducted by Hamilton Harty (final 11 mins 30 secs reproduced on track 3 of CD 9984 'The English Tradition'; this is the first CD of three to form Vol II of the three-volume set '*The Recorded Cello: The History of the Cello on Record* (East Sussex, UK: Pearl, 1993). Since Elgar composed this concerto in 1919, Squire's style must obviously have been what he had in mind, rather than modern performance practice.

This is not even taking into account differences in specification and production of instruments. According to Philip in his chapter in *Performance Practice* quoted above (p. 478), by the 1920s steel was replacing catgut for the upper reaches of the string instruments, and the bores of brass instruments were becoming increasingly wider. Anybody who has heard a performance of any 19th century work on 'authentic' instruments, will have observed that the sound is often startlingly different from modern performances. Furthermore, the pronunciation of a language, the accepted educated accent, and the enunciation of sounds by singers, will also change with time, leading to vocal qualities which vary considerably over generations. Therefore we can only know approximately what sounds Rimsky-Korsakov heard from his orchestra and singers, and what he expected to be produced in performances.

burgeoning cosmopolitan and international political and artistic consciousness.¹

In music, even acolytes and disciples of Rimsky-Korsakov such as Glazunov and Arensky composed much of their later music on western 'art' music models, and it was Rimsky-Korsakov's pupil Igor Stravinsky who is commonly said to have decisively engineered the break with the musical past with his *Rite of Spring*, premiered in 1913. The First World War brought all artistic experimentation to a halt, and in 1917 the Bolshevik Revolution inaugurated a new philosophy of art which had to depict and further the struggle of the workers against capitalism. All musical experimentation was banned, and consequently, following the collapse of Communism in the late 1980s-early 1990s, Russian composers such as Sofiya Gubaidulina, Elena Firsova, Albert Schnittke, and others, plunged into an exploration of musical experimental means and forms which had been banned for so long, rather than returning to their native roots.

Accordingly, the classical Russian operas of the late 19th century, including *Sadko*, although frequently staged, and much admired and enjoyed, are viewed in Russia as being the end of a tradition, rather than a building-block for further development.

We must therefore reluctantly conclude that Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko*, not because the project of the opera-*bylina* was misguided or unfeasible, but simply because of historical circumstances, has proved to be a dead-end in Russian musical history.

FINAL REMARKS

We have quoted at the beginning of our Introduction Taruskin's observation concerning the

¹ For an in-depth examination of the political, cultural, and artistic evolution of Russian life at the turn of the 20th century up to the Great War, see e.g. Billington, James, *The Icon and the Axe*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), pages 434-518.

amount of sub-text required for comprehension of Rimsky-Korsakov's operas, which is 'a semiotician's dream, and a critic's nightmare'. The writer of this thesis is not a critic, and certainly not a semiotician. However, given this proviso, we have striven as far as possible, within the circumscribed boundaries of a thesis, to give a comprehensive explication of the 'sub-text', the 'hinterland' of the opera-*bylina*, and to explore the composer's intentions and artistic goals, not only in this work, but throughout his artistic career.

We were, of course, aware that such a sub-text existed when we set out to write this thesis more years ago than we care to remember; but it was only on commencing a deep study of each line of the text and music of the score, and all the sources, whether textual, musical, historical, or biographical, that we came to realise how extraordinarily deeply interwoven each reference is. We have already quoted as an example the use of the *bylina* of Volk Vseslavich, the shamanic magician-*bogatyř*, and the introduction of two *volkhvy* ('warlocks', wizards); the creation of the river that flows through Novgorod from the Princess *Volkhova*, and the ascription by folk tradition of the creation of this river to an evil magician; and finally, the fact that the adventures of Volk are often confused in the sources with those of another *bogatyř* called Volga. In other words, from the one syllable *Vol/k/kh* the composer has produced a web of references to magicians and rivers. We have also speculated earlier whether this extraordinarily intensive interlinking of motifs and references was in fact entirely conscious.

In a discussion of Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestration, Gerald Abraham talks of his 'mathematical imagination', by which the critic seems to imply a certain coldness of mood of the 'fantastic' scenes of the operas, produced by the conscious, comprehensively planned, interweaving of such musical devices as octatonic scales, minor thirds, augmented sevenths, and so on, to

produce a mood of fantasy.¹

Our task in this thesis has not been to analyse Rimsky-Korsakov's music which is based on the utilisation, and an exploration of the possibilities of, the tonal and harmonic resources of western 'art' music. But we may indicate here that the meticulous exploitation of such means in the 'fantastic' scenes of *Sadko* parallels the intensive use of planned textual and folk-musical inter-reference and interdependence in the 'realistic' scenes in Novgorod. In this relatively long thesis, we have *only* examined the background of the realistic scenes, and of the fantastic scenes in so far as they derive from folk sources. Musical experts, such as Abraham or van der Pals, have been able to find an analogous density of texture in the 'art' music. This all demonstrates, on the part of the composer, a terrifying amount of energy and dedication in examining sources, both textual and musical, both folk and literary, and an extraordinary innate capacity for synthesis (both conscious and unconscious) of assimilated information, and, finally a genius for reproducing that synthesis in appropriate sound. Abraham's phrase 'mathematical imagination' may well be taken as a thoroughly appropriate description of the composer's mind, if by 'mathematical' we wish to imply a remarkably original mind like Newton's in Wordsworth's image, 'voyaging through strange seas of thought alone'.² Similarly, such a description may be apt if by 'imagination' we signify a faculty with an outstanding capacity for human empathy (eg in portraying the emotions of characters such as Volkhova, Snow-Maiden, and the saintly Maiden Fevroniia), a vibrant warmth and exuberance in reproducing the mood of such scenes of jollity as the dances of the *skomorokhi* in *Sadko*, and finally, the almost hallucinatory and hypnotic intensity of the pantheism expressed in his music from *Snow-Maiden* (1882) to *Kitezh* (1907).

By our painstaking analysis in this thesis of the opera-byline *Sadko* (premiere 1897) which falls

¹ Abraham, G., 'Sadko', *Studies in Russian Music* (1969), pp. 221-245 (p. 243).

² Wordsworth, William, *The Prelude*, (1850), book III, line 63.

just over halfway through the composer's career of operatic composition, we have attempted to communicate at least some idea of the bedrock of sub-text, allusion, breadth of knowledge, and human empathy, which underpins Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov's artistic vision and world-view.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Synopsis of Rimsky-Korsakov's Opera *Sadko*. 309-313

Appendix II

Full Russian and English texts of stage directions dealt with in the thesis. 314-321

Appendix III

Musical examples referred to in text of thesis. 322-351

Appendix IV

Sources of the major variants of the *bylina Sadko* with which Rimsky-Korsakov would have been familiar at the time of writing his opera on the theme. 352

Appendix V

Russian operas mentioned in the thesis, including all of Rimsky-Korsakov's completed works in the genre. 353-355

APPENDIX I

SYNOPSIS OF RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S OPERA SADKO

(All obscure references, such as the 'white burning stone' and the 'Mighty *Bogatyr*' Monastic Elder' are explained in the main text).

The opera has no 'acts' but is divided into several 'tableaux' (*kartiny*) since, as Rimsky-Korsakov emphasised, the work consists of a string of 'scenes' taken from the old epic of Sadko, the Rich Merchant of Novgorod.¹ The composer notes in his prefatory material to the score:

*'The period of the action described in the bylina, which is usually attributed to the 11-12th centuries, has been transferred in the opera to that semi-legendary, semi-historical epoch when Christianity had only just become established in Novgorod, and when the old pagan traditions were still present in full force.'*²

It is to be understood in the opera that the River Volkhov, which has always historically flowed through Novgorod, providing it with access to the rest of Russia and western Europe, did not, in fact, in this operatic 'semi-legendary' time, exist. Consequently the Novgorod merchants have to maintain their fleets on Lake Il'men', which although in reality four miles from Novgorod, is represented in the opera as being extremely close to the city. This lack of a close navigable waterway to the outside world is a major disadvantage to Novgorod's trade. One of the major themes of this 'saga set in operatic form' is the creation of this river, which is supposedly miraculously brought into being by the folk musician Sadko's skill at his art.

TABLEAU ONE

The opera is prefaced by a short introduction '*Okian-More Sinee*' ('The Deep-blue Ocean-Sea'), which reproduces in music the unhurried heaving of the surface of the sea, and the surging of the waters in the sea's depths. The curtain then rises on a banquet in the Hall of one of the Merchants' Guilds of old Novgorod.

The merchants vaunt the wealth and freedom of Novgorod. A visiting professional *gusli*-player, Nezhata, sings the old epic saga about the hero Volkh Vseslavich. The assembled merchants demand that one of their own folk musicians should compose a saga in praise of the glory of Novgorod.

Sadko, a poor itinerant musician, enters, but proclaims - in a staccato recitative style drawn directly from the anthologies of old epic narratives - his dreams of rigging out a great fleet on Lake Il'men', setting up trade with the outside world, and adding to Novgorod's glory. The

¹ Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Letopis'*, p. 353.

² Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., 'Vmesto predisloviia', note 2, '*Sadko - Opera-bylina*', full score, vol I (no page no.).

merchants mock Sadko, and, with the aid of the *skomorokhi* (the strolling players who provided the entertainment at feasts in old Russia), drive Sadko from the Guild-Hall. He declares as he goes that, from henceforth, he will sing of his plans, not at human gatherings, but only to the waters of Lake Il'men'. The strolling players then sing a series of humorous songs mocking Sadko, as they, and the merchants, join in a lively dance. The tableau ends in general merry-making.

TABLEAU TWO

The shore of Lake Il'men'. A bright summer night, under a waning crescent moon. Sadko, sitting on 'a white burning stone' sings a folk-song like lament to the waters. The rushes rustle, the waters become disturbed, and a flock of white swans and grey ducks appears on the lake and swims to shore. They turn into beautiful maidens - the daughters of the Sea Tsar; at their head is Princess Volkhova. She tells Sadko that his songs have drawn them all from the depths, and she entreats him to sing a merry song. As he does so, the Princess weaves a garland for him, while the other water-maidens perform a round-dance. These maidens then scatter into the surrounding woodland, leaving Sadko and the Princess alone. They sing a love-duet, and setting the garland on his head, she informs him that she is the daughter of the Sea Tsar and of his wife, The Most Wise Water Queen: her elder sisters are the deep streams of the world, which flow into the seas. She describes the wonders of her father's azure sea-castle, and tells Sadko that it has been foretold that she will marry a mortal. They declare their betrothal, and she tells him that, if he casts his net into the waters on the following day, she will send him fish made of gold, and he will be able to fulfil his ambitions of becoming a wealthy merchant. Dawn approaches: the waters on the lake foam, the Sea Tsar himself appears from the depths, and angrily orders the maidens back into the waters. They turn back into swans and ducks and swim away with a chorus of farewell.

TABLEAU THREE

Early morning in Sadko's dwelling. We are in the main hall. Sadko's young wife Liubava Buslaevna is waiting by an ornately carved window for her husband, who has not been home all night. Bells toll for early morning Mass, and Liubava declares that she has lost Sadko's love: he now dreams only of sailing abroad and attaining glory. Sadko bursts in, utterly distracted. He seems oblivious of his wife's loving greeting, and babbles of his meeting with the Sea Princess. As the bells toll for the end of Mass, he declares his intention of going to the quayside of Lake Il'men', and wagering his 'turbulent head' against the merchants' vast wealth, that he will find fish made of gold in the lake. To Liubava's despairing cries, he rushes forth.

TABLEAU FOUR

The quay at Novgorod. Vast numbers of ships stand off the quay. The musical themes of the people of Novgorod, of the traders from all over the then known world, of the strolling players, pilgrims, soothsayers, and others are kaleidoscopically interwoven throughout the entire extended scene.

The crowd are excitedly thronging round the quay, pointing out goods from abroad, while the merchants exhort them to buy. A group of stern wandering pilgrims enters, and declaims, to a religious folk melody, a narrative of the struggle between Good and Evil. The strolling players mock them, and sing a song in praise of ale. The two Governors of the town and Nezhata, the musician from Novgorod, add to the musical tapestry with their comments on the scene, as do the Soothsayers offering to cast spells.

At the height of the revelry, Sadko enters, to general mockery. He immediately declares that he knows of a 'wonder of wonders' in the lake - fish made of gold. He dramatically stakes his 'turbulent head' against all the wares on all the merchants' stalls. A rowing-boat is prepared, and Sadko, the two Governors, and several distinguished Novgorodians step in, and the oarsmen cast off. The Sea Princess's voice is heard (apparently only by Sadko) telling him he will win his wager, be rich and happy, travel abroad, and be hers for ever. A net is cast, and drawn in. The crowd declare in amazement that the net is full of golden fish. They tell the merchants that they have lost their wager, and must hand over all their wealth to Sadko, and live henceforth as utter paupers. The net is drawn up onto the quay, and the fish turn into gold bars before the crowd's gaze. Sadko then calls forth all the 'beggarly tavern riff-raff' to form his retinue and crew and leads them offstage to acquire all the merchants' wares, to array themselves in fine clothes, to acquire a large fleet, and prepare to set sail for foreign lands. Nezhata begins to compose a new epic in praise of Sadko, now himself, by miraculous means, just such a wealthy trader. The strolling players mock the impoverished merchants. Sadko and his retinue, now richly dressed, re-enter to a sprightly march, and then the retinue leave to freight and rig out the 'thirty ships and yet a further ship', that they have already purchased. Sadko magnanimously returns all the merchants' wares, and then calls upon three foreign merchants - a Varangian (Viking), Indian, and Venetian - to sing songs of their native lands, so that he may judge which countries to sail to.

The Viking merchant declaims of the menacing cliffs, the seas, and the warlike character of the inhabitants, of his 'midnight land'. The crowd agitatedly calls on Sadko not to sail to this terrible place. The Indian Merchant, in a sinuous melody, sings of the fabulous wealth of his country, but also mentions that anybody who hears the song of the fabulous Phoenix-bird in his country, will forget everything. The crowd once again warns Sadko not to go anywhere near the place! Finally, the Venetian merchant sings of his city, of its traditional marriage once a year - in the person of the Doge - to the sea, and of its benevolent climate. The crowd, led by Nezhata, advise Sadko to wend his way to Venice, and this advice he accepts. His wife rushes in, and tries to hold him back, but he rejects her lamentations, and boards the ship with his retinue and crew. From the prow of the ship, Sadko, as if in response to the songs of the foreign merchants, leads off a great chorus in praise of the various localities of Russia. To this brilliant chorus the ships set sail, and, in the scarlet light of the setting sun, the curtain falls.

TABLEAU FIVE

In the midst of the high seas, Sadko's 'Falcon-Ship' ie, the flagship of his fleet, is becalmed. Sadko declares that this must be because he has been sailing the seas as a wealthy trader for twelve years, and has never given a thank-offering to the Sea Tsar for his good fortune. His crew have already thrown barrels of gold, silver, and pearls into the sea, but this is apparently not acceptable to the Tsar - he obviously requires a human sacrifice. Therefore they should

cast lots on the waters to see who must sacrifice himself. However, Sadko here sings in an aside that he believes it is not the Sea King requiring a sacrifice, but the Sea Princess, his betrothed, who is calling him to her. The crew cast large lots of wood, while Sadko throws a light hop-stalk. The chunks of wood all float, while the hop-stalk sinks. Sadko accepts that it is he who must sacrifice himself. He calls for his *gusli*, and, enjoining his crew to sail back to Novgorod and inform his wife of what has occurred, he steps down onto a raft of oak. As he does so, the Falcon-Ship's sails fill and she races away. Sadko is left alone: a wordless offstage women's chorus is heard, and the voice of the Sea Princess then declares that she is Sadko's for ever. As the curtain falls, Sadko and his raft sink into the depths.

TABLEAU SIX.

From the blackness a transparent azure palace slowly comes into view. In the centre grows a broom bush - Russian marriages in pagan times took place by broom bushes, a symbol of fertility. The Sea Tsar and his Queen are seated on thrones. Princess Volkhova is spinning at a spinning-wheel. Sadko enters the palace on a sea-shell drawn by a grampus-like species of dolphin. The Sea Tsar upbraids Sadko for the fact that the musician has sailed the high seas for twelve years and not offered any tribute to the source of his wealth. Volkhova, to appease her father, begs him to ask Sadko to strike up a song on his *gusli*. The musician then sings a folk-like melody in honour of the Sea Realm and its rulers. Volkhova declares that he is her betrothed, and the Tsar announces that he will allow his daughter to marry Sadko, and live with him in his azure sea palace. The Tsar calls upon his heralds, the sheat-fish, to sound their trumpets, and summon all the Underwater Realm to the feast. As the trumpets sound off-stage, the Tsar commands that his children and grandchildren, the streams and brooks of the world, should gather; following them, the fish too will assemble, and each will perform one of the specific functions of the guests at a traditional Russian wedding: the pike will be the traditional matchmaker, the burbot will be the best man, the perches will be the maids of honour, the sturgeon will be the seneschal, while the great whale-fish will be the door-keeper. There follows a gracious round-dance, and the sea creatures accompany Sadko and Volkhova as they process round the broom bush in a pagan marriage ceremony. The Tsar orders Sadko to strike up a dance on his instrument, and the musician does so, from time to time singing lines in praise of the Sea Kingdom and its rulers. Over the course of the following episode, the dance gradually becomes wilder and wilder. First, the sea-nymphs, fish, and sea monsters dance, while singing glory to the sea and the rivers, then Sadko and Volkhova declaim words of love to each other. As the dance becomes more and more ferocious, the Tsar and Tsarina join in. Through the transparent walls of the palace great ships are seen sinking. The water creatures excitedly call on the seas and rivers to overflow their shores, and at the height of the frenetic dance, the Sea King commands the waters to overflow, sink the 'beauteous ships', and destroy all Christian folk.

The dance is brought to an instantaneous halt with the sudden appearance of the Mighty *Bogatyr* Monastic Elder, dressed in the garb of a wandering pilgrim. He strikes Sadko's instrument from his hands with a massive lead staff, and the entire pagan Underwater Kingdom stands stock-still in stupefaction. To the tune of a Russian Orthodox ecclesiastical chant, the apparition deprives the Sea Tsar of his power, and declares that he must release his daughter onto the dry land of Novgorod, where she will be turned into a river for ever. He commands

that Sadko, who has behaved shamefully in entertaining the Underwater Realm thus, must likewise go, and henceforth serve Novgorod with his songs. Sadko and Volkhova embark into a sea-shell drawn by dolphins, and as they are drawn to the surface, the Sea Realm and the azure palace begin to sink for ever into the depths. The chorus of sea beings calls on Sadko to immortalise them in a song. The scene concludes in total darkness.

TABLEAU SEVEN

The newly-married pair arrive outside Novgorod on their sea-shell drawn by swans and dolphins. At first, their voices, singing lovingly to each other, are heard behind the curtain; this then rises on a green meadow by Lake Il'men'. Sadko, surrounded by reeds, is asleep on the bank. Volkhova, sitting beside him and bending over him, sings a heartfelt lullaby in Russian folk style. As the dawn breaks, she declares that her time has now come to dissolve first into a mist, and thence into a river, but she will remain faithful to Sadko for ever. She dissolves into a scarlet morning mist.

The voice of Sadko's wife, Liubava, is heard in the distance, lamenting her abandonment by her husband. He wakes up, greets her, and they sing rapturously of their new-found joy.

The mist is gradually dispersing, and the great River Volkhov appears, flowing into Lake Il'men'. The river is illumined by golden sunlight. As Sadko and his wife declaim the miracle, Sadko's fleet, headed by his Falcon-Ship, is seen returning home along the river. The crew greet Sadko with an exclamation of amazement. As they disembark, all the folk of Novgorod, plus the City Governors, the strolling players, pilgrims, foreign merchants, and Nezhata, pour onto the stage, and sing in wonder at the newly-created river which Novgorod now possesses. Nezhata, the Indian Merchant, and the first Governor, emphasise that Sadko, by his art, has attracted the river to Novgorod. Now, the way is clear from Novgorod to distant lands. As Sadko narrates his adventures, the crowd, Nezhata, and the foreign merchants, sing Sadko's praises, while the pilgrims sing a chorus in praise of God. Taking his *gusli*, Sadko strikes up a song extolling the Mighty *Bogatyr* Monastic Elder (St Nicholas), who has interceded for his people. All join in a great chorus of thanksgiving. The opera ends with a traditional concluding epic formula: 'Those glorious old tales, they really happened,/ and are sung to amuse glum old folk, / and to teach the young lads and lasses/ and are sung for all to hear'.

APPENDIX IV

Sources of the major variants of the *bylina Sadko* with which Rimsky-Korsakov would have been familiar at the time of his writing his opera on the theme.

DANILOV, KIRSHA (1804; expanded 1818; edn. 1977).

NOS	PP	TITLES
29	142-147	<i>Sadko bogatoi (sic) gost'</i>
47	178-182	<i>Sadkov korabl' stal na more</i>

RYBNIKOV, PAVEL NIKOLAEVICH (1861-1867; edn. 1909-10).

VOL I

NOS	PP	TITLES
18	114-115	<i>Sadko</i>
54	332-335	<i>Sadko</i>
66	376-379	<i>Sadko</i>

VOL II

NOS.		
107	24-31	<i>Sadko kupets</i>
124	128-130	<i>Sadko</i>
134	243-254	<i>Sadko</i>

GIL'FERDING, ALEXANDER FEDOROVICH (1873; edn. 1949-51).

VOL I

NOS	PP	TITLES
70	640-657	<i>Sadko</i>

VOL II

174	655-658	<i>Sadko</i>
-----	---------	--------------

APPENDIX V

RUSSIAN OPERAS MENTIONED IN THE THESIS, INCLUDING ALL OF RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S COMPLETED WORKS IN THE GENRE

PREDECESSORS OF 'THE FIVE': (dates are generally of premieres, except when work was revised, and the revised work was that first performed).

GLINKA

<i>A Life for the Tsar</i>	1836
<i>Ruslan and Liudmila</i>	1842

SEROV

<i>Rogneda</i>	1865
----------------	------

THE THREE MAJOR OPERA-PRODUCING MEMBERS OF THE FIVE

MUSORGSKY

Boris Godunov

First version	1868-9 (premiere 1928 (sic)).
Substantially revised	1871-2 (premiere 1874).

Khovanshchina

Begun in 1873; left extremely incomplete at the composer's death in 1881. Premiered in Rimsky-Korsakov's version in 1886.

BORODIN

Prince Igor'

Begun in 1869, still incomplete at the composer's death in 1887. Premiered in Rimsky-Korsakov's version in 1890.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (with the composer's generic sub-titles where appropriate).

Volume references are to the 50-volume edition of Rimsky-Korsakov's complete works published by the State Musical Publishing House (GMI) between 1946 and 1970 in Moscow and Leningrad. 'PR' = 'Piano reduction'.

The Maid of Pskov

First version 1873 Vol I (a), 1966. PR Vol 29 (a), 1965

Third version 1892 (This is the version now normally performed. There was an attempt at a second revision in 1877 which Rimsky-Korsakov abandoned and never published). Vol I (b), 1966. PR vol 29 (b), 1967.

May Night

1880 Vol 2 (a,b), 1948
PR Vol 30, 1951

Snow Maiden: A Spring Tale

1882 Vol 3 (a, b), 1953
PR Vol 31, (a,b), 1953

Malda (Magical Opera-Ballet)

1892 Vol 44 (a,b, supplement), 1960
PR Vol 32, 1959

Christmas Eve (An Opera Wassail-Song)

1895 Vol 5 (a,b), 1951
PR Vol 33, 1951

Sadko (An Opera-bylina).

1897 Vol 6 (a,b,c), 1952
PR Vol 34, 1952

Mozart and Salieri

1898 Vol 7, 1950
PR Vol 35, 1950

Lady Vera Sheloga

1898 Vol 8, 1946
PR Vol 36, 1948

The Tsar's Betrothed

1899 Vol 9 (a,b), 1956
PR Vol 37, 1956

The Tale of Tsar Saltan, of his Son the Illustrious and Mighty Bogatyr' Prince Gvidon Saltanovich, and of the Fair Princess [probably the longest opera title in history]

1900 Vol 10 (a, b), 1957
PR Vol 38, 1957

<i>Serviliia</i>	1902	Vol 11 (a, b), 1963 PR Vol 39, 1963
<i>Kashchei the Deathless (A little Autumn Tale)</i>	1902	Vol 12, 1955 PR Vol 40, 1955
<i>Pan Voevoda</i>	1904	Vol 13 (a, b), 1955 PR Vol 41, 1955
<i>The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh, and of the Maiden Fevronia</i>	1907	Vol 14 (a, b), 1962 PR Vol 42, 1962
<i>The Golden Cockerel</i> <i>(A dramatised operatic nonsense story)</i>	1909	(posthumous premiere) Vol 15 (a, b), 1950 PR Vol 43, 1951

BIBLIOGRAPHY

NOTES TO BIBLIOGRAPHY

For the system of transliteration and abbreviations used in this bibliography, see Abstract, pages 4-5.

Items below are in Latin alphabetical order - eg, although 'v' is the third letter of the Russian alphabet, author-surnames beginning with this letter will be found in 21st letter position below, in accordance with English-Latin script.

The transliteration of the soft sign: ' , is ignored for this purpose; eg. Ol'denburg comes before Olkhovsky.

CLASSIFICATION OF TITLES THROUGHOUT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1) The Music of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Sadko*.
 - (a) *Scores*.
 - (b) *Recording of Sadko* .
 - (c) *Secondary Sources on the music of Sadko*.
- 2) Other Sound Recordings referred to in Thesis.
- 3) The Life of Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov: Biographies and Memoirs.
- 4) Rimsky-Korsakov's Musical and Aesthetic Conceptions.
- 5) The Principal Collections of *Byliny*, Folk Songs, and Folk Literature known to Rimsky-Korsakov.
- 6) Commentaries, Anthologies of *stariny*, and Secondary Sources.
- 7) The *Skomorokhi*.
- 8) Russian History.
- 9) Other works cited and consulted.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1) THE MUSIC OF RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S OPERA SADKO

(a) Scores

Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Opera-bylina 'Sadko'* (piano reduction), (Leipzig: M P Belaieff, 1897).

Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A, ed. Lokshin, A. L., *Sadko - opera-bylina v semi kartinakh: partitura*, vol 6 of (musical) *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 50 vols (Moscow & Leningrad: 'GMI' ; 50 vols, 1946-1970). *Sadko* is vol 6 in three parts.

Sadko - opera-bylina v semi kartinakh: pereložhenie dlia peniia s fortepiano (as above), vol 34.

(b) Recording of *Sadko*

Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *SADKO* - Kirov Opera and Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev, CD: Philips CD 442 138-2, and Laser-disc: Philips 1LD 0000622.

(c) Secondary Sources on the music of *Sadko*

Abraham, G., *Studies in Russian Music* (1935; edn. London: William Reeves, 1969).

Cui, C.; see Kiui, Ts.

Gilse van der Pals, Nikolai van, *N. A. Rimsky-Korssakow: Operschaffen nebst Skizze über Leben und Wirken* (Paris & Leipzig: W. Bessel & Co., 1929).

Kandinskii, A. I., 'Sadko', (in) *Russkaia muzykal'naia literatura*, ed. Frid, E. A., instalment III (Leningrad: 'Muzyka', 1972) pp. 70-106.

Kandinskii, A. N., 'O muzykal'nykh kharakteristikakh v tvorchestve Rimskogo-Korsakova 90x godov', (in) *Rimsky-Korsakov: Muzykal'noe nasledstvo*, ed. Kabalevskii, D. B., I, 79-144.

Kashkin, N. D., 'Muzykal'noe obozrenie 'Sadko'', *Russkoe obozrenie* 49 (Jan 1898) pp. 563-577.

Kiui, Ts. A., ' 'Sadko' - opera-bylina Rimskogo-Korsakova', *Izbrannye stat'i* ed. Gusin I. L. (Leningrad: 'GMI', 1952) pp. 472-479.

Shumskaia, N. A., '*Sadko*' *N A Rimskogo-Korsakova* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1951).

Toom, Pieter van den, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky* (New Haven & London: 1983) pp. 35-39.

Tsukkerman, V. A., 'O siuzhete i muzykal'nom iazyke opery Rimskogo-Korsakova 'Sadko', *SM*, (Moscow: 'Sovetskii Kompozitor'), no. 3 (March) 1933, pp. 49-73.

2) OTHER SOUND RECORDINGS REFERRED TO IN THESIS

Arensky, Anton, 'Fantasia on Themes by I. T. Ryabiniin', op. 48; *Russian State Symphony Orchestra, under Valeri Polyansky; Piano - Tatiana Polyanskaya*. (CHANDOS Chan 10086 (2003)). Track Six. The eccentric transliteration here is that on the original CD.

Byliny (various singers), NSA, British Library, London: 2 LPs: D-024791-2, and D-025677-8 (1955).

Elgar, Edward, *Cello Concerto*, (1919), soloist W. H. Squire, conductor Hamilton Harty (London: Halle Orchestra, 1930). Final 11 mins 30 secs repr. on: track 3 of CD 9984 'The English Tradition'; this is the first CD of three which form Vol II of the three-volume set *The Recorded Cello: The History of the Cello on Record* (East Sussex, UK: Pearl, 1993).

Russian Folk Traditions, series two: all CDs issued by Norman Ross Publishing Co., New York, (2000), in collaboration with the Institute of Russian Literature (Russian Academy of Sciences). Principally for the purposes of this thesis:

Disc One: Russian Epics;

Disc Four: Spiritual Poetry;

Disc Five: Lamentations of the Russian Far North;

Disc Nine: Recruit and Soldiers' Songs;

Disc Fourteen: Instrumental Music [tracks 18-20 contain recordings, made in 1954, of a *gusli*].

Vaughan Williams, Ralph, *Address at Yale University upon his being awarded the Henry Elias Holland Memorial Prize* Dec 1954 (NSA, London, 1CD R0002055 BD99 NSA).

3) THE LIFE OF NIKOLAI ANDREEVICH RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: BIOGRAPHIES AND MEMOIRS

Gnesin, M. F., *Mysli i vospominaniia o N. A. Rimskom-Korsakove* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1956).

Iastrebtsev, V. V., *N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov: Vospominaniia*, 2 vols (Leningrad: 'GMI' 1959-1960); extremely selective extracts translated and edited by Florence Jonas, *Reminiscences of Rimsky-Korsakov* (New York & Guildford (UK): Columbia University Press, 1985), with author's surname transliterated as Yastrebtsev.

Kabalevskii, D. B., ed. *Rimsky-Korsakov - Muzykal'noe nasledstvo – Issledovaniia, materialy*,

pis'ma, 2 vols (Moscow: 'ANSSSR', 1953-54).

Rimskaia-Korsakova, T. V., ed. *N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov v sem'e: Iz semeinoi perepiski* (Saint Petersburg: 'Kompozitor', 1999).

Rimsky-Korsakov, A. N., *N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov - Zhizn' i tvorchestva*, 5 vols, (Moscow: 1933-1946). For the opera *Sadko*, see: 'Sochinenie opery-byliny 'Sadko'. Razryv s imp. teatrami', vol. IV, gl. VIII, 62-76.

Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., eds. Ossovskii, A. V., and Rimsky-Korsakov, V. N., *Letopis' moei muzykal'noi zhizni* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1955). This is vol I of Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., (literary) *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (q.v. below). Translated by Judah A. Joffe as *My Musical Life* (1925; edn. London: Eulenberg Books, 1974).

Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., Senior ed. Ossovskii A. V., *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 8 vols (Moscow: 'GMI', 1955-82). This is a full collection of the composer's literary writings and correspondence, and is not to be confused with the musical *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* listed in Section 1(a). This collection of writings is referred to in the thesis as: '(literary) *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*'.

Rimsky-Korsakov, V. N., 'Iz vospominanii i materialov semeinogo arkhiva', (in) *Rimsky-Korsakov. Muzykal'noe nasledstvo* ed. Kabalevskii D. B. (qv above), vol II, 113-176.

Solovtsov, A. A., *Zhizn' i tvorchestvo N. A. Rimskogo-Korsakova* (Moscow: 'Muzyka', 1964).

Tiumenev, I. F., 'Vospominaniia o N. A. Rimskom-Korsakove', (in) *Rimsky-Korsakov - Muzykal'noe nasledstvo*, ed. Kabalevskii, D. B., vol II, 177-247.

4) RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S MUSICAL AND AESTHETIC CONCEPTIONS

Gozenpud, A. A., *N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov - Temy i idei ego opernogo tvorchestva* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1957).

Kremlev, Iu. A., *Estetika prirody v tvorchestve N. A. Rimskogo-Korsakova* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1962).

5) THE PRINCIPAL COLLECTIONS OF BYLINY, FOLK SONGS, AND FOLK LITERATURE KNOWN TO RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

Afanas'ev, A. N., *Narodnyiia russkiiia legendy* (London (sic): 1858).

Afanas'ev, A. N., *64 russkikh narodnykh pesen* (St Petersburg: 1866).

Afanas'ev, A. N., *Russkii narodnyia skazki* (1853-66); edn: *Narodnye russkie skazki* (sic) ed. Propp, V. Ia., 3 vols (Moscow: 'Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury', 1957).

Agreneva-Slavianskaia, O. Kh., *Opisanie russkoi krest'ianskoi svad'by s tekstom i pesniami*, 3 instalments (Moscow & Tver': 1887-91).

Balakirev, M. A., *Sbornik russkikh narodnykh pesen, sostavlennyi M. Balakirevym* (Leipzig: M. P. Beliaeff, 1895).

Barsov, E. V., *Prichitan'ia severnago kraia*, 2 instalments (Moscow: 1872 and 1882; reissue eds. Chistova, V. E., & Chistov, K. V., St Petersburg: 'Nauka', 1997).

Danilov, Kirsha, ed. Iakubovich, A. F., *Drevniia ruskiia stikhotvoreniia, sobrannia Kirsheiu Danilovym* (Moscow: 1804; 2nd expanded edn. ed. Kalaidovich, K., as *Drevniia rossiiskii stikhotvoreniia* (Moscow: 1818); edn. eds. Putilov, B. N., and Evgen'eva, A. P., *Drevnie rossiiskie stikhotvoreniia* (Moscow & Leningrad: 'Nauka', 1977).

Danilov, Kirsha, as above (1818), (Moscow: A. A. Torletskii, 1878).

Danilov, Kirsha, as above (1818), (St Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1892 (in the series 'Deshevaia Biblioteka')).

Danilov, Kirsha, ed. Sheffer, P. N., *Sbornik Kirshi Danilova: Drevniia rossiiskii stikhotvoreniia: Izdanie imperatorskoi publichnoi biblioteki po rukopisei pozhertvovannoi v biblioteku Kniaz'em M. P. Dolgorukovym: s fotograficheskoi snimkom* (St Petersburg: 'Imperatorskaia Akademiia Nauk', 1901).

Danilov, Kirsha, ed. Gorelov, A. A., *Drevnie rossiiskie stikhotvoreniia* (St Petersburg: 'Tropa Troianova', 2000).

Gil'ferding, A. F., ed. Gil'tebrandt, P., *Onezhskii byliny zapisannia Alexandrom Fedorovichem Gil'ferdingom letom 1871 goda* (St Petersburg: 1873). 2nd edn. 3 vols ed. Bestuzhev-Riumin, K. N., (St Petersburg: 'Imp. Ak. Nauk', 1894, 1896, 1900). 4th edn. eds. Nikiforov A. I., and Vinogradov G. S., with introd. by V G Bazanov, 3 vols (Moscow & Leningrad: 'ANSSSR', 1949-51).

Istomin, F. M., and Diutsch, G. O., *Pesni russkago naroda sobrany v guberniakh Arkhangel'skoi i Olonetskoi v 1886 godu* (St Petersburg: 'Imperatorskoe Russkoe Geograficheskoe Obshchestvo', 1894).

Kireevskii, P. V., ed. Bezsonov, P., *Pesni sobrannia P. V. Kireevskim*, 10 instalments (Moscow: 1860-1874).

Lopatin, Nikolai, *Polnyi Narodnyi Pesennik* (Moscow: 'Gramotnost', 1885).

Prach, I., *Sobranie russkikh narodnykh pesen polozhennykh na muzyku Ivanom Prachem*, 2nd

edn. 2 vols (St Petersburg: 1806).

Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *Sbornik russkikh narodnykh pesen, sostavlennyya N. A. Rimskim-Korsakovym* (Saint Petersburg: 'M.V. Bessel' , 1877).

Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., *40 narodnykh pesen sobrannykh T. I. Filippovym*, (1882; edn: (musical) *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol 47, ed. N. V. Shelkovyi, 1952).

Rybnikov, P. N., *Pesni sobrannyya P. N. Rybnikovym*, 4 vols (1861, 1862, 1864, 1867, various localities). 2nd edn ed. Gruzinskii A. E., 3 vols (Moscow: 'Sotrudnik shkol', 1909-1910).

Sakharov, I. P., *Pesni russkago naroda*, 5 instalments (St Petersburg: 1838-9). The *byliny* are principally concentrated in instalment five.

Sakharov, I. P., *Russkii narodnyia skazki* (St Petersburg: 1841).

Shein, P. V., *Russkii narodnyia pesni sob. P. V. Sheinom* (Moscow: 1870).

Stakhovich, M., *Russkii narodnyia pesni* (Moscow: 1854; edn. Moscow: 'Muzyka', 1964).

6) COMMENTARIES, ANTHOLOGIES OF STARINY, AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Alexander, Alex E., *Bylina and Fairy Tale - The Origins of Russian Heroic Poetry* (The Hague & Paris: Mouton, 1973).

Arant, P., *Compositional Techniques of the Russian Oral Epic, the Bylina* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1990).

Astakhova, A. M., *Byliny severa*, 2 vols (Moscow & Leningrad: 'ANSSSR', vol I, 1938, vol II, 1951).

Astakhova, A. M. *Russkii bylinnyi epos na severe* (Petrozavodsk: 'Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo Karelo-Finskoi SSSR', 1948).

Astakhova, A. M., ed., *Il'ia Muromets* (Moscow & Leningrad: 'ANSSSR', 1958).

Astakhova, A. M., *Slavianskii fol'klor i istoricheskaia deistvitel'nost'* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1965).

Astakhova, A. M., *Byliny – itogi i problemy izucheniia* (Moscow & Leningrad: 'Nauka', 1966).

Bartlett, Rosamund, *Wagner and Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Beliaev, V. M., *Sbornik Kirshi Danilova: Opyt rekonstruktsii pesen Kirshi Danilova* (Moscow: 'Sovetskii Kompozitor,' 1969).

- Belinskii, V. G., *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 12 vols (St. Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad: 1900-1926).
- Belinskii, V. G., *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 13 vols (Moscow and Leningrad: ANSSSR, 1953-1959).
- Bezsonov, P. A., ed. *Kaleki Perekhozhie*, 2 vols (Moscow: vol I, 1861, vol II, 1863).
- 'Bogatyr' (in) *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* (Brokgauz i Efron) vol 7 (1891) 147-157.
- Buslaev, F. I., *Istoricheskaia ocherki russkoi narodnoi slovesnosti i iskusstva*, 2 vols, (St Petersburg: 1861).
- Buslaev, F. I., 'Russkii bogatyrskii epos' (1862) and 'Russkii narodnyi epos', (1861) both in: *Russkii bogatyrskii epos* (Voronezh: 'Tsentral'noe Chernozemnoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo', 1987).
- Chettéoui, Wilfrid, *Un Rapsode Russe - Rjabinin le Père - La Byline au XIXème Siècle* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1942).
- Chichеров, V. I., 'Byliny', *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopedia*, Sen. ed. Surkov A. A., (Moscow: 'Gosudarstvennoe nauchnoe izdatel'stvo', 1962-1978), vol I, 801-803.
- Chistov, K. V., *Narodnaia poetessa I A Fedosova* (Petrozavodsk: 'Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo Karelo-Finskoi SSSR', 1955).
- Chistov, K. V., & Putilov, B. M., eds. *Fol'klor i etnografiia russkogo severa* (Leningrad: 'Nauka', 1973).
- Chistov, K. V., ed. *I. A. Fedosova - Izbrannoe* (Petrozavodsk: 'Kareliia', 1981).
- Chistov, K. V., & Lobanov, M. A., eds. *Russkii Sever: Problemy etnografii i fol'klora* (Leningrad: 'Nauka', 1981).
- Dal', V., *Tolkovyi slovar' zhivago Velikaruskago iazyka*, 3rd edn, 4 toma, v 8 chastiakh (Moscow & St Petersburg: 1903-1910).
- Dobrovol'skii, V. M., 'O notnykh zapisiakh v Sbornike Kirshi Danilova', (in) Danilov, 1977, pp. 405-413.
- Fétis, F. J., *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*, 8 vols (1835-1844), 2nd edn. entitled *Bibliographie de la Musique*, 10 vols (Paris & Brussels: 1861-1881).
- Filin, F. P., *Slovo o polku Igoreve* (Moscow: 'Sovetskaia Rossiia', 1981).
- 'Golubinaia Kniga', (in) *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'*, (Brokgauz i Efron) vol 9, (1893) 116-117.

Gorelov, A. A., 'Kem byl avtor sbornika 'Drevnie rossiiskie stikhotvoreniia' ', *Russkii fol'klor - materialy i issledovaniia*, (Moscow & Leningrad: 'ANSSSR', 1967) VII, 293-312.

Gulyga, A. V., ed. *Fridrikh Vil'gelm Iozef Shelling*, 2 vols (Moscow: 'ANSSSR', 1987 & 1989).

Guthrie, Matthew, 'Anciens Instruments de Musique des Paysans Russe', *Dissertations sur les Antiquités de Russie, traduites sur son ouvrage anglais, dédié a la Société Royale des Antiquaires d'Ecosse* (St Petersburg: 1795) pp. 17-50, with fig 9, end-plate, illustration of *gusli*. (English-language originals not traced).

Ianchuk, N. A., ed. *Iubileinyi sbornik v chest' V. F. Millera* (Moscow: 1900).

Jones, Roy, *Language and Prosody of the Russian Folk Epic* (Paris & The Hague: Mouton, 1972).

Khalanskii, M., *Velikoruskiiia byliny Kievskago tsikla* (Warsaw: 1885).

Korguzalov, V. V., and Dobrovol'skii, B. M., *Byliny: Russkii muzykal'nyi epos* (Moscow: Sovetskii kompozitor, 1981).

Liatskii, E. A., *Rus' strazhdushchaia* (Stockholm: 'Severnye Ognii', 1920).

Liatskii, E. A., *Byliny - starinki bogatyrskiiia* (Stockholm: 'Severnye Ognii', 1920).

Lipets, R. S., *Epos i drevniaia Rus'* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1969).

Loboda, A. M., *Russkii bogatyrskii epos - opyt kritiko-bibliograficheskago obzora trudov po russkomu bogatyrskomu eposu* (Kiev: 'Imperatorskii Universitet Sviatago Vladimira', 1896).

Loboda, A. M., 'Russkii bogatyrskii epos', (in): *Universitetskiiia Izvestiia* No 10 - Oktyabr (Kiev: 'Imperatorskii Universitet Sviatago Vladimira', 1896) 147-188 (summary of previous entry).

Miller, Orest F., *Il'ia Muromets i bogatyrstvo kievskoe* (St Petersburg: 1869).

Miller, Vsevolod F., *Ocherki russkoi narodnoi slovesnosti: Byliny* (Moscow: 'I. D. Sytin', 1897).

Miller, V. F., ed. Ianchuk, N. A., *Iubileinyi sbornik v chest' V. F. Millera*, (Moscow: 1900).

Oinas, Felix J., 'Bylina', (in) Terras, pp. 66-70.

Pomerantseva, E. V., *Mifologicheskie personazhi v russkom fol'klоре* (Moscow: 'Nauka' 1975).

Propp, V. Ia., *Russkii geroicheskii epos* (Leningrad: 'Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta', 1955).

Propp, V. Ia., and Putilov, B. N., *Byliny*, 2 vols (Moscow: 'Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo

Khudozhestvennoi Literatury', 1958).

Selivanov, F. M., *Stikhi dukhovnye* (Moscow: 'Sovetskaia Rossiia', 1991).

Serov, A. N., *Kriticheskie stat'i*, 4 vols (St Petersburg, 1892-1895).

Shambinago, S. K., 'Drevnerusskoe zhlishe po bylinaim', (in) Miller, V. F., ed. Ianchuk, N. A., *Sbornik*, 1900, pp. 129-149.

Skaftymov, N., *Poetika Russkikh bylin* (1924; edn. The Hague & Paris: Mouton, 1970).

Smirnov, Iu. U., and Smolitskii V. G., *Dobrynia Nikitich i Alesha Popovich* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1974).

Smirnov, Iu. U., and Smolitskii, V. G., *Novgorodskie byliny* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1978).

Smolitskii, V. G., 'Bylina o Dunae', (in) A. M. Astakhova, A. M., ed. *Slavianskii fol'klor i istoricheskaia deistvitel'nost'* (Moskva: 'Nauka', 1965) pp. 109-131.

Speranskii, M. N., ed. *Byliny*, 2 vols (Moscow: vol I, 1916, vol II, 1919).

Speranskii, M. N., *Russkaia ustnaia slovesnost': vvedenie v istorii ustnoi russkoj slovesnosti: ustnaia poezii povestvovatel'nogo kharaktera* (Moscow: 'A. M. Mikhailov', 1917).

Veselovskii, A. N., *Sobranie sochinenii Aleksandra Nikolaevicha Veselovskago*, 8 vols (Petrograd: 'Otdeleniia Russkago iazyka i slovesnosti Rossiiskoi akademii nauk', 1921).

Veselovskii, A. N., 'Kaliki perekhozhie i bogomil'skie stranniki', *Vestnik Evropy*, (April 1872), IV, 682-722.

Vilinbakhov, V. B., & Engovitov, N. G., 'Gde byla Indii russkikh bylin?' (in): Astakhova A. M., ed., *Slavianskii fol'klor i istoricheskaia deistvitel'nost'* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1965), pp. 99-108.

Vilinbakhov, V. B., 'Bylina o Solov'e Budimiroviche v svete geograficheskoi terminologii', in: *Russkii fol'klor*, (Vol XII): *Iz istorii Russkoj narodnoi poezii* (Leningrad: 'Nauka', 1972) pp. 226-229.

Zakharova, O. B., *Byliny: Poetika siuzheta* (Petrozavodsk: 'Izdatel'stvo Petrozavodskogo Universiteta', 1997).

Zenkovsky, Serge A., ed. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1963).

Zhirmunskii, V. M., *Vvedenie v metriku* (Leningrad: 'Akademiia' 1925; edn. Munich: Wilhelm Funk Verlag, 1971).

7) THE SKOMOROKHI

Belkin, A. A., *Russkie skomorokhi*, (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1975).

Findeizen, N. F., 'Skomorosh'e delo na Rusi', (in) *Ocherki po istorii muzyki v Rossii c drevneishikh vremen do kontsa XVIII veka*, 2 vols (Moscow & Leningrad: 'Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, Muzykal'nyi sektor', 1928), I, 145-233.

'Gusli' (in) Sadie, Stanley, ed., *New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, (London: Macmillan, 1984), II, 112-113. Entry by Ernst Ensheimer.

Koshelev, V. V., ed. and compiler: *Skomorokhi: Annotirovannyi bibliograficheskii ukazatel' 1790-1994* (Saint Petersburg: 'Liki Rossii', 1994).

Krestal'nyi, N. I., *Sofiia Kievskaiia* (Moscow: 'Iskusstvo' 1958).

Vlasova, Z. I., *Skomorokhi i fol'klor* (St Petersburg: 'Aleteia', 2001). On 'Terentii gost', see pp. 241-247.

Zguta, Russell, *Russian Minstrels - A History of the Skomorokhi* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

8) RUSSIAN HISTORY

Arenzon, E. R., et al., *Abramtsevo* (Leningrad: 'Khudozhnik RSFSR', 1988).

Arenzon, E. R., *Savva Mamontov* (Moscow: 'Russkaia kniga', 1995).

Christoff, P. K., *An Introduction to nineteenth-century Russian Slavophilism: A Study in Ideas*; 2 vols (Vol I: 's-Gravenhage: Mouton and Co, 1961; vol II, The Hague & Paris: Mouton, 1972).

Giliarovskaia, N. V., 'Rimsky-Korsakov i khudozhniki (materialy k stsenicheskoi istorii oper Rimskogo-Korsakova)', (in) *Rimsky-Korsakov: Muzykal'noe Nasledstvo*, ed. Kabalevskii D. B., II, 261-318.

Iakovlev, V. V., 'N A Rimsky-Korsakov i opernyi teatr S I Mamontova', *Teatral'nyi Al'manakh*, ed. Grigor'ev, M. S., (Moscow: 'Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo', 1946), kn. 2, pp. 300-326.

Iakovlev, V. V., 'Teatr Mamontova', *Izbrannye trudy o muzyke*, 3 vols (Moscow: various publishers, 1964-1983). Vol III, 221-235.

Ianin, V. L., *Novgorodskie posadniki* (Moscow: 'Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta', 1962).

Karamzin, N. K., *Istoriia gosudarstva Rossiiskago*, 10 vols (St Petersburg: 1815-1824).

'Khozhdenie Stefana Novgorodskago', (in): Speranskii, M. N., *Iz starinnoi novgorodskoi literatury* (Leningrad: 'ANSSSR', 1934), pp. 5-82.

Kirichenko, E. I., *Russkii Stil' - Poiski vyrazheniia natsional'noi samobytnosti: Narodnost' i natsional'nost: Traditsii drevnerusskogo i narodnogo iskusstva v Russkom iskusstve XVIII - nachala XX veka* (Moscow: 'Galar', 1997). See especially, on folk character and national ethos in Russian art of Rimsky-Korsakov's period, 'Ideia narodnosti i national'nosti v iskusstve vtoroi chetverti XIX veka', pp. 81-147; on the Abramtsevo circle, 'Abramtsevo v istorii Russkogo Iskusstva', pp. 234-239; on V. Vasnetsov, 'V M Vasnetsov i ego polotna na bylinno-skazochnye siuzhety', pp. 240-246; and on the style of the stage sets in Mamontov's private theatre, 'Neorusskii stil' v dekoratsiiakh mamontovskogo kruzhka v Russkoi Chastnoi Opere', pp. 248-254.

English version: *The Russian Style*, Kirichenko, Evgenia, compiled by Mikhail Anikst, (London: Laurence King, 1991).

Kostomarov, N. N., *Russkaia respublika: Severorusskie narodopravstva vo vremena udel'no-vechevogo uklada: Istoriia Novgoroda, Pskova, i Viatki* (St Petersburg: 1863; edn. Moscow: 'Smiadyn', 1994).

Nasonov, A. N., ed., *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopis' starshevo i mladshago izvodov* (Moscow: 'ANSSSR', 1950).

Paston, E. V., 'Khudozhniki v teatral'noi deiatel'nosti kruzhka' (in) Arenzon, E. R., *Abramtsevo* (1988), pp. 63-87.

Paston, E. V., *Abramtsevo: Iskusstvo i zhizn'* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 2003).

Pogodin, M. P., *Izsledovaniia, zamechaniia, i lektsii o Rossiiskoi istorii*, (7 instalments), edn. 3 vols (Moscow: 1846).

Solov'ev, S. M., *Ob otnosheniiakh Novgoroda k Velikim Kniaz'iam* (Moscow: 1846).

Solov'ev, S. M., *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremën*, 29 vols, (Moscow: 1851-1879).

Speranskii, M. N., ed. *Iz starinnoi novgorodskoi literatury XIV veka* (Leningrad: 'ANSSSR', 1934).

Stanislavsky, K. S., *Moia zhizn' v iskusstve* (Berlin: Petropolis, 1926).

Vernadsky, George, *The Origins of Russia*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), esp. pp. 124-7 & 154-161.

Walicki, Andrzej, (trans. Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka), *The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).

9) OTHER WORKS CITED AND CONSULTED

Abraham, G., *Essays in Russian and East European Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

Abraham, G., 'Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay Andreyevich', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 26 vols ed. Stanley Sadie (London, New York, etc.: Macmillan, 1980-1987) vol 16 (1980) pp. 27-41.

Afanas'ev, A. N., *Poeticheskia vozzreniia slavian na prirodu*, 3 vols (Moscow: 1865, 1868, 1869).

Andreev, V. F., ed. '*Proshloe Novgoroda i novgorodskoi zemli*' (papers from a conference), 2 vols, (Velikii Novgorod: Novgorodskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2002).

Anichkov, E. V., *Iazychestvo i drevniaia Rus'* (St Petersburg: 1914; edn. Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner, 1995).

Anitchkoff E., 'Old Russian Pagan Cults', *Transactions of the Third International Congress for the History of Religions*, 2 vols, ed D. S. Allen & J. de M. Johnson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, MCMVIII) II, 244-259.

Anonymous: 'Sadko', review in *Zhizn' iskusstva* (1920, 16-17 March).

Asaf'ev, B. V., 'N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov' (in) *Simfonicheskie etiudy* (Petrograd: 'Gosudarstvennaia Filarmonia', 1922).

Asaf'ev B. V., *Rimsky-Korsakov - opyt k kharakteristike* (Petrograd: 'Svetozar', 1923).

Asaf'ev, B. V., eds. Keldysh, Iu. V., & Iakovlev, V. V., 'Muzykal'nye esteticheskie vozzreniia Musorgskogo', *M. P. Musorgskii - k piatidesiatiletiu so dnia smerti 1881-1931: stat'i i materialy* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1932) pp. 33-56.

Asaf'ev, B. V., '*Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov 1844-1944* (Moscow & Leningrad: 'Muzgiz', 1944).

Asaf'ev, B. V., 'Muzyka Rimskogo-Korsakova v aspekte narodno-poeticheskoi slavianskoi kul'tury i mifologii', *SM*, (1946), No. 7, pp. 67-79.

Asaf'ev, B. V., *Izbrannye trudy*, 5 vols (Moscow: 'ANSSSR', 1955).

Asaf'ev, B. V., *Ob opere - Izbrannye stat'i* (Leningrad: 'Muzyka', 1976). On Sadko at the Bol'shoi in 1920, see pp. 173-176.

Astakhova, A. M., et al. eds. *Istoricheskie pesni s XIII do XIX vv.*, 4 vols (Moscow & Leningrad: 'ANSSSR', 1960-1973).

Azbelev, S. N., 'Novgorodskie byliny i letopis', (in) *Russkii fol'klor*, VII (Moscow and Leningrad: ANSSSR, 1962) pp. 44-51.

Baecklund, Astrid, *Personal Names in Medieval Velikij Novgorod* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1959).

Bakhrevskii, B. A., *Savva Mamontov* (Moscow: 'Molodaia Gvardiia', 2000).

Baranov, Iu., *Vasilii Andreev* (Tver': 'Russkaia Provintsia', 2001).

Bell, Quentin, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*, 2 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, (I) 1972, (II) 1974).

Benois, A., *The Russian School of Painting* (1902: edn. as *Istoriia russkoi zhivopisi v XIX veke* (Moscow: 'Respublika', 1995). On Abramtsevo and the Mamontov circle see pp. 341-402.

Benua - see 'Benois' above.

Blakey, Kate, 'Folk Tales of Ancient Lord Novgorod the Great', *Slavonic Review* (London: School of Slavonic Studies, 1924-5) pp. 52-62.

Blum, Jerome, *Lord and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Centuries* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961).

Brooks, Allan, *Ducks of the World in Full-color Paintings by Allan Brooks and other Artists* (New York: Dover, 1989).

Brown, D., *Glinka: a Biographical and Critical Study* (London: OUP, 1974).

Brown, Malcolm Hamrick, ed., *Musorgsky: In Memoriam 1881-1981* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1982).

Brown, Malcolm Hamrick, ed. *Russian and Soviet Music: Essays for Boris Schwartz* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1984).

Campbell, John Stuart, *V. F. Odoevsky and the Formation of Russian Musical Taste in the Nineteenth Century* (New York and London: Garland, 2000).

Chicherov, V. I., & Ukhov, P. D., *Byliny* (Moscow: 'Detskaia literatura', 1971).

Chudnovskii, M. A., *Rezhisser stavit operu* (Moscow: 'Iskusstvo', 1967).

D'iachenko, G., *Polnyi tserkovno-slavianskii slovar'* ((1898): edn. Moscow: 'Izdatel'skii otdel Moskovskogo Patriarkhata', 1993).

Druskin, M., *Voprosy muzykal'noi dramaturgii opery* (Leningrad: 'GMI', 1952).

Dzhiddi, G. A., *Srednevekovyi gorod Shemakha - IX-XVII veka* (Baku: 'ELM', 1981).

Emerson, Caryl, and Oldani, Robert, *Modest Musorgsky and Boris Godunov: Myths, Realities, Considerations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Engel', Iu. D., ed. Kunin, I. F., *Glazami sovremmenika – izbrannye stat'i o Russkoi muzyke* (Moscow: 'Sovetskii Kompozitor', 1971).

Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar' 82 vols (Leipzig & St Petersburg: Brokhaus i Efron, 1890-1904).

Ernst, S., *Il'ia Efimovich Repin* (Leningrad: 1927).

Famintsyn, A. S., *Bozhestva drevnikh slavian* (1915; edn. St Petersburg: 'Aleteiia', 1995).

Famintsyn, A. S., 'Skomorokhi na Rusi' (1889) and 'Gusli' (1890), (in) *Skomorokhi na Rusi*, ed. Dobronravin, N. D., (St Petersburg: 'Aleteiia', 1995).

Fasmer, Maks, *Etimologicheskii slovar' russkogo iazyka*: 4 vols (Moscow: 'Progress', 1964-1973). This is a translation and expansion, by O. N. Trubachëv, of: Vasmer, Max: *Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg: 1950-1958).

Fedorovtsev, S., 'O tvorcheskikh svyaziakh Rimskogo-Korsakova s Glinkoi', (in) *Pamiatni Glinki 1857-1957*, (Moscow: ANSSSR, 1958) 348-362.

Fedotov, G. P., *The Russian Religious Mind*, 2 vols (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, MCMLXVI). Vol I, 344-47, on volkhvy.

Fedotov, G. P., *Stikhi Dukhovnye – russkaia narodnaia vera po dukhovnym stikham* (Moscow: 'Gnozis', 1991).

Ferman, V. E., 'Opemye vozzreniia Rimskogo-Korsakova', (in) Ferman, V. E., ed. *Opemyi Teatr. Stati i issledovaniia* (Moscow: 'GMI' 1961).

'Fiziolog': (anon) (in) gen. eds. Likhachëv D. S. and Dmitriev L. A., *Pamiatniki literatury drevnei Rusi: XIII vek* (Moscow: 'Khudozhestvennaia literatura', 1981) pp. 475-485.

Frolova-Walker, Marina, 'Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay Andreyevich', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 29 vols, ed Stanley Sadie (London etc: Macmillan, 2001), vol 21, pp. 400-423.

Garden, Edward, *Balakirev* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967).

Gerdyntsev, V. V., *Gde, kogda i kak vznikli byliny?* (Moscow: 'Editorial', 1998).

Gershenzon, M., *Obrazy proshlago* (Moscow: Levenson, 1912).

Glebov, Igor' (pseudonym of B. V. Asaf'ev), 'Sadko - opera-bylina v Bol'shom teatre', *Zhizn' iskusstva* (1920, 25-26 Sept).

Gordeeva, E. M., *Kompozitory 'Moguchei kuchki'*, (Moscow: 'Muzyka', 1985).

Gozenpud, A. A., *Russkii opernyi teatr xix veka 1836-1856* (Leningrad: 'Muzyka', 1969).

Gozenpud, A. A., all as above entry, for period 1857-1872 (1969).

All as above entry for period 1873-1889 (1973).

Gozenpud, A. A., *Russkii opernyi teatr na rubezhe xix-xx vekov i I. F. Shaliapin. 1890-1904* (Leningrad: 'Muzyka', 1974).

Gozenpud, A. A., 'Iz nabludenii nad tvorcheskimi protsessami Rimskogo-Korsakova: (1) Zapisnye knigi kompozitora [pp. 145-207]; (2) Rimsky-Korsakov v rabote nad opernym libretto [pp. 208-251]', (in) ed., Kabalevskii, *Rimsky-Korsakov: Muzykal'noe nasledstvo*, vol I, 145-251.

Griffiths, Steven, *A critical study of the music of Rimsky-Korsakov 1844-90* (New York & London: Garland, 1998); on symphonic sketch 'Sadko' see pp. 78-91.

Grigor'ev, A. D., *Arkhangel'skiiia byliny i istoricheskiia pesni, sobrannyya A. D. Grigor'evym v 1894-1901*, 3 vols (Moscow: vol I, 1904, vol III, 1910; Prague: vol II, 1939 (sic); ed. 3 vols, Saint Petersburg: 'Tropa Troianova', 2002-3).

Grishina, I. E., 'Semantika vkhodnykh i okonnykh proemov krest'ianskogo zhilishcha kak osnova ikh kompozitsionnogo razvitiia', (in) *Narodnoe zodchestvo: Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, Sen. ed. Orfinskii, V. P., (Petrozavod: 'Petrozavodskii gosudarstvennyi universitet', 1972) pp. 63-84.

Gut, Serge, 'L'Echelle a double seconde augmentée: Origines et utilisation dans la musique occidentale', (in) *Musurgia* (Paris), VII, no 2, 2000.

' I ' (ie Ы) ' 'Sadko' - Moskovskaia Russkaia chastnaia opera', *RMG*, 3 (March), 1898, pp. 288-290.

Iankovskii, M. O., 'Bylinnye istoki opery 'Sadko' N. A. Rimskogo-Korsakova', (in) Sokhor, A. N., ed., *Uchenye zapiski*, vol II (Leningrad: 'Gosudarstvennyi nauchnyi institut teatra, muzyki, i kinematografii', 1958) pp. 319-352.

Iankovskii, M. O., 'Stasov i Rimsky-Korsakov', (in) *Muzykal'noe Nasledstvo*, Kabalevskii, D. B., ed., vol I, 337-408.

Iarustovskii, B. M., *Dramaturgiia russkoi opernoi klassiki - rabota russkikh kompozitor-klassikov nad operoi* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1953).

Ippolitov-Ivanov, M. M., *50 let russkoi muzyki v moikh vospominaniakh* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1934).

Ivanov, M. M., 'Sadko – opera-bylina N. Rimskago-Korsakova v semi kartinakh', *Novoe Vremia*, no. 7906, 2 March 1898.

Jankelévitch, Vladimir, *La Rhapsodie - verve et improvisation musicale* (Paris: Flammarion, 1955). See especially Chapter 11, pp. 56-149, 'Rimski-Korsakov et les métamorphoses'.

Kabalevskii, D. B., Sen. ed., *Rimsky-Korsakov - Muzykal'noe nasledstvo: Materialy, issledovaniia, pis'ma*, 2 vols (Moscow: 'ANSSSR', 1953 & 54).

Kandinskii, A. N., 'Russkaia klassika v Bol'shom teatre', *SM* 7, (1977) 63-69.

Kandinskii, A. N., ed., *Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov* (Moscow: Moskovskaia gosudarstvennaia konservatoriia, 2001).

Karger, M. K., *Novgorod Velikii* (Moscow & Leningrad: 'Iskusstvo', 1970).

Kawabata, Maiko, 'The Narrative Voice in Rimsky-Korsakov's Sheherazade', (in) *Women and Music - A Journal of Gender and Culture*, vol 4 (2000), pp. 18-39.

Kennedy, Michael, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London, New York, & Toronto: OUP, 1964).

Kern Holoman, D., '19th Century - Introduction', *Performance Practice*, ed. Sadie, Stanley, II, 323-349.

Khubov, G. N., *O Muzyke i muzykantakh* (Moscow: 'Sovetskii kompozitor', 1959). On *Sadko*, see pp 141-146.

Khvalenskaia, E., ed. *U istokov rezhissury – Ocherki iz istorii russkoi rezhissury kontsa xix-xx veka* (Leningrad: Leningradskii Gosudarstvennyi institut teatra, muzyki, i kinenatografii, 1976).

Kiseleva, E, 'Teatr russkoi opery', (in) *Nash Sovremennik*, I (Jan) 1985, pp. 171-184.

Kolesnitskaia, I. M., 'Pis'ma P. N. Rybnikova k I. I. Sreznevskomy', (in) *Russkii fol'klor*, vol IV (1954), 281-304.

Kondrat'eva, T. N., *Metamorfozy sobstvennogo imena* (Kazan': 'Izdatel'stvo kazanskogo universiteta', 1983).

Korguzalov, V. V., & Dobrovol'skii, B. M., *Byliny: Russkii muzykal'nyi epos* (Moscow: 'Sovetskii kompozitor', 1981).

Korzukhin, I. A., *N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov i Richard Wagner*, (Berlin: no publisher given; approx 1920).

Koyré, Alexandre, *Etudes sur l'histoire de la pensée philosophique en Russie* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique, J. Vrin, 1950).

Kremlev, Iu. A., *Natsional'nye cherty russkoi muzyki* (Leningrad: 'Muzyka', 1968).

Kremlev, Iu. A., *Ocherki po estetike muzyki* (Moscow: 'Sovetskii Kompozitor', 1972).

Kremlev, Iu. A., *Izbrannye stat'i* (Leningrad: 'Muzyka', 1976).

Kunin, I. F., *N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov – zhizn' i tvorchestvo v vospominaniakh, pis'makh i kriticheskikh otzyvakh* (Moscow: 'Sovetskii Kompozitor', 1974).

Lapshin, I. I., *Khudozhestvennoe tvorchestvo* (Petrograd: 'Mysl', 1922) (On Rimsky-Korsakov, see pp. 270-303).

Lapshin, I. I., *Rimsky-Korsakov: dva ocherka* (Petrograd: 'Gosudarstvennaia Akademicheskaiia filarmoniiia', 1922).

Lazarev, V. N., *Novgorodskaiia ikonopis' - Novgorodian Icon-painting* (in Russian and English) (Moscow: 'Iskusstvo', 1969).

Lebedev, A. K., & Solodovnikov, A. V., *Vladimir Vasil'evich Stasov – zhizn' i tvorchestvo* (Moscow: 'Iskusstvo', 1976).

Lebedev, A. K., *Stasov i russkie khudozhniki* (Moscow: 'Izdatel'stvo Akademii khudozhest SSSR', 1961).

Levasheva, O. E., *Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka*, 2 vols (Moscow: 'Muzyka', 1987 & 88).

Liapunov, A. S., ed. *M. A. Balakirev i V. V. Stasov - Perepiska*, 2 vols (Moscow: 'Muzyka', 1970-71).

Liatskii, E. A., 'Skazitel' I. P. Riabinin i ego byliny', *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 4, 1894, ed. Ianchuk N. A., (Moscow: 'Etnograficheskii Otdel Imperatorskago Obshchestva liubitelei estestvoznaniia, antropologii i etnografii') pp. 105-151; with commentary on some of Riabinin's musical lines by A. N. Arensky, pp. 152-153.

Lineff, Eugénie, *The Peasant Songs of Great Russia as they are in the Folk's Harmonization*, 2

series (Series I, St Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences 1905; series 2, Moscow: same publisher, 1911) (translation of following item).

Lineva, E., ed Korsh, F. E., *Velikoruskii pesni v narodnoi garmonizatsii*, 2 Instalments (St Petersburg: 'Imperatorskaia Akademiia Nauk' inst 1, 1904, inst 2, 1909).

Lipaeu, Ivan, ' 'Sadko ' - Opera-bylina N. Rimskago-Kosakova (*sic*) na Moskovskoi stsene', *RMG* I, (Jan 1898), pp. 69-77.

Lipets, R. S., 'Obraz drevnego tura i otgoloski ego kul'ta v bylinakh', Putilov and Sokolova, *Slavianskii fol'klor*, 1972) pp. 82-109.

Livanova, T. N., *Stasov i russkaia klassicheskaia opera* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1957); pp. 265-354 concern Rimsky-Korsakov.

Lord, Albert *The Singer of Tales* (1960; edn eds Mitchell, Stephen, and Nagy, Gregory, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000). This latter edition comes with an accompanying CD featuring archive recordings of South Slavic epic song, and of a Balkan instrument called the *gusle*. This is a kind of primitive fiddle, with one to three strings, and is *not* to be confused with the Russian *gusli*, which, as we have seen, is reminiscent of a zither or psaltery.

Machinskii, B. A., ' 'Dunai' russkogo fol'klora ha fone vostochno-slavianskoi istorii i mifologii', *Russkii Sever: Problemy etnografii i fol'klora*, eds. Chistov and Lobanov (1981), pp. 110-171.

Maikov, L. N., *O bylinakh vladimirova tsikla* (St Petersburg: 1863).

McMahon, James, *The Music of Early Minnesang*, (Columbia: Camden House, 1990).

Mikhel'son, M. I., *Russkaia mysl i rech'*, 2 vols, (St Petersburg: 'Imperatorskaia akademiia nauk', 1902-03).

Miliukov, P. N., 'Chto takoe 'more Virianskoe' i gorod 'Ledenets' ', (in) Miller, V F, ed. Ianchuk N. A., *Sbornik*, 1900.

Mirzoev, V. G., *Byliny i letopis': Pamiatniki russkoi istoricheskoi mysli* (Moscow: 'Mysl', 1976).

Mochul'skii V., *Istoriko-literaturnyi analiz stikha Golubinoi Knigi* (Warsaw: 1887).

Moon, David, *The Russian Peasantry 1600-1930: The World the Peasant Made* (London & New York: Longman, 1999).

Morrison, Simon, 'The Semiotics of Symmetry, or Rimsky-Korsakov's Operatic History Lesson', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, (Cambridge UK and Brunswick USA: Cambridge University Press), vol 13 (2001), no 3, pp. 261-293.

Muir, Stephen, 'Rimsky-Korsakov, Sadko, and the Byliny', (in) *British Postgraduate*

Musicology (Cambridge, England: Wolfson College) no 1 (Oct 1997) pp. 5-13.

Muir, Stephen, *The Operas of Rimsky-Korsakov from 1897 to 1904* (University of Birmingham: unpublished PhD thesis, March 2000).

Myers, F. W. H., *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, 2 vols (New York, London, & Bombay: Longman, Green and Co., 1904).

Myers, Gregory, 'The Collision of the Pagan and the Christian in Rimsky-Korsakov's Fantasy Opera', *Bŭlgarsko muzikoznanie*, (Sofia), Vol 27 (2003), no. 1, pp 87-93.

Neff, Lyle, *While the Bear Sleeps* (Web-site [http:// phd.indiana.edu/papers/beartxt.html](http://phd.indiana.edu/papers/beartxt.html).56). (1994)

Noskova, I. Ia., 'Traditsionnye i individual'nye elementy v stile bylin' (in) *Russkii Fol'klor* (Vol XII, (Leningrad: ANSSSR, 1971) pp. 193-207.

Novichkova, T. A., *Epos i Mif* (Moscow: 'RAN', 2001).

Novikov, Iu A., *Skaziteli i bylinnaia traditsia* (Saint Petersburg: 'Traditsia', 2000).

Obikhod notnago tserkovnago peniia dlia chetyrekhgolosnago smeshannago khora (Graz: Sviataia Sinoda Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi v Pol'she, 1978).

Obram, V. A., 'Rimsky-Korsakov i narodnaia pesnia', *Rimsky-Korsakov - Muzykal'noe nasledstvo*, ed. Kabalevskii, D. B., I, 252-284.

Obraztsov, G. A., *Estetika V V Stasova i razvitie russkogo natsional'no-realisticheskogo iskusstva* (Leningrad: 'Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta', 1975).

Oinas, Felix J., 'Aristocratic Origins of the Russian Byliny', *Slavic Review* 30 (1971) pp. 513-522.

Oinas F. J., and Soudakoff, Stephen, eds. *The Study of Russian Folklore* (The Hague & Paris: Mouton, 1975).

Ol'denburg, S. F., *Sergeiu Fedorovichu Ol'denburgu: k piatidesiatiletiu nauchno-obshchestvennogo deiatel'nosti 1882-1932: Sbornik stat'ei*, (Leningrad: 'ANSSSR', 1934).

Olkhovsky, Yu., *Vladimir Stasov & Russian National Culture* (Epping, Essex: Bowker Publishing, 1983).

Opolovnikov, A. V., *Russkoe dereviannoe zodchestvo* (Moscow: 'Iskusstvo', 1983).

Orfinskii, V. P., ed., *Narodnoe zodchestvo – Sbornik nauchnykh trudov* (Petrozavodsk: 'Petrozavodskii gosudarstvennyi universitet', 1972).

- Orlova, A. A., & Rimsky-Korsakov, V. N., *Stranitsy zhizni Rimskogo-Korsakova - Letopis' zhizni i tvorchestva*, 4 vols (Moscow: 'GMI', 1969-1973).
- Ossovskii, A.V., *Vospominaniia, issledovaniia* (Leningrad: 'Muzyka', 1968).
- Otchet za 1871 goda Imperatorskogo russkago geograficheskago obshchestva*, ed. Baron F. R. Osten-Saken (St Petersburg: 1872).
- P – – skii, E., (presumably the critic and writer E. M. Petrovskii), 'Tematicheskii analiz opery 'Sadko', 'RMG 9 (Sept), 1898, pp. 796-800.
- Petrovskaia, I. F., *Teatr i muzyka v Rossii XIX – nachala XX v - Obzor bibliograficheskikh i spravochnykh materialov* (Leningrad: 'Gosudarstvennyi Leningradskii institut teatra, muzyki, i kinematografii', 1984).
- Petrovskaia, I. F., *Istochnikovedenie istorii russkoi muzykal'noi kul'tury XVIII – nachala XX veka* (Moscow: 'Muzyka', 1989).
- Phillips, Robert, '1900-1940', (in) *Performance Practice*, ed Sadie, Stanley, II, 461-482.
- Pokrovskii, B. A., *Stupeni professii* (Moscow: 'Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo', 1984).
- Pomerantseva, E. V., 'Sud'by russkogo bylevogo eposa v poslevoennye gody', *Russkaia literatura* (Leningrad), no. 4, (1963) pp. 119-124.
- Porfiridov, N. G., *Drevnii Novgorod* (Moscow, Leningrad: 'ANSSSR,' 1947).
- Povestkin, V. I., 'Mir muzyki drevnikh novgorodtsev: Arkheologicheskie otkrytiia', (in) Andreev, V. F., ed., *Proshloe Novgoroda* (2002) (qv), I, 23-29.
- Povest' vremennykh let*, eds. Adrianova-Perets V. P. and Likhachev D. S., (St Petersburg: 'Nauka', 1986).
- Pronshtein, A. P., *Velikii Novgorod v XVI v.* (Khar'kov: 'Izdatel'stvo khar'kovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta', 1957).
- Putilov, B. N., and Sokolova, V. K., eds., *Slavianskii fol'klor* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1972).
- Putilov, B. N., 'Iskusstvo bylinnogo pevtsa' (in) *Printsipy tekstologicheskogo izuchenii fol'klora*, ed. Putilov, B. N. (Moscow & Leningrad: 'Nauka' 1966) pp. 220-251.
- Putilov, B. N., ed., *Byliny*, (Leningrad: 'Sovetskii Pisatel', 1986).
- Putilov, B. N., *Epicheskoe skazitel'stvo* (Moscow: RAN, 1991).
- Pytin, A., *Russkoe masonstvo XVIII i pervoi chetverti XIX vv* (Petrograd: 'Ogni', 1916).

Rakhmaninov, S. V., *Pis'ma*, ed. Apetiantz, Z., (Moscow: 'GMI', 1955).

Razumova, A. P., *Iz istorii russkoi fol'kloristiki: P N Rybnikov i P S Efimenko* (Moscow & Leningrad: 'ANSSSR - Karelo-Finskii filial', 1954).

Ridenour, R. C., *Nationalism, Modernism, and Personal Rivalry in Nineteenth-century Russian Music* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981).

Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A., ed. Morosan, Vladimir: *Pamiatniki russkoi dukhovnoi muzyki - Polnoe sobranie dukhovno-muzykal'nykh proizvedenii Nikolaia Andreevicha Rimskogo-Korsakova* (Madison, CT, USA: Musica Russica, 2000).

Riot, Claude, *Chants et Instruments: Trouvères et Jongleurs au Moyen Age* (Paris: R.E.M.P.A.R.T., 1995).

Roginskaia, F. S., ed., *Peredvizhniki* (Moscow: 'Art-Rodnik', 1997).

Rotbaum, L., *Opera i ee stsenicheskoe voploshchenie: zapiski rezhissera* (Moscow: 'Sovetskii kompozitor', 1980).

Russkii fol'klor - Bibliograficheskii ukazatel' 1881-1900, compiler T. G. Ivanova, (Leningrad: ANSSSR, 1990);

As above, for 1901-1910, comp. M. Ia. Mel'ts (1981).

As above, for 1911-1965, comp. M. Ia Mel'ts (1967).

As above, for 1966-1975, comp. M. Ia. Mel'ts (1984).

As above, for 1976-1980, comp. T. G. Ivanova (1987).

Rybakov, B. A., *Iazychestvo drevnei Rusi* (Moscow: 'Sofiia i Gelios', 2001).

Rybakov, B. A., *Iazychestvo drevnikh slavian* (Moscow: 'Sofiia i Gelios', 2002).

Rychner Jean, *La chanson de geste - essai sur l'art épique des jongleurs* (Geneva: E. Droz, and Lille: Giard, 1955).

Sadie, Stanley, ed., *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 26 vols (London, New York, and many other cities: Macmillan, 1980-1987).

Sadie, Stanley, ed., *New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, 4 vols (London: Macmillan, 1984).

Sadie, Stanley, ed. *Performance Practice*, (2 vols), (1) *Before 1600*; (2) *After 1600* (Basingstoke (UK) and New York: Macmillan, 1990).

Sakharov, I. P., *Puteshestviia russkikh liudel po Sviatoi Zemle* (Saint Petersburg: 1839).

Saminsky, Lazare, (ed. Charles Weissner), 'Lazare Saminsky's Years in Russia and Palestine – Excerpts from an unpublished Autobiography', *Musica Judaica* (NY), vol II, 1977-8, pp. 1-20.

Savvaitov, P. A., *Opisanie starinnykh russkikh utvarei, odezhd, oruzhiia, ratnykh dospekhnov i konskago pribora v azbuchnom poriadke raspolozhennoe* (Saint Petersburg: 1896).

'Scales'; On this subject see the various articles in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Sadie, (qv above) inc. (many authors) 'Modal Scales and Traditional Music' (vol 16, esp. pp. 823-828); on the whole-tone scale, see vol 27, pp. 351-352 (H. K. Andrews); 'Pentatonic', vol 19, pp. 314-316 (Jeremy Day-O'Connell); and 'Octatonic', vol 18, pp. 326-327 (Charles Wilson).

Shein, P. V., *Velikorus' v svoikh pesniakh, obriadakh, obychaiakh* (St Petersburg: 1898).

Sheronov, N. Iu., 'Uvertura 'Svetlyi Prazdnik': Znamennyi raspev v tvorchestve russkikh kompozitorov', (in) Kandinskii, *Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov* (2000), pp. 122-127.

'Skazanie ob Indiiskom Tsarstve' (perevod i kommentarii G. M. Prokhorova) (in) *Pamiatniki literatury drevnei rusi XIII veka* eds. Likhachev D. S. and Dmitriev L. A. (Moscow: 'Khudozhestvennaia literatura', 1981), pp. 466-473.

Slovar' sovremennogo russkogo iazyka, 17 vols (Moscow: 'ANSSSR', 1950-1965).

Smimov, Iu. I., *Slavianskie epicheskie traditsii* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1974).

Smolitskii, V. G., *Rus' izbianaia* (Moscow: 'Gosudarstvennyi respublikanskii tsentr russkogo fol'klora', 1993).

Soimonov, A D., *P. V. Kireevskii i ego sobranie narodnykh pesen* (Leningrad: 'Nauka', 1971).

Sokolovskaia Tira, 'Russkoe masonstvo - masonstvo kak polozhitel'noe dvizhenie russkoi mysli v nachale XIX veka', *Vsemirny Vestnik*, 1904; edn. as *Russkoe masonstvo i ego znachenie v istorii obshchestvennogo dvizheniia xviii i pervoi chetverti xxix stoletii* (Moscow: 'Gosudarstvennaia publichnaia istoricheskaia biblioteka Rossii' 1999).

Sosnovtseva, O., 'O variantnoi forme u Rimskogo-Korsakova', (in) *Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov*, ed. Kandinskii, A. I., (Moscow: Moskovskaia gosudarstvennaia konservatoriia, 2001) pp. 114-121.

Speranskii, M. N., 'Indiia v staroi russkoi pis'mennosti', (in) Ol'denburg, (see above) 1934, pp. 463-469.

Spiegelman, Joel, 'Style Formation in early Russian Keyboard Music', (in) *The Eighteenth Century in Russia*, ed J. G. Garrard (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1973) pp. 311-320.

Stasov V. V., *Slavianskii i vostochnyi ornament po rukopisiam drevniago i novago vremeni* (St Petersburg: 1887).

Stasov, V. V., 'Slavianskii kontsert g. Balakireva', (in) *Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti*, 1867, no 130; repr: *Sobranie sochinenii V. V. Stasova, 1847-1886* (3 vols: St Petersburg, 1894, vol III, cols 217-219).

Stasov, V. V., 'Proiskhozhdenie russkikh bylin', *Vestnik Evropy* 1868, nos 1-4, 6-7, repr: *Sob soch V.V. Stasova* (see previous entry), vol III, cols 948-1259.

Stasov, V. V., ed. Kiseleva, V. A., *Stat'i o Rimskom-Korsakove* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1953).

Stasov, V. V., '25 let russkogo iskusstva', (1882-1883) (in) *Izbrannye sochineniia*, 3 vols, (Moscow: 'Iskusstvo', 1952) vol II, 391-568.

Stasov, V. V., *Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka* (1857; edn. Moscow: 'GMI', 1957).

Stender-Petersen, A. D., 'La Théorie de l'origine Varègue de la byline Russe', (in) *Varangica* (Aarhus: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri, 1953) pp. 217-24).

Stender-Petersen, A. D., 'Chetyre etapa russkovariashskikh otnoshenii' (*ibid* above), pp. 241-262.

Stoglav, ed. Kozhanchikov, D. E., (St. Petersburg: 'Imp. Ak. Nauk', 1863).

Suvorova, E. I., *V. V. Stasov i Russkaia peredovaia mysl'*, (Leningrad: 'Leninizdat', 1956).

Swan, Alfred J., *Russian Music and its Sources in Chant and Folk-song* (London: John Baker, 1973).

Taruskin, Richard, *Opera and drama in Russia, as practised and preached in the 1860s* (Rochester, New York: Univ. of Rochester Press, 1993).

Taruskin, Richard, *Musorgsky: Eight Essays and an Epilogue* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993; edn 1997).

Taruskin, Richard, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, 2 vols (Oxford, OUP, 1996).

Taruskin, Richard, *Defining Russia Musically - Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Taruskin, Richard, 'Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay Andreyevich', *New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 4 vols ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), vol III, pp. 1331-1341).

Taruskin, Richard, 'Sadko', *New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 4 vols ed. Stanley Sadie, (London: Macmillan, 1992), vol 4, pp. 120-122.

Taruskin, Richard, 'The Present in the Past - Russian Opera and Russian Historiography', *Russian and Soviet Music: Essays for Boris Schwartz*, ed. Malcolm Hamrick Brown, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1984), pp. 77-146.

Tchaikovsky, M. I., *Zhizn' Petra Il'icha Chaikovskago*, 3 vols (Moscow & Leipzig: P. Jürgenson, 1903).

Telepnef, Boris, *An Outline of the History of Russian Freemasonry* (London: no publisher indicated, 1922).

Telepneff (sic), B., *Freemasonry in Russia* (London: Quatuor Coronati Lodge, 1922) pp. 261-292.

Terras, Victor, ed. *Handbook of Russian Literature*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1985).

Thomsen, Vilhelm, *The Relations between Ancient Russia and Scandinavia, and the Origins of the Russian State* (Oxford & London: James Parker, 1877).

'Transliteration of Cyrillic'; *Humanities Reader Guide No. 7* (London: British Library, 1999).

Tsetlin, M. O., *Piatero i drugie*, (New York: 'Novyi zhurnal', 1944). Translated into English as: Zetlin, Michael, *The Five: The Evolution of the Russian School of Music* (qv below).

Tsukkerman, V. A., 'Rimsky-Korsakov i narodnaia muzyka' (SM 10-11, 1938) pp. 104-127.

Tsukkerman, V. A., *Muzykal'nye teoreticheskie ocherki i etiudy*, vol 2: *O muzykal'noi rechi N. A. Rimskogo-Korsakova* (Moscow: 'Sovetskii Kompozitor', 1975).

Ukhanova, I. N., *Rez'ba po kosti v Rossii XVIII-XIX vekov* (Leningrad: 'Khudozhnik RSFSR', 1981).

Vanslov, V., *Opera i ee stsenicheskoe voploshchenie* (Moscow: 'Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo', 1963).

Vasilenko, S. N., *Stranitsy vospominanii* (Moscow: 'GMI', 1948).

Vasil'eva, E. E., 'Napevy russkoi epicheskoi traditsii Prionezhii', *Russkii Sever: Problemy etnografii i fol'klora*, eds. Chistov & Lobanov (1981), pp 172-188.

Vladimirov, S. V., 'Ob istoricheskikh predposylkakh vzniknoveniia rezhissury' (in) Khvalenskaia, E., *U Istokov . . .* (1976) pp. 247-253.

'Volkhvy' (in) *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'*, (Brokgauz i Efron), vol 13, 1892, pp. 107-110, esp. 109-110 'Volkhvy na Rusi'.

Zakharova, O. B., *Byliny: Poetika Siuzheta* (Petrozavodsk: Izdatel'stvo Petrozavodskogo universiteta, 1997).

Zetlin, Michael, trans. and ed. George Panin, *The Five: The Evolution of the Russian School of Music* .(New York: International University Press, 1959). This is a translation of Tsetlin, M. O., above.

Zhdanov, I. V., *Russkii bylevoi epos: izsledovaniia i materialy* (St Petersburg: 'L. F. Panteleev', 1895).

Zil'bershtein, I. S., and Samkov, V. A., *Sergei Diaghilev i russkoe iskusstvo*, 2 vols: (Moscow: 'Izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo', 1982).

Zinkevich, Yelena S., ed., *Anton Rubinstein and Nikolaj Rimsky-Korsakov: Selected Operas. Proceedings of the International Musicological Convention in Vorzel, Ukraine, May 4-6, 1994* (Heilbronn: Musik-Edition Lucie Galland, 1997).

