

The Use of Bassoon in Russian Orchestral Music

Cynthia Lynn Susan Stacy

Spring 2016

**Thesis submitted in partial completion of Senior Honors Capstone requirements for the
DePaul University Honors Program**

Dr. Kurt Westerberg, School of Music

Mr. William Buchman, School of Music

CYNTHIA STACY

THE USE OF BASSOON IN RUSSIAN ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

HONORS THESIS

This thesis, presented in partial completion of the Honors Capstone, is dedicated to Kurt Westerberg, Bill Buchman, and Sarah Wells Kaufman, who ceaselessly encourage my curiosity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	7
Introduction	8
Part 1: A Study on Russian Orchestral Music	12
Mikhail Glinka	
Mily Balakirev	
The Mighty Handful (and Tchaikovsky)	
The National Style	
Russian Folk Music Within Orchestral Works	
Orchestration and the Prevalence of the Bassoon within the Russian Canon	
Part 2: Armenian Influence in Russian Music	28
The Armenian Duduk	
“Dudki” in Russian Orchestral Scores	
Evoking the Duduk through the Bassoon	
Armenia in the 18th and 19th Centuries	
Conclusion	35
Works Cited	36
Works Consulted	40

ABSTRACT

As a bassoonist, it is my observation that the instrument is employed frequently within Russian works. This is most notable in works written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Through musical and historical analysis, I tackle this subject from a musicological perspective.

My conclusion is that the bassoon is so heavily relied upon by these composers because of its timbre. Folk music permeates the Russian canon, and its rustic, modal qualities posed a challenge to composers: emulate these qualities by means of harmony and orchestral texture.

Ultimately, the bassoon (sometimes accompanied by other winds) came to evoke the sound of the Armenian *duduk*. Multiple composers within my focus explicitly connect the two, as indicated by their use of the term “dudki” in relation to bassoon-laden passages. Upon researching the term, the etymology and cultural significance of the *duduk* is invaluable to understanding the prevalence of bassoon within this music.

INTRODUCTION

Through historical and musical analysis, my thesis investigates not only the use of bassoon in Russian orchestral music, but why the bassoon is so prevalent. I surmise that the extensive use of the instrument has influences rooted in Russian folk song and its traditional instruments. While Russian music has been researched and analyzed, the role the bassoon plays within the Russian canon has not been dissected. I will focus on Russian culture and musical history, as well as the lives of prolific Russian composers. By focusing on their lives and compositional techniques, I will discover how folk music became integrated within their works and why instrumentation became important to the Russian style of orchestral music.

As a bassoonist myself, I have had the opportunity to perform an array of orchestral pieces, Russian and otherwise. I have experienced my point firsthand: the bassoon is employed significantly in Russian orchestral music, arguably more than in the music of other European countries. Of course, this is a generalization of a trend; there are a handful of non-Russian composers that utilize the bassoon in excess. My theory, however, is that Russian composers make a systematic and habitual use of employing the bassoon in significant, meaningful ways. More specifically, I believe that Russian composers have developed this custom out of a rich tradition of folk music.

Russian folk music includes vocal and instrumental pieces. Instrumental folk music can be traced back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though instruments were banned under the reign of Tsar Alexis I, influenced by the Orthodox Church. This occurred during the latter half of the seventeenth century, but the ban was lifted and a revival of instrumental folk music soon followed.

The use of folk music within an orchestral setting can be attributed to Mikhail Glinka, who employed folk songs throughout his compositional output. Most notably Glinka's first opera, *A Life for the Tsar*, is largely based on traditional Russian folk song and subject matter. This set the precedent for later Russian composers; including folksong within an orchestral setting began a tradition that would become a nationalistic style. This stylistic idiom would be continued throughout the nineteenth century and extended into the twentieth century with composers such as Stravinsky.

Mily Alekseyvich Balakirev, Glinka's immediate predecessor, was also pivotal in expressing nationalism through music (Garden). To learn more about the folk genre as well as record it, Balakirev spent part of his musical career collecting and harmonizing traditional Russian folk songs. His influence on subsequent Russian composers is clear. These harmonizations would inspire and allow Balakirev's Russian colleagues to include traditional folk song in their own works. Composers of interest include Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, and Stravinsky. All of these composers were influenced in varying degrees by Balakirev and, by extension, Glinka.

It is essential to take note of the careful orchestral setting of such folk melodies. The bassoon is either utilized soloistically, which is not at all uncommon within the Russian canon, or within a woodwind choir. Interestingly, when the bassoon participates in folk melodies, verbatim or varied, some of these composers notate *dudki* in their scores. An example of this is the opening bassoon solo to *Le Sacre du Printemps* by Igor Stravinsky- one of the most iconic bassoon solos within the repertory.

But what might the importance of *dudki* be to Russian orchestral music? I have concluded that this term is invaluable in comprehending the prominence and use of the bassoon within the Russian canon.

This term- *dudki*- is rooted in Armenian tradition. Ancient *duduk* exist in three possible sizes, the longest of which is considered a bass-duduk. Each size of the instrument produces a mid-to-low range sound that is simultaneously nasal and plaintive. The appearance of this term within orchestral scores indicates that musical passages were written with the timbre of the *duduk* in mind. This term appears in multiple sketches and scores, and, based on the nature of said appearances, I surmise that the timbre of the bassoon was most like that of the *duduk*. I argue that a timbral relationship exists between the *duduk* and bassoon and that the *duduk's* timbre became increasingly important in Russian folk music. It would ultimately be simulated in orchestral music by the bassoon.

Throughout its evolution, the bassoon has been described as a sweet, plaintive sounding instrument. Rimsky-Korsakov asserts the same opinion in his text *Principles of Orchestration*. It is my argument that this sound is reminiscent of the traditional *duduk*, and has become indoctrinated into Russian orchestral soundscape. To further illustrate my point that Russian composers relied heavily on bassoon to provide this timbre, I have examined the twenty most requested excerpts for professional auditions. Eight of the the requested bassoon excerpts, forty percent, are Russian (Lyman).

My research spans ancient instruments circa 12BCE to Russian compositions through 1913. I will begin by analyzing stylistic elements of Russian orchestral works and will then establish my theory as to how the Armenian *duduk* found its way into Russia. By clarifying

these connections, I will be able to exemplify the importance of “dudki” in various Russian manuscripts, especially in regards to orchestration. Glinka, Stravinsky, Mussorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov all employ the bassoon in passages in which they hope to evoke the sound of the *duduk*; I argue that the extensive use of bassoon within the Russian canon is heavily influenced by this ancient instrument and traditional Russian folk music.

PART I: A STUDY OF RUSSIAN ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

MIKHAIL GLINKA: THE FATHER OF RUSSIAN MUSIC

Mikhail Glinka would posthumously be titled “the father of Russian music,” (Frolova-Walker) so it is only fitting to begin an exploration of Russian music with his works. Born in 1804, young Mikhail Glinka grew up in a Russia dominated by Western and Central European orchestral works. Bach and Handel are quoted as being some of Glinka’s favorite composers, while he was also heavily influenced by Berlioz’ programmatic works (Bennett). Glinka was the first Russian composer to gain notoriety both in his own nation and abroad. For this reason, he earned the aforementioned title.

Glinka’s upbringing as a composer was important to the beginning of the Russian tradition of orchestral music. He studied music theory with a German, Siegfried Dehn, who was an expert on traditional church modes (Frolova-Walker). These modes would be the basis for Glinka’s folk music harmonizations extremely present in his early works. There are

numerous folk-influences within much of his music, but perhaps most notably in *A Life for the Tsar* (1836), *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1842), and *Kamarinskaya* (1848) (Campbell).

Joseph Bennett, writing for *The Musical Times*, describes Glinka as the, “most national of composers; the founder of a Russian school, and the initiator of an artistic development which may, and probably will, exercise an immense influence upon music in general” (Bennett). I agree with Bennett’s praise; it is apparent that Glinka made apt use of folk music which initiated and encouraged later Russian composers. Glinka’s inspired use of folk song within orchestral works also created the basis for Russian nationalism through music.

As he gained experience and notoriety as a composer, Mikhail Glinka traveled throughout Europe and was witness to many different cultures and musical genres. These exotic genres would appear in Glinka’s later works, such as the *Spanish Overture*. “In Spain, the originality of the national melodies will help me much as regards the *Fantaisies* I have in mind,” (Bennett). In France, Glinka came to be friends with Berlioz and worked with him intimately. Within the same letter, Mikhail Glinka reflects on Berlioz’ style, saying,

“his combinations have, among other merits, that of being entirely new.

Broad ensemble, ample details, close harmonic tissue, instrumentation powerful and till now unheard-such are the characteristics of the music of Berlioz”

(Bennett).

Although influenced by Berlioz, harmonic prowess orchestral finesse had already been present within Glinka’s works. In fact, Hector Berlioz had written “ [h]e is a great harmonist

and writes for instruments with a care and knowledge of their subtlest resources which makes his orchestra one of the newest and most piquant that one can hear” (Bennett).

Glinka’s aptitude and passion for folk music was integral to his orchestral output. Although his travels left him with ample non-Russian folk music on which to draw, he returned to Russian subject matter with his *Karaminskaya* in 1848. It is important, however, to note the shades of “Italian, Spanish, and Oriental influence” (Istel 394) present throughout his post-tour works. The colors produced by such influences would certainly add to Glinka’s “progressiveness” as a composer (Frolova-Walker).

The Russian phrase for folk music is Народная песня- literally “people’s music” (A Nercessian 86), which Glinka took to heart. He is quoted as saying “[t]he common people compose; we only arrange” (Istel 393). In his memoirs, Glinka recalled Russian peasant choirs singing under his window (Glinka), and although he gives these accounts, the folk-music that shaped Glinka’s young life was not all vocal. In fact, there is evidence that Glinka was brought up around folk-song specifically arranged for woodwind instruments.

In his book, *Russian Music and its Sources in Chant and Folk-Song*, Alfred Swan relays Glinka’s experience at home with his maternal uncle’s folk-orchestra: “During supper they usually played Russian folk-songs arranged for two flutes, two clarinets, two horns, and two bassoons, and it was possibly from these songs that I acquired my love for our native Russian music” (p. 62). Bennett’s article briefly discusses the same influence, stating “the brother of Madame Glinka was not only able, but disposed, to keep a band of musicians attached to his household.” Such intimate experience with woodwind instruments and folk-song likely paved the way for Glinka’s expert orchestration.

MILY BALAKIREV: A CONTINUATION OF RUSSIAN NATIONALISM

“Of all the musicians of his generation, only Balakirev knew Glinka” (Taruskin ‘83); Glinka died in Berlin in 1857, only two years after meeting Balakirev. While brief, it is evident that the relationship between Mikhail Glinka and Mily Balakirev was in fact impactful. One of Balakirev’s earlier works, *Themes of Three Russian Folk Songs* (also called *Overture on Russian Themes*), was composed just after Glinka’s death. “[T]he Overture was no doubt a deliberate tribute to the memory of the great man [Glinka]” (Taruskin ‘83).

Folk music captivated Balakirev and became his primary subject matter. “The first collection of songs with music which gave an exact notation of melody and a more suitable harmonization was the work of the composer M. A. Balakirev (1866)” (Verdansky). Mily Alekseyvich Balakirev collected a number of folk-songs on the Volga river in during this time (Garden 293). After collecting these melodies, Balakirev harmonized them for use in art-music. These harmonizations were published, making them available to composers throughout Europe during this time. In fact, Balakirev’s publication inspired Rimsky-Korsakov to harmonize his own collection over ten years later (Verdansky).

Balakirev’s harmonizations, use of folk song, and orchestration were directly influenced by Glinka’s compositions. Balakirev would then inspire the compositions of Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, Borodin, and Cui- “the Mighty Handful.” Like Glinka, Balakirev sought to celebrate nationality by indoctrinating traditional folksong into orchestral works. This encouraged the sense of nationalism that permeates Russian

orchestral works. Balakirev's work had been so important to Russian nationalism that he became a member of the Folk-song Commission of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society in 1897 (Garden 293).

THE MIGHTY HANDFUL (AND TCHAIKOVSKY)

Balakirev is essential to a long lineage of Russian composers. Between the years 1856 and 1862, Balakirev met Mussorgsky, Cui, Rimsky-Korsakov, and finally Borodin. These would all become prolific Russian composers known colloquially as the "Mighty Handful," or "The Mighty Five." "Balakirev longed for action and to influence others" (Zetlin); he'd get his wish. He would become, undeniably, the leader of these composers. His collection of folk songs and harmonizations would be used by The Five in art-songs, symphonies, and ballets well past his death in 1910.

The correspondence between Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov began in 1862, when Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was but seventeen years old (incidentally, this was also the year the St. Petersburg Conservatoire was founded by Anton Rubinstein). Rimsky-Korsakov was overseas as a naval cadet during the duration of their correspondence (Montagu-Nathan). As corroborated by his memoirs, Rimsky-Korsakov's initial letter to Balakirev tells of his budding first symphony. Rimsky-Korsakov, expressing desire to send a manuscript to Balakirev for review (Rimsky-Korsakov '42), had hoped Balakirev would be receptive to the initial letter. Balakirev replied to young Rimsky-Korsakov on November 7, 1862, which began Rimsky-Korsakov's lessons immediately. Rimsky-Korsakov recalls his response:

“My first attempt to orchestrate this movement [Movement 1 of Symphony no 1 in Eb] embarrassed me, and Balakirev orchestrated for me the first page of the introduction, whereupon the work went better” (Rimsky-Korsakov ‘42).

It is evident from his tone that Rimsky-Korsakov, seventeen years old at the time, admired Balakirev and sought him out as a mentor. Rimsky-Korsakov would later say that, “his [Balakirev’s] [knowledge] surpassed all bounds of possibility, and every word and opinion of his were absolute truth to me” (Rimsky-Korsakov ‘42). Balakirev indeed became Rimsky-Korsakov’s mentor, a position he greatly accepted after the loss of one of his most promising pupils, Gusev. The letters ended in October 1864, upon Rimsky-Korsakov’s return to Russia (that none other than Balakirev expedited, worried about Rimsky-Korsakov’s mental health (Montagu-Nathan)). Upon his arrival, Rimsky-Korsakov’s lessons were with “the master” himself.

The importance of Balakirev’s influence on Pyotr Illich Tchaikovsky, who is not considered one of the Five, is not to be disregarded. In fact, “[i]t is difficult to imagine how Tchaikovsky might have developed as a composer had Balakirev not taken him in hand in 1869” (Garden ‘80). In the fall of 1867, Balakirev had been appointed the conductor of the Russian Musical Society and would also conduct a series of concerts at the Free School of Music, which he directed. 1867 was also the beginning of Tchaikovsky’s compositional career; he composed his first opera, *The Voyevoda*, in this year. As Balakirev was quickly becoming a powerful figure to Russian orchestral music, Tchaikovsky was implored to accept Balakirev’s guidance and criticism, although he remained confident in his own abilities. Despite Balakirev’s attempts to mentor Tchaikovsky, the latter continued his “academic”

education and was still the composer of works with “expressive melodies, brilliant orchestration and piquant harmony” (Taruskin ‘09). The relationship between the two composers is nothing short of complex. Perhaps we cannot firmly grasp the extent of its complexity, as Balakirev “always preferred to deliver his opinions verbally, so that the criticism could be really detailed” (Brown). This complexity is rooted in their respective methodologies. Tchaikovsky, the academic from St. Petersburg, was pressured to believe Balakirev as an uneducated poseur. “The hidden relationship... to Balakirev, a thoroughly disreputable figure in the eyes of the conservatory, would definitely have been a prudent thing to conceal...”(Taruskin ‘09). However, “[t]here is much evidence to suggest that Tchaikovsky felt both a great need for and, simultaneously, a resentment of guidance. It so happened that Balakirev was the almost ideal man to administer this to Tchaikovsky” (Brown). There was an internal struggle within Tchaikovsky to remain true to both his Germanic, academic education and folk-music influences.

We know of Borodin’s personality and relationship towards Balakirev because of his letters to the latter (Seaman). Originally published by V V Stasov in 1889, the letters are filled with Borodin’s personal experience with other members of the Five and serve as “a vivid account of the composer’s life and work over a period of thirty years” (Seaman). In his letter dated September 21 of 1871, Borodin concerns himself with the success of his colleagues. Translated by Seaman, this letter discusses “adherence to the ideals of Russian nationalist school, the adoption of national subject matter, and a conscious imitation of the musical innovations of Glinka.”

Balakirev led these composers without a formal conservatory. While Tchaikovsky had access to music textbooks in languages other than Russian at the Saint Petersburg Conservatoire (Garden), “no textbooks on the theory of music in the Russian language meant that Balakirev and his proteges had had no formal musical education” (Garden). The lack of formal education, however, enabled the Mighty Handful much more harmonic freedom. Liberation from Western concepts of tonality and dissonance “allowed the Five, who were not academically trained, to create breathtaking orchestrations” (Taruskin ‘97) and employ folk music with exotic harmonizations. These exotic harmonizations were the Russians’ response to the “disgusting” German canon as Balakirev candidly described in his 1863 letter to Rimsky-Korsakov (Montagu-Nathan). Tchaikovsky’s formal education, which equipped him with such Germanic ideals, was an important factor in why he was *not* considered one of the Five.

THE NATIONAL STYLE

Mikhail Glinka’s 1848 work *Kamarinskaya* was especially important to the Five in that its basis in folk melody served as a model for a “changing-background” strategy (Frovola-Walker). Glinka did not to develop folk melodies, but reset them harmonically within the same piece. This way, he achieved different musical context without sacrificing the integrity of the original melody. The lack of melodic development juxtaposed with preponderance of harmonic development became something unique, but important, to Russian orchestral music. “Mussorgsky would begin doing the same thing; this became his

model for “Kromy Forest” scene in *Boris Godunov* (Campbell). This “changing background” strategy was treasured as a national style.

An ever-present minor mode seems to fall upon Russian music. Described by Edward Garden in 1980, a “sharp-five over tonic,” tonality is prominent within Russian folk song. This interval is usually classified as a lowered sixth or minor sixth and is ultimately what tinges most Russian orchestral music with somber overtones. It is first seen in the “Bridal Chorus” within Glinka’s *A Life for the Tsar* (Garden ‘80). “Since the subtonic of the minor (e.g. E^b in F minor) is also the dominant of the relative major, harmonic settings of such melodies move easily between the minor and relative major, a detail that gives a characteristic coloration to much Russian music ‘in folk style’, whether Musorgsky’s or anyone else’s” (Oldani). Another interval present throughout much of the Russian canon is the falling fourth (Garden ‘80), which comes from vocal inflections built into the Russian language. These intervallic relationships and harmonic behaviors are likely born out of the modality intrinsic to the Russian folksongs and their subsequent harmonizations.

Aside from its harmonic idioms, Russian orchestral music often encompasses non-Western rhythmic phenomena. In an effort to accurately emulate the rhythmic qualities of folk song, these Russian composers did not always adhere to musical meters commonly established in Western European works. This is another direct consequence of traditional folk song. “Its rhythm is partly determined by the nature of the living tongue” (Verdansky). Russian lyrics have different syllabic patterns, and as a result composers commonly employed asymmetrical meter: 5/4, 7/4, etc, to preserve the integrity of the appropriated lyrical content. “The use of changing time signatures is another vital feature of Balakirev’s set which has not

been lost on Tchaikovsky, even if this particular characteristic influenced far more profoundly Mussorgsky and Borodin” (Garden ‘80). This is obvious in Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition* during the “Promenade” movement, which fluctuates between 5/4 and 6/4. Tchaikovsky’s *Symphony no. 6* begins in 5/4 as well, and Stravinsky’s oscillation between 4/4 and 3/4 or 2/4 in *Le Sacre du Printemps* create the same kind of asymmetrical pulse.

While the preponderance of asymmetrical meter and descending harmony causes an overall turbulent musical atmosphere, listeners must not forget that Russian orchestral music indeed has moments of brilliance and exoticism. Examples of this include the triumphant major tonalities during Mussorgsky’s “Great Gates of Kiev” within *Pictures at an Exhibition* and the romantic flourishes within Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade*. Such colors were first established by Glinka, who “sought out fresh harmonies and enriched his textures with contrapuntal interest” (Frovola-Walker). It was Glinka that employed other daring musical tools, such as the whole tone scale, which contributed to the ‘progressive’ character of later Russian nationalist music (Frovola-Walker). Later, Rimsky-Korsakov would use said scale to represent the Sultan in *Scheherazade*. Glinka’s progressiveness became the Russian standard; it was continued by Balakirev, and would later be employed by Igor Stravinsky after studying with Rimsky-Korsakov, perhaps Balakirev’s most famous disciple. “Almost all Russian composers of the later 19th century – both the Tchaikovsky and Balakirev camps – regarded Glinka as their forerunner” (Campbell).

RUSSIAN FOLK MUSIC WITHIN ORCHESTRAL WORKS

It is true that such prolific use of folk music within an orchestral work is a trait of Russian orchestral works. There are many Western and Central European countries that employ folk music elements as part of their orchestral canons- Germany, Austria, and France come to mind- but the Russian canon is different in its extent and explicitness. While folk music sometimes exists within Western European art music as a melodic inspiration, much of (perhaps the majority of) Russian art music is explicitly rooted in Russian subject matter and quotes folk songs verbatim. This is traceable back to Glinka with his operatic works. His opera *A Life for the Tsar* is based on seventeenth century Russian history. Mussorgsky's operas *The Fair at Sorochintsy* and *Boris Gudonov* are also rooted in Russian subject matter: *Fair at Sorochintsy* is based off of a story by Nikolai Gogol and *Boris Gudonov* is based on the work by Pushkin regarding the real-life Tsar of the same name. Folk songs are quoted throughout these operas, and continue to appear in other Russian works. In *Scheherazade*, "Rimsky-Korsakov appropriated a folk song from Balakirev's recent anthology" (Taruskin '09) for the opening of the third movement. This folk song would appear in a strikingly similar way in Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* symphony (Garden '80). Another example of Russian folk song quoted by Tchaikovsky is in the finale of *Symphony no 4*. Tchaikovsky includes "The Birch Tree," a beloved folk song as the closing theme of the work. Taruskin explains that this very song was "used by opera composers as early as the 18th century, and by Balakirev" (Taruskin '09).

I argue that the composers in question used folk music without such stylistic repercussions in mind. Because most of these composers had no formal training, their musical education was rooted, perhaps entirely, in folk music. The non-Western idioms and

tonalities that permeate Russian music were not used, originally, in outward defiance of Western harmony; these were simply the sounds that Russian composers had experienced their entire lives. I assert that a sense of nationalism was felt after Russians and non-Russians alike were able to hear the obvious stylistic differences between Russian and Western European canons. The notion that the orchestral output from Western European countries was “disgusting” (Seaman) was a repercussion of the Russians’ newfound harmonic preferences, though it did motivate the continued use of folk music within orchestral works. Russians are proud of their music, and rightfully so. Had it not been for the appearance of folk music within their orchestral works, I doubt the Western world would have any inkling to its existence or importance.

The appropriated folk songs “fall into four main categories: wedding songs..., peasant dances..., laments..., and peasants’ or boatmen’s songs” (Garden ‘68). These four main categories of folk song warrant different musical settings and generally require specific musical elements. These musical elements became idiomatic to the Russian canon. It is no coincidence, then, that certain musical idioms became deeply associated with the musical settings in which they occur. For instance, wedding songs often employ a “call-and-response” structure (Slobin) which would require multiple instruments or singers. Peasant dances require more rhythmic instruments than laments. These dances would likely call upon drums and louder wind instruments to provide rhythmic motivation. The overt and persistent rhythmic qualities of Stravinsky’s “Danse Sacrale” from *Le Sacre du Printemps* are a modernized example of this folk idiom. The type of folksong at any point within a work dictated the idioms called upon by the composer. Instrumental timber played a major role in

orchestral composers' choice of orchestration, as well. As different folk songs required different soundscapes, composers learned to employ specific instruments to accurately emulate the folk song in its native setting.

ORCHESTRATION AND THE PREVALENCE OF BASSOON WITHIN THE RUSSIAN CANON

I argue that the orchestral texture tendencies born out of Russian folk music extend through the entire canon, though my research focuses only through Stravinsky. More specifically, it is the woodwinds, bassoon especially, that provide timbral depth within scenes and characterized soundscapes intrinsic to these folk songs. In many of the aforementioned examples of folksong within orchestral works, the woodwinds carry the native melody. Most notably is the opening to *Le Sacre du Printemps*; the entire introduction is woodwind soli supporting a bassoon solo which works through the melody of “Tu, manu sesērēle,” a Lithuanian wedding song (Grymes). Tchaikovsky uses low brass and woodwinds during “The Birch Tree,” in his fourth symphony, and Mussorgsky employs brass and woodwinds for timbral changes throughout *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Rimsky-Korsakov, too, would employ woodwinds in masterful ways throughout his compositional output. *Scheherazade* is only one example of masterful use of woodwind solos to create timbral depth.

In his memoirs Rimsky-Korsakov wrote, “Balakirev said I have a gift for orchestration” (Rimsky-Korsakov '42). Earlier, Tchaikovsky agreed with Balakirev, stating in a letter to him that “Rimsky is so nice and good and so talented” (Zetlin). Rimsky-Korsakov had access to

woodwind instruments and after being appointed Inspector of Navy Bands in the early 1870s (Zetlin) (Seamen). In his memoirs, Rimsky-Korsakov writes “I came to know all the uttermost tones of all instruments and the secret of producing some notes which everybody avoids through ignorance” (Rimsky-Korsakov ‘42). He would put this knowledge to paper in his textbook, *Principles of Orchestration*.

While Rimsky-Korsakov began this text in 1873, it was completed after his death by Maximilian Steinberg. *Principles of Orchestration* was published in Russia in 1922, ten years after its completion and was not translated to English until the 1960s. It has, however, remained in circulation as a viable text on orchestration since. In chapter three, Rimsky-Korsakov describes each woodwind instrument in detail. Rimsky-Korsakov asserts his intimate knowledge of each instrument, saying “In each wind instrument I have defined the *scope of greatest expression*, that is to say the range in which the instrument is best qualified to achieve the various grades of tone,” (14). The composer communicates his opinion of the bassoon in colorful language throughout this chapter. Both double reeds, the bassoon and oboe, are often spoken of together. It seems that Rimsky-Korsakov, in doing this, implies the lower half of the oboe range and the entire range of the bassoon: “The lower register of the oboes and the bassoon is thick and rough, yet still nasal in quality; the very high compass is shrill, hard and dry” (14). In speaking of the bassoon, specifically, Rimsky-Korsakov states, “In the major [key], an atmosphere of senile mockery; a sad, ailing quality in the minor [key]” (19) and “...it may be conceded that the mocking character of the bassoon could easily and quite naturally assume a light-hearted aspect,” (19).

The bassoon is described as sweet and plaintive with the ability to be brittle and serious, as well. In his diagram that maps out the range of each instrument, Rimsky-Korsakov describes the lowest range of the bassoon as “full, rough” the middle, “mournful, dull” the high, “clear,” and the very high, “piercing” (17). I argue that Rimsky-Korsakov’s concept of the bassoon sound was not his alone. He had been composing and orchestrating for nearly ten years under the guidance of Balakirev with the support of Mussorgsky, Cui, and Borodin, and the qualities described in *Principles of Orchestration* were already very much employed by other members of the Five as well as Glinka and Tchaikovsky. Rimsky-Korsakov would pass his orchestral prowess to the very composer that showcased woodwinds, especially the bassoon, extraordinarily. “He [Stravinsky] studied with Rimsky-Korsakov, from whom he learned technique in composition and orchestration... he bred in Stravinsky a classical emphasis on craft, technique, and tradition” (Taruskin ‘09).

But why is this important to the bassoon as an instrument? Looking at the repertoire asked from today’s bassoonists, it is clear that Russian composers expected the bassoon sound to be very present within their works. As musicians prepare for auditions, solos or particularly difficult passages are called upon during an audition. Bassoonists have more Russian musical excerpts than any of the other woodwind instruments. Out of the twenty most frequently asked excerpts, eight of the bassoon excerpts are Russian. This forty per cent outweighs the thirty-two percent of flute excerpts, fifteen of oboe, and twenty per cent of clarinet excerpts. The sheer number of bassoon solos within Russian works is a clue that the instrument was beloved by these composers.

My question is not “in what ways is the bassoon utilized in Russian music” but “*why* does the bassoon seem so important to Russians?” The answer to this question is, not surprisingly, lies within their original scores. The extensive use of bassoon may lie in these composers’ initial musical sketches, specifically Glinka’s *A Life for the Tsar*... In order to more truly emulate a folk song setting, Glinka labeled his use of woodwind choir “*dudki*.” (Grymes). Much like the fact that composers used the same folk songs, it turns out that this instrumentation was used similarly as well. After Glinka Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and even Stravinsky used this term in musical selections which feature the bassoon. Rooted in tradition, “*dudki*” appears in nineteenth and twentieth century scores to evoke the sound of a traditional folk instrument with an exotic past.

PART 2: ARMENIAN INFLUENCES IN RUSSIAN MUSIC

The term *dudki* appears in multiple scores. Four examples of particular interest are works by Glinka, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Stravinsky. In these pieces, the term *dudki* accompanies excerpts which rely significantly on the bassoon. Glinka and Rimsky-Korsakov use *dudki* in woodwind-choir passages with considerable emphasis on bassoon, while Mussorgsky and Stravinsky utilize the bassoon as a solo instrument in their *dudki* passages. I argue that the appearance of *dudki* within these bassoon-laden musical excerpts creates a distinct correlation between the bassoon and *dudki*.

Glinka's use of *dudki* in *A Life for the Tsar* set an example for Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and later Stravinsky. We see *dudki* in *Fair at Sorochintsy*, one of Mussorgsky's unfinished works. Rimsky-Korsakov used *dudki* in *The Snow Maiden*, and his pupil, Igor Stravinsky, would later employ the same term at the beginning of *Le Sacre du Printemps*.

What might *dudki* mean? The appearance of any term at the beginning of a piece of music serves as an inkling as to what the composer intended for that section. The fact that *dudki* appears within these sections, then, is evidence that Russian composers wrote these segments of larger orchestral works with *dudki* in mind.

THE ARMENIAN DUDUK

Dudki is actually a Russian cognate for the plural of the Armenian word *duduk*. The *duduk* is the national instrument of Armenia (Stokes) and is invaluable to the region's folk tradition. It has been associated with a plaintive and rustic quality (Sinclair) and is often affiliated with shepherds. In fact, a Kurdish folktale embodies these qualities: (Sinclair).

“There was once a poor shepherd who watched the flocks of a very rich Kurd. He had thousands of sheep, goats, cattle, and horses, and could at any moment place a thousand retainers in the field to punish an enemy or on a marauding expedition. He had a beautiful daughter who fell in love with the poor shepherd and the sweet music of his *belur*, and he reciprocated her affection. She begged her father to allow them to marry. For a long time he was obdurate. At last to her incessant pleading, for all Kurds are devoted to their children, he said this: “If he can keep his flock of five hundred sheep from drinking at the spring for three days, you shall marry him.” The shepherd watched them day and night. Whenever they approached the spring he played his sweetest airs on his *belur*. The sheep know this music is their call. They love it. So as he walked away from the spring each time playing, they always followed him. At the expiration of the three days, no sheep had touched the water of the spring. So he won his Kurdish beauty. They were married, and he and his descendants have always been noted as the best performers on the *belur*, the sweetest of instruments.”

Immediately after retelling the folktale, Sinclair says, “Often the word *duduk* is used for them [*belur*] in European Turkey and Northern Asia Minor,” meaning that the Kurdish word *belur* is equivalent to the Armenian *duduk*. I argue that it is not at all far-fetched to believe

that the Armenian *duduk* had the same cultural importance as the *belur* illustrated by the Kurdish folk tale above. Furthermore, I believe the qualities exemplified here -sweet, pastoral- are the very qualities called upon by Glinka and preceding composers. This is important to understanding how the *duduk*, and ultimately the bassoon, came to such importance in Russian music. The period in which Mikhail Glinka first included *dudki* in his scores is the same period in which Kurdish and Armenian cultures coexisted peacefully. Armenian culture also existed in Russia, so it is plausible from historical as well as musical perspectives that Glinka knew the timbre of the *duduk* and how it was used in folk music. He then used the bassoon with other woodwinds to create the pastoral scenes intrinsic to the *duduk*.

The Armenian *duduk* is a double reed instrument created from Apricot wood (Stokes). Its timbre is rather mellow, nasal, and plaintive, which I argue is a direct result of the material from which the instrument is made. "The acoustical properties of wood, such as the volume, quality, and color of the sound ... are determined by the mechanical properties of the material from which they are made because the sound is produced by vibrations of the material itself" (Wegst). Apricot wood's relatively low density of 0.67g/cc (EOL) is most similar to that of maple, from which bassoons are made. This density is 0.546g/cc (Physical Properties. Web.)

The *duduk* resembles but does not sound like the oboe. This is another consequence of wood density. "[D]enser tropical species, [such as] African blackwood or grenadilla (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*), have been favored for oboe" (Wegst). Grenadilla has a density of 1.2-1.25g/cc (Physical Properties. Web), making it nearly twice as dense as maple. It makes

sense, then, that the oboe has a higher, more piercing quality than the bassoon. We can also infer that the bassoon is more timbrally related to the *duduk* because of its lower density. Wegst asserts that “we can illustrate the design requirements for these instruments and analyze why certain species are especially suited for particular sound applications and therefore traditionally chosen by musical instrument makers,” which is not at all unlike Rimsky-Korsakov’s claim “[t]he choice of instruments for characteristic and expressive melody is based on their distinctive qualities,” (Rimsky-Korsakov ‘42).

“DUDKI” IN RUSSIAN ORCHESTRAL SCORES

Glinka was the first to use the bassoon to evoke the *duduk* in *A Life for the Tsar* and does so by employing the sweet, nasal timbre of the modern bassoon within a woodwind choir. However, *A Life for Tsar* employs two bassoons to balance the register and darken the timbres of the flute, oboe, and clarinet within the excerpt. Rimsky-Korsakov’s opera *The Snow Maiden*: includes a stage band of “shepherds’ horns” in act IV. These onstage instruments are all woodwinds, and primarily double reeds. Perhaps the most explicit examples of the bassoon imitating the *duduk*, are the excerpts within *The Fair at Sorochintsy* and *Le Sacre du Printemps*. Both *dudki* passages rely on only solo bassoon. “Dumka Parobka” is an aria within the first act sung by a peasant boy regarding his nuptial plans. Fittingly, the folk tune appropriated by Mussorgsky for this purpose is none other than “Tu, manu sesērēle,” the wedding song which begins *Le Sacre du Printemps*. Stravinsky, it appears, stole the *dudki*-bassoon solo from *Fair at Sorochintsy* and used it in for the opening bassoon solo of the *The Rite of Spring*.

Stravinsky's letters to the ballet's costume designer, Nikolai Roerich excitedly say that the *Introduction* was written for *dudki* (Grymes). The designer, then, drew a boy playing a duduk, which was kept with Stravinsky's musical sketches (Grymes). In 1912, Stravinsky wrote to Russia's Musical Gazette that the opening was indeed supposed to evoke *dudki* (Grymes).

EVOKING THE DUDUK THROUGH THE BASSOON

Each of the aforementioned pieces relies heavily on the bassoon both as a solo instrument and a member of woodwind choir to represent the *duduk*. These passages also happen to be rooted in folk-song. Mussorgsky's use of bassoon in *The Fair at Sorochintsy* is not only similar in timbral content to the *duduk*, but in folk content as well. Dumka Parobka, the aria in which the bassoon accompanies the vocalist, surrounds conflict regarding a wedding. The emotional basis behind said excerpt is that of struggle, yearning, rusticism. I argue that Mussorgsky and Stravinsky relied on the bassoon's timbral abilities in its higher register to create the sound of the *duduk* within their orchestral settings.

The traditional instrument has strong associations with pastoral settings and shepherds. "[S]imilar shepherd music and instruments are known in northern European territories from the Vistula River in the west to the upper Volga in the east, and from the polar circle to the Pripet River in the south" (Stokes), so it is logical that the "duduk, a highly popular folk instrument amongst shepherds and peasants" (Nercessian) would find itself in orchestral works in such regions. The plaintiveness of the bassoon, as described by

Rimsky-Korsakov, is the only timbre that truly evokes that of the traditional *duduk*.

Verdansky, perhaps romantically, describes hearing her native home's music and recalls a "plaintive Russian song to see immediately the black earth, the wide, fields, the rising sun and the green grass blown by the morning wind," This plaintive sound calls for long phrases and seemingly unrefined, nasal sound qualities, which directly reflects that of the bassoon. It seems plausible- probable, even- that Russian composers knew the *duduk* intimately, and historical context supports my supposition that these composers likely interacted with the instrument.

ARMENIA IN THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES

"The connection between Russia and the Armenian people dates from the time of Peter the Great, although even before his reign a certain number of Armenians had found their way into Russia" (Fire and Sword).

The second Russian-Iranian war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Turkmenchay (1828). the end of the Russian-Iranian war led to Russia's rule of Armenia, although the Armenian people were encouraged to celebrate and protect their culture. Russia had gained control over modern-day eastern Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia (Fisher), and this treaty "contributed to the unification of the Armenian people within the Russian Empire," which would impact Russian culture, I argue, significantly. "They [Armenians] were permitted, within certain limits, to develop their national life; many became wealthy and many rose to high positions in the military and civic service of the state" (Fisher). The

Armenian people valued music greatly (Stokes) and brought their folk traditions into Russia when they emigrated.

The idea of Armenian folk music used by Russian composers is supported by none other than Balakirev. Balakirev's use of a Tartar folk-melody in his middle movement of *Islamey* is both an example of the idiomatic "sharp-five-over-tonic" in many Russian pieces, as well as direct explanation of its origin. In fact, Balakirev is said to have heard this very melody sung by an Armenian folk-singer in 1869 (Garden '80). Garden's recount supports two of my own arguments: the first being that Armenian people, their culture, and music were present in Russia and the second being that these things had direct influence on the Russian composers in question. Truman also asserts that Tartar and Turkish music has profound influence on Russian music in his article *An Aspect of Stravinsky's Russianism: Ritual*. Ultimately, the sheer fact that a Slavic cognate exists for an Armenian instrument supports the notion that this instrument was present in the Slavic soundscape of the nineteenth and twentieth century compositions. It is truly possible that Russian composers could have encountered an Armenian instrument such as the *duduk*.

CONCLUSION

Scholars love to nail down specific formulas, but the overall music system is indeterminate, by its very nature (Slobin). Surely there are a multitude of factors that went into these composers' instrumentation choices, but I argue that the Armenian presence in Russia, having already been established, influenced the Russian folk music with which Glinka, Balakirev and the Five, Tchaikovsky, and Stravinsky were familiar. The appearance of *dudki* in Russian scores would not have happened had Armenians not migrated into Russia; the Russian use of bassoon in these passages evokes the tradition and timbre of the Armenian *dudki*. Russians appropriated this timbre in their own folk music (Sinclair), which orchestral composers (beginning with Glinka) then simulated with modern instrumentation- namely, the bassoon.

Works Cited

- "Armenian Genocide". *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online*.
Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2016. Web. 06 Jun. 2016
- Brown, David. Balakirev, Tchaikovsky And Nationalism. *Music and Letters* 42.3 (1961):
227-41. Web.
- Bennett, Joseph, and Glinka Michel Ivanovitch. "The Great Composers. No. XX. Glinka."
The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular 28.527 (1887): 12-14. Web.
- Campbell, Stuart. "Glinka, Mikhail Ivanovich." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*.
Oxford University Press. Web. 1 Feb. 2016.
- Chaikovskii, Piotr Ilich. *Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Symphonies*. New York: Dover, 1979. Print.
- Fire and Sword in the Caucasus. Armenians, Tartars, and the Russian Government. N.p.,
n.d. Web. 03 April 2016.
- Fisher, William Bayne; Avery, P.; Hambly, G. R. G; Melville, C. (1991). *The Cambridge
History of Iran* 7. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frolova-Walker, Marina. "Glinka, Mikhail Ivanovich." *The Oxford Companion to Music*. Ed.
Alison Latham. *Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press*. Web. 1 Feb. 2016.
- Garden, Edward. "Balakirev." *The Musical Times* 109.1506 (1968): 725. Web.
- Garden, Edward. The Influence of Balakirev on Tchaikovsky. *Proceedings of the Royal
Musical Association* 107.1 (1980): 86-100. Web.
- Glinka, M. I. *Ivan Susanin, Or, A Life for the Tsar*. London: Decca, n.d. Print.

- Glinka, M. I., and Richard B. Mudge. Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka: Memoirs. Place of Publication Not Identified: Oklahoma U.P., 1963. Print.
- Grymes, James A. "Dispelling the Myths: The Opening Bassoon Solo to The Rite of Spring." *The Journal of the International Double Reed Society* 26 (1998). JSTOR. Web.
- Istel, Edgar, and Baker Theodore. "Rimsky-Korsakov, the Oriental Wizard." *The Musical Quarterly* 15.3 (1929): 388-414. Web.
- Lyman, Jeffrey. "Commonly Asked Excerpts." *The Most Popular Orchestral Excerpts for Bassoon* (2015): 172-80. Umich.edu. 15 Oct. 15. Web. 06 Jan. 16.
- M. D. C. *The Musical Times* 65.981 (1924): 999. Web.
- Montagu-Nathan, M. "Musician and Midshipman: An Account of the Correspondence between Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov." *The Musical Times* 96.1349 (1955): 357-60. Web.
- Mussorgsky, Modest Petrovich, and Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin. *Boris Godunov*. London: J. Calder, 1982. Print.
- Mussorgsky, Modest Petrovich, Maurice Ravel, and Lorin Maazel. *Pictures at an Exhibition*. N.p.: London SPC 21079., 1972. Print.
- Nercessian, Andy. *The Duduk and National Identity in Armenia*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2001. Print.
- Robert W. Oldani. "Musorgsky, Modest Petrovich." *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. Web. 6 Jun. 2016.
- PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF COMMON WOODS. *PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF*

COMMON WOODS. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 May 2016.

Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay, Nadezhda Nikolaevna Rimskaya-Korsakova, A. N.

Rimskii-Korsakov, and Carl Van Vechten. *My Musical Life*. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1942.

Print.

Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay, Maksimilian Shteinberg, and Edward Agate. *Principles of Orchestration, with Musical Examples Drawn from His Own Works*. New York: Dover Publications, 1964. Print.

Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay. *Scheherazade, Op. 35*. New York: E.F. Kalmus Orchestra Score, 1933. Print.

Seaman, Gerald. Borodin's Letters. *Musical Quarterly* *The Musical Quarterly* LXX.4 (1984): 476-98. Web.

Sinclair, A. T. Gypsy and Oriental Musical Instruments. *The Journal of American Folklore* 21.81 (1908): 205. Web.

Slobin, Mark. "6. Folk Music Today and Tomorrow." *Folk Music A Very Short Introduction* (2011): 108-23. Web.

Stokes, Jamie. *Encyclopedia of the Peoples of Africa and the Middle East*. New York: Facts On File, 2009. Print.

Stravinsky, Igor. *The Rite of Spring*. London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1969. Print.

Swan, Alfred J. *Russian Music and Its Sources in Chant and Folk-song*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1973. Print.

Taruskin, Richard. *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1997. Print.

Taruskin, Richard. How the Acorn Took Root: A Tale of Russia. *19th-Century Music* 6.3 (1983): 189-212. Web.

Taruskin, Richard. *On Russian Music*. Berkeley: U of California, 2009. Print.

Taruskin, Richard. *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*. Oxford: Oxford U, 1996. Print.

Truman, Philip. An Aspect of Stravinsky's Russianism: Ritual. *Revue Belge De Musicologie / Belgisch Tijdschrift Voor Muziekwetenschap* 46 (1992): 225. Web.

Vernadsky, Nina. The Russian Folk-Song. *Russian Review* 3.2 (1944): 94. Web.

Wegst, U. G. K. Wood for Sound. *American Journal of Botany* 93.10 (2006): 1439-448. Web.

Zetlin, M. O., and Oushakoff Olga. "Balakirev." *The Russian Review* 4.1 (1944): 67-82. Web.

Works Consulted

- Avery, Mark. "A Comparative Examination of the Notation of Selected Orchestral Bassoon Solos." *The Journal of the International Double Reed Society* 25 (1997): 29-42. ProQuest. Web. 25 Oct. 2015.
- Baumann, Max Peter. "The Local and the Global: Traditional Musical Instruments and Modernization". *The World of Music* 42.3 (2000): 121-144. Web...
- Brindley, Giles. "The Logical Bassoon". *The Galpin Society Journal* 21 (1968): 152-161. Web...
- Buerkle, B. (2012, 01). TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony 6; MENDELSSOHN: Midsummer night's dream overture. *American Record Guide*, 75, 176.
- de, I. B. (2012). Voices of sorrow: Meoldized speech, laments, and heroic narratives among the yezidis of armenia. *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 44, 129-148, 235.
- Farmer, Henry George. "Turkish Instruments of Music in the Seventeenth Century". *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1 (1936): 1-43. Web...
- Gloag, Kenneth. Russian Rites: Petrushka, The Rite of Spring and Les Noces. *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky* (n.d.): 79-97. Web.
- Krader, Barbara. "Folk Music in Soviet Russia: Some Recent Publications". *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* 2 (1970): 148-154. Web
- Langwill, Lyndesay G.. "The Bassoon: Its Origin and Evolution". *Proceedings of the Musical Association* 66 (1939): 1-21. Web.

Popov, Valerij Sergeevič (01/01/2013). "Aspects of bassoon performance". *Музыкальное*
(2072-9979), (3), p. 26.)

Robinson, Harlow, and Caryl Emerson. Boris Godunov: Transpositions of a Russian Theme. *Russian Review* 48.1 (1989): 115. Web.

Sharp, D.B. (01/01/2003). "An acoustical investigation into the effect of the crook profile on the sound produced by the bassoon". *Acta acustica united with Acustica* (1610-1928), 89 (1), p. 137.

Thomson, A. (2010). Typically russian. *Musical Times*, 151, 106-112.

Zenck, Martin. "Ritual or Imaginary Ethnography in Stravinsky's "le Sacre Du Printemps?"". *The World of Music* 40.1 (1998): 61-78. Web..