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Russian Lyric Diction:  
A practical guide with introduction and annotations  
and  
a bibliography with annotations on selected sources

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Abstract

Russian Lyric Diction:

a practical guide with preliminaries and annotations,  
and  
a bibliography with annotations on selected sources

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Music

The purpose of this dissertation is twofold — to investigate, in brief, the available guides to Russian lyric diction and to present my own comprehensive guide, which gives singers the tools to prepare the pronunciation of Russian vocal pieces independently. The survey examines four guides to Russian lyric diction found in popular anthologies or diction manuals — Anton Belov’s *Libretti of Russian Operas, Vol. 1*, Laurence Richter’s *Complete Songs* series of the most prominent Russian composers, Jean Piatak and Regina Avrashov’s *Russian Songs and Arias*, and Richard Sheil’s *A Singer’s Manual of Foreign Language Dictions* — and three dissertations — “The Singer’s Russian: a guide to the Russian operatic repertoire through a collection of texts of opera arias for all voice types, with phonetic transcriptions, word-for-word

and idiomatic English” by Emilio Pons, "Solving Counterproductive Tensions Induced by Russian Diction in American Singers" by Sherri Moore Weiler, and "Russian Songs and Arias: an American Singer's Glasnost" by Rose Michelle Mills-Bell. The annotated guide introduces the sung sounds of Russian and the corresponding Cyrillic letters, advancing in difficulty and covering elements of articulation, phonological rules, and Cyrillic orthography. As the chapters advance, the most important elements of Russian phonological theory are explored in greater depth. The appendices supply additional information such as charts of the Cyrillic letters with their associated phonemes and allophones in IPA, the pronunciation of the most popular Russian composers' names, expanded discussions of historical and phonological topics, a lexicon of Russian words with exceptional pronunciations, and a concise guide to Russian grammar with tables of grammatical forms and their pronunciations. This guide should fulfill a broadly expressed need for detailed instruction in the formation of the Russian speech sounds and their application for singing.

## Acknowledgements

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Karin V. Stromberg (1954-2004)

Graduate Advisor

Karin was always warm, thoughtful and supportive, as she guided me and many others through the graduate morass.

Julian Patrick (1927-2009)

Professor in Voice, Doctoral Committee Chair, Mentor

Julian taught this old dog many new tricks, just as I thought my singing career was waning. He taught best by example. Julian was a consummate singer, actor, musician, colleague, professional, and mentor, and his care for and encouragement of his students were unbounded. He has been and always will be deeply missed.

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## Introduction

I was inspired to write a practical guide to Russian lyric diction after hearing several competent singers perform Russian works in recital, yet demonstrate non-idiomatic and erroneous pronunciation, even after studying published phonetic transcriptions. Most of the singers used Piatak and Avrashov's popular *Russian Songs and Arias*. When I worked with a few of these singers, I realized that each was interpreting the Piatak and Avrashov transcriptions through the filter of her or his general training in diction. Their study was similar to mine and of the kind common to most music schools and conservatories around the United States. Because the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols in Piatak and Avrashov looked familiar, the singers thought they knew how they were being used. The voice students only educated themselves about the unfamiliar symbols and trusted their previous training for the rest. Because of confusing elements of Piatak and Avrashov's work, but more so because of the approach the singers used in their preparation, I came to believe that a more practical application of the IPA and a more systematic presentation of the idiomatic elements of Russian phonetics would be needed to help singers achieve better Russian diction.

As I began my research, I discovered that most guides to Russian singing diction were contained in anthologies of Russian vocal literature, like Piatak and Avrashov's, in which all the texts are phonetically transcribed and translated for singers to study by rote. In contrast, I wish to supply to the singer with a reference of the sung sounds of the Russian language (from basic sounds to subtle nuances) and the concepts and rules that allow singers to prepare unfamiliar Russian vocal pieces on their own, as is expected of one approaching vocal works in Italian, French, and German. My approach is modeled on ones found in texts

like Evelina Colorni's *Singers' Italian*, Thomas Grubb's *Singing in French*, William Odom and Benno Schollum's *German for Singers*, and Timothy Cheek's *Singing in Czech*, as well as multi-language diction books such as Marcie Stapp's *The Singers Guide to Languages*, Joan Wall's *Diction for Singers*, and John Moriarty's *Diction*. I have personal experience with Moriarty's approach, as I studied advanced diction with him throughout my three years at the New England Conservatory of Music.

My dissertation begins with a survey of the available guides to Russian lyric diction, pointing up any confusing or erroneous information, and then presents my own practical guide. My manual is designed for well-trained singers who will use their existing knowledge of the IPA and general concepts of lyric diction to aid in understanding and mastering Russian sung pronunciation. In it, I adhere to the general concepts of phonetics and phonology and use the official symbols of the IPA. A singer should then be able to compare my descriptions of phonetic articulation and concepts to sources such as the *IPA Handbook*, Pullum and Ladusaw's *Phonetic Symbol Guide* or Joan Wall's *International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers*, and find consistency and support. My goal is to provide a comprehensive resource that will help singers have the confidence to explore the canon of great, Russian vocal literature.

## CHAPTER 1

### Survey of Relevant Texts involving Russian Lyric Diction

#### Overview

Very few texts attempt to aid English speakers in correctly pronouncing Russian when singing it. The most commonly available guides number only four and are found in the following anthologies of prepared Russian texts and a multi-language manual of lyric diction — Anton Belov’s *Libretti of Russian Operas, Vol. 1: Operas Based on the Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pushkin* (2004),<sup>1</sup> any one of Laurence R. Richter’s series of *Complete Song Texts*, including Tchaikovsky (1999), Rakhmaninov (2000), Musorgsky (2002), Shostakovich (2007), and Prokofiev (2008), the classic work of Jean Piatak and Regina Avrashov’s *Russian Songs and Arias: Phonetic Readings, Word-by-Word Translation, and a Concise Guide to Russian Diction* (1991), and Richard F. Sheil’s *A Singer’s Manual of Foreign Language Dictions* (2004).<sup>2</sup> The common issues that arise amidst these treatments involve the choice of IPA symbols and phonetic articulations used for the sounds associated with the Cyrillic letters -о- and -и- and certain unstressed Russian vowels, the unorthodox or erroneous use of IPA symbols, and editorial or printing errors that could cause significant confusion.

Looking at these issues in a little more detail, one finds that in the surveyed texts Cyrillic -о- in a stressed syllable is assigned the pronunciation of either an *open o*, IPA /ɔ/, or a *closed o*, IPA /o/. The reasons for the disagreement between authorities may come from

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<sup>1</sup> An abridged version of Belov’s guide can also be found in his *19th Century Russian Operatic Anthology: Twenty Arias for Baritone with International Phonetic Alphabet Transcriptions and Word-for-Word Translations Including a Guide to the IPA and Russian Lyric Diction* (2005).

<sup>2</sup> The Russian chapter in Sheil’s manual was written by Christine Walters Komatsu.

differences in dialect, but my research suggests that the formation of the Russian phoneme is actually a combination of the lower tongue of open /ɔ/ with the more rounded lips of closed /o/.<sup>3</sup> The specific transcription for such a vowel formation could be either [ɔ̞] (an open /ɔ/ with more lip rounding) or [o̞] (a rounded /o/ with a lower tongue).<sup>4</sup> For simplicity, I choose to avoid diacritics when possible, so my guide employs the IPA symbol /ɔ/, stressing the importance of lip rounding over tongue position, but describes the “mixed” formation of the vowel in the text. The other Cyrillic letter that fosters debate within the surveyed authors is -и-. This letter is associated with two readings that are equally common amongst contemporary Russian speakers, /ʃʲiʲ/ and /ʃʲɪʲ/. The /ʃʲiʲ/ cluster is generally preferred by my native Russian authorities,<sup>5</sup> so my guide follows suit.

In the Russian language, some vowels widely differ in pronunciation depending upon whether they are stressed or unstressed. These changes usually follow rules dictated by individual regional accents in contemporary Russian speech. When singing Russian, the adjustments generally follow an accent termed *Old Muscovite* (OM), which is an accent from central Russia that became the basis for the pronunciation of *literaturnyĭ* (*literary*) Russian and the model for stage oration and singing.<sup>6</sup> This accent mixes the traditions known as

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix K, “The Story of /O/: is Russian stressed /o/ open or closed.”

<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey K. Pullum, and William A. Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, second ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 143, 254 and 127, 236, respectively.

<sup>5</sup> Elena A. Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika I Intonatsiya Russkovo Yazyka* [*Practical Phonetics and Intonation of the Russian Language*]. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskovo Universiteta [Publishing House of Moscow University], 1963), 100–111; R. I. Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie: Uchebnoe Posobie dlya Studentov Pedagogicheskikh Institutov* [*Russian Literary Pronunciation: An Instructional Textbook for the Students of Pedagogical Institutes*], 5th ed. (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1972), 172.

<sup>6</sup> V. V. Vinogradov, *The History of the Russian Literary Language*, xx–xxvii, 28–29; W. K. Matthews, *The Structure and Development of Russian* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), 5, 86–91; Michael Shapiro, *Russian Phonetic Variants and Phonostylistics*, edited by W. E. Bull, W. L. Chafe, C. D. Chrétien, et al., vol. 49, *University of California Publications in Linguistics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 3–6; Comrie, Stone and Polinsky, *The Russian Language*, 28–29; Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie* [*Russian Literary Pronunciation*], 14–17.

*akanye* and *ikanye*. The rules of *akanye* cause the Russian /o/ and /a/ phonemes to be exchanged for either /a/ or /ə/ when unstressed, depending upon the proximity to stress. *Ikanye*, more extensive, causes unstressed /ɛ/–/jɛ/ (written -e-) and /a/–/ja/ (written -я-) to be read as [ɪ], [jɪ], /i/, /ji/, or [i], based upon a number of factors.<sup>7</sup> Some of the surveyed works use fewer variants, while one does not adhere to *ikanye* at all. My approach adopts the full spectrum.

Each text in the survey employs some IPA symbols in confusing or erroneous ways, usually by assigning a symbol that formally represents a different articulation from the Russian phoneme or allophone. Below contains the greatest amount of unorthodox IPA usage, while Richter contains the least. My guide does use two IPA symbols less strictly than applied by linguists, but if one produces the formal phonemes for these symbols within context, the result still sounds quite idiomatically Russian.

The editorial mistakes in each surveyed text vary from missing or misspelled words to Cyrillic font transcription errors to missing words or verses in songs or arias. No publication is perfect, but when an editorial error causes significant confusion, it is pointed out. Christine Walters' Russian chapter in Richard Sheil's multi-language text, *A Singer's Manual of Foreign Language Dictions*, suffers from the most editing errors.

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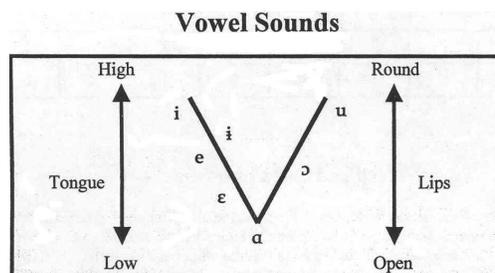
<sup>7</sup> G. O. Vinokur, *The Russian Language: A Brief History*, translated by Mary A. Forsyth and edited by James Forsyth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 108–138; A. P. Vlasto, *A Linguistic History of Russia to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) 377–393; V. V. Vinogradov, *The History of the Russian Literary Language from the Seventeenth Century to the Nineteenth: A Condensed Adaptation into English with Introduction by Lawrence L. Thomas*, edited by Lawrence L. Thomas and Francis J. Whitfield (Madison: The University of Wisconsin, 1969), 86–126, 237–268; Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 14–16.

### The Survey

The two volumes by the Russian-born, baritone, Anton Belov — *Libretti of Russian Operas* and *The 19th Century Russian Operatic Anthology for Baritone* — are prepared texts of Russian operas and arias, in which Belov supplies to singers Cyrillic texts with IPA transcriptions above (using some unorthodox symbols, including one of his own) and word-by-word translations, below. Prosaic translations of highly poetic phrases and notes about obscure references and obsolete or unusual words are also provided.

Belov’s anthologies are designed for singers to learn pronunciation by rote. His guide to Russian lyric diction, complete only in *Libretti of Russian Operas*, is more conceptual than practical and helps to understand the given transcriptions rather than to offer tools for independent work. Belov’s transcriptions and translations are clear, and his diction guide is detailed in its concepts, but certain issues could cause singers confusion.

Belov’s guide, “Russian Lyric Diction,” is broken into “The Sounds of Russian,” on “how to read the phonetic transcriptions that use standard IPA,” and “Reading Russian,” for the singer who “wishes to delve deeper into the structure of the Russian language” and learn “how to read the Cyrillic Alphabet.”<sup>8</sup> He begins with a chart (Fig. 1):



From Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas*<sup>9</sup>

Figure 1

<sup>8</sup> Anton Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas, Vol. 1: Operas Based on the Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pushkin*, Ann Brash and Valeria Konstantinovskaya, eds. (Genesco: Leyerle Publications, 2004), xii.

<sup>9</sup> Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas*, xii. The style of Belov’s chart resembles one in John Moriarty’s *Diction* (1975). Belov studied with Moriarty at the New England Conservatory of Music (*Libretti*, page 493).

This chart is generally self-explanatory, yet where Belov places the phoneme /ɔ/ (open /ɔ/) is important as to the tongue and lip position represented in the graphic. By placing /ɔ/ exactly equidistant between /a/ and /u/, he suggests that the tongue position and lip shape of /ɔ/ lie exactly between the high, back, very rounded /u/ and the low, back, unrounded /a/. For Russian /o/, this is accurate for lip shape but not for tongue position, which should be lower than mid-way between /a/ and /u/. The IPA symbol /ɔ/ represents the phoneme entitled *Cardinal Vowel No. 6*, as defined by Daniel Jones. Cardinal /ɔ/ is placed lower down the “Lips” line rather than in its middle, and so represents a more unrounded lip shape and a lower tongue position in the mouth than for Russian /o/.<sup>10</sup> It is true that Russian does not recognize more than one version of the /o/-phoneme, unlike French, Italian, German or English, yet representing the Russian /o/ as /ɔ/ does suggest a less rounded lip formation than the Russians actually use.<sup>11</sup> Belov is signifying the more rounded lip position by placing the symbol midway in his chart, but he also risks confusing trained singers, who might instinctually relax their lip rounding when they encounter the /ɔ/ symbol. Whether to use the IPA symbol of /ɔ/ or /o/ for Russian /o/, as well as how specifically to form the Russian vowel, is varied and even controversial, so an extensive essay on the subject is located in Appendix K. Belov may come from the minority of Russians who prefer a more open sounding /o/,<sup>12</sup> but defining Russian /o/ as “[ɔ] – approximates its Italian counterpart as in

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<sup>10</sup> Daniel Jones and Dennis Ward, *The Phonetics of Russian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 16–18.

<sup>11</sup> Compare M. V. Trofimov and Daniel Jones, *The Pronunciation of Russian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), 32 (orogram of cardinal /ɔ/), with Kálmán Bolla, *A Conspectus of Russian Speech Sounds*, László Varga, translator (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1981), Plate 6 (stop action photo of /o/ in the word *кто*).

<sup>12</sup> Trofimov and Jones, *The Pronunciation of Russian*, 59: §199; Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 55: §12.122.

*occhi*<sup>13</sup> simply risks making an American-trained singer produce a sound that is too unrounded to be idiomatically Russian.

For Russian *velar -i-*, IPA /i/, Belov states that “the front of the tongue is in the position of [i],” while “the back of the tongue is moved slightly forward.” In his process, he states that “in order to modify the vowel from [i] to [ɪ] the back-central part of the tongue moves forward.” These statements are confusing, as they seem to suggest that the back of the tongue can move forward by a separate action that does not affect the rest of the tongue. This is physiologically inaccurate. What is actually happening in the formation of /i/ is that the *blade* of the tongue remains in the /i/ position, as does the *back* of the tongue (high and forward), but the mid portion of the tongue (termed the *front*) is drawn down toward the well or floor of the mouth. This drawing down action folds the tongue a bit, effectively pulling the back a little more forward toward the blade. The back does move forward, but as a reaction to the folding maneuver of the front, rather than by its own muscular action.

On the topic of symbol usage, Belov discusses schwa, /ə/, but introduces his own phonetic symbol for singers to use instead – /ɑ/, a smaller, flatter /ɑ/. The use of the schwa symbol, /ə/, can be tricky. Most American singers have been trained to use the /ə/ symbol to transcribe the “natural e” in French, which, in turn should be pronounced with quite a bit of lip rounding.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, when a singer sees the symbol /ə/ in an IPA transcription, she or he tends to sing it as a mid-central, quite rounded phoneme, rather than a low-central,

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<sup>13</sup> Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas*, xii.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Grubb, *Singing in French: A Manual of French Diction and French Vocal Repertoire* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1979), 43; Thomas M. Donnan, *French Lyric Diction* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), 15.

unrounded vowel resembling /ʌ/. Belov considers /ə/ to be an unrounded vowel and seems to understand the confusion that could be caused by using the /ə/ symbol, and so he states that:

In Russian singing diction the use of the true *schwa* is usually avoided...most vowels that are reduced to a *schwa* in speech must be sung as a slightly weakened [a]. In this edition the weakened **a** is indicated by a smaller symbol [a] versus [a].<sup>15</sup>

His choice of a version of /a/ reflects the fact that in Russian phonetics, /ə/ is ultimately a reduction of the /a/ phoneme, when it is in a remote position from the stressed syllable.

By introducing his own symbol, Belov eschews the problem of using the schwa symbol, but requires the singer to remember what is meant by the new symbol. In my work, the familiar symbol /ʌ/ is used for the conditions under which Belov uses his special symbol, in order to counter possible confusion. Interestingly, because most singers tend to adjust the form of a lower, more back vowel toward a higher and more forward position (for ease of singing and better consistency of resonance), the phoneme /ʌ/ usually is sung more like the “weakened [a]” that Belov promotes.

One of the objectives of my dissertation is to use IPA symbols and diacritical markings in their established capacity to represent as many of the Russian phonemes and allophones as possible. This way, any question of what speech sound is desired may be checked against an outside source of IPA symbols and independently confirmed. I am also interested in personal transcriptions being more easily written. Belov employs the *Palatal Hook* form of symbol for palatalized consonants, but in the IPA, the same phonetic action is represented by placing an existing diacritical mark, called *Superscript j*, [ʲ], after any desired consonant (i.e., /s/ = /sʲ/ and /t/ = /tʲ/). In the past, consonant symbols with palatal hooks

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<sup>15</sup> Belov, *Libretti*, xiii.

were accepted,<sup>16</sup> but at the 1989 Kiel Convention, this kind of complex symbol form was rejected based on a set of foundational rules for creating new IPA symbols:<sup>17</sup> The *Palatal Hook* symbols may be economical for commercial printing, but they are rather difficult symbols to hand-write. Adding a *Superscript j* to an existing consonant symbol is much more efficient for personal transcription.

Belov has only two cases of truly incorrect symbol usage, that of IPA /L/ and /ç/.

First, he uses the IPA symbol of /L/ to represent the *Russian velar -l-*, explained as follows:

American singers often wrongly imitate this sound by placing the tip of the tongue far back on the hard palate as in the word *cold*. In reality the tip of the tongue must be almost as far forward as in the production of the English *th* sound... This edition uses the phonetic symbol [L] to differentiate this sound from the Italian [l],...<sup>18</sup>

I do not know Belov's (or perhaps, his editor's) logic in choosing /L/, but it would seem that he is trying to achieve two goals: 1) keep singers' tongue tips in a dental position, while velarizing the /l/ phoneme; and 2) differentiate between the written symbols for Russian -l- and Italian -l-. The IPA symbol for a velar /l/ (and therefore, the Russian phoneme), /ʎ/, achieves both of these goals.

*Small Capital L*, /L/, is an inappropriate symbol, because it is specifically defined as a "voiced, velar, lateral approximant,"<sup>19</sup> describing how the vocal cords are engaged in making a sound (voiced), while the back of the tongue contacts the soft palate (velar), so that the air must pass around the tongue by the sides (lateral) with little friction (approximant).

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<sup>16</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 262.

<sup>17</sup> International Phonetic Association, "Report on the 1989 Kiel Convention," *Journal of the International Phonetic Association* 19, no. 2 (1989), 68.

<sup>18</sup> Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas*, xvi.

<sup>19</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 108, 303.

The status of the tip of the tongue is missing, because /L/ symbolizes a consonant phoneme that is only velar without any involvement of the tip. Functionally, the tip of the tongue remains behind the lower teeth, in a neutral position, and the phoneme is wholly articulated by the back of the tongue and the *velum* (soft palate). The Russian velar -l- is not formed this way.

As Belov points out, Russian velar -l- (he calls it “hard l”) is *dental*, with the tip of the tongue placed against the upper incisors.<sup>20</sup> The “hard” timbre comes from *velarization*; a modification made to an existing consonant. First one forms the dental /l/ and then modifies it by raising the back of the tongue to the velum. *Tilde L* (/ɫ/) is a *voiced, velarized, dental, lateral approximant*.<sup>21</sup> Strictly speaking, this symbol represents an *alveolar* placement of the tip of the tongue, formally requiring a diacritical mark to make it dental, like so: /ɫ̪/,<sup>22</sup> but a common convention is to drop diacritical marks, if a language forms such phonemes in only one way. In Russian, all tongue-tip phonemes (/t/, /d/, /r/, /n/, and /l/) are dental. The symbol /ɫ/ is sufficiently different from plain /l/ to prevent confusion, and since it can represent a velarized, dental /l/, it is the better choice for phonetically symbolizing Russian velar -l-.

Second, Belov’s choice of representing palatalized /x/ with the IPA symbol of /ç/ is understandable, but inaccurate. Daniel Jones and Dennis Ward consider /ç/ to be one of the cardinal consonants.<sup>23</sup> It is a *voiceless, palatal, median fricative* similar to the German *ich-laut* in words like *ich* or *mich*.<sup>24</sup> In the formation of the phoneme /ç/ the air passes between the highest point of the hard palate and the mid-top of the tongue, producing friction between

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<sup>20</sup> Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas*, xvi.

<sup>21</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 103–104, 303, 306.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 103, 306.

<sup>23</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 144.

<sup>24</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, 31. The German *ich-laut* is actually a bit more forward than Jones’ /ç/.

the middle of the tongue and the middle of the hard palate. The consonant /x/ is also considered a cardinal phoneme by Jones and Ward, as it is created by the friction between the back of the tongue and the velum (near the hard palate); again, two clearly defined points. In contrast, a palatalized /x/ (IPA /xʲ/; /x̟/, in Belov) is formed midway between the cardinal consonants /ç/ and /x/. Russian phoneticists describe the friction for /xʲ/ as made between the mid-back tongue and the back hard-palate, a point in front of the velum yet behind the mid-point of the hard palate.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, Belov's choice of symbol is inappropriate. The symbol /xʲ/ (or /x̟/, in *Palatal Hook* font) should represent the Russian, palatalized /x/.

On an unrelated point, Belov urges the use of /ʃʲ/ (/ʃʲʲ/) for the letter -ш-, when singing, but there is a small criticism of his historical information. He states:

It is historic fact that in the 1800's this letter was pronounced as a combination of the soft sounds [ʃ] and [tʃ], that is [ʃtʃ].<sup>26</sup>

This is inaccurate, as there is strong evidence that the Muscovite pronunciation of /ʃʲʲ/ for the Cyrillic letter -ш- was part of aristocratic speech as early as the second half of the 1600s and had become the educated norm by the nineteenth century, even outside of Moscow.<sup>27</sup>

The rest of Belov's guide goes into more depth on the applied rules of pronunciation when reading Russian in Cyrillic, since adjacent phonemes greatly influence each other, in

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<sup>25</sup> Jones and Ward, 144: §18.102, Fig. 22; 145: Fig. 23; Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika* [*Practical Phonetics*], 116–117; Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie* [*Russian Literary Pronunciation*], 43; S. C Boyanus, *A Manual of Russian Pronunciation* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd., 1935. Reprint, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 19; Trofimov and Jones, *Pronunciation of Russian*, 88, 148; Bolla, *Conspectus of Russian Speech Sounds*, 160, Plate 66, and Plate 70.

<sup>26</sup> Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas*, xxvii.

<sup>27</sup> Anne E. Pennington, Editor and Translator, *Grigorii Kotoshikhin: O Rossii V Tsarstovanie Alekseya Mikhailovicha* [*About Russia under the Reign of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich*]: *Text and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 205; Vlasto, *A Linguistic History of Russia*, 300–333, 356–377; Michael Shapiro, *Russian Phonetic Variants and Phonostylistics*. Edited by Bull, Chafe, Chrétien, et al., vol. 49, *University of California Publications in Linguistics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 3–6.

Russian. Belov's guide is detailed for a short work, covering basic pronunciation rules, vowel reduction, historical changes in orthography and pronunciation, assimilation in consonants, assimilation effects upon vowels, irregular pronunciations, and several common pronunciation exceptions. Belov concludes with a discussion of the important differences between spoken and sung Russian and the use of the Moscow (*Muscovite*) accent as preferred in singing. Interestingly, while Belov discusses and adheres to *akanye* rules (the reduction of /o/ to /a/ or /ə/ when in an unstressed position), he believes that *ikanye* (/ɛ/→/jɛ/ and /a/→/ja/ reducing to an /i/-allophone) rarely occurs when singing Russian, so the generally vowels retain their stressed position qualities.

Editorial errors are few, but the largest occurs in Prince Gremin's aria from *Eugene Onegin*. In the B section, when Gremin speaks of the debauched people and situations one encounters in aristocratic life, two lines about coquettes and fashionable scenes are omitted:

288	<i>Eugene Onegin, Act III</i>						
ʃrɛ'ɕi	lu'kavix	malɐ'duʃnix	ʃal'nix	bɐ'lɔvannij_	ɕɛ'tɛj		
Среди	лукавых,	малодушных,	шалых,	балованных	детей,		
Among	sly,	cowardly,	foolish,	spoiled	brats,		
zla'ɕɛjɛf_	i	smɛʃ'nix_	i	'skufnix	tu'pɪx	ɕɪ'vɔʃivix	su'ɕɛj
Злодеев	и	смешных	и	скучных,	тупых,	привязчивых	судей,
villains	both	funny	and	boring,	stupid,	annoying	judges,
ʃrɛ'ɕi	xɐ'lɔdnix	ɕɪ'vɔʃivix	zɛstɐkɐ'ʃɛrdnɛj	su'ɕɛ'ti		← Point of missing text	
Среди	холодных	приговоров,	жестокосердой	суе́ты,	...		
amid	cold	judgments,	and cruel-hearted	vanity,			
ʃrɛ'ɕi	dɐ'sadnɛj	ɪ'pustɔ'ti	rɐ'ɕɛtɔʃ	'dum_	i	rɔzɡɐ'vɔʃɪf	
Среди	досадной	пустоты,	расчетов,	дум	и	разговоров,	
amid	regrettable	emptiness,	calculations,	opinions	and	chatter,	

The missing lines are:

...среди кокеток богомольных, среди холопов добровольных,  
 ...amidst coquettes pious, amidst lackeys voluntary,  
 среди вседневных модных сцен, учтивых, ласковых измен;...<sup>29</sup>  
 amidst day-long fashionable scenes, polite, tender betrayals;...

<sup>28</sup> Belov, *Libretti*, 288.

Due to the composition of the music, these lines cannot be removed. Such editorial problems point up how even an anthology of well-prepared texts can fail the needs of a singer.

In 2011, Anton Belov created a website devoted to Russian art song, named, appropriately, Russian Art Song (found at *russianartsong.com*). The site is devoted to translations and transcriptions of a large number of songs from a wide variety of Russian composers, both well-known and lesser known to non-Russians. His IPA transcriptions are in the style of his operatic anthologies, employing the same unorthodox and self-created symbols. He also includes his own readings of many of the poems to help in pronunciation, and provides a link to a Russian website that contains historical recordings of many Russian singers of the early- and mid-twentieth-century singing these arts songs.<sup>30</sup> Of greatest pertinence is an electronic publication of an expanded guide to Russian diction.<sup>31</sup> It is comprised of fifty-four pages on diction and ten pages on meter in Russian poetry (a topic unique to Belov's expanded guide).

Most of Belov's new guide is conceptually the same as the version in his operatic anthologies with expanded descriptions and discussions. Still considering Russian /o/ to be the same as the Italian open /ɔ/, Belov contrasts the phoneme with the "American" open /ɔ/, which he feels (and many agree) is far too open. He uses the example of the English word *on*.<sup>32</sup> This may be confusing to some, as many Americans pronounce the word as /an/, with no lip-rounding at all, while many others in the American mid-west do round the vowel, so that it is similar to the /ɔ/ in the word *dog*.

<sup>29</sup> Translation by Craig M. Grayson

<sup>30</sup> Anton Belov, <http://www.russianartsong.com/> (Created in 2011, last modified 1/17/2012. Accessed 5/29/2012).

<sup>31</sup> Belov, <http://www.russianartsong.com/A-Guide-to-Russian-Diction-Full-Version.pdf> (last modified 1/9/2012. Accessed 5/29/2012).

<sup>32</sup> Belov, *A Guide to Russian Diction* (website, pdf), 5–6.

In this newer text, Belov acknowledges the IPA's *superscript j* ([<sup>j</sup>]) diacritic indicating palatalization, rather than the *Palatal Hook*,<sup>33</sup> but he continues to use the latter in his transcriptions. When discussing the indicator letters, Belov originally talked in terms of “hard” and “soft” vowels, but in the newer guide, he promotes the idea of “non-palatalizing” and “palatalizing” vowels (similarly to Walters, in the next critique).<sup>34</sup> Belov makes clear in this version that he is partial to *ekanye* pronunciation, rather than *ikanye*, and acknowledges the point as a “grey area” in Russian diction.<sup>35</sup> And he adds to his discussion of the unstressed -ий ending after velar consonants (/k/, /g/, and /x/) the option of the /ij/ pronunciation (previously only /əj/ [transcribed as /aj/] was described).

Belov continues to conflate Cyrillic letters with phonemes/allophones, in an effort to offer reading rules as the way to transform the spelling into sounds. He discusses Russian consonant clusters a bit more deeply, but certainly does not cover all the unusual readings. Belov creates a nicely detailed chart of reading rules and covers some of what he calls “particularities” of Russian grammar, touching on topics that contrast with English grammar. The section that is unique to Belov’s website guide (and differs from all other Russian lyric diction sources found) is his exposition on poetic meter as applied to Russian poetry. He feels that such information should aid a non-Russian singer in better vocal phrasing of the Russian texts. For all the expansion of information, Belov still does not describe the articulation of the more idiomatic sounds of Russian in any greater detail than his earlier guide, and is not particularly helpful in avoiding unnecessary tensions in the singer. The website guide remains more conceptual than practical.

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<sup>33</sup> Belov, *Guide* (website pdf), 10.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

In the final analysis, Belov's volumes may likely remain the gold standard for Russian diction transcription and translation aides, and his website is extremely helpful on the topic of Russian art song, but as for providing tools necessary for a singer to decode and transcribe an aria or song written in Cyrillic, independently, Anton Belov's Russian diction guides are at best incomplete.

The Russian chapter of Richard F. Sheil's *A Singer's Manual of Foreign Language Dictions* (YBK Publishers, 2004) tries both to delve into accurate pronunciation and to give the singer some tools to do personal transcriptions, but rampant editorial errors and some phonological inaccuracies materially and substantially degrade an otherwise excellent attempt. Sheil's *Singer's Manual* was first published in 1975, but Christine Walters' Russian chapter was not added until 1984.<sup>36</sup> Walters is an American singer and teacher who is a specialist in Russian vocal literature.<sup>37</sup> Sheil also refers to Walters' "...gratitude to Alla Davidovich, former vocal coach at the Bolshoi Opera in Moscow, for her many helpful criticisms and suggestions during the preparation of that chapter,"<sup>38</sup> therefore, the work carries significant authority. Such a benefit, though, cannot counter the costs of incompetent editing.

After a short introduction, Walters presents a chart of the "Present-day Russian (Cyrillic) Alphabet."<sup>39</sup> The chart gives a glimpse of the pervasive editorial errors. In it, one finds an attempt to use *Palatal Hook* symbols (made with the diacritical mark of a leftward facing hook) to represent palatalized consonants, but prints *Right-tail* diacritics instead. In the

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<sup>36</sup> Richard F. Sheil, *A Singer's Manual of Foreign Language Dictions*, sixth ed. (New York: YBK Publishers, 2004), xii.

<sup>37</sup> Christine Walters Komatsu, "Biography" [personal website], cited July 11 2009; available at <http://christinekomatsu.tripod.com/Bio.htm>.

<sup>38</sup> Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, xii.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

IPA, Right-tailed consonant symbols represent *retroflexed* phonemes,<sup>40</sup> meaning that the front half of the tongue is curled back, so that the underside of the tip touches the front or middle of the hard palate. This is a very different articulation to palatalization. It would be easy for an editor, unfamiliar with their usage and meaning, to confuse the two different symbols, but the erroneous symbols are used throughout the chapter.

Two foot notes below the same chart present the Russian names for the letters -ь- and -Ь-, твёрдый знак (*hard sign*) and мягкий знак (*soft sign*), respectively. The errors are made in the IPA transcriptions following each of the names. After твёрдый знак, [ˈtʲɔɾ-dʲɪj znak] is written, and after мягкий знак, [ˈmʲɑz-ɕʲɪj znak].<sup>41</sup> The transcriptions display the *Right-tail* error, but also, the transcription [following Walters’ apparently intended style] for твёрдый should read as [ˈtʲɔɾ-dʲɪj], with /ɕ/ representing a palatalized /v/ not /y/, and мягкий should be transcribed as /ˈmʲɑx-ɕʲɪj/ with /x/ not /z/. Considering that /ɕ/ looks somewhat like to /y/ and that /x/ is right next to /z/ on a QWERTY keyboard, perhaps the errors are typographical, but a singer, new to Russian and unaware, could be seriously misled.

The problems in Walters’ chapter seem unusually extensive. Nearly every page has at least one mistake. Not all of the errors occur in the IPA symbols. Several mistakes are made in the Cyrillic letters, while some are made in the English translations. For example, in the section covering the hard and soft signs (-ь- and -Ь-, respectively), the text is printed as, “Use of the hard sign, ы,…”<sup>42</sup> but the printed letter -ы- should be -Ь-. Other errors include omissions. The fifth page of Walters’ chapter contains a large chart on consonant-vowel

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<sup>40</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 264 under *Comments*.

<sup>41</sup> Sheil, *Singer’s Manual*, 112.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 113.

combinations that occur in Russian. Below the chart, footnote number three references the Cyrillic letters -Ѣ- and -III-. The footnote prints just “Ѣ and III” with no other information. Looking at footnote number one that states, “Ж, II, and III are always hard,”<sup>43</sup> it can be assumed that Walters wished footnote three to read “Ѣ and III are always soft” — the most logical parallel statement. This same chart is also filled with a number of mistakes in IPA usage similar to the Right-hook error already mentioned.

Very strange misprints occur intermittently, but rather frequently. In an example of the Cyrillic letter -Ѣ- being read as the phoneme /p/, the word скорѣе (*grief; sorrow*) is transcribed as /skɛːrɸ/, with the symbol /ɛː/ representing the vowel.<sup>44</sup> This symbol is a *Right-Hook Reversed Epsilon* which represents a “...rhotacized (*r*-colored) version of [ɛ]...”<sup>45</sup> which itself is a version of /ɔ/. The symbol has nothing to do with the vowel it is supposed to depict. The transcription, in Walters’ intended style, should be printed as /skɔrɸ/.<sup>46</sup> Later on, the word много (*much; many*) is transcribed as /ˈmnɛː-ɡɔ/, also printing the /ɛː/ symbol instead of /ɔ/.<sup>47</sup> This peculiar substitution happens quite often.

Under the section on the letter -Ж, ж-, another cryptic misprint happens:

Жю occurs only in words of French origin and is accordingly pronounced in the French manner, [ʒju].<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, 115.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>45</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 56.

<sup>46</sup> Sheil, 131. Walters, like Belov, prefers the IPA symbol of /ɔ/ to represent the pronunciation of stressed Russian /o/.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

The Cyrillic letters in the brackets are assumed to be IPA symbols, but which symbols must be inferred. In the French word *jury*, the first syllable, *ju-*, would be transcribed as /ʒy/, and so, it would follow that these are probably the desired symbols. It is possible that, in the nineteenth century, Russian words borrowed from French were spoken using original pronunciation. In modern Russian speech, though, many of the more common borrowed words, such as *жюри* (*judges; jury*), have been *russified*, and so have lost their native idiosyncrasies. Today, *жюри* is pronounced (and generally sung) as /ʒu 'ʒi/.<sup>49</sup> Also, in the text, the phonetic transcription is printed as /ʒø-ʒi/.<sup>50</sup> By Walters' interpretation, the first vowel would be /y/, not /ø/ (also, the stress mark is on the incorrect syllable), so Walters' transcription should be /ʒy-'ʒi/. Similarly, under a subsection on the palatalized phoneme /f/, the example word, *портфель* (*briefcase*), is transcribed as /pɔrt-'fɛl/.<sup>51</sup> This word, too, has been *russified*, reducing the unstressed vowel, so it should be transcribed as /part-'fɛl/.<sup>52</sup>

Walters' example words sport many of the more confusing errors, such as in the IPA transcription printed for *спасибо* (*thank you*) as “/spa-'ʂi-bə/.”<sup>53</sup> Like most Russian diction authorities, Walters favors the use of the backed /ɑ/ in sung Russian, not the fronted /a/ (with

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<sup>49</sup> T. F. Ivanova, *Novyi Orfoepicheskii Slovar' Russkogo Yazyka: Proiznoshenie, Udarenie, Grammaticheskie Formy* [*New Orthoepical Dictionary of the Russian Language: Pronunciation, Stress, and Grammatical Forms*], A. N. Tikhonov, ed. (Moscow: Russkii Yazyk Media, 2004), 180; and Kenneth Katzner, ed., *English-Russian : Russian-English Dictionary Revised and Expanded Edition* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994), 644.

<sup>50</sup> Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, 134.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>52</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 61–62; Borunova, Vorontsova, and Yes'kova, *Orfoepicheskii Slovar' [Orthoepical Dictionary]*, 424; and Katzner, 878. The support here is based on omission, rather than inclusion. These sources do not show *портфель* as having an exceptional pronunciation, where as other borrowed words do show such a condition (especially note Borunova, 424).

<sup>53</sup> Sheil, 116.

one exceptional rule), and yet, in the above transcription /spa-/ is printed. The usual *Right-tail* error for the palatalized /s/ is printed, but also, a Cyrillic -и- should be read as /i/, in most cases (except when following a hard consonant), yet /ɪ/ is printed in the example. The corrected transcription is /spa-<sup>1</sup>ʂi-bə/. On a following page, the word тепло (*warmth*) is transcribed as “/ʧɪp-<sup>1</sup>ʂɔ/.”<sup>54</sup> The /p/ should not be palatalized and the IPA symbol /ʎ/ used for Russian velar -л-, is incorrect. It should be the symbol /ɮ/.<sup>55</sup> The *Belted L* (/ʎ/) is employed instead of *Tilde L* (/ɮ/) throughout Walters’ text.<sup>56</sup> A corrected transcription would read as /ʧɪp-<sup>1</sup>ʂɔ/. Under the section entitled “Я, я [ja, a, ja, a] when stressed,” the first sentence reads, “When stressed, y nearly always has the vowel sound [a]...” The printed “y” should be the Cyrillic letter -я-. After stating “When stressed а is in an interpalatal [*sic* — interpalatal] position, its vowel sound is /a/...” the word ять (the name for the old letter ѣ) is printed, but is transcribed as /jatʃ/. This, of course, would confuse a reader, as the example uses /a/ rather than /a/, which directly opposes the rule just stated.<sup>57</sup> The IPA symbol /a/ printed for interpalatal /a/ occurs several times throughout the chapter.

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<sup>54</sup> Sheil, *Singer’s Manual*, 117.

<sup>55</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 105, 103.

<sup>56</sup> Giving the benefit of the doubt, one may assume that this is a type-setting error, since Walters states that a “slash through the IPA symbol is used to show its somewhat guttural quality” (Sheil, 136). The symbol /ʎ/ looks as if there is a slash through it, but the diacritic in *Belted L* (/ʎ/) looks decidedly like a loop or curly-q. An editor’s confusion between the symbols, though, would be understandable. For the record, *Belted L*, /ʎ/, represents a voiceless, alveolar, lateral *fricative* (with no velarization), where *Tilde L*, /ɮ/, depicts a *voiced, velarized*, alveolar (or dental), lateral *approximant* (Pullum and Ladusaw, 103, 105).

<sup>57</sup> Sheil, 120.

Then, under the section titled -Ц, ц-, the word сердце (*heart*) is transcribed as /'ʂɛrt-tsə/,<sup>58</sup> reflecting Walters' belief that the cluster -ци- would read as a double /t/ sound.<sup>59</sup> This particular cluster, though, happens to be *degeminate* (un-doubled), so the first /t/-phoneme is *deleted* (when a phoneme effectively disappears due to surrounding conditions).<sup>60</sup> Also, the final vowel should follow the rule on unstressed /ɛ/→/jɛ/ (stated by Walters earlier) and be reduced to /i/, not /ə/.<sup>61</sup> The corrected transcription is /'ʂɛr-tsi/.

The most complex misprint in the chapter is found in the section on consonant clusters pronounced as /ts/ (-ТС- and -ТЬС-):

ТОЛНЯТСЯ      ТАД-+ЖИТ-С;      ТЦЕЯ ТЦРОНГ.<sup>62</sup>

This presents an interesting cryptogram, but I believe the proper printing should look something like this:

ТОЛНЯТСЯ      taɫ-'ɲat-sə      they throng.

Walter's accompanying "Russian Exercise" (found in an appendix) is Tchaikovsky's setting of A. K. Tolstoy's "Средь Шумного Бала" (*In the Midst of the Noisy Ball*). The poem is printed in Cyrillic with its IPA transcription below each line. An English translation is then given separately. The melody is printed with the Cyrillic text and IPA transcription set below.<sup>63</sup> This study sample is riddled with errors, as well. For example, the Cyrillic text displays such errors as, the word Твои (*your, fam. pl.*) printed as Твон, покрывала (*covered*)

<sup>58</sup> Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, 141.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>60</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 142.

<sup>61</sup> Sheil, 141.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 171–175.

missing the velar /i/ in its IPA transcription (/pə-kri-<sup>1</sup>va-tə/ not /pə-kr-<sup>1</sup>va-tə/), ГОЛОС (voice) printed as ПОЛОС, and свирели (*reed pipe; recorder*) printed as сбирели.<sup>64</sup> В часы (*In the hours*) is transcribed as /f\_tʃa-<sup>1</sup>si/,<sup>65</sup> yet by normal *ikanye* rules, the combination of -ча- in a pre-stress position sounds as /tʃ<sup>i</sup>/,<sup>66</sup> so the transcription should read as /f\_tʃ<sup>i</sup>-<sup>1</sup>si/. Walters states a related rule,<sup>67</sup> but does not seem to recognize this application.<sup>68</sup> Finally, the word печальные (*sad*) is transcribed with a backed /a/, instead of the fronted /a/.<sup>69</sup> The English translation is fine, if a bit too creative, but the setting of the scored song contains myriad errors of the kinds already discussed, though different from those in the Cyrillic text.<sup>70</sup>

On the topic of phonological concepts, Walters' overall approach is generally quite good, but has some issues common to other Russian diction works. Like Belov, Walters considers that Russian /o/ "when stressed...has the typical European pronunciation of the open o..."<sup>71</sup> and therefore uses the IPA symbol /ɔ/, and she uses schwa (/ə/) to symbolize the reduced sound of a remotely unstressed /a/ or /o/.<sup>72</sup> As discussed earlier, using these symbols can cause misunderstandings that result in non-idiomatic Russian pronunciation. Walters also fails to mention the labialization of stressed /o/ after labial consonants or to discuss the /ə/-like off-glide, which completes the idiomatic formation of the Russian vowel. Walters

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<sup>64</sup> Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, 171.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 37; Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 66–67, 215.

<sup>67</sup> Sheil, 142.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 172, 171.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 174–175.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

mentions that “...unstressed [vowels] may be placed on a primary musical stress.” She suggests that, “When this happens, the vowel should take its stressed color rather than its normal unstressed pronunciation...”<sup>73</sup> Strictly obeying this line of thinking could obscure certain words or cause pronunciations that Russians do not tend to sing, especially if an unstressed /o/ is sung as /o/, not /a/. Walters follows the rules of *akanye*, but, unlike Belov, she also advocates the practice of *ikanye*.

Some Russian pronunciation texts erroneously discuss vowels as being individually either hard or soft. Walters tries to take a more phonologically accurate approach by showing how vowels and consonants work as interdependent pairs, not strings of isolated sounds. Unfortunately, Walters then writes about the Cyrillic vowel letters -а-, -э-, -о-, -у-, and -ы- as “vowels that harden preceding consonants,” and -я-, -е-, -ё-, -ю-, and -и- as “vowels that soften preceding consonants,”<sup>74</sup> conflating letters with sounds and reading with phonological rules, ultimately negating her attempt at conceptual accuracy. Walters, though, does introduce the idea of regressive assimilation in a practical fashion through her discussions of palatalization. Assimilation (the imposition of phonetic features of one phoneme onto an adjacent phoneme) is integral to Russian pronunciation, and regressive (backwardly influencing) assimilation is by far the most common. Walters’ approach introduces this concept into the student’s way of thinking about Russian diction, without going through a confusing explanation or using specialized terminology.

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<sup>73</sup> Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, 114.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 116–125.

On more specific issues, some of Walters' phonetic descriptions are inaccurate or questionable. Her description of the formation of the Russian, velar /i/-vowel (IPA, /i/) is somewhat troublesome:

[The vowel ы] ...is somewhat like the ee in **beet**, but is formed much farther back in the mouth, and with the tongue quite low...The lips should remain relaxed, and not be retracted.<sup>75</sup>

The “ee in **beet**,” is the /i/-phoneme, and when one then drops the tongue “quite low” from the /i/ position, it moves closer to /ɪ/, and if then the singer forms this “farther back in the mouth” (such a vague phrase could be problematic in itself), she or he may end up with an appropriately sounding /i/-allophone. The problem comes from stating that the whole tongue is low in the mouth — it is not. Only the central portion of the tongue is drawn down low in the mouth. The description of the formation being “farther back” is also inaccurate. The tongue essentially remains in the same place as the initial /i/-position, though the pulling down of the central tongue causes the back part of the tongue to draw forward a bit. The tongue is not really retracted.

Walters' description of the Russian palatalized /l/, is also misleading:

[The palatalized л]...articulation is that of the typical European dental l...(The ll in the English word **billion** only approximates this sound.)<sup>76</sup>

A “European dental l” has a specific formation: the tip of the tongue touches the back of the upper, frontal incisors, while the blade and the front of the tongue stay relaxed, away from

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<sup>75</sup> Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, 119.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 136. In Walters' text, palatalized /l/ is transcribed as /ḷ/, which represents *Retroflex L*, a very different tongue formation than that of a palatalized /l/ (IPA /lʲ/ or /l̟/ in *Palatal Hook* font).

the palate, and the back of the tongue is in a relaxed, mid-high to mid-low position.<sup>77</sup> A palatalized /l/, by definition, must have most of the tongue arched toward, if not touching, the hard palate. A Russian palatalized /l/ has the tip of the tongue on the upper incisors, but the blade of the tongue continues to arch up (touching the *alveolar ridge*), and the front and back of the tongue also arch toward the hard palate.<sup>78</sup> The example of the English word *billion* can produce nearly the proper shape for the tongue, but it is not guaranteed to do so.<sup>79</sup>

In Walters' discussion of palatalized /x/, the description of the formation of the phoneme is incorrect:

[x̣] (*sic* — [x̣]) When preceding softening vowels, x is palatalized. Its sound is much like the German front **ch**, or “*ich-Laut*”. A remote approximate in English would be the h in **huge**, but the Russian [x̣] (*sic*) is much higher and farther forward.<sup>80</sup>

Though the comparison to the German *ich-Laut*, /ç/, makes some sense, it must be accompanied by the fact that Russian palatalized /x/ (/x̣/) is farther back on the palate (see earlier discussion of Belov), not forward, as Walters asserts. If a student were to make the sound that Walters describes, the air stream would escape at the back of the alveolar ridge.

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<sup>77</sup> Evelina Colorni, *Singers' Italian: A Manual of Diction and Phonetics* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 55; Luciano Canepari, *A Handbook of Phonetics: Natural Phonetics: Articulatory, Auditory and Functional* (Muenchen: Lincom Europa, 2005), 158, 190, 195. The height of the back of tongue can vary quite a bit, as long as it does not touch the soft palate. As mentioned earlier, a Russian /ʎ/ is a velarized dental l, meaning that the back of the tongue touches (or nearly touches) the velum.

<sup>78</sup> Jones and Ward, 171–173, 172: fig. 29; Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika [Practical Phonetics]*, 78; Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 40–41. Again, the height of the back portion of the tongue can vary, but the arching of the blade does not.

<sup>79</sup> For those, like me, who remember the late Carl Sagan's affectation, pronouncing *billion* can be done using a quite low and back, even pharyngeal, formation of /l/.

<sup>80</sup> Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, 141.

The IPA symbol for such a phoneme is /ç/,<sup>81</sup> which lies between /ʃ/ and /ç/ — too far forward for Russian /xʲ/, which lies between /ç/ and /x/.<sup>82</sup>

Walters takes debatable positions on some Russian pronunciation rules and concepts. For instance, she states that, “Generally, hard consonants before soft consonants remain hard.” She then gives only two exceptions, -з- and -ц-. This is really about regressive assimilation of palatalization in consonant clusters, and Walters’ rule reflects contemporary, spoken Russian. Yet, this is not the tradition when singing Russian, since the vast majority of Russian vocal literature was composed in the nineteenth century, often using texts from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century poets. From these earlier centuries to as recently as the first part of the twentieth century, the palatalization of entire consonant clusters was nearly *de rigueur*, in Russian speech, when 1) the final cluster member was palatalized, 2) it felt natural to palatalize the preceding consonants, and 3) there was no other reading rule to prevent it. Only a very few consonants would not be palatalized in a cluster.<sup>83</sup> Russian lyric diction tends to maintain this broader, traditional practice.

Walters lists the letters associated with four voiceless consonants, -х-, -п-, -ч-, and -щ-, and states that the four “have no voiced counterparts.”<sup>84</sup> Her statement is incomplete and might be confusing to a singer. While it is true that these letters lack unique Cyrillic letters representing voiced counterparts, the associated phonemes do have phonetically voiced

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<sup>81</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 33.

<sup>82</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 144: §18.102.

<sup>83</sup> Most sources do not actually establish rules, but list and/or discuss each of the different consonant clusters possible in Russian. Of the sources used in this dissertation, the most comprehensive are: Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 108–127; Bruce L. Derwing and Tom M. S. Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian: A Systemic Approach to Russian Spelling and Pronunciation* (Columbus: Slavica Publishers, 1980), 75–87; and Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 200–205. All advocate the liberal application of regressive palatalization throughout the consonant cluster. Also, there is an excellent, linguistic discussion on this topic in Bernard Comrie, Gerald Stone, and Maria Polinsky, *The Russian Language in the Twentieth Century*, second ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 42–45.

<sup>84</sup> Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, 129.

allophones that occur under certain assimilative conditions. Jones and Ward give a set of examples reflecting just such regressive voicing: отец бы /ɑ 'tʲɛɔ̯ bɨ/, дочь бы /'dɔɔ̯ bɨ/, дождь бы /'dɔʒʲɔ̯ bɨ/ (the letter cluster -ждь- is read as /ʃʲʃʲ/, like the letter -ш-, when final and not assimilating voicing) and орлох бы /ɑ 'gʲɔɫɔ̯ bɨ/.<sup>85</sup> Walters does not discuss these specific cases of assimilation of voice.

In a section dealing with the Cyrillic letter -ш-, an important issue with Walters' introductory discussion arises:

This voiceless consonant is the soft (palatalized) version of [ʃ]. When preceding vowels, it is usually pronounced long, which is indicated by the double IPA symbol [ʃʃ]. In front of consonants and at ends of words, ш is single. It is more forward and palatalized than the **sh** in **she**. Sometimes its release almost sounds like [tʃ], and therefore the IPA symbol used by some phoneticians is [ʃ̟ (t) ʃ̟].<sup>86</sup>

The IPA symbol cluster [ʃ̟ (t) ʃ̟] is a variation of the transcription /ʃʲtʃʲ/.<sup>87</sup> The two pronunciations — /ʃʲʃʲ/ and /ʃʲtʃʲ/ — are equally common amongst native Russian speakers,<sup>88</sup> but the /ʃʲʃʲ/ cluster is preferred for singing.<sup>89</sup> Walters' assertion, though, that -ш- is read as a single /ʃʲ/ "In front of consonants..." rather than the usual /ʃʲʃʲ/, is debatable. This position is not unprecedented, but there is disagreement amongst several authorities (including Jones

<sup>85</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 189.

<sup>86</sup> Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, 143.

<sup>87</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 82.

<sup>88</sup> R. I. Avanesov, *Russkaya Literaturnaya I Dialektnaya Fonetika [Russian Literary and Dialectal Phonetics]* (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1974), 172; Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika [Practical Phonetics]*, 110–111; Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 139–140; Comrie, Stone and Polinsky, *The Russian Language*, 33–35.

<sup>89</sup> Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas*, xxvii; Laurence R. Richter, *Tchaikovsky's Complete Song Texts: Russian Texts of the Complete Songs of Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky with Phonetic Transcriptions, Literal and Idiomatic English Translations* (Mt. Morris: Leyerle Publications), 1999, ix–x; . Sheil, *A Singer's Manual*, 143; Emilio Pons, "The Singer's Russian: a guide to the Russian operatic repertoire through a collection of texts of opera arias for all voice types, with phonetic transcriptions, word-for-word and idiomatic English," dissertation (Indiana University, 2008), 35; Vinokur, *Russkoe Stsenicheskoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Stage Pronunciation]*, 21–31.

and Ward, Avanesov, Bryzgunova, Boyanus, Belov, and Piatak and Avrashov). Also, Walters' specific condition under which this phenomenon occurs directly opposes Avanesov and is only half of the criteria set by Jones and Ward. Jones and Ward state that:

...the sound ʃ (i.e. a single ʃ, not a double ʃʃ) is common...in contiguity with other consonants, as in...<sup>90</sup> 'suʃnəʂt̚ сушность (essence), gərɫ'ropʃɪk гардеробщик (cloak-room attendant), where a rather careful pronunciation could have ʃʃ.<sup>90</sup>

The older phonetic symbols /ʃ/ and /ɹ/ are equivalent to present day /ʃ<sup>j</sup>/ and /ɹ/, respectively.

For Jones and Ward, the /ʃ<sup>j</sup>ʃ<sup>j</sup>/ cluster can be pronounced as a single /ʃ<sup>j</sup>/ either in front of or following another consonant. Avanesov allows for the option of either /ʃ<sup>j</sup>ʃ<sup>j</sup>/ or /ʃ<sup>j</sup>/ only after other consonants, with /ʃ<sup>j</sup>ʃ<sup>j</sup>/ being the pronunciation for all other conditions, even at the end of words (contrary to Jones/Ward and Walters).<sup>91</sup> Avanesov would actually consider both Walters' example of изящный /i 'z<sup>j</sup>aʃ<sup>j</sup> nɨj/ (*elegant*) and Jones and Ward's example of сушность /'suʃ<sup>j</sup> nəs<sup>j</sup>t̚/ (*essence*) as incorrect, if only a single /ʃ<sup>j</sup>/ is spoken.<sup>92</sup> Avanesov acknowledges the use of /ʃ<sup>j</sup>/ in such cases, but considers it un-orthoepical (incorrect).<sup>93</sup> Bryzgunova only subscribes to the elongated /ʃ<sup>j</sup>ʃ<sup>j</sup>/.<sup>94</sup> Belov does not address this variant at all (tacitly advocating /ʃ<sup>j</sup>ʃ<sup>j</sup>/ for all cases), while Piatak and Avrashov and Boyanus favor using the /ʃ<sup>j</sup>tʃ<sup>j</sup>/ pronunciation and so avoid the problem all together. The position taken for my

<sup>90</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 139, §18.88

<sup>91</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 272–273.

<sup>92</sup> S. N. Borunova, V. L. Vorontsova, and N. A. Yes'kova, *Orfoepicheski Slovar' Russkogo Yazyka: Proiznoshenie, Udarenie, Grammaticheskie Formy [(An) Orthoepical Dictionary of the Russian Language: Pronunciation, Stress, Grammatical Forms]*, edited by R. I. Avanesov and N. A. Yes'kova (Moscow: Russkii Yazyk, 1988), 189, 569.

<sup>93</sup> Avanesov, *RLP*, 82–84.

<sup>94</sup> Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika [Practical Phonetics]*, 114–115.

guide is based on the strength of Avanesov and Bryzgunova and considers that singing requires more careful pronunciation, and so employs /ʃʲʃʲ/ in all cases.

Walters all but ignores the important subject of the verbal, reflexive particles -ся and -сь (the particle/suffix -ся is never stressed). The question is whether the -c- is read in hard form as /-sʌ/ (sometimes /-sɑ/) and /s/ or in soft form as /-sʲʌ/ (or /-sʲɑ/) and /sʲ/. Walters does not address the reflexive particles in the section covering -C, c- or in any special section or note, but only covers the -ТСЯ- and -ТЬСЯ- combinations,<sup>95</sup> which are both read as “hard” /tsʌ/ (or /tsɑ/), because the -TC- and -ТЬC- consonant clusters are considered like the letter -Ц (/ts/), a generally unpalatalized consonant.<sup>96</sup> There are no example words in the main text with a -ся ending (or -сь, for that matter) that is not one of the -TC- style clusters. The only example of a “non-TC” reflexive particle is found in the study song in the appendix, which is transcribed so that the particle ending is soft, that is /sʲʌ/.<sup>97</sup> With this transcription and no specific discussion on the subject, Walters promotes the idea that, other than with -TC- clusters, the reflexive particle -ся is read with a palatalized /sʲ/, which would apparently be the same for -сь. It can be argued that this position is acceptable, since it seems to be the most recent fashion, but there is a position just as strong, if not stronger, that urges singers to use a hard /s/ in all but one such case, in Russian lyric diction.

Colloquial speech changes often, but pronunciation in Russian opera (with most of its greatest works coming from pre-revolutionary times) continues to resist modernization. Therefore, it makes sense for Russian lyric diction to reflect, in general, the more traditional

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<sup>95</sup> Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, 145.

<sup>96</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie* [*Russian Literary Pronunciation*], 140–141.

<sup>97</sup> Sheil, 171, 174.

rules of *literaturnyi* (*literary*) pronunciation (based on *Old Muscovite*), which would suggest that the verbal, reflexive particle -ся be read using “hard” /s/, in all cases, but for the “strange exception: end-stressed gerunds,” as Comrie, Stone, and Polinsky put it.<sup>98</sup>

In Walters’ section on the Cyrillic letter -ч-, under a subsection on /ʃ/, there is a note about /a/ in the interpalatal position.<sup>99</sup> It is a version of a note which originally occurred under the section on the vowel letter -я- but has a seriously confusing printing error. In the original note under -Я, я-, Walters states:

When stressed **a** is in an interpalatal [*sic*-interpalatal] position, its vowel sound is /a/.

This sound is more forward than [a] and is slightly spread. Its color lies somewhere between [a] and [æ].<sup>100</sup>

Yet, in the later iteration of the principle, the note states that:

[-ч-] sometimes places **a** in an interpalatal position...in this position, **a** responds as **я** does under like circumstances, i.e., with an [a] (*sic*) pronunciation when stressed...<sup>101</sup>

“...with an [a] pronunciation when stressed...” is supposed to read as, “with an [a] pronunciation when stressed...” using the fronted /a/ phoneme, not the backed /a/. A similar note under the section on -Ш, ш- repeats the error.<sup>102</sup> Back in the subsection on /ʃ/, the example word *случайно* (*by chance*) is transcribed as /sʃu-ˈtʃaj-nə/. Since the /a/ is in a stressed, interpalatal position, it should be transcribed as /a/, as per the correct version of the

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<sup>98</sup> Comrie, Stone and Polinsky, 45–46.

<sup>99</sup> Sheil, *Singer’s Manual*, 142. This section has a printing error in its title. Based upon Walters’ other sections, the title of this section should read as -Ч, ч-, but it is printed as -C, c-.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

given rule, thus the transcription should read as /sʎu-ʎʃaj-nə/. Then, the word печаль (*sorrow; sadness*) is transcribed as /pɨ-ʎʃaj/, when it should be /pɨ-ʎʃal/.

In the final section of the chapter, entitled “Special Consonant Combinations,” Walters covers the consonant clusters of -чч-, -зч-, -жч-, -зж-, -тч-, and -тьс-. She does not, though, cover the larger clusters, other than -тьс-, containing three or four consonants (including the hard and soft signs). Such larger clusters often require one consonant phoneme effectively to disappear through *deletion*.<sup>103</sup> For example, one of the most common longer clusters is -вств-, in which the initial /f/-phoneme is often deleted — чувство (*sense; feeling*) is pronounced as /ʎʃu stvʌ/, not /ʎʃuf stvʌ/.<sup>104</sup>

Finally, some of the errors in Walters’ chapter seem to involve not recognizing or creating exceptions to certain Russian pronunciation rules. In her section on doubled Russian consonants, Walters notes that doubled consonants immediately following a stressed syllable are elongated, but the first example given is русский (*Russian — masc. adj.*). The transcription is /rus-skʃij/, assuming an elongated /s/-phoneme.<sup>105</sup> This word happens to be an exception, though, so the written -cc- is read as a single /s/, that is, /rus-kʃij/.<sup>106</sup> Under a sub-section on the Cyrillic letter -г- being read as the phoneme /v/, the genitive form of the famous composer’s name, Tchaikovsky, is transcribed as /ʎʃaj-ʎkɔf-skə-və/ (Чайковского in

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<sup>103</sup> John Harris, “Deletion” in *The Blackwell Companion to Phonology*, edited by Marc van Oostendorp, Colin Ewen, Elizabeth Hume and Keren Rice (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 1597–1613. An older term is *elision* [see Clark and Yallop, *Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology* (1995), 90], but the term can be confused with colloquial usage (see Harris, “Deletion,” 1598); Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules*, 37–41.

<sup>104</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 147–152; 151; 100, §37, no. 2; 123–126.

<sup>105</sup> Sheil, *Singer’s Manual*, 130.

<sup>106</sup> Borunova, Vorontsova, and Yes’kova, *Orfoepicheskkii Slovar’ [Orthoepical Dictionary]*, 510.

Cyrillic).<sup>107</sup> Although the transcription seems to follow all the rules, the issue is the first syllable. Under the section discussing -Ч, ч-, Walters, herself, writes:

This consonant sometimes places **a** in an interpalatal position...in this position, **a** responds as **я** does ...i.e., with...an [i] sound when unstressed.<sup>108</sup>

The “Чай-” in ЧайКОВСКОВО fits the criteria for an unstressed, interpalatal /a/, and since this proper name is not an exception, all forms should be pronounced using /tʃi-/, that is /tʃi-ˈkɔf-skə-və/. The articulation of /j/ (-й-) following the /i/ (-а-) is deleted, due to the palatal nature of /i/, so the /j/ is not transcribed.

Even with the conceptual errors, though, Walters’ work is generally complete and easy to understand. Unfortunately, the editing and proofing are so incompetent, that the practical usefulness of her text has been seriously compromised. This is made all the worse, because the latest publication (2004, sixth ed.) is labeled as “revised and expanded.”

Laurence R. Richter’s *Tchaikovsky’s Complete Song Texts: Russian Texts of the Complete Songs of Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky with Phonetic Transcriptions, Literal and Idiomatic English Translations* is the first publication in a series of six anthologies published over nine years (1999-2008), which also cover Rakhmaninov, Musorgsky, Shostakovich and Prokofiev, and a survey collection that includes “Старые Романсы” (Old Ballads) and works by the seminal composers Glinka, Dargomyzhsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Balakirev, and Cui. William W. Derbyshire, reviewing Richter’s 2002 volume on Musorgsky in the *Slavic and East European Journal*, rightly said that Richter’s multivolume endeavor was a “*tour de force* on the author’s part and...a valuable contribution...to singers wishing to

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<sup>107</sup> Sheil, 132.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 142.

include Russian art songs in their recital programs.”<sup>109</sup> Richter was a pioneer in the teaching of Russian lyric diction at Indiana University, in the 1970s, and continues to instruct Russian phonetics classes and Russian diction for singers, as a Lecturer Emeritus.<sup>110</sup> His song books supply complete phonetic transcriptions and translations of the lyrical texts, along with what is called a “key to Russian phonetic transcription.”<sup>111</sup> Richter’s brief guide (only two-and-a-half pages), which introduces each anthology, gives the singer a way to make sense of the transcriptions, but does not provide any tools for independent work. Also, he does not adhere to the official IPA but employs certain phonetic symbols that are familiar to Slavic specialists, rather than most singers.

Richter’s volumes are similarly formatted to Belov’s work, in that the Russian song texts are printed in the Cyrillic, and then are phonetically transcribed, translated word-for-word and finally presented in idiomatic English, in which the grammar, word order, sentence structure, and idioms are adjusted for clear understanding. Unlike Belov, Richter gives almost no notes on odd word usage or historical references, nor any background information on the poetry, subjects, or poets. Richter’s transcriptions and translations are practical and unadorned. In the same, no-nonsense vein, the key to the pronunciation of the transcriptions is quite abbreviated and largely covers how to understand and pronounce the given phonetic transcriptions in broad terms, providing only the most basic rules on such topics as assimilation. There are no discussions on special letter combinations or exceptions, nor is there any attempt by Richter to teach a singer why individual letters or letter combinations

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<sup>109</sup> William W. Derbyshire, "Reviews: Laurence R. Richter. *Mussorgsky's Complete Song Texts*" in *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Winter, 2003): 711.

<sup>110</sup> Indiana University, 2007 biography, available at: <http://www.indiana.edu/~deanfac/bios/2007/Richter07.pdf>; REEI Commemorative, 2008, available at: [http://www.indiana.edu/~reeiweb/newsletter/REEI\\_Commemorative2008.pdf](http://www.indiana.edu/~reeiweb/newsletter/REEI_Commemorative2008.pdf), p. 8 (10); Indiana University Faculty profile available at: [http://www.indiana.edu/~iuslavic/facProfile\\_LRichter.shtml](http://www.indiana.edu/~iuslavic/facProfile_LRichter.shtml).

<sup>111</sup> Richter, *Tchaikovsky's Complete Song Texts*, ix–xi.

are pronounced as they are. Essentially, Richter has done all the work, and the singer must simply accept it and study what is on the page.

Richter is the only author of such a transcription anthology who uses a modified Slavicist Phonetic Alphabet. This transcription system is, as Derbyshire puts it, “based loosely on the International Phonetic Alphabet, but with the substitution of symbols more familiar to Slavists.”<sup>112</sup> While most of the symbols are shared with the IPA, a number of sounds are given symbols derived from the modern Roman alphabet, rather than those specially formed for the IPA (mostly derived from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English print style):<sup>113</sup>

**Table 1**

<b>Cyrillic:</b>	<b>ж</b>	<b>ш</b>	<b>ц</b>	<b>щ</b>	<b>ч</b>	<b>жж</b>	<b>-чъ бы</b>	<b>ы</b>
IPA:	/ʒ/	/ʃ/	/ts/	/ʃʲʃʲ/	/tʃʲ/	/ʒʲʒʲ/	/-dʒʲ bi/	/i/
Slavicist:	/ž/	/š/	/c/	/šš/	/č/	/žž/	/-dž by/	/y/

Though it does require a singer extra study to learn these symbols, they are not necessarily confusing, except for the use of the symbol /y/ in place of /i/, as explained further on.

The Slavicist phonetic system poses the difficulty of having to learn unfamiliar symbols for no practical reason, possibly throwing an obstacle in the way of a singer who may already feel intimidated. While singers know most of the IPA from their training, the Slavicist version must go through another layer of translation. Beyond this, the use of /c/ for /ts/ and /y/ for /i/ could be frustrating. The IPA symbol /c/ is assigned to a /ts/-like articulation, used in Hungarian, that is significantly further back on the hard palate than a

<sup>112</sup> Derbyshire, "Reviews: Richter. *Mussorgsky*," 712. "Slavist" is an alternative term to "Slavicist."

<sup>113</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 173, 207.

Russian /ts/-phoneme.<sup>114</sup> More important, though, is that the symbol /c/ is completely unknown to most singers, while /ts/ is very familiar. In the case of the /y/-symbol, it formally represents (and singers recognize it as) the high, fronted, fully rounded vowel used in French for the letter -u- (as in *tu*, /ty/), which is quite different from the low, central, unrounded [ɨ]-allophone.<sup>115</sup> Why should a singer go through such trouble, when there are perfectly good, quite familiar IPA symbols that can represent the same Russian sounds.

I can only postulate that three other symbols ([ɨ̞], /l/, and [̚]), which Richter employs in an unorthodox fashion, were chosen for easier type-setting, since they have such different usual assignments in the IPA. As exemplified in Table 1, above, Richter uses what is called a *Subscript Right Half-Ring* diacritic ([ɨ̞]) to denote palatalization, rather than the *Palatal* (left) *Hook* or the *Superscript j*. Technically, the *Subscript Right Half-Ring* denotes an added or increased rounding of the lips to a phoneme,<sup>116</sup> which tends to modify vowels, so Richter's usage is incorrect. Also, he represents the Russian velar -l- with the IPA symbol for the European -l-, /l/. Even though Richter's description specifies the velarized /l/ and warns against using the "continental l̥" pronunciation,<sup>117</sup> his use of the plain /l/-symbol would, more likely, confuse singers and cause them to articulate the very phoneme against which he warns. Finally, a *Superscript Dash*, [̚], is used to denote a consonant that is not released

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<sup>114</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 27

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 197, 88.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>117</sup> Richter, *Tchaikovsky's Complete Song Texts*, x.

explosively (an *unreleased* consonant in the jargon of phonetics).<sup>118</sup> The proper IPA diacritical symbol for this phenomenon is what is called a *Corner*, [ʔ]<sup>119</sup> — why not use it?

On more common issues, Richter assigns the closed /o/ symbol to Russian stressed /o/ and states that “The vowels of Russian are pronounced essentially like Italian vowels...”<sup>120</sup> I have discussed how Belov and Walters prefer the open /ɔ/, and why I object to this choice, but Richter sits in the closed /o/ camp for which I advocate. My position is that even though Russian /o/ is a combination of open /ɔ/ (tongue) and closed /o/ (lips), if a singer forms an Italianate closed /o/ (slightly more open than a French or German /o/), though not perfectly idiomatic, she/he still will produce a sound that is much closer to the Russian /o/-phoneme than open /ɔ/.

Richter prefers the schwa symbol, /ə/, to represent a reduced /o/ or /a/. Though officially correct, objections to the /ə/-symbol in Russian lyric diction have already been addressed. Interestingly, though, Richter does not advocate schwa for all cases of unstressed /o/ or /a/. He restricts its use to the unstressed adjectival endings -ой and -ий, which rhyme (both pronounced as /-əj/) in the strict *Old Muscovite (OM)* tradition.<sup>121</sup> All other cases of unstressed /a/ and /o/, (as well as /ja/), for Richter, are pronounced as /a/ (or /ja/), no matter how remote. Unstressed /ε/-/jε/, /i/, and /i/, retain their unreduced sounds as /ε/, /jε/, /e/, /je/, or /i/ (or /i/); and /i/ (transcribed as /y/, as discussed), respectively.<sup>122</sup> Adhering to *OM*

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<sup>118</sup> Richter, *Tchaikovsky's Complete Song Texts*, x.

<sup>119</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 239.

<sup>120</sup> Richter, ix.

<sup>121</sup> Throughout Richter's transcriptions and referred to in Derbyshire, "Reviews: Richter. *Mussorgsky*," 712; Also see Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas*, xxiv; Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 153–156; Comrie, Stone and Polinsky, *The Russian Language*, 46, 48–49.

<sup>122</sup> Richter, *passim* [transcriptions].

pronunciation as strictly as Richter may sound somewhat old fashioned or overly affected to most Russians. Belov's and Walters' work suggests that such devotion to *OM* style may be giving way to a more modern speech approach with some modifications.

With one exception, the rest of Richter's information is solid and helpful. His descriptions of how to form the /i/ phoneme and his cautions against certain pitfalls, especially with palatalization, are very practical. In general, Richter's section on consonants is accurate, but his discussion on forming and practicing the Russian velar /t/ might cause unnecessary tongue and throat tension in a singer:

Russian hard [l] merits special mention, since it is much harder than even English final "dark" l. . . Hard [l] is pronounced with the tongue in the same contour as in English r: **earn, earth**, etc. A good exercise for practicing Russian hard l is to say English **grr**, then hold everything in place except the tip of the tongue, which moves forward only far enough to make dental contact, and say **girl** with the l in the throat, as if gargling with it, and hold onto it as long as breath allows.<sup>123</sup>

His exercise produces a *pharyngealized* /l/, rather than a velarized /l/. A pharyngeal /l/ is really too far back and constrictive for effective singing. Richter, though, may just be unfamiliar with the integral need for a relaxed root of the tongue and pharynx for good singing. It is true that many Russians do speak the /t/-phoneme with a pharyngeal position of tongue,<sup>124</sup> but several other authorities of Russian pronunciation suggest that the velarized /t/ is preferred.<sup>125</sup>

Richter's short paragraphs on assimilation provide good, general rules that encompass most conditions of the phenomenon. He advocates a kind of assimilation that affects the /ε/–

<sup>123</sup> Richter, *Tchaikovsky's Complete Song Texts*, x.

<sup>124</sup> Bolla, *Conspectus*, 100.

<sup>125</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 40–41; Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika [Practical Phonetics]*, 78; Trofimov and Jones, *Pronunciation of Russian*, 120–121; Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 167–68: §21.12 and §21.13.

/jɛ/ *vocoids* (vowel related formations), in which they are pronounced as /e/–/je/, when preceding a palatalized phoneme. Lastly, Richter introduces a case of progressive assimilation, in which a preceding hard consonant causes the /i/-phoneme to be pronounced as /i/.<sup>126</sup> What is not made clear is that, except for the generally unpalatalized constants /ʒ/, /ʒ/ and /ts/, this progressive assimilation only occurs across a word boundary, as in к Ивану /k̲ i 'va nu/ (toward Ivan) [the unpalatalized consonants cannot be followed by the /i/-phoneme, even within a word]. The word boundary cannot be regressively breached by palatalization. The rule applies because the /i/-phoneme cannot follow a hard consonant, and if some boundary keeps the preceding consonant unpalatalized, then the /i/-phoneme must be replaced by its hard allophone, /i/.<sup>127</sup> Within a word, which has no such boundary, like руки, /ru 'kʲi/ (hand, *gen. sing.*), the preceding consonant to the /i/-vowel must be the palatalized phoneme, /kʲ/.<sup>128</sup>

Topics Richter does not cover in his brief primer are: 1) the effects of the interpalatal position on /a/ when stressed (becoming /a/); 2) what happens to /a/, /ja/, /ɛ/, or /jɛ/ when unstressed (becoming /ɪ/, /jɪ/ or /i/, /ji/, under *ikanye* rules); 3) the regressive assimilation of palatalization from a final palatalized consonant in a cluster; and 4) the deletion of certain consonants in large consonant clusters. Interpalatal assimilation is not covered, because, it seems that Richter does not agree with the concept. He does not cover the subject directly, but it is evident in his transcriptions that all unstressed vowels, other than /o/ (and /i/, in the narrow case of the adjectival ending -ий), are to be pronounced in unreduced form, as

<sup>126</sup> Richter, *Tchaikovsky's Complete Song Texts*, x–xi.

<sup>127</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 107; Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules*, 62.

<sup>128</sup> Avanesov, 104–105; Derwing and Priestly, 65.

dictated by strict *OM* pronunciation. He also seems to reject *ikanye* completely on the same grounds.<sup>129</sup> On the influence of palatalized final consonants upon clusters, Richter seems to palatalize most all of the preceding cluster members in his transcriptions. In the final examination, Richter's work, like Belov's, is laudable, but as a text that provides training and tools for singers to do their own phonetic transcriptions of Russian, it is seriously lacking. Also, his use of the Slavicist symbols creates extra work for the singer, and the ultra-strict observance of *OM* tradition can result in affected and old-fashioned sounding performances.

Jean Piatak and Regina Avrashov's *Russian Songs and Arias: Phonetic Readings, Word-by-Word Translation, and a Concise Guide to Russian Diction* (1991) is a collection of important and popular Russian art songs and operatic arias that have been transcribed into IPA and translated word-for-word for singers to learn by rote. The "Concise Guide to Russian Diction" is a primer that is designed to help the singer understand the given transcriptions.<sup>130</sup> Jean Piatak is an American of Russian descent, whose family is Russian speaking. She is a singer with degrees from Oberlin Conservatory (B.M.), the Cleveland Institute of Music (M.M.), and the University of Colorado (D.M.A.). Piatak's co-author, Regina Avrashov was born in St. Petersburg, Russia (Leningrad, when the text was published). Her degrees are from the Leningrad Herzen Pedagogical Institute (M.A.) and Georgetown University (second M.A.). She taught English and French in Russia, and Russian at Howard University in Washington, D.C. and the University of Colorado Denver. Avrashov is also a freelance translator of Russian.<sup>131</sup> For over ten years, Piatak and Avrashov's *Russian Song and Arias* has been the most popular text to help singers with

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<sup>129</sup> Richter, *Tchaikovsky's Complete Song Texts*, passim [transcriptions].

<sup>130</sup> Jean Piatak and Regina Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias: Phonetic Readings, Word-by-Word Translation, and a Concise Guide to Russian Diction* (Dallas: Pst...Inc., 1991), 1–22.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

Russian diction and is found in nearly every music library in the U.S. It also is the most helpful to recitalists who are comfortable with IPA transcription, as Belov's work is exclusively of Russian opera, and Richter's work uses the unusual Slavicist phonetic symbols. This, too, is a text that does the work for the singer, while providing only a brief key to Russian diction. It does not teach singers how to read and transcribe Russian Cyrillic print for themselves. Piatak and Avrashov's guide, as with the other works discussed, is mostly accurate, but there are some issues which may cause enough confusion to produce poor results for singers.

Piatak and Avrashov's primer covers the difficulties of Russian sung pronunciation in some detail, and their organization is straightforward, from attaching the varied sounds to each Cyrillic letter to discussing the different conditions that bring about pronunciation variances to listing several common exceptions. Laurence Richter reviewed Piatak and Avrashov's text and found several printing errors, as well as several misplaced word stresses that, in turn, produced corresponding, incorrect, phonetic transcriptions. Richter writes on incorrect transcriptions:

Many of the mistakes in the transcriptions are so out of the question that they would be counterintuitive for any native speaker. For example: жёстокие instead of жестокие; моёю instead of мою; середёчный instead of сердёчный; льёшь instead of лёшь; шлёт (repeatedly) instead of плёт. And these are not just typographical errors: they are also in the transcriptions. 132

Then on misplaced stresses, misprints and misused terms:

9. Wrong stresses are everywhere. A few examples: другую for другую, баюшки for баюшки, сказка́х for сказа́ках, са́ма for сама́, па́рчею for парче́ю, Досифе́й (transcribed [da si' fi]!) for Досифе́й. Sometimes a wrong stress is given even when the rhyme of the text should make the correct stress obvious. Thus оскорбле́на is given for оскорбле́на, despite its rhyming with полна́; обма́ни for обманя́, despite its rhyming with дохня́; etc.

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<sup>132</sup> Laurence R. Richter, "Reviewed Work: *Russian Songs and Arias* by Jean Piatak; Regina Avrashov," *The Slavic and East European Journal* Vol. 38, no. 2 (Summer, 1994), 401.

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out the book one encounters isolated errors, like the misspelling of Rakhmaninov as “Rakmaninov” on every title page in the Rakhmaninov section. Or pearls such as this: “Voiced and voiceless consonant pairs are called **cognates**.” 133

Richter also had several criticisms that I discovered myself.

Piatak and Avrashov assert that “Russian has only seven vowel sounds and one glide and just one way to form a diphthong.”<sup>134</sup> They reject most all of the allophones of cardinal vowel sounds suggested by Belov, Richter or Walters.<sup>135</sup> In Russian, three fronted allophones ([a], [æ] and [e]) are associated with the phonemes /a/ and /ɛ/<sup>136</sup> but Piatak and Avrashov do not accept them, suggesting that only /a/ and /ɛ/ are used in singing. Of three possible reduced sounds, [ʌ], /ə/ and [ɪ],<sup>137</sup> they reject [ʌ], using schwa, /ə/, as the only reduction for /a/ or /o/, and also [ɪ], using cardinal /i/, instead. Therefore, Piatak and Avrashov’s vowel list consists of five cardinal vowel sounds and one hard allophone (/a/, /ɛ/, /i/, /o/, /u/, and [i]), only one reduced vowel, /ə/, and the glide, [j].<sup>138</sup> Such an over-simplified set places Piatak and Avrashov at odds with most of the authorities cited here, and it lacks some of the phonetic nuances that can help a singer sound idiomatically Russian.

Another confusing statement appears in an introductory paragraph.

Russian is also not particularly difficult because virtually every letter is pronounced, with one letter equaling one sound (see “Silent Consonants” for exceptions). Russian has no consonant clusters...that form a single sound (e.g. *sh* for [ʃ] in the English word *shoe*...).<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Richter, “Review of Piatak,” 404.

<sup>134</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias*, 1.

<sup>135</sup> Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas*, xii–xiii; Richter, *Tchaikovsky's Complete Song Texts*, ix; Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, 113, 116, 118–119, 121–122, 126.

<sup>136</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 46–50, 43–44.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 50–55; 36–37.

<sup>138</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, 2–5, 7–8, 10–14.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

Several Cyrillic letter-clusters are pronounced as single phonemes, depending upon style. The pairs -зж- and -сж- are each read as /з/, while -зш- and -сш- read as /ʃ/. The groupings of -зч-, -сч-, -сш-, -жч-, -злч- and -стч- are each read as /ʃʲ:/, in *Old Muscovite* style.<sup>140</sup> Piatak and Avrashov prefer the phonetic cluster /ʃʲtʃʲ/ (simplified to /ʃtʃ/) to /ʃʲ:/,<sup>141</sup> which reduces the number of single phonemes, due to style. These examples, though, fit into Piatak and Avrashov’s category of “silent consonants.” A less confusing rendering of their second point, though, might be to say that there is no single Russian phoneme that *requires* more than one letter in spelling, like -sh- in English — the phoneme /ʃ/ cannot be spelled with less than two letters in English (while many borrowed Germanic words spell the phoneme as -sch-).

Piatak and Avrashov’s view about certain phonemes may stand them in opposition to some fundamental rules of pronunciation in Russian. The rules of literary pronunciation state that /з/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), and /ts/ (-ц-) generally remain unpalatalized and so are unaffected by any palatalizing influences of a subsequent phoneme.<sup>142</sup> This also means that /i/ (-и-) cannot follow /з/, /ʃ/, or /ts/, therefore the [i]-allophone must, no matter how it might be spelled in Cyrillic, yet Piatak and Avrashov write:

	in general	[i]	жизнь [ʒizɲ]
<b>И и</b>	after ь	[ji]	семьи [simʲji]
	unstressed <i>and</i> after ж, ш, or ц	[i]	живой [ʒiˈvoj] <sup>143</sup>

Their assignment of “in general [i]” as the pronunciation of the letter -и- is correct, but the word *жизнь* (*life*) is transcribed using /i/. Using the usual rules, *жизнь* is transcribed as

<sup>140</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie* [*Russian Literary Pronunciation*], 138–139, 346–350.

<sup>141</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias*, 18.

<sup>142</sup> Avanesov, *RLP*, 49, 295; Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika* [*Practical Phonetics*], 43–45; Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 35–36; 108; Boyanus, *Manual of Russian Pronunciation*, 22–23, 45–46; Belov, *Libretti*, xxiii; Sheil, *Singer’s Manual*, 125.

<sup>143</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, 3.

/ʒizʲnʲ/, with the [i]-allophone. Piatak and Avrashov seem not to agree with this fundamental rule, so their transcriptions are consistently incorrect under these circumstances. Oddly, the letter -и- in the unstressed position, in the word *живой* (*living* — *adj.*), is transcribed as the allophone [ɪ], as if stress makes a difference, when it does not.

Generally, Piatak and Avrashov subscribe to *ikanye*, but they promote an interesting exception:

<b>Е е</b>	part of an unstressed declensional suffix		
	and after ь, ъ, or another vowel	[jə]	чудное [tʃud nə jə]
	part of an unstressed declensional suffix		
	but not after ь, ъ, or another vowel	[ə]	голубке [ga 'lup kə] <sup>144</sup>

Under *ikanye* rules, the letter -е- in an unstressed syllable is usually read as [ɪ] or [jɪ], including when final, but the above exception of an “unstressed declensional suffix” seems to come from an older style of *OM* pronunciation.<sup>145</sup> Belov’s transcriptions often display a tendency to read final -е- with a reconstituted pronunciation of /ɛ/–/jɛ/ or /e/–/je/.<sup>146</sup> Richter does not subscribe to any vowel reduction or assimilation (with the exception of unstressed /o/ and the suffix -ий), and so ends up reading unstressed, final -е- the same way as Belov. Walters applies *ikanye* pronunciation to the letter -е- in unstressed positions.<sup>147</sup> Jones and Ward favor it, as well,<sup>148</sup> but note that “many pronounce” certain words that end in -е- with /ə/, instead of a form of /i/.<sup>149</sup> Boyanus is similar to Jones and Ward.<sup>150</sup> On the other hand,

<sup>144</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias*, 3.

<sup>145</sup> Comrie, Stone and Polinsky, *The Russian Language*, 56–59.

<sup>146</sup> Belov, *Libretti of Russian Opera*, 136–138. These pages encompass the transcription of Boris’s “I have achieved power” aria from Act II of Musorgsky’s *Boris Godunov*. There are many examples of unstressed, -е- ending nouns and adjectives in this piece.

<sup>147</sup> Sheil, *Singer’s Manual*, 124–125.

<sup>148</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 194–197.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 196 n.1.

<sup>150</sup> Boyanus, *Manual of Russian Pronunciation*, 60–61, 63–67.

Piatak and Avrashov's position is in agreement with Avanesov and Bryzgunova,<sup>151</sup> both leading authorities in the phonetics of Russian speech. Considering the position of Belov, Richter and Walters on this subject, it could be suggested that the older style is giving way to a newer one, and that Piatak and Avrashov's exception is no longer necessary. The following guide applies a combination of Walters and Belov. At more rapid tempos, *ikanye* is preferred, but when tempos slow or durations increase, it is suggested that the singer reconstitute most unstressed vowels to their unreduced form, including in the pronunciation of written final -e-.

In one case, Piatak and Avrashov take *ikanye* a little too far:

Ӣ ӣ as the vanish vowel of a diphthong [i] той [toi]<sup>152</sup>

They discuss this topic more deeply in a section entitled “Diphthongs and the Vowel ӣ,” in which all the examples display the use of /i/, instead of /j/.<sup>153</sup> Most accurately, the Cyrillic letter -ӣ- should be transcribed into IPA using the symbol /j/. The j-glide is a form of the /i/ vowel, and can sound much like /i/ when internal to a word, but when ending a word, the glide should include a slight voiced release (like a “buzzing”) as the tongue creates an affricate with the hard palate, and it must always be short — not sustained.<sup>154</sup> The glide at the end of a word should be treated as it is in French with words such as *travail* (*work*) /tra 'vaj/ and *soleil* (*sun*) /sɔ 'lɛj/. Piatak and Avrashov's examples would be more properly transcribed as /toj/, /'tʃɑj kəj/, and /ɑ 'tʃej/. The greatest problem with transcribing -ӣ- as an /i/-vowel, albeit the “vanishing vowel of a diphthong,” is the tendency of singers to sustain

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<sup>151</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie* [*Russian Literary Pronunciation*], 69–72, 157; Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika* [*Practical Phonetics*], 138–139, 150 (chart).

<sup>152</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias*, 3.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 13–14.

<sup>154</sup> Avanesov, *RLP*, 42–43, 90; Bryzgunova, 125–127; Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 71–73, 74–75; Boyanus, *Manual of Russian Pronunciation*, 55; Belov, *Libretti*, xxiii; Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, 126; and Richter, *Tchaikovsky's Complete Song Texts*, passim.

the weaker vowel of such diphthongs at slower tempi, often giving the two sounds near equal value. This is commonly heard in the singing of Italian with such words as *mai* (/ma:i/*never*). This kind of equaling out of a diphthong is simply unacceptable in Russian, so using the symbol /j/ becomes a necessity.

Also, Piatak and Avrashov seem to prefer to use an /i/-vowel (or /ji/ cluster) for *ikanye* purposes with the letters -е- and -я- in unstressed positions. The cited authorities of spoken Russian — Avanesov, Bryzgunova, Jones and Ward, and Boyanus — prefer the [ɪ]-allophone (Avanesov and Bryzgunova use the symbol [i̯], while Jones/Ward and Boyanus use [ɪ]) for unstressed, *ikanye* vowels (except in an interpalatal position, when the /i/-phoneme is used). The authorities on lyric diction display a spectrum of approaches from no *ikanye* (Richter) to using [ɪ] (Walters) to a unique mix (Belov). In the following guide, the [ɪ]-allophone is preferred when *ikanye* cases are sung in a faster tempo or rhythm, while, at slower tempi or rhythms, a process of vowel reconstitution is promoted.

Piatak and Avrashov accept schwa, /ə/, as the only reduced vowel sound, risking the problems already enumerated,<sup>155</sup> but several other issues arise over the rest of the detailed development of their guide. First, of a number of examples, Piatak and Avrashov write:

In Russian, [ɪ] is also pronounced with the tongue forward, but the sound is produced in the back of the mouth and feels guttural. The softened version of [ɪ], [i̯] ... , more closely resembles the English pronunciation of *l*. The [ɾ] in Russian is flipped (but never rolled), as in Italian.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias*, 7.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

The first objection is to Piatak and Avrashov's application of the IPA symbol /l/ for Russian velar -l-, on the same grounds as discussed in the Richter critique. Further concerns are found in the next statements: "the softened version...[l̥]...more closely resembles the English pronunciation of /l.../" and "The [r] in Russian is flipped (but never rolled)..." English /l/ is rarely palatalized, not even in words like "million," often used to exemplify palatalized /l/. Words such as "ludicrous" or "lute" come close to real palatalization of the /l/-phoneme, only if the speaker uses the highly refined diction that is often heard on the classical stage. Therefore, Russian palatalized /l/ does not really resemble a normal, English /l/. It does, though, somewhat resemble the Italian, palatal lateral affricative /l̥/-allophone that occurs in the consonant cluster -gl-, as in *figlio* (son) /'fi ʎo/. This, too, is only an approximation, but the resulting sound is more like the Russian palatalized /l/, than is a regular, English /l/. As a side issue, the example words for the two /l/ varieties are reversed relative to the IPA symbols given, potentially causing confusion for the reader. Piatak and Avrashov have printed:

[l̥] million      [l] laugh<sup>157</sup>

when it should be:

[l] laugh      [l̥] million

The idea that Russian /r/ is never rolled is also incorrect. It is true that /r/, within a Russian word, is flipped (*tapped*), rather than rolled (*trilled*), but initial /r/ is trilled, somewhat like Italian, but the duration in Russian is shorter. Also, final /r/, in Russian, is

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<sup>157</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias*, 8.

actually trilled longer than initial /r/, and initial or final /r/ (even intervocalic /r/ — Belov) may be trilled a little longer for artistic, dramatic, or emphatic reasons.<sup>158</sup>

As stated earlier, Piatak and Avrashov prefer the Cyrillic letter -и- to be read as /ʃtʃ/, (Piatak and Avrashov give the example of the sound produced by the ligature of “fresh cheese”).<sup>159</sup> The reasoning is similar to a discussion in Belov, but the conclusion is opposite:

Piatak and Avrashov:

The pronunciation of the letter и depends on the date the poem was written and the region of the Soviet Union [the text was published in 1991 — the Soviet Union was not yet fully dissolved] in which the poet resided. The generally accepted pronunciation of и currently is [ʃ:]; that is, a long [ʃ] with the middle part of the tongue raised towards the hard palate. The songs of Prokofiev contain this pronunciation. However, for most of the songs you will sing, the correct sound is [ʃtʃ], since the poems predate general acceptance of the current sound. The cluster [ʃtʃ] is also currently the standard pronunciation in Leningrad [now “St. Petersburg”].<sup>160</sup>

Belov:

The sound of the letter и underwent a certain transformation during the last century. It is historic fact that in the 1800’s this letter was pronounced as a combination of the soft sounds [ʃ] and [tʃ], that is [ʃtʃ]. The contemporary Moscow dialect norm, however, is to pronounce и as an elongated softened form of [ʃ], that is [ʃ:]. You can still hear a [ʃtʃ] in the speech of some educated Petersburgians or the Russian émigrés in America and Western Europe. Because the [ʃtʃ] pronunciation sounds rather unnatural to most Russians, it is recommended that this letter be pronounced the modern way.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 176–177; Boyanus, *Manual of Russian Pronunciation*, 11; Belov, *Libretti*, xvi; and Sheil, *Singer's Manual*, 138.

<sup>159</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias*, 7.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>161</sup> Belov, *Libretti*, xxvii.

As explained in the Belov critique, this view of historical phonology is inaccurate. The Muscovite /ʃʲʃʲ/ reading pronunciation of -ш- (also printed as, /ʃʲ:/, /ʃ̣:/, or /ʃ̣ʃ̣/) can be traced as far back as the seventeenth century, and the prevalence of this fashion can be demonstrated from the second half of the eighteenth century into the early part of the twentieth century.<sup>162</sup> The bulk of Russian vocal literature falls within this time frame, when /ʃʲʃʲ/ was the more fashionable pronunciation. Today, the two pronunciations split fairly evenly across the Russian-speaking population.<sup>163</sup>

Piatak and Avrashov's transcription of -ш-, /ʃ:/ or /ʃtʃ/, lacks any diacritic for palatalization, either *Palatal Hook* or *Superscript j*. As Belov describes in the above quote, /ʃ/ should be palatalized, that is, /ʃ̣/, whether as the elongated, single phoneme or the first element of the cluster. This is noticeably different from the unpalatalized phoneme that is associated with the Cyrillic letter -ш-, /ʃ/. In Russian, the /tʃ/ portion of the clustered sound is intrinsically palatalized,<sup>164</sup> but English speakers can produce both an unpalatalized and a palatalized version of the /tʃ/-phoneme (e.g. *chalk* /tʃɔk/ vs. *cheat* /tʃʲit/). Therefore, it is advisable that both elements of the cluster indicate palatalization — /ʃʲtʃʲ/, or /ʃ̣tʃ̣/ in *Palatal Hook* font. This is what is found in Jones and Ward (their font prints as /ʃ̣tʃ̣/).<sup>165</sup> Avanesov and Bryzgunova recognize hard variants of /ʃ:/ and /ʃtʃ/, but consider them non-orthoepical, especially Bryzgunova, who presents the hard pronunciations as flawed and in need of

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<sup>162</sup> Pennington, *Grigorii Kotoshikhin: O Rossii V Tsarstovaniye Alekseya Mikhailovicha [About Russia under the Reign of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich]*, 205; Vinokur, *The Russian Language*, 19, 82–84; Vlasto, *Linguistic History of Russia*, 68; Comrie, Stone and Polinsky, *The Russian Language*, 33.

<sup>163</sup> Comrie, Stone and Polinsky, *The Russian Language*, 33–35.

<sup>164</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 154 §19.29; Boyanus, *Russian Pronunciation*, 24 §3.

<sup>165</sup> Jones and Ward, 139–140 §18.89.

correction.<sup>166</sup> If a singer were to sing this cluster without palatalization, it would generally be considered a mistake by native Russian speakers.

On a related subject, Piatak and Avrashov cover certain consonant clusters that have different pronunciations from those suggested by their orthography (e.g. -сж- and -зж- are each read as /з:/).<sup>167</sup> They do not, though, seem to consider -сч- and -зч- as clusters of such kind. Piatak and Avrashov consistently transcribe -сч- and -зч- as /stʃ/,<sup>168</sup> while all other cited authorities transcribe these clusters as either /ʃʲtʃʲ/ or /ʃʲtʃʲ/, as if they were spelled with the letter -ш-.<sup>169</sup>

Piatak and Avrashov discuss the Russian vowel /i/ (-и-) and the consonant /x/ (-х-) in the section entitled “The Two Russian Sounds Not in English.”<sup>170</sup> Their approach to /x/ is fine, but their paragraphs on /i/ are rather confusing. They do not really describe how to articulate the vowel except at the end of the paragraphs on the subject, but the directions are vocally unhelpful:

It is best to think of and sing the vowel [i] as a guttural form of [i], that is, lower the back of the tongue while you sing [i].<sup>171</sup>

Piatak and Avrashov’s description is not really phonologically or physiologically accurate. While it is true that some Russians may speak with a rather guttural (technically, *pharyngeal*)

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<sup>166</sup> Avanesov, *Russkaya Literaturnaya I Dialektnaya Fonetika* [*Russian Literary and Dialectal Phonetics*], 172–174; Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika* [*Practical Phonetics*], 110–113.

<sup>167</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias*, 17–18.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 12, 18, and passim (in transcriptions).

<sup>169</sup> Avanesov, *RLP*, 138–139; Bryzgunova, 113; Jones and Ward, 203–204; Boyanus, 34; Belov, *Libretti*, xxviii; Sheil, *Singer’s Manual*, 144; Richter, *Tchaikovsky’s Complete Song Texts*, passim (in transcriptions).

<sup>170</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, 8–9.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

version of [i],<sup>172</sup> the sung version of the vowel (as well as the orthoepically spoken version) is velarized, as discussed in detail in the Belov critique.

One of Piatak and Avrashov's more interesting tools is the use of margin notes. Most of them provide details and trivia that are often overlooked by other texts. For example:

*To open a vowel sound, slightly lower either the jaw or the tongue.*<sup>173</sup>

*In Russian the sound for x is never [ç], as in "ich" [ɪç] or "Küche" [күçə] (sic – [күçə]).*<sup>174</sup>

These are generally helpful, but a few are a little confusing, such as:

*Russian has no secondary stressed syllables.*<sup>175</sup>

This is generally correct, but it is incomplete, since Russian does have compound words that maintain the stresses of each individual word producing a *de facto* secondary stress. Two common examples are:

четырёхкратный /tʃɪ tɪ ˌrʲox ˈkrat nɪj/ fourfold; quadruple.

темнозелёный /tʲɪm nɐ zʲɪ ˈlʲo nɪj/ dark-green.

Other cases of secondary stress in Russian can include words created using a separable prefix and words of foreign origin. There can even be words with triple stress.<sup>176</sup> Of course, these latter types of words are rare and would not be expected to be encountered in opera or art song.

<sup>172</sup> Bolla, *Conspectus*, 66.

<sup>173</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, 7.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>176</sup> R. I. Avanesov, *Modern Russian Stress*, translated by D. Buckley, edited by C. V. James, *Pergamon Oxford Russian Series* (Oxford: Pergamon Press Ltd., 1964), 71–78.

Then another note is confusing, because it is incomplete:

*Very occasionally ë will be written ѣ in Old Russian...*<sup>177</sup>

The letter -ѣ- became -e- and never represented -ë-.<sup>178</sup> If -ѣ- were to be found printed in a place where the letter -ë- should be, then it would simply be an error (and so it should happen only “very occasionally”). It would have been more accurate and helpful for Piatak and Avrashov to convey this nuance. Also, as Richter points out in his review, the use of the term “Old Russian” is incorrect. Old Russian is a very specific linguistic term that refers to a historical Slavic, root language that gave rise to several of the modern Slavic languages including Russian and Ukrainian.<sup>179</sup> Piatak and Avrashov should have presented their points in terms of “pre-revolutionary” Russian.

Piatak and Avrashov do have a few unique sections at the end of their primer. First, the section entitled “Using a Russian Dictionary” covers the changes in Cyrillic orthography from pre-revolutionary printing to modern day, in more detail, and how to decode the changes, in order to find the correct word in a modern Russian-English dictionary. The occasional advantages (and some problems) in using a pre-revolutionary dictionary, if one can be acquired, is also discussed.<sup>180</sup> The next section, “Declensions and Conjugations in the Russian Language,” is very helpful in recognizing the different forms that root words can take. Piatak and Avrashov list the noun, pronoun and adjective declensions and discuss certain common diminutive forms. They then deal with the verbal conjugational endings, as well as the most common, verbal, root-stem morphologies.

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<sup>177</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias*, 20.

<sup>178</sup> Vinokur, *The Russian Language: A Brief History*, 41–42; Vlasto, *A Linguistic History of Russia*, 48–50; Matthews, *Structure and Development of Russian*, 113.

<sup>179</sup> Richter, *Review: Russian Songs and Arias*, 404.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 19–20.

Piatak and Avrashov end the primer discussing the pitfalls of misreading song texts, because the word underlay can often be overly compact, making separate particles look as if they are part of a word, as well as causing certain letter combinations to look like other letters (Piatak and Avrashov cite *ю*, which is *ь ю*, being mistaken for *ь о*). They also show how Russian music publishers use underscores ( *\_* ) the way American publishers use hyphens, while Russians use hyphens to extend words over long notes, the way Americans use underscores.<sup>181</sup>

Though the publication is somewhat outdated, Piatak and Avrashov's *Russian Songs and Arias* is still the only text that covers Russian lyric diction in some detail and transcribes into IPA the most popular and important Russian art songs and arias. My experience shows, though, that the errors and misleading information in the diction guide and transcriptions of this anthology have caused singers to sound non-idiomatic and even mispronounce Russian in performance.

There are three openly available dissertations incorporating Russian lyric diction. Emilio Pons' "The Singer's Russian: a guide to the Russian operatic repertoire through a collection of texts of opera arias for all voice types, with phonetic transcriptions, word-for-word and idiomatic English" (Dissertation, Indiana University, 2008) is cut from similar cloth as Belov, Piatak and Avrashov, and Richter. His unique element involves organizing the chosen Russian arias by voice type (Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone and Bass) rather than by opera or composer. Pons' section on Russian lyric diction is similar to Belov's guide, more conceptual than immediately practical, but it is a bit more comprehensive.

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<sup>181</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias*, 20–22.

Pons received his doctorate from Indiana University in 2008. His mentor in Russian diction was Laurence Richter, covered earlier in the literature survey. Pons also was a young artist with the Marinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, Russia for the 2005-2006 season (as well as the Marinsky's summer program in Finland over the summers of 2004 and 2005), where he coached with Larissa Gergieva,<sup>182</sup> therefore his work carries some authority. At the time of writing, Pons' dissertation was unavailable through the Indiana University library, but I was able to obtain an electronic copy through the generosity of Dr. Pons, after contacting him through his website.

The dissertation consists of twelve chapters and a bibliography. While the last five chapters contain the transcriptions and translations of Russian arias grouped by voice type, it is the first seven which contain Pons' contribution to the study of Russian lyric diction. In actuality, the first three chapters include a general introduction and two chapters discussing broader issues of lyric diction and IPA usage. The fourth chapter lays out a brief history of the Russian language, then comments on the idiosyncrasies of Pons' own transcription method, as well as phonetics, in general. I should note that the copy of Pons' dissertation sent to me (what seems to be a scan of his actual dissertation in pdf format) is strangely lacking in citations, except for a few direct quotes, and most of his footnotes are only expository. This is most disturbing when Pons covers the history of the Russian language. The information is accurate, but it is neither his original research nor is it common knowledge, so the citation of his sources would generally be expected. Also, Pons presents some wonderful information on

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<sup>182</sup> Emilio Pons, "The Singer's Russian: a guide to the Russian operatic repertoire through a collection of texts of opera arias for all voice types, with phonetic transcriptions, word-for-word and idiomatic English," dissertation (Indiana University, 2008), iii-iv; "Emilio Pons, tenor," at [http://www.emiliopons.com/English/Downloads\\_files/Resume\\_\(English\)\\_Apr\\_2011.pdf](http://www.emiliopons.com/English/Downloads_files/Resume_(English)_Apr_2011.pdf) [last modified April, 2011, last accessed January 25, 2012].

the phonological history of the adjectival endings -гий, -кий and -хий, for which I would like to have the original source(s), but alas, no citation.<sup>183</sup> Such lack also made verification of any unique, debatable or questionable statements in the rest of his work essentially impossible.

Chapters 5 through 7 comprise a 34 page exposition on Russian lyric diction. Specifically, Chapter 5 covers Russian consonants, Chapter 6, the vowels, and Chapter 7, other topics including double consonants, consonant clusters, prepositions and negative particles, special suffixes, and the Russian orthographic reforms. As mentioned earlier, Pons' information on Russian diction is more conceptual than practical and is oriented toward helping the singer make sense of his transcriptions in Chapters 8-12. He has very few exercises for practicing difficult articulations, and Pons rarely describes idiomatic Russian articulatory formations in detail. For example, Pons makes no mention of the mixed articulation of Russian /o/, even while he discusses the spectrum of variance from /o/ to /ɔ/.<sup>184</sup> Also, he does not try to describe how to articulate the Russian vowel most alien to English speakers, that of /i/, though he spends three pages discussing detailed elements of Russian linguistic theory in regards to the two Russian /i/-allophones, /i/ and /i/.<sup>185</sup> Pons describes the articulation of only one Russian phoneme — the Russian /ʎ/, and the only exercise given to help the Anglophone singer is directly quoted from Laurence Richter's Russian diction primer found in his *Complete Song Texts* series.<sup>186</sup> Another interesting quirk of Pons's guide, by his own admission, is that all of his phonetic and phonological detail is presented in terms of Russian spoken pronunciation. Pons explains that, since Russian speech

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<sup>183</sup> Pons, "The Singer's Russian," 18, 55.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 46–48.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 30–31.

uses more varied phonemes than its stage diction, understanding the details of Russian phonology should be made more thorough.<sup>187</sup> What Pons rarely makes clear is how Russian lyric diction differs from the spoken, such as which elements are changed or dropped. I assume the difference is illuminated in studying the transcriptions, but such an approach may make his guide quite confusing at first blush.

In hindsight, I realize that I understood and agreed with most of Pons' Russian diction exposé, because I have developed my own expertise in the field. I, therefore, strongly question whether even a well-trained singer, confident in the usual lyric dictions and the IPA, would understand the technical jargon and advanced concepts of Russian phonetics and phonology Pons presents. I tend to believe that a more intermediate singer/student would be effectively lost in the theories and might be discouraged from attempting to sing in Russian all together. Sung Russian is a matter of advanced diction, for sure, but a much more practical approach is possible than that of Pons. His transcription work may well be extremely helpful, but his guide to Russian diction may be too esoteric for most singers.

Sherri Moore Weiler's "Solving Counterproductive Tensions Induced by Russian Diction in American Singers" (Dissertation, Florida State University, 2004) is a pedagogical treatise focusing on the technical vocal problems that befall singers when attempting to reproduce what they think are Russian phonemes (often too pharyngeally formed). Weiler offers links to her abstract and dissertation at <http://www.sherriweiler.com/id13.html> [last updated Sept., 2009]. Her web site presently (March, 2012) ranks as the most relevant web page for the search query "Russian diction," using several popular internet search engines. The prominence and accessibility of Weiler's dissertation is unfortunate, in this case, as her

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<sup>187</sup> Pons, "The Singer's Russian," 20.

scholarship is of such low rigor and quality that an unwitting singer could come away from the text with greater vocal tension, rather than less, as well as incorrect Russian pronunciation. Space will not be devoted to Weiler's work beyond revealing that her dissertation is poorly sourced (the vast majority of Weiler's factual statements come almost verbatim from Piatak and Avrashov, and she refers several times to Wikipedia articles as primary sources), she has a tendency to paraphrase authoritative source material with such vague citation, that she often borders upon plagiarism, and she so lacks literacy in the Russian language, that she produces embarrassing mistranslations and misinterpretations of Russian source material to the point of reversing the original intent of several quoted passages. Weiler's dissertation should be avoided.

Rose Michelle Mills-Bello's "Russian Songs and Arias: an American Singer's Glasnost" (Dissertation, University of Maryland College Park, 1998), can be found in ProQuest under the database for Interdisciplinary Dissertations and Theses (query: Russian Diction), but not through public, web-based, search engines. It falls into the category of annotated transcriptions, similar to Belov, Richter, and Piatak and Avrashov, but really focuses on introducing some of the great standards of Russian art song into the recital repertoire of American singers. I chose not to analyze Ms. Mills-Bellos' work, because her project only cursorily involved Russian diction, and her approach — using old-fashioned, dictionary-style symbols for phonetic transcription, for example: ЛЮБЛЮ /lʲu 'bʲlʲu/ (I love) transcribed as "lyoo-blyoo" — is not relevant to the work here.

## CHAPTER 2

A Practical Guide to Russian Lyric Diction

with Annotations

## Preface

This guide is designed to help singers, coaches, and teachers transform the Cyrillic texts of Russian songs and arias into the sounds of Russian lyric diction. The International Phonetic Alphabet (the IPA) aids in this goal, applying the most common phonetic transcription conventions. Detailed explanations and ample examples help to clarify, when the Russian sounds or processes of articulation have no analogues to the lyric diction of Italian, French, German, or American English. It is assumed that the reader is familiar with symbols of the IPA, the sounds they represent, and the general rules of lyric diction, but lesser known IPA symbols and those specific to Russian are fully covered in context. Those who need a review of the IPA may turn to the chart in Appendix A.

Singers who may or may not be familiar with Russian can benefit from this guide, but it must be stressed that the formal study of Russian is imperative to achieve the fullest artistic expression in the language, as well as the quickest preparation and memorization. Whether one studies Russian or not, listening to native Russian speakers and singers is indispensable. Today, there are myriad ways to hear fine native singers, actors, and others sing or speak Russian with clear, beautiful, lyric or stage diction. A list of exemplary Russian singers on audio and video recordings is presented in Appendix M, as a good start to a student's listening.

This text gradually introduces the sounds of Russian and the Cyrillic alphabet. The Russian speech sounds are organized into two chapters, the *Vowels* and the *Consonants*. Each chapter leads from the most familiar phonemes and intuitive Cyrillic letters to the most difficult and unusual, including the consonant clusters, simple to complex. The chapter on

consonants also includes a detailed discussion of the soft (-ь-) and hard (-Ъ-) signs, which often indicate some difference in a word's pronunciation and may also affect its meaning.

As the next chapters advance in number, so do their topics advance in complexity. The topics trend from palatalization to assimilation as applied to final consonants, consonant clusters, and vowels to syllabic stress, patterns of shifting stress, vowel reduction and reconstitution to unusual grammatical forms and common pronunciation exceptions. The concluding chapter covers historical, political and social issues that have affected Russian spelling and pronunciation, and what those sounds and/or spellings are today. Two final essays cover the stylistic variants of Russian diction and the choral singing of modern Russian. The Appendices contain charts, lists, and discussions about items or issues encountered in the study of Russian vocal literature, including obsolete Cyrillic letters, the different printed typefaces, different styles of the phonetic transcription of Russian, pronunciation of the names of several famous Russian composers, bibliographies of helpful texts, and quick reference guides to the IPA, the Cyrillic alphabet, and pronunciation rules. With this guide in hand, it is hoped that every singer shall possess the necessary tools to prepare to sing in Russian beautifully.

## Preliminaries

### Approach and Layout of the Guide

In this guide, each Russian speech sound is presented as an anchor for learning the corresponding letter of the Cyrillic alphabet. In classical phonology, an individual speech sound is called a *phoneme* /'fo:ʊ ni:m/, while a contextual variant of a phoneme is called an *allophone* /'æ lə ɹfo:ʊn/. Working definitions of these terms, as well as detailed discussions with examples, are presented further on. Generally, this text adheres to the accurate use of the IPA, modern phonetic practices, and a classical structuralist approach<sup>188</sup> to phonological theory, which integrates well with practical phonetics. Unorthodox approaches to IPA usage and phonological concepts are engaged at times for reasons that are explained in context.

Isolated phonemes and transcriptions of words or phrases are printed within virgules, / /, while representations of allophones are framed by brackets, [ ]. Individual orthographic letters, Cyrillic or Roman, are bounded by hyphens (e.g., -л- or -d-), example words within sentences are italicized, when Roman, or plainly printed, when Cyrillic (e.g., *good* or xopomy), and in-sentence translations of foreign words are placed within parentheses [e.g., xopomy (*good*)]. Each Russian phoneme or allophone is introduced using an IPA symbol followed by the different Cyrillic letters associated with the sound and mention of any special rules. In the descriptions, the phonemes or allophones are treated phonetically, phonologically, and orthographically. This means that the physiological formation of the sound is described, first, then any abstract pronunciation rules for the sound in context are

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<sup>188</sup> Structuralism is generally associated with what is called the Prague School of phonology founded in the 1920s by Vilém Mathesius and included Roman Jakobson and Nicolai S. Trubetzkoy, but the foundation was set by the work of Ferdinand de Saussure in the late nineteenth century. See, Eli Fischer-Jørgensen, *Trends in Phonological Theory*, translated by Niels Davidsen-Nielsen (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1975), 10-49.

given, and finally, how Cyrillic letters represent the pronunciation rules is discussed (often called *reading rules*<sup>189</sup>). When possible, examples related to Italian, French, German, and/or American English pronunciation are presented, followed by Russian examples. Certain pronunciation variants exist in Russian, based upon regional or artistic fashions that rival the standard pronunciation. Such *styles* are discussed under individual phonemes and allophones.

Chapter 6 ends with a chart that lists each Cyrillic letter with its different associated sounds in Russian alphabetical order, and Appendix D lists each sound with its possible Cyrillic letters. It is strongly recommended that the chapters and exercises herein be studied before attempting to use these particular charts. They are only reminders for those who already understand the Russian sounds and the Cyrillic letters, and could otherwise be confusing, out of context.

#### On the International Phonetic Alphabet of 1993 (Revised 1996 and 1999)

Scanning through the available literature on Russian lyric diction, including the transcription resources, a singer encounters a few different alphabets of phonetic symbols. This guide may add to the confusion, but I wish to adopt stricter IPA usage for the sake of consistency. The set of symbols used in this text are those agreed upon for phonetic transcription by the International Phonetic Association (also “the IPA”) at the 1989 Convention in Kiel, Germany (revised and ratified in 1993, 1996, and 1999). Significantly for phonetic transcribers of Russian, the IPA symbol chart of 1989 lacks the specialized *Palatal Hook* consonant symbols representing the palatalized consonant phonemes (e.g. /b̟/,

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<sup>189</sup> R. I. Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie: Uchebnoe Posobie Dlya Studentov Pedagogicheskikh Institutov* [*Russian Literary Pronunciation: An Instructional Textbook for the Students of Pedagogical Institutes*], 5th ed. (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1972), 211–213; Bruce L. Derwing and Tom M. S. Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian: A Systemic Approach to Russian Spelling and Pronunciation* (Columbus: Slavica Publishers, 1980), 4–5.

/d/, /f/, /k/, etc). The IPA membership prefers the [ʲ] superscript in a /consonant+ʲ/ form to depict the palatalization of a given consonant (e.g. /bʲ/, /dʲ/, /fʲ/, /kʲ/, etc.). The Association rejected the *Palatal Hook* symbols, because they constituted a number of new symbols that could be obviated by adding the single diacritic, [ʲ], to any existing consonant symbol.<sup>190</sup> The *Palatal Hook* symbols are economical for commercial publishing, but representing consonantal palatalization with *Superscript j* is much simpler for personal, hand-written transcriptions — one goal of this guide.

The orthodox application of the revised IPA symbols also allows for third-party verification. If a singer possesses a transcription of a Russian piece using the IPA, then any reference source covering how those symbols are articulated can help the singer at least approximate the speech sounds of Russian. Descriptions of some of the phonemes are adjusted to achieve a more idiomatically Russian accent, but the chosen symbols come close to the Russian phonemes, even without customization. To address transcription economy, a kind of shorthand for representing palatalization across consonant clusters in personal transcriptions is suggested in Appendix J. In contrast, the guide's formal transcriptions use the /consonant+ʲ/ form. Appendix C charts the different styles of phonetic symbols one might encounter in published transcriptions or transcription systems for Russian vocal literature.

### Russian Lyric Diction versus Speech Pronunciation and IPA Transcription

Singers are often trained to alter pronunciation for consistency of resonance and greater beauty of tone. This adjustment in pronunciation is called *lyric diction* and works

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<sup>190</sup> International Phonetic Association, "Report on the 1989 Kiel Convention," *Journal of the International Phonetic Association* 19, no. 2 (1989), 67–72; Geoffrey K. Pullum, and William A. Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, second ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 303–306.

hand-in-hand with good vocal technique to increase the acoustical resonance of the voice and so the understandability of language over greater distances. Proper technique, then, frees the larynx, pharynx, tongue, jaw, and lips of unnecessary tension and improves the performer's ability to use lyric diction for greater understandability. Of course, absolute purity of diction may give way to the physiological relaxation necessary for accurate pitch and quality of tone at the very extremes of the vocal range.

Conversational speech, on the other hand, permits the inefficiencies of regional accents, including extra diphthongs and triphthongs, the dropping (*deletion*) of many consonants, and the reduction of most unstressed vowels. One of the more well known examples of this effect in American English is the short conversation that sounds like “Jeet? Nah, Joo?” but actually represents the exchange, “Did you eat? No, did you?” Regionalisms and colloquialisms may diminish broader intelligibility, but they convey the diversity of origin and culture that is often considered the heart and soul of a nation's people.

The Russian language is as diverse of regional accent as American English. Modern Russian has three, main accents: the southern; the central or transitional; and the northern, each of which can be broken into a number of localized variants.<sup>191</sup> There also are formal delineations of pronunciation, independent of region, based upon a hierarchy of style, which includes Церковное произношение [Church pronunciation] and Литературное произношение [Literary pronunciation]. Church pronunciation is essentially the stylistic opposite of conversational pronunciation. In Church style (essentially that of Russian Church Slavonic), every letter has one sound, including *myagkiĭ znak* (-ь-) and *tvoridyĭ znak* (-ъ-),

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<sup>191</sup> G. O. Vinokur, *The Russian Language: A Brief History*, translated by Mary A. Forsyth and edited by James Forsyth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 10–20; A. P. Vlasto, *A Linguistic History of Russia to the End of the Eighteen Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) 302–311, 323–326, 333–335.

and each vowel sounds its value without any reduction or assimilation.<sup>192</sup> Conversational speech, in contrast, uses all forms of reduction, assimilation, deletion, voicing, and devoicing for the sake of rapidity and casualness. Russian conversational speech displays the full colors of regional accent.

When singing Russian, the pronunciation traditions generally follow the central Russian accent, termed *Old Muscovite*, which became the basis for the pronunciation of *literaturnyĭ* (*literary*) Russian and the model for stage oration and singing. Literary pronunciation is the Russian equivalent of standard, academic pronunciation. It generally displays *akanye* and mostly *ikanye* traditions. *Akanye* is the Russian accent in which the /o/-phoneme is reduced to /a/ (or /ʌ/ or /ə/) in an unstressed position and, in the practice of *ikanye*, /a/ or /ja/ reduce to /ɪ/ or /jɪ/, respectively, and /ɛ/, /jɛ/, /e/, or /je/ reduce to /i/, /ji/, /i/, or /ji/. Literary pronunciation also allows for further vowel reduction (e. g. remotely unstressed /a/ and /o/ reduce to either /ʌ/ or /ə/) but not as much as conversational pronunciation.<sup>193</sup> There is also *Сценическое произношение* [Stage diction], used by actors, which some linguists consider a strict preservation of the historical, *Old Muscovite* accent, which is more traditional than Literary pronunciation.<sup>194</sup>

Russian lyric diction, like stage diction, includes *Old Muscovite* traditions, but leans a bit more toward modern literary pronunciation. Formal diction provides for more defined and

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<sup>192</sup> Vlasto, *Linguistic History of Russia*, 10–22; Vladimir Morosan, “RUSSICA™ Transliteration System,” found at <http://www.musicarussica.com/file.lasso?file=translit.htm> [Accessed March 6, 2012].

<sup>193</sup> Vinokur, *Russian Language*, 108–138; Vlasto, 377–393; V. V. Vinogradov, *The History of the Russian Literary Language from the Seventeenth Century to the Nineteenth: A Condensed Adaptation into English with Introduction by Lawrence L. Thomas*, edited by Lawrence L. Thomas and Francis J. Whitfield (Madison: The University of Wisconsin, 1969), 86–126, 237–268; Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie* [Russian Literary Pronunciation], 14–16.

<sup>194</sup> S. M. Kuz'mina, senior ed., *Russkoe Stsenicheskoe Proiznoshenie* [Russian Stage Pronunciation]. (Moscow: Nauka, 1986), 5–74, 192–201, 219–226.

consistent vowels upon which to sing sustained tones. Also, due to the elongated or slow motion pronunciation that often occurs in singing, lyric diction tends to *reconstitute* normally reduced vowels into their unreduced state. This means, for example, that the pronunciation of the Cyrillic letter -я-, in an initial but unstressed position — usually reduced from /a/ or /ja/ to /ɪ/ or /jɪ/, under *ikanye* rules — may be reconstituted to /a/ or /ja/ at a slower tempo.

In Russian lyric diction, certain rules of pronunciation are followed that are not true for Russian conversational speech. All of the phonetic (IPA) transcriptions in this guide reflect the pronunciation of sung Russian, as opposed to conversational speech, though mention is made of the differences from time to time. More conversational pronunciation may be suggested for *parlando*-style phrases or recitative. Such suggestions and pertinent examples are presented within the context of discussing the individual phonemes.

#### A Note about Syllabic Stress

Chapter 7 treats syllabic stress in more detail, but a basic explanation is needed to understand certain references and notes in the guide. Russian words can have many syllables, but generally, only one syllable takes the stress (sometimes called the *tonic* syllable). There are no reliable rules to determine where the stress falls in a Russian word (that must be aided by a good Russian-English dictionary), and the rules for figuring the shifts of stress in the changing grammatical forms are complicated with many exceptions. Once the stress is determined, though, the unstressed syllables and their positions must be considered. The position of a syllable in relation to the stress often affects the vowel sound in that syllable.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> R. I. Avanesov, *Modern Russian Stress*, translated by D. Buckley, edited by C. V. James, *Pergamon Oxford Russian Series* (Oxford: Pergamon Press Ltd., 1964), 20–31, 58–61.



### Phonemes, Allophones, Features, and Assimilation: Definitions and Importance

*Assimilation* is a technical term for a phenomenon of pronunciation that is very familiar to singers and others who deal with multiple foreign languages. To understand assimilation fully, though, one must first understand the *phoneme* and the *allophone*. It is generally accepted that there are two parts to the definition of a phoneme, though some consider the two parts as separate definitions with different functions.<sup>196</sup> The first part is that a phoneme is the smallest contrasting segment of speech in a specific language which can affect meaning.<sup>197</sup> Individual vowels and consonants are phonemes, if when interchanged in a *morpheme* (usually a word), the meaning changes. For example, in English, *bit* and *bat* are clearly two different words, and phonemically they differ by one segment, the vowel sound /ɪ/ versus /æ/.<sup>198</sup> Because exchanging these sounds changes the meaning of the word, the vowel sounds are each separate phonemes, in English. The same goes for *bat* versus *bad*, in which the affecting phonemes are the consonant sounds /t/ versus /d/. The second part of the definition is that a phoneme represents a class of speech sounds, in a specific language, that share certain *distinctive features* of articulation but may differ in minor contextual features that do not influence meaning in that language.<sup>199</sup>

In phonetics and phonology, *features* are the specific articulatory elements that combine to define a phoneme or an allophone. A feature that applies to all vowels is being *sonorant*, that is, the vocal cords are engaged for the duration of the speech sound. Other

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<sup>196</sup> John Laver, *Principles of Phonetics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 41–42; Bičan, Aleš, *Phoneme in Functional and Structural Phonology* [<http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/bican/bic-001.pdf>] (Linguistica Online, September 1, 2005 [cited February 5, 2012]), pdf: 1–2.

<sup>197</sup> Laver, 41; Larry H. Small, *Fundamentals of Phonetics: A Practical Guide for Students*. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998), 13.

<sup>198</sup> For the technical minded, pairs of words contrasted by only one phoneme are termed *minimal pairs*.

<sup>199</sup> Laver, 42; Paul Clubberley, *Russian: A Linguistic Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 53.

features must combine, though, in order to differentiate one vowel from another. Such features include: the tongue being *high*, *mid*, or *low*; the tongue “arch” being *front*, *central*, or *back*; the lips being *rounded* or not; and the soft palate being down, making a vowel *nasal*, or up, making it *oral*. The constriction of air flow is a main feature of consonants and is actually labeled as *consonantal*, but the defining features include things like *labial* (made by the lips), *lateral* (air flow goes around the sides of the tongue), *coronal* (the blade of the tongue is involved), *continuant* (when an air stream keeps flowing. When air flow is disrupted, the feature is opposite to *continuant*, which can be called *stopped*). The phonological terminology for such defining features is *distinctive features*. In modern phonological theory, distinctive features come in *binary pairs*, meaning that a feature is or isn't. A sound is *sonorant* or not (*consonantal*), a vowel is *rounded* or not (*unrounded*), or a consonant is *continuant* or not (*stopped*), *voiced* or not (*unvoiced*), etc.<sup>200</sup> There are greater levels of phonological abstraction, but what is important is that phonemes and allophones are made up of and made distinctive by their articulatory features. Using the examples from above, the largest difference between /ɪ/ (*near-high*, *near-front*, and *unrounded*) and /æ/ (*near-low*, *front*, and *unrounded*) is the height of the front part of the tongue, *near-high* vs. *near-low*, respectively. The only distinctive feature that is different between /t/ (*voiceless*, *alveolar plosive*) and /d/ (*voiced*, *alveolar plosive*) is *voicing*. In other cases, a phoneme can differ in minor features in differing contexts without affecting the meaning of a word.

For example, if one considers the English words *pat* and *spat*, both written -p-'s represent the phoneme /p/ but are pronounced slightly differently when closely inspected.

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<sup>200</sup> Laver, *Principles of Phonetics*, 110-112; Iggy Roca and Wyn Johnson, *A Course in Phonology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 86-110; John Clark, Colin Yallop, and Janet Fletcher, *An Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology*, Third ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 372-379.

The /p/ in *pat* finishes with a small “explosion” of air (*unvoiced release*), which is narrowly transcribed in the IPA as [p<sup>h</sup>], while the /p/ in *spat* has no release (*unreleased stop*) and would be narrowly transcribed as [p̚]. If the /p/-phoneme is exchanged for a /k/-phoneme in the above English words, the new sounding words would be very different in meaning (effectively, *cat* and *scat*), but if the *released* [p<sup>h</sup>] of *pat* is switched for the *unreleased* [p̚] of *spat*, the word would still be easily recognized as *pat*, though a strange or foreign accent might be attributed to the odd pronunciation. In phonological terms, *allophones* are the variations of phonemes that differ in minor features due to context but do not change meaning. Using an analogy that may be familiar, the phoneme /p/ is like a species (say, dog), while the allophones [p<sup>h</sup>] and [p̚] are varieties of that species (say, poodle and retriever). Therefore, as per the second part of its definition; a phoneme represents a class of speech sounds which may encompass several allophones within a specific language.

Many phonetic alterations that are *allophonic* often go unrecognized by all but trained phoneticists, including in features such as *labialization*, *release*, *velarization* and some *palatalization*. The English words *cool* and *keel* differ in the vowel phoneme, which changes the word-meaning, but they also differ in the forms of /k/, which remain fully recognizable as varieties of the /k/-phoneme. The /k/ in *cool* is labialized due to the following, rounded /u/-phoneme. The difference can be heard by rounding the lips for /u/ and making a repeated /k/ (without any vowel sound), then spreading the lips, as for /i/, while continuing to make the isolated /k/. Obviously, this difference goes unnoticed in conversation, as it is natural for the subsequent vowel formation, but if a speaker does not round the lips enough when saying *cool*, the utterance might be unintelligible.

Most important, phonemes and allophones are language specific. What is a phoneme in English may not be in Italian, and so forth. For example, in English /ŋ/ is a phoneme (e.g. *hand*, /hænd/, versus *hanged*, /hæŋd/), but /ŋ/ is an allophone of the phoneme /n/ in Italian (e.g. *banca*, /'ban ka/, could be mispronounced as /'ban ka/ and still be understood by an Italian, though it would be recognized as incorrectly pronounced). Allophones do not change meaning, but if mistakenly used for a phoneme, meaning can be obscured. If the same foreigner above says /'se ŋo/ for the word *seno* (chest), rather than /'se no/, the Italian may be confused, as the word will sound like nonsense, due to the fact that /ŋ/ does not produce an understandable Italian word in this context. Phonemes also can have written forms that do not necessarily look like the phonetic symbol. For example, in English, the phoneme /ɔ/ can be written as -aw- in *awesome*, -augh- in *caught*, -ough- in *bought*, and -o- in *dog*. One may remember a version of the joke: “What does *ghoti* spell?” “*Fish*: -gh- from *rough*, -o- from *women*, and -ti- from *nation*.”<sup>201</sup> Also, a single written letter can represent several phonemes. In English, the letter -o- can represent the phonemes /ɑ/, /ɔ/, or /ɪ/, as well as the diphthong [o:ʊ].

*Assimilation* generally is defined as when one speech sound takes on a phonetic feature of another speech sound. It involves the second part of the definition of a phoneme, since the phenomenon can cause a phonemic change (change in the class of a phoneme), but does not affect the meaning of the containing word in context. Also, it can be purely

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<sup>201</sup> This linguistic joke is usually attributed to George Bernard Shaw, but apparently the attribution is spurious. A well-researched blog entry on the subject by the linguist Ben Zimmer can be found on the Language Log web site at <http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=81> (posted April 23, 2008, accessed March 7, 2012).

allophonic, altering a minor feature of a phoneme without changing its class.<sup>202</sup> This may all seem complicated, but a few examples of some very familiar words should help.

Using Italian as an example language, *un* (a, one) pronounced as /un/ presents the usual pronunciation of the letter -n- as /n/, but the phrase *un poco* (a little bit), pronounced as /<sub>1</sub>um 'pɔ ko/, shows how the influence of the labial /p/-phoneme causes the dental, nasal /n/-phoneme to alter to the labial, nasal /m/-phoneme. In Italian, the /m/- and the /n/-phonemes are of different classes, and the exchange of the two in other circumstances would cause a change of meaning, but within this particular context meaning is stable — a phonemic change of class without a change of meaning. *Sforzo* (effort) and *sveglia* (an alarm; [he] wakes up), on the other hand, demonstrate a different effect. Pronounced as /'sfɔr tso/, the unvoiced /f/-phoneme in *sforzo* allows the /s/-phoneme to remain unvoiced, but in *sveglia*, pronounced as /'zve λa/, the voiced /v/-phoneme influences the unvoiced /s/-phoneme to become its voiced allophone, [z]. Because [z] is an allophone of /s/, in Italian, this assimilation is allophonic not phonemic. The example of *banca* (bank), /'baŋ ka/, above, displays allophonic assimilation, as well.

The examples also show an important detail of assimilation. In the cases of /m̲p/, /sf/, and /zv/, the second phoneme asserts its influence backwards onto the first. This direction of influence is technically called *regressive*.<sup>203</sup> Most assimilation is regressive, especially in Russian, though *progressive* (forward influencing) can occur.<sup>204</sup> It should be noted that in the above example, the *sonorant* (voiced and sustainable) phoneme /r/ in *sforzo*,

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<sup>202</sup> Laver, *Principles of Phonetics*, 382–384; Small, *Fundamentals of Phonetics*, 162–163, 212; Daniel Jones and Dennis Ward, *The Phonetics of Russian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 188–189. Jones and Ward call allophonic assimilation “similitude” — this term is defunct.

<sup>203</sup> Small, *Fundamentals of Phonetics*, 163; Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 189.

<sup>204</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 189.

is not influenced by the following unvoiced /ts/-phoneme. Although such technicalities may seem like sausage making (we don't really want to know how it is made), at the beginning of training most singers have had to contemplate all the rules carefully, which now seem second nature.

Examples:

Italian:	un	/un/	a; one
	un poco	/,um 'pɔ ko/	a little bit
	seno	/'se no/	chest; breast
	banca	/'ban ka/	bank
	sforzo	/'sfɔr tso/	effort
	sveglia	/'zve λa/	an alarm; (he) wakes up

Assimilation, especially regressive assimilation, is extremely important in Russian. Allophonic assimilation occurs far less in Russian, yet it happens under very common circumstances. While most cases of allophonic assimilation in Russian are automatic as discussed above (e.g., palatalization of hard consonants before the /i/-phoneme, labialization of consonants before the phonemes /u/ and /o/, etc.), there is one type, which will be discussed further on in context, that non-Russian speakers must be trained to do. The rules governing assimilation and the effects upon pronunciation in Russian will be integrally incorporated in the discussions of the different phonemes and allophones.

## On Transcription: Virgules, Brackets, and Unorthodox IPA Usage

### Virgules and Brackets

It has been noted by some phonetics scholars that, when a book of diction for singers is produced using the IPA symbols, the authors mix up phonemes and allophones in their transcriptions. The most glaring error is that phonemic IPA symbols are enclosed in *brackets*, [ ], rather than *virgules*, / /. What is under scrutiny is the difference in symbol usage and transcription orthography between phonemes and allophones. Most diction-for-singers texts use brackets, but seem to transcribe only broadly (phonemically, rather than allophonically) thus confusing or conflating phonemes and allophones. To be concrete, transcription of the words *bat*, *pest* and *spot* can be broad — /bæt/, /pɛst/ and /spɒt/, for phonemes — or narrow — [bʰæɪtʰ], [pʰɛɪstʰ] and [spʰɒtʰ], for allophones.<sup>205</sup> In singers' diction books these might be written either as [bæt], [pɛst] and [spɒt], emphasizing a stable vowel approach to singing, or [bæ:ɪt], [pɛ:ɪst] and [spɒt], suggesting the need to sing the vowel diphthongs for better understandability and less affectation. Such erroneous practices can be found from Madeleine Marshall (1940s/50s) to John Moriarty (1970s) to Marcie Stapp (1990s) to Timothy Cheek (2001). So pervasive is this kind of transcription, even with highly studied and detailed authors, that it could be considered a convention, rather than a misunderstanding or error.

Looking over many of these diction books, it becomes clear that different conventions arise out of the desire to balance precision with efficiency and conciseness. In a phrase, this kind of transcription style could be called *phonetic shorthand*, eschewing some details while preserving the most important ones. The use of brackets and some very precise symbolism reflects the authors' desire for the singer to consider only one prescribed sound and

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<sup>205</sup> John Laver, *Principles of Phonetics*, 550–561.

articulation for each symbol, which has been described and defined prosaically in their texts. In this way, these transcriptions represent very specific allophones, properly printed with brackets. Yet these authors forego most or all allophonic diacritics to simplify transcriptions and call the sounds phonemes in their texts, acknowledging the fact that each sound may have color and articulation variants from language to language, if not circumstance to circumstance, while being represented by the same, single symbol. It is the schizophrenic goals of the authors that produce equally schizophrenic conventions that, none the less, are pervasive.

Such logic could be applied to Russian lyric diction, because many vowels and consonants have only one sound and articulation; that is, the phoneme, in a very loose sense, is an allophone. In other cases, the minutiae of contextual articulation either occur naturally or are less important to sounding authentic in singing, so transcribing in the narrow, allophonic form becomes overly cumbersome. As examples, consider the Russian words палка (*a stick; a cane*) and мать (*mother*). They would be allophonically transcribed as [p̚ɑ̯ k̚ə] and [mat̚ʰ], but, in Russian, all unpalatalized, plosive, consonant sounds, such as /p/ and /k/, are *unreleased stops*, so the [̚] symbols could be considered superfluous. The symbols [ɑ], [t̚], [m], [ə], and [t̚ʰ] can represent allophones in this context, and the advancing of the /a/ vowel, [ɑ̯], occurs naturally, when preparing for a palatalized /t/. Though the release, [ʰ], off the palatalized /t/ is necessary, once again, this release is part of all palatalized, plosive consonants in the final position, so transcribing it could be viewed as unnecessary. Therefore, transcribing these words as [pɑ̯ k̯] and [mat̚ʰ], might still be accepted as allophonic, since each sound has only one shape, placement and articulation

within the context of the specific words. This kind of transcription could be considered a form of shorthand, providing both accuracy of sound and efficiency of transcription.

Therefore, the biggest technical transcription problems with singing diction texts are two: 1) all IPA symbols tend to be bracketed as if they were the very concrete and specifically articulated sounds known as allophones, when in reality the sounds presented in isolation are phonemes with the possibility of having allophonic variants under different situations, and therefore should be framed by virgules, / / and 2) bracketed transcriptions (words and/or phrases) often are mixtures of allophones and phonemes and sometimes are only phonemes, and so, by the conventions of phonetics should also be framed by virgules. In the desire to correct such problems, this guide presents most transcriptions of words and/or phrases phonemically and so frames those words and phrases in virgules, even though those example words or phrases may contain allophones. Phonemes, in isolation, are framed by virgules, and individual allophones are framed by brackets, [ ]. At times, narrow, allophonic transcriptions may be presented, and those, of course, would be bracketed.

#### Unorthodox Usage: /ʌ/ for /ə/

The IPA symbol for *schwa*, /ə/, is quite familiar to well-trained singers, but there are two general colors of schwa — rounded and unrounded. The rounded version is most common to French in words such as “je,” /ʒə/ or “le,” /lə/, and seems similar to the mixed vowel /ø/.<sup>206</sup> The unrounded sound is common to English and Russian and is essentially a reduction of the /ʌ/-vowel used in an unstressed position (as in the word “upholstery,”

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<sup>206</sup> Grubb, *Singing in French*, 43; Donnan, *French Lyric Diction*, 15.

/ə 'pɒl stəːɪ/ versus “upper,” /'ʌp pə/).<sup>207</sup> The lack of stress causes the tongue to relax upward a bit, making /ə/ slightly higher than /ʌ/. Because of the two colorations of schwa, some points of confusion and questions can arise: When singers see the IPA symbol /ə/, which color should they use? Will a singer’s specific training influence her/his instinctual choice? Can the difference be clearly and simply symbolized by the IPA? Should the difference be shown by using diacritical marks added to the /ə/ symbol, or should a new symbol be created? Can an existing IPA symbol be substituted for one of the colors and be helpful rather than confusing?

From my own training and my experience working with many American-trained singers, most of us have been taught to pronounce the /ə/ symbol as it is in French — a forward or central, rounded articulation similar to /ø/. This then causes a problem when reading more orthodox IPA transcriptions of either Russian or English. Without careful retraining, many American singers pronounce all schwas as the rounded, French version, resulting in non-idiomatic, even incorrect pronunciation. Therefore, a singer’s training may strongly influence the instinctual choice of articulation for the symbol /ə/. So, could a diacritical mark clarify the difference without causing too much trouble?

If a diacritic is to symbolize the difference between unrounded and rounded allophones of the schwa phoneme, the usual protocol for the IPA is to make the unadorned symbol represent the unrounded version and then add rounding to the phoneme with a diacritic. So, /ə/ would represent the unstressed, unrounded /ʌ/-like sound, and something like /ə̞/ might symbolize the rounded, /ø/-like allophone. Yet, the problem arises, again, that

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<sup>207</sup> Small, *Fundamentals of Phonetics*, 80–82.

without extensive retraining, most singers could easily assign the rounded sound to the plainly written schwa, resulting in the same confusion as before. It seems that it might be best to use a different symbol, but rather than create a completely new one, perhaps the best choice is the existing related symbol, /ʌ/.

The broader issue of using the symbol /ʌ/ instead of /ə/ can be addressed directly by considering the position taken by American phoneticians, but which is also applicable to Russian. In *Fundamentals of Phonetics: A Practical Guide for Students*, the author, Larry Small, states:

It is difficult to discuss [the vowel /ə/] without discussing another vowel concurrently, namely /ʌ/ ... These vowels are used to represent allophones of the same sound, even though most phoneticians and clinicians treat them as two separate vowel phonemes. (There *is* actually a slight difference in their place of production in the oral cavity). The basic distinction between these vowels is that /ə/ *occurs only in unstressed syllables* and /ʌ/ *occurs only in stressed syllables*. [emphasis from the original text.]<sup>208</sup>

The idea that a vowel often has at least one reduced version used in unstressed positions can justify the use of /ʌ/ in place of /ə/, in lyric diction, as the reconstitution of a reduced vowel for the sake of clarity and sing-ability. The final upshot is that, both in American English and in Russian, /ə/ really is /ʌ/, but when in an unstressed position at conversational speed, the tongue relaxes a bit and the /ʌ/-phoneme becomes slightly higher and less back naturally, without thought. Therefore, if a singer does not have to think about forming this version of /ə/ from /ʌ/, when singing rapidly and syllabically, then the only issue left is what to do, or, more accurately, how to think about this vowel when the music is slower or when the vowel is sustained, and that question has already been answered — consider the phoneme to be /ʌ/

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<sup>208</sup> Small, *Fundamentals of Phonetics*, 80.

in all cases. Such is the approach taken in this guide. The unorthodox use of the /ʌ/ symbol in place of the schwa (/ə/) is to avoid the mistake of singing a rounded /ə/, as in French lyric diction, instead of the proper unrounded version.

### Acknowledgement of Major Sources

The general information in this guide, including the formation and quality of Russian phonemes and allophones and the basic rules of Russian pronunciation, is supported by or derived from the following sources. Some more information on these sources may be found in the annotated bibliography:

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## CHAPTER 3 – The Vowels

There are five vowel *phonemes* in Russian and one semi-vowel phoneme. In lyric diction, five *allophones* and six */j/-glide+vowel clusters* are associated with the main vowels.<sup>209</sup>

There are a total of eleven Cyrillic letters that represent the vowels, the clusters, and the semi-vowel.

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<sup>209</sup> Defining the exact number of vowel phonemes and allophones in Russian lyric diction is controversial. The number is quite varied among the most prominent sources and depends upon the number of secondary and reduced forms that are accepted by an authority, as well as how the j-glide+vowel clusters are viewed (see Piatak and Avrashov, 1; Sheil, 113,116, 118–119, 121–122, 126; Belov, *Libretti*, xii–xiii; and Richter, ix). Strictly, Russian has only five vowel phonemes, /i/, /ɛ/, /a/, /o/, and /u/. All other variants are allophones, and the /j/-glide+vowel clusters make up a separate phenomenon. Therefore, /i/ and /ɪ/ are allophones of /i/, /e/ is an allophone of /ɛ/, and /æ/, /ɑ/, and /ə/ (or /ʌ/) are allophones of /a/ (see Jones and Ward, 28). As a rule, Russian lyric diction permanently shifts /a/ to /ɑ/ (removing any more backed alternative), and then shifts /æ/ to /a/. Also, this guide uses the symbol /ʌ/ in place of /ə/, for reasons discussed within the chapter. Several Russian diction texts describe the /j/-glide+vowel clusters as “soft vowels.” This is phonologically incorrect and will be avoided in this guide.



The Cyrillic letter -а- is a *cognate* to the Roman letter, meaning that it is recognizable as the same letter with the same or similar pronunciation. The letter -я- is uniquely Slavic, but might be remembered as a capital -А- with a “soft” leading edge.

Examples:

English: father     /'fɑ: ðə/

French: âme     /'ɑ: mə/     soul; spirit

Russian:

Printed -а- in the stressed position:

так     /tak/     so; that

мама     /'ma ma/     mama; mommy

заказ     /za 'kas/     an order

задом     /'za dΛm/     backwards

карандаш /kΛ ran 'dɑʃ/     a pencil

автор     /'ʔɑf tΛr/     author     will be transcribed as /'ɑf tΛr/

**Note:** When sung, especially with longer, sustained tones, the Russian /ɑ/ is not reduced (i.e. remains /ɑ/) in positions directly adjacent to the stressed syllable. In spoken Russian, the phoneme /ɑ/ in an unstressed position adjacent to the stressed syllable (as in мама, папа, заказ, and карандаш) normally would be reduced to a more centralized phoneme such as /Λ/ or /ə/ (producing /'ma mə/, /zΛ 'kaz/, and /kə ran 'dɑʃ/, for the above examples). Vowel *reduction* and *reconstitution* in singing is discussed in more detail in Sections 7 and 8 of this chapter.

Examples (cont'd):

Printed -я- in the stressed position, following palatalized consonants:

мята /<sup>j</sup>mʲa ta/ mint

девятка /dʲi 'vʲat ka/ a printed numeral nine

говоря /gɒ va 'rʲa/ [While] speaking... (*verbal adv. of* ГОВОРИТЬ)

**Note:** The *superscript-j*, [ʲ], found between a consonant and the vowel in IPA transcriptions, represents the palatalization of the consonant, not a /j/-glide+vowel cluster.

When reading Cyrillic, the letter -я- following a consonant letter, indicates that the preceding consonant phoneme is palatalized. This is the first of four *indicator* letters introduced in the following entries. Usually, the consonants /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), and /ts/ (-ц-) are not palatalized, even when followed by an indicator letter, but the letter -я- is generally not written after the letters -ж-, -ш-, or -ц- (except with Cyrillic transliterations of foreign names).

Sound   Cyrillic

/o/	О	generally.
	ӧ	less frequently, only in the stressed position, when preceded by a palatalized consonant, or after one of the Cyrillic letters -Ж- or -Ш-.

The Russian /o/-phoneme is quite idiomatic of the language. The lips are well rounded in the formation, but the phoneme is not the very round (and very closed) /o/ of German or French. Russian /o/, is also not the open /ɔ/-phoneme found in Italian, German, French and English. It is best described as a combination of two types of /o/. Russian /o/ is formed with the low tongue position of open /ɔ/ and the more rounded lips of closed /o/ (but, again, more relaxed than the German or French version).

The formation can be practiced by speaking the open /ɔ/ first, to find the low tongue position, and then rounding the lips toward the closed /o/ shape, while keeping the tongue low. Because it is natural to raise the tongue as the lips round more, a singer must compensate by feeling as though the middle of the tongue is drawing down toward the floor of the mouth. This vowel is what is sustained in singing, but to sound even more idiomatically Russian, the vowel should be released in a fashion that produces a diphthong.

An idiomatic, stressed Russian /o/ is pronounced as the diphthong: [o:ʌ]. The [o:] portion is strong and sustained, while the [ʌ] portion is nimbly glided through. The sound is not too far from the -o- in *coffee* when spoken with a stereotypical New York (really, Brooklyn or Queens) accent, that is, /'kɔ:ʌ fi/, rather than /'kɔ fi/. Another detail is that after certain labial consonant phonemes, such as /b/, /p/, and /v/, the stressed /o/ is *labialized*, meaning that a slight w-glide occurs between the consonant and the [o:] portion of the

diphthong, that is, [<sup>w</sup>o:ɬ]. For example, the Russian word for *Look!* or *Well!* is *Вот!* (Cyrillic *В* is generally read as /v/) and would be accurately pronounced as /v<sup>w</sup>o:ɬt/. Finally, like Russian /a/, when the /o/ phoneme is alone or in the initial position, it begins with a glottal stop, [ʔo]. In singing, the main /o/-phoneme is sustained, while any coloration before or after it is greatly diminished.

Stressed /o/ is generally spelled -o- in Cyrillic (cognate to Roman -o-). The letter -o- can occur anywhere in a word, but must be read as /o/, when in the stressed syllable. Less frequently, the /o/-phoneme is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -ë- (generally without the dieresis, thus looking like the letter -e-). This spelling can only occur in the stressed syllable, and it follows a palatalized consonant or the Cyrillic letters -ж- (/ʒ/) and -ш- (/ʃ/).

The letter -ë- is the second Cyrillic letter that indicates that a preceding consonant letter should be read as a palatalized phoneme. As before, the consonants /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), and /ts/ (-ц-) are not palatalized, even when followed by an indicator letter. While the letters -ж- and -ш- often precede the letter -ë-, the letter -ц- does not.

Examples:

English:	bought	/bo:ɬt/	(spoken with a stereotypical Brooklyn accent)
Russian:	Вот!	/v <sup>w</sup> o:ɬt/	Look!; Well!; There!
	ОКНО	/ɔk 'no:ɬ/	a window
	ОКОЛО	/'ʔo:ɬ kɬ tɬ/	near; about
	ТЁМНЫЙ	/'t <sup>j</sup> o:ɬm n <sup>j</sup> j/	dark; gloomy ( <i>adj.</i> )
	ЖЁЛТЫЙ	/'ʒo:ɬ t <sup>j</sup> j/	yellow ( <i>adj.</i> )

**Note:** In the other transcriptions of this guide, the Russian, stressed /o/ will be transcribed simply as /o/, without any indication of labialization, diphthong, or glottal stop (when initial). This is for economy of printing, but also as a reminder that when singing an extended tone, the main portion of the /o/ must be the sustained part of phoneme.

THUS: Вот! /vot/  
окно /ak 'no/  
около /'o kɐ tɕɔ/  
тёмный /'tʲom nʲij/  
жёлтый /'ʒotʲ tʲij/

Sound    Cyrillic

- /ɛ/        ъ        when followed by an unpalatalized (hard) consonant.
- е        when preceded by a palatalized consonant or one of the Cyrillic letters -ж-, -ш-, or -ч-, in the stressed syllable and then followed by an unpalatalized consonant.
- е        when preceded by an unpalatalized consonant (other than -ж-, -ш-, or -ч-), only in certain words and word roots that are borrowed from other languages and retain foreign pronunciation [Appendix F].

The Russian open /ɛ/-phoneme is essentially the same as open /ɛ/ in European languages. When initial the phoneme includes a glottal stop, [ʔɛ], as in the English word *echo*. After the following examples, the [ʔ]-symbol will not be printed. Open /ɛ/, in Russian words, generally only precedes unpalatalized phonemes.<sup>211</sup>

Stressed /ɛ/ can be spelled as Cyrillic -ъ- or -е-. The letter -ъ- is generally found only in borrowed words and most often in the initial position. More frequently, the /ɛ/-phoneme, in the stressed syllable, is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -е-, after palatalized consonants or the Cyrillic letters -ж- (/ʒ/), -ш- (/ʃ/), or -ч- (/tʃ/) and before a hard consonant (or, rarely, a low or back vowel, such as /ɑ/ or /u/). Several borrowed words break the above rules, especially for the letter -е-. See Appendix F for a lexicon of selected exceptions.

The third indicator letter, -е-, generally will not indicate the palatalized pronunciation of the consonants /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), or /tʃ/ (-ч-). A rare exception is discussed under the entry for the consonant /tʃ/ (-ч-) in Chapter 4.

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<sup>211</sup> It is possible for a transliterated foreign word to break this rule, but such words would probably be quite rare in Russian operas or songs.

## Examples:

English:	echo	/ˈʔε ko:u/		
	poetic	/po ˈε tɪk/		
	exit	/ˈʔεg zɪt/		
Russian:	эхо	/ˈʔε xʌ/	echo	transcribed as /ˈε xʌ/
	поэма	/pa ˈε ma/	poem	
	это	/ˈʔε tʌ/	this	transcribed as /ˈε tʌ/
	кета	/ˈkʲε ta/	a Siberian salmon	
	кадет	/ka ˈdʲɛt/	a cadet	
	женская	/ˈʒɛn ska ja/	a woman's	( <i>possessive adj.</i> )
	цельй	/ˈtɕɛ ʰij/	the whole; the entire	( <i>adj.</i> )
	неуч	/ˈnɛ utʃʲ/*	an ignoramus	( <i>coll.</i> )
ALSO:	кафе	/ka ˈfɛ/	café	( <i>from French</i> )
	септима	/ˈsɛpʲ tʲɪ mʌ/	a seventh	( <i>in music – from German</i> )

\*The IPA symbol for a palatalized /n/ is /ɲ/, rather than /nʲ/, so неуч is transcribed as /ˈnɛ utʃʲ/, not /ˈnʲɛ utʃʲ/ (see Chap 4, Section 2).

**Note:** only when spelled as -ə-, when the /ɛ/-phoneme is internal and preceded by a vowel, as in поэма, above, do not insert a /j/-glide between the vowels, as if it were /pa ˈjɛ mʌ/, and do not use a glottal stop.

Sound   Cyrillic

/i/        И        (can be spelled -и- in Pre-Soviet typeface, but it is rare)

Russian /i/ is essentially the same as the /i/-phoneme of all European languages familiar to singers. Much like English, when /i/ is the initial phoneme, it begins with a glottal stop, [ʔi] (the [ʔ]-symbol will not be used, after the examples below). Also, when the /i/-phoneme is spelled with the letter -и- (or Pre-Soviet -и-), a glide should not be added before the phoneme (stressed or unstressed) when following another vowel [i.e. when spelled -и-, do not pronounce it as the cluster [ji] after another vowel (only exception: the suffix -ии, /i ji/)].

Because the tongue is so high and fronted when producing the vowel, in Russian, unpalatalized consonants cannot precede the /i/-phoneme. Therefore any consonant preceding the /i/-phoneme is transcribed in the IPA as palatalized, that is with a [ʲ]. The singer must then be careful not to introduce a j-glide between the consonant and the vowel. For example: пика (lance/pike) will be written in the IPA as /'pʲi ka/, yet should sound similarly to /'pi ka/, rather than /'pji ka/. Consonant palatalization will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

When the /i/-phoneme is in the stressed syllable of a Russian word, it will always be spelled with the Cyrillic letter -и- (or Pre-Soviet -и-). This does not mean that the letter -и- is always read as /i/.<sup>212</sup> The phoneme /i/ in the unstressed position can have other spellings (Section 3).

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<sup>212</sup> Russian orthography should not be confused with its phonology. The /i/-phoneme cannot follow any hard consonant, only its allophone, [i], can. In most of these cases, [i] is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -ы-, as in ты – /tɨ/ – *you (sing. fam.)*. In a few cases, though, the spelling is -и-, yet must still be read as [i], because the preceding consonant is unpalatalized, as in жить – /ʒitʲ/ – *to live*. See the entry for the [i]-allophone, below.

Examples:

English:	beet	/bit/		
	seat	/sit/		
	please	/pliz/		
Russian:	идти	/ʔidʲ ˈtʲi/	to go; to walk	transcribed as /idʲ ˈtʲi/
	или	/ˈʔi lʲi/	or	transcribed as /ˈi lʲi/
	молить	/ma ˈlʲitʲ/	to entreat; to beseech	
	моих	/ma ˈix/	of mine ( <i>gen. pl. poss. pro.</i> )	

It may help memorization to know that, the Cyrillic letter -и- is derived from the ancient Greek -Η- or *ēta* that sounded as /i/. During the development of the Cyrillic alphabet the crossbeam tilted backward to form the present letter.<sup>213</sup> One other Cyrillic letter is similar looking but has a diacritic mark: -й- (called и краткое — /i ˈkrat kə jɪ/ — *short -i-*). Though related to -и-, -й- is the Cyrillic spelling for the /j/-glide (see Section 2).

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<sup>213</sup> Hans Jensen, *Sign, Symbol and Script: An Account of Man's Effort to Write*, translated by George Unwin, 3rd revised edition (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1970), 500 [chart]; Valentin Kiparsky, *Russian Historical Grammar: Volume I*, translated by J. I. Press, revised edition (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979), 162.

Sound    Cyrillic

/u/        y

Ю        when preceded by a palatalized consonant, or in words of foreign origin preceded by one of the consonants -ж-, -ш-, -ч-, or -ч-.

In Russian, /u/ is stable (no diphthong), the lips are highly rounded, and the tongue is quite high in back, as in Italian. Like the previous vowels, Russian /u/ is preceded by a glottal stop when initial, [ʔu] (the symbol for which is not used, after the example below). When spelled with the Cyrillic letter -y-, if following another vowel, the phoneme should not be preceded by a glide, producing [ju] (stressed or unstressed).

Stressed /u/ can be spelled with the Cyrillic letters -y- or -ю-, but the letter -y- is far more usual. In fact, the letter -y- is always read as the phoneme /u/ in sung Russian (stressed or unstressed). The /u/-phoneme spelled with the letter -ю- (the last indicator letter), stressed or unstressed, only occurs after palatalized consonants or after /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), /tʃ/ (-ч-), or /tʃʲ/ (-ч-), solely in words of foreign origin.

Normally, the letter -ю- is not written after the consonants -ж-, -ш-, -ч-, or -ч-. Yet, certain words of French origin use the letter -ю- to transliterate the French -u- (the mixed vowel /y/) and the letter -y- as a transliteration of the French letter combination -ou- (the cardinal vowel /u/). In the Russian version of these French words, both -y- and -ю- are read as /u/, without any consonant palatalization or gliding. These letter combinations can also be found in proper names. The letter -ш- does not precede the letter -ю- in any case.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Avanesov, *Russian Literary Pronunciation*, 272 (note in column 5).

Examples:

English:	boot	/but/	
Italian:	crudel	/kru 'de le/	cruel
French:	tout	/tu/	all; whole
Russian:	в углу	/vu 'gɫu/	in the corner
	капуста	/ka 'pu sta/	a cabbage
	узко	/'ʔu skʌ/	narrowly, tightly      transcribed as /'u skʌ/
	турбан	/tʲur 'ban/	a turban
	люди	/'lʲu dʲi/	people
	нюх	/ɲux/*	the sense of smell

\*The IPA symbol for a palatalized /n/ is /ɲ/, rather than /nʲ/, so нюх is transcribed as /ɲux/, not /nʲux/ (see Chap 4, Section 2).

AND:	амбушюр	/am bu 'ʃur/	embouchure
	брошюра	/bra 'ʃu ra/	brochure; pamphlet
	жюри	/ʒu 'ri/	jury
	Чюмина	/'tʃju mʲi nʌ/	Chyumina, Olga (19 <sup>th</sup> C. Russian poet)

**Warning:** for those familiar with French, do not assign the /i/-phoneme to the Cyrillic letter -y-, and for those familiar with the IPA, do not confuse the Cyrillic letter -y- with the IPA symbol /y/.

Sound    Cyrillic

[ɨ]

И

И    when preceded by -ж-, -ш-, -п-; or across the word boundary when preceded by a hard consonant.

The Russian allophone [ɨ] is perhaps the most difficult Russian vowel sound for English speakers to produce. Sometimes called a “dark” or “back” /i/-vowel,<sup>215</sup> the allophone [ɨ] is a *velarized* version of the /i/-phoneme.<sup>216</sup> The sound can also be likened to the -i- in the English word *till*, that is the /ɪ/-phoneme.<sup>217</sup> This analogy is accurate only if the /ɪ/-phoneme (represented by the letters -ll-), which follows the /ɪ/, is velar in the first place. Yet, in another word, *milk*, the consonant cluster /lk/ can be a useful tool in producing the Russian [ɨ]. The /l/-phoneme is high and frontal, necessary for the /i/-part of the formation, while the /k/-phoneme raises the back of tongue to the soft palate (the *velum*), which is needed to *velarize* the /i/-phoneme (see exercise below). It is the *velarization* that creates the “back” timbre. Most important for singers to remember is that Russian [ɨ] is not *pharyngeal* (colored by the back of tongue being near to or touching the *pharyngeal wall*).<sup>218</sup>

To shape this vowel, form the /lk/-cluster in *milk* with the tongue, then carefully drop the entire tongue away from the roof of the mouth, while retaining the overall shape (much

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<sup>215</sup> Boyanus, *Manual of Russian Pronunciation*, 45–47.

<sup>216</sup> Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas*, xiii. Belov states that the back of the tongue “is moved slightly forward,” after first forming the /i/-phoneme, to create the /ɨ/. His description reflects the action of velarization without using the term, though technically, the back of the tongue can only move up toward the velum, not forward, but the subjective sensation might very well be that of a forward motion.

<sup>217</sup> Boyanus, 46.

<sup>218</sup> It is true that many Russians speak the [ɨ]-allophone pharyngeally, but the velarized formation keeps tension away from the root of the tongue, allowing the throat to remain relaxed and the larynx free for better singing.

like an s-shape lying on its side or a wave shape), and pronounce the /ɪ/ of *milk*, low, in chest voice. The resulting sound very closely resembles the [ɪ]-allophone. Once it becomes comfortable to sustain the shape, the tip of the tongue can and should be relaxed, as it is the shape of the middle and back half of the tongue that is critical. An alternate exercise is to pronounce the phoneme /i/, noting how the air stream travels over the top of the tongue and seems to vibrate against the back of the upper teeth. Then, while continuing to speak the /i/-phoneme, imagine aiming the air stream underneath the tongue, as if to make it pass through the floor of the mouth and exit out from under the chin. This imaginary action often produces a more singable and sustainable version of the Russian [ɪ].

To finish off the authenticity of this allophone, the singer needs to quickly shift back towards the forward /i/-phoneme on the release of the vowel — i. e., produce the diphthong [i:i]. This should occur naturally when relaxing out of the main vowel to produce a subsequent sound. Like most diphthongs in singing, the main portion, in this case, the [ɪ]-allophone, should be sustained for the duration of the note. The shift to the second portion (/i/) should be as late as possible. After the singer works through these directions a few times, she/he should listen to as many native Russian singers and speakers (and/or well-trained Russian language students) as possible, and then try to repeat words containing the [ɪ]-allophone, as often as possible.

Just as unpalatalized consonants cannot precede the /i/-phoneme, palatalized consonants cannot precede the [ɪ]-allophone. Most Russian consonants can be palatalized, but three, generally, are not — /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), and /ts/ (-ц-). Only the [ɪ]-allophone can follow these consonants. On the complicated side of things, many Russian words end with

unpalatalized (hard) consonants and must remain so. If a word following a final hard consonant starts with an /i/-phoneme, the /i/ must be changed to the [i̯]-allophone to fit the above rule, unless the two words are separated by punctuation or an implied break. A deeper explanation of this rule is covered in Chapters 5 and 6. These pronunciation rules apply to stressed and unstressed positions, alike, in sung Russian.

The letter -ы- is unique to the Cyrillic alphabet, as it did not come from the Glagolitic alphabet.<sup>219</sup> In sung Russian, it represents only the [i̯] pronunciation. In contrast, the Cyrillic letter -и-, generally read as /i/, is read as [i̯], when preceded by one of the letters -ж-, -ш-, or -ц-, or a word ending in a hard consonant (with the limitations mentioned above).

Examples:

	мы	/m̄i̯/	we
	ты	/t̄i̯/	you ( <i>fam.</i> , <i>2<sup>nd</sup> pers. sing.</i> )
	копыто	/kα 'p̄i̯ tΛ/	a hoof
AND:	жить	/ʒit̄j/	to live
	цирк	/ts̄irk/	a circus
	копошиться	/kα pα 'ʃ̄i̯ tsΛ/	to swarm (insects); to putter (people)
ALSO:	к Игорю	/'k̄ i̯ gΛ r̄i̯u/	to Igor's

**Note:** The Cyrillic letter -ы- is essentially not found in the initial position.<sup>220</sup>

<sup>219</sup> Carlton, *Phonological History of the Slavic Languages*, 55.

<sup>220</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 49; Boyanus, *Manual*, 45; Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 35. The only exceptions are transliterations of certain foreign proper names.



### Section 3 – The Cardinal Vowels and Allophone [ɪ] in Unstressed Positions

#### Sound    Cyrillic

/a/        а        in the immediate pre-stress, or immediate post-stress positions, or when the initial letter of a word.

О        in the immediate pre-stress position, or when the initial letter.

In Russian lyric diction, an unstressed /a/-phoneme can be spelled with either -a- or -o-, when in the immediate pre-stress position or when the initial letter of a word (regardless of distance from stress). There are some exceptions to this rule for the letter -o- (see the entry on the /o/-phoneme, further on). The /a/-phoneme is only spelled with -a- when in the immediate post-stress position.

The feature of the Russian regional accent that *reduces* the /o/-phoneme to /a/ or [ʌ] and the /a/-phoneme to [ʌ] (or /ə/) in unstressed syllables is called *akanye* (also, *akan'e*) [pronounced /'a kə nɪ/ and spelled *аканье* in Cyrillic].<sup>222</sup>

Examples:

Spelled -a- in the immediate pre- or post-stress position.

какой    /kɑ 'koj/    which; what

мама     /'mɑ mɑ/    mama; mommy

папа     /'pɑ pɑ/     papa; daddy

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<sup>222</sup> Avanesov, *Russkaya Literaturnaya I Dialektnaya Fonetika* [*Russian Literary and Dialectal Phonetics*], 143–145; Matthews, *Structure and Development of Russian*, 94; and Comrie, Stone, and Polinsky, *The Russian Language*, 311.

## Examples (cont'd):

Spelled -o- only in the immediate pre-stress position.

коза /kа 'zа/ nanny goat

ломать /lа 'matʲ/ to break; fracture

топаз /tа 'pas/ topaz

In Contrast: тихо /'tʲi xʌ/ quietly

как-то /'kak tʌ/ somehow

Spelled -a- or -o- when unstressed and the initial letter of a word.

адвокат /ad va 'kat/ a lawyer; an attorney

отека́ть /a tʲɪ 'katʲ/ to swell up

**Note:** In sung Russian, the /a/-phoneme is reduced to [ʌ] (or /ə/) under fewer conditions than in conversational speech. Unstressed /a/ is generally reduced to schwa (/ə/), under most conditions of spoken Russian.

Sound    Cyrillic

/o/        o        in certain words that have been borrowed from other languages and have retained some foreign features, in any unstressed position.

The Russian /o/-phoneme, in an unstressed position, can be spelled with the letter -o- regardless the distance from the stress, only in certain words of foreign origin. These words tend to have been phonetically transliterated into Cyrillic, retaining at least some of their native pronunciation. Such words are rare in nineteenth-century Russian vocal literature, but they can often appear in modernist and twentieth-century works.

Examples:

From French

hôtel        /o tɛl/

consommé /kɔ̃ sɔ̃ me/

cacao        /ka ka o/

To Russian

отель        /o 'tɛlʲ/        not /a 'tʲɛlʲ/

консоме    /kon so 'mɛ/    not /kʌn sa 'mʲɛ/

какао        /ka 'ka o/        not /ka 'ka ʌ/

From American

radio        /'rɛ:i di o:ʊ/

To Russian

радио        /'ra dʲi o/        not /'ra dʲi ʌ/

A list of the more useful words and/or word roots can be found in Appendix F.

Sound   Cyrillic

/ɛ/      е      stressed or unstressed, without preceding palatalization, only in certain words and word roots that have been borrowed and have retained some foreign features.

Usually, the vowels /ɛ/ or /e/, when stressed, and [ɪ], when unstressed, are spelled with the Cyrillic letter -е-, only when preceded by a palatalized consonant or as part of a /j/+vowel cluster (Section 6). Yet, words of foreign origin that also retain elements of their original pronunciation can contain the letter -е- read only as /ɛ/ (not /e/ or /ɪ/) with an unpalatalized preceding consonant (regardless of stress position). Like the previous case, these words are rare in nineteenth-century Russian vocal literature, but can appear more often in modernist and twentieth-century works.

Examples:

энергия      /ɛ 'nɛr gʲi jɪ/      energy (*via German*)

анданте      /an 'dan tɛ/      andante (*from Italian*)

A list of the more useful words and/or word roots can be found in Appendix F.

\*      \*      \*      \*      \*

Sound   Cyrillic

/u/      у      stressed or unstressed.

Ю      stressed or unstressed.

See entry in previous section.

Sound    Cyrillic

/i/	И	stressed or unstressed.
	ѧ	pre-stress only and preceded by the letter -ч- or -ш- and followed by the letter -й- or a palatalized consonant ( <i>interpalatal</i> ).

When the phoneme /i/ is spelled with -и- (-i-, pre-Soviet), neither syllabic stress nor position affects the reading as /i/, in sung Russian (see earlier entry on /i/ for full rules).

The /i/-phoneme is spelled with the letter -а-, only in the letter pairings -ча- and -ша-. These letter pairs, though, must be in a pre-stress syllable, and the consonant immediately following these pairs must be palatalized [including /j/ (-й-)]. When a vowel is sandwiched between two palatalized consonants, it is termed *interpalatal*. Therefore, this case can be said to be a pre-stress, interpalatal /a/. Section 6 covers *interpalatalization*.

When /a/, /a/, /e/, or /ε/ are reduced to an /i/-allophone (/i/, [ɪ], or [i]), in unstressed syllables, the phenomenon is called *ikanye* (also, *ikan'e*) [pronounced /'i kə nɪ/ and spelled *иканье* in Cyrillic].<sup>223</sup> These reduced allophones can be spelled with -а-, -я-, or -е-.

Examples:

или	/i lʲi/	or ( <i>conj.</i> )
этика	/e tʲi kɐ/	ethics
AND: чадить	/tʃʲi dʲitʲ/	to emit smoke
шавель	/ʃʲʲi vʲelʲ/	sorrel
площадь	/pʲɫɔ ʃʲʲitʲ/	a plaza; a square

<sup>223</sup> Аванесов, *Russkaya Literaturnaya I Dialektnaya Fonetika* [Russian Literary and Dialectal Phonetics], 159–160; Matthews, *Structure and Development of Russian*, 95; Comrie, Stone, and Polinsky. *The Russian Language*, 53–55, 308.

Sound    Cyrillic

- [i̯]
- Ы    stressed or unstressed.
  - И    stressed or unstressed, when preceded by -ж-, -ш-, -ц- or across the word boundary when preceded by a hard consonant, and in an exceptional case of specific historical style discussed in Chapter 9.
  - е    only when unstressed and preceded by -ж-, -ш-, or -ц-.

The allophone [i̯], when spelled as -ы-, is unaffected by position or stress.

The letter -ы- is always read as the [i̯]-allophone. When the Cyrillic letter -и- is preceded by one of the consonants, -ж-, -ш-, or -ц-, the -и-, it almost always is read as [i̯], in any position, stressed or not, since the consonants /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), or /ts/ (-ц-) usually cannot be followed by the /i/-phoneme (see the one exception in Chap. 8, Sec. 3).

When a word ends in a hard consonant and is followed by the conjunction и (*and*) or a word with an initial -и-, the -и- will be read as [i̯]. There is one more case, exemplified below, in which -и- can be read as [i̯], only in Russian lyric diction, using a very particular style of pronunciation. The rules for such cases are discussed in Chapter 9.

When the letter -е- is in an unstressed syllable and is preceded by one of the letters -ж-, -ш-, or -ц-, it, too, is read as [i̯]. The rules of *ikanye* dictate that the vowel be an /i/-allophone, while the rule about the consonants, /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), or /ts/ (-ц-), requires that the following /i/-allophone be the low, central [i̯].

Examples:

мы	/mi/	we
рыцарь	/ri 'tsarʲ/	a knight
жить	/ʒitʲ/	to live
широкий	/ʃi 'ro kij/*	wide
к Ивану	/k i 'va nu/	to Ivan's (to John's)
брат и сестра	/brat i sʲi 'stra/	brother and sister
тихий	/'tʲi xij/*	quiet ( <i>adj.</i> )
долгий	/'doɫ gij/*	long ( <i>adj.</i> )
великий	/vʲi 'lʲi kij/*	great ( <i>adj.</i> )
цена	/tsi 'na/	a price
жена	/ʒi 'na/	a wife
шесток	/ʃi 'stok/	a small perch

\*The reading of -и- as [i] in the adjectival ending -ий, when following a velar consonant [/x/ (-x-), /g/ (-г-), or /k/ (-к-)], reflects a unique style taken from Russian *Stage Pronunciation* that influences lyric diction. A full discussion of this pronunciation style, including a variant style (see Section 5, under the phoneme /ʌ/) is presented in Chapter 9.

## Section 4 – The Intermediate Allophones Only in Stressed Positions

### Sound    Cyrillic

- [a]      а      only in the stressed position after the consonants -ч- and -ш- and when followed by a palatalized consonant or /j/ (spelled -й-).
- я      only in the stressed syllable, when preceded by a palatalized consonant, and only when followed by a palatalized consonant or /j/ (spelled -й-).

The Russian [a]-allophone is shaped nearly the same way as the French, fronted /a/-phoneme, but the middle of the tongue is raised slightly higher.<sup>224</sup> The [a]-allophone occurs when *interpalatal* (sandwiched between two palatalized phonemes).

The allophone [a] is spelled with the letter -а- only when in the stressed syllable, preceded by one of the clusters /tʃʲ/ (-ч-) or /ʃʲʃʲ/ (-ш-) and followed by a palatalized phoneme. It is spelled with the letter -я-, also, only when in the stressed syllable, but preceded by any other palatalized consonant, other than /tʃʲ/ (-ч-) or /ʃʲʃʲ/ (-ш-), and is followed by a palatalized phoneme.

Examples:

French:	là	/la/	there
Russian:	вращать	/vrʌ ˈʃʲʃʲatʲ/	to rotate; turn
	чай	/tʃʲaj/	tea
	мяч	/mʲatʃʲ/	a ball
	пять	/pʲatʲ/	five ( <i>card. num.</i> )

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<sup>224</sup> Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika [Practical Phonetics]*, 26–27.

In Contrast:	врать	/vrɑtʲ/	to tell lies
	мать	/matʲ/	mother
	пятый	/'pʲɑ tɨj/	fifth ( <i>ord. num.</i> )

**Note:** The [ɑ]-allophone is sung by Russians, because it is a strong enough contrast to the backed /ɑ/-phoneme, but is less vocally tense than the [æ]-allophone (as in *cat* /kæt/), which occurs in spoken Russian.

Sound    Cyrillic

- [e]    ѐ    only in the stressed position, when the initial letter of a word and followed by a palatalized phoneme.
- е    only in the stressed position, when preceded by a palatalized consonant or by -ж-, -ш-, or -ц-, and followed by a palatalized phoneme.

The Russian [e]-allophone is forward and closed like the French /e/-phoneme, though perhaps, slightly more relaxed. There should be no hint of a diphthong towards /i/. A singer may relax the Russian [e]-allophone to a more open position for the sake of vocal comfort and tone, as long as the vowel does not become an open /ɛ/.<sup>225</sup>

The [e]-allophone, when initial and only when spelled with the letter -ѐ-, includes a glottal stop, [ʔe]. As before, the transcription of this symbol is simplified to [e].

## Examples:

French:	étique	/e tik/	lean, emaciated
	chétif	/ʃe tif/	paltry, puny
	jésuite	/ʒe zɥit/	Jesuit
Russian:	этика	/ʲe tʲi kɐ/	ethics
	шесть	/ʃesʲtʲ/	six ( <i>card. num.</i> )
	жечь	/ʒetʲ/	to burn
	целить	/ʲtse lʲitʲ/	to aim at something

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<sup>225</sup> Boyanus, 39; Jones and Ward, 43 n1. Belov and Richter prefer what they call the Italian, closed /e/, which is defined as being significantly more relaxed and open than the French version. Walters (in Sheil) suggests the more closed type. It is true, though, as noted by Belov (Libretti, xii), that the amount of closeness is less important than a clear distinction from the open /ɛ/. Belov also suggests that adjusting the aperture of the closed vowel for vocal comfort and resonance, rather than for absolute purity of diction, is acceptable.

## Examples (cont'd):

дверь	/dʲvʲerʲ/	a door
музеи	/mu 'zʲe i/	museums ( <i>nom. plural</i> )
In Contrast: это	/'ε tʌ/	this
шест	/ʃεct/	pole; long stick
женская	/'zɛn ska ja/	a woman's (something)
целый	/'tɕɛ ɫij/	whole; entire
дверка	/dʲvʲer ka/	a little door ( <i>dim. of дверь</i> )
кадет	/ka 'dʲɛt/	a cadet

## Section 5 – The Reduced or Centralized Allophones

*Reduced* vowels, also called *centralized* vowels, are never stressed. By definition, the centralizing adjustment to a vowel only occurs when it is unstressed.<sup>226</sup> The reduction of certain Russian vowels, in lyric diction, produces two distinct allophones [ʌ] and [ɪ]. These allophones generally occur in remotely unstressed positions, as opposed to the positions immediately adjacent to the stressed syllable. Another important point is that there can be a difference between pre-stress and post-stress allophones.

The first reduced vowel is a sustainable vowel that is produced with relatively relaxed articulators (lips, jaw, and tongue) and an open resonator (the *pharynx*). Similarly to English, the vowel is [ʌ] as in the word *but* /bʌt/. The Russian [ʌ]-allophone is considered an open (or low), mid-back, unrounded vowel. It is much like /ɑ/, but the mid-back portion of the tongue is slightly higher and more forward. As with Americans, Russians use both an unrounded schwa, /ə/, and the vowel [ʌ] in speech (depending upon position), but when singing Russian, [ʌ] is favored. It must be noted that the rounded version of schwa commonly used in French lyric diction should not be used in Russian.

The second reduced vowel is the allophone [ɪ], as in the English word *bit*, and is related to the cardinal vowel /i/. For example, if an American is asked to say the word *begin* slowly, she/he will often say something like *bee-gin* /<sub>1</sub>bi 'gɪn/, but when spoken rapidly, it is usually pronounced as /bɪ 'gɪn/ — the /i/-phoneme centralizes to the allophone [ɪ].

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<sup>226</sup> Laver, *Principles of Phonetics*, 157, 516; Small, *Fundamentals of Phonetics*, 166–167; Clark, Yallop, and Fletcher, *Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology*, 85.

Sound    Cyrillic

- [ʌ]    а or О    in the *penultimate* or *remote* pre-stress position (not when the initial letter), or in a remote post-stress position.
- О        in any post-stress position.
- Я        only when part of the reflexive verbal ending (suffix) -ТЬСЯ or -ТСЯ.
- И        in an exceptional case of historical style discussed in Chapter 9.

One of five vowels (/a/, [ʌ], /i/, [ɪ], and [i̯]) used in unstressed syllables in place of certain other vowels, the allophone [ʌ] is a reduced /a/, and so is part of the *akanye* phenomenon. The allophone [ʌ] is pronounced like the -u- in the English words *up* and *but*. In singing, the [ʌ]-vowel can be difficult to sustain and lack resonance at slower tempi, so it is perfectly acceptable for the singer to modify the vowel back toward /a/. More on this is discussed under Vowel Reduction and Reconstitution in Sections 7 and 8 in this chapter.

This allophone, when pre-stress, must be in a remote pre-stress position. A good example for the penultimate pre-stress position is in the Russian word for *milk*, молоко, which is pronounced as /mʌ tʌ 'ko/. In such a position, [ʌ] can be spelled either with -a- or -o- (see examples below). When an -a- or -o- is in an unstressed syllable but is the initial letter of a word, either is read as /a/, only.

In the immediate post-stress position, [ʌ] should be sung for a spelling of Cyrillic -o-, as in the word for *quietly*, тихо, transcribed as /'tʲi xʌ/.

**Note:** Several published IPA transcriptions of Russian texts for singers employ the schwa symbol, /ə/, defined as sounding like the -a- in *about*, under each of the above

conditions. Even though both the /ə/-symbol and the assigned sound are technically correct, employing this symbol might be confusing to American-trained singers.<sup>227</sup> Many may relate the /ə/-symbol to the unstressed -e- in French lyric diction, as in *repose* /rə po zə/ or the -e- in *je* /ʒə/, which is quite rounded and is more related to /ø/ than /ʌ/.<sup>228</sup> The schwa symbol /ə/ is not used in this guide, and the rounded schwa articulation should be avoided in Russian.

#### Examples:

English:	but	/bʌt/	
	above	/ʌ 'bʌv/	
Russian:	молоко	/mʌ tʌ 'kɔ/	milk
	вразнобой	/vrʌ znʌ 'boj/	haphazardly
	этика	/'e tʲi kʌ/	ethics
	узко	/'u skʌ/	narrowly, tightly
	одеваться	/ʌ dʲi 'vʌ t:sʌ/	to dress oneself; to get dressed

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<sup>227</sup> In English, [ə] is the unstressed or reduced allophone of the /ʌ/-phoneme (Small, 80–82). The example word of *above* would be transcribed as /ə 'bʌv/, symbolizing essentially the same vowel sounds with the first as unstressed and the second as stressed. In Russian speech transcription, the [ʌ] symbol is often used in the immediate pre-stress position while the [ə] is used in the remote pre-stress position. Therefore, the example word *молоко* could be transcribed as /mʌ lʌ 'kɔ/ for speech. To reiterate, though, the unorthodox use of the [ʌ]-symbol in this guide is for the pedagogical purpose of avoiding the mistake of singing the rounded /ə/ (as in French lyric diction) for the unrounded version.

<sup>228</sup> Thomas Grubb, *Singing in French: A Manual of French Diction and French Vocal Repertoire* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1979), 43–51.

Examples (cont'd):

тихий	/tʲi xɫj/*	quiet ( <i>adj.</i> )
долгий	/doɫ ɡɫj/*	long ( <i>adj.</i> )
великий	/vʲi ʲi kɫj/*	great ( <i>adj.</i> )

\*The reading of the letter -и- as [ɫ] in the adjectival ending -ий, when following a velar consonant [/x/ (-х-), /g/ (-г-), or /k/ (-к-)], reflects the historical style known as *Old Muscovite (OM)* pronunciation, upon which much of Russian lyric diction is based. A full discussion of this pronunciation style is presented in Chapter 9.

**Reminder:** The letter -а- in the immediate post-stressed syllable, remains sung as /a/, even though in spoken Russian, the pronunciation would be /ɫ/ or /ə/.

Sound    Cyrillic

- [ɪ]    ъ    in any unstressed position.
- а    only unstressed, preceded by -ч-, or -ш- and followed by an unpalatalized consonant (exception below); post-stress even when interpalatal.
- е    only unstressed, preceded by a palatalized consonant including -ч- and -ш- and followed by an unpalatalized consonant.
- я    only unstressed, preceded by a palatalized consonant (not -ч- or -ш-) and followed by an unpalatalized consonant.

The allophone [ɪ] is like the pronunciation of the -i- in the English word *bit*, but in Russian, it is slightly more closed (the tongue is raised a bit higher). The [ɪ]-allophone is a reduction of /ɛ/ and /а/ and is part of the *ikanye* phenomenon.

As is discussed in more detail in Section 8, reduced vowels are often, even commonly, reconstituted to their non-reduced form, when they are sustained, due to slower rhythm or tempo. The allophone [ɪ] is mostly used when singing *parlando*-style music.

Similarly to the cardinal vowels, if a reduced allophone begins a word, it is initiated with a glottal stop.

Examples:	ЭКЗАМЕН	/ɪg 'zɑ mʲɪn/	an examination
	ДУЭЛИСТ	/du ɪ 'lʲɪst/	a duelist
	ЧЕЛОВЕК	/tʃɪ tʃɑ 'vʲɛk/	a man; a person
	ЧАСЫ	/tʃɪ 'sɪ/	a clock; a watch; hours ( <i>pl.</i> )
	ТЯНУТЬ	/tʲɪ 'nutʲ/	to pull; to tug

**Exception:** some common cases of vowel reduction do not reconstitute, and vowels in certain loan words do not reduce. For example:

Чайковский /tʃɪ 'kofʲ sʲkʲij/ Tchaikovsky not /tʃɑ:i 'kofʲ sʲkʲij/

Чарльстон /tʃɑrʲlʲi 'ston/ Charleston not /tʃirʲlʲi 'ston]

**Special Note:** There are many Russians who reduce to [e] rather than [ɪ] in the above cases (called *ekanye* [or *ekan'e*], pronounced as /'jɛ kə nɪ/, and spelled еканье in Cyrillic).<sup>229</sup> Be careful to listen closely to the corrections made by a conductor or a native, Russian-speaking coach in cases where the above rules would apply. If the [e]-allophone is used where one would expect [ɪ], the singer should simply change her/his usage from [ɪ] to [e]. Further discussion on the history of such differences in regional Russian accents is given in Chapter 9.

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<sup>229</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 27–28; Comrie, Stone, and Polinsky. *The Russian Language*, 53–54, 54 n25.

## Section 6 – The /j/+Vowel Clusters

### Introduction

The /j/+vowel clusters occur, in context, under only three conditions — in an initial position (including, in some cases, standing alone), directly following a vowel, or following one of the signs, -b- (hard) or -b- (soft). To articulate an isolated /j/+vowel cluster, the singer arches the tongue toward the highest point of the hard palate, first, and then “peels” it away, front to back, while pronouncing the vowel.

If the cardinal vowel sounds in question are: /a/, /ε/, /o/, and /u/, then the cardinal cluster sounds are: /j+/a/, /j+/ε/, /j+/o/, /j+/u/.

Therefore: /a/ → /ja/

/ε/ → /jε/

/o/ → /jo/

/u/ → /ju/

In isolation, the associated Cyrillic letters are -я- (/ja/), -е- (/jε/), -ё- (/jo/), and -ю- (/ju/), and the following orthographic correlations can also be made: а – я, э – е, о – ё, and у – ю.

**Note:** the *dieresis* of -ё- is rarely written or printed, making it visually indistinguishable from -е-. The student will have to use a Russian-English dictionary to discern which is which. Also, the letters -ы- and -и- are correlated similarly as above, as [ɨ] (-ы-) can only follow an unpalatalized consonant, and /i/ (-и-) can only follow a palatalized consonant.

### Stress and Assimilation

As with the cardinal vowels, effects of certain conditions such as: placement within a word; stress; proximity to stress when unstressed; and effects of assimilation apply similarly, but not exactly, to the corresponding /j/+vowel clusters.

### The Cyrillic Letters -я-, -е-, -ё-, and -ю- as Indicators of Palatalization in Pronunciation

Many English-language texts on Russian pronunciation discuss the letters -я-, -е-, -ё-, and -ю- as the “palatalized,” “soft,” or “palatalizing” vowels. This confuses letters with sounds. The letters -я-, -е-, -ё-, and -ю- are alternates for -а-, -э-, -о-, and -у-, and the vowels associated with the extra letters are still /ɑ/, /ɛ/, /o/, and /u/. The alternate orthographic forms indicate that something palatalized precedes the vowel, either a consonant or a /j/-glide, in pronunciation. Palatalized consonants and their pairing with vowels are covered in Chapter 4, Section 2. When the indicator letters are initial (including when isolated) or follow a vowel or one of the signs, they are sung as /j/+vowel clusters.

The /j/+Cardinal Vowel ClustersCluster   Cyrillic

**/ja/**      **я**      only in the stressed syllable and not followed by a palatalized phoneme including /j/ (-й-). Reading for the Cyrillic letter -я- when isolated, initial, or following a vowel or one of the signs.

The Russian version of /ja/ is similar to the pronunciation of the German word *ja*, but without any aspiration of the /j/.

The /ja/-cluster is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -я-, when standing alone, when initial and stressed, or when stressed and following a vowel or one of the signs, -ь- or -ъ- — not followed by a palatalized phoneme.

To help remember the Cyrillic letter, one may consider that -я- looks like a capital -А- with a soft, left edge.

Examples:

я	/ja/	I ( <i>1<sup>st</sup> pers. sing. pronoun</i> )
яма	/'ja ma/	a hole; a pit
бояться	/ba 'ja t:sʌ/	to be afraid of
он объял	/,on ab 'jaʃ/	he embraced

Cluster Cyrillic

**/jɛ/**      **е**      only in the stressed syllable and not followed by a palatalized phoneme including /j/ (-й-). Reading for the Cyrillic letter -е- when initial or following a vowel or one of the signs.

The cluster /jɛ/ is pronounced similarly to the -ye- in the English word *yes*.

The /jɛ/-cluster is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -е-, when initial and stressed, or when stressed and following a vowel or one of the signs, -ь- or -ъ- — not followed by a palatalized phoneme.

Do not mistake -е- for -ë- (/o/–/jo/). This is difficult, as -ë- is almost never printed with the dieresis, making the two printed letters visually the same (See Chapter 6).

## Examples:

English:	yes	/jɛs/	
Russian:	ехать	/'jɛ xatʲ/	to go (by riding or driving)
	поездка	/pa 'jɛst ka/	a trip
	объект	/ab 'jɛkt/	an object; an establishment; an installation

Cluster Cyrillic

/jo/ ё only in the stressed syllable. Reading for the Cyrillic letter -ё- when initial, or following a vowel or one of the signs.

Obviously, the /jo/-cluster contains the Russian /o/-phoneme, which means that the cluster is pronounced as /jo:ʌ/. This is similar to the *York* in *New York*, when spoken with a stereotypical Brooklyn accent: /nu 'jo:ʌk/.

The /jo/-cluster is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -ё-, when initial or when following a vowel or one of the signs, -ь- or -б-.

## Examples:

English:	New York	/nu 'jo:ʌk/	(spoken with a heavy, Brooklyn accent)
Russian:	ёлка	/'jo:ʌʃ ka/	fir tree; Christmas tree transcribed /'joʃ ka/
	её	/jɪ 'jo/	her; hers (fem. pronoun in <i>gen.</i> and <i>acc.</i> )
	объём	/ʌb 'jom/	the volume of; the scope of ( <i>fig.</i> )

Cluster Cyrillic

**/ju/**      Ю      stressed or unstressed. Reading for the Cyrillic letter -ю- when initial, or following a vowel or one of the signs.

The cluster /ju/ is pronounced similarly to the English word *you*. The singer should make sure that the lips are highly rounded and the vowel does not end in a diphthong.

The /ju/-cluster is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -ю-, when initial or when following a vowel or one of the signs (-ь- or -ъ-).

Examples:

English:    you      /ju:/

Russian:    юбка      /'jʊp kɑ/      a skirt

             уют      /u 'jut/      comfort

             отбюлить /ɑt ju 'lʲitʲ/      to scurry away (*insect*)

Cluster    Cyrillic

[ji]        и            only for the grammatical ending -ии.

The letter -и- generally does not represent the allophonic cluster [ji], even when following other vowels. It is allowable, though, in the reading of the neuter prepositional nominal suffix -ии, for a /j/-glide to be inserted between the /i/-phonemes, for better clarity in singing. In spoken Russian, this ending is usually pronounced as an elongated /i/-phoneme, /i:/.

Examples:

Special Case:    в здании    /v̲ 'zda ni ji/    in the building

Otherwise:       мои            /ma 'i/            my (*poss. nom. plural pron.*)

музеи            /mu 'zʲe i/        museums (*nom. plural*)

### The /j/+Intermediate Vowel Clusters

The *fronting* (when the front of the tongue rises toward the hard palate) of the vowels in these clusters is a result of *interpalatalization*. Because each vowel in this section is preceded by a /j/-glide, then if one is also followed by a palatalized phoneme, including /j/ (-й-), the vowel is sandwiched between two palatalized phonemes. Interpalatalization forces the tongue to arch more than it is for the related cardinal vowel, altering the sound. All interpalatal vowels are somewhat fronted, but Russian lyric diction only recognizes two of the vowels as clearly separate allophones — [a] and [e].

#### Cluster Cyrillic

[jа]      я      only in the stressed syllable, when initial or following a vowel, and only when followed by a palatalized phoneme.

The allophonic cluster [ja] is based on the fronted /a/-phoneme and applies to a rather small number of words. Once the palatalization process is mastered (Chapters 5), the forward adjustment will often occur naturally under the appropriate conditions. The cluster [ja] is only spelled with the letter -я-.

Examples:

Russian:	ять	/jatʲ/	name for the Old Cyrillic letter ѣ
	сияние	/sʲi ˈja ni jɪ/	a glow; a radiance

Cluster Cyrillic

[je]    е    only in the stressed syllable, when initial or following a vowel, and only when followed by a palatalized phoneme.

The cluster [je] is pronounced similarly to the -je- in the German word *jede* (/ˈje: dɛ/). The vowel portion (/e/) should be spoken cleanly, without any hint of diphthong towards [ɪ] or /i/ at the end. If the strict pronunciation causes too much tension for a singer, it is acceptable to relax open the vowel somewhat, but not so far as to produce an open /jɛ/.

The [je]-cluster only occurs in the stressed syllable and is spelled with the letter -e- in modern Russian (in pre-Soviet printing, either -e- or -ѣ- can be used). The [je] form occurs initially or following a vowel, and only interpalatally.

Examples:

Russian:	есть	/jesʲtʲ/	to eat; is (3 <sup>rd</sup> pers. sing. of <i>быть</i> – to be)
	если	/ˈje sʲlʲi/	if; when
	моей	/ma ˈjej/	my; mine ( <i>feminine form</i> )

## The /j/+Reduced Vowel Clusters

### Cluster Cyrillic

[jɪ] я and е in unstressed positions, initial or after vowels, when not interpalatal.

[ji] я and е in unstressed positions, initial or after vowels, when interpalatal.

The cluster [jɪ], similar to the -yi- in the English word *yipee*, is the reduced version of /jɑ/ or /jɛ/. The “Important Note” on [ɪ] vs. [e] (*ikanye* vs. *ekanye*), under the discussion of the allophone [ɪ] (Section 5, above), also applies to the use of [jɪ] vs. [je]. Reconstitution to the non-reduced vowels in the clusters is common, when singing sustained notes at a slower *tempo* (see Section 8 below). Vowel reduction is more appropriate for quicker tempos.

The cluster [jɪ] is *fronted* to [ji], when a palatalized phoneme follows. The /j/-glide remains, when these clusters follow vowels, if spelled with either -я- or -е-.

### Examples:

English:	yipee!	/jɪ 'pi/	
Russian:	язык	/jɪ 'zik/	a tongue; a language
	тирания	/tʲi ra 'ɲi jɪ/	tyranny
	яйцо	/jij 'tso/	an egg
	его	/jɪ 'vo/	him; his; it; its
	новое	/'no vΛ jɪ/	new ( <i>adj. neut. nom &amp; acc.</i> )
	её	/ji 'jo/	her; hers

Exception to reducing unstressed /ja/, when spelled as the letter -я-:

When the letter -я- is part of the feminine, adjectival suffix -ая, though the /ja/ in this suffix is never stressed, the suffix is always sung as /a ja/.

Examples:

какая      /ka 'ka ja/      which (*fem. interrog. pronoun*)

тёмная    /'tʲom na ja/    dark (*fem. adj.*)

### Cluster

[jʌ] the use of [jʌ] in sung Russian, as the reading of the letter -я- in an unstressed position, should be avoided.

## Section 7 – Vowel Assimilation and Reduction: the Phonology

The previous vowel sounds are discussed from a practical stand point, as to what vowel sound to use when. The phonological processes that produce the phonemic and allophonic changes in the vowels are Assimilation and Reduction. Most vowel alteration can be attributed to reduction, when in an unstressed syllable, but there is one condition that causes allophonic alteration due to assimilation.

### Vowel Assimilation (*Fronting*)

The intermediate vowel allophones and allophonic clusters [a], [ja], [e] and [je] are the result of assimilation, as they generally occur in an interpalatal position within a stressed syllable. The palatalized feature of the surrounding phonemes influences the shaping of the vowel. If the vowel phonemes or clusters /a/, /ja/, /ε/, or /je/ are bounded by palatalized articulations, then the vowel phonemes assimilate the feature of a higher arch to the tongue, becoming the more closed allophones. This phenomenon is technically called *fronting* (when the front of the tongue rises toward the front part of the hard palate). Some measure of fronting actually happens naturally to all vowels either in the interpalatal position or just when followed by a palatalized sound (since the preparatory arching of the tongue naturally narrows the space between it and the palate), but only the [a]–[ja] and [e]–[je] allophones are specifically recognized in Russian lyric diction ([a]–[ja] only occurs interpalatally). Fronting also extends to one reduced vowel allophone in an interpalatal position. The allophone is [ɪ], discussed under vowel reduction, and it *fronts* to the /i/-phoneme when interpalatal.

Another point is that the /ε/-phoneme fronts to [e] when stressed and followed by a palatalized consonant, even if it is preceded by /ʃ/ (-ш-), /ʒ/ (-ж-), or /ts/ (-ц-), which usually

negates a vowel's interpalatal status. This applies whether the phoneme is spelled with the letter -ə- or -e-.

### Vowel Reduction (*Feature Neutralization and Centralization*)

Vowel reduction refers to how the articulation of a vowel in an unstressed position, becomes more relaxed and less distinct, the further away it is from the stressed syllable. The phonological underpinning of vowel reduction (as well as assimilation and deletion in consonants and vowels) is a concept called *markedness*. As mentioned in Chapter 2, phonemes are identified by *distinctive features*. Distinctiveness results from the *asymmetrical* or uneven distribution of certain features. Features that are more common or less distinct are called *unmarked*, while rarer, more unusual features are called *marked*. *Markedness* is applicable to far more than just phonetic features, but reduction only involves features. Stressed syllables are rarer; therefore stressed vowels are contextually more distinctive or *marked*. The relaxation, or *neutralization*, of a vowel's distinctive features occurs when *markedness* is lost, as the vowel moves away from the stress.<sup>230</sup> This means that the tongue relaxes toward a more central position in the mouth (*centralization*), while the lips relax toward an unrounded, not very wide opening. The vowel defined by a fully neutral, mid-central tongue position and lax, unrounded lips is what phoneticists call *schwa* (/ə/). The reduced vowels of Russian lyric diction, though, should not neutralize all the way to schwa, but maintain some relationship to cardinal vowels. The vowels primarily affected by reduction, in Russian, are /o/ (-o-), /a/-/ja/ (-a- and -я-), and /ε/-/jε/ (-ə- and -e-).

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<sup>230</sup> Clark, Yallop, and Fletcher, *Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology*, 109–111 and 152–154. The phenomena of *neutralization* and *markedness* were codified by R. Jakobson and N. S. Trubetsky of the Prague School of phonology in the 1930s. N. Chomsky with M. Halle, and J. H. Greenberg, in the 1960s, expanded the theoretical applications.

The first phenomenon of vowel reduction is *akanye* and deals with the vowel phonemes /o/ and /a/. The first *akanye* reduction involves relaxing (*neutralizing*) the lip-rounded feature of /o/, producing /a/. This is due to the vowels waning distinction, as it moves away from the stressed position. The next reduction *centralizes* the tongue to form /ʌ/, and, in Russian speech, the process ends with /ə/. In terms of reading rules, the letter -o-, normally read as /o/, is read as /a/ when unstressed and is in the immediate pre-stress syllable or is the initial letter of a word. The vowel /a/, then, reduces further, in positions more remote from the stressed syllable to the allophone [ʌ]. Further reduction to schwa (/ə/) should be avoided, when singing Russian.

The second phenomenon is *ikanye* and occurs when the vowel /ε/ is in an unstressed position (whether preceded by palatalization or not), and only when an /a/-vowel is unstressed and is preceded by a palatalized consonant or /j/-glide. This condition is associated with the letter -ə- and the indicator letters -е- and -я-, respectively, in spelling. The cardinal phonemes *centralize* by relaxing the tongue upward, but in the case of the /ε/-vowel's already higher tongue position, and, for the /a/-vowel, the preceding palatalization (consonant or /j/-glide), some *fronting* of articulation occurs, and the resulting reduced vowel is the mid-high allophone, [ɪ] (or [jɪ], if appropriate). **Reminder:** after the consonants, /ʃ/ (-ш-), /ʒ/ (-ж-), or /ts/ (-ц-), the allophone [ɪ] does not follow. The [ɨ]-allophone is the only allophone of /i/ that can follow such hard consonants.

## Section 8 – Vowel Reconstitution in Russian Lyric Diction

Often in singing Russian vocal literature (as in all music), words, phrases, sections or entire songs or arias can be musically slower and sustained. Under such conditions the idea of the reduced vowel becomes impractical, as all vowels gain stress-like importance. When the music is slow and sustained, normally reduced vowels should be reconstituted to their unreduced form, which then adhere to the usual phonetic and phonemic rules. Conceptually the process is simple — move backwards along the chain of reduction as the notes lengthen. A chart may be helpful:

Unstressed /o/ (-o-) and /a/ (-a-): [ʌ] reverts to /a/, but /a/ should not revert to /o/.

Unstressed /a/ (-a-) after /tʃ/ (-ч-): [ɪ] reverts to /a/

Pre-stress /tʃ<sup>j</sup>aj/ (чай-): /tʃ<sup>j</sup>i/ may become /tʃɪ/, but not /tʃ<sup>j</sup>aj/

Unstressed /a/-/ja/ (-я-): [ɪ] or [jɪ] revert to /a/ or /ja/, respectively

Unstressed /ɛ/-/jɛ/ (-э- or -е-): [ɪ] or [jɪ] revert to /ɛ/ or /jɛ/, respectively; and /i/ or /ji/ revert to [e] or [je], when interpalatal

**Note:** -и- read as [i] (stressed or unstressed) and unstressed -е- read as [i] after a hard consonant (on long or short notes), remain sung as [i].

Examples:

[Key: “→” means “reconstitutes to”; “=” means “remains”]

молоко (milk) /mʌ ʔa 'ko/ → /ma ʔa 'ko/, not /mo ʔo 'ko/

около (near; about) /'o kʌ ʔʌ/ → /'o ka ʔa/

карандаш (a pencil) /kʌ ran 'daʃ/ → /ka ran 'daʃ/

музыка (music) /'mu zi kʌ/ → /'mu zi ka/

часы (hours; a clock) /tʃɪ 'si/ → /tʃa 'si/

Чайковский (Tchaikovsky) /tʃ<sup>j</sup>i 'kof<sup>j</sup> s<sup>j</sup>k<sup>j</sup>ij/ → /tʃ<sup>j</sup>ɪ 'kof<sup>j</sup> s<sup>j</sup>k<sup>j</sup>ij/, not /tʃ<sup>j</sup>aj 'kof<sup>j</sup> s<sup>j</sup>k<sup>j</sup>ij/

Examples (cont'd):

[Key: “→” means “reconstitutes to”; “=” means “remains”]

язык (a tongue; a language)	/jɪ 'zɪk/	→ /jɑ 'zɪk/
тянуть (to pull; to tug)	/tʲɪ 'nutʲ/	→ /tʲɑ 'nutʲ/
тирания (tyranny)	/tʲi ra 'ɲi jɪ/	→ /tʲi ra 'ɲi jɑ/
ещё (still; yet; also)	/jɪ 'ʃʲʃʲo/	→ /jɛ 'ʃʲʃʲo/
безумный (crazy; mad)	/bʲɪ 'zum ɲɪj/	→ /bʲɛ 'zum ɲɪj/
единный (single; united)	/jɪ 'dʲɪ ɲɪj/	→ /jɛ 'dʲɪ ɲɪj/
нести (to carry)	/ɲɪ 'sʲtʲɪ/	→ /ɲɛ 'sʲtʲɪ/

BUT:

широкий (wide)	/ʃɪ 'ro kɪj/	= /ʃɪ 'ro kɪj/
к Ивану (to Ivan's)	/k̲ɪ 'va nu/	= /k̲ɪ 'va nu/
тиёй (quiet [ <i>adj.</i> ])	/'tʲɪ xɪj/	= /'tʲɪ xɪj/
жена (a wife)	/ʒɪ 'na/	= /ʒɪ 'na/

Review of Vowel Sounds and Coinciding Printed Letters

Cardinal Vowels: /ɑ/, /o/, /ɛ/, /u/, /i/, [i]

/ɑ/	а	initial or when preceded by an unpalatalized phoneme; stressed, immediate pre- or post-stress, or unstressed initial
	о	immediate pre-stress or unstressed initial
	я	stressed only; when preceded by a palatalized consonant, not followed by a palatalized phoneme
/o/	о	initial, or when preceded by an unpalatalized phoneme; generally stressed only; Exception — unstressed in certain foreign words
	жӛ, шӛ	stressed only; consonants remain unpalatalized
	ӛ	stressed only; when preceded by a palatalized consonant
/ɛ/	э	stressed only; initial or when preceded by an unpalatalized phoneme, and when followed by an unpalatalized phoneme
	же, ше, џе	stressed only; only when followed by an unpalatalized phoneme; consonants remain unpalatalized
	е	generally only stressed, after palatalized consonants, before unpalatalized phonemes; in certain foreign words the preceding consonant is not palatalized; Exception — unstressed only in certain foreign words
/u/	у	stressed or unstressed; initial, internal or final, preceded by an unpalatalized phoneme
	ю	stressed or unstressed; after palatalized consonants; Exception — in certain foreign words, preceding consonant is not palatalized [Note: жури can be pronounced /ʒʲu ˈrʲi/]

## Cardinal Vowels (cont'd):

/i/	и	stressed or unstressed; only when a palatalized consonant precedes
	ча, ша, че, ше	only when unstressed and interpalatal
	я or е	only when unstressed, preceded by a palatalized consonant and followed by a palatalized phoneme
[i]	ы	stressed or unstressed; only when an unpalatalized consonant precedes
	же, ше, це	unstressed only, consonants are not palatalized
	жи, ши, ци	stressed or unstressed; consonants are unpalatalized
	и	stressed or unstressed; across word boundary after hard consonants (also see Ch. 6)
		unstressed in the adjectival ending -ий after velar consonants, using Stage Pronunciation

## Fronted Vowels: [a], [e]

[a]	ча, ша	only in stressed syllable and when followed by a palatalized phoneme
	я	only in stressed syllable, when preceded by a palatalized consonant and followed by a palatalized phoneme
[e]	же, ше, це	only in the stressed syllable and when followed by a palatalized phoneme
	э	only when the initial letter, in the stressed syllable, and when followed by a palatalized phoneme
	е	only in stressed syllable, when preceded by a palatalized consonant and followed by a palatalized phoneme

The /j/-glide:

/j/	й	only unstressed
		as part of the /j/+vowel clusters (see below)

Reduced Vowels: [ʌ] and [ɪ]

[ʌ]	а or о	in penultimate or remote pre-stress position, not initial letter
	о	in any post-stress position
	-ТЬСЯ, -ТСЯ	only as reflexive verbal ending
	и	in the adjectival ending -ий, after velar consonants, in Old Muscovite style
[ɪ]	э	in any unstressed position
	че, ше	only when unstressed
	ча, ша	only when unstressed (certain foreign words excepted) and not followed by a palatalized phoneme
	я or е	only when unstressed, preceded by a palatalized consonant and not followed by a palatalized phoneme

/j/+Cardinal Vowel Clusters: /ja/, /jɛ/, /jo/, /ju/

/ja/	я	in stressed position, only when initial, after a vowel or one of the signs, and not followed by a palatalized phoneme
/jɛ/	е (can be ѣ)	in stressed position, only when initial, after a vowel or one of the signs, and not followed by a palatalized phoneme
/jo/	ё	in stressed position, only when initial, after a vowel or one of the signs; dieresis is almost never printed

## /j/+Cardinal Vowel Clusters (cont'd):

/ju/ ю stressed or unstressed; only when initial, after a vowel or one of the signs

## /j/+Fronted Vowel Clusters: [ja], [je]

[ja] я in stressed position, only when initial, after a vowel or one of the signs, and when followed by a palatalized phoneme

[je] е in stressed position, only when initial, after a vowel or one of the signs, and when followed by a palatalized phoneme

## /j/+Reduced Vowel Clusters:[jɪ] and[ji]

[jɪ] я or е in unstressed position, only when initial, after a vowel or one of the signs, and not followed by a palatalized phoneme

[ji] я or е in unstressed position, only when initial, after a vowel or one of the signs, and followed by a palatalized phoneme

## Exceptions:

/ja/ -я in the feminine, adjectival suffix -ая

[ʌ] -я in the reflexive, verbal suffixes -ться (or -тся)

## Special Notes:

- All vowels, when initial are preceded by a glottal stop.
- In sung Russian, especially with sustained tones, the /a/-phoneme in an unstressed position adjacent to the stressed syllable is not reduced (e.g. /'ma ma/ or /'pa pa/).
- The /i/-phoneme cannot follow unpalatalized consonants.
- The [i]-allophone cannot follow palatalized consonants.

- When /ɛ/, spelled with -э-, is internal and preceded by a vowel, as in ПОЭМА, do not insert a /j/-glide between the vowels, as if it were [pɑ 'jɛ mɐ], and do not use a glottal stop.
- When singing Russian, the rounded schwa, as used in French lyric diction, should be avoided.
- Singers are discouraged from using the /ə/-symbol in personal transcriptions.
- Many Russians reduce to [e] rather than [ɪ] or /i/, under specified conditions. The same applies to [je] vs. [jɪ] or [ji]. This accent is called *ekanye* (/ʲɛ kɑ pɪ/).
- The dieresis on -ë- rarely is written or printed, making it visually indistinguishable from -e-. The singer will have to use a Russian-English dictionary to discern which is which.
- The /i/-phoneme, when spelled with the letter -и-, is generally not clustered with the /j/-glide, as /ji/, even after vowels. Exception: declensional ending -ии can be sung as [-i ji] for clarity.
- The Cyrillic letters -я-, -е-, -ë-, and -ю- generally indicate preceding palatalization, whether a consonant or a /j/-glide. Exception: when preceding consonants are /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), or /ts/ (-ц-), which generally are not palatalized.
- Reading the letter -я- as the cluster [jɐ], when in an unstressed position, should be avoided, in sung Russian.

Cyrillic Letter to Phoneme Vowel Index

А а	/ɑ/, [ʌ]; less common: [a], [ɪ], /i/
Е е	/ɛ/, /jɛ/, [e], [je], [ɪ], [jɪ], /i/, [ji], or [i] [unstressed, after /ʒ/, /ʃ/, /ts/]
Ё ё	/o/, /jo/ stressed position only (dieresis is rarely printed)
И и	/i/ most of the time; [i] across the word boundary, when preceded by a hard consonant; when preceded by /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), /ts/ (-ц-); in the adjectival ending -ий, after velar consonants, using <i>Stage</i> pronunciation [ʌ] in the adjectival ending -ий, after velar consonants, using <i>Old</i> <i>Muscovite</i> pronunciation
Й й	/j/
О о	/o/, /ɑ/, [ʌ]
У у	/u/
Ы ы	[ɨ]
Э э	/ɛ/, [e]
Ю ю	/u/, /ju/
Я я	/ɑ/, /ja/, [ɪ], [jɪ], [ʌ]; less common: [a], [ja], /i/, and [ji]

Pre-Soviet Vowel Letters commonly found in printed music:

Ѣ = е

ѣ = и

ѵ = и

A Note on Diphthongs and Triphthongs<sup>231</sup>

In Russian, the *diphthongs* are the /j/+vowel clusters associated with the Cyrillic letters, -я-, -е-, -ё-, -ю-, and the cardinal vowels (incl. -и-) when followed by /j/ [ʲ] (-ај-); /oj/ (-ој-); /εj/ (-эј-); /uj/ (-уј-); [ij] (-ий-) and /ij/ (-ий-)]. Two other vowels can be thought of as diphthongs; the allophone [i<sup>i</sup>] (-ы-), where the /i/-phoneme occurs at the release, and stressed /o/ as [o:ʌ] or [o<sup>ʌ</sup>]. These release vowels result naturally from the relaxation of one of the forming articulators at the end of the vowel's duration — the tongue for [i] and the lips and tongue for /o/. A singer should focus on maintaining the core vowel ([i] or /o/) throughout a sustained tone and allow the articulator relaxation to do the work at the very end of the note.

Russian *triphthongs* are the /j/+vowel clusters associated with the Cyrillic letters, -я-, -е-, -ё-, -ю- followed by /j/ (-ј-). Examples: -яј- [jaј], -еј- [jeј], -ёј- /joј/, and -юј- /juј/. Russian /o/ can be considered a triphthong when it is labialized, as when it follows a labial consonant such as /v/. Under this condition the pronunciation is [ʷo:ʌ] or [ʷo<sup>ʌ</sup>].

**Reminder:** vowel clusters are not diphthongs or triphthongs. As in Italian, in Russian, each individual vowel within a cluster is sung.

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<sup>231</sup> Section based on: Boyanus, *Manual of Russian Pronunciation*, 41–43, 47, 52–53, 68; and Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 73–79.

## CHAPTER 4 – The Consonants

There are 35 consonant phonemes in Russian, not including the /j/-glide. They are made up of 15 pairs of related unpalatalized and palatalized phonemes,<sup>232</sup> 2 phonemes that are intrinsically palatalized, with no “hard” partners, and 3 consonants that are generally not palatalized. Then there are 3 rare palatalized allophones, 3 voiced allophones that only occur in cases of assimilation, and 1 allophone that is a rare case of voicing in one circumstance but is a rare case of palatalization in another. All in all, Russian has 42 unique consonant articulations.

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<sup>232</sup> Many pairs of Russian words have different meanings when the sole phonetic difference is an unpalatalized consonant vs. a palatalized one (minimal pairs), but generally only when the palatalized consonant precedes a vowel or ends a word. This is why palatalized consonants are included as phonemes in the above number. In contrast, when consonants are palatalized in longer clusters, the second, third, or later consonants to be palatalized can be considered allophones, because, whether such remote consonant members of the cluster are correctly palatalized or not tends to be irrelevant to meaning.

## Introduction

Often, a chapter on consonantal pronunciation is organized either alphabetically or by common articulation such as *plosives*, *fricatives*, *stops*, *nasals*, and *liquids*. Such relationships are addressed later, but the following groupings are employed to introduce the singer to the rest of the Cyrillic letters in a way that may assuage some usual fears.

Most of the letters of the Cyrillic alphabet are derived from the Greek printed alphabet (versus the script letters used in Glagolitic). A few were invented, and a couple may have been borrowed from the Hebrew alphabet.<sup>233</sup> Some of the Greek letters have passed into both Russian and English usage with similar symbols and associated sounds, while others have come into Russian usage only, and still others have been transferred from Greek to Russian with familiar symbols but different sounds from the Greek. The following groupings of Cyrillic letters reflect these shared qualities.

The groupings are as follows: *The Cognates* — five letters that look like familiar Roman letters and represent sounds that are similar to English usage; *The Greeks* — six letters that passed from Greek to Cyrillic, retaining the Greek phonemic assignment; *The False Friends* — four print-style and three cursive letters that look like familiar Roman letters, but represent completely different sounds, even from the Greek; and *The Hushers plus II* — five letters that came directly from the Glagolitic alphabet, representing sounds common to the Slavic languages but did not have Greek analogues.

At the end of this chapter, the consonants are re-grouped, in different ways, to deepen the singer's understanding and provide some mnemonic help. The consonants are introduced in two sections: The Unpalatalized Consonants and The Palatalized Consonants.

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<sup>233</sup> Jensen, *Sign, Symbol and Script*, 492; Diringer, *The Alphabet*, 487.

## Section 1 – The Unpalatalized Consonant Phonemes (*alphabet spelling* only)

This section introduces the unpalatalized phonemes and Cyrillic letters of the Russian consonants. Unpalatalized consonants can occur standing alone [к (/k/) and в (/v/) are Russian prepositions, and ж (/ʒ/) is a contraction of же (/ʒɛ/)] or in any position in a word, if not followed by the /i/-phoneme or a palatalized consonant. Many of the unpalatalized, Russian consonants are *stopped*. Similarly to Italian consonants, they release little to no air. The *plosives* (e.g. /p/, /b/, /t/ and /d/) are *fully stopped*, releasing essentially no air.

An important part of consonant articulation is *voicing*. In *Voiced* consonants, the vocal cords vibrate during articulation, and in *unvoiced* consonants, the cords do not. As an example, /v/, /b/, /z/ and /d/ are all voiced consonants, while /f/, /p/, /s/ and /t/ are unvoiced. Consonants can often be paired as voiced/unvoiced partners, since the articulation of the lips and tongue are the same, but one is voiced and the other is unvoiced (e.g. /v/—/f/, /b/—/p/, /z/—/s/, and /d/—/t/). Voicing is highly relevant to assimilation, which is covered in more detail in Chapter 6.

*Alphabet spelling* is my own term of art, referring to how a single Cyrillic letter was assigned to an already existing, Russian phoneme to create an alphabet. Under practical conditions, involving the effects of *assimilation*, *neutralization*, and *deletion* (Chapter 6), most phonemes have two spellings and several phonemes have more. In keeping with the approach of slowly advancing in complexity, the entries below provide only a single, alphabet spelling, while alternate spellings, due to context, are covered in Section 4 and Chapter 6.

The CognatesSound    Cyrillic

/k/        к

The Russian /k/-phoneme is essentially the same as in familiar European languages. In English, the consonant is often released with an aggressive puff of air, but in Russian, like Italian, the air pressure does not build up, so the tongue makes the “click” of the /k/, yet does not produce the release of air. The /k/-phoneme is considered a *velar stop*, but since such technical jargon can be cumbersome, the singer may simply consider the Russian /k/ as similar to the Italian /k/. As with most unpalatalized consonants, the /k/-phoneme cannot precede a palatalized phoneme or the /i/-phoneme (this rule is not repeated in the other entries, as it applies to all consonants, except /ʒ/, /ʃ/, and /ts/).

Russian /k/ is spelled with the letter -к- and is the first cognate presented. It can occur alone or in any position in a word. The letter -к- cannot be read as unpalatalized, if preceding an indicator letter (-я-, -е-, -ё-, -ю-, or -и-) or the soft sign (-ь-). This point applies to all consonant letters, except -ж-, -ш-, and -ч-, and so is not repeated in the other entries.

## Examples:

Italian:	caro	/'ka ro/	dear
	come	/'ko me/	how; like
	cupo	/'ku po/	dark; hollow
Russian:	как	/kak/	how; like
	кот	/kot/	tom cat
	кусок	/ku 'sok/	piece; slice; lump

Sound   Cyrillic

/m/        М

The Russian /m/-phoneme is a nasal, voiced consonant, which is pronounced essentially in the same manner as the /m/-phoneme of the familiar European languages, including English.

Russian /m/ is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -м-. This letter is always written in a double-spike form and never in a double-hump form, as in English. This is because an italicized or cursive, Cyrillic -т- looks like an English, lowercase -m- (see: The False Friends).

Examples:

English:	man	/mæn/	
	mitten	/'mɪ tən/	
	compass	/'kʌm pəs/	
	moat	/mo:ʊt/	
Russian:	мак	/mak/	a poppy; poppy seeds
	море	/'mo r'ɪ/	the sea
	музыка	/'mu zi kʌ/	music
	мы	/mi/	we ( <i>1<sup>st</sup> per. pl. pronoun</i> )
	компас	/'kom pas/	a compass

Sound      Cyrillic/t/      Т *m*

The unpalatalized Russian /t/-phoneme is formed like the Italian /t/, dentally and without a strong release of air.

Russian /t/ is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -т-. An italicized or cursive -т- looks like an English, lowercase -m- (see: False Friends), but italicization is very rare in published music and cursive fonts are even rarer.

Examples:

Italian:	tutto	/tut:to/	all; everything
	italiano	/i ta 'lja: no/	Italian
	tempo	/'tɛm po/	time; tempo ( <i>music</i> )
Russian:	тот	/tot/	that
	эта	/'ɛ ta/	this ( <i>feminine form</i> )
	тума́к	/tu 'mɑk/	a punch; clout
	ты	/ti/	you ( <i>2<sup>nd</sup> pers. sing. pronoun</i> )

Sound    Cyrillic

/z/        з

The Russian /z/-phoneme is generally the same as in English and the familiar European languages. Its *aspiration* has a deep and rich “buzzing” timbre. This feature is most similar to the /z/-phoneme in German, as in the word *Sonne* [<sup>1</sup>zɔn:nə].

Russian /z/ is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -з-. It is considered a cognate, because it resembles an English, cursive -z-. The singer should be careful not to confuse this Cyrillic letter with the IPA symbol /z/. Also, be careful not to read the letter -з- as /ts/.

## Examples:

English:	zoo	/zu/	
	zip	/zɪp/	
German:	sehen	/ <sup>1</sup> ze: ən/	to see
	Rose	/ <sup>1</sup> rɔ: zə/	rose
Russian:	за	/za/	behind; beyond ( <i>prep.</i> )
	ЗОЛОТО	/ <sup>1</sup> zɔ ʔɬ tɬ/	gold
	зубы	/ <sup>1</sup> zu bɪ/	teeth (plural of зуб)
	зыбкий	/ <sup>1</sup> zɪp k <sup>ij</sup> /*	vague; unstable
	музыка	/ <sup>1</sup> mu zɪ kɬ/	music

\*This example contains an alternate spelling for the unvoiced consonant, /p/, due to phonological context. Rules for these spellings are covered in Chapter 6. Other example words in this guide display alternate spellings without special note.

Sound    Cyrillic

/b/    Б б

The Russian /b/-phoneme is generally pronounced similarly to the Italian /b/-phoneme, without an explosive release.

Russian /b/ is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -б-. This is the last cognate letter, because it resembles a stylized, Roman, lowercase -b-. Be careful not to confuse the letter -б- with the Cyrillic letter -в-, which sounds as /v/ or /f/ (see: False Friends). Also, do not mix up -б- with the Cyrillic symbol -Ѣ-, the hard sign. As a mnemonic device, one might imagine the Russian -б- as a Roman -b- with a roof or awning over its belly.

## Examples:

Italian:	banda	/'ban da/	band
	bomba	/'bom ba/	bomb
	buttare	/but: 'ta re/	to throw; to cast
Russian:	бабушка	/'bɑ bu ʃkʌ/	grandmother
	бог	/box/	God
	буква	/'buk va/	letter (of the alphabet)
	быстро	/'bi strʌ/	quickly; fast

## The Greeks

These Cyrillic letters represent Russian phonemes that are similar to those associated with the original Greek letters.

### Sound    Cyrillic

/g/        Г г

The Russian /g/-phoneme can be considered the same as the Italian /g/. It is a voiced, velar stop that does not release much air. The /g/-phoneme is the voiced partner of the /k/-phoneme.

Russian /g/ is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -Г-. It is the Greek letter, *gamma*, in uncial print. The italicized or cursive -Г- is an unusual form that does not come from Greek or Glagolitic cursive.<sup>234</sup> It is reminiscent of a backwards, lowercase, Roman -s-. As with other Cyrillic italicized letters, cursive -Г-, -г-, is quite rare in music publishing.

Examples:

Italian:	gala	/'ga la/	gala; festivity
	io pago	/'i:ɔ 'pa go/	I pay
	gusto	/'gu sto/	taste; savor
Russian:	горе	/'go rʲɪ/	grief; sorrow
	гумми	/'gum mʲi/	chewing gum
	газ	/gas/	gas; natural gas
	угол	/'u ɡɫ/	a corner

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<sup>234</sup> Jensen, *Sign, Symbol and Script*, 470 and 490.

Sound   Cyrillic/d/   Д д *g*

The Russian /d/-phoneme is similar to the Italian /d/. It is dental, without a strong release, and is the voiced partner of the /t/-phoneme.

The Russian /d/ is spelled with the Cyrillic -Д- (from the print-style, Greek letter, *delta*). One version of the italicized or cursive Cyrillic -Д- (second above) looks very much like a Roman lowercase -d-, but another version (third above) looks like a Roman, lowercase, cursive -g- (see: *False Friends*). Luckily, these forms are rare in print.

## Examples:

Italian:	dare	/'da re/	to give
	raddoppio	/rad: 'dɔp: pjo/	doubling; redoubling
	duro	/'du ro/	hard; harsh
Russian:	дама	/'da ma/	lady; queen ( <i>in cards</i> )
	дома	/'do ma/	at home
	дума	/'du ma/	thought
	продавать	/prΛ da 'vatʲ/	to sell

Sound   Cyrillic

/p/      п n

The Russian /p/-phoneme is similar to the Italian /p/, as an unreleased stop. It is the unvoiced partner of the /b/-phoneme.

The Russian /p/ is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -п-, (from the print-style, Greek letter, *pi*). An italicized or cursive -п- looks like a Roman, lowercase -n- (see: False Friends).

## Examples:

Italian:	parlare	/par 'la re/	to speak
	poco	/'pɔ ko/	a little bit
	puro	/'pu ro/	pure
Russian:	папа	/pa pa/	papa; daddy
	порох	/'po rɔx/	powder; gunpowder
	попутно	/pa 'pu tnɔ/	at the same time; in passing
	топот	/'to pɔt/	tramping (feet); clip-clop (hooves)

Sound    Cyrillic

/f/        Ф

The Russian /f/-phoneme is essentially the same as the Italian, French, German or English /f/. It is the unvoiced partner of the /v/-phoneme.

Russian /f/ is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -ф- (the print-style Greek letter, *phi*). The Pre-Soviet form, -Ѡ-, can rarely, but sometimes, be found in Russian vocal publications.

Examples:

English:	father	/ˈfɑ ðə/	
Italian:	forte	/ˈfɔr te/	loud; strong
French:	foule	/ful/	crowd; throng
German:	raffen	/ˈraf fən/	to carry off; to snatch up
Russian:	фамилия	/fa ˈmi ʲi jɪ/	surname; family name
	форма	/ˈfɔr ma/	form; shape; mold
	футболка	/fut ˈboʎ ka/	t-shirt; polo shirt
	конфорка	/kan ˈfɔr ka/	a burner (stove)

Sound    Cyrillic

/x/        x

The Russian /x/-phoneme is formed similarly to the German /x/, or *ach-laut*, as in the famous composer's name, *Bach* (/bax/), but the Russian /x/-phoneme is generally articulated on the front of the velum. Exact placement can vary, but Russian /x/ should be a velar fricative.

The Russian /x/-phoneme is unvoiced and has a voiced partner, the allophone [χ], which occurs infrequently and is not represented by a separate Cyrillic letter. The allophone [χ] will be discussed in the chapter on consonant clusters and assimilation. In Russian, do not substitute a /k/-phoneme for the /x/-phoneme; a common error of English speakers.

The Russian /x/ is spelled with the Cyrillic letter-х- (from the Greek letter, *khi*).

Examples:

German:	Bach	/bax/	brook; the composer's name
	machen	/'ma xən/	to make; to do
Russian:	хороший	/xa 'ro ʃij/	good ( <i>nom. adj.</i> )
	холод	/'xo łɫ/	the cold
	худой	/xu 'doj/	thin; bad; worn ( <i>nom. adj.</i> )
	пух	/pux/	down; fluff

Sound    Cyrillic

/ɫ/    Л л

The Russian /ɫ/-phoneme is the only unpalatalized Russian consonant that does not have a familiar, coincident phoneme from Italian, French, German or English. It seems on the face of it to be almost antithetical to singing, as the sound often seems very back and almost guttural, especially when compared to the Italian dental /l/. This impression is deceiving.

The Russian /ɫ/ is a dental /l/, but it is *velarized*. This means that when the consonant is spoken, the tip of the tongue is up in the dental position (behind the upper front teeth), the *blade* (front-middle) of the tongue is low in mouth, while the back of the tongue is up, lightly contacting the front of the soft palate (the *velum*). When forming /ɫ/, the shape of the tongue is somewhat like an -s- lying on its side, if one were to look at the tongue shape using an x-ray from the side. If the singer slowly says the word *milk*, she/he will notice that the tongue passes through this shape naturally. By suspending this passing form, a functionally correct /ɫ/ can be achieved. If the singer thinks back to the discussion on forming the allophone [i̯], -и-, in Chapter 3, a strikingly close relationship between [i̯] and /ɫ/ may be recognized.

In order to stay clear of the common pitfall of too pharyngeal a formation, the singer should make the back of the tongue contact more at the transition between the hard and soft palate, rather than farther back, toward the uvula. The singer should remember that the back of the throat (the *buccal pharynx*) is kept relaxed (the classic, open throat) not constricted, and that the portion of the tongue that travels down the throat toward the root of the tongue should not be tensed.

Try this exercise:

Place the tongue in the Italianate, dental /l/ position. Keeping the tip of the tongue against the back of the upper front teeth (or at the gums), say the nonsense word “goo-goo.” Noting how the back of the tongue can raise and lower independently of the tip, hold the back of the tongue against the transition point between the hard and soft palate (where it should have been touching for the /g/ sound of “goo-goo”) and say the English name *Luke*. This should produce the velarized sound of Russian /ɫ/ and sound like the Russian word for *onion* – лук, /ɫuk/. Now, practice the Russian example words below.

Russian /ɫ/ is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -л- (from the Greek print-style letter, *lambda*).

Examples:

English:	milk	/mɪɫk/	
Russian:	лодка	/ˈɫot ka/	a boat
	лампа	/ˈɫam pa/	a lamp; a light bulb
	лук	/ɫuk/	an onion
	слышно	/ˈsɫi ʃnʌ/	audibly; audible

## The False Friends

The following letters come from the Greek alphabet and look to English speakers like familiar Roman letters, yet the phonemes associated with the Cyrillic letters do not match what that English speaker might expect.

<u>Sound</u>	<u>Cyrillic</u>
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/v/	В в
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The Russian /v/-phoneme is formed like a /v/-phoneme in Italian, French, German and English, but the quantity and pressure of the air that passes between the lower lip and upper teeth is somewhat less. It must be emphasized that the Russian /v/ is not breathy (it does not leak air). It fully vibrates, but it is not under strong air pressure.

The Russian /v/-phoneme is rather weak. This not only means that it is produced with low air pressure, but also that it is not phonemically influential upon neighboring phonemes. Phonemic influence, in general, is taken up under both Consonant Clusters and Consonant Assimilation, but under the conditions when a voiced consonant would normally cause the voicing of a preceding unvoiced consonant, the phoneme /v/ does not have such influence in Russian. As an example, in Italian, the word *sviglia* is pronounced as /<sup>l</sup>zve λa/, not /<sup>l</sup>sve λa/. The voiced /v/ influences the preceding /s/ and makes it voiced as well. The Russian /v/ does not exert such power. See the example word **свобода** below.

The Russian /v/-phoneme is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -В-. Scholars believe that in Ancient Greek, -β- (the formally printed *beta*), did sound as /b/.<sup>235</sup> Apparently, though, by the ninth century, when it is believed that the Cyrillic alphabet was developed, the /b/-sound had faded from Greek usage to be replaced by the /v/-phoneme, which was retained in Russian.<sup>236</sup>

Examples:

English:	votive	/ˈvoʊ tɪv/	
Italian:	valere	/va ˈle re/	to be worth; to cost
French:	vouloir	/vu lwa:r/	to will; to desire; to wish
German:	willig	/ˈvɪ lɪç/	willing; ready
Russian:	ВОН	/vot/	Here (is); See (here)
	ДАВАТЬ	/da ˈvatʲ/	to give; to let
	ВЫ	/vɨ/	you (2 <sup>nd</sup> pers. plural pron.)
	В УГЛУ	/vu ˈgɫu/	in the corner
	СВОБОДА	/sva ˈbo da/	freedom; liberty

<sup>235</sup> Diringer, *The Alphabet*, 454 (chart), 457 (chart); Jensen, *Sign, Symbol, and Script*, 452 (chart).

<sup>236</sup> Jensen, *Sign, Symbol, and Script*, 470 (chart), 495 (chart). Interestingly, in modern Spanish, written -b- can also be read using variants of the /v/-phoneme, and written -v- can be read as /b/. See: Nico Castel, *A Singer's Manual of Spanish Lyric Diction*, (New York: Excalibur Publishing, 1994), 56–59.

Sound    Cyrillic

/n/        Н н

The Russian /n/-phoneme is pronounced like the same phoneme in Italian, French, German, and English. It is dental and nasal.

Russian /n/ is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -Н-. The orthographic and phonetic background of Cyrillic -Н- is even more interesting and confusing, than that of -В-. In the early Greek alphabet (circa 800 BCE), the symbol Η, called *ēta* /'i ta/, represented the phonemes /h/ and /i/, while the symbol Ν, called *nu* /nu/, represented the phoneme /n/.<sup>237</sup> By the time the more familiar, classical Greek alphabet developed (circa 600 BCE), *ēta* was printed as -Η- and only represented the /i/-phoneme. *Nu* (still pronounced as /n/) came to be printed as -Ν-.<sup>238</sup> In some of the earliest Cyrillic writing, the letter -Н- represented the /i/-phoneme and -Ν- was read as /n/, yet further development caused a reinterpretation of the crossbars of these letters and turned -Η- (/i/) into -И- and -Ν- (/n/) into -Н-.<sup>239</sup> Therefore, the Cyrillic letter -Н- is indeed a *false friend* on two counts, because it looks like the Roman -H- and the classical Greek *ēta*, yet it is read neither as /h/ nor /i/ but as /n/.

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<sup>237</sup> L. H. Jeffery, *Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*, revised edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 28–29, 31; Diringer, *The Alphabet*, 450, 454, 457; Jensen, *Sign, Symbol, and Script*, 452.

<sup>238</sup> Diringer, 454, 457; Jensen, 452; Vlasto, *Linguistic History of Russian*, 36.

<sup>239</sup> Diringer, 476, 481; Jensen, 495, 500; Kiparsky, *Russian Historical Grammar*, 162; Vlasto, 36.

## Examples:

English:	no	/no <sup>u</sup> /	
Italian:	naso	/'na zo/	nose
French:	nouveau	/nu vo/	new
German:	nicht	/niçt/	not
Russia:	наверх	/na 'v <sup>j</sup> εrx/	up; upstairs
	нос	/nos/	nose; prow; point
	нужно	/'nu ʒnΛ/	(one) must; (one) needs to
	длинный	/'dʲlʲi nij/	long

Sound    Cyrillic

/r/      р /ѣ

The Russian /r/-phoneme is *trilled* (rolled), as in Italian and the lyric dictions of French, German, and British English. In these languages, distinctions are often made between double and single letters or initial, final and internal placement, as to whether to sustain a trill or to just *tap* (flip) the /r/-phoneme. The Russian /r/ is trilled when singing. How long one sustains the trilling is varied by placement (generally initial /r/ is a shorter trill, while final /r/ is slightly longer), but Russian /r/ also can be trilled longer or shorter in any position for expressive or dramatic reasons. In Russian speech, the phoneme is often just tapped in the initial and internal positions.

Producing a trilled /r/ can be one of the more frustrating skills to learn, if a singer cannot produce it easily (or at all) by nature. Sometimes there may be physiological limitations or neurological dysfunctions prohibiting easy tongue trilling, but, from personal teaching experience, if a singer can produce a strong clear /t/-phoneme and speak the /s/-phoneme without a lisp, then it is more than likely that she/he can learn how to produce a trilling /r/.

Few exercises exist that actually teach someone how to tongue trill in a fool-proof fashion, but one of the better versions goes as follows:

Slowly and deliberately say:    PUT IT OUT.

Make sure not to use too much air, or sustain too much air pressure.

Keep it light and crisp.

Say the phrase repeatedly without pause, first at a slower tempo:

PUT IT OUT PUT IT OUT PUT IT OUT PUT IT OUT PUT IT OUT...

Now increase speed until the words begin to meld together:

PUTITOUT PUTITOUT PUTITOUT PUTITOUT PUTITOUT...

Once the speed is sufficiently rapid the phrase should morph into a single,

nonsense word:

PROUT...[rhyming with Trout].

With a distinctively trilled [r] phoneme:

PRRROUT PRRROUT PRRROUT PRRROUT...<sup>240</sup>

It may also be helpful to perform the above exercise using an *alveolar* /t/, rather than a *dental* /t/. That is, place the tip of the tongue about a half an inch up from the inside of the teeth onto what is called the *alveolar ridge* at the front of the hard palate (one can feel a set of ridges in the skin). This higher placement can often help those who have a shorter sublingual ligament (colloquially called *tongue tied*), because it forces a relaxation of the underside of the tongue necessary for the independent action of the tip of the tongue.

Though initially the singer will probably use too much air to trill the /r/-phoneme, with practice the breath pressure can be reduced and should be reduced to the least possible, while still clearly and evenly trilling the /r/. Once mastered, a singer should be able to vocalize on a constantly trilling /r/ throughout most, if not all, of her/his range.

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<sup>240</sup> I believe that this exercise came to me from Carl Saloga, a tenor colleague at FSU, in the early 1980s. I have not read or heard of this exercise since, but I have found it to be one of the most successful of its kind. Thank you, Carl, if my memory has served me correctly.

The Russian /r/ is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -р- (from the Greek print-style letter, *rhō*).<sup>241</sup> There is no trick for remembering that this letter is read as /r/ not /p/. Knowing that the Greek letter is called *rhō* might help, but for most people, that would be a matter of rote memorization. The cursive version of the letter more resembles a Roman cursive -r- with a long tail, but cursive is highly uncommon in publishing.

Examples:

Italian:	terrore	/ter:'ro re/	terror; dread
	parrucca	/par:'ruk:ka/	wig; periwig
	arra	/'ar:ra/	pledge; token
Russian:	ра́бота	/rɑ 'bo tʌ/	work; job
	рука	/ru 'kɑ/	hand; arm
	ры́ба	/'ri bɑ/	fish
	уда́р	/u 'dar/	a blow or strike
	бо́бр	/'bo br/	a beaver
	наро́д	/nɑ 'rot/	a people; the people

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<sup>241</sup> Diringer, *The Alphabet*, 454 (chart); Kiparsky, *Russian Historical Grammar*, 162.

Sound    Cyrillic

/s/        С

The Russian /s/-phoneme is pronounced as it is in Germanic languages (German, English, Scandinavian, etc.) with depth of tone to the “hiss” and fairly strong, focused air flow. The most important feature to the sound of the Russian /s/ is the depth of tone. The *sibilance*, made with the mid-tongue low in the mouth, is darker in timbre. This difference will be most important to contrast with the Russian *palatalized* /sʲ/ discussed later.

The Russian /s/-phoneme is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -с-. In modern English, -с- before an -i- or -e- is generally read as /s/. Consider such words as *cedar*, *certain*, *circus*, *city*, and *century* or the Latin borrowed phrase *et cetera*. Even the English name for the letter -с- is read as /si/. Yet, from common experience, English speakers do not tend to associate the letter -с- with the /s/-phoneme.

The Cyrillic letter -с- is borrowed from ancient Greek, *uncial* (/ˈʊn ʃəl/ or /ˈʊn si əl/) script, a large, scribal writing often used in special biblical and liturgical manuscripts. In this style of script, the letter -Σ- (*sigma*) was rounded into what looks like (and actually is the original) -С-.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Jensen, *Sign, Symbol, and Script*, 465–466, 465 n3; Diringer, *The Alphabet*, 457; Kiparsky, *Russian Historical Grammar*, 163.

Examples:

English:	soon	/su:n/	
German:	besser	/ˈbɛsɚə/	better
Russian:	сон	/son/	a sleep; a dream
	оса	/ɑ ˈsɑ/	a wasp
	государь	/gʌ su ˈdarʲ/	a sovereign; Your Lordship
	осыпать	/ɑ si ˈpatʲ/	to sprinkle with; to strew with; to shower with

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Sound    Cyrillic

/d/      *g* (Д and д)

/p/      *n* (П)

/t/      *m* (Т)

Cursive letters in print are so rare that learning them may be unnecessary. If given a manuscript with cursive calligraphy, though, knowing these forms may come in handy.

It might be intuitive that *-n-* is a cursive version of the letter -п-, but unless one has seen early Cyrillic texts, it would not come to mind that -т- might be written with a droopy crossbar, looking something like -п-,<sup>243</sup> and so would logically be written as *-m-* in a cursive form. Even stranger is how *-g* derives from a seventeenth-century, stylized -д- with long bottom-tails, where the right tail is much longer than the left.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Jensen, *Sign, Symbol, and Script*, 496; Vinokur, *The Russian Language*, 33; Diringer, *The Alphabet*, 478–479; Kiparsky, *Russian Historical Grammar*, 163.

<sup>244</sup> Kiparsky, 162.

## The Hushers and II<sup>245</sup>

The next set of letters come from the *Glagolitic* alphabet (the first known Slavic alphabet, devised by the Thessalonican missionaries, Cyril and Methodius) and are hypothesized to have been created by combining or modifying Greek cursive letters, borrowing letters from non-Greek alphabets, such as Hebrew, and/or combining Greek letters with non-Greek letters.<sup>246</sup>

The Russian consonants /ʃ/ (-ш-), /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ts/ (-ц-), /tʃʲ/ (-ч-), and /ʃʲʃʲ/ (-шш-), can be grouped into unpalatalized (hard) consonants and palatalized (soft) consonants. The unpalatalized consonants, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, and /ts/, generally do not palatalize. In contrast, /tʃʲ/ (-ч-) and /ʃʲʃʲ/ (-шш-), are intrinsically palatalized. There are conditions under which /ʃ/, /ʒ/, and /ts/ can be palatalized. The exceptions for /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ are rather unusual, but a palatalized [tʲsʲ]-allophone occurs in a very common word. The exceptions for /ʃ/ and /ts/ are covered in their entries, while the palatalization of /ʒ/ is discussed under the palatalized consonants (Section 2). The hard *hushers* and /ts/ (-ц-) conclude this section. The soft *hushers*, /tʃʲ/ (-ч-) and /ʃʲʃʲ/ (-шш-), begin the following section on palatalized consonants.

On a technical point, /ts/ and /tʃʲ/ are both single phonemes, even though the modern IPA transcriptions are written like clusters, while /ʃʲʃʲ/ is actually a cluster.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> The term *husher* refers to the idea that each sound (/ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃʲ/ and /ʃʲʃʲ/) is like something used to “hush up” someone — see Sophia Lubensky, Gerard L. Ervin, and Donald K. Jarvis, *Nachalo: When in Russia... [Beginning: When in Russia...]* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1996), 43.

<sup>246</sup> Carlton, *Phonological History of the Slavic Languages*, 22; Jensen, *Sign, Symbol, and Script*, 492; Vinokur, *The Russian Language*, 26.

<sup>247</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 148–149, 152–153; Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 179–180. The obsolete, “ligature” symbols for these phonemes are /ts/ and /tʃʲ/.

The Hard Hushers and IISound    Cyrillic

/ʃ/        III

The Russian /ʃ/-phoneme is articulated similarly to the similar French, German or English phoneme, when followed in those languages by /ɑ/, /o/, or /œ/. While the sides of the tongue touch the upper molars and the tip of the tongue seals off the front of the hard palate just at the alveolar ridge, the center portion of the tongue forms a deep ladle-like shape. The air passes underneath the tongue into and out of the well of the lower teeth and exits the lips. The ladle shape of the tongue brings a dark timbre to the phoneme. Generally, the consonant /ʃ/ (-III-) does not palatalize. It is the unvoiced partner of /ʒ/ (-Ж-).

The Russian /ʃ/-phoneme is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -III-, which was borrowed directly from the *Glagolitic*. Ancient Greek did not have a /ʃ/-phoneme, so had no letter to denote it,<sup>248</sup> but there are W-like and pitchfork-like symbols representing the phoneme /ʃ/ in nearly all of the Semitic alphabets.<sup>249</sup> Russian linguistic scholars believe that the letter -III- may have been borrowed from a Hebrew letter,<sup>250</sup> which is thought to have been derived from an Egyptian hieroglyph depicting a short row of reeds, . This pictogram is believed to have been onomatopoeic of the wind passing through the rushes – *shhhh*.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Vlasto, *Linguistic History of Russian*, 34–38; Kiparsky, *Russian Historical Grammar*, 163; Diringer, *The Alphabet*, 487.

<sup>249</sup> Jensen, *Sign, Symbol, and Script*, 255–258, 266, 272, 285, 299, 310.

<sup>250</sup> Jensen., 492; Diringer, 487.

<sup>251</sup> Jensen, 72, 779, 257.

Examples:

French:	chou	/ʃu/	cabbage
German:	schon	/ʃo:n/	already; as yet; even
English:	shop	/ʃap/	
Russian:	ваша	/'va ʃa/	your ( <i>feminine pl. pos. pro.</i> )
	шорох	/'ʃo rax/	a rustle; a rustling
	шумный	/'ʃum nij/	noisy; bustling ( <i>nom. adj.</i> )
	широкий	/'ʃi 'ro kij/	wide; broad ( <i>nom. adj.</i> )*
	пошёл	/pa 'ʃoʃ/	(he) set out; (he) began to walk ( <i>past masc. form</i> )

\*The word широкий (*wide*) displays the tenacious hardness of /ʃ/ (-ш-).

The /ʃ/-phoneme generally cannot be palatalized, so it cannot be followed by the /i/-phoneme. Under these conditions, only the allophone [ɨ] can follow.

There is one word (with its grammatical derivatives), in Russian, in which a single, palatalized /ʃ<sup>j</sup>/ is spelled as -шш- before an indicator letter (the letter -шш- is read as a double /ʃ<sup>j</sup>ʃ<sup>j</sup>/ but can sometimes be /ʃ<sup>j</sup>/). The word is шшют, pronounced as /p<sup>j</sup>ʃ<sup>j</sup>ut/, which translates as *fop*, but is obsolete in usage.<sup>252</sup> The modern Russian word is фат /fat/ from French. Шшют might occur, though, in a work by Pushkin or Lomonosov and so could be in a Russian opera or art song.

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<sup>252</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 87; Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian*, 116.

Sound      Cyrillic

/ʒ/      ж

Since the Russian phoneme, /ʒ/, is the voiced partner of the /ʃ/-phoneme, the tongue is formed the same way for /ʒ/ as for /ʃ/, with a deep ladle-like shape. The air passes through the same way, under the tongue, yet there is also the engagement of the vocal cords (*voicing*). This creates a complex “buzzing” sound, which is much like the French /ʒ/-phoneme.

The Russian, /ʒ/-phoneme is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -ж-, and also was borrowed from Glagolitic. Some scholars suggest that it was created by Cyril and Methodius, but this exact letter-form can be found in other Greek derived alphabets from over a millennium earlier. The associated sounds, though, vary widely across the different cultures.<sup>253</sup> To help with memorization, the letter can be viewed as an -x- with a vertical line drawn down its mid-line.

Examples:

French:	geste	/ʒest/	gesture; action; deed
	jauge	/ʒoʒ/	gauge; measurement
	jour	/ʒur/	day; daytime; dawn

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<sup>253</sup> Vlasto, *Linguistic History of Russian*, 34–38; Kiparsky, *Russian Historical Grammar*, 163; Diringer, *The Alphabet*, 476, 487.

Russian:	ужасно	/u 'ʒa snʌ/	terribly; awfully
	жук	/ʒuk/	a beetle
	жизнь	/ʒizɲ/*	life
	женский	/'ʒɛn skiʃ/	feminine; female ( <i>adj.</i> )
	жюри	/ʒu 'ri/**	judges; a jury
	ружейник	/ru 'ʒej ɲik/	a gunsmith

\*The word *жизнь* (*life*) displays the unpalatalized requirement of /ʒ/. It forces the letter *-и-* to be read as the allophone [i], not as the /i/-phoneme.

\*\*The most recent pronunciation is shown above, but it may have finalized as late as the 1990s.<sup>254</sup> Earlier, *жюри* retained some foreignness and was pronounced as /ʒʲu 'ri/, with a palatalized /ʒ/ (apparently the only word of this sort, not a proper name<sup>255</sup>). Considering how new the pronunciation may be and the strength of tradition in lyric diction, it probably would be acceptable, perhaps recommended, to sing /ʒʲu 'ri/, if the word were encountered in a Russian opera or song.

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<sup>254</sup> In T. F. Ivanova's *Novyi Orfoepicheski Slovar' Russkogo Yazyka: Proiznoshenie, Udarenie, Grammaticheskie Formy [a New Orthoepical Dictionary of the Russian Language: Pronunciation, Stress, and Grammatical Forms]*, edited by A. N. Tikhonov. (Moscow: Russkii Yazyk Media, 2004), the word is listed with the preferred pronunciation as [ʒu 'ri] and [ʒʲu 'ri] as an alternate; and in Kenneth Katzner's, *English-Russian : Russian-English Dictionary, Revised and Expanded Edition* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994) the listed pronunciation is solely [ʒu 'ri]. Yet, in *Orfoepicheski Slovar' Russkogo Yazyka: Proiznoshenie, Udarenie, Grammaticheskie Formy [(The) Orthoepical Dictionary of the Russian Language: Pronunciation, Stress, Grammatical Forms]* by S. N. Borunova, et al., and edited by R. I. Avanesov and N. A. Yes'kova (Moscow: Russkii Yazyk, 1988), the admonition is made: !не рек. [жу]ри, which means "Note! Not recommended: [ʒu 'ri]."

<sup>255</sup> Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules*, 115.

Sound    Cyrillic

/ts/        Ц

Though the /ts/-phoneme exists in German and Italian (English has the /t + s/ cluster, but technically, this is not the /ts/-phoneme), there is little or no restriction as to the tongue formation for these languages. In Russian, the /ts/-phoneme is produced with the tip of the tongue high and the middle of the tongue low (as it is with /ʃ/ and /ʒ/), keeping the phoneme unpalatalized under almost all conditions. In the following examples, the Russian word цирк (*circus*), displays the unpalatalized requirement of -Ц-, so that, generally, the only /i/-allophone that can follow the consonant is [i] (exception, below).

An exercise that may heighten awareness of the appropriate tongue position for this consonant is to go back and forth between the syllable /tsi/, as in *tsetse fly*, and /tsɔ/, as in *Zoll*. This will sound like the word *see-saw* with added initial ‘t’s – *tsee-tsaw*. The cluster /tsi/ puts the tongue into a palatalized position, opposite from what it should be, while /tsɔ/ forces the lowering of the middle portion of the tongue into the proper position for the Russian /ts/.

There are two more important elements to Russian /ts/ that may seem arcane, but help to distinguish the /ts/ phoneme from the /t-s/ cluster, which also occurs in Russian. First, the tip of the tongue is not placed in the fully dental position, as for /t/, but is placed slightly higher at the edge of the gums (the *gingiva*) or even slightly above that. This position will help to keep the mid-tongue low. Second, one does not articulate a full /t/-phoneme followed by a full /s/-phoneme, as would happen with the /t-s/ cluster. Instead, the tongue is placed

against the *gingival* point and the the phoneme results from air being “exploded” through this point of closure. In a way, what is produced is a /t/-phoneme with a strong and elongated release of air. Such articulation achieves a sound that is clearer and of shorter duration than the cluster of dental /t/ and /s/. Russian /ts/ is a single phoneme that should take no more time to pronounce than a single /t/ or /s/.

The Russian /ts/-phoneme is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -Ц-. The letter -Ц- is not represented in Glagolitic, so it is considered to have been an invention of the followers of Cyril and Methodius. Some linguistic scholars place a question mark next to this letter as to its origin, while others hypothesize that it also may have been borrowed from Hebrew.<sup>256</sup>

Examples:

Italian:	pazzo	/ˈpatːso/	lunatic; fool; crazy
German:	zu	/tsuː/	to
Russian:	царь	/tsarʲ/	a czar; a king
	цыган	/tsi ˈgan/	a gypsy (male)
	цуг	/tsuk/	a team of tandem horses
	цокот	/ˈtso kɔt/	clatter; clank
	цирк	/tsirk/	a circus
	целый	/ˈtse ɫij/	whole; entire; intact

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<sup>256</sup> Jensen, *Sign, Symbol, and Script*, 492, 495; Diringer, *The Alphabet*, 487; Carlton, *Phonological History of the Slavic Languages*, 55.

Exceptions to the Hardness Rule for /ts/ and a Spelling Rule for -и-

Some proper and geographical names break the spelling rule that -я-, -ё-, or -ю- do not follow -и- and, in turn, break the “not palatalized” rule for the phoneme. In such cases /ts/ may be palatalized (/tʲsʲ/). As an example, Цюрих (Zürich) may be pronounced /tʲsʲu rʲix/ (though /tʲsu rʲix/ is fine, too).<sup>257</sup> This means that the blade of the tongue is placed in the palatalized position before pronouncing the /ts/. Other examples are:

ЦЯВЛОВСКИЙ /tʲsʲav ʲto fʲisʲkʲij/ Tsyavlovsky

ЦЮРУПИНСК /tʲsʲu ʲru pʲinsk/ Tsiurupinsk (Ukrainian place name)

There are also certain declensional endings in which the /i/-phoneme is not changed to the allophone [i̯], but the /ts/-phoneme is palatalized. These forms will be covered in the chapter on unusual grammatical forms and common exceptions (Chapter 8).

Finally, there is a very common word exception (along with its derivatives), where the /ts/-phoneme is palatalized within the cluster [tʲsʲvʲ], before the vowels /ɛ/ or /o/ (as associated with the indicator letters -е- and -ё-).<sup>258</sup> The word and some of its derivatives are:

are: ЦВЕТ /tʲsʲvʲɛt/ a color (*obs*: a single flower)

ЦВЕТЫ /tʲsʲvʲɪ ʲti/ flowers

ЦВЕТОК /tʲsʲvʲɪ ʲtok/ a flower

РАСЦВЕТАТЬ /rasʲ tʲsʲvʲɪ ʲtatʲ/ to flower; to blossom

РАСЦВЁЛ /rasʲ tʲsʲvʲoʲtʲ/ flowered; bloomed.

<sup>257</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie* [Russian Literary Pronunciation], 269, note.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 86, “Note 1.”

## Section 2 – The Palatalized Consonant Phonemes (*alphabet spelling*)

This section covers the palatalized versions of the previously introduced consonants, as well as the two intrinsically soft *hushers*. Each unpalatalized consonant has a palatalized counterpart (though /ʃ<sup>j</sup>/, [ʒ<sup>j</sup>], and /tʃs<sup>j</sup>/ are rare). The Cyrillic letters for the consonants are generally read in hard form when standing alone, when followed by one of the letters -а-, -о-, -ə-, -у-, or -ы-, or the hard sign (-ь-), or when final. They are usually read in palatalized form only when followed by an indicator letter (-я-, -ё-, -е-, -ю-, or -и-), the soft sign (-ь-) [including when final], or another palatalized consonant. The hushers, /tʃ<sup>j</sup>/ (-ч-) and /ʃ<sup>j</sup>ʃ<sup>j</sup>/ (-щ-), are intrinsically palatalized and have no hard partners. These two clusters begin the section, completing the introduction to the letters of the Cyrillic alphabet.

The palatalization of consonants is an extremely important element of Russian speech, and is covered in detail in Chapter 5. Presently, though, a basic discussion is needed to help understand the content of this section. Some texts on Russian pronunciation describe consonants as being palatalized by placing a /j/-glide after them (e.g. /t/+j/ = /tj/). This description is faulty. A more accurate statement is that most Russian consonants are palatalized by articulating the consonant with the tongue already raised and shaped to the hard palate from the onset. The consonant is articulated with an integrally palatalized tongue position, hence, the use of the *consonant*<sup>+j</sup> symbolism (e.g. /t<sup>j</sup>/).

In many cases, but not all, a palatalized consonant may conclude with a small “explosion” of air, either without voicing (unvoiced release), sounding hiss-like, or with voicing (voiced release), making a “buzzing” sound, based upon whether the consonant is unvoiced or voiced. This release of air at the end of a consonant is similar to that which

occurs naturally when, in English, one speaks the consonant cluster -ch-, /tʃ/, as in the word *chat* [tʃ<sup>h</sup>æt<sup>ʔ</sup>] (unvoiced release), or the -j-, /dʒ/, in the word *jeans* [dʒ<sup>h</sup>i:nz<sup>h</sup>], (voiced release). In most cases, the effect of palatalizing a consonant is quite audible, but in others, it is much harder to perceive.

Due to *regressive assimilation of palatalization* (discussed in Chapter 6), an entire cluster of consonants can be palatalized, if conditions palatalize the right-most consonant in that cluster. Therefore, often, what follows a consonant determines whether it is palatalized or unpalatalized. While the palatalized consonant is transcribed with [j], a following vowel is transcribed as the cardinal vowel or allophone, without an intervening /j/-glide [except under a specific condition discussed in Section 3]. For example: *тюк* (*a bundle; a bale*) is transcribed as /t<sup>j</sup>uk/ not /tjuk/ or /t<sup>j</sup>juk/.

It must be noted that Russian vowels are not “soft” or “hard,” they are just vowels and are preceded by hard and soft consonants. The orthographic conventions already discussed indicate whether a consonant is read as palatalized or not, before a vowel. The intertwined relationship of spelling and pronunciation, in Russian, often causes the conflation of letters, phonemes, and pronunciation rules. This is an error, but it is easily made.

In the following sections, the palatalized consonants are grouped by a combination of criteria. First, the phonemes are presented in order of the difficulty of articulation, and then the consonants are grouped by category, e. g. dental (teeth), labial (lips), nasal, etc. Finally, the consonants are paired, when appropriate, as unvoiced and voiced partners, because such pairs share the same articulation, other than voice.

As in the previous section, only the alphabet spelling is listed, and the alternate spellings are covered in Section 4 and Chapter 6.

### The Palato-laminal Fricatives or the *Hushers*

*Palato-laminal fricatives* or *hushers* are those consonants which are articulated by forcing air through the space made between the hard palate and the mid-tongue, when the tongue is placed up near the hard palate and seals off air along the inside wall of the molars on both sides. The blade of the tongue can then either be high and forward, near the hard palate, or pulled low, away from the palate. The Cyrillic letters representing the *hushers* are -ш-, -ж- (previous section), -щ- and -ч- (this section).

### The Soft *Hushers*

<u>Cluster</u>	<u>Cyrillic</u>	
/ʃʲʃʲ/	Ш	in general.
/ʃʲtʃʲ/		under special circumstances.

The difference between /ʃ/ and /ʃʲʃʲ/ is a matter of duration and palatalization, with the latter being palatalized and of double length. The symbol /ʃʲʃʲ/ is preferred to /ʃʲ:/ (an elongated /ʃʲ/), as it emphasizes the tendency for Russians to rearticulate the /ʃʲ/-phoneme. If one alternates between the English words *sheet* and *shop*, the difference between /ʃʲ/ and /ʃ/ becomes apparent. The slight re-articulation can be practiced by saying the words *leash sheets* together, as in /li:ʃʲʃʲi:ts/.

Because /ʃʲʃʲ/ (-ш-) is palatalized, subsequent vowel sounds may be affected by certain pronunciation rules. Also, orthographically, the letter -ш- will not be followed by the letters -ы-, -я-, -ю-, or -ѐ- due to a spelling rule.<sup>259</sup> A phonological difference between /ʃʲʃʲ/

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<sup>259</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 272.

and /ʃ/ is the fact that the /ʃ/-phoneme generally cannot be palatalized, while /ʃʲjʲ/ is intrinsically palatalized and has no unpalatalized version. This means that, while [i] is the only /i/-allophone that can follow /ʃ/, it cannot follow /ʃʲjʲ/. Also, because /ʃʲjʲ/ is palatalized, if the vowel /a/ (-a-) is sandwiched between it and another soft consonant or softening agent — [j] (-ь-) or /j/ (-й-), the /a/ is considered interpalatal and is fronted to /a/.

The two possible pronunciations of /ʃʲjʲ/ or /ʃʲtʲjʲ/ reflect a socio-political influence on the pronunciation of Russian. The historical pronunciation is /ʃʲtʲjʲ/, as it still is in Russian Church Slavonic. This is also the pronunciation used by many natives of the city of St. Petersburg (previously, Leningrad). In the central region of Russia dominated by Moscow, the cluster's pronunciation shifted to /ʃʲjʲ/ around the seventeenth century. Moscow then gained prominence as a social and political center, and so it became *à la mode* to use the /ʃʲjʲ/-pronunciation, even outside of the region.<sup>260</sup> Since then, the cluster /ʃʲtʲjʲ/ was often considered an overly academic pronunciation, but after the Bolshevik Revolution, especially after Stalin came to power, the /ʃʲtʲjʲ/-cluster returned to favor. Performing artists of that era, though, including stage actors and opera singers, continued to use /ʃʲjʲ/ with the understanding that they were performing mostly pre-revolutionary works and so should speak like the authors and composers of that time.<sup>261</sup> Interestingly, in the post-Soviet era, the pronunciation of /ʃʲjʲ/ has come back into fashion. Today, both versions are almost equally encountered.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Vlasto, 67–68, 324–328; 365–376; 391–393; Michael Shapiro, *Russian Phonetic Variants and Phonostylistics*. Edited by Bull, Chafe, Chrétien, et al., vol. 49, *University of California Publications in Linguistics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 3–6.

<sup>261</sup> Vinokur, *Russkoe Stsenicheskoe Proiznoshenie* [Russian Stage Pronunciation], 21–31; Kuz'mina, *Russkoe Stsenicheskoe Proiznoshenie* [Russian Stage Pronunciation], 5–74, 192–201, 219–226.

<sup>262</sup> Comrie, Stone, and Polinsky. *The Russian Language*, 33–35.

This guide's focus is that of lyric diction, therefore, since /ʃʲʲj/ is the pronunciation at the Bolshoi Theatre, /ʃʲʲj/ is what a singer of Russian should generally use. It is arguable, that if a singer is performing a Soviet Era opera such as Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* or a song based on Gogol's writing or is trying to show a class difference through dramatic character, then employing the /ʃʲʲtʃʲj/ pronunciation might be appropriate. As a general practice, though, sing /ʃʲʲj/.

The Russian /ʃʲʲj/-cluster is spelled with the letter -ш-.

Examples:

Italian:	scintilla	/ʃʲin 'til: la/	sparkle; spark
German:	schießen	/'ʃʲi: sən/	to shoot, dash, dart; to sprout
English:	sheet	/ʃʲi:t/	
Russian:	ещё	/jɪ 'ʃʲʲjo/	still; also; more
	щи	/ʃʲʲji/	cabbage soup
	щука	/'ʃʲʲju ka/	pike (the fish)
	вошить	/va 'ʃʲʲjitʲj/	to wax
BUT:	мешанин	/mʲɪ ʃʲʲja 'ɲin/ or /mʲɪ ʃʲʲtʃʲja 'ɲin/	petit bourgeois
	товарищ	/ta 'va riʃʲʲtʃʲj/	comrade (a very “Soviet” pronunciation)

A Special Case of Palatalization

<u>Cluster</u>	<u>Cyrillic</u>	
[ʒʒʲ]	ЗЖ or ЖЖ	only when in the root of a word and spoken in an affected style. Considered the voiced partner to /ʃʃʲ/.

The cluster [ʒʒʲ] is the voiced partner to /ʃʃʲ/. The tip of the tongue lies behind the lower incisors while the rest of the tongue curves high into the mouth with the top of the tongue following the shape of hard palate, all before the phoneme is articulated. The vocal cords are engaged when spoken. The sound is similar to the -gi- in the French word *girafe*, but, in Russian, the tongue is even a little higher and more forward. As with /ʃʃʲ/, the [ʒʒʲ]-cluster has a rearticulation between the [ʒʲ] elements creating a double-length duration. Therefore, [ʒʒʲ] is used to symbolize the rearticulation and double length, even though the symbol [ʒʲ:] might be considered the formal IPA transcription.<sup>263</sup> This cluster is considered allophonic, because its palatalization is irrelevant to the meaning of the words concerned.

As discussed in the previous section, single /ʒ/ is generally unpalatalized, but the reading of the written cluster -ЖЖ- and its “sister” cluster -ЗЖ- has a socio-political element (like the reading of -ИИ-), and each may be read as palatalized [ʒʒʲ]. The unpalatalized /ʒʒʲ/-cluster is dominant today, such that the soft version seems highly stylized or affected.<sup>264</sup> Yet, the palatalized version is often perfectly acceptable, even desired, when singing late-romantic, Russian works, such as Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin*. This is much like when an

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<sup>263</sup> The unorthodox symbolism used here and in the previous section on the letter -ИИ- is not without precedent. The concept derives from the practice of the Russian phoneticists, including Avanesov and Bryzgunova, to transcribe -ИИ- and -ЖЖ- as /ии’ии’/ (/ʃʃʲʲ/) and /ж’ж’/ (/ʒʒʲʲ/), respectively. The practice can then be found in the works of Trofimov and Jones, Boyanus, and Jones and Ward using the IPA equivalent, similarly to the above. Ward in his own work used the Cyrillic phonetic system like the Russians.

<sup>264</sup> Comrie, Stone, and Polinsky. *The Russian Language*, 35–36.

American stage actor pronounces the word *new* as [ɲu] rather than [nu]; it seems affected in normal conversation, but is quite admirable on stage, especially when performing Shakespeare or singing opera.

Examples:

French:	Gigi	/ʒi ʒi/	(the proper name)
	gigot	/ʒi go/	leg of mutton
	gilet	/ʒi lɛ/	waistcoat; vest

The following pronunciations would be those of a nineteenth-century, high society character:

Russian:	вожжи	/'vo ʒʒi/	reins
	жужжать	/ʒu 'ʒʒatʃ/	to hum; to buzz
	позже	/'po ʒʒi/	later
	уезжать	/u ji 'ʒʒatʃ/	to leave; to depart

The modern pronunciation of these words is:

	вожжи	/'vo ʒʒi/
	жужжать	/ʒu 'ʒʒatʃ/
	позже	/'po ʒʒi/
	уезжать	/u ji 'ʒʒatʃ/

Sound    Cyrillic

/tʃʲ/      ч

The Russian /tʃʲ/-phoneme can be considered the same as it is in Italian and English when followed by the closed vowel /i/. English has both a hard /tʃ/ and soft /tʃʲ/, therefore the symbolism of /tʃʲ/, with *superscript-j*, emphasizes the always-present palatalization, in Russian.

Russian /tʃʲ/ is spelled with the Cyrillic letter -ч-. Due to a spelling rule, the Cyrillic letter -ч- is generally not followed by the vowel letters -ы-, -я-, -ю-, or -э- except in some proper and place names.<sup>265</sup>

## Examples:

English:	cheese	/tʃʲi:z/	
Italian:	città	/tʃʲit:'ta/	city
Russian:	час	/tʃʲas/	an hour
	ручей	/ru 'tʃʲej/	brook; stream
	чёрный	/'tʃʲor nij/	black ( <i>adj.</i> )
	чихом	/'tʃʲo xɫm/	all at once; one fell swoop
	я хочу	/ja xa 'tʃʲu/	I want; I wish
	чисто	/'tʃʲi stɫ/	cleanly; neatly; purely

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<sup>265</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 270.

## The Dentals

While several consonants are formed with the tongue touching the teeth in some way, dental consonants are considered those that are formed with the tip of the tongue touching the back of the front teeth (upper or lower), and where the primary sound comes from this tip-of-tongue/front-teeth interplay. The Cyrillic letters for the dentals are: -C-, -З-, -Т-, -Д-, and -И-. Generally, /ts/ (-И-) is not palatalized.

<u>Sound</u>	<u>Cyrillic</u>
/s <sup>j</sup> /	С
/z <sup>j</sup> /	З

There is no true equivalent of the Russian /s<sup>j</sup>/-phoneme in Italian, French, German or English. Spanish has a similar phoneme in the standard pronunciation, as opposed to the Castilian.<sup>266</sup> In forming the Russian /s<sup>j</sup>/, the tip of the tongue is slipped downward behind the lower *incisors* (front teeth), while the blade of the tongue is placed near to the upper incisors, but does not touch them. The sides of tongue touch the inside of the molars, blocking air flow, while the top of the tongue creates a shallow channel through which the air passes. The friction point with the blade of the tongue (where the sibilance occurs) is forward of the alveolar ridge near the gum line.

Those who attempt these directions may notice a similarity to the German *ich-laut*, /ç/, as in *ich* [ʔiç]. The friction point for /ç/ is near the highest point of the hard palate, which is significantly farther back from the friction point for /s<sup>j</sup>/. The high arch of the tongue for /ç/ and /s<sup>j</sup>/ is similar, but the blade of the tongue is much more forward in /s<sup>j</sup>/ than in /ç/.

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<sup>266</sup> Castel, *Manual of Spanish Lyric Diction*, 72–74.

Some phoneticians may question employing the /s<sup>j</sup>/-symbol rather than /ç/. The important difference is that /ç/ is considered *alveolo-palatal*,<sup>267</sup> where the friction occurs at the transition between the alveolar ridge and the hard palate. This is somewhat farther back than for /s<sup>j</sup>/. Therefore, /s<sup>j</sup>/ is really a palatalized version of an *alveolo-dental* /s/.

The phoneme /z<sup>j</sup>/ is formed like the /s<sup>j</sup>/-phoneme, with a forward arched tongue, yet /z<sup>j</sup>/ is voiced. There is no evidence that the Spanish palatalize the /z/-phoneme, therefore, the following examples will include Spanish words only for the /s<sup>j</sup>/-phoneme.

**Reminder:** palatalized consonants are indicated orthographically when followed by the letters -я-, -ё-, -е-, -ю-, -и-, or the soft sign (-ь-) [including when final].

Examples:

Spanish:	silla	/ <sup>l</sup> s <sup>j</sup> i ʎa/	chair
	sala	/ <sup>l</sup> s <sup>j</sup> a la/	living room
	mesa	/ <sup>l</sup> me s <sup>j</sup> a/	table
Russian:	семь	/s <sup>j</sup> em <sup>j</sup> /	seven
	сюда	/s <sup>j</sup> u <sup>l</sup> da/	to here; this way
	гусь	/gus <sup>j</sup> /	goose
	сильный	/ <sup>l</sup> s <sup>j</sup> il <sup>j</sup> ni <sup>j</sup> /	strong; powerful
	козёл	/ka <sup>l</sup> z <sup>j</sup> ot/	billy goat
	друзья	/dru <sup>l</sup> z <sup>j</sup> a/	friends
	зима	/z <sup>j</sup> i <sup>l</sup> ma/	winter

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<sup>267</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 33.

<u>Sound</u>	<u>Cyrillic</u>
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/tʲ/	Т
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/dʲ/	Д
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The Russian phoneme /tʲ/ is formed by first placing the tongue up along the shape of the hard palate with the tip lying down against the inside of the lower incisors near the gums. Then the blade of the tongue is placed high on the inside of the upper incisors at the tooth/gum border and the air lightly “exploded” through the barrier made by the tongue blade and the upper incisor/gum region. The Russian /tʲ/ represents a single palatalized consonant, not a combination of an unpalatalized consonant followed by a vowel or a glide, such as /ti/ or /tj/.

The phoneme /dʲ/ is articulated as /tʲ/ but the vocal cords are engaged, making /dʲ/ the voiced partner of /tʲ/.

Both the unvoiced and voiced phonemes are released ([tʲʰ] and [dʲʰ], respectively). Such releases are much like what happens naturally when speaking either the phoneme /tʃ/ (unvoiced release) or /dʒ/ (voiced release). Make sure not to speak /tʃ/ for /tʲ/ or /dʒ/ for /dʲ/. With /tʲ/ and /dʲ/, the air stream is much more constricted, as the blade of the tongue is significantly more forward.

The release in pronunciation is especially important when the written letters -Т- or -Д- are followed by a soft sign (-ь-). This is most common when the consonant is final, but it can also occur within a word. The release (unvoiced or voiced) in the pronunciation must be given prominence when the -ь- is present in the spelling.

The symbol [ʰ] is not used beyond the completion of this section, for printing economy. Also, a singer does not need to use the symbol in personal transcriptions.

Examples:

Russian:	тело	/tʲɛ tʲʌ/	body	
	тюк	/tʲuk/	bale; bundle	
	тянуть	/tʲɪ ˈnutʲʰ/	to pull; to tow	[tʲɪ ˈnutʲʰ]
	мать	/matʲʰ/	mother	[/matʲʰ/]
	дети	/dʲɛ tʲi/	children	
	дьявол	/dʲʰjɐ vʌtʲ/	devil	[/dʲʰjɐ vʌtʲ/]*
	люжий	/dʲu ʒij/	hefty; robust	
	чудесный	/tʃu ˈdʲɛ snij/	miraculous; marvelous	

\*The combination of a palatalized consonant and a /j/+vowel cluster (/dʲjɐ-/) produces both a prominent aspiration (in this case, voiced) off the consonant and a strong /j/-glide element before the vowel. This only occurs when the orthography indicates it by a soft sign (-ь-) being written between the consonant-letter and the indicator vowel-letter.



Sound    Cyrillic

/fʲ/        Ф

/vʲ/        В

The Russian phonemes /fʲ/ and /vʲ/, also, do not have exact matches in the languages generally familiar to singers. They are, though, somewhat similar to the -fi- in the Italian word *fiume* /'fju me/ or the -fu- in the English version of the word *fugue* /fju:g/, and the -vi- in the English word *view* /vju:/ or the Italian word *vieni* /'vjɛ ni/. Of course, the tongue must be in the palatalized position before articulation.

**Reminder:** the singer should always think of palatalized consonants as complex but single, integrated articulations, not clusters of a consonant plus a /j/-glide then a vowel.

Examples:

Russian:	ферма	/'fʲɛr mɑ/	a farm	
	верфь	/vʲɛrfʲʰ/	a shipyard	[/vʲɛrfʲ/]
	фьорд	/'fʲʰort/	fjord	[/'fʲort/]
	вязка	/'vʲas kɑ/	binding; knitting; bundle	
	вьёт	/vʲʰjot/	(she/he) twists together; (it) builds (a nest)	[/vʲjot/]

### Lateral -L- and The Nasals

These phonemes are grouped together because they do not have unvoiced partners (the technical terminology for this kind of sustainable and resonant consonant is *sonorant*). Also, each has phonetic similarities to familiar sounds in the Romance languages. One phoneme has a unique IPA symbol, rather than the standard *consonant* +<sup>j</sup> symbolism like /t<sup>j</sup>/ or /p<sup>j</sup>/.

A *lateral* consonant is one in which the air passes sideways (laterally) around the tongue. Essentially, most of the lateral phonemes are /l/-like. The differences lie in where the air slips out along the tongue. In the dental /l/, the air comes out the sides near the tip of the tongue. In the pronunciation of the Italian word *gli*, commonly transcribed as [ʎi], the air exits the sides of the tongue near the back, upper molars.

A *nasal* consonant is one that, in some way, closes off the exit of air out of the mouth, thus forcing the air to pass through the nasal passages, which requires that the soft palate drop down. Examples of common nasal consonants are /m/, /n/, /ɲ/, and /ŋ/. The /ɲ/-phoneme is present in the French name *Mignon* (/mi ɲɔ̃/), and the /ŋ/-phoneme occurs in the English word *hang* (/hæŋ/).

The Cyrillic letters in this section are: -Л- for the *lateral*, -М- and -Н- for the *nasals*.

Sound    Cyrillic

/lʲ/        л

Though the Russian /lʲ/-phoneme is similar to the Italian [ʎ]-allophone (as in the word *gli*), there is a major difference in the articulation between the two. The Italian [ʎ]-allophone is actually fricative; the laterally escaping air causes a friction or vibration between the sides of the tongue and the back molars. This produces the idiomatic, Italian, lateral lisp-like sound. In Russian, there is no friction, thus the sides of the tongue are sealed against the back molars and do not leak any air. The air actually passes around the base of the tongue and comes up from the well of the lower teeth. The Russian /lʲ/ should be liquid (*sonorant*), not “lisp-ing” (*fricative*). The /lʲ/-phoneme does not occur before other palatalized consonants, except itself (that is, /lʲlʲ/). Within other clusters, only the hard /l/-phoneme is used.

## Examples:

Russian:	лѐн	/lʲon/	flax
	лѐгкo	/lʲɪx 'ko/	easily; lightly
	люди	/'lʲu dʲi/	people
	лѐжкa	/'lʲa ʃka/	haunch; upper thigh
	лицo	/lʲi 'tso/	face
	солѐ	/so lʲ/	salt; <i>in music</i> : sol; G
	только	/'to lʲ kɐ/	only

Sound   Cyrillic/m<sup>j</sup>/   М

The Russian phoneme /m<sup>j</sup>/, in isolation, is practically indistinguishable from unpalatalized /m/ to the ear (try this: hum, then switch between an unpalatalized and palatalized tongue position). In Latin based languages and English, palatalization usually occurs naturally, when an /m/-phoneme is followed by an /i/-phoneme or a /j/-glide, such as in the following cases:

English:	meet	/m <sup>j</sup> it <sup>h</sup> /
Spanish:	Mira!	/'m <sup>j</sup> i: ra/ Look!
Italian:	miele	/'m <sup>j</sup> jε le/ honey
French:	Mignon	/m <sup>j</sup> i ɲɔ̃/

The palatalization in these examples is generally not notated in broader IPA transcription.

In Russian, though, the /m<sup>j</sup>/-phoneme must be used consciously and a slight but perceivable j-gliding element must exist between the consonant and any vowel, except /i/.

Examples:

Russian:	мясо	/'m <sup>j</sup> α sΛ/	meat
	место	/'m <sup>j</sup> ε stΛ/	place; site
	семья	/s <sup>j</sup> i 'm <sup>j</sup> ja/	family
	в мёде	/v m <sup>j</sup> o d <sup>j</sup> i/	in honey
	мир	/m <sup>j</sup> ir/	world; peace
	мюзикл	/'m <sup>j</sup> u z <sup>j</sup> ikt̚/	a musical (show)
	семь	/s <sup>j</sup> em <sup>j</sup> /	seven

Sound    Cyrillic

/ɲ/        Н

The Russian /ɲ/-phoneme is essentially pronounced in the same fashion as in the familiar European languages and English. The tongue must be in its palatal position before the phonation of the consonant. The /ɲ/-phoneme is palatalized only before dental consonants in clusters (see rules in Chapter 5).

The single IPA symbol incorporates palatalization therefore, -ня- is transcribed as /ɲa/ not /n<sup>j</sup>a/, -нё- as /ɲo/ not /n<sup>j</sup>o/, etc.

## Examples:

Italian:	sdegno	/'zde ɲo/	disdain; contempt
French:	ligne	/li ɲə/	line; row
Russian:	нет	/ɲet/	no
	коньяк	/ka 'ɲjak/	cognac
	нюхать	/'ɲu xat <sup>j</sup> /	to smell; to sniff
	нёбо	/'ɲo bɫ/	the hard palate; the roof of the mouth
	день	/d <sup>j</sup> eɲ/	the day
	никто	/ɲi 'kto/	no one; nobody

## The Velars

Unpalatalized *velar* consonants are formed by the tongue rising to meet the soft palate, known as the *velum*. In singing Russian, this point can be at the front of the velum, or at the transition between the hard and soft palate. A velar consonant can be *stopped* (/k/ and /g/), when the tongue-velum contact stops the air flow then releases either explosively, as in English, or not, as in Russian. It also can be *fricative* (/x/) when the contact is looser, causing a friction between the articulating tissues producing distinctive sounds from cat-hissing to mucous-clearing. Palatalized velar consonants shift forward onto the back of the hard palate. The Cyrillic letters for the Russian velar consonants are: -к-, -г- and -х-.

### Sound    Cyrillic

/k<sup>j</sup>/        к

/g<sup>j</sup>/        г

Similarly to the /m<sup>j</sup>/-phoneme, palatalization happens rather naturally, when a /k/-phoneme is followed by an /i/-phoneme or a j-glide, such as in:

English: keep    /k<sup>j</sup>i:p<sup>h</sup>/

Italian: chiaro    /'k<sup>j</sup>ja: ro/ clear; bright

French: quignon    /k<sup>j</sup>i ɲɔ̃/ hunk (of bread)

As noted earlier, the palatalization in the above examples is generally not notated in broader IPA transcription.

The Russian /k<sup>j</sup>/-phoneme is articulated quite forward on the hard palate, with the blade of the tongue somewhat near to the alveolar ridge.

The phoneme /g<sup>j</sup>/ is the voiced partner to /k<sup>j</sup>/ and so is articulated in the same way and under the same circumstances, but the vocal cords are engaged. Generally, the /g<sup>j</sup>/-phoneme only occurs before the vowels /ε/, /e/, /i/, or /ɪ/, though names and words of foreign origin can introduce other combinations.<sup>268</sup>

Examples:

Russian:	с кем	/s <sup>j</sup> k <sup>j</sup> εm/	with whom
	ткёт	/tk <sup>j</sup> ot/	(she/ he) weaves
	кювет	/k <sup>j</sup> u 'v <sup>j</sup> εt/	ditch
	руки	/'ru k <sup>j</sup> i/	hands; arms
	генерал	/g <sup>j</sup> i nɪ 'rɑɫ/	general ( <i>military</i> )
	гибкий	/'g <sup>j</sup> iɸ k <sup>j</sup> i/*	flexible
	гений	/'g <sup>j</sup> e n <sup>j</sup> i/	genius
	Гяуров	/g <sup>j</sup> ɑ 'u rɒf/	Ghiaurov ( <i>Bulgarian surname</i> )
	гюрза	/'g <sup>j</sup> ur zɑ/	a blunt-nosed viper ( <i>zoology</i> )

\*The reading of the adjective ending -кий as /k<sup>j</sup>i/ reflects a Russian lyric diction style that borrows from Russian stage diction. In modern Russian speech, this cluster is pronounced as /k<sup>j</sup>iɸ/.

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<sup>268</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 220.

Sound    Cyrillic

/xʲ/        х

Unlike the formation of /kʲ/ and /gʲ/, the phoneme /xʲ/ is the /x/-phoneme with the contact of the tongue placed only somewhat more forward onto the back portion of the hard palate, rather than significantly more so. This position is essentially midway between the positions for /ç/ and /x/ (known to singers as the German *ich-laut* and *ach-laut*, respectively). The biggest difference from the other palatalizations is that the front portion of the blade of the tongue is relaxed away from the palate, while the back is raised toward the back of the hard palate. Within the context of a word, though, the position of the blade of the tongue is less important than the position of the back portion.

There is a voiced allophone of this consonant phoneme, but it is unusual. It is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, section 4 under “Regressive Voicing Assimilation.”

## Examples:

Russian:	хитро	/xʲi 'tro/	slyly (adv.)
	стихи	/'sʲtʲi xʲi/	verses; poetry
	схема	/'sʲxʲε mɔ/	a diagram; a chart
	херес	/'xʲe rʲis/	sherry

A Difficult Palatalized PhonemeSound    Cyrillic/r<sup>j</sup>/        р

For English speakers, the trilled /r/ is often a difficult phoneme to produce, but it is also one of the harder phonemes to palatalize. Therefore, the /r<sup>j</sup>/-phoneme can often be quite a difficult Russian consonant for Anglophones to articulate (especially Americans). First, a singer must be fully proficient at trilling with the tongue tip up and the blade sinking down toward the well of the lower teeth. Once this is mastered, the singer must then learn to trill the tongue tip while keeping the center of the blade of the tongue up near the hard palate.

One possible exercise for differentiation and practice is to first repeat /ro/ or /ra/ a few times, with the trill strong and sustained, then change to /ri/ or /re/, then finally change to /rji/ or /rje/. After a while the complex position of the tongue will be achievable independently of the air flow so that the singer can have the tongue in position before speaking it, thus producing a true /r<sup>j</sup>/-phoneme.

On a practical level, the phoneme is most noticeable when its associated Cyrillic letter, -р-, is directly followed by a soft sign, -ь-, because the pronunciation of this cluster requires a small aspiration along with the trill. The written cluster -рь- can happen either at the end of a word or internally. Though infrequent, this challenging cluster is common enough to demand mastery.

Examples:

Russian:	река	/rʲɪ 'kɑ/	river	
	орёл	/ɑ 'rʲoɫ/	eagle	
	рюмка	/'rʲum kɑ/	shot glass (for liquor)	
	порядок	/pɑ 'rʲɑ dɫk/	order; sequence	
	рис	/rʲis/	rice	
	дверь	/dʲvʲerʲh/	door	[/dʲvʲerʲ/]
	горький	/'gɔrʲh kʲj/*	bitter	[/'gɔrʲ kʲj/]
	рьяность	/'rʲhʲɑ nɫsʲtʲ/	zeal	[/'rʲhʲɑ nɫsʲtʲ/]

\*Again, the reading of the adjective ending -кий as /kʲj/ reflects a Russian lyric diction style which borrows from Russian stage diction. In speech, this cluster is pronounced as /kʲij/.

### Section 3 – The Signs: *Tvyordyi Znak* (Ѣ) and *Myagkii Znak* (ь)

*Tvyordyi znak* (Ѣ) [ТВЁРДЫЙ ЗАК, in Cyrillic] and *myagkii znak* (ь) [МЯГКИЙ ЗАК] literally mean *hard sign* and *soft sign*. The spoken pronunciations of these terms are /'tʲvʲor dʲi j znak/ and /'mʲæxʲ kʲi j znak/, respectively (the letter -г- in МЯГКИЙ is read as /xʲ/ due to a phonological effect). These signs are only found following consonant letters.

In Old Cyrillic writing, the letters -Ѣ- and -ь- were assigned to distinct vowel sounds. By the 1100's, though, these letters were replaced by -o- and -e-, when written in stressed syllables, and when in unstressed syllables, they were read as *reduced* vowels — one backed, /ə/ (-Ѣ-) and one fronted, /ɪ/ (-ь-). Slavic linguists suggest that these letters fully lost phonemic value by 1200 CE. As signs, these symbols marked the boundaries of words and certain syllables, as well as indicated a hard (by -Ѣ-) or soft (by -ь-) preceding consonant. Therefore, every word that ended in a consonant was written with either -Ѣ- or -ь- following that consonant.<sup>269</sup> Peter the Great's alphabet reform (1708-1710) considered dropping the use of final -ь-, but publishers continued to use it into the early 1900s. It was not until an education reform after the Bolshevik Revolution (1917) that hard signs following final consonant letters were officially dropped from printing and hardness was considered the default condition for signless, final consonants.<sup>270</sup> Because this latter reform occurred after the golden era of Russian art music publication (mostly in the 1800s), today, there is still a great quantity of Russian vocal music that uses -ь- in the pre-reform fashion. The singer must

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<sup>269</sup> G. O. Vinokur, *The Russian Language: A Brief History*. Translated by Mary A. Forsyth. Edited by James Forsyth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 21–29, 28; Vlasto, *A Linguistic History of Russia*, 1–10, 34–41, 40; W. K. Matthews, *The Structure and Development of Russian*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), 116. The signs are not considered consonants, so Russian words are not thought of as ending in signs, they are conceived of as ending in consonants, while the signs convey a feature of the final consonants.

<sup>270</sup> Comrie, Stone, and Polinsky, *The Russian Language*, 284–291, 290.

simply ignore -Ь- when it is the final symbol of a word, but recognize that it usually has some significance when used internally. Extremely important is not to mix up the two signs, since such confusion could well affect the meaning of words, if palatalization were incorrect.

### Твёрдый Знак /'tʲvʲ or dʲj znak/: the Hard Sign

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>IPA</u>
-Ь-	none

In modern usage, the sign -Ь- is written after certain prefixes that are added to roots generally beginning with a /j/+vowel cluster. Usually, the sign produces a boundary which regressive palatalization does not cross [the exception is when the prefix ends in /v/ (-В-), /s/ (-С-), or /z/ (-З-)]. The consonant before -Ь- generally should be pronounced in unpalatalized form, while the /j/+vowel cluster after the sign should articulate the initial /j/-glide. For /v/ (-В-), /s/ (-С-), or /z/ (-З-), the consonants are palatalized, and the following /j/+vowel cluster is articulated, as well, producing an extra aspiration between the consonant and the vowel (as if the sign was a *myagkii znak* (-ь-); see below).<sup>271</sup> Such nuances are often hard to recognize by non-Russian speakers, but they can be very important, since these details may be the only audible difference between two words with different meanings. The following examples begin with two pairs of words where the only spelling difference is the internal -Ь-. Sometimes, there is a change in syllable stress (helping aural differentiation), but at other times, the word will be one syllable and wholly dependent upon the speaker's pronunciation

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<sup>271</sup> Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian*, 75–87; 82.

for differentiation. Two pairings present strong phonetic similarities, but all of the examples require careful attention.

Examples:

объеда́ть	/ab jɪ 'datʲ/	to eat out of house and home ( <i>coll.</i> )
обеда́ть	/a 'bʲɛ datʲ/	to have the midday meal (dinner; lunch)
съе́сть	/sjesʲtʲ/	to eat (up)
се́сть	/sʲesʲtʲ/	to sit down [perfective of садиться]
въе́зд	/vjɛst/	an entrance; an entry
ве́ст	/vʲɛst/	west; west wind ( <i>nautical usage only</i> )
по́дъём	/pad 'jom/	a raising or lifting up; an ascent
объя́ть	/ab 'jatʲ/	to embrace; to envelop
разъя́рять	/rɐz ji 'rʲatʲ/	to enrage; to infuriate
съя́мный	/'sjom nij/	removable; detachable

## Мягкий Знак /'m<sup>j</sup>æx<sup>j</sup> k<sup>j</sup>ij znak/: the Soft Sign

Cyrillic      IPA

-Ь-      *superscript j* diacritic ([<sup>j</sup>])

The sign, -Ь-, represents a change in the formation of the consonant(s) immediately preceding it. *Myagkiĭ znak* generally indicates that the preceding consonant is palatalized. The rules and effects of palatalization will be covered in detail in the following chapter, but it must be emphasized that if the palatalization indicated by this sign is disregarded, such a mispronunciation can very likely change the meaning of a word. The following examples present pairs of words that have different meanings, if the palatalization indicated by the *myagkiĭ znak* is ignored.

Examples:

шесть	/ʃes <sup>j</sup> tʲ/	six
шест	/ʃest/	pole; long stick
полька	/'pol <sup>j</sup> ka/	a Polish woman; a polka ( <i>dance</i> )
полка	/'poł ka/	a shelf
мать	/mat <sup>j</sup> /	mother
мат	/mat/	mate ( <i>in chess</i> ); floor mat
гостья	/'go s <sup>j</sup> tʲjɪ/	a female guest
гостя	/'go s <sup>j</sup> tʲɪ/	a (male) guest's ( <i>gen. sing. of гость</i> )

Though the sign -Ь- often comes at the end of words, it can also occur anywhere within a word. In cases when [<sup>j</sup>] (-Ь-) comes between a consonant and a /j/+vowel cluster, the

“double” /j/-glide ([<sup>j</sup>j]) produces a strong aspiration (unvoiced or voiced). To feel the two types of aspiration, first, speak the French word *tien* (yours) /tjɛ̃/ and allow the /tj/ to “lisp,” as it were, so that a strong stream of air passes through the space between the upper and lower, front teeth. Then, isolate the /tj/ without the vowel; be sure not to slip into saying /tʃ/, and keep the air stream narrowly focused, centrally aligned and forward in placement. This is the unvoiced, aspirated /j/-glide. Now, use the same process, but change the word to the English word *deuce*, but use a British accent so that the word is pronounced as /djus/ (similar to, but not the same as the word *juice*). One should feel a narrowly focused vibration right at or near the gingiva or the alveolar ridge, on the inside of the upper front teeth, when making the /dj/ sound. With the cluster /dj/ (like /tj/), make sure it does not become /dʒ/, as in *juice*, and keep the voiced aspiration narrow, central and forward. These kinds of aspirations are made by the palatalized plosive and sibilant consonants, that is, consonants which have either some explosive or hissing air at release, including /t<sup>j</sup>/, /d<sup>j</sup>/, /s<sup>j</sup>/, /z<sup>j</sup>/, /p<sup>j</sup>/, /b<sup>j</sup>/, /f<sup>j</sup>/, /v<sup>j</sup>/, /tʃ<sup>j</sup>/, and /ʃ<sup>j</sup>ʃ<sup>j</sup>/ (in rare cases of assimilation, /d<sup>j</sup>ʒ<sup>j</sup>/ can occur in Russian). The palatalized sonorants (the sustainable, voiced consonants), /l<sup>j</sup>/, /r<sup>j</sup>/, /m<sup>j</sup>/, and /ŋ<sup>j</sup>/, are sung with no extra emphasis or elongation.

## Examples:

большой	/balʲ ˈʃoj/	big; large; grand (adj.)
польза	/ˈpolʲ za/	a use; a benefit
тюрьма	/ˈtʲurʲ ma/	a prison
меньший	/ˈmʲɛn ʃij/	smaller; lesser (comp. of малый and маленький)
свадьба	/ˈsvadʲ ba/	a wedding
редька	/ˈrʲetʲ ka/	a radish
сесть	/sʲesʲtʲ/	to sit down [perfective of садиться]
площадь	/ˈplʲo ʃʲʲitʲ/	a plaza; a square
гусь	/gusʲ/	a goose
князь	/kʲnasʲ/	(a) prince
кровь	/kroʲfʲ/	blood
голубь	/ga ɫupʲ/	a pigeon
копье	/ka ˈpʲjo/	a spear
гостья	/ˈgo sʲtʲjɪ/	a female guest
вьющийся	/ˈvʲju ʃʲʲij sɐ/	curly (hair); climbing (plant) [adj.]
пьёт	/pʲjot/	(she/he) drinks

Exceptions: when -ь- does not indicate palatalization or extra aspiration.

- 1) When -ь- immediately follows the letters -ж- or -ш- (-ь- does not occur after -ц-), it does not indicate palatalization in pronunciation.<sup>272</sup>
- 2) When -ь- immediately follows the letters -ч- or -щ-, it does not indicate extra aspiration in pronunciation.
- 3) The cluster -тьс- is generally treated like -ц-, and so the -ь- is ignored and the cluster is read with the hard sound, /ts/.

Examples:

рожь	/rɔʒ/	rye
глушь	/gɫuʃ/	wilderness
утешьте	/u 'tʲɛʃ tʲɪ/	console yourself; take comfort ( <i>imp.</i> )
дочь	/dotʃʲ/	a daughter
вещь	/vʲɛʃʲʲ/	a thing or work ( <i>masc. sing.</i> )
не плачьте	/nɪ 'pɫatʃʲ tʲɪ/	don't cry ( <i>plural imp.</i> )
дочь бы	/dodʒʲ bi/	(the) daughter would...
одеваться	/a dʲɪ 'va tʲsɫ/	to dress oneself; to get dressed

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<sup>272</sup> Historically, -ж- and -ш- followed by -ь- were read as palatalized phonemes. Such softening was lost over time, but the spelling remained in many words.

## Section 4 – Final Consonants

In Russian, as in German, final consonants are generally unvoiced, regardless of spelling. This is true for both unpalatalized and palatalized consonants. This does not apply to the *sonorants*, /ʎ/, /m/, /n/, and /r/ (and their palatalized forms), which obviously require voicing in order to be heard at all.

Under certain circumstances of assimilation between the ends and beginnings of adjacent words, final consonants are voiced, including consonants that have no phonemic voiced partner (making such voiced consonants allophones only). Assimilation of voicing across the word boundary is discussed in Section 3 of Chapter 6.

This is the first presentation of alternate spellings of certain phonemes. The alternate spellings have a logical relationship to the phonemes. In general, the alphabet spelling of a voiced consonant, such as -б- for /b/, is the alternate spelling for the phoneme's unvoiced partner, in this case /p/ (unpalatalized and palatalized). Only the letters that are read as voiced in other circumstances are of concern here. The associated phonemes are the following when not voiced due to assimilation across the word boundary.

<u>Sound</u>	<u>Cyrillic</u>
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/p/	-п
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/p <sup>j</sup> /	-п <sup>ь</sup>
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The phoneme /p/ is the unvoiced partner of /b/. Under most conditions, when the Cyrillic letter -п ends a Russian word, it is read as /p/. A letter -п when followed only by the soft sign (-ь) is still treated as a final consonant, and so is read as /p<sup>j</sup>/.

Examples:

зуб	/zup/	a tooth
столб	/stołp/	a post; a pillar; a column
скорбь	/skor <sup>j</sup> p <sup>j</sup> /	sorrow; grief
зыбь	/zip <sup>j</sup> /	rippling (on a surface)

Sound    Cyrillic

/f/        -В

/f<sup>j</sup>/      -Вь

The phoneme /f/ is the unvoiced partner of /v/. Under most conditions, the Cyrillic letter -В in the final position is read as the phoneme /f/. Final letter -В when followed by the soft sign (-ь-) is read as /f<sup>j</sup>/.

Examples:

кров	/krof/	a shelter
лев	/l <sup>j</sup> εf/	a lion
Прокофьев	/pra 'ko f <sup>j</sup> ɪf/	Prokofiev
кровь	/krof <sup>j</sup> /	blood
церковь	/'tser <sup>j</sup> kΛf <sup>j</sup> /	a church

Sound    Cyrillic

/k/        -Г

The phoneme /k/ is the unvoiced partner of /g/. Under most conditions, final letter -Г is read as /k/. Final Cyrillic -Гъ does not occur in Russian.<sup>273</sup>

Examples:

друг	/druk/	a friend ( <i>masculine</i> )
берег	/'bʲe rʲɪk/	a coast; a shore; a river bank
снег	/sʲnʲɛk/	snow

Sound    Cyrillic

/t/        -д -Ѡ

/tʲ/      -дЬ -ѠЬ

The unvoiced partner of the phoneme /d/ is /t/. Final letter -д is read as /t/, and final Cyrillic -дЬ, as /tʲ/.

Examples:

обед	/a 'bʲɛt/	midday meal; lunch
сад	/sat/	a garden
отъезд	/at ʲɛst/	departure
площадь	/'pʲɫo ʃʲʲɪtʲ/	a space; a square (plaza)
грудь	/grutʲ/	chest; breast

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<sup>273</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 220–221.

Sound    Cyrillic

/ʃ/    -Ж; -ЖЬ

The unvoiced partner of the phoneme /з/ is /ʃ/. Both final letter -ж and final Cyrillic -жь are read as /ʃ/, because /з/ is generally not palatalized, and its unvoiced partner, /ʃ/, follows the same rule.

Examples:

НОЖ	/noʃ/	a knife
СВЕЖ	/sʲvʲɛʃ/	fresh; cool ( <i>short form, masculine adj.</i> )
ЛОЖЬ	/ʎoʃ/	a lie
МОЛОДЁЖЬ	/mʌ ʎa 'dʲoʃ/	the youth; young people

Sound    Cyrillic

/s/    -З

/sʲ/    -ЗЬ

The unvoiced partner of the phoneme /з/ is /s/. Final letter -з is read as /s/, and final Cyrillic -зь, as /sʲ/.

Examples:

ГЛАЗ	/gʎas/	an eye
СЛЁЗ	/slʲos/	of (the) tears ( <i>genitive plural form</i> )
КНЯЗЬ	/kʲnasʲ/	(a) prince
МАЗЬ	/masʲ/	grease; ointment

## CHAPTER 5 – The Palatalization Process

When *palatalization* occurs, it is integral to the affected phoneme, but when a palatalized phoneme occurs in a Russian word, it often affects the other sounds around it, especially preceding phonemes. On one level, palatalization is allophonic, as it modifies a phoneme without changing its larger class. Yet, in Russian, palatalization has a phonemic quality, as well, in that the meaning of a word can be changed if one palatalizes (or not) incorrectly. Determining the effect of palatalization and its intra-word boundaries requires an approach that, in this text, is called the *Palatalization Process*.

### Palatalization: Overview

There are two large parts to developing a practical process of determining palatalization in Russian words. There are the phonetic and phonological rules, which are symbolically expressed through the IPA, but there is also the reading of the Cyrillic letters, some of which act as indicators of palatalization. The phonemic and the orthographic are often conflated in Russian diction guides, but the following attempts to keep the threads separated yet intertwined, in the application of the palatalization process.

Palatalization directly affects consonants (though vowels are secondarily influenced), and one must discern from the spelling of words which consonants are palatalized. The Cyrillic letters do not depict or indicate palatalization themselves [though /tʃʲ/ (-ч-) and /ʃʲʃʲ/ (-шш-) are intrinsically palatalized], so Russian consonants are either orthographically indicated as palatalized by a following letter or a sign, or they are phonetically influenced by the palatalized feature of a subsequent consonant [including /j/ (-й-)]. This latter adjustment is the first example of *assimilation* in consonants (discussed later.)

At the most basic level, one encounters the palatalized consonant phoneme paired with a vowel. Such a pairing is orthographically represented by a consonantal letter plus one of the indicator letters or sign [я- (/jɑ/), -е- (/jɛ/), -ѐ- (/jo/), -ю- (/ju/), -и- (/i/), or the soft sign, -ь- (/ʲ/)]. For example, the letter cluster -тя- represents the palatalized consonant phoneme /tʲ/ paired with the vowel phoneme /ɑ/, producing the phonemic cluster /tʲɑ/. Secondly, when a palatalized consonant phoneme ends a Russian word, it must be represented by the written pairing, *consonant+soft sign* (-ь-), as in the Russian word мать (*mother*), /matʲ/. Since there is a Russian word мат, without the soft sign, meaning

*checkmate* or *floor mat*, these two words (*minimal pair*) show how a palatalized consonant can be a phoneme. The third level of consonant palatalization occurs when one consonant precedes another consonant that is already palatalized.

Just as one consonant can be articulated with the tongue in the palatalized shape, so can a cluster of consonants be executed. This potential demonstrates the influence of palatalization, technically called *regressive assimilation of palatalization*. Once a consonant is determined to be palatalized, then that consonant can be a *palatalizing agent*. This kind of influence [*assimilation*] can then work backwards [*regressive*] through all preceding consonants (even affecting vowels), until some kind of strong boundary is reached. Therefore, a process of applying the articulation and determining the boundaries must be constructed.

### The Palatalization Process

The foundation of the process is mechanical. A singer must:

- 1) prepare the tongue by arching it and placing it up into the dome of the hard palate, and then
- 2) execute the consonant with the tongue still in the arched shape, and finally
- 3) proceed to a peeling action while voicing the cardinal vowel that follows [except for /i/ (-и-), which maintains the arched position during phonation].

Yet first, a singer must determine exactly what should get palatalized in any Russian word. The analysis requires three steps: first, the orthographic palatalizing indicators and

phonemic palatalizing agents must be identified; second, the boundaries beyond which palatalization cannot occur must be established; and third, adjustment to some vowels must be determined, if preceding a palatalized consonant or in an interpalatal position. This is most practically and quickly done by considering the Cyrillic letter and sign indicators and applying the phonological rules as *reading rules*.<sup>274</sup>

Since one consonant can be a palatalizing agent of preceding consonants, one must determine that the first consonant is palatalized. This is done by the indicator letters or sign already mentioned. Locating any of the indicator letters or any occurrence of the soft sign, then noting the preceding consonant, usually satisfies the first objective of the process. Next, to determine the points across which palatalization cannot occur, the boundaries must be defined. The boundaries are generally set as follows:

- 1) a consonant that is generally not palatalized, as represented by the letters, -ш-, -ж-, or -ц-;
- 2) the hard sign, -ѣ- (except when -б-, -с-, or -з- precedes the hard sign);
- 3) a vowel, though this vowel may be the last element to be influenced;
- 4) a new palatalizing agent, which then establishes a new point of regressive influence;
- 5) the word boundary (except when a word begins with an indicator letter, other than -и-, and the preceding word ends in -б-, -с-, or -з-);
- 6) punctuation, especially a period (.). The punctuation boundary is absolute.

No assimilation of any sort crosses punctuation.

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<sup>274</sup> The term *reading rules* is commonly used by Russian pedagogues to discuss the application of phonological processes when reading in Cyrillic.

**Note:** The word boundary can be crossed by other forms of assimilation, but it is not crossed by palatalization, except for rule #5, above.<sup>275</sup>

The third and final step is to determine if any vowels change to a more closed allophone due to being followed by a palatalized consonant or being interpalatal. The vowels with which to be concerned are, in stressed syllables, /a/–/ja/ (as -a- or -я-) and /ε/–/jε/ (as -e- or -э-), and the unstressed allophones [ɪ] or [jɪ] (which can be represented by any of the indicator letters, above). When /a/–/ja/ (spelled -я-), /ε/–/jε/ (spelled -е-), and their unstressed allophone [ɪ]–[jɪ], are followed by palatalized consonants, they are considered to be interpalatal (placed between palatalizing agents), and so change phonetically to [a]–[ja], [ε]–[jε], and /i/–[ji], respectively. The vowel /ε/, when spelled -э-, is not found in positions representing interpalatalization, but shifts from /ε/ to [e], when followed by a palatalized consonant. The allophone [a], when spelled -а-, only occurs when interpalatal and in the stressed syllable. When the letter -а- is in both an unstressed and interpalatal position, it will be read as /i/.

The complete process by which palatalization is determined when phonetically transcribing a Russian word is as follows. A singer should:

- 1) syllabify each word, so that each syllable ends in a vowel or /j/ [-й-] (except, of course, one-syllable words);
- 2) determine if there are any indicators of palatalization in each word, starting from the final letter and moving left;

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<sup>275</sup> Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian*, 81–83.

- 3) if an indicator is found, then move one letter to the left of it and determine if that letter represents one of the above boundaries or a *palatalizable* consonant;
- 4) if the letter represents a boundary, then move along looking for other indicators;
- 5) if the represented consonant adjacent to the indicator is palatalizable, mark it as such in the transcription using the [ʲ] symbol and move one more letter to the left and continue as above;
- 6) mark each palatalized consonant with [ʲ] as determined, including in clusters (see limiting rules, below);
- 7) when the final boundary is reached, the process is finished, except, if the boundary is one of the vowels in one of the conditions described in the previous paragraph. Then the appropriate fronting adjustments should be made.

**Reminder:** All vowels preceding palatalized consonants are fronted, even more so when interpalatal. These adjustments are natural to the palatalization process, yet only [ja], [a], [je], and [e] are formally recognized in Russian lyric diction as secondary allophones or allophonic clusters.

In Russian, there is a rather broad variation in the consonants that can be regressively influenced by other palatalized consonants. The spectrum spans from nearly all secondary consonants in a cluster being palatalized to very few. Russian lyric diction follows the traditions of Old Muscovite pronunciation, which in turn, palatalizes nearly all secondary cluster members. The following is a list of the more universal limitations to the palatalization of secondary consonants within clusters.<sup>276</sup>

- 1) Do not regressively palatalize /ʎ/ within a cluster except when the letters are doubled: -льль- → /lʎlʎ/.
- 2) Do not regressively palatalize /r/ within a cluster except when the letters are doubled [-ррь- → /rʎrʎ/] or directly following -и-, -е-, or -э- (in the stressed syllable only).<sup>277</sup> See examples of the latter in footnote.
- 3) Do not regressively palatalize /n/ (-н-), except before another palatalized /n/ or dental consonant.
- 4) Only regressively palatalize a velar consonant (/k/, /g/, or /x/) before another palatalized velar consonant.
- 5) Only regressively palatalize a labial consonant (/b/, /p/, /v/, or /f/) before another palatalized labial consonant.

The following examples begin simply and advance in length and complexity of word. Each step of the process above is explained in notes or shown graphically.

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<sup>276</sup> The rules on limiting regressive palatalization within a consonant cluster are derived from Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian*, 76–87.

<sup>277</sup> Derwing and Priestly, 86–87, examples: смерть /sʎmʎerʎtʎ/ (*death*); терпеть /tʎirʎ ʎpʎetʎ/ (*to endure*); кирпич /kʎirʎ ʎpʎitʎ/ (*a brick*).

**стол** (*table*): one syllable; no palatalizing indicators; all hard: /stoł/.

**столь** (*so adv.*): one syllable; one indicator sign (-ь-); preceding consonant (/t/) is palatalizable; next in line is a vowel (/o/) [boundary #4]; no other palatalizing indicators; /t/ is the only consonant to be palatalized: /stolʲ/.

**мать** (*mother*): one syllable; one indicator sign (-ь-); preceding consonant (/t/) is palatalizable; next in line is a vowel (/a/) [boundary #4]; no other palatalizing indicators; /t/ is the only consonant to be palatalized: /matʲ/.

**мять** (*to knead*): one syllable; two indicators (-ь- and -я-); preceding consonants, /t/ and /m/, respectively, are palatalizable; /m/ is word boundary [#5]; vowel /a/ (spelled -я-) is interpalatal, and so is fronted, /a/ to [a]: /mʲatʲ/.

**большой** (*big, large, grand*): two syllables; two indicators (-ь- and -й-); /j/ (-й-) preceded by vowel /o/ [boundary #4]; consonant preceding -ь- (/t/) is palatalizable; next in line is another /o/-vowel [boundary #4]; no other palatalizing indicators; /t/ is the only consonant to be palatalized: /bałʲ ʲoj/.

**сестрёнка** (*a little sister*): three syllables; two indicators, -ё- and -е-; consonant preceding -ё-, /r/, is palatalizable; next two preceding consonants (/t/ and /s/) are palatalizable; next in line is a new palatalizing indicator (-е-) [boundary #3]; entire cluster of /str/ is palatalized; the letter -е- is in the unstressed syllable, so would be read as [ɪ], but it is also interpalatal, thus [ɪ] is fronted to /i/; the letter -е- in a new indicator and /s/ is palatalizable; initial /s/ is word boundary [boundary #5], therefore: /sʲi ʲsʲtʲrʲon ɪka/.

**симметрический** (symmetrical): **bold** = indicator letters; | = boundary; → = “becomes”;

**bold+underline** = interpalatal

си мме три че ский → |си| мме| три| че| ский → |с<sup>j</sup>**и**| м<sup>j</sup>м<sup>j</sup>е| т<sup>j</sup>р<sup>j</sup>**и**| че| ский →  
/s<sup>j</sup>i m<sup>j</sup>m<sup>j</sup>ɨ 't<sup>j</sup>r<sup>j</sup>i tʃ<sup>j</sup>i ski<sup>j</sup>/ → /s<sup>j</sup>i m<sup>j</sup>m<sup>j</sup>ɨ 't<sup>j</sup>r<sup>j</sup>i tʃ<sup>j</sup>i ski<sup>j</sup>/ (reflects *OM Stage* style)

It must be noted that present day palatalization rules in Russian are more complex than presented here. Some simplification comes from the fact that lyric diction borrows from the Old Muscovite tradition, in which more palatalization occurred than does today. A few more sophisticated rules about regressive palatalization are discussed in Chapter 6 (Section 3, “Types of Assimilation”). Singers may experience native-Russian authorities who demand adherence to more complex practices. Those singers will have to listen carefully, mark their scores, and practice. This guide can only offer a reasonable baseline from which to start.

## CHAPTER 6 – Applied Assimilation in Russian

Assimilation (of which some palatalization is part) has the greatest effect upon consonants when in clusters and in the final position across the word boundary. This chapter covers the changes and adjustments made to the reading of the Cyrillic consonantal letters in various, commonly found clustered forms and across boundaries. It also completes the entries to the Russian speech sound palate, and concludes with a chart that reviews the phoneme-to-Cyrillic letter correlations for the consonants, and a grand chart of all the Cyrillic letters paired with their various pronunciations in Cyrillic alphabetical order.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> The rules presented in this chapter are generally derived from two sources: Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian*, 30–59, 66–75, 135–143; and Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 80–82, 94–103, 106–107, 128–152, 216–273.

## Section 1 – Consonant Clusters

Pronouncing consonant clusters in Russian integrates all the aspects of Russian phonology presented so far, and more. The analytical process involves taking the given consonant phonemes, applying the rules of assimilative voicing, defining inhibiting boundaries, determining any special pronunciations (possibly deleting a phoneme from what is suggested by the letters of a cluster or causing a cluster of consonantal letters to be read like a single phoneme) and, if appropriate, applying the palatalization process to the cluster.

The baseline approach to consonant clusters in Russian is to pronounce each consonant member in the cluster and to determine the voicing of all the consonants based upon the status of the last member of the cluster. A basic rule of voicing is that the sonorant consonant phonemes (/l/, /m/, /n/, and /r/, with palatalized versions) do not influence the voicing of preceding, unvoiced consonants and are never devoiced themselves in lyric diction (devoiced sonorants can occur in spoken Russian). Also, the phoneme /v/ (-b-) has no assimilative voicing influence of its own, but is influenced by most other consonants. Finally, the phonemes /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /ʃʲʃʲ/ often have special influence upon other consonant phonemes, and there are many clusters of Cyrillic letters in varying lengths (2, 3, 4, etc.) of which their reading pronunciation does not match what is suggested by the letters themselves. These special cases are covered in Section 2.

The present section defines regressive assimilation of voicing and covers its effect upon individual consonants and alternate spellings. Then special cases of consonantal letter clusters are discussed, encompassing two letters (including doubled consonants), three letters, four letters, and certain clusters with the soft sign (-ь-) and/or certain vowels contained within them. As in the previous chapter, the palatalization process is applied to all

members of a consonant cluster to determine which members are subject to palatalization. In most cases, if the last consonant in a cluster is palatalized, then each preceding consonant in the cluster will be palatalized, if no superseding rules prevent it.

### Regressive Assimilation of Voicing

Regressive assimilation of voicing occurs when one consonant phoneme takes on the voicing quality (voiced or unvoiced) of an immediately following consonant phoneme. Regressive assimilation of voicing is phonetic, that is, the backward influence of voicing is about sounds altering sounds. In concrete practice, though, assimilation affects how the letters of a word are read, so an approach commonly employed is called *reading rules*. A basic example of reading rules involves reading a pairing of two consonantal letters (disregarding palatalization, the sonorants, the phoneme /v/ (-B-), or other special cases). The second letter of such a pair is read as the indicated phoneme with its natural voicing, then the first letter in the pair may be read with the voicing of the second. Phonetically, if the first phoneme has the same voicing as the second, then nothing changes, but if the first phoneme is of the opposite voicing as the second, the first takes on the voicing quality of the second, so that the voicing of the entire cluster is that of the final member. For example: -тк- is read as /tk/, and -дг- as /dg/; but -тг- is read as /dg/, and -дк- as /tk/.

As with palatalization, the influence of voicing can step backward through clusters of several consonants, because as each member of the cluster is influenced by the previous, that member then becomes a new agent of influence. Therefore, barring any special conditions or rules, if the last member of a four-consonant cluster, made of a mix of naturally voiced and unvoiced consonants, is unvoiced, then the entire cluster is unvoiced (the same works for the

voiced case). Some examples are: -пск- is read as /psk/, but -пст- as /bzg/; and -кбст- is read as /kpst/, but -кбсл- as /gbzd/.

**Reminder:** Since consonant phonemes (except sonorants) in the final position are always unvoiced, only regressive voicing can occur across the word boundary, (see Ch. 4, Sec. 4 and Section 3, below.).

Below, in the form of reading rules (letter first, then how to read it), the individual Cyrillic letters are presented, each with its alternative phoneme and the conditions under which such alternatives occur in two letter clusters. Many of these phonemes can be palatalized as well.

Cyrillic    Read as

б    /p/; /pʲ/    when followed by an unvoiced consonant phoneme.

The Cyrillic letter -б-, normally read as /b/, is read as unvoiced /p/, when followed by an unvoiced consonant phoneme. Pertinent to clusters of only two consonantal letters, the letters associated with the unvoiced phonemes are -к-, -п-, -с-, -т-, -ф-, -х-, -ц-, -ч-, -ш- and -щ- (the clusters -бп- and -бф- are generally not found within Russian words).

Examples:

трубка	/ˈtrup ka/	a tube; a pipe
абсент	/ap ˈsɛnt/	absinthe
обсестъ	/apʲ ˈsʲesʲtʲ/	to sit around ( <i>coll.</i> )
обточить	/ap ta ˈtʃʲitʲ/	to grind smooth ( <i>perfective</i> )
обход	/ap ˈxot/	a going around; a bypass; the rounds

## Examples (cont'd):

столбцы	/staɫp 'tsi/	columns (of print)
голубчик	/ga 'ɫup tʃ'ik/	my dear fellow ( <i>literally</i> : little pigeon man)
обшить	/ap 'ʃitʃ/	to edge; to trim ( <i>perfective</i> )
община	/'op ʃ'ji nɐ/	a community; a commune

Cyrillic    Read as

Г        /k/        when followed by unvoiced consonant phonemes except /k/ and /tʃ/.

Cyrillic -г-, normally read as /g/, is read as unvoiced /k/, when followed by an unvoiced consonant phoneme except /k/ (-к-) and /tʃ/ (-ч-). The most common letters for unvoiced consonant to follow -г-, other than -к- and -ч-, in Russian words, are -с-, -т- and -ш-.<sup>279</sup> The special cases of -к- (/k/) or -ч- (/tʃ/) following -г- are covered in Section 2. Due to an exception (#4) to the rules of regressive palatalization (Chap. 5), the /k/-phoneme spelled -г- is not found in the palatalized form.

## Examples:

улёгся	/u 'ljo ksa/	(he) laid down; (it) subsided
ногти	/'nok tʃ'i/	fingernails; toenails
могший	/'mok ʃij/	(someone) who was able...
берёгший	/'bʲɪ 'rok ʃij/	(someone) who was saving; protecting...

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<sup>279</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 220.

Cyrillic    Read as

Д        /t/; /tʲ/    when followed by unvoiced consonant phonemes. Pairings with -c-,  
-ц-, -ч-, -ш- or -щ- create special cases (Section 2).

Cyrillic -д-, normally read as /d/, is read as unvoiced /t/, when followed by unvoiced consonant phonemes. This is true for all unvoiced consonants, but when /t/ combines with /s/, /ts/, /tʃ/, /ʃ/ or /ʃʲʃʲ/, the resulting clusters are pronounced like different existing phonemes and so are included in Section 2 with the special cases of assimilation. When the cluster produces a double set of /t/-phonemes, it is pronounced with a slight lengthening of the stop: /t:/. This elongated stop is not emphasized as it is in Italian, but is only slightly longer than a single /t/-phoneme.

Examples:

водка	/ˈvot ka/	vodka
надпись	/ˈnatʲ pʲisʲ/	an inscription
подтыкать	/pa t:i ˈkatʲ/	to tuck in (or under)
подфарник	/pat ˈfar nɪk/	a parking light
подход	/pat ˈxot/	an approach
подкидыш	/patʲ ˈkʲi dɨʃ/	a foundling child

Cyrillic    Read as

ж        /ʃ/        when followed by unvoiced consonant sounds. The cluster -жч- is a special case (Section 2).

Cyrillic -ж-, normally read as /з/, is read as unvoiced /ʃ/, when followed by unvoiced consonant phonemes. Not all of the letters for unvoiced consonants can be found following the letter -ж-, but the most common are -к-, -т- and -с- (generally as part of verb forms that end in -ся). Like its voiced partner, /з/ is not palatalized even when followed by an indicator of palatalization. The case of -ч- (/tʃ/) following -ж- is covered in Section 2.

Examples:

ложка	/ˈlʊʃ ka/	a spoon
рожки	/ˈrɔʃ kʲi/	small horns ( <i>of animals</i> )
мужской	/muʃ ˈskoj/	masculine; male
неужто	/nɪ ˈu ʃtɔ/	Really? ( <i>var. of неужели</i> /nɪ u ˈzɛ lʲi/)
режься	/ˈrʲɛʃ sɔ/	Start fighting! (swords) [ <i>fig.; fam. imp. of резаться</i> ]

Cyrillic    Read as

з        /s/; /sʲ/        when followed by unvoiced consonant phonemes. The clusters -зш- and -зч- are special cases (Section 2).

Cyrillic -з-, normally read as /з/, is read as unvoiced /s/, when followed by unvoiced consonant phonemes. Not all the letters for unvoiced consonants can be found following the

letter -з-, but the most common are -к-, -п-, -с-, -т- and -ш-.<sup>280</sup> The cases of -ш- (/ʃ/) and -ч- (/tʃ/) following -з- are covered in Section 2.

Examples:

мазки	/ma 'sʲkʲi/	dabs; strokes (with paint)
из-под	/is ɤat/	from under ( <i>prep.</i> ; <i>spoken without stress</i> )
грызся	/'gri s:a/	(it) fought (male animal)
лезть	/lʲesʲtʲ/	to climb
образцовый	/a bras 'tso vij/	model; exemplary ( <i>adj.</i> )

Cyrillic    Read as

к            /g/    when followed by voiced consonant phonemes (not the *sonorants* or /v/).

Cyrillic -к- is read as voiced /g/, when followed by a voiced consonant phoneme (/b/, /g/, /d/, /ʒ/, or /z/). In practice, though, the letter -к- is rarely followed by any letter for a voiced consonant other than -з- (/z/), and even those words tend to be uncommon. Due to an exception (#4) to the rules of regressive palatalization (Chap. 5) the palatalized form of the /g/-phoneme spelled as -к- is not found.

**Reminder:** The sonorant phonemes (/tʲ/, /m/, /n/, and /r/, along with their palatalized versions) do not influence the voicing of preceding, unvoiced consonants. Also, the phoneme /v/ (-в-) has no assimilative voicing influence.

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<sup>280</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 236–238.

Examples:

анекдот	/a nɪg 'dot/	anecdote
ЭКЗАМЕН	/ɪg 'za mʲɪn/	examination
ВОКЗАЛ	/vɑg 'zɑtʃ/	station (railroad)
ЭКЗЕМПЛЯР	/ɪg zɛmp 'lʲɑr/ or /ɪg zʲɪmp 'lʲɑr/	copy; specimen

Cyrillic    Read as

С    /z/; /zʲ/    only when followed by the voiced consonant phonemes /d/, /g/, /z/ or /b/ or /b/.

Cyrillic -с-, normally /s/, is read as the voiced /z/, when followed by /d/, /g/, /z/ or /b/ only (/v/ does not carry such influence). Palatalization may occur as well. The phoneme /z/ has a special influence (Section 2). When a cluster produces a double set of /z/-phonemes, it is pronounced with a slight lengthening of duration: /z:z/.

Examples:

сбор	/zbor/	a collection
просьба	/'prozʲ ba/	a request
сдавать	/zda 'vatʲ/	to hand in; to turn in
сделка	/'zʲdʲɛtʃ ka/	a transaction; a deal
сговор	/'zgo vɫr/	a conspiracy; collusion
сгиб	/zʲgʲɪp/	a fold; a crease
сзади	/'z:ɑ dʲi/	in back; behind; from behind ( <i>adv.</i> )

Cyrillic    Read as

Т        /d/; /d<sup>j</sup>/    if followed by the voiced consonant phonemes /b/, /g/, /d/, /ʒ/ or /z/.

Cyrillic -т-, normally /t/, is read as the voiced /d/, when followed by one of the voiced consonant phonemes /b/, /g/, /d/, /ʒ/ or /z/. The sonorants and /v/ have no effect. Palatalization may occur as well. When a cluster produces a double set of /d/-phonemes, it is pronounced with a slight lengthening of the stop: /dː/. This elongated stop is not emphasized as it is in Italian, but is only slightly longer than a single /d/-phoneme. Voicing of this phoneme can also occur across word boundaries (Section 3).

Examples:

отбой	/ad 'boj/	a retreat (from battle)
отгадка	/ad 'gat ka/	an answer; a solution
отзимовать	/ad <sup>j</sup> z'i ma 'vat <sup>j</sup> /	to get through the winter
отдавать	/a d:a'vat <sup>j</sup> /	to give back; to return (something)
отдел	/a <sup>l</sup> d <sup>j</sup> :eɫ/	a section; a department; a branch ( <i>military</i> )
отжимать	/ad ʒi 'mat <sup>j</sup> /	to wring out; to squeeze out
отзыв	/'od zɪf/	a review; a comment
мать бы	/'mad <sup>j</sup> bi/	the mother would...
тот же	/'tod ʒi/	the same (as)

Cyrillic    Read as

Ф        /v/        when followed by the voiced consonant phoneme /g/ only in the word Афганистан (Afghanistan) and any derivatives. This case is unique in Russian.

Cyrillic -ф-, normally /f/, is generally not followed by voiced consonants in Russian, except for the unique case of the word Афганистан (Afghanistan) and its derivative terms. In these cases the letter -ф- is read as /v/. The letter -ф- is rarely followed by any consonant in Russian, and most of those words are of foreign origin.<sup>281</sup>

Examples:

Афганистан	/av ɡʌ nʲi 'stan/	Afghanistan
афганцы	/av 'ɡan tsi/	Afghanis ( <i>pl.</i> )
афганский	/av 'ɡan sʲkʲij/	Afghan or Afghani ( <i>adj.</i> )

Cyrillic    Read as

Ц        /dz/        internally, only in some non-Russian proper names when followed by a voiced consonant. This is obviously rare.

Cyrillic -ц-, generally /ts/, is not followed by voiced consonants (other than the sonorants and -в-, which have no voicing influence) in Russian words, except in some foreign proper names and compound words. In these cases, -ц- is read as the voiced cluster /dz/.<sup>282</sup> The phoneme /ts/ can be voiced due to assimilation across the word boundary.

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<sup>281</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 268.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

Examples:

Шварцберг	/ʃvɑrdz bʲɪrk/	Schwarzberg
Лао Цзы	/ʎɑo 'dzi/	Lao Tse (or Lao-Tsu)
конференц-зал	/kɒn fʲɪ rʲɛndz 'zɑʎ/	conference room

Cyrillic    Read as

ч        /dʒʲ/    when followed by a voiced consonant, but this is very rare, internally.  
 Usually such voicing will occur across word boundaries (Section 3).

Cyrillic -ч-, generally /tʃʲ/, is usually not followed by voiced consonants (other than the sonorants and -в-) in Russian words, but if it happens, -ч- is read as the voiced cluster /dʒʲ/.<sup>283</sup> The /tʃʲ/-phoneme can be voiced in cases of assimilation across the word boundary (Section 3).

Examples:

аляба	/ɑʎdʒʲ 'bɑ/	greed
начдив	/nɑdʒʲ 'dʲɪf/	division commander

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<sup>283</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 271.

Cyrillic   Read as

III      /ʒ/      when followed by a voiced consonant, but this is very rare, internally.  
 Usually such voicing will occur across word boundaries (Section 3).

Cyrillic -III-, generally /ʃ/, is usually not followed by voiced consonants (other than the sonorants and -B-) in Russian words, but if it happens, -III- is read as the voiced phoneme /ʒ/.<sup>284</sup> The /ʃ/-phoneme can be voiced in cases of assimilation across the word boundary (Section 3).

Example:

волшебство    /vɔɫʂ 'bɔ/    witchcraft

Cyrillic Letters -II-, -X-, and -III-

The consonants /p/ (spelled -II-) and /x/ (spelled -X-) are not found before voiced consonants within Russian words,<sup>285</sup> so neither phoneme is voiced in an interior cluster. The cluster /ʃʃʃʃ/ (-III-) tends not to be followed by consonants other than the sonorants or -B-<sup>286</sup> so this phoneme, too, is not voiced in such an interior cluster. However, /p/, /x/ and /ʃʃʃʃ/ can be voiced (/b/, [ɣ] and [ʒʒʒʒ], respectively), in cases of assimilation across the word boundary (Section 3).

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<sup>284</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 272.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 253n and 269n.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., 272n.

## Section 2 – Special Cases of Consonant Assimilation in Clusters

### Double Consonants

The basic rules for reading and pronouncing double consonants are:

- 1) Doubled letters that represent consonants are more often read as a single consonant phoneme rather than as a double or elongated consonant.
- 2) If read as a double consonant, pronounce the cluster as two consonants spoken together without a break or shadow vowel in between, or as a consonant phoneme of double duration.<sup>287</sup> Do not treat Russian double consonants like the Italian counterparts, which can be tripled or quadrupled for dramatic purpose. Russian double consonants are only a bit longer in duration than single consonants. Palatalization may be applied.
- 3) Some double letter clusters can produce a double consonant reading in one situation, but be read as only one consonant in another.
- 4) Unpalatalized double consonants more often occur before the vowels /a/ (-a-), /o/ (-o-), /u/ (-y-) and /i/ (-и-).<sup>288</sup>
- 5) Double letter clusters preceding -e- (/ε/[e]), -ë- (/o/), -и- (/i/), -ю- (/u/), or -я- (/α/[a]), are often read as single palatalized consonants, but a few are read as single only before -e- (/ε/[e]) or -и- (/i/).<sup>289</sup>
- 6) The sonorant consonants, /ʎ/, /m/ and /r/, are generally not doubled within a word.<sup>290</sup> The sonorant /n/, also generally not doubled, has several exceptions.

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<sup>287</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 213–215.

<sup>288</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 216–268.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

- 7) Double consonants that are formed across word boundaries are usually pronounced as double phonemes.<sup>291</sup>

The way to produce a Russian double consonant is to think of speaking the single consonant twice without any break in between. For example, the word *отдавать* (to give back; to return something) can be seen as *от давать* with a pronunciation of /ad da 'vatʲ/. If spoken without any break, the result sounds more like either /adda 'vatʲ/ or /a d:a 'vatʲ/, but not like an Italian-style /ad:da 'vatʲ/, with an extended stop. When doubling a voiced consonant (or even a sonorant), the same kind of approach of articulating the phoneme twice without any break works well. Be sure not to produce a pulsation on the second iteration.

In the entries throughout the rest of this guide, transcribing the double consonant with double IPA symbols (e.g. /ʃʃ/) or a single phonetic symbol with a colon denoting elongation (e.g. /ʃ:/) are interchangeable. A transcription of two spaced IPA symbols with a ligature (e.g. /ʃʃ/) is employed to depict double consonants across a word boundary (e.g. *мышь же* /'miʃʃi/ *the mouse...*). All of these transcription styles should still be pronounced as prescribed above. Almost all consonants may be found at some time as a double cluster across the word boundary. If the boundary is phonetically crossable, the two consonants in this condition are paired as a cluster and pronounced as a double consonant, even if there is an intervening soft sign.

The following is a list of double letter clusters, their pronunciations and the rules that govern their articulation. The list is not alphabetical but rather is in the order of complexity of rule. Generally, singers will only encounter words in which the double consonants follow

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<sup>290</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 131, 243–255.

<sup>291</sup> Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian*, 70, 72.

the default rules. Since most exceptions are found in borrowed words or special terminology, such words would rarely be used in opera or art song texts. As can be seen in several examples below, discerning what is a borrowed word and what is not can often be difficult. Under such cases the singer should refer to a comprehensive Russian pronunciation dictionary [see Appendix H].

### Always Doubled

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	<u>Examples</u>			
ГГ*	/g:/; /gʲ:/	леггорн	/lʲɛ 'g:orn/	leghorn (breed of chicken)	
		*Found only in unusual loan words limited in occurrence.			
ДД or ТД	/d:/; /dʲ:/	поддать	поддѐвка	отдать	отдел
		/pa 'd:atʲ/	/pa 'dʲ:of ka/	/a 'd:atʲ/	/a 'dʲ:ɛʃ/
		to kick ( <i>pfv</i> )	a long coat	to return ( <i>pfv</i> )	a section
ЖЖ or ЗЖ	/ʒʒ/; /ʒʲʒʲ/*	жужжать	вожжи	позже	мышь же
(ш-ж across word boundary only)		/ʒu 'ʒʒatʲ/*	/'vo ʒʒi/*	/'po ʒʒi/*	/'miʒʒi/
		to buzz	the reins	later	the mouse...
ЗЗ or СЗ	/z:/; /zʲ:/	беззлobie	воззрение	сзади	с землей
		/bʲɪ z:ʃo bi jɪ/	/'va 'zʲ:rʲe ni jɪ/	/'z:a dʲi/	/'zʲ zʲimʲ 'lʲej/
		a good nature	an outlook	from behind	with land

\*See Chapter 4, Section 2: A Special Case of Palatalization for explanation of the two pronunciations.

Mostly Doubled with Some Exceptions

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	
ВВ	/vː/; /vʲː/	when initial; across word boundary.
	/v/; /vʲ/	internally (rare; mostly borrowed words).

Examples

ВВОЗ	ВВИДУ	РАВВИН	В ВАЗУ	В ВИЛЛУ
/vːos/	/vʲːi ˈdu/	/ra ˈvʲin/	/v ˈva zu/	/vʲ vʲi ˈʎu/
importation	in view of	a rabbi	in the vase	in the villa

бб	/bː/; /bʲː/	across word boundary.
(п-б across word boundary only)	/bː/	internally (rare), before /a/ (as -a-), unpalatalized only.
	/bʲː/	internally (rare), before /i/ (-и-), /ɛ/, /e/, or /ɪ/ (as -е-).

Examples

аббат	баббит	роббер	серб бежит	клоп бы
/a ˈbːat/	/ba ˈbʲit/	/ˈro bʲɪr/	/ˌsʲɛrbʲ bʲɪ ˈzɪt/	/klob ˌbɪ/
an abbot	babbit metal	a rubber (in cards)	the Serb runs	the bedbug would...

Always Single (except across word boundary)

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	<u>Examples</u>
рр	/r/; /rʲ/	терраса    территория    актёр рад    актёр решил
		/tʲɪ ˈra sa/    /tʲɪ rʲɪ ˈto ri ja/    /ak ˌtʲor ˈrat/    /ak ˌtʲor ˌrʲɪ ˈʃɪt/
		a terrace    a territory    an actor is glad    an actor decided

Usually Single with Exceptions

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	
КК	/k/; /k <sup>j</sup> /	internally, in most cases; when final (rare, mostly as /k/).
	/k:/	internally, only in borrowed words or specialized terms.
к-к / г-к	/k:/; /k <sup>j</sup> /	across word boundary.

**Note:** Only the /k/-phoneme, in an internal position, is varied. The letter -г- followed by -к- across the word boundary is read as a double or elongated /k:/ or /k<sup>j</sup>/. The internal cluster -гк- is a special case covered further on.

Examples

аккорд	кокк	кокки	мокко	барак красен	снег красив
/a 'kɔrt/	/kok/	/'ko k <sup>j</sup> i/	/'mo k:ɔ/	/bɑ 'rɑk 'krɑ s <sup>j</sup> ɪn/	/snɛk k <sup>j</sup> ɪrɑ 's <sup>j</sup> ɪf/
a chord ( <i>music</i> )	a coccus	cocci	mocha	the hut is red	the snow is pretty

ЛЛ	/l/; /l <sup>j</sup> /	internally, in most cases; when final (rare).
	/l:/; /l <sup>j</sup> /	across word boundary; internally, in borrowed words only.

**Note:** Exception to final consonants rule: вилл [v<sup>j</sup>ɪl:] of the villas (*gen. pl.*), yet вилла [v<sup>j</sup>ɪ ʎɑ] a villa (*nom. sing.*).

Examples

баллон	миллион	мулла	эллинизм	стол лазурен
/bɑ 'ʎɔn/	/mi l <sup>j</sup> i 'ɔn/	/mu 'ʎ:ɑ/	/ɪ l <sup>j</sup> i: 'nɪzɪm/	/stɔʎ ʎɑ 'zu r <sup>j</sup> ɪn/
a bottle; a rubber tire	a million	a mullah	Hellenism	the table is light blue

Usually Single with Exceptions (cont'd)

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	
ММ	/m/; /m <sup>j</sup> /	in most cases, internally or final (rare).
	/m:/; /m <sup>j</sup> :/	across word boundary; borrowed words, internally or final.

Examples

грамматика	грамм	комментарий	сумма	суммировать
/gra 'ma t <sup>j</sup> i kɫ/	/gram/	/kɫ m <sup>j</sup> ɪn 'ta r <sup>j</sup> ij/	/'su m:ɑ/	/su 'm <sup>j</sup> :i rɫ vɫt <sup>j</sup> /
grammar	a gram	commentary	a sum	to add up; to sum up

ПП	/p/	internally and final before /ɑ/, /o/, /u/, and /i/.
(б-п across word boundary only)	/p <sup>j</sup> /	internally before /i/ (-и-), /ɛ/, /e/, or /ɪ/ (as -е-).
	/p:/; /p <sup>j</sup> :/	across word boundary.

Though single /p/ is the preferred reading of -пп- before the vowels /ɑ/ (-а-), /o/ (-о-), /u/ (-у-), and [i] (-ы-), an elongated /p:/-phoneme is a stylistic option, if the double consonant cluster is sandwiched between two vowels (*intervocalic*), only if the preceding vowel is in a stressed position. Therefore, a word such as группа (*a group*) may be pronounced as /'gru p:ɑ/, but its genitive plural form, групп (*of the groups*), is pronounced as /grup/.

Examples

оппозиция	аппетит	группа	групп	об печь
/ɑ pɑ 'z <sup>j</sup> i tsi jɪ/	/ɑ p <sup>j</sup> ɪ 't <sup>j</sup> it/	/'gru p:ɑ/	/grup/	/ɑp <sup>j</sup> 'p <sup>j</sup> etʃ/
opposition	an appetite	a group	the groups'	on the stove

Usually Single with Exceptions (cont'd)

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	
ФФ	/f/; /f <sup>j</sup> /	internally (rare exceptions).
ВФ	/f:/; /f <sup>j</sup> :/	internally (very rare), and across word boundary.

Essentially, all Russian words containing the letter -ф- (/f/) are words of foreign origin. Words containing -фф- are rare, and -вф- is even more so. On a practical level, a singer may never encounter these clusters within a word. The most common case is the -вф- cluster formed across the word boundary, since -в- is one of the most ubiquitous Russian prepositions, meaning *to*, *into*, *in* or *at*. Such cross boundary clusters are always double (or elongated) consonant sounds.

Examples

диффузия	эффект	диффамация	эвфемизм	в форме
/d <sup>j</sup> i 'fu z <sup>j</sup> i jɪ/	/ɪ 'f <sup>j</sup> ɛkt/	/d <sup>j</sup> i fɪɑ 'ma tsi jɪ/	/ɪ f <sup>j</sup> ɪ 'm <sup>j</sup> izɪm/	/f <sup>j</sup> 'for m <sup>j</sup> ɪ/
diffusion	an effect	defamation	a euphemism	in good shape

Varied with Complex Rules and/or Many Exceptions

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	
НН	/n:/; /n <sup>j</sup> :/	when a junction to a suffix; across word boundary
	/n/; /n <sup>j</sup> /	when part of word root: internally and final (many exceptions).

The most common case of -нн- that singers may encounter is when the cluster is at the junction between a suffix and a root. There are so many exceptions to the “-нн- in a word-root” rule, that use of a comprehensive Russian pronunciation dictionary is strongly

suggested (Appendix H). Similarly, when -нн- is final (usually in genitive plural forms of feminine words), the cluster can be either double or single in pronunciation, so consultation of a pronouncing dictionary is also recommended. The past passive, deverbal form ending -нный is read as a double consonant, but it is considered a special grammatical form and is discussed in Chapter 8.

Examples (for -нн-)

анналы	теннис	ванна	тонне	
/a 'na tɨ/	/'te nɨs/	/'va n:a/	/'to n:ɨ/	
annals	tennis	a bath(tub)	to a ton (dat.)	
длинный	ванн	тонн	он начал	он нёс
/'dʲlʲi n:ij/	/'van:/	/'ton/	/'on na 'tʃaɫ/	/'on 'nos/
long (adj.)	of baths	of tons	he began	he carried

Cyrillic    Read as

СС        /s:/; /sʲ:/    when a junction of a prefix or a suffix (some exceptions);  
across word boundary.

      /s/; /sʲ/    when part of word root: all positions (many exceptions).

ЗС; СЗС; /s:/; /sʲ:/    generally found as junctions of prefixes or suffixes.

ЗЬС

The cluster -cc- is one of the more common double letter clusters in Russian and can occur in any position, initial, interior or final. In the final position, the cluster -cc- is often read as a single /s/ or /sʲ/. When interior and as part of the word root, the cluster's pronunciation variation is so great that the use of a comprehensive Russian pronunciation

dictionary is strongly suggested (Appendix H). In the letter clusters directly above, the internal soft sign (-ь-), in the last two, does not indicate palatalization. If the second /s/ of the cluster is hard, then the whole cluster is pronounced as a hard, doubled /s/-phoneme. The whole cluster is palatalized, if the second /s/ is palatalized.

**Exception:** By the first rule above (junction of suffix), the word русский, meaning either *a male from Russia* or the masculine adjective *Russian*, would be pronounced with a doubled /s/-phoneme, but it is an exception pronounced with only a single /s/-phoneme, /<sup>1</sup>ru s<sup>j</sup>k<sup>j</sup>ij/. This distinguishes русский from рузский (*masculine adjectival form of Ruže* [a village in central Poland]), pronounced with a double length /s/-phoneme, /<sup>1</sup>rus<sup>j</sup>: k<sup>j</sup>ij/. Русский in any declensional form is pronounced with a single /s/-phoneme (русский, русская, русское, etc.)<sup>292</sup>

Examples (for -сс-, -зс-, -сьс-, and -зьс-)

глиссандо	кассета	касса	массив	этрусский
/g <sup>j</sup> l <sup>j</sup> i 'san do/	/ka 's <sup>j</sup> ε ta/	/ <sup>1</sup> ka s:α/	/ <sup>1</sup> ma s <sup>j</sup> :i/	/ε'trus <sup>j</sup> : k <sup>j</sup> ij/
glissando	cassette	cashier office	mountain range	Etruscan
бесстрашие	рассмешить	класс	масс	ссора
/b <sup>j</sup> is:traʃ ni ji/	/ra s <sup>j</sup> :m <sup>j</sup> i 'ʃit <sup>j</sup> /	/klas/	/mas:/	/ <sup>1</sup> so ra/
fearlessness	to make laugh (pfv.)	a class	of the masses	a quarrel
грызся	приблизься	украсься	из села	с сиропом
/ <sup>1</sup> gri s:α/	/p <sup>j</sup> r <sup>j</sup> i 'b <sup>j</sup> l <sup>j</sup> i s:α/	/u 'kra s:α/	/is <sup>j</sup> s <sup>j</sup> i 'tα/	/s <sup>j</sup> s <sup>j</sup> i 'ro pλm/
Fight! <sup>293</sup>	Move closer!	Adorn yourself!	from the village	with syrup

<sup>292</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 137; Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian*, 72.

<sup>293</sup> From the verb грызться, (of animals) *to fight*, this imperative might be used as a dog command.

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	
ТТ	/t/; /tʲ/	when part of a word root, internally (with exceptions).
ТТ; ДТ	/t:/; /tʲ:/	junction of a prefix or a suffix, and across word boundary.

The cluster -ТТ- in an interior position of a word root has enough pronunciation variation, that it is also helpful to use a comprehensive Russian pronunciation dictionary (Appendix H). Usually, when -ТТ- is part of a word root, the word is of foreign origin, but some of these words are pronounced with a single consonant phoneme and others with a doubled or elongated /t/-phoneme. Also, there are cases in which the clusters -ТЬ Т- and -ЛЬ Т- are formed across the word boundary. As per the general rule, these clusters are read as doubled or elongated /t/-phonemes, but unlike the similar case under -СС-, here, the soft sign indicates a barrier to assimilation. If the second word in the pairing begins with a hard /t/-phoneme, then the two phonemes must be pronounced separately, that is, as a soft /tʲ/ followed by a hard /t/ as in the phrase *мать трудится* (the mother toils), which is pronounced as /matʲ tru 'dʲi tsa/. On the other hand, if the second word begins with a soft /tʲ/ phoneme, then a double /tʲ/-cluster is formed and is pronounced as such, as in *мать терпит* (the mother suffers), /matʲ tʲerʲ pʲit/.

Examples (for -ТТ- and -ДТ-)

атташе	либреттист	гетто	Атика	оттуда	оттиск
/a ta 'ʃɛ/	/lʲi 'bʲrʲe tʲist/	/'gʲɛ t:ʌ /	/'a tʲ:i kʌ/	/a 't:u da/	/'o tʲ:isk/
an attaché	a librettist	a ghetto	Attica	from there	a print (imprint)
подтыкать	подтёк	от того	от тех	под топором	под тюком
/pa ti 'katʲ/	/pa 'tʲ:ok/	/at ta 'vo/	/atʲ tʲ:ɛx/	/pʌt tʌ pa 'rom/	/pʌtʲ tʲ:u 'kom/
to tuck in	a streak	from that	from those	under the ax	under a bale

Extremely Rare Double Letter Clusters (exclusively borrowed words)

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	<u>Examples</u>	
-Щ-	/tʃs/	палашо	пишикато
		/pa 'ʃa t:so/	/pʲi t:si 'ka to/
		palace; mansion	pizzicato
-Ч-	/tʃʲj/	пиччикато (variant of пишикато)	
		/pʲi t:ʃʲi 'ka to/	
		pizzicato	

Special Readings for Certain Letter Clusters

The following consonant clusters generally have one thing in common — the pronunciation of the cluster does not directly reflect the usually associated phonemes of the Cyrillic spelling. In most cases, at least one phoneme in the cluster either changes or is deleted (*deletion* is a phonological phenomenon in which the articulation of a member of a cluster disappears. Often the deleted phoneme shares many phonetic features with an adjacent member). Several changes may seem logical or obvious, in light of the usual rules of assimilation, but the less obvious cases must be memorized over time. The organization of the following examples is from shorter to longer letter clusters.

**Reminder:** the default approach to Russian consonant clusters is to assume that each cluster member is to be pronounced, apply the rules of regressive assimilation of voicing, check for the special cases, and then apply any pertinent rules of regressive palatalization. Finally, a check of the exceptions given throughout this chapter should cover a good number of unusual cases.

Two-Letter Clusters that Read as One Double ConsonantCyrillic   Read as   Examples

ЩШ; ШШ	/ʃ:/	бесшумно	/bʲɪ ˈʃ:um nɐ/	noiselessly
		лезший	/ˈlʲɛ ʃ:iʲ/	climbing
		с шумом	/ˈʃʊ mɐm/	with noise
		без шапки	/bʲɪʃ ˈʃap kʲi/	without a hat

Cyrillic   Read as   Examples

ЗЖ; СЖ	/ʒ:/	изживать	/i ʒ:i ˈvatʲ/	to rid oneself of
		сжигать	/ʒ:i ˈgatʲ/	to burn
		без жены	/bʲɪʒ ʒi ˈni/	without a wife
		с женой	/ʒ ʒi ˈnoj/	with the wife

**Note:** The above pronunciations are based on the phonemes /ʃ/ and /ʒ/, and are not palatalized. Also, they will act as boundaries to regressive palatalization.

Two- and Three-Letter Clusters that Read Like another Consonant or ClusterCyrillic   Read as   Examples

ЩЧ; ШЧ	/ʃʃʲ/	счастье	/ˈʃʃʲɪ sʲtʲɪ/*	happiness
		резче	/ˈre ʃʃʲɪ/	harsher
ЖЧ		мужчина	/ˈmu ʃʃʲi nɐ/	a man; a male human
СТЧ; ЗДЧ		жёстче	/ˈʒo ʃʃʲɪ/	harder
		громоздче	/gra ˈmo ʃʃʲɪ/	bulkier
ССЧ		рассчитывать	/ra ˈʃʃʲi ti vatʲ/	to calculate; to figure

The above clusters are read as if they were spelled using the letter -щ-.

\*This is an exception to the interpalatal /a/ rule. See Chapter 8, Section 5.

Two- and Three-Letter Clusters that Read Like another Consonant or Cluster (cont'd)

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	<u>Examples</u>		
ТШ; ДШ; ЧШ	/tʃ:/*	ветшать	/vʲɪ 'tʃ:a tʃ/	to decay
		младший	/'mɫa tʃ:iʃ/	younger
		лучший	/'ɫu tʃ:iʃ/	better
		под шапкой	/patʃ 'ʃap kɔʃ/	under the cap
<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	<u>Examples</u>		
ДЖ; ТЖ	[dʒ:]*	поджѳг	/pa 'dʒ:ok/	(he) set fire to ( <i>past</i> )
		отжил	/'o dʒ:iʃ/	(he) had lived (his) life
		под жакет	/pɔdʒ ʒa 'kɛt/	under the jacket
ТЧ; ДЧ	/tʃʲ:ʃʲ/	вотчина	/'vo tʃʲ:i nɔ/	the ancestral lands
		подчас	/pa 'tʃʲ:ʃʲas/	sometimes; at times
		от чердака	/atʃʲ tʃʲɪr da 'ka/	from the attic

The above cluster pronunciations are based on phonemes associated with the letter -ч- (unvoiced, voiced, and double-stopped).

\*The clusters /tʃ:/ and [dʒ:] are unpalatalized and are boundaries to palatalization.

The Clusters -ТС-, -ДС- and -ТЬС-

The letter clusters, -ТС-, -ДС- and -ТЬС- have varied reading rules, so each is presented separately. The first case for -ТС-/-ДС- is the default, while the rest can be viewed as special. The particular pronunciation for these clusters generally applies to the junctions of prefixes and word roots, as well as across word boundaries. These clusters may be palatalized.



### Two-Letter Clusters with Unusual Readings

The changes for the following clusters are not universal (one case is even exceptional). A limited number of words require these pronunciations, while others do not. There are no discernable rules as to which words use the special pronunciation, therefore consulting a comprehensive Russian language dictionary is recommended (Appendix H). Some of these words are extremely common and will inevitably be encountered by singers in the Russian vocal literature.

Normally, assimilation involves voicing, palatalization or some element of articulation that is obviously related to an influencing phoneme, but the assimilative effects in these clusters neutralize certain articulatory features counter intuitively. In the cases below, the affected consonant neutralizes a plosive element, leaving only a fricative articulation that represents a somewhat related but different phoneme.

#### Cyrillic   Read as   Examples

ЧН	/ʃn/	скучный	/'sku ʃnij/	boring ( <i>adj.</i> )
		скучно	/'sku ʃnʌ/	bored ( <i>adv.</i> )
		конечно	/ka 'jɛ ʃnʌ/	of course, certainly
BUT:		конечный	/ka 'jɛtʃ' nij/	final, last ( <i>adj.</i> )

More examples can be found, but these three are the most commonly encountered words with the pronunciation of /ʃn/ for the letter cluster -чн-, and so could be called the *скучно rule*.

<u>Сyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	<u>Examples</u>		
ЧТ	/ʃt/	что	/ʃto/	what ( <i>interr.</i> ); that ( <i>conj.</i> )
		чтобы	/'ʃto bi/	in order to
		ничто	/nɪ 'ʃto/	nothing
BUT:		нечто	/'nɛtʃʲ tʌ/	something

The cluster -чт- is only read as /ʃt/ when it is part of the word **что** or its derivatives. For the sake of memory the case could be called the **что rule**. The exception above is **нечто**, which may be the only **что** derivative that is not read with the /ʃt/ pronunciation. It also seems to be the only such word in which the **что** portion is unstressed.

<u>Сyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	<u>Examples</u>		
ГК	/xk/	мягко	/'mʲɑx kʌ/	softly, gently ( <i>adv.</i> ) [also <i>short adj.</i> ]
		легко	/'lʲɪx 'ko/	easily, lightly; slightly ( <i>adv.</i> ) [also <i>shrt. adj.</i> ]
	/xʲkʲ/	мягкий	/'mʲɑxʲ kʲij/	soft, gentle ( <i>adj.</i> )
		лёгкий	/'lʲoʰʲ kʲij/	easy, light; slight ( <i>adj.</i> )

The letter -г- is read as /x/ or /xʲ/, when followed by /k/ or /kʲ/, respectively, within a word. This specific cluster is very rare internally, and the example words shown above (and any derivatives) may be unique, but the words are very common. As a mnemonic device, this case could be called the **мягко/мягкий rule**. It must be emphasized that this special pronunciation rule applies only to the cluster within a word. It does not hold true across the word boundary (see **Double Consonants: КК**, above).

Cyrillic   Read as   Examples

ГЧ	/xʲtʃʲ/	легче	/'lʲɛx tʃʲɪ/	lighter; easier ( <i>comp.</i> of лёгкий)
		мягче	/'mʲɑx tʃʲɪ/	softer; gentler ( <i>comp.</i> of мягкий)
		облегчать	/ɑ bɪʲɪx 'tʃʲatʲ/	to lighten; to ease
		смягчать	/sʲmʲɪx 'tʃʲatʲ/	to soften; to mitigate

This is a related case to the previous, dealing with the same root words, therefore, many similar qualifications apply. This pronunciation refers to the cluster within a word and does not apply across the word boundary (the final -Г of an initial word would be read as unvoiced /k/, for example, Олег читает /'olʲɪk tʃʲɪ 'tɑ jɪt/ *Oleg reads*). The above case could be called the *легче rule*. Note that although /tʃʲ/ is a palatalized phoneme, the preceding /x/-phoneme is not palatalized. This is an exception to the normal, regressive assimilation of palatalization rule.

Russian linguists point to only one exception to this pronunciation rule, which is: тяжчайший /tʲɪkʲ 'tʃʲaj ʃɪj/ *most severe* (superlative of тяжкий [tʲɑ ʃkɪj] *severe*).<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 145; Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian*, 51, 116.

Deletion in the Reading of Three- and Four-Letter Clusters

There are a large number of three- and four-letter clusters in which one cluster member is not read; the associated phoneme effectively disappears. Phonologically, this is known as *deletion*. In some cases the deleted consonant is phonemically weak, as with the phonemes associated with the letter -B- (/v/ or /f/) in larger clusters. More often, though, two consonants share so much of the shape and placement of one or more articulators, as well as air flow and voicing that it becomes difficult to keep the two phonemes separated. In such cases, one phoneme fully neutralizes the other, deleting it. Since Russian assimilation is mostly regressive, the first member of a cluster tends to succumb to the articulation of the second. The consonant clusters below engage this principle and *delete* one of their members in pronunciation. Exceptions are discussed in context.

Following the larger group of member deleting clusters, a pair of clusters are presented from which the first cluster member is deleted rather than the middle one. The first case reflects the articulation matching deletion, but the second case seems to be a matter of historical style rather than a principle of neutralization. Though the phonological reason for the deletion may be somewhat unclear, the result tends to produce a cluster articulation that is far easier to pronounce than suggested by the orthography. Once again, the following entries are presented in the form of reading rules, since phonemically the clusters are just what they are. Only reading the letters suggests that “something is missing” in the pronunciation.

Three- and Four-Letter Clusters not Reading Internal -Т- or -Д-<sup>295</sup> (Exceptions Follow)

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	<u>Examples</u>		
СТН	/sn/	страстный	/ˈstra snij/	ardent
	/sʲnʲ/	честнее	/tʃʲɪ ˈsʲnʲe jɪ/	more honest (than)
ЗДН	/zn/	поздно	/ˈpo znɐ/	late ( <i>adv.</i> )
	/zʲnʲ/	поздний	/ˈpo zʲnʲij/	late ( <i>adj.</i> )
СТЛ	/sʲlʲj/	счастливо	/ʃʲʲɪ ˈsʲlʲi vɐ/	happily
[Conditions for -СТЛ- to be read as /sʲlʲj/ seem rare. See exceptions]				
СТЦ; ЗДЦ	/sts/	истца	/ɪs ˈtsɐ/	of the plaintiff
		под узды	/pɐd us ˈtsɪ/	by the bridle
НДЦ [нтц]	/nts/	голландцы	/gɐ ˈʔɐn tsɪ/	the Dutch
[-нтц- seems to exist only in artificially created words]				
рдц	/rts/	сердце	/ˈsʲɛr tsɪ/	a heart
СТСК	/sʲ:kʲj/	марксистский	/mɐrk ˈsʲi sʲ:kʲij/	Marxist ( <i>adj.</i> )
НДСК; НТСК	/ɲsʲkʲj/	голландский	/gɐ ˈʔɐn sʲkʲij/	Dutch ( <i>adj.</i> )
		гигантский	/gʲi ˈgɐɲ sʲkʲij/	gigantic ( <i>adj.</i> )
		парламентский	/pɐr ˈʔɐ mʲɪɲ sʲkʲij/	parliamentary ( <i>adj.</i> )

<sup>295</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 148–151; Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian*, 37–40.

Exceptions and Notes

Cyrillic      Read as  
 зДН    /zdn/; /z<sup>j</sup>d<sup>j</sup>n/

All words in which this cluster deletes the /d/-phoneme are ones in which the root of the word contains the -зД- cluster, yet the -н- is part of a suffix. In other terms, the -Д- and the -н- are morphologically separated. There is a set of words, though, in which the -Д- and the -н- are part of the word root, while the -з- is a member of a prefix. The root words here are ДНО, which means *the bottom* and ДЕНЬГИ, which means *money*. In the case of both ДНО and ДЕНЬГИ, the root form is ДН-. The prefixes involved are БЕЗ-, МЕЗ- and ВОЗ-, which have the meanings of *without*, *in between* and *repetition*, respectively. The resulting words must have all three letters of the cluster pronounced.<sup>296</sup> These exceptional words are:

бездна            /'b<sup>j</sup>ɛz dna/            an abyss; a huge amount  
 [deriv.< без+дно “without bottom”]

безмездный      /b<sup>j</sup>ɪz 'm<sup>j</sup>ɛz dnij/      gratuitous; charitable  
 [deriv.< без+мез+деньги “without in-between money”]

безвозмездный    /b<sup>j</sup>ɪz vɔz 'm<sup>j</sup>ɛz dnij/    free; unpaid  
 [deriv.< без+воз+мез+деньги “without repetitious in-between money”]

при бездне        /pr<sup>j</sup>i 'b<sup>j</sup>ɛz<sup>j</sup> d<sup>j</sup>ni/        at the abyss (*prep. case*)

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<sup>296</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 148; Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian*, 39; Charles E. Gribble, *Russian Root List with a Sketch of Word Formation*, 2nd ed (Columbus: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1981), 40, 23, 28, 19.

Exceptions and Notes (cont'd)

Cyrillic      Read as

СТЛ    /stʃ/; /sʲtʃʲ/    Words in which the root stem is a form of *стла-* or *костля-*<sup>297</sup>

Examples

стлать      /stʃatʲ/            to lay out; to spread out (a table cloth)

стлаться    /'stʃa t:sʌ/          to stretch out; to extend

постлать    /pa 'stʃatʲ/          *perfective* of стлать

костлявый   /ka 'sʲtʃʲa vij/      bony thin (*adj.*)

Cyrillic            Read as

НТСК      /ntʃʲskʲ/; /ntsk/    the default reading of this cluster.

The pronunciation of /ntʃʲskʲ/ for the cluster -НТСК-, as presented in the earlier section, is an exception that applies only to the words given in the example. In all other cases, the cluster is read as if spelled in Cyrillic as -нцк- (though palatalizable), that is, /ntsk/ or /ntʃʲskʲ/.<sup>298</sup> As apparent by the following examples, the exceptional words tend to be more common than the words using the default pronunciation.

Examples

комендантский /кʌ mʲɪn 'dʌŋ tʃʲskʲij/    commandant (*masc. adj.*)

комендантская /кʌ mʲɪn 'dan tska ja/    commandant (*fem. adj.*)

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<sup>297</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 149; Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian*, 39.

<sup>298</sup> Avanesov, 150; Derwing and Priestly, 38.

Three- and Four-Letter Clusters with First Member not Read

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Read as</u>	<u>Examples</u>	
ЛНЦ	/nts/	СОЛНЦЕ	/'son tsi/ [unique case] the sun
ВСТВ	/stv/	ЧУВСТВО	/'tʃu stvΛ/ a sense; a feeling
		ЗДРАВСТВУЙТЕ!	/'zdra stvuj tʃɪ/ Hello! ( <i>formal</i> )
		БЕЗМОЛВСТВОВАТЬ	/bʲɪz 'moʃ stvΛ vatʲ/ to be silent; speechless
	/sʲtʲvʲ/	ЧУВСТВЕННЫЙ	/'tʃu sʲtʲvʲɪ n:iʲ/ sensuous ( <i>adj.</i> )

Notes and Exceptions

СОЛНЦЕ is a unique word with a unique pronunciation. It is therefore assumed that a singer will not come across the internal cluster of -ЛНЦ- in any other Russian word.<sup>299</sup>

Though the /stv/ pronunciation applies to all words using the -ЧУВСТВ-, ЗДРАВСТВ- or the -МОЛВСТВ- root stems, the three example words are the most common. Two relatively common words that lie outside of this pronunciation group are:

ХВASTOBCTB	/xvΛ stɑ 'fstvo/	bragging ( <i>n.</i> )
ДЕВСТВЕННЫЙ	/'dʲe fʲsʲtʲvʲɪ n:iʲ/	virginal ( <i>adj.</i> )

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<sup>299</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 151; Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian*, 116.

Review of the Process to Analyze Russian Consonant Clusters

- 1) Assume that each consonant in the cluster will be pronounced.
- 2) Apply the rules of regressive assimilation of voicing based upon the final consonant in the cluster that is not a sonorant or the phoneme /v/ (-B-).
- 3) Check for double consonants or any special cases and apply appropriate rules.
- 4) Apply regressive palatalization, if appropriate.
- 5) Check exceptions entered throughout this chapter (Chapter 6).

### Section 3 – Assimilation Across Word Boundaries

#### Defining the Word Boundary

Throughout the preceding sections on consonant clusters, the rules either can or cannot be applied *across the word boundary*. The boundaries between and within words are defined by:

- 1) punctuation (periods, commas, colons, semi-colons)
- 2) the implied phrase (places of possible pause without punctuation)
- 3) the individual word
- 4) in between a preposition and its object or a prefix/suffix and a word root
- 5) certain phonemes with specific, absolute qualities that deny some influences

The boundaries listed in #4, above, are of special consideration because, in Russian, prepositions are usually integrated with the object in pronunciation, as if all one word. Often prefixes are versions of prepositions that have fused with their objects to make new words of more specific meaning.

In general, punctuation and implied phrase separation (points where a speaker could pause without punctuation and still maintain or enhance meaning) present terminal boundaries which are not crossed by any phenomena of assimilation, including voicing and palatalization. How to establish an *implied phrase boundary* is a bit complicated and will be discussed in some detail further on. On the other hand, preposition and prefix/suffix boundaries are crossed by the assimilative influence of voicing, but not of palatalization. Individual words are governed by grammatical relationship. The closer the syntactic relationship of two words the more likely assimilative influences will cross the boundary

between them, but as has been discussed already, some assimilation just does not occur across any external boundaries.

### Types of Assimilation

For consonants the types of assimilation that can be encountered in Russian are:

- 1) palatalization;
- 2) voicing/devoicing;
- 3) deletion (disappearing consonants in clusters); and
- 4) change in articulatory feature (usually from plosive to fricative).

In the latter two cases (deletion and articulatory feature change), neither phenomenon crosses any boundary between words, and within words (prefix/suffix and roots) the conditions are very specific and have been discussed within the context of particular clusters and words. Palatalization, for a majority of cases, neither crosses the word boundary, including prepositions, nor the prefix/suffix boundary. The exceptions for preposition and prefix/suffix boundaries, even when a *tyordyi znak* (-Ь-) creates the boundary, include:

- 1) when the preposition ends in the same consonant as the initial letter of the object word, or the prefix/suffix junction with the root produces a double consonant and the second consonant in the pair is palatalized; and
- 2) when the preposition or prefix (only) ends with one of the consonant letters -B-, -C-, or -3-, and the initial letter of the following word or word root indicates regressive palatalization.

The following examples display the normal condition of no palatalization effects across the word boundaries. Some exceptions are subsequently listed:

к сердцу	/k 's <sup>j</sup> ɛr tsu/	to (the) heart
под вечер	/pad 'v <sup>j</sup> e tʃ <sup>j</sup> ɪr/	toward evening
обвить	/ab 'v <sup>j</sup> it <sup>j</sup> /	to wind around ( <i>pfv.</i> of обвивать)
отчёт	/at tʃ <sup>j</sup> ot/	an account; a report
BUT: к киоску	/k <sup>j</sup> k <sup>j</sup> i 'os ku/	toward the kiosk
под диваном	/pʌd <sup>j</sup> d <sup>j</sup> i 'va nʌm/	under the couch
отенок	/at <sup>j</sup> t <sup>j</sup> ɛ nʌk/	a shade; a hue
AND: в мире	/v <sup>j</sup> 'm <sup>j</sup> i r <sup>j</sup> ɪ/	in the world
съесть	/s <sup>j</sup> 'jes <sup>j</sup> t <sup>j</sup> /	to eat ( <i>pfv.</i> of есть)
изменять	/iz <sup>j</sup> m <sup>j</sup> i 'nat <sup>j</sup> /	to change; to cheat on ( <i>w/ dative</i> )

### Regressive Assimilation of Voicing

Voicing assimilation can occur across all boundaries except punctuation or the implied phrase (numbers 1 and 2 of the boundary list above). The matter of devoicing assimilation is only pertinent across the prefix/suffix boundary with the root and with the preposition *в* (*in, into*), as all final consonants are unvoiced by rule, and so can only be voiced by regressive assimilation across a word boundary. The rules of voicing assimilation relate more to the phonetic pairing across the boundary than the type of boundary and are complicated by pairings with vowels, with the sonorant consonants [ʃ/ (-ʃ-), /m/ (-m-), /n/ (-n-), /r/ (-r-) and /j/ (-j-)], and with /v/ or /f/, when spelled with the letter -в-.

For arcane linguistic reasons in Russian, the phoneme /v/ (or /f/), when spelled with -B-, has no assimilative power of its own and is completely influenced by the phonemes around it. If it is followed by a consonant that is not a sonorant, it follows the rules of a non-sonorant consonant, but if it is followed by a vowel or a sonorant, it follows the rules of a sonorant.<sup>300</sup> This phonemic weakness can complicate the application of the rules of voicing assimilation. A practical technique is to ignore /v/ (-B-) when it is in a position of regressive influence and to look to the next letter in line to apply its particular influence across both the /v/-phoneme and the word boundary.

The basic rules for assimilation of voicing across word boundaries are:

- 1) No consonant assimilates voicing across punctuation or the implied phrase.<sup>301</sup>
- 2) Sonorants and vowels do not influence voicing assimilation across any boundary, but do allow final voiced consonants of prepositions, particle contractions, prefixes and word roots (boundary #4) to retain voicing.<sup>302</sup>
- 3) When singing Russian, sonorants are never devoiced.
- 4) All other consonants (non-sonorant) influence assimilation of voicing across the boundaries of individual, syntactically related words (boundary #3), between prepositions and objects, between prefixes/suffixes and roots (boundary #4), and within words (in consonant clusters greater than two members, the last member in the cluster influences the rest).<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules*, 43.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, 45–46.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 44–48.

Here are some examples:

Rule #1: /'a na 'mo ʒit pʲetʲ ˈdʲmʲi tʲrʲi nʲi 'mo ʒit/

Анна может петь. Дмитрий не может.

Anna can sing. Dmitri cannot.

/da 'bu dʲit na vas bʲlʌ ga 'datʲ/

...да будет на вас благодать,...

[that] may upon you [there] will be a blessing,...

Rule #2: /sat naʃ/     /sat 'a ni/     /sat vaʃ/

сад наш     сад Анны     сад ваш

our garden     Anna's garden     your garden

/mʲiʒ nas/     /bʲiʒ 'a ni/     /raz 'ʲu ka/     /'je sʲiʲi b mok/

меж нас     без Анны     разлука     если б мог

amongst us     without Anna     a separation     if [one] could

Rule #3: /on ʲu 'bʲiʲ ʲta nʲu/     /a 'na 'u ʒin pʲl da 'jot/

Он любил Таню     Она ужин подаёт

He loved Tanya     She supper serves (She serves supper)

Rule #4: /kod bi/     /got pra 'ʃotʲ/     /ad ʒi 'vatʲ/     /pʲlʌt ku 'patʲ/

кот бы...     год прошёл     отживать     подкупать

A tomcat could...     a year passed     to die out     to bribe

/g ˈdʲmʲi tʲrʲi ju/     /bʲis 'ta ni/     /'prozʲ ba/     /'rʲetʲ ka/

к Дмитрию     без Тани     просьба     редька

to Dmitri's     without Tanya     a request     a radish

/gvosʲtʲ/     /gozʲdʲ bi/     /gozʲdʲ zda 'jot/     /gvocʲtʲ 'sto it/

гвоздь     гость бы     гость слаёт     гвоздь стоит

a nail     a guest would     the guest is weakening     the nail costs

The last line of examples displays the power of regressive assimilation of voicing, when there are no phonological boundaries. In the case of ГВОЗДЬ, the final consonant letter -Д- (the soft sign, -Ь-, does not count as a consonant) is read devoiced by rule, but it then influences the preceding consonant (-З-, normally /z/) and devoices it as well. In the last three examples, the word boundary is crossable, which effectively creates consonant clusters of three and four letters. Since the last non-sonorant member (not /v/) of such a cluster is the agent of assimilation across the entire cluster, then each cluster is voiced or devoiced according to that final member.

#### Determining the Implied Phrase

Rule #1 of assimilation across boundaries refers to the implied phrase or an implied break that acts like a point of punctuation. Determining the break point of an implied phrase can be difficult without strong literacy in the Russian language. It is somewhat easier to define where an implied phrase break does not occur, than where it does occur. As in most languages, a subject, verb and object constitute a unit that should not be broken. Modifiers directly related to these basic parts add to the phrase and are bound to the words they modify. Prepositions are connected to their objects as a prepositional phrase, but the entire phrase itself can be one of the first points of an implied phrase break. The prepositional phrase is not integrally related to the rest of a sentence and may imply a point of pause. Conjunctions that do not require a separation by comma may still imply a possible pause. Then, in languages like Russian, in which word order is less important, the syntactical relationship of a group of words can produce a point of implied pause between words that may seem integrally bound but really are not. A few examples may help to clarify.

From “Boris Godunov,” Act II, Pushkin/Musorgsky:

/kaɡ 'bu rʲa sʲmʲerʲtʲ u 'no sʲid zʲi nʲi 'xa/  
 Как б<sub>в</sub>уря, см<sub>в</sub>ерть уно<sub>в</sub>сит жениха...]  
 Like [a] storm, death carries away [a] groom...

From “Doubt,” Kukol’nik/Glinka:

/ja 'pʲta tʲʉ nʲi 'vʲi pʲta kʌdʲ ga 'rʲa f sʲlʲi 'zax/  
 я плачу, не выплак<sub>в</sub>ать горя в слезах.  
 I am crying, [yet] do not weep out [the] grief in tears.

From *Christ is Risen*, Merezhkovsky/Rakhmaninov:

/kaɡ 'da b on biʲt mʲiʒ nas i 'vʲi dʲiʲt kaɡ 'bra ta brat vʌzʲi nʲi na 'vʲi dʲiʲt/  
 Когда б Он был меж нас и видел... как брата брат возненавидел,...  
 When [it] would that He was among us and saw,... how brother brother deeply hated.  
 [how brother deeply hated brother]

From *To the Children*, Khomyakov/Rakhmaninov:

/ma 'lʲi tʲsa da 'bu dʲiʲt na vas bʲʌ ga 'datʲ/  
 ...молиться, да б<sub>в</sub>удет на вас б<sub>в</sub>лагодать,...  
 ...to pray, [that] may upon you [there] will be a blessing,...<sup>304</sup>

In the last two examples, two boundaries and one case of voicing might be more difficult to discern, if one is not proficient in the Russian language and grammar. In the example from *Christ is Risen*, the lone б after Когда is a contraction of the particle бы, which conveys the subjunctive mood (*would that; could that*). It retains its voiced sound, because it is followed by a vowel (rule #2, above). Next, normally, when и /i/ (*and*), conjoins two subjects, if the first subject ends in an unpalatalized consonant, the /i/-phoneme changes to the allophone [i].

<sup>304</sup> All translations on this page are by Craig M. Grayson

In the case of “Он был меж нас и видел,” меж нас (*amongst us*) is a prepositional phrase relating to the state of the subject, Он (*He*), while и видел (*and saw*) describes the action of the subject. Two separate clauses are implied (in translation — *He was amongst us[,] and [He] saw...*), so that меж нас and видел are not syntactically related. The result is an implied phrase break between меж нас and и видел, which negates the assimilative effect that changes the reading. Then, in the example from *To the Children*, the poetic syntax obscures the relationships, but на вас is also a prepositional phrase that implies a phrase break before благодать (a confusing word itself, as it looks like a verb but actually is a noun), and so the voiced /b/ (-б-) does not regressively influence the final, unvoiced /s/ (-с-) of вас. It does require a comfortable knowledge of Russian to do this work by oneself, but most likely, such cases would be addressed by a native-Russian coach or conductor.

#### Regressive Assimilation of Voicing Across the Word Boundary

A consequence of voicing assimilation across the word boundary, in Russian, is that consonant phonemes that are exclusively unvoiced must become voiced allophones. Whereas unvoiced /t/ (-т-) can be paired with voiced /d/ (-д-), there are no voiced phonemic partners to the unvoiced consonants /x/ (-х-), /ts/ (-ц-) and /tʃ/ (-ч-). The voiced versions of these phonemes only occur due to regressive voicing, and so are only allophonic. Two of these voiced allophones are familiar to English speakers, one is not. They are presented in order of phonetic familiarity, below.

Cyrillic   Read as

ч      [dʒʲ]      when influenced by regressive voicing.

The voiced version of /tʃʲ/, like the -j- in the English words *jeans*, /dʒʲi:nz/, and *jeep*, /dʒʲi:p/. The Russian allophone is always palatalized.

Examples

дочь бы	луч был	печь зёрна
/dodʒʲ bi/	/ludʒʲ biʃ/	/pʲedʒʲ ʲzʲor na/
the daughter would	a ray was	to bake grains

Cyrillic   Read as

ц      [dz]      when influenced by regressive voicing.

The voiced allophone of /ts/, like the -ds- in the English words *bends*, /bendz/, and *reds*, /ɪɛdz/.

Examples

отец бы	у птиц был	братец знает
/ɑ tʲɛdz bi/	/u ʲpʲtʲidz biʃ/	/'bra tʲidz ʲzna jɪ/
the father would	the birds had	the little brother knows

Cyrillic   Read as

X        [ɣ]        when influenced by regressive voicing.

The allophone [ɣ], the voiced version of /x/, is unknown to most English speakers. One obvious way to practice this sound is to pronounce the unvoiced phoneme of /x/, sustaining the fricative with the breath, and then activate the voice to produce a sound not unlike gargling. It may also be noticed that this sound has some relationship to the voiced phoneme /g/, but /g/ is a plosive whose unvoiced partner is /k/. The allophone [ɣ], like its unvoiced parent, /x/, is fricative. The singer should be careful not to articulate a French, *velar -r-* or German *uvular -r-*, (/ʁ/ or /ʀ/, respectively) for [ɣ]. The allophone [ɣ], like /x/, is formed on the back of the hard palate not on the soft palate (the velum) or the uvula.

Examples

он оглох бы	горох же	мой слух был
/on a 'gʎox bi/	/gɑ 'roɣ ʒi/	/moj sʎux biʃ/
he would become deaf	the peas	my hearing was

## Review of the Consonant Sounds and Coinciding Printed Letters

Sound(s) [/standard/; /palatalized/]      Cyrillic letter(s) [print; script] – specific explanations

### The Cognates (the same as or recognizably similar to English)

/k/; /kʲ/	к <i>κ</i> ; г <i>ɣ</i> – unvoiced when final or due to regressive assimilation
/m/; /mʲ/	м <i>μ</i> – sonorant
/t/; /tʲ/	т <i>τ</i> ; д <i>ð</i> – unvoiced when final or due to regressive assimilation
/z/; /zʲ/	з <i>z</i> ; ц – voiced due to regressive assimilation
/b/; /bʲ/	б <i>β</i> ; п <i>p</i> – voiced due to regressive assimilation

### The Greeks (directly borrowed from Greek, including sound)

/g/; /gʲ/	г <i>ɣ</i> ; κ <i>κ</i> – voiced due to regressive assimilation
/d/; /dʲ/	д <i>ð</i> ; ϑ <i>θ</i> ; т <i>τ</i> – voiced due to regressive assimilation
/p/; /pʲ/	п <i>p</i> ; б <i>β</i> – voiced due to regressive assimilation
/f/; /fʲ/	ф <i>φ</i> ; в <i>β</i> – devoiced when final or due to regressive assimilation
/x/; /xʲ/	х <i>χ</i> ; г <i>ɣ</i> (in the clusters -γκ- and -γϑ-, only)
[χ]	х <i>χ</i> – voiced across word boundary due to regressive assimilation
/ʎ/; /ʎʲ/	л <i>λ</i> – sonorant

### The False Friends (look familiar, but sound different)

/v/; /vʲ/	в <i>β</i> ; ф <i>φ</i> – in rare cases of regressive voicing assimilation
/n/; /nʲ/	н <i>η</i> – sonorant
/r/; /rʲ/	р <i>ρ</i> – sonorant
/s/; /sʲ/	с <i>ς</i> ; з <i>z</i> – devoiced when final or due to regressive assimilation

The Hushers and II (familiar sounds, but highly unfamiliar letters)

## Hard:

/ʒ/; [ʒʲ](rare)	Ж ж; III и; – voiced due to regressive assimilation C; 3 – before voiced -ж-
/ʃ/; [ʃʲ](very rare)	III и; Ж ж; Ч ч – in special cases of the clusters -чт- and -чн- C; 3 – before unvoiced -III-
/ts/; /tʲsʲ/(very rare)	II и; -тс-; -тѣс- – under very specific conditions
[dz]	II и – in cases of regressive assimilation, usually across word boundary

## Soft:

/tʃʲ/	Ч ч; – also, in certain special clusters (see Ch 6, S. 2)
[dʒʲ]	Ч ч – due to voicing assimilation (rare internally); in certain clusters (Ch 6, S. 2)
/ʃʲʃʲ/	III и; -жч-; -чч-; -IIIч-
[ʒʲʒʲ]	III и; rare cases of cluster -зж-; rare cases of cluster -жж-

Articulation and Voicing Groups**Dental****Unvoiced**

/s/, /sʲ/ C c

**Voiced**

/z/, /zʲ/ З з

**Labial****Unvoiced**

/p/, /pʲ/ П п

**Voiced**

/b/, /bʲ/ Б б

**Velar****Unvoiced**

/k/, /kʲ/ К к

**Voiced**

/g/, /gʲ/ Г г г

/t/, /tʲ/ Т т т

/d/, /dʲ/ Д д

/f/, /fʲ/ Ф ф

/v/, /vʲ/ В в

/x/, /xʲ/ Х х

/ʏ/, /ʏʲ/

/ts/, /tʲsʲ/ Ц ц

/dz/

/m/, /mʲ/ М м [sonorant]

/n/, /nʲ/ Н н [sonorant]

/ʎ/, /ʎʲ/ Ў ў [sonorant]

[velarized when unpalatalized]

**Palato-laminal****Unvoiced**

/tʃʲ/ Ч ч [palatalized]

**Voiced**

/dʒʲ/

**Alveolar****Voiced**

/r/, /rʲ/ Р р [trilled sonorant]

/ʃ/ III и

/ʒ/ Ж ж

/ʃʲʃʲ/ III и [palatalized] /ʒʲʒʲ/

## Cyrillic to Phoneme Index of All Letters in Alphabetical Order

А а а	/a/, [ʌ]; less common: [a], [ɪ], /i/
Б б б	/b/, /bʲ/; /p/, /pʲ/
В в в	/v/, /vʲ/; /f/, /fʲ/
Г г г	/g/, /gʲ/; /k/, /kʲ/; /x/ (in the clusters -гк- and -гч- only)
Д д д	/d/, /dʲ/; /t/, /tʲ/
Е е	/ɛ/, /jɛ/, [e], [je], [ɪ], [jɪ], /i/, /ji/; [i] unstressed, after /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), /ts/ (-ц-)
Ё ё	/jo/, /o/ — diacritical umlaut is rarely printed
Ж ж	/ʒ/; /ʃ/ — almost always unpalatalized; very rare: [ʒʲ]; /ʃʲʃʲ/ (as cluster -жч-)
З з	/z/, /zʲ/; /s/, /sʲ/; /ʒ/, /ʒ:/ or [ʒʲʒʲ] (as cluster -жж-); /ʃ/ (as cluster -шш-)
И и и	/i/ most of the time; [i] when preceded by /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), /ts/ (-ц-); [i] across the word boundary, when preceded by a hard consonant; [i] in the adjectival ending -ий, in the style of <i>Stage Pronunciation</i> ; [ʌ] in the adjectival ending -ий, in the style of <i>Old Muscovite</i>
Й й ѱ	/j/ sometimes deleted [e.g. Чайковский /tʃʲi 'koʃʲ sʲkʲij/]
К к	/k/, /kʲ/; /g/, /gʲ/
Л л л	/ʎ/, /ʎʲ/
М м м	/m/, /mʲ/
Н н	/n/, /ɲ/
О о	/o/, /ɑ/, [ʌ]
П п п	/p/, /pʲ/; /b/, /bʲ/ — only across word boundary due to voicing assimilation
Р р р	/r/, /rʲ/
С с	/s/, /sʲ/; /z/, /zʲ/; /ʃ/ (as cluster -шш-); /ʃʲʃʲ/ (as cluster -чч-); /ʒ/ (as cluster -жж-)
Т т т	/t/, /tʲ/; /d/, /dʲ/; as part of /ts/, /tʃ/, [dz], [dʒ] in certain clusters (see Ch 6, Sec. 2)
У у	/u/

Ф ф ф	/f/, /fʲ/; rare within word: /v/, /vʲ/ – more common across word boundary
Х х	/x/, /xʲ/; unusual: [χ] — across word boundary due to voicing assimilation
Ц ц ц	/ts/, [dz] — due to voicing assimilation; rare: /tʃʂʲ/ (see Ch. 6, entry on -ц-)
Ч ч	/tʃʲ/, [dʒʲ] — due to voicing assimilation; /ʃ/ in clusters -чт-, -чн-, only certain words
Ш ш	/ʃ/, /ʒ/ — due to voicing assimilation (rare within words); /ʃʲʃʲ/ (as cluster -шч-)
Щ щ	/ʃʲʃʲ/; rare: [ʒʲʒʲ] — due to voicing similitude
Ъ	hard sign ( <i>tvorodyĭ znak</i> ); No IPA Symbol
Ы ы	[ɨ]
Ь	soft sign ( <i>myagkiĭ znak</i> ); IPA diacritic, [ʲ]
Э э	/ɛ/, [e], [ɪ]
Ю ю	/u/, /ju/
Я я	/a/, /ja/, [ɪ], [jɪ], [ʌ]; less common: [a], [ja], /i/, and [ji]

## CHAPTER 7 –

### Syllabic Stress and Vowels:

#### Spelling and Reading Rules; Shifting Stress

Where the stress or accent falls within a Russian word often determines the exact sound of the different vowels in the word. As with the latter sections of the preceding chapter, reading rules become the practical gateway to pronunciation. Certain grammatical processes and forms cause a shift in the stressed syllable of a word. Knowing when such shifts might happen can be helpful.

## Syllabic Stress in Russian

Russian places stress or accent on only one syllable in a multi-syllable word (some compound words have secondary stressed). Also, in the Russian language, prepositions are bound to their objects syntactically, so the entire prepositional phrase is spoken as if it were one, continuous word. In such cases, most prepositions are treated as unstressed syllables. Another kind of word that is treated as an unstressed syllable is the particle (such as, *бы*, *же*, *не* and *ни*). Conjunctions are rarely, if ever, stressed but this does not affect their inherent pronunciation.

As mentioned in the introduction to this guide, the position of a syllable in relation to the stressed syllable is often important in determining how a vowel is pronounced. There are no practical rules to determine which particular syllable is stressed in any specific Russian word, though there are parts of words (certain prefixes, suffixes, verb particles, verb form endings, etc.) that are never stressed. Generally, Russian composers, like most composers, tend to try to set words so that the stressed syllable falls on a strong beat and/or is of longer duration and, perhaps, is set on a higher pitch melodically. Yet, rational word underlay is often ignored for the sake of the melodic phrase, and so, cannot be considered a reliable indicator of a Russian word's actual syllabic stress pattern. Only a comprehensive Russian-language dictionary can be trusted for verification. Complicating matters is the shifting of stress that can occur in the conjugation of verbs and in the various declensional forms of nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Though regular patterns of stress shift can be charted, especially in verbs, there really is no way of determining exactly which word takes on which pattern by any clear set of rules. So, again, a good Russian dictionary (as well as texts that specialize in verb conjugation and declensional forms) must be used to find out how the

stress shifts in such cases. That said, familiarity with what patterns exist, what elements are always or never stressed, and when stress really matters can be very helpful to accelerate a singer's preparation.

## Section 1 – When Syllabic Stress Matters: Vowel Spelling and Reading Rules

In review, the major factors that enter into determining which vowel is read for a certain spelling include what the letter is, what the stressed syllable is, and the relative position to the stress. Several vowels do not change significantly in pronunciation (in Russian lyric diction) whether stressed or unstressed. These vowels are: /i/, /u/ (/ju/ cluster, as well), and [i] [-и-, -y- (-ю-), and -ы-, respectively]. The sounds associated with the letters -y-, -ю- and -ы- do not really vary, and the reading of -и- as /i/ does not change due to its stress position; rather, assimilative influences rule this vowel. The rest of the Russian vowels are significantly affected by stress or position or both, and this affects the reading of the associated letters.

Several letters, associated with the vowels, each have multiple readings depending upon its position in a word. When reading the letters -е-, -я- and -э-, only whether they are in the stressed syllable or not matters, not relative position to stress. Factors other than stress determine various readings for the letters -е-, -я- and -э- in unstressed syllables. The letter -ё- can only be written in the stressed syllable, but its reading is affected by some assimilative factors. The circumstances are very different for the letters -а- and -о- where both stress and position are important in deciding the proper reading of each. Therefore, in short chart form:

Letters with Readings Unaffected by Stress or Position

-и-; -у-; -ю-; -ы-

Letters with Readings Affected by Stress but not Position

-е-; -я-; -э-; -ё- (stressed syllable only)

Letters with Readings Affected by both Stress and Position

-а-; -о-

The letter -о- has the greatest variance of reading due to stress and position in common Russian words. The letter is read as /o/ only when in the stressed syllable (unstressed in certain foreign words), as /a/ in the immediate pre-stress position or initial, when an unstressed; and as [ʌ] in any post-stress position or in a remote pre-stress position when not the initial letter. Here are some examples indicative of the reading rules and the importance of syllabic stress when reading the letter -о-.

МОЛОКО	/mʌ ʎa 'ko/	milk
ОКОЛО	/'o kʌ ʎʌ/	near; about
ОКНО	/ak 'no/	a window ( <i>nom. sing.</i> )
ОКНА	/'ok na/	the windows ( <i>nom. &amp; acc. pl.</i> )
ОКНА	/ak 'na/	of the window ( <i>gen. sing.</i> )
ОДИНОКО	/a dʲi 'no kʌ/	[one feels] alone; lonely ( <i>adv.</i> )
ОДИНОКА	/a dʲi 'no ka/	[she is] alone; lonely ( <i>short form, fem. adj.</i> )

The word ОКНО (*window*), above, is a clear example of how important it is to know which syllable is stressed. In the case of ОКНА, only context and syntax helps a singer decide whether the pronunciation is /'ok na/ or /ak 'na/. The Russian word ОКНО is also a good example of shifting stress due to declensional form. For ОДИНОКО and ОДИНОКА, the phonetic

difference when singing the associated final vowel sound can be an important element to help the listener understand meaning.<sup>305</sup>

The letter -a- has less reading variance in Russian lyric diction, but stress and position are just as vital to this letter as with -o-.

Examples:

мама	/'ma ma/	mama; mommy
заказ	/za 'kaz/	an order
карандаш	/kΛ ran 'daʃ/	a pencil
автор	/'af tΛr/	an author
музыка	/'mu zi kΛ/	music
женская	/'ʒɛn ska ja/	a woman('s); female; feminine ( <i>adj.</i> )
адвокат	/ad va 'kat/	an advocate; a lawyer

Essentially, the letter -a- is read as /a/ in all positions except for the remote-pre- or post-stress, when not the initial letter or the adjectival, feminine ending -ая (always /a ja/, in Russian lyric diction).<sup>306</sup>

The letter -e- has its greatest variability of reading in the stressed position due to the surrounding environment. In the stressed syllable, -e- can be read as /ɛ-/jɛ/ or [e]-[je]. Yet, in an unstressed syllable, the letter -e- is read as [ɪ]-[jɪ], /i-/ji/ (when interpalatal), or [i] [after /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), /ts/ (-ц-)]. The letter -я- is read as /a-/ja/ or /a-/ja/, when in the stressed syllable, but as [ɪ]-[jɪ] or /i-/ji/, in an unstressed syllable, except in the reflexive

<sup>305</sup> Several authorities do not make the distinction between post-stressed -o- and -a-, assigning [Λ] (or /ə/) to both letters in the post-stress position. My decision to suggest the difference is for clarity's sake, but also, because I have noted the distinction made by some Russian singers.

<sup>306</sup> There are several authorities that advise that the letter -a- in any post-stress position be read as [Λ] (or schwa, /ə/, for several texts). This guide suggests that -a- in the immediate-post-stress position be read as /a/ in order to aurally differentiate from words that have the letter -o- in the same position. For example: блюдо /'blʲu dΛ/ (*a platter*) and блюда /'blʲu da/ (*platters* or *a platter's...*).

verbal endings -ТЬСЯ and -ТСЯ, when it is read as [ʌ]. The letter -Ә- in the stressed position is read as /ɛ/ or [e], while in an unstressed position, it may be read as [ɪ] or [i].<sup>307</sup> Finally, because -ё- is only written in the stressed position, it is read as /o/–/jo/.

There is one other interesting case when stress and orthography join together in Russian. In pre-revolutionary printing (very common for Russian opera and art song), the old Cyrillic letter -Ѣ- was often used in place of -е-, but generally only in the stressed syllable.<sup>308</sup> When -Ѣ- is printed in the stressed position, it is always read as if it were a stressed -е-, following all the same rules for phonetic variation. Yet, and this is very important, the letter -Ѣ- is not printed exclusively in place of every stressed -е-. Very often the letter -е- is printed in the stressed position in some words, while -Ѣ- is used in others. Therefore, in pre-revolutionary printing, it cannot be safely assumed that if a Russian word has several syllables containing -е- and not -Ѣ-, that the stress falls on a “non-е” syllable. A singer must check nearly every word containing -е- to find which syllable is stressed.

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<sup>307</sup> Some authorities prefer unstressed -Ә- to be read as [i]. This text recommends [ɪ] for the sake of easier vocal production.

<sup>308</sup> Of the cases in which I have found the letter -Ѣ- printed in an unstressed position, the stressed vowel is either another -Ѣ- or a vowel-letter other than -е-.

## Section 2 – Patterns of Shifting Stress

### In the Declension of Nouns, Adjectives and Pronouns

Russian is a language that uses *declension*, which means that each noun, pronoun and adjective has several forms consisting of a root stem with changing forms of endings. Each ending conveys the case and syntactical function of the root word. The cases are labelled *nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, prepositional, and instrumental*. The endings tend to be different in the singular from the plural, so a Russian noun has several declensional endings. Adjectives must agree with the nouns they modify in case, number and gender (in Russian — masculine, feminine, and neuter). Pronouns have their own set of declensional forms. More detailed information about Russian grammar can be found in Appendix E. What is important to know is that for many Russian nouns, the stress can shift from one syllable to another, depending upon the case form.

The basic stress patterns of nouns are:<sup>309</sup>

- [Key: S = singular; Pl = Plural; N = nominative; A = accusative;  
G = genitive; P = prepositional; D = dative; I = instrumental]
- a:a Stress on Root – No Shift (between S and Pl)
  - b:b Stress on Case Ending – No Shift
  - a:b Stress on Root in S – Stress on Ending in Pl
  - b:a Stress on Ending in S – Stress on Root in Pl
  - a:c Stress on Root in All Cases in S or Pl Except G, P, D, I in Pl
  - c:c Stress on Ending – All Cases S or Pl Except A in S; and N or A in Pl

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<sup>309</sup> Olga Kagan and Frank Miller, *V Puti [on the Way]* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1996), 357–359.

Basic stress patterns for nouns (cont'd):

d Special Shifting Stress Pattern (Stress same for S and Pl in each case):

N = Root  
 A = Ending  
 G = Ending  
 P = Root  
 D = Root  
 I = Ending

Many feminine and neuter nouns have no ending (the *null ending*) in the *genitive plural* form. If the nominative plural form has end stress, that stress moves back one syllable, relative to the nominative form [e.g. имена /i mʲɪ 'nɑ/ (*the names* [*neut. nom. pl.*]); имён /i 'mʲɔn/ (*of the names* [*neut. gen. pl.*])]. The “d” pattern above only applies to the words дети, /'dʲe tʲi/, *children* and люди, /'lʲu dʲi/, *people* (see examples in Appendix E).

Adjectives establish their stress in the nominative form, which is the form found in a dictionary, and that stress position (on the root or on the ending) remains fixed throughout the different forms. Pronouns tend to place stress on the very end syllable in any multi-syllabic form. The exceptions are наш, ваш, and этот (*our, your* [*pl.*] and *this*, respectively), which have first syllable stress. Many adjectives with root stress generate comparative forms that shift the stress to the ending, such as:

НОВЫЙ /'no vʲij/ new → новее /nɑ 'vʲje jɪ/ newer  
 СИЛЬНЫЙ /'sʲilʲ nʲij/ strong → сильнее /sʲilʲ 'ʲje jɪ/ stronger

### In Verb Conjugation

In a fashion, verbs are less complex than nouns, when it comes to stress patterns, because most verbs keep the stressed syllable of the infinitive throughout conjugation. But verbs have greater complexity because of the various formations, from the tenses to the

imperative to the deverbal constructions (verbal adjectives and verbal adverbs). Also, many verbs are made by adding a prefix to a root verb possibly causing a shift in stress relative to the root verb. More detail about verb conjugation and other verb formations can be found in Appendix E, but here are a few examples of verb conjugation displaying some of the common stress patterns.

Examples:

Fixed: знать /znatʲ/ to know

я знаю	/ja 'zna ju/	I know	мы знаем	/mi 'zna jim/	we know
ты знаешь	/ti 'zna jɪʃ/	you know	вы знаете	/vi 'zna ji tʲɪ/	you know
она знает	/a 'na 'zna jɪt/	she knows	они знают	/a 'ni 'zna jut/	they know

Shifts: любить /lʲu 'bʲitʲ/ to love

я люблю	/ja lʲu 'bʲu/	I love	мы любим	/mi 'lʲu bʲim/	we love
ты любишь	/ti 'lʲu bʲiʃ/	you love	вы любите	/vi 'lʲu bʲi tʲɪ/	you love
она любит	/a 'na 'lʲu bʲit/	she loves	они любят	/a 'ni 'lʲu bʲit/	they love

писать /pʲi 'satʲ/ to write

я пишу	/ja pʲi 'ʃu/	I write	мы пишем	/mi 'pʲi ʃim/	we write
ты пишешь	/ti 'pʲi ʃiʃ/	you write	вы пишете	/vi 'pʲi ʃi tʲɪ/	you write
она пишет	/a 'na 'pʲi ʃit/	she writes	они пишут	/a 'ni 'pʲi ʃut/	they write

As is fairly clear from the above examples, when there is a shift of stress in a verb, it is generally between the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular form and the rest of the conjugation. Also, verbs that shift stress tend to be verbs that have end-stress in the infinitive form. Of course, the difficult verbs in which to determine stress shift are those with single syllable infinitives.

Past tense formation tends to retain the stress pattern of the infinitive form, as does the imperative form. Past tense verbs agree in gender/number with the subject:

любить /lʲu 'bʲitʲ/ to love

он любил /on lʲu 'bʲitʲ/ he loved      оно любило /a 'no lʲu 'bʲi tʲɔ/ it loved  
она любила /a 'na lʲu 'bʲi tʲa/ she loved      они любили /a 'nʲi lʲu 'bʲi lʲi/ they loved  
люби! /lʲu 'bʲi/ Love! (*sing.*)      любите! /lʲu 'bʲi tʲɪ/ Love! (*plural*)

найти /naj 'tʲi/ to discover; to find

он нашёл /on na 'ʃotʲ/ he discovered      оно нашло /a 'no na 'ʃto/ it discovered  
она нашла /a 'na na 'ʃta/ she discovered      они нашли /a 'nʲi na 'ʃlʲi/ they discovered  
найди! /naj 'dʲi/ Find out! (*sing.*)      найдите! /naj 'dʲi tʲɪ/ Find out! (*pl.*)

обидеть /a 'bʲi dʲitʲ/ to hurt; insult (someone)

он обидел /on a 'bʲi dʲitʲ/ he hurt      оно обидело /a 'no a 'bʲi dʲi tʲɔ/ it hurt  
она обидела /a 'na a 'bʲi dʲi tʲa/ she hurt      они обидели /a 'nʲi a 'bʲi dʲi lʲi/ they hurt  
обидь меня! /a 'bʲi dʲ mʲɪ 'nʲa/ Insult me!  
обидьте его! /a 'bʲi tʲɪ jɪ 'vo/ Insult him!

Several common verbs have shifting stress in the past tense, while most of the end-stress verbs that conjugate with suffixes that use the letter -ё- have a masculine form that lacks a suffix. Some examples:

быть /bitʲ/ to be

он был /on bitʲ/ he was      оно было /a 'no 'bi tʲɔ/ it was  
она была /a 'na bi 'tʲa/ she was      они были /a 'nʲi 'bi lʲi/ they were

начать /na 'tʲʲatʲ/ to begin (*perfective*)

он начал /on 'na tʲʲatʲ/ he began      оно начало /a 'no 'na tʲʲa tʲɔ/ it began  
она начала /a 'na na tʲʲa 'tʲa/ she began      они начали /a 'nʲi 'na tʲʲa lʲi/ they began

нести /nʲi 'sʲtʲi/ to carry

он нёс /on nʲos/ he carried      оно несло /a 'no nʲi 'stʲo/ it carried  
она несла /a 'na nʲi 'stʲa/ she carried      они несли /a 'nʲi nʲi 'slʲi/ they carried

In Deverbal Formations (Verbal Adjectives and Verbal Adverbs)

Determining the stress within the root of deverbal forms is less predicable, but verbal adjectives add adjectival endings to a specially derived root form, and those endings are never stressed. The special verbal adverb endings (which often look like the feminine adjectival ending -ая) can either be stressed or unstressed.

начинать /na tʃi 'natʲ/ to begin; to start (*imperfective*)

начинающий /na tʃi 'na ju ʃʲʃij/ (the person who is) starting

начинаемый /na tʃi 'na jɪ mij/ (the thing that is) being started

начинавший /na tʃi 'naf ʃij/ (the person who was) starting

начиная /na tʃi 'na jɪ/\* While starting, (something happened) [*v. adv.*]

начать /na 'tʃatʲ/ to begin; to start (*perfective*)

начавший /na 'tʃaf ʃij/ (the person who) already started

начатый /'na tʃa tij/ (the) begun (thing)

начав /na 'tʃaf/ Having begun, (something happened) [*v. adv.*]

бросать /bra 'satʲ/ to throw; to toss (*imperfective*)

бросающий /bra 'sa ju ʃʲʃij/ (the person who is) throwing

бросаемый /bra 'sa jɪ mij/ (the thing that is) being tossed

бросавший /bra 'saf ʃij/ (the person who was) throwing

бросая /bra 'sa jɪ/\* While throwing, (something happened) [*v. adv.*]

бросить /'bro sʲitʲ/ to throw; to toss (*perfective*)

бросивший /'bro sʲif ʃij/ (the person who has) thrown

брошенный /'bro ʃɪn nij/ (the thing that has been) tossed

бросив /'bro sʲif/ Having thrown, (something happened) [*v. adv.*]

\*This form, which ends with -я, follows the rules for unstressed /ja/.

Considering words such as ОКНО /ak 'no/ (*a window* [*nom. sing.*]) and the verb examples given, it is important to be able to recognize the declensional forms with their accompanying stress shifts and the verb conjugation variations in order to properly pronounce many Russian words. Ultimately, the best strategy is to acquire one or two comprehensive Russian-English (or even an all-Russian) dictionaries and a verb conjugation and deverbal formation text (of the 501 or 1001 verbs variety), and then take a good, Russian language course.

CHAPTER 8 –  
Unusual Spelling and Grammatical Forms,  
Common but Confusing Forms,  
and  
Some Common Pronunciation Exceptions

Russian opera and art song most often draw from the works of the great poets and writers for their texts. Such authors as Pushkin and Lomonosov utilize the largest palate of grammatical forms in their writing including some rather uncommon and complex constructions. Also, some of the most commonly occurring words in the Russian language do not follow the usual rules of pronunciation. Recognizing the more confusing forms and exceptional words can help to make a singer's preparation more efficient<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> All references in this chapter to grammar or grammatical rules and forms and examples are derived from five sources: Sophia Lubensky, Gerard L. Ervin, and Donald K. Jarvis, *Nachalo: When in Russia...* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1996); Olga Kagan and Frank Miller, *V Puti [On the Way]*, (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1996); and Sandra F. Rosengrant and Elena D. Lifschitz, *Focus on Russian: An Interactive Approach to Communication*, second ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996); Thomas R. Beyer, Jr., *501 Russian Verbs: Fully Conjugated in All Tenses*, (Hauppauge: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1992); Katzner, *English-Russian : Russian-English Dictionary*.

## Section 1 – Looking up -ë- or not

The Cyrillic letter -ë- (/o/–/jo/) is not unusual, but it usually looks the same as the letter -e- (/ε/–/jε/) when printed. Without a command of Russian vocabulary and grammar, a singer will not know if a printed -e- in a stressed position is -e- or -ë-, except by consulting a Russian language dictionary. Fortunately, when looking up any word to establish its stressed syllable, a singer also tends to discover if the word contains the letter -ë- in its standard, dictionary form. The monkey wrench in this practice is the potential shifting of stress through the process of declension or conjugation, but most comprehensive Russian-English dictionaries print such shifts after the Russian word, including, if the new form produces a -ë- in place of a -e- or vice versa. There are a few common words, word forms and endings that, if memorized, can significantly reduce the need to run to the dictionary looking for -ë-.

### Common Pronouns (and Declined Forms) with Only a -ë- Form

[Key: Cases: *nom.* = nominative; *acc.* = accusative; *gen.* = genitive; *prep.* = prepositional; *dat.* = dative; *instr.* = instrumental. Pronouns: *inter.* = interrogative; *pers.* = personal; *reflx.* = reflexive; *demo.* = demonstrative; *deter.* = determinative; *poss.* = possessive; *poss. inter.* = possessive interrogative. Genders: *masc.* = masculine; *neut.* = neuter; *fem.* = feminine]

<b>еë</b> ( <i>her</i> )	<i>acc.</i> and <i>gen.</i> of ОНА (she)	printed ee	/ji 'jo/
<b>нëм</b> ( <i>him; it</i> )	<i>prep.</i> of ОН (he) or ОНО (it)	printed нeм	/nom/
<b>моë</b> ( <i>my</i> )	<i>nom.</i> and <i>acc.</i> of <i>neut. poss.</i>	printed moe	/ma 'jo/
<b>моëм</b> ( <i>my</i> )	<i>prep.</i> of <i>masc.</i> and <i>neut. poss.</i>	printed moeM	/ma 'jom/
<b>твоë</b> ( <i>your</i> )	<i>nom.</i> and <i>acc.</i> of <i>neut. poss.</i>	printed tboe	/tva 'jo/
<b>твоëм</b> ( <i>your</i> )	<i>prep.</i> of <i>masc.</i> and <i>neut. poss.</i>	printed tboeM	/tva 'jom/
<b>своë</b> ( <i>my own</i> )	<i>nom.</i> and <i>acc.</i> of <i>neut. poss.</i>	printed cboe	/sva 'jo/

<b>своѐм</b> ( <i>my own</i> )	<i>prep. of masc. and neut. poss.</i>	printed <b>своѐм</b>	/sva 'jom/
<b>чѐѐ</b> ( <i>what's?</i> )	<i>nom. and acc. of neut. poss. inter.</i>	printed <b>чѐѐ</b>	/tʃ'jo/
<b>чѐѐм</b> ( <i>who's/what's?</i> )	<i>prep. of masc. and neut. poss. inter.</i>	printed <b>чѐѐм</b>	/tʃ'jom/*

\*Do not confuse with the interrogative pronouns **чѐм** and **чѐѐм**, which do not have the soft sign, -ѐ-, in their spelling. See below.

Other than those listed above, the *personal*, *reflexive*, *possessive* and *possessive interrogative* pronoun forms do not use -ѐ-. Also, no *demonstrative* pronoun forms [**этот** (*this*) and **тот** (*that*)] use -ѐ-. For a list of all the different Russian pronouns, see Appendix E, under *Pronouns*.

#### Pronoun Problems: чѐѐм, чѐм, всѐѐ, все, всѐѐм and всеѐм

The inanimate *interrogative* pronoun **что** (*what*) has one case form, the *prepositional*, that is spelled **чѐѐм** /tʃ'jom/, and another, the *instrumental*, that is spelled **чѐм** /tʃ'jɛm/. These will look the same in usual printing — **чѐм**. Only context will determine which pronoun is being used. The pronoun **чѐѐм** requires a preposition to precede it, which in turn, has to be a preposition that requires the prepositional case from its object. **Чѐм** can stand alone or may follow certain prepositions that require an object in the instrumental case. For a list of prepositions and the cases which each requires, see Appendix E under *Prepositions*.

Two ubiquitous, *determinative* pronoun forms are **все** (/f'sʲɛ/) and **всѐѐ** (/f'sʲo/). These are forms of **всѐѐ** (/vʲɛsʲ/), which is the masculine, nominative pronoun that can mean *all*, *the whole*, or *every*. **Всѐѐ** is the neuter version in the nominative and accusative cases, and is generally used to mean *everything* or *all*, as a collective singular pronoun, as in **всѐѐ хорошо**, /f'sʲo xʌ rʌ 'ʃo/, *everything is fine*. **Все** is the plural form in the nominative case and, for

inanimate objects, the accusative case. In the nominative case, все is often used to mean *everyone, everybody*, or *all living things*, as in Все готовый?, /fʲɪsʲɪ ɡa 'to vij/, *Is everybody ready?* In the accusative case (the direct object), the word tends to mean *all things* (inanimate), as in он дал мне все, /on daʎ mʲnʲɪ fʲɪsʲɪ/, *he gave everything to me* (literally: *he gave to me all the things*). Once again, context will often be the only way to tell, in print, which word is meant. The context to focus upon is whether the antecedents to the pronoun are people or things. This may not easily be apparent, so it may end up being the first question for a native Russian-speaking coach.

Another pair in this group is всем (/fʲɪsʲɔm/) and всем (/fʲɪsʲɛm/). Всем is the prepositional case of the masculine and neuter pronouns, while всем is the instrumental case of the same, as well as the dative case of the plural form. Discerning the context of the dative plural may not be too difficult, but sorting out the other conditions may be quite tricky, so, once again, the final recourse may be to ask a Russian-speaker for help.

#### The Letter -ë- in Declensional Endings, and Prefixes/Suffixes for Nouns and Adjectives

Fortunately, there are no declensional endings for nouns or adjectives that contain the letter -ë-. See Appendix E to learn more about declension and to see lists of the different declensional endings (both noun and adjective) and their pronunciation. There are no prefixes for nouns or adjectives that contain -ë-, but suffixes are different. There is one noun suffix which contains -ë- that has no look-alike suffix which contains -e-. This suffix is -ёнок, /-ʲɔ nʌk/. The suffix -ёнок refers to a young member of a species, such as телёнок, /tʲɪ 'ʲɔ nʌk/, *a male calf*, or ребёнок, /rʲɪ 'bʲɔ nʌk/, *a baby boy*. Two noun suffixes have look-alikes — -ёр (/-/ɔr/); -ер (/-/ɛr/) and -ёж (/-/ɔʒ/); -еж (/-/ɛʒ/). The suffix -ёр refers to

an agent of an occupation, such as актёр, /ak 'tʲor/, *an actor*, or дирижёр, /dʲi rʲi 'ʒor/, *an orchestra conductor*, yet there are words of similar type that end in stressed -ер, such as инженер, /in ʒi 'nɛr/, *an engineer* (one trained in engineering). The suffix -ёж is used to make nouns out of some verbs, such as грабёж, /gra 'bʲoz/, *robbery* (from грабить, /'gra bʲitʲ/, *to rob*), but the suffix -еж also creates nouns from verbs (albeit more abstractly) by denoting something which precedes the action, such as in the word рубеж, /ru 'bʲeʒ/, *a boundary line*. Рубеж is derived from the verb рубить, /ru 'bʲitʲ/, *to chop*, and suggests the idea of the point or line that precedes a dividing point. Adjective suffixes do not contain the letter -ё-, but they can be harder to discern from the root of an adjective.<sup>311</sup>

### The Letter -ё- in Verb Conjugations

Appendix E covers the different types of verb conjugation, but it is notable that the verb conjugation forms that contain -ё- are often end-stressed -ти or -сти verbs (verbs where the infinitives end with the letters -ти or -сти, and where the last or end syllable is stressed). There are verbs that have -ё- in their conjugation that do not fit the above categories, but verbs with the aforementioned, stressed, infinitive endings definitely contain -ё- in conjugational endings. Very few verbs have -ё- in their infinitive form, so -ё- does not often show up in the root portion of the deverbal forms, since those forms are derived from the infinitive. Some common examples are:

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<sup>311</sup> All information derived from Gribble, *Russian Root List*, 22–30.

**Table A**

идти /idʲi 'tʲi/ to walk:	я	иду	/i 'du/	I walk
	ты	идёшь	/ti i 'dʲoʃ/	you walk
	она	идёт	/a 'na i 'dʲot/	she walks
	мы	идём	/mi i 'dʲom/	we walk
	вы	идёте	/vi i 'dʲo tʲi/	you walk
	они	идут	/a 'ni i 'dut/	they walk
нести /ni 'cʲtʲi/ to carry; bear:	я	несу	/ja ni 'su/	I carry
	ты	несёшь	/ti ni 'sʲoʃ/	you carry
	она	несёт	/a 'na ni 'sʲot/	he carries
	мы	несём	/mi ni 'sʲom/	we carry
	вы	несёте	/vi ni 'sʲo tʲi/	you carry
	они	несут	/a 'ni ni 'sut/	they carry
вставать /fstɑ 'vatʲ/ to stand up:	я	встаю	/ja fstɑ 'ju/	I stand up
	ты	встаёшь	/ti fstɑ 'joʃ/	you stand up
	она	встаёт	/a 'na fstɑ 'jot/	it stands up
	мы	встаём	/mi fstɑ 'jom/	we stand up
	вы	встаёте	/vi fstɑ 'jo tʲi/	you stand up
	они	встают	/a 'ni fstɑ 'jut/	they stand up
беречь /bʲi 'pʲetʲ/ to save; keep:	я	берегу	/ja bʲi rʲi 'gu/	I save
	ты	бережёшь	/ti bʲi rʲi 'ʒoʃ/	you save
	она	бережёт	/a 'na bʲi rʲi 'ʒot/	she saves
	мы	бережём	/mi bʲi rʲi 'ʒom/	we save
	вы	бережёте	/vi bʲi rʲi 'ʒo tʲi/	you save
	они	берегут	/a 'ni bʲi rʲi 'gut/	they save
дёргать /'dʲop gatʲ/ to pull; jerk:	я	дёргаю	/ja 'dʲop ga ju/	I pull
	ты	дёргаешь	/ti 'dʲop ga jʲiʃ/	you pull
	она	дёргает	/a 'na 'dʲop ga jʲit/	she pulls
	мы	дёргаем	/mi 'dʲop ga jʲim/	we pull
	вы	дёргаете	/vi 'dʲop ga jʲi tʲi/	you pull
	они	дёргают	/a 'ni 'dʲop ga jut/	they pull

### The Deverbal Endings -енны, and -ённы

One deverbal form, the past passive participle (a completed verb action used as an adjective, such as *the saved dollar* – a dollar that had been saved), utilizes a suffix part that can either contain -e- or -ë-. These ending portions are -енн- or -ённ-, creating adjectival endings such as -енны, -ённы, -енная, and -ённая. The participles formed with -енн- can come from many verbs, but the participles formed with -ённ- come from the same verbs that use -ë- in their conjugation, for example, бережённый доллар, /b'jɪ r'ʃɪ 'zɔ n:iʃ 'dɔ ɫar/, *a saved dollar*.

### Section 2 – The Deverbal Ending Forms: Verbal Adjectives and Adverbs

Appendix E discusses in some detail the formation of adjectives and adverbs from verbs (the deverbals), but the look and pronunciation of the ending forms can be confusing. The verbal adjectives are divided into four categories, but some categories have more than one formation. Because the verb is being transformed into an adjective, adjectival suffixes generally end the new formed words. All verbal adjectives are made of three or four parts: 1) the verb root; 2) a special participle particle; 3) the adjectival suffix and, if applicable, 4) a reflexive particle [-ся, or -сь].

Example:

читающая девушка /tʃi 'ta ju ʃ'ʃja ja 'dʲɛ vuʃ kɐ/ the reading girl

1) читаю- [verb root: *to read*]      2) -ш- [*participle particle*]      3) -ая [*adj. suffix*]

The deverbal endings, including the adjectival extensions are:

Present Active:    -ший      -шая      -шее      -щие  
                          /ʃʲʃʲij/   /ʃʲʃʲa ja/   /ʃʲʃʲi jɪ/   /ʃʲʃʲi jɪ/

Past Active:        -вший    -вшая    -вшее    -вшие  
                          /fʃij/    /fʃa ja/   /fʃijɪ/   /fʃi jɪ/  
                          -ший      -шая      -шее      -щие  
                          /ʃij/      /ʃa ja/    /ʃi jɪ/    /ʃi jɪ/

Present Passive:                      See Below

Past Passive:        -тый      -тая      -тое      -тые  
                          /tij/      /ta ja/    /tɐ jɪ/    /ti jɪ/  
                          -нный    -нная    -нное    -нные  
                          /n:ij/    /n:a ja/   /n:ɐ jɪ/   /n:i jɪ/  
                          -енный    -енная    -енное    -енные  
                          /ʲɪn nɪj/   /ʲɪn na ja/   /ʲɪn nɐ jɪ/   /ʲɪn ni jɪ/  
                          -ённый    -ённая    -ённое    -ённые  
                          /ʲon nɪj/   /ʲon na ja/   /ʲon nɐ jɪ/   /ʲon ni jɪ/

The adjectival endings of verbal adjectives are never stressed. They are declined the same way as other adjectives, agreeing in case and gender/number with the modified nouns. The -нн- cluster of the past passive participle ending is read as a double or elongated /n/ sound (/nn/ or /n:/). Also, in the past passive -енный /ʲɪn:ij/ endings, the -e- is unstressed, while in the -ённый /ʲon:ij/ form, the -ë- must be in the stressed syllable. These endings add a reflexive particle [-ся, or -сь], when the verb is reflexive. Even though modern pronunciation urges that the reflexive particle -ся be read as soft, /sʲɪ/, after indicator letters or -й- (/j/),

when singing Russian, the ending -ся is read as /sʌ/, based upon Old Muscovite tradition. For example: -ённыйся /ʲon nʲj sʌ/ or -ённыеся /ʲon nʲ jʲ sʌ/.

The present passive participle is formed by adding the adjectival ending to the first-person plural form [the мы (*we*) conjugation] of an imperfective verb. Graphically:

First-person plural verb + adjectival ending = present passive participle  
 любим (we love) + -ый (*masc. sing adj. ending*) = любимый (*favorite; beloved [m. s. adj.]*)  
 /ʲu bim/                      /ʲj/                                      /ʲu 'bi mij/

This means that the combined nominative endings would be:

Present Passive: -мый      -мая      мое      -мые  
                                  /mʲj/    /mʌ jʌ/    /mʌ jʲ/    /mʲ jʲ/.

The changes of declensional endings follow the adjectival model.

When verbal adverbs are formed, the endings are different between *imperfective* and *perfective* verbs. Imperfective verbs are time independent actions and perfective verbs are time dependent. Imperfective and perfective are the verbal *aspects*. For more detail on Russian verbs and aspect, see Appendix E. The imperfective verbal adverb can be confusing because some verbs create adverbs that look like feminine adjectives with -ая (/ʌ jʌ/) endings, yet with verbal adverbs, the unstressed -я ending is read as [jʲ]. Verbal adverbs, also, can have the reflexive particles [-ся, or -сь] added. Like all adverbs, Russian verbal adverbs do not decline.

The imperfective verbal adverb form is:

verb root + -я (or -а, after hushers)

чита- + -я = читая	/tʲʲi 'tʌ jʲ/	while reading...
говор- + -я = говоря	/gʌ vʌ 'rʲʌ/	while speaking...
спеш- + -а = спеша	/sʲpʲʲi 'ʃʌ/	while rushing...

The above formation is also used for the perfective verbal adverb forms of what are categorized as prefixed forms of the verb идти /itʲi 'tʲi/ (*to walk*). For example:

прид- + -я = придя	/prʲi 'dʲa/	having arrived...
уйд- + -я = уйдя	/uj 'dʲa/	having left...

Other than the special case above, there are two formations of perfective verbal adverbs, one is non-reflexive and one is reflexive:

Non-Reflexive: verb root + -в

сказа- + -в = сказав	/ska 'zaf/	having arrived...
написа- + -в = написав	/nʌ pʲi 'saf/	having written...

Reflexive: verb root + -вшись

верну- + -вшись = вернувшись	/vʲir 'nuf ʃisʲ/	having come back...
улыбну- + -вшись = улыбнувшись	/u ɫib 'nuf ʃisʲ/	having smiled...

It should be noted that the letter -в- in these endings is read as an unvoiced /f/-phoneme. The ending of final -в could be read as voiced due to assimilation, but it would be unusual, as such verbal adverbs are usually separated by punctuation or an implied phrase break.

### Section 3 – The Suffixes -ция and -ционный with Palatalized -ц- /tʲsʲ/

Under the section discussing the unpalatalized consonant /ts/ (-ц-), it has been mentioned that the word цвет (*color; blossom; flower [obs.]*) and its many derivatives are all pronounced with a palatalized allophone of the consonant, that is [tʲsʲ], as in /tʲsʲvʲet/. There are two suffixes where /ts/ is palatalized before a palatalizing agent. In fact, these endings not only break the rule that /ts/ is not palatalized, but also the rule that forces a following /i/-

phoneme to change to the [i]-allophone. These suffixes are 1) the noun-form ending -ция, /tʲsʲi jɪ/, only when it is analogous to the English suffixes *-tion* or *-ence*, and 2) the adjectival form, -ционный, /tʲsʲi ʲjo n:iʲj/, which is analogous to the English *-tial*, *-tory*, or *-tionary*.

Some examples are:

декламация	/dʲɪ kɫɑ 'ma tʲsʲi jɪ/	declamation
декламационный	/dʲɪ kɫɑ mɐ tʲsʲi 'o n:iʲj/	declamatory
революция	/rʲɪ vɑ 'lʲu tʲsʲi jɪ/	revolution
революционный	/rʲɪ vɐ lʲu tʲsʲi 'o n:iʲj/	revolutionary
каденция	/kɑ 'dʲɛɲ tʲsʲi jɪ/	cadence
каденционный	/kɐ 'dʲiɲ tʲsʲi 'o n:iʲj/	cadential

A very important note is that the Russian suffix -ция can also be an analog to the English suffix *-ture*, as in лекция (*lecture*), but in this context the normal rules apply, and such word forms use the pronunciation of /tsɪ jɪ/ for the suffix — /lʲɛk tsɪ jɪ/.

#### Section 4 – Non-Reflexive -ся and -сья read as /sʲɑ/ or /sʲɪ/

Throughout most of this guide the reflexive particle -ся has been discussed as being read in unpalatalized form as /sɑ/ or /sɐ/. Most of the time, the particle is part of a verb form that produces one of the two endings -тся or -ться. In these endings, the clusters -тс- or -тьс- follow the rules of the Cyrillic letter -ц-, and so are not read as palatalized even if followed, in spelling, by an indicator letter, such as -я-. Also, whenever the combination -ся is specifically a reflexive particle, it is read as /sɑ/ or /sɐ/, in Russian lyric diction (from the Old Muscovite tradition). There are cases, though, where the combination -ся is not a reflexive particle but is part of a noun form, a pronoun form or verbal adverb form of a non-

reflexive verb. In these cases the letter combination is read as either /sʲɑ/ or /sʲɪ/ (stressed or unstressed, respectively).

The noun form which ends in the combination -ся occurs in the genitive form of masculine nouns that end in -сь in the nominative case. For example:

гусь /gusʲ/ a goose → гуся /'gu sʲɪ/ the goose's...<sup>312</sup>

There are few Russian nouns that end in -сь, and most are feminine nouns that are differently declined from the above and do not create the -ся combination. Only the rarer, masculine nouns ending in -сь can form a “look-alike” suffix. This form is rarely stressed, and so is most often read as /sʲɪ/ (unless the word is set in a slow or sustained musical line, and so would be reconstituted to /sʲɑ/). The pronoun that is spelled with the -ся combination is the feminine, nominative form of the determinative pronoun *весь*, which means *all*, *every*, *everyone* or *everything*, that is, *вся*, which is read as /fʲsʲɑ/.

With verbal adverbs, such look-alike forms generally require the verb to be imperfective (some perfective verbs form adverbs the same way as imperfective verbs), and also that the verb-stem end with the Cyrillic letter -с-. Imperfective verbs (and some perfective verbs) form their verbal adverb by removing the present tense conjugation suffix from its root-stem and adding the suffix -я. For example:

ГОВОР/ИТ ([he] speaks) → ГОВОР- + -я = ГОВОРЯ /gɒ vɑ 'rʲɑ/ while speaking...

When the root-stem ends in -с-, then the end of the root combined with the suffix can look like the reflexive particle -ся:

ПРОС/ИТ ([he] asks) → ПРОСЯ /pra 'sʲɑ/ while asking...

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<sup>312</sup> In present-day, Russian conversational speech, the stress of the genitive form of *гусь* has shifted to the end. Therefore, today, *гуся* is pronounced as [gu 'sʲɑ].

An example of a perfective verb with a look-alike verbal adverb is:

понес/ёт ([he] *will carry*) → понеся /pɫ nɪ 'sʲɑ/ when [he] will be carrying...

In most cases, the verbal adverb form places the stress on the final -я. Since the reflexive particle -ся is never stressed, this can help in differentiating the two pronunciations, but there are several verbal adverb forms where the stress precedes the ending, such as:

завис/ит ([he] *depends on*) → завися /zɑ 'vʲi sʲɪ/ while depending on...

Therefore, once again, Russian (-English) dictionaries and verb-form texts should be consulted to resolve any question, absent a native-Russian speaker to ask.

Another possible confusing, Russian, word-form ending is the combination -сья. This grouping can occur as the plural form of a neuter noun ending in -сье or -сьё, or in the feminine nominative of an adjective where the masculine, nominative (dictionary) form ends in -сий. These words are fairly rare, but also, care must be taken to note that the combination is -сья, with a soft sign in between the -с- and the -я-. This ending is not the combination -ся or even -ься. If such care is taken, then the singer will recognize that the grouping must be read as /sʲɑ/ or /sʲɪ/, depending upon stress.

## Section 5 – A Few Common Pronunciation Exceptions

Within the body of this guide many exceptions to the rules have been presented and discussed. The following is a short list containing exceptions that seem to stand outside of the Russian rules of pronunciation including the special case rules. Why these words are different is most likely due to some long standing fashion or tradition, defying the usual processes of phonological assimilation, centralization or mutation over the generations.

**счастье** /ʃʲʃʲa sʲtʲjɪ/ happiness (including derivatives)

By the rules, the letter cluster -чч-, read like the Cyrillic letter -щ-, as /ʃʲʃʲ/, should make the /a/-vowel interpalatal, and so be pronounced as fronted [a]. Thus, the academic pronunciation should be /ʃʲʃʲa sʲtʲjɪ/. Yet, many Russian speakers insist that the vowel is cardinal /a/. Why this is seems undiscoverable, but it may simply be aesthetic taste. For the singer, though, the darker timbred phoneme does produce a less tense and more resonant sound than the academically correct phoneme. Some Russian speakers even harden the /ʃʲʃʲ/ cluster to doubled /ʃʃ/, therefore, /ʃʃa sʲtʲjɪ/.

**церковь** /tɕɛrʲ kʌfʲ/ church

There is no reason to palatalize the /ɪ/ (-p-) in **церковь**, using modern Russian pronunciation rules. There are no palatalizing agents around the letter to cause such assimilation, yet it is palatalized. Apparently, the pronunciation comes from a long-standing tradition of the Old Muscovite accent.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Derwing and Priestly. *Reading Rules for Russian*, 87.

**ангел**      /'aŋ gʲɪtʲ/      angel

Generally, dental sonorants do not get regressively palatalized by palatalized velar consonants, making the expected pronunciation of this word to be [ʼaŋ gʲɪtʲ]. This exception may possibly derive from being a borrowed word. It applies to all derivative words, as well.

**ага!**      /a ʼha/      aha!

This exception is useful for a singer of Russian opera to know, as “Ara!” is often uttered by operatic characters. The IPA symbol for the consonant is actually *aspirate -h-*, just as it is spoken in English, and not the velar /x/, as one might assume. The pronunciation of /h/ for the Cyrillic letter -г- is very old and has been preserved in this interjection.

**русский**      /ʼru sʲkʲij/      a male from Russia; Russian (*adj.*— any form)

See “Exception,” in Chap. 6, Sec. 2: Double Consonants — under the entry for -cc-.

**сейчас**      /si ʼtʲʂas/ or /se ʼtʲʂas/      now; right now

Normally the initial /s/-phoneme would be palatalized producing /sʲi ʼtʲʂas/ (the /j/ [-й-]) is deleted due to the preceding, closed /i/ and the subsequent, palatalized /tʲʂ/), but in this case, a strong tradition has depalatalized the /s/.

**танцевать**      /tʌn tsa ʼvatʲ/      to dance

The usual rules state that an unstressed /ɛ/-vowel following an unpalatalized consonant, such as /ts/ (-и-), would be reduced to the [i]-allophone, that is /tʌn tsi ʼvatʲ/. A fairly strong Old Muscovite tradition, though, causes the /ɛ/ to be pronounced as /a/ in this word, and any derivatives where the -ие- spelling is in an unstressed position.

## CHAPTER 9:

### History, Politics and the Russian Language: Changes in Letters and Pronunciation

Russian social history and politics are closely intertwined with the development of the Russian language. From how Cyrillic became the form of writing to the different kinds of writing styles to how native Russians can often tell another Russian's social and economic background by her/his speech, all reflect this deep connection between Russian life and Russian language. This chapter covers the aspects of Russian lyric diction and the Cyrillic alphabet that have been influenced or changed by Russian history and politics. Some of the changes and controversies continue today and may be encountered by a singer.

## Section 1 – Orthography

In Appendix K, an essay on the history of the Cyrillic alphabet makes clear that many changes in the Russian written alphabet have occurred over the past 1,100 years. At first, Russian writing was solely for the religious purpose of communicating Christian Orthodoxy to the early Slavic people. When formal Greek print replaced the script used in Glagolitic, official governmental and business correspondence became wide spread. This was the beginning of Old Cyrillic, which still contained many more letters than the present Cyrillic alphabet. It contained more letters because Old Russian (an off-shoot of Old Slavonic) actually had more spoken sounds than modern Russian, including a set of French-like, nasal vowels. As the Russian spoken language evolved, many of the sounds disappeared from speech, yet the orthography remained. In time, many excess symbols were dropped, while some symbols would change their phonetic meaning.<sup>314</sup>

### Spelling Reforms and the Obsolete Letters

At different times in Russian history, the changes in the language were codified in official government reforms of orthography and spelling. The reform that is considered to have established modern Russian is that of Peter the Great, between 1708 and 1710. This reform dropped redundant letters from all governmental correspondence, and attempted to influence general publishing. It was not wholly successful, as many publishers continued to use some of the redundant letters. These Russian publishers continued to use older

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<sup>314</sup> Vinokur, *The Russian Language*, 21–29; Vlasto, *A Linguistic History of Russia*, 6–41, 344–374; Matthews, *Structure and Development of Russian*, 3–17, 109–144; Comrie, Stone, and Polinsky. *The Russian Language*, 28–33.

orthography until the Bolshevik Revolution and the Soviet orthography reform of 1917-18.<sup>315</sup> The heyday of Russian art music was in the latter half of the 1800's, long before the Revolution, and so many publications of classic Russian opera and art song still use the obsolete letter forms in their texts. Most of the letters affected by the Soviet reform were alternate forms of letters more commonly used today. Two letters, -ѣ- and -ѧ-, had become silent placeholders (though the *myagkiĭ znak*, -ь-, maintains some power as an indicator of palatalization). The letters that were dropped from the Russian Cyrillic alphabet in the Soviet reform, yet still can be encountered in Russian music publications are:

	ѣ	і	ѧ	and	ѣ
which correspond to:	е	и	и	and	ѣ

A singer should simply substitute the modern letters for the defunct ones to decipher the old-fashioned printing.

### Outmoded Spellings

Russian pre-revolutionary texts often contain outmoded spelling, as well, which includes the defunct use of *tyordyĭ znak*, -ѣ-, at the end of all words that, today, just end in consonants. As an example of the old use of the *tyordyĭ znak* (-ѣ-), here are the first lines of Rakhmaninov's Opus 26, Number 6, *Christ is Risen* (Христос Воскрес – Merezhkovsky, poet):

«Христось Воскресѣ» поють во храмѣ; Но грустно мнѣ... душа молчить.

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<sup>315</sup> Vlasto, *A Linguistic History of Russia*, 374–377; Matthews, *Structure and Development of Russian*, 144–154, 168–173; Comrie, Stone, and Polinsky, *The Russian Language*, 283–303.

This would be written in modern Cyrillic as:

/xrʲi 'stos vas 'krʲes pa 'jut va 'xra mʲɪ no 'gru snʌ mʲnɛ du 'ʃa maʃ tʃʲit/

«Христос Воскрес» поют во храме; Но грустно мне... душа молчит.

“Christ is Risen,” they sing in the cathedral; But it is sad for me...[my] soul keeps silent.

The next most common old-fashioned spellings that a singer may experience involve a few of the forms of feminine, personal pronouns:

ея	=	еѣ	[more unusual is ею for the accusative case of еѣ]
мя	=	меня	
тя	=	тебя	

In the cases of ея (/jɪ 'ja/) or ею (/jɪ 'ju/), it is acceptable, if not expected, for the singer to change these to the modern form of еѣ (/jɪ 'jo/). Since мя (/mʲa/) and тя (/tʲa/) are single syllable words, changing them to the modern two syllable form only works if the musical setting allows. Decoding the historical Russian printing style is fairly simple, once one knows what must be ignored or changed.

#### Contractions of the Words бы, же, ли, and чтобы

Though not a historical issue, there are three, short, Russian words that are often written as contractions of just single letters. These words are бы, же and ли. Бы is used in conjunction with the past tense of a verb to express the conditional or subjunctive mood, and so can be translated as *would*, *should*, or *could*. This particle can be printed as a single, freestanding, б, as in these examples:

Я бы ушёл /ja bi u 'ʃoʃ/ or Я б ушёл /jab u 'ʃoʃ/ I should have left.

Если бы ты заболел, я бы ушёл /'je s'ɫʲi bi tɨ zɐ ba 'ɫʲɛɫ ja bi u 'ɫɔɫ/ or

Если б ты заболел, я б ушёл /'je s'ɫʲip tɨ zɐ ba 'ɫʲɛɫ jab u 'ɫɔɫ/

If you had been sick, I would have left.

The particle contraction, б, remains read as /b/, when the following word begins with a vowel, a sonorant or a voiced consonant. It is unvoiced and pronounced as /p/, when the following word begins with an unvoiced consonant.

Же may be shortened to ж and can be used to express contrast (it is considered a conjunction in this case), being roughly translated as *though*, or for emphasis, similarly to the English word *indeed*. For example:

Я ухожу, она же остаётся /ja u xa 'zu a 'na zi a sta 'jo t:sɐ/ or

Я ухожу, она ж остаётся /ja u xa 'zu a 'naʒ a sta 'jo t:sɐ/

I am leaving; she, though, is staying.

Она же твоя мать /a 'na zi tva 'ja matʲ/ or

Она ж твоя мать /a 'naʃ tva 'ja matʲ/

She, indeed, is your mother.

The particle contraction, ж, is also affected by regressive assimilation of voice, and so can be read as either /ʒ/ or /ʃ/, depending upon the subsequent word.

Ли may be shortened to ль and is either the conjunction *whether; if*, or is an interrogative particle, with no direct translation, that produces a polite form of question. The contraction spelled ль is read as a palatalized sonorant, so it is not devoiced in singing. For example:

Я не знаю, смогу ли я пойти /ja nɪ 'zna ju sma 'gu lʲi ja paj 'tʲi/ or  
 Я не знаю, смогу ль я пойти /ja nɪ 'zna ju sma 'gulʲ ja paj 'tʲi/  
 I don't know; whether I'll be able to go.

Правится ли вам это? /'nra vʲi t:sɐ lʲi vam 'ɛ tɐ/ or  
 Правится ль вам это? /'nra vʲi t:sɐlʲi vam 'ɛ tɐ/  
 Do you like this?

Finally, чтобы has a few idiomatic usages, but as a conjunction it means *in order to*, *so that* or *in order that*. Its contraction is *чтоб* and is read either as /ʃtob/ or /ʃtop/, depending upon the influence of regressive assimilation of voice.

Все мы работаем, чтобы жить. /fʲsʲɛ mɪ ra 'bo ta jɪm 'ʃto bɪ ʒɪtʲ/ or  
 Все мы работаем, чтоб жить. /fʲsʲɛ mɪ ra 'bo ta jɪm ʃtob ʒɪtʲ/  
 We all work, in order to live.

Он пошёл в булочную, чтобы купить хлеба /on pa 'ʃot 'vbu tɐ snu ju  
 'ʃto bɪ 'ku pʲitʲ 'xlʲɛ ba/ or  
 Он пошёл в булочную, чтоб купить хлеба /on pa 'ʃot 'vbu tɐ snu ju  
 ʃtop 'ku pʲitʲ 'xlʲɛ ba/  
 He went to the bakery, in order to buy bread.

## Section 2 – Issues of Pronunciation Style

### What is Old Muscovite?

Throughout this text the Old Muscovite (OM) tradition of pronunciation has often been mentioned. OM tradition includes the phonological practices of *akanye* and *ikanye*, as well as, what I will coin as *shshokanye* versus *shchokanye* (neither of which term actually exists in Slavic linguistics). Also, the translated terms of *Church* pronunciation, *Literary*

pronunciation, *Stage* pronunciation, and *Conversational* pronunciation have been used to describe other types of traditions of Russian pronunciation. Each of these phonological traditions has a strong social and political meaning attached to it, yet in recent times, such traditions have lost value, and a modern, more eclectic form of diction is emerging. Both Russian Stage pronunciation and Literary pronunciation stand upon the foundation of Old Muscovite. The Russian Stage tradition historically has preserved the Muscovite pronunciation style more faithfully, while the Russian Literary style has been slowly adjusting to modern Russian speech norms. Within the last generation or so, though, the Stage tradition has also been modernizing and incorporating more conversational pronunciation.<sup>316</sup>

Old Muscovite is “Old” because the term refers to a style of regional pronunciation that emerged in the seventeenth century and grew in popularity through the eighteenth century, and was very common during the nineteenth and early twentieth century up to and a bit past the Bolshevik Revolution (1917). It is an older tradition of speaking. The accent is “Muscovite,” because it was the style of speech dominant amongst those born and bred in Moscow or the surrounding region,<sup>317</sup> and became the norm due to Moscow’s political centrality and power for many centuries.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Kuz'mina, *Russkoe Stsenicheskoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Stage Pronunciation]*, 5–74, 192–201, 219–226.

<sup>317</sup> The term relates to the Grand Duchy [Principality] of Moscow (Великое Княжество Московское /vʲi 'lʲi kə jɪ 'kɲa zɪ stvə mɐ 'skof skə jɪ/), the region centered on the city of Moscow. The word comes through French as “Muscovie” and is anglicized to “Muscovy.” Therefore, a citizen of Muscovy is a *Muscovite*, pronounced as /'mɐ skə vɑ:ɪt/. See: entry for “Muscovy,” *Dictionary.com Unabridged* (Random House, Inc.), <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/muscovy> (accessed: May 02, 2012); and *Online Etymology Dictionary* (Douglas Harper, Historian), <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/muscovy> (accessed: May 02, 2012).

<sup>318</sup> Vlasto, *A Linguistic History of Russia*, 324–328; 365–376; 391–393.

Moscow Politically Speaking

The moniker of “Old Muscovite” refers both to the period in Russian history when the seat of political power shifted from Kiev (the Ukraine) to Moscow (Russia, known at the time as Rus’), and the specific idiosyncrasies of the Russian accent spoken in the central region of Russia that encompasses Moscow. Politically, the power shift began in the fourteenth century CE but did not solidify until the establishment of Imperial Moscow around 1500, during the reign of Ivan III (“the Great” — ruled 1462–1505). The term Царь ([tsarʲ] — *Tsar*) had been growing in use since the mid-1400s but was not the official term for the imperial crown of Russia until Ivan IV (“The Terrible” — ruled 1533–1584). In other words, the reign of the Tsars started in Moscow.<sup>319</sup> As is often the case today, fashion is set by the most famous, richest and/or most powerful in a society. Essentially, since Moscow was established as the home to the Tsars (pun intended), Russian social fashion has continued to spread from that center, including regional affectations of speech.

Old Muscovite (OM) as a Regional Accent: *Akanye* and *Ikanye* vs. *Ekanye*

Russian linguists divide the Russian language into broad regional accents: the North, the South, and a narrow belt between called the Central or Transitional region. There are eastern and western subgroups within the larger categories, but those accents remain quite localized. Moscow is located in the Central zone, but what is interesting is that before Moscow became the center of the Russian monarchy and power, the accent was quite idiosyncratic and localized.

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<sup>319</sup> Vlasto, *A Linguistic History of Russia*, 356–358; Muriel Heppell, “The Rise of Moscow — Ivan III — Ivan IV” in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia and the Soviet Union*, edited by Archie Brown, John Fennell, Michael Kaser and H. T. Willetts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 86–89.

The largest phonological divide of North and South Russian is between the accents of *okanye* and *akanye*. *Okanye* applies to Russians who keep /o/ (-o-) in an unstressed position as an /o/-phoneme, while *akanye* speakers reduce unstressed /o/ to /a/ or [ʌ] (or schwa, /ə/). Muscovites decidedly speak with *akanye*, but another phonological characteristic depends upon whether unstressed /a/–/ja/ (-я-) and /ɛ/–/jɛ/ (-е-) are reduced or not, and this is where Moscow shows an unusual idiosyncrasy. Five hundred years ago, most Russians outside of Moscow were *yakanye*, meaning that unstressed /a/–/ja/ (-я-) remained unreduced, and *yekanye* (usually spelled *ekanye*), as unstressed /ɛ/–/jɛ/ (-е-) went unreduced, as well. Muscovites, though, were *ekanye* and *yikanye* (spelled *ikanye*), as they reduced unstressed /a/–/ja/ (-я-) to /ɛ/–/jɛ/ (or [e]–[je]) and unstressed /ɛ/–/jɛ/ (-е-) to [ɪ]–[jɪ] (or /i/–/ji/).<sup>320</sup> By the time Russian Literary pronunciation began to develop, well over a century later, Muscovites had become almost wholly *ikanye*, reducing both unstressed /a/–/ja/ and /ɛ/–/jɛ/ to [ɪ]–[jɪ] or /i/–/ji/ (as well as [i], in certain cases). Though the accent was almost unique to Moscow, political power translated into the power of fashion so that both *akanye* and *ikanye* became the literary norm.<sup>321</sup> Though this guide abides by the *ikanye* standard, it must be noted, that the present *ekanye* accent (reducing unstressed /a/–/ja/ and /ɛ/–/jɛ/ to /ɛ/–/jɛ/ or [e]–[je], respectively) is still well represented in Russia, including in Moscow, and can be held as equally correct by many Russian singers, coaches, and conductors.

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<sup>320</sup> Vlasto, *Linguistic History of Russia*, 313–316; 323–328.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, 300–333, 356–377.

### One Way to Determine Historical Pronunciation

How can details of pronunciation be known about people and fashions centuries old? In short, it is found in the writing — often poetic. As was true for English, Russian spelling was not codified or crystallized until rather recently (mostly over the last three hundred years or so), so early writers often spelled in a way that symbolized more regional pronunciation. As an example, the Russian word что (*what* or *that*) is spelled with the letter -ч- (normally read as /tʃ/ yet, in this case, as /ʃ/), but because the word has long been pronounced as /ʃto/, some Russians historically spelled it што, reflecting colloquial pronunciation.

Sometimes the historical pronunciation of vowels in certain Russian accents has been suggested by the same replacement error principle in writing (an -a- being written in an unstressed position where an -o- would be correct, for example).<sup>322</sup> More often, understanding how vowels may have been pronounced has come from the rhymes in poetry, especially in forms that favor exact rhyme over half-rhyme. As an English example, in the nursery rhyme *Little Miss Muffet*, the name *Muffet* rhymes with the word *tuffet*, so if we know that *tuffet* is pronounced as /<sup>l</sup>tΛ fet/, then we may assume that the unusual name of *Muffet* might rhyme and be pronounced as /<sup>l</sup>mΛ fet/ (as opposed to, say, /my <sup>l</sup>fe/). What is interesting, though, is that some historical, literary sources use the name *Moffet*, suggesting that perhaps some English accents may pronounce an -o- in this condition as /Λ/ or that the -u- in *tuffet* might be pronounced as /ɑ/, /ɔ/, or perhaps a rounded /ə/. Similar ambiguities exist when linguists study the possible historical pronunciation of most any language, so greater certainty comes from comparing large volumes of writing.

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<sup>322</sup> Pennington, *Kotoshikhin*, 191–217; 397–400.

### Other Traditions of Old Muscovite (OM) affecting Russian Lyric Diction

#### ШШ : /ʃʲʃʲ/ versus /ʃʲtʃʲ/ (*shshokanye* vs. *shchokanye*)

As already discussed, the strongest characteristics of Old Muscovite are the vowel pronunciation phenomena of *akanye* and *ikanye*. The next most idiosyncratic practice is what has been coined above as *shshokanye*. *Shshokanye*, per say, is when the Cyrillic letter -шш- is read as if it were a palatalized and doubled /ʃ/. Historically, outside of Moscow, the letter -шш- was read as /ʃʲtʃʲ/ (termed in this guide as *shchokanye*). Moscow, on the other hand, almost uniquely pronounced it as the palatalized cluster /ʃʲʃʲ/. Slavic linguists have determined that the oldest pronunciation of this letter, going back to Russian Church Slavonic, was as /ʃʲtʃʲ/,<sup>323</sup> yet, as Moscow grew in power so did the Muscovite accent begin to infiltrate society and culture beyond the walls of the Kremlin (see earlier discussion). The pronunciation of the cluster as /ʃʲʃʲ/ became the fashion, especially amongst the aristocracy, the educated, and by extension (through patronage and involvement with high society), artists of all disciplines, including performers.<sup>324</sup> It is this Old Muscovite tradition that is preserved in Russian lyric diction, mostly due to the connection to Russian Stage diction, which preserves the same.

#### Old Muscovite and Russian Stage Diction

The Russian theatre tradition is relatively young compared with much of Europe and Asia. Its organized, professional roots span only to the mid-1700s in St. Petersburg, and even then, Russian theatre did not achieve a strong cultural status until the mid- to late-1800s. St.

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<sup>323</sup> Vlasto, *Linguistic History*, 68.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 319, 323–328.

Petersburg was the dominant center until a later period (mid-nineteenth c.), when Moscow began to equal and then to surpass the quality and reputation of the Petersburg theatre.<sup>325</sup> One might assume, then, that the other prominent style of speech, appropriately called Old Petersburg, would be preferred in the theatre (Old Petersburg accent is *akanye*, but then it is *yakanye/ekanye*, and decidedly *shchokanye*).<sup>326</sup> Yet, the power of fashion is expectation, so when someone goes to the theatre to hear native works, it is expected that the fashionable speech-style of the day would be heard. The early patrons of the Russian theatre, as with most art before modern times, were royalty, aristocracy, and others of wealth and fashion. For these patrons Muscovite would most likely have been the popular speech style, and the theatre would have obliged. Much of this is conjecture, of course, but some proof lies in a number of sources on Russian linguistic history that discuss the prominence of the Old Muscovite accent in the theatre and in the academic world (where the *literary* style predominates).<sup>327</sup>

On an interesting point, Russian opera, as an institution, actually has a longer and stronger history in Russian culture than Russian theatre. The only issue is that Russian opera was originally borrowed whole-cloth from Italy, and so Italian operas were the first to be performed by Russian singers who had learned their vocal technique directly from some of the great Italian *Bel Canto* singers and teachers. The truly Russian operas by Russian composers did not emerge until the mid-1800s (with Glinka and Serov), along with the rise to prominence of the theatre in Moscow (see: “A Note on Style...” further on).

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<sup>325</sup> Oscar G. Brockett, *History of the Theatre*. Fifth ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1987), 420–25; 455–58; 533–536.

<sup>326</sup> Comrie, Stone, and Polinsky, *The Russian Language*, 33.

<sup>327</sup> Vlasto, *Linguistic History of Russian*, 328; Comrie, Stone and Polinsky, 34.

The Adjective Ending -ий : /ij/ versus /ɪj/

It is the connection between Russian Stage pronunciation and the parallel tradition of Russian Literary pronunciation that produces an option in pronunciation related to the Cyrillic letter -и-. Normally the letter -и- is read as /i/, stressed or unstressed, in all positions within a word and indicates palatalization of any preceding consonants [except /tʃʲ/ (-ч-) and /ʃʲʃʲ/ (-ш-)]. The usual exception is generally that the only allophone of /i/ that can follow any of the consonants /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), or /ts/ (-ц-) is the [i̯]-allophone (for exceptions to this rule, see Chapter 8). In modern Russian conversational pronunciation, there are no more exceptions than those referenced above, yet there is one more exception (with two versions) that affects Russian lyric diction. This exception is drawn from either the tradition of stage diction or the oldest examples of literary pronunciation found in the poetry of Lomonosov and Pushkin.

The adjectival suffix -ий generally fits the standard reading rules for -и-, indeed, in modern Russian conversational pronunciation, the /i/-phoneme completely follows the normal rules. In Stage pronunciation, though, the velar consonants /k/, /g/, and /x/ (spelled -к-, -г-, and -х-, respectively) in an unstressed syllable cannot be followed by the /i/-phoneme (similarly to /ʒ/, /ʃ/, and /ts/). Therefore, the [i̯]-allophone must follow when the /i/-phoneme normally would (Russians palatalize the velars and use the /i/-phoneme, in modern conversation). In Stage pronunciation, this special rule applies to any unstressed /i/-phoneme following a velar consonant, but the most usual situation is that of the unstressed, adjectival suffix -ий. The most common examples occurred earlier in this text:

великий	/v <sup>j</sup> i 'l <sup>j</sup> i kij/	great
долгий	/'doł gij/	long
тихий	/'t <sup>j</sup> i xij/	quiet

The second version applies to the more academic, Russian Literary style. In older Russian poetry, such as Pushkin's works (the kind of texts most often used as Russian art song lyrics or opera libretti), rhymes were made between unstressed, adjectival endings written as -ой and those written as -ий, when following letters for velar consonants. Since there is little evidence that unstressed -ой suffixes in such cases were read as [ij], it is assumed that the unstressed -ий suffix was read as [Λj] (or /əj/) after letters for velar consonants. Therefore, if the rhyme scheme of the poetry includes such a pairing, then the singer must read the -ий suffix as [Λj]. For example [lines from Pushkin's *Ruslan and Ludmila*]:

/pr<sup>j</sup>i 'da ni stΛ r<sup>j</sup>i 'ni gtu 'bo kΛj/  
 ...преданья старины глубокой...  
 ...[the] legends of old times extreme... [the legends of truly ancient times...]

/za 'v<sup>j</sup>i d<sup>j</sup>in dar p<sup>j</sup>if 'tsa vi 'so kΛj/  
 ...Завиден дар певца высокий.  
 Envable is [the] gift of the singer sublime. [The sublime gift of the singer is enviable]

In the end, the rhyme takes precedence.<sup>328</sup> If the -ий suffix is written clearly to rhyme with the suffix -ый then the singer should make the rhyme, and the same goes for the -ий/-ой pairing. If, though, there is no such rhyme scheme in place, then the singer could decide

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<sup>328</sup> There are actually many examples in songs and arias in which the suffix -ий is paired in a rhyme scheme with either -ый or -ой, and yet it follows a letter which does not depict a velar consonant. In such cases, it is best to alter the reading of -ий appropriately, so as to make the endings rhyme.

between the Stage pronunciation of [ij] or the more contemporary, pronunciation of /ij/, under which our earlier examples would be sung as:

великий /v<sup>j</sup>i 'l<sup>j</sup>i k<sup>j</sup>ij/ great

долгий /'doł g<sup>j</sup>ij/ long

тихий /'t<sup>j</sup>i x<sup>j</sup>ij/ quiet

Strictly, the [ij] pronunciation is more appropriate for Russian lyric diction, but the modern, version (/ij/) would not be considered unacceptable.

### A Note on Style, Vocal Technique, and Russian Lyric Diction

There is a fact about the so-called Russian School of singing that is little known in the West: classical vocal technique was first taught to the Russians by some of the great *Bel Canto* singers, composers, and teachers of Italy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Italian opera troupes were brought in by the Tsarinas (first Anna, then Catherine the Great) to perform. Many Italian musicians stayed in Russia (encouraged by the patronage of the Imperial Court) and trained Russian singers, composers and other musicians in the Italian traditions.<sup>329</sup> A major characteristic of “Italianate” singing truly pervades the Russian approach; sound (especially legato sound) is paramount, even over pure diction. This translates into spending more time on vowels than consonants (including large clusters), and altering vowels, particularly in the uppermost portion of the vocal range, for the sake of the evenness and beauty of tone.

In practice, this means that Russian singers use the /ɑ/-phoneme, rather than fronted /a/, which is normal to Russian speech. In Russian speech, interpalatal /ɑ/ is pronounced as [æ] (as in *cat*), but this allophone is not used in singing. Russian singers shift only to the fronted [a]. Also, Russian /o/ is allowed to open up on higher notes, first to /ɔ/ then towards a slightly more rounded /ɑ/, much the way that an Italian singer might make the adjustment. The /i/-vowel is often rounded and lowered a bit, while the velar [i]-allophone is also rounded a little, but then is brought more forward than in Russian speech. This latter

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<sup>329</sup> Gerald Seaman, "The Rise of Russian Opera" in *New Oxford History of Music: The Age of Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 270–280; Seaman, "National Element in Early Russian Opera, 1779–1800," *Music & Letters* 42, no. 3 (July, 1961), 252–62; Richard Taruskin, "Ital'yanshchina" in *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 186–205.

allophone ([i̯]) is velarized in singing, rather than pharyngealized, as some Russian speakers might produce it, and it is brought forward by shifting the back of the tongue toward the front of the soft palate (in front of the uvula) from the back of the throat. A similar adjustment is made to the velar /t̪/-consonant. All plosive consonants (/b/, /p/, /d/, /t/, /g/, /k/, etc.) are *unreleased*, meaning that they are efficient and release little air. Legato line is “Tsar,” so all consonants are “pushed to the right” as far as possible and are as quick and light as possible (large clusters, as well), giving the greatest time for vowels. One of the most telling diction errors that a non-Russian singer can make when singing Russian is to over-pronounce and dwell on the consonants.

A good motto: Sing Russian like an Italian to sound really Russian.

### A Note for the Chorus Master: On the Choral Singing of Modern Russian

Since this guide covers only modern, Russian lyric diction, liturgical Russian pronunciation, such as Russian Church Slavonic (RCS), is not discussed. In the case of Russian opera, essentially all pronunciation is that of modern Russian diction. A conductor might wish the Old Believers in Musorgsky's *Khovanshchina* or the Monks during the Death of Boris scene in *Boris Godunov* to use RCS pronunciation, when singing any liturgy-like music, but that generally is not done. Also, there are many, well-known, Russian choral works from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that are not liturgical and so should use modern Russian diction.

The special challenge of choral singing is vowel matching. Many voices singing the same words at the same time must shape their vowels in the same way to produce a unified sound. Therefore, the most important question to ask is, what is the exact vowel shape/color that must be sustained when the vowel is really a diphthong, such as Russian, stressed /o/, or when regional variations cause confusion? Another major issue is the great variance of training, experience, skill, and innate talent that a large group of people presents when entering into such a communal project. Add to these issues the usual lack of scheduled time and the chorus master is faced with a tremendous challenge. Under such circumstances, some decisions, adjustments and compromises must be made. This essay will try to cover the most common issues.

Russian, stressed /o/, as covered in the guide, is at least a diphthong, /o:ʌ/, if not a triphthong, /uo:ʌ/. Labialization (rounding the lips as for /u/) is most prominent when the /o/-phoneme is preceded by a labial consonant sound such as /p/, /b/, /f/, /v/, or one of their

palatalized versions. Also, the Russian /o/-phoneme combines the lower and flatter tongue position of /ɔ/ with the well-rounded lips of /o/. For choral homogeneity, some adjustments can be made. First, use labialization only for the labial consonants listed above, as it is more natural. When a stressed /o/ begins a word or stands alone, there is still some labialization in speech, but it is much less important in singing. Therefore, just shape and sustain the combination /o/-phoneme with well-rounded lips. Second, if the formation of Russian /o/ is too difficult to get matched up have the members sing a nice round, Italian /o/, remembering that Italian /o/ is neither as closed nor as rounded as the German or French /o/. If the choristers must sing higher in their range, allow them to open up toward (even all the way to) /ɔ/. Since there is only one form of /o/ in Russian, it is perfectly fine to drop the jaw and open the mouth for the sake of good tone quality in the upper registers. Make sure there is enough rounding to sound like some form of /o/, though, because singing a pure /a/ for stressed /o/ can change the meaning of the word. Third, don't worry about the /ʌ/ off-glide. When a large group is singing, it is almost indiscernible. If the off-glide is desired, though, simply treat it as a relaxing of the lips at the very end of the sustained /o/-phoneme.

Next is [ɪ] or *velar -i-*. This is a hard one, and most of the encountered tricks, such as substituting an /y/-phoneme, don't really work. What is important is that the vowel should not be a guttural or pharyngeal /i/ (or [ɪ]) but should be a velarized /i/- (or [ɪ]-) vowel. This keeps the back of the tongue out of the throat. Using the image of singing an [ɪ]-vowel while sending the air stream under the tongue or through the floor of the mouth, instead of over the top of the tongue, may also get the color without causing pharyngeal tension. For [ɪ], there

are no shortcuts, just practice, practice, practice. With most of the other primary vowels in Russian, the Italianate model works best.

In the case of the secondary allophones [a] and [e], the more important one is [e]. If a singer sings /a/ instead of [a] in an interpalatal position, little is lost, if even heard, but singing an open /ε/ in place of a closed [e], can often change the meaning of a word (e.g. шест /ʃɛst/ = a pole, but шесть /ʃesʲtʲ/ = six). Remember the [e]-allophone in Russian is like the French or German /e/-phoneme, though a bit more relaxed. Also, opening up to a more Italianate /e/ is acceptable, if the more closed /e/ sounds vocally tense. The reduced vowel sounds [ʌ] and [ɪ], can also be tricky, so a decision may be made not to use them. This would mean that 1) spelled -a- and -o- in all unstressed positions would be sung as /a/, 2) the letter -я- would always be sung as /a/–/ja/ (or [a]–[ja] when followed by a palatalized consonant, -ь-, or -й-), and 3) spelled -e-, in an unstressed position, would be sung as /ε/–/jε/ (or [e]–[je], when fronted). An exception to number 2, above, may be the letter combination -чай-, when in a pre-stress position (as in the composer's name, Чайковский /tʃʲi 'kofʲ sʲkʲij/ *Tchaikovsky*). This should be sung as /tʃi-/ under most circumstances, even though /tʃaj-/ is considered an option. Luckily, the three-letter combination is rare. The rule is that, if one does not choose to reduce these vowels, then they must be sung as the appropriate primary or secondary vowels. Therefore, in such cases, /a/ can never be allowed to slip into [ʌ], just as when singing in Italian, and the difference between /ε/ and /e/ must be maintained.

On the subject of consonants, the greatest difficulties usually occur in 1) producing the Russian *velar -l-* (/ʎ/), 2) proper palatalization, and 3) articulating long, complex,

consonant clusters. In the case of /ʃ/, like [ʃ], forming it as a velarized, rather than pharyngealized, consonant is the key to a more forward and free sound. The best formation exercise, as discussed in the guide, is to place the tongue in the dental /l/ position and then raise the back of the tongue to meet the front of the soft palate or, even the transition point between the soft and hard palate. This keeps the tongue out of the pharynx, so that the air and sound can vibrate freely, but produces a perfectly acceptable /ʃ/-phoneme. Borrowing from the [i]-allophone, again, the image of the air stream passing under the tongue or through the bottom of the mouth may help to keep the sound from feeling and sounding bound up in the throat.

The main point on palatalization is that this process reflects the position of the tongue in forming a consonant, not a separate phonetic sound, such as /i/ (with vowels or consonants), or /j/ (with consonants only). In other words, the tongue being arched toward the hard palate is part and parcel of the consonant as a whole. The tongue must be in the arched position before speaking the core consonant and must remain in this shape throughout the utterance of the main phoneme. All the palatalized consonants (and /j/+vowel clusters, for that matter) can and should be practiced in isolation, perhaps on vocalizes, as well as in clusters. As for situations when /j/+vowel clusters are sung [e. g. я /ja/ (*I*), её /jɪ 'jo/ (*her*), если /'je s'ʲi/ (*if*), новую /'no vu ju/ (*new [fem. acc.]*)], like the consonants, the arched tongue must be in place before the vowel voicing occurs. These vowels are preceded by /j/, not /i/, making the arched tongue shape integral to the entire articulation. Remember that -й- represents the separate phoneme of /j/, and that the soft sign, -ь-, after a consonant can indicate extra aspiration (unvoiced or voiced), while the tongue remains in the arched shape.

As for regressive palatalizing of consonantal clusters, the easiest and most formal choice is to palatalize the entire cluster, except for the consonants /ʒ/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), or /ts/ (-ц-) (or /tʃ/ (-ч-), if it is not the original, influencing consonant). Simply place the tongue into the arched position and speak/sing the cluster. The more recent practice of palatalizing only certain consonants regressively can rarely be discerned from the more historical practice, while singing over an orchestra. In contrast, singing without regressive palatalization in consonant clusters, when it should be present, is not only difficult, it is noticeably incorrect.

The several special consonant clusters that are covered in the guide (ones that sound very different from their spelling and ones that delete one or more of their letter readings when sung) should be carefully studied and heeded, as they are much easier to pronounce than they look orthographically. In all other cases of complex consonantal clusters, it can be helpful to divide the cluster syllabically. If the cluster is internal, one may place the first consonant(s) on the end of the preceding syllable and the rest on the beginning of the next (e. g., Чайковский (*Tchaikovsky*) /tʃʲi 'koʃʲ sʲkʲij/, rather than /tʃʲi 'ko ʃʲsʲkʲij/). If the cluster is initial and more complex (usually unfamiliar to English speakers), the singer might first practice by artificially syllabifying the cluster, placing a vowel before the consonants (e.g. взбрѣдѣть – *to occur to somebody* – /vʲzʲbʲrʲɪ 'datʲ/ might be practiced as /ivʲzʲ bʲrʲɪ 'datʲ/, as if the first portion was the English word *eaves*). Once well practiced, singers should work towards pronouncing consonantal clusters quickly and lightly. Also, as in Italian, Russian consonants, including clusters should be “pushed to the right” as far as possible, and given just enough time to sound clearly without disrupting legato line. Russians will even accept slightly unclear consonants for vowel oriented, legato line, over choppy

sound due to over pronounced consonants. Sing Russian consonants as light and forward, even if formed in the back of the mouth.

Finally, preparation is imperative for the chorus master. One must know exactly which syllable is stressed in each of the printed words. Even though the music often may follow the spoken stresses, it will not always. Proper stress is necessary to implement the *akanye* and *ikanye* reductions correctly and to phrase the music in a more idiomatically Russian fashion. Also, related to knowing the correct stresses, knowing when a printed -e- is actually a -ë-, and so is read /jo/ or /o/, obviously should rank high on a chorus master's preparatory checklist, as well as correctly applying the rules of assimilation. Russian is a language of advanced diction (as English is for non-native speakers), and should be respected with thorough preparation.

## Review Chart of the International Phonetic Alphabet\*

IPA	English	Italian	French	German	Russian	IPA	English	Italian	French	German	Russian
<b>ɑ</b>	father		âme		стал	<b>u</b>	<u>too</u>	tu	<u>tout</u>	Ruh	углу
<b>a</b>		alma	aller	Vater	мять	<b>ʊ</b>	<u>book</u>			Mutter	
<b>æ</b>	cat					<b>ʌ</b>	<u>but</u>				молоко
<b>b</b>	box	bocca	bas	bitte	баня	<b>v</b>	vice	viva	vie	<u>weg</u>	вам
<b>d</b>	dad	duca	du	dich	добро	<b>w</b>	wall	<u>guai</u>	<u>oui</u>		
<b>e</b>	<u>taper</u>		<u>parlé</u>	<u>Seele</u>	время	<b>z</b>	zip	<u>rosa</u>	<u>rose</u>	<u>Rose</u>	знать
<b>ɛ</b>	bet	petto	mais	wenn	это	<b>ʒ</b>	<u>azure</u>		<u>je</u>		жить
<b>f</b>	far	furore	frais	Vogl	фильм	The /j/+vowel clusters					
<b>g</b>	gone	gobba	gard	gaben	гора	<b>ja</b>	<u>yacht</u>	<u>aria</u>		<u>ja</u>	ял
<b>ɣ</b>					оглох бы	<b>ja</b>			<u>royal</u>		мять
<b>h</b>	happy			Haus		<b>je</b>	<u>yes</u>	<u>ieri</u>	<u>tienne</u>		мне
<b>x</b>				<u>Bach</u>	хотет	<b>je</b>	<u>yea</u>	<u>pietà</u>			есть
<b>i</b>	beet	<u>figli</u>	dite	ihr	идти	<b>jo</b>	<u>yo-yo</u>				моё
<b>ɪ</b>	sit			bitte	часы	<b>ju</b>	<u>you</u>	<u>fiume</u>		<u>Jugend</u>	твою
<b>i</b>					был	<b>ji</b>	<u>yippie</u>			<u>Jiddisch</u>	ядро
<b>j</b>	<u>boy</u>		<u>feuille</u>	<u>Jung</u>	чай	Palatalized consonants					
<b>k</b>	kite	caldo	qui	König	как	<b>b<sup>j</sup></b>					бьёт
<b>l</b>	leap	ladro	loup	Liebe		<b>d<sup>j</sup></b>					для
<b>ɫ</b>	<u>milk</u>				стол	<b>f<sup>j</sup></b>	<u>fjord</u>	<u>fiume</u>			кровь
<b>m</b>	mama	mama	maman	Mutter	мама	<b>g<sup>j</sup></b>					ноге
<b>n</b>	not	nel	non	nicht	но	<b>k<sup>j</sup></b>					руке
<b>o</b>	open	colori	l' <u>eau</u>	Rose	вот	<b>ɫ<sup>j</sup></b>					столь
<b>ɔ</b>	<u>ought</u>	sotto	sortir	Wonne		<b>m<sup>j</sup></b>					мять
<b>œ</b>			<u>fleur</u>	<u>könnte</u>		<b>ɲ</b>	<u>onion</u>	<u>gnocchi</u>	<u>agneau</u>		няня
<b>ə</b>	<u>broken</u>		je	tragen		<b>p<sup>j</sup></b>					пьеса
<b>p</b>	papa	papa	papa	Paar	папа	<b>r<sup>j</sup></b>					горько
<b>r</b>		ridere			работа	<b>s<sup>j</sup></b>					сёл
<b>ə̃</b>	<u>liver</u>					<b>ʃ<sup>j</sup></b>					щи
<b>s</b>	see	sotto	sucre	<u>faßen</u>	стол	<b>t<sup>j</sup></b>			<u>tuile</u>		мать
<b>ʃ</b>	<u>shoe</u>	<u>sciutti</u>	<u>chou</u>	<u>schön</u>	ищу	<b>ʧ<sup>j</sup></b>	<u>cheese</u>	<u>città</u>			чай
<b>t</b>	top	tutto	temp	Tot	то	<b>v<sup>j</sup></b>					вьёт
<b>ts</b>		<u>zitto</u>		<u>Zeit</u>	царь	<b>x<sup>j</sup></b>					ухе
<b>tʃ</b>	<u>chauk</u>			<u>Deutsch</u>		<b>z<sup>j</sup></b>					земля
						<b>ʒ<sup>j</sup></b>					дожль бы

\* Some symbols and sounds are not pertinent to Russian; some only to Russian. The IPA symbols that relate to Russian reflect singing pronunciation only.

## APPENDIX B

The Russian Cyrillic Alphabet in Print Form

Russian letter names are in IPA, except for -й-, -ь-, and -ъ-, which names are transliterated from the Russian.

<b>Cyrillic</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Cyrillic</b>	<b>Name</b>
А а	/a/	Р р	/ɛr/
Б б	/bɛ/	С с	/ɛs/
В в	/vɛ/	Т т	/tɛ/
Г г	/gɛ/	У у	/u/
Д д	/dɛ/	Ф ф	/ɛf/
Е е	/jɛ/	Х х	/xa/
Ё ё	/jo/	Ц ц	/tɕɛ/
Ж ж	/ʒɛ/	Ч ч	/tʃʲɛ/
З з	/zɛ/	Ш ш	/ʃa/
И и	/i/	Щ щ	/ʃʲʃʲa/
Й й	/i/ <i>kratkoje</i>	Ъ ъ	<i>tvorodyĭ znak</i>
К к	/ka/	Ы ы	/i/
Л л	/ɛt/	Ь ь	<i>myagkiĭ znak</i>
М м	/ɛm/	Э э	/ɛ/
Н н	/ɛn/	Ю ю	/ju/
О о	/o/	Я я	/ja/
П п	/pɛ/		

Obsolete Letters Still Encountered in Russian Opera Scores and Art Song Music

Ѣ = e

ѣ = и

ѵ = и

ѿ = ѿ

## APPENDIX C

Russian Phonetic Transcription Stylistic Conversion Chart

Comparison of this text with the four major Russian diction systems:  
 Piatak/Avrashov: *Russian Songs & Arias*; Belov: *Libretti of Russian Operas*;  
 Richter: *Complete Song Text Series*; and Sheils (Walters): *A Singer's Manual*

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Grayson</u> <u>IPA</u>	<u>P/A</u> <u>IPA</u>	<u>Belov</u> <u>Mod. IPA</u>	<u>Richter</u> <u>Slav. PA</u>	<u>Sheil (Walters)</u> <u>IPA</u>
А а	/a/ [ʌ] [a] [ɪ]	[blank /ə/ /a/ /i/	line = [a] /a/ [a]	same for /a/ /a/ /a/	all] /ə/ [a] [ɪ]
Б б	/b/ /bʲ/	/b/ /bʲ/	/b/ /bʲ/	/b/ /bʲ/	/b/ /bʲ/
В в	/v/ /vʲ/	/v/ /vʲ/	/v/ /vʲ/	/v/ /vʲ/	/v/ /vʲ/
Г г	/g/ /gʲ/	/g/ /gʲ/	/g/ /gʲ/	/g/ /gʲ/	/g/ /gʲ/
Д д	/d/ /dʲ/	/d/ /dʲ/	/d/ /dʲ/	/d/ /dʲ/	/d/ /dʲ/
Е е	/jɛ/ [je] [jɪ] /ji/ [i]	/jɛ/ /jɛ/ /ji/ /ji/ [i]	[je] /jɛ/ [je] [i]	[je] /jɛ/ [je] /y/	[je] [jɪ] /ji/ [i]
Ё ё	/jo/				
Ж ж	/ʒ/ /ʒʲ/	/ʒ/ /ʒʲ/	/ʒ/ /ʒʲ/	/ʒ/ /ʒʲ/	/ʒ/ /ʒʲ/
З з	/z/ /zʲ/	/z/ /zʲ/	/z/ /zʲ/	/z/ /zʲ/	/z/ /zʲ/
И и	/i/ [i] /ɪ/	/i/ /i/ /ɪ/	[i] [i] /ə/	/y/ /ə/	[i] /i/
Й й	/j/	/i/	/j/	/j/	/j/
К к	/k/ /kʲ/	/k/ /kʲ/	/k/ /kʲ/	/k/ /kʲ/	/k/ /kʲ/

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Grayson</u> <u>IPA</u>	<u>P/A</u> <u>IPA</u>	<u>Belov</u> <u>Mod. IPA</u>	<u>Richter</u> <u>Slav. PA</u>	<u>Sheil (Walters)</u> <u>IPA</u>
Л л	/l/ /l <sup>j</sup> /	/l/ /l <sup>j</sup> /	/L/ /l̥/	/l/ /l̥/	/l̥/ /l̥/
М м	/m/ /m <sup>j</sup> /	[blank /m̥/	line = /m̥/	same for /m̥/	all] /m̥/
Н н	/n/ /ɲ/	/n/ /ɲ/	/n/ /ɲ/	/n̥/ /ɲ̥/	/n̥/ /ɲ̥/
О о	/o/ /a/ [ʌ]	/o/ /a/ /ə/	/ɔ/ /a/ [ɑ]	/o/ /a/ /a/ (/ə/)	/ɔ/ /a/ /ə/
П п	/p/ /p <sup>j</sup> /	/p/ /p̥/	/p̥/	/p̥/	/p̥/
Р р	/r/ /r <sup>j</sup> /	/r̥/	/r̥/	/r̥/	/r̥/
С с	/s/ /s <sup>j</sup> /	/s̥/	/s̥/	/s̥/	/s̥/
Т т <i>m</i>	/t/ /t <sup>j</sup> /	/t̥/	/t̥/	/t̥/	/t̥/
У у	/u/				
Ф ф	/f/ /f <sup>j</sup> /	/f̥/	/f̥/	/f̥/	/f̥/
Х х	/x/ /x <sup>j</sup> /	/x̥/	/ç/	/x̥/	/x̥/
	[ɣ]	/x/	[ɣ]	[ɣ]	/x/
Ц ц	/ts/ [dz]	/ts/ /ts/	/ts/ [dz]	/c/ [dz]	/ts/ /ts/
Ч ч	/tʃ <sup>j</sup> / [dʒ <sup>j</sup> ]	/tʃ/ /tʃ/	/tʃ/ [dʒ]	/ç/ [dʒ̥]	/tʃ̥/ /tʃ̥/
Ш ш	/ʃ/	/ʃ/	/ʃ/	/ʃ̥/	/ʃ̥/
Щ щ	/ʃ <sup>j</sup> ʃ <sup>j</sup> / /ʃ <sup>j</sup> ʃ <sup>j</sup> /	/ʃtʃ/ /ʃtʃ/	/ʃ̥:/ /ʃ̥:/	/ʃ̥ʃ̥/ /ʃ̥ʃ̥/	/ʃ̥ʃ̥/ /ʃ̥ʃ̥/
Ъ	No IPA				
Ы ы	[ɨ]	[ɨ]	[ɨ]	/y/	[ɨ]
Ь	[j]	[,]	[,]	[,]	[,]

<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Grayson</u> <u>IPA</u>	<u>P/A</u> <u>IPA</u>	<u>Belov</u> <u>Mod. IPA</u>	<u>Richter</u> <u>Slav. PA</u>	<u>Sheil (Walters)</u> <u>IPA</u>
Э э	/ɛ/ [e] [ɪ]	[blank /ɛ/ /ɛ/	line = [e] /ɛ/	same for [e] /ɛ/	all] [e] [ɪ]
Ю ю	/ju/				
Я я	/ja/ [ja] [jɪ] [ʌ]	/ja/ [ja] /ji/	/ja/ [jɔ] /ə/	/ja/ /ja/ /a/	[ja] [jɪ] [e] [jə]

## APPENDIX D

Phoneme to Cyrillic Index

/a/	а	stressed, immediate pre- or post-stress, or initial (stressed or not)
	о	immediate pre-stress or unstressed initial letter only
	я	stressed not followed by palatalized consonant or -й-; unstressed, feminine adjective endings -ая and -яя
[a]	а	only when stressed, after /tʃʲ/ (-ч-) or /ʃʲʃʲ/ (-ш-), and followed by a palatalized consonant or -й-
	я	stressed only and followed by palatalized consonant or -й-
[ʌ]	а	remote pre- or post-stress, not initial
	и	ending -ий, <i>Old Muscovite</i> tradition
	о	penultimate and remote pre-stress not initial; all post-stress
	я	in reflexive, verbal endings -ться or -тся, no preceding palatalization
/jɑ/	я	only when stressed; initial or following a vowel, and followed by an unpalatalized consonant or final
[ja]	я	only when stressed; initial or following a vowel, and followed by a palatalized consonant
/b/; /bʲ/	б б̆	п <i>n</i> when voiced due to assimilation
/v/; /vʲ/	в в̆	ф <i>φ</i> when voiced in rare cases of assimilation
/g/; /gʲ/	г г̆	к <i>k</i> when voiced due to assimilation
/d/; /dʲ/	д д̆ д̆̂	т <i>m</i> when voiced due to assimilation
/ɛ/	е (ѣ)	stressed only (except certain foreign words) after any consonant, only when followed by an unpalatalized consonant or final
	э	stressed only (except certain foreign words) and followed by an unpalatalized consonant
[e]	е	stressed only, after any consonant, only when followed by a palatalized consonant
	э	initial, stressed, and followed by a palatalized consonant or -й-

Phoneme to Cyrillic Index (cont'd)

/jɛ/	е	only when stressed, initial or following a vowel, and followed by an unpalatalized consonant
[je]	е	only when stressed, initial or following a vowel, and followed by a palatalized consonant
/jo/	ё	only when stressed, initial or following a vowel; dieresis rare
/o/	о	stressed only (except in some compound words)
/z/ ([zʲ])	ж ж	ш ш voiced due to assimilation; unpalatalized only (one exception)
	з	before voiced -ж-
	с	before voiced -ж-
/zʲzʲ/	ш ш	voiced due to assimilation (rare within words)
	жж	in rare cases of cluster -жж- in <i>Old Muscovite</i> accent
	зж	in rare cases of cluster -зж-
/z/; /zʲ/	з з	с с voiced due to assimilation
/i/	и (i,v)	almost always (see [i] below)
	е	only unstressed and interpalatal
	а	only after -ч- or -ш-, when pre-stress and interpalatal
[ɪ]	а	only unstressed after -ч- or -ш-, pre-stress not interpalatal; post-stress all cases, including interpalatal
	е	unstressed, preceded by a palatalized consonant only, and when followed by an unpalatalized consonant or final
	э	unstressed, not preceded by a /j/-glide
	я	all unstressed positions (except fem. adj. endings -ая and -яя) preceded by a palatalized consonant, when followed by an unpalatalized consonant or final
/ji/	е	unstressed, only initial or following a vowel, and followed by a palatalized consonant
	я	unstressed (except fem. adj. endings -ая and -яя), only initial or following a vowel, and followed by a palatalized consonant

Phoneme to Cyrillic Index (cont'd)

[jɪ]	е	unstressed, only initial or following a vowel, and followed by an unpalatalized consonant or final
	я	unstressed (except fem. adj. endings -ая and -яя), initial or following a vowel, and followed by an unpalatalized consonant or final
/j/	й	when spelled out (sometimes deleted due to assimilation); also part of /j/+vowel clusters
/k/; /kʲ/	к к	г г as unvoiced when final or due to regressive assimilation
/l/; /lʲ/	л л	
/m/; /mʲ/	м м	
/n/; /nʲ/	н н	
/o/	о	stressed, mostly; unstressed only in certain foreign words
/p/; /pʲ/	п п	б б unvoiced when final or due to regressive assimilation
/r/; /rʲ/	р р	
/s/; /sʲ/	с с	з з unvoiced when final or due to regressive assimilation
/t/; /tʲ/	т т	д д unvoiced when final or due to regressive assimilation
/u/	у	stressed or unstressed, any position
	ю	stressed or unstressed after a palatalized consonant; in certain foreign words without preceding palatalization
/ju/	ю	stressed or unstressed, initial or following a vowel only
/f/; /fʲ/	ф ф (ə)	в в unvoiced when final or due to regressive assimilation
/x/; /xʲ/	х х	г г in the clusters -гк- and -гч- only
[χ]	х	voiced across word boundary due to assimilation
/ts/	ц ц	-тс-, -тьс- under very specific conditions
/tʲsʲ/	ц ц	very rare
[dz]	ц ц	voiced due to assimilation, usually across word boundary

Phoneme to Cyrillic Index (cont'd)

/tʃʲ/	ч ч	also clusters тш; дш; чш
/tʃ/		unpalatalized in clusters тш; дш; чш
[dʒʲ]	ч ч	voiced due to assimilation (rare internally); and clusters тж; дж
[dʒ]		unpalatalized in clusters тж; дж
/ʃ/ (/ʃʲ/)	ш ш	ж ж unvoiced when final and due to assimilation; unpalatalized only (one obsolete exception)
	з	before unvoiced -ш-
	с	before unvoiced -ш-
	ч	clusters -чт- and -чн- in only a few words
/ʃʲʃʲ/	ш ш	also clusters -жч-; -сч-; -шч-
[No IPA]	ь	the hard sign or <i>tvorodyĭ znak</i>
[i]	ы	stressed or unstressed, all positions
	и	after /з/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), or /ts/ (-ц-) [with rare exceptions]; across word boundary after hard consonants; ending -ий using <i>Stage Pronunciation</i>
	е	unstressed after /з/ (-ж-), /ʃ/ (-ш-), or /ts/ (-ц-)
[j]	ь	the soft sign or <i>myagkiĭ znak</i>

## APPENDIX E

Common Russian Grammatical Forms with Pronunciations<sup>330</sup>**Declension**

*Declension* is the representation of case, gender and number in nouns, adjectives, and pronouns through added or changing word endings or forms. For those unfamiliar, cases relate to the syntactical organization of a sentence. The cases in Russian are the *nominative*, the *accusative*, the *genitive*, the *dative*, the *prepositional*, and the *instrumental*. Those familiar with ancient Greek and Latin know that, in the larger scope of language, there are more cases, but only six are employed in Russian.

**Nouns:**

A Russian noun generally has a root that is then declined by a set of suffixes signifying the different cases. The declensional endings also incorporate gender (masculine, feminine, and neuter) and number (singular or plural). Often, the syllabic stress of a word shifts as the form changes, affecting pronunciation. Also, Russians decline nouns that move around under their own power, or are animate (people and animals), slightly differently from nouns that do not (plants, things), which are considered inanimate (Table 1).

**Table 1**

Masculine, singular (inanimate):

СТОЛ (table):

Nom.	СТОЛ	/stoɫ/	Prep.	СТОЛЕ	/sta 'lʲɛ/
Acc.	СТОЛ	/stoɫ/	Dat.	СТОЛУ	/sta 'ɫu/
Gen.	СТОЛА	/sta 'ɫa/	Inst.	СТОЛОМ	/sta 'ɫom/

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<sup>330</sup> The grammatical rules and information in this appendix are derived from three sources: Lubensky, Ervin, and Jarvis, *Nachalo: When in Russia...*; Kagan and Miller, *V Puti [On the Way]*; and Rosengrant and Lifschitz, *Focus on Russian*.

**Table 1 (cont'd)**

Masculine, singular (animate):

студент (student):

Nom.	студент	/stu 'dʲɛnt/	Prep.	студенте	/stu 'dʲɛn tʲɪ/
Acc.	студента	/stu 'dʲɛn ta/	Dat.	студенту	/stu 'dʲɛn tu/
Gen.	студента	/stu 'dʲɛn ta/	Inst.	студентом	/stu 'dʲɛn tɒm/

Masculine, plural (inanimate):

столы (tables):

Nom.	столы	/sta 'tʲɪ/	Prep.	столах	/sta 'tʲax/
Acc.	столы	/sta 'tʲɪ/	Dat.	столам	/sta 'tʲam/
Gen.	столов	/sta 'tʲof/	Inst.	столами	/sta 'tʲa mʲɪ/

Masculine, plural (animate):

студенты (student):

Nom.	студенты	/stu 'dʲɛn tʲɪ/	Prep.	студентах	/stu 'dʲɛn tax/
Acc.	студентов	/stu 'dʲɛn tɒf/	Dat.	студентам	/stu 'dʲɛn tam/
Gen.	студентов	/stu 'dʲɛn tɒf/	Inst.	студентами	/stu 'dʲɛn ta mʲɪ/

Feminine, singular (inanimate):

поэма (poem):

Nom.	поэма	/pa 'ɛ ma/	Prep.	поэме	/pa 'ɛ mʲɪ/
Acc.	поэму	/pa 'ɛ mu/	Dat.	поэме	/pa 'ɛ mʲɪ/
Gen.	поэмы	/pa 'ɛ mi/	Inst.	поэмой	/pa 'ɛ mɒj/

Feminine, singular (animate):

жена (wife):

Nom.	жена	/ʒi 'na/	Prep.	жене	/ʒi 'nɛ/
Acc.	жену	/ʒi 'nu/	Dat.	жене	/ʒi 'nɛ/
Gen.	жены	/ʒi 'ni/	Inst.	женой	/ʒi 'noj/

Feminine, plural (inanimate):

поэмы (poems):

Nom.	поэмы	/pa 'ɛ mi/	Prep.	поэмах	/pa 'ɛ max/
Acc.	поэмы	/pa 'ɛ mi/	Dat.	поэмам	/pa 'ɛ mam/
Gen.	поэм	/pa 'ɛm/	Inst.	поэмами	/pa 'ɛ ma mʲɪ/

**Table 1 (cont'd)**

Feminine, plural (animate):

жѐны (wives):

Nom.	жѐны	/ʰʒo ni/	Prep.	жѐнах	/ʰʒo naχ/
Acc.	жѐн	/ʒon/	Dat.	жѐнам	/ʰʒo nam/
Gen.	жѐн	/ʒon/	Inst.	жѐнами	/ʰʒo na mʲi/

Neuter, singular (always considered inanimate):

дело (thing, matter, deed):

Nom.	дело	/ʰdʲɛ tʌ/	Prep.	деле	/ʰdʲɛ lʲi/
Acc.	дело	/ʰdʲɛ tʌ/	Dat.	делу	/ʰdʲɛ tʌ/
Gen.	дела	/ʰdʲɛ tʌ/	Inst.	делом	/ʰdʲɛ tʌm/

Neuter, plural:

дела (things, matters, deeds):

Nom.	дела	/dʲɪ tʌ/	Prep.	делах	/dʲɪ tʌχ/
Acc.	дела	/dʲɪ tʌ/	Dat.	делам	/dʲɪ tʌm/
Gen.	дел	/dʲɛtʌ/	Inst.	делами	/dʲɪ tʌ mʲi/

Two examples of shifting stress are:

дети (children):

Nom.	дети	/dʲɛ tʲi/	Prep.	детях	/dʲɛ tʲɪχ/
Acc.	детей	/dʲɪ tʲej/	Dat.	детям	/dʲɛ tʲɪm/
Gen.	детей	/dʲɪ tʲej/	Inst.	детьми	/dʲɪ tʲɪmʲi/

двери (doors):

Nom.	двери	/dvʲɛ rʲi/	Prep.	дверях	/dvʲɪ rʲɪχ/
Acc.	двери	/dvʲɛ rʲi/	Dat.	дверям	/dvʲɪ rʲɪm/
Gen.	дверей	/dvʲɪ rʲej/	Inst.	дверями	/dvʲɪ rʲɪa mʲi/

These are just a few examples of the declension of common Russian nouns. Of course, there are some unusual declension forms and special exceptions, but these present the basic idea for nouns. It should be noted that the spelling of declensional endings is affected by some Russian *spelling rules*, but since a singer only sings words that are already written, understanding exactly how and why the endings are changed is of lesser importance. The

goal of this appendix is to help the singer recognize the grammatical forms and aid in decoding the overall structure of a sentence as to its subject(s), object(s) and modifier(s), thus aiding in phrasing and interpretation. It should be noted that several forms of differing cases look alike, so attention must be paid to this, when attempting translation.

### **Adjectives:**

Adjectives agree with the nouns they modify in gender and number. The adjectival declensions consist of basic endings that follow either unpalatalized or palatalized root finals and (in the masculine only) are affected by whether the particular ending is the stressed syllable or not (Table 2).

**Table 2**

Masculine Adjective Endings:

Case	<u>Unstressed/Stressed Unpalatalized Root</u>		<u>Palatalized Root (always unstressed)</u>	
Nom.	-ий/-ой	/ij/ /'oj/	-ий	/ij/
Acc.	-ий/-ой or -ого	/ij/ /'oj/ or /Λ vΛ/ /'o vΛ/*	-ий or -его	/ij/ or /jɪ vΛ/*
Gen.	-ого	/Λ vΛ/ /'o vΛ/	-его	/jɪ vΛ/
Prep.	-ом	/Λm/ /'om/	-ем	/jim/
Dat.	-ому	/Λ mu/ /'o mu/	-ему	/jɪ mu/
Inst.	-ым	/im/	-им	/im/

\*As with nouns, the *nominative* and *accusative case* endings are the same with *inanimate* things, while the *accusative* and *genitive case* endings are the same with people and animals (*animate* entities). Also, remember that although -ого and -его are spelled with a -г-, the -г- is read as /v/.

## Feminine Adjective Endings:

Case	Unpalatalized Root (unstressed/stressed)	Palatalized Root (always unstressed)
Nom.	-ая /а ja/ /'а ja/	-яя / <sup>j</sup> а ja/*
Acc.	-ую /у ju/ /'у ju/	-юю / <sup>j</sup> у ju/*
Gen.	-ой /Λj/ /'oj/	-ей / <sup>j</sup> ij/
Prep.	-ой /Λj/ /'oj/	-ей / <sup>j</sup> ij/
Dat.	-ой /Λj/ /'oj/	-ей / <sup>j</sup> ij/
Inst.	-ой /Λj/ /'oj/	-ей / <sup>j</sup> ij/

\*In the feminine form, the *nominative* and the *accusative case* endings are read in full standard form, whether or not the ending is stressed. The second syllable of these endings is never stressed and the first syllables indicate palatalization, so that a preceding consonant will be palatalized. Examples: лишняя /<sup>j</sup>lʲiʃ nɔ ja/; лишней /<sup>j</sup>lʲiʃ nʲij/. The initial *superscript-j* indicates the palatalized root final.

## Neuter Adjective Endings:

Case	Unpalatalized Root (unstressed/stressed)	Palatalized Root (always unstressed)
Nom.	-ое /Λ jɪ/ /'o jɪ/	-ее / <sup>j</sup> i jɪ/
Acc.	-ое /Λ jɪ/ /'o jɪ/	-ее / <sup>j</sup> i jɪ/
Gen.	-ого /Λ vΛ/ /'o vΛ/	-его / <sup>j</sup> ɪ vΛ/
Prep.	-ом /Λm/ /'om/	-ем / <sup>j</sup> im/
Dat.	-ому /Λ mu/ /'o mu/	-ему / <sup>j</sup> ɪ mu/
Inst.	-ым /im/	-им /im/

## Plural Adjective Endings:

Case	Unpalatalized Root (unstressed/stressed)	Palatalized Root (always unstressed)
Nom.	-ые /ijɪ/	-ие /i jɪ/
Acc.	-ые or -ыѐ /ijɪ/ or /ix/*	-ие or -иѐ /i jɪ/ or /ix/*
Gen.	-ыѐ /ix/	-иѐ /ix/
Prep.	-ыѐ /ix/	-иѐ /ix/
Dat.	-ым /im/	-им /im/
Inst.	-ыми /im <sup>j</sup> i/	-ими /im <sup>j</sup> i/

\*As with nouns, the *nominative* and *accusative case* endings are the same with *inanimate* things, while the *accusative* and *genitive case* endings are the same with people and animals (*animate* entities).

An unusual set of adjectival case endings occur only with roots ending in -б-, -в-, -з-, -л-, or -с-, producing nominative endings such as -бий, -вий, -зий, etc. The root finals are all

palatalized, and the endings are never stressed. The declension endings for these forms are (Table 3):

**Table 3**

<u>Case</u>	<u>Masculine</u>		<u>Feminine</u>	
Nom.	-ий	/ij/	-ья	/jɑ/
Acc.	-ий or -ьего	/ij/ or /jɪ vɐ/*	-ью	/ju/
Gen.	-ьего	/jɪ vɐ/	-ей	/jɪj/
Prep.	-ьем	/jim/	-ей	/jɪj/
Dat.	-ьему	/jɪ mu/	-ей	/jɪj/
Inst.	-ьим	/im/	-ей	/jɪj/

<u>Case</u>	<u>Neuter</u>		<u>Plural</u>	
Nom.	-е	/jɪ/	-и	/i/
Acc.	-е	/jɪ/	-и or -иё	/i/ or /ix/*
Gen.	-ьего	/jɪ vɐ/	-иё	/ix/
Prep.	-ьем	/jim/	-иё	/ix/
Dat.	-ьему	/jɪ mu/	-им	/im/
Inst.	-ьим	/im/	-ими	/imʲi/

\*Nominative and accusative case endings are the same with *inanimate* things, while the accusative and genitive case endings are the same with people and animals (*animate* entities).

The *myagkiĭ znak* beginning most of these endings and preceding the vowels indicates that the preceding consonant is palatalized, but also that a prominent, voiced aspiration is produced between the palatalized consonant and the vowel.

### **Short Form Adjectives:**

The preceding charts pertained to the long form of adjectives used to modify nouns directly. Adjectives in the predicate position referring back to a subject often use a short form, though either short or long forms are acceptable. Whether long form or short form, an adjective agrees with the noun it modifies in gender and number. As examples:

When an adjective directly modifies a noun, then the *long form* must be used (Table 4):

**Table 4**

Он <b>высокий</b> человек.	/on vi 'so kʲij tʃɪ tɑ 'vʲɛk/	He is a tall man.
Она <b>высокая</b> женщина.	/ɑ 'na vi 'so ka ja 'zɛn ʃʲjɪ nɐ/	She is a tall woman.
Это <b>высокое</b> дерево.	/ɛ tɐ vi 'so kɐ jɪ 'dʲe rʲɪ vɐ/	That is a tall tree.
Вот, такие <b>высокие</b> сосны!	/vot ta 'kʲi jɪ vi 'so kʲi jɪ 'sos ni/	Look, such tall pines!

When a predicate adjective reflects backwards onto the subject, then the *short form* of the adjective may be used (Table 5):

**Table 5**

Он <b>высок</b> .	/on vi 'sok /	He is tall.
Она <b>высока</b> .	/ɑ 'na vi sa 'ka/	She is tall.
Это дерево <b>высоко</b> .	/ɛ tɐ 'dʲe rʲɪ vɐ vi 'so kɐ/	That tree is tall.
Вот, сосны так <b>высоки</b> .	/vot 'sos ni tak vi sa 'kʲi/	Look, the pines are so tall.

Therefore, the common short adjectival endings are spelled as (Table 6):

**Table 6**

	No preceding palatalization indicated	Preceding palatalization indicated
Masculine –	null [no ending]	ь
Feminine –	а	я
Neuter –	о	е
Plural –	ы or и*	и

\*Spelling rules apply.

Adjectives can be constructed from verbs (deverbal forms). Those forms are discussed under the section on verbs.

**Adverbs:**

Adverbs can be derived from either adjectives or verbs. Adverbs derived from adjectives, whether modifying adjectives or verbs, have essentially one declensional ending of -о. Adverbs do not agree in gender or number. Most of the time adverbs are derived from adjectives (Table 7).

**Table 7**

трудный /'tru dnɨj/ – difficult	трудно /'tru dnʌ/ – difficult; with difficulty
простой /pra 'stoj/ – simple	просто /'pro stʌ/ – simple; simply
ёроший /xʌ 'ro ʃij/ – good	ёрошо /xʌ ra 'ʃo/ – good; well

Adverbs can be derived from verbs, as well, and are covered in the section on verbs.

**Pronouns:**

Pronouns at times act like nouns and at times like adjectives, so they have forms similar to each. Many pronouns decline by changing form completely, while others decline using the *root + suffix* style. There are specific categories of pronouns which are based upon grammatical usage. These categories are: *interrogative/relative*; *personal*; *reflexive*; *demonstrative*; *determinative*; *possessive – singular and reflexive*; *possessive – plural*; and *possessive interrogative*.

**Table 8****Interrogative/Relative**

<u>Case</u>	<u>Pronoun /pronunciation/</u>	
	<u>who/whom</u>	<u>what/which/that</u>
Nominative:	кто /kto/	что /ʃto/ (note the pronunciation of -ч- for the
Accusative:	кого /kʌ 'vo/	что /ʃto/ nominative and accusative forms of что)
Genitive:	кого /kʌ 'vo/	чего /tʃʲɪ 'vo/
Prepositional:	ком /kom/	чём /tʃʲɪ om/
Dative:	кому /kʌ 'mu/	чему /tʃʲɪ 'mu/
Instrumental:	кем /kʲɛm/	чем /tʃʲɛm/

**Table 9****Personal**

<u>Case</u>	<u>Singular Pronoun /pronunciation/</u>				
	<u>I/me/of mine</u>	<u>you/of yours</u>	<u>he/him/of his</u>	<u>it/of it</u>	<u>she/her/of hers</u>
Nominative:	я /ja/	ты /ti/	он /on/	оно /a 'no/	она /a 'na/
Accusative:	меня /mʲi 'ja/	тебя /tʲi 'bʲa/	(н)его /jɪ 'vo/*	(н)его /jɪ 'vo/	(н)её /jɪ 'jo/
Genitive:	меня /mʲi 'ja/	тебя /tʲi 'bʲa/	(н)его /jɪ 'vo/	(н)его /jɪ 'vo/	(н)её /jɪ 'jo/
Prepositional:	мне /mʲɛ/	тебе /tʲi 'bʲɛ/	нём /nom/	нём /nom/	ней /nej/
Dative:	мне /mʲɛ/	тебе /tʲi 'bʲɛ/	(н)ему /jɪ 'mu/	(н)ему /jɪ 'mu/	(н)ей /jej/
Instrumental:	мною /mnoʲj/	тобой /ta 'boj/	(н)им /im/	(н)им /im/	(н)ей /jej/

\* If the preceding preposition ends in a vowel, then the above pronouns begin with an added palatalized -н- (/ɲ/). For example: у него, /u ɲɛ 'vo/, at his place.

<u>Case</u>	<u>Plural Pronoun /pronunciation/</u>		
	<u>we/us/of ours</u>	<u>you/of yours</u>	<u>they/them/of theirs</u>
Nominative:	мы /mi/	вы /vi/	они /a 'nʲi/
Accusative:	нас /nas/	вас /vas/	(н)их /ix/
Genitive:	нас /nas/	вас /vas/	(н)их /ix/
Prepositional:	нас /nas/	вас /vas/	них /nix/
Dative:	нам /nam/	вам /vam/	(н)им /im/*
Instrumental:	нами /'na mʲi/	вами /'va mʲi/	(н)ими /'i mʲi/

\*There are many forms that look alike, but one may be overlooked: the Dative form of *them* looks the same as the Instrumental form of *him/it*. Be careful of look-alikes when translating.

**Table 10****Reflexive**

<u>Case</u>	<u>Pronoun /pronunciation/</u> <u>myself/yourself /his own/herself/itself/ourselves/yourselves/themselves</u>
Nominative:	я /a
Accusative:	себя /sʲi 'bʲa/
Genitive:	себя /sʲi 'bʲa/
Prepositional:	себе /sʲi 'bʲɛ/
Dative:	себе /sʲi 'bʲɛ/
Instrumental:	собой /sa 'boj/

**Table 11****Demonstrative**

<u>Case</u>	<u>Pronoun /pronunciation/</u>			
	<u>ЭТОТ = this</u>			
	masculine	neuter	feminine	plural
Nominative:	ЭТОТ /'ε tΛt/	ЭТО /'ε tΛ/	ЭТА /'ε tα/	ЭТИ /'ε t'i/
Accusative:	ЭТОТ /'ε tΛt/*	ЭТО /'ε tΛ/	ЭТУ /'ε tu/	ЭТИ /'ε t'i/*
Genitive:	ЭТОГО /'ε tΛ vΛ/	ЭТОГО /'ε tΛ vΛ/	ЭТОЙ /'ε tΛj/	ЭТИХ /'ε t'iχ/
Prepositional:	ЭТОМ /'ε tΛm/	ЭТОМ /'ε tΛm/	ЭТОЙ /'ε tΛj/	ЭТИХ /'ε t'iχ/
Dative:	ЭТОМУ /'ε tΛ mu/	ЭТОМУ /'ε tΛ mu/	ЭТОЙ /'ε tΛj/	ЭТИМ /'ε t'im/**
Instrumental:	ЭТИМ /'ε t'im/**	ЭТИМ /'ε t'im/**	ЭТОЙ /'ε tΛj/	ЭТИМИ /'ε t'i m'i/

\* For masculine and plural forms, inanimate antecedents use the nominative form and animate antecedents use the genitive form.

\*\* Many forms look alike, but do not overlook that the singular masc./neut. Instrumental forms and the plural Dative form look alike. Be careful about look-alikes when translating.

<u>Case</u>	<u>Pronoun /pronunciation/</u>			
	<u>ТОТ = that</u>			
	masculine	neuter	feminine	plural
Nominative:	ТОТ /tot/	ТО /to/	ТА /tα/	ТЕ /t'ε/
Accusative:	ТОТ /tot/*	ТО /to/	ТУ /tu/	ТЕ /t'ε]*
Genitive:	ТОГО /tα 'vo/	ТОГО /tα 'vo/	ТОЙ /toj/	ТЕХ /t'εχ/
Prepositional:	ТОМ /tom/	ТОМ /tom/	ТОЙ /toj/	ТЕХ /t'εχ/
Dative:	ТОМУ /tα 'mu/	ТОМУ /tα 'mu/	ТОЙ /toj/	ТЕМ /t'εm/**
Instrumental:	ТЕМ /t'εm/**	ТЕМ /t'εm/**	ТОЙ /toj/	ТЕМИ /t'ε m'i/

\* For masculine and plural forms, inanimate antecedents use the nominative form and animate antecedents use the genitive form.

\*\* Many forms look alike, but do not overlook these look-alikes. Always be careful when translating.

**Table 12****Determinative**

Case	<u>Pronoun /pronunciation/ all, every, everyone, everything, the entire</u>			
	masculine	neuter	feminine	plural
Nominative:	весь /vʲesʲ/	всѐ /fʲsʲo/	вся /fʲsʲa/	все /fʲsʲɛ/
Accusative:	весь /vʲesʲ/*	всѐ /fʲsʲo/	всю /fʲsʲu/	все /fʲsʲɛ/*
Genitive:	всего /fʲsʲɪ 'vo/	всего /fʲsʲɪ 'vo/	всей /fʲsʲej/	всех /fʲsʲɛx/
Prepositional:	всѐм /fʲsʲom/	всѐм /fʲsʲom/	всей /fʲsʲej/	всех /fʲsʲɛx/
Dative:	всему /fʲsʲɪ 'mu/	всему /fʲsʲɛ 'mu/	всей /fʲsʲej/	всем /fʲsʲɛm/**
Instrumental:	всем /fʲsʲɛm/**	всем /fʲsʲɛm/**	всей /fʲsʲej/	всеми /'fʲsʲɛ mʲi/

\* For masculine and plural forms, inanimate antecedents use the nominative form and animate antecedents use the genitive form.

\*\* Many forms look alike, but do not overlook these look-alikes. Always be careful when translating.

**Table 13****Possessive (singular, reflexive)**

Case	<u>Pronoun /pronunciation/ my/mine</u>			
	masculine	neuter	feminine	plural
Nominative:	мой /moj/	моѐ /ma 'jo/	моя /ma 'ja/	мои /mo 'i/
Accusative:	мой /moj/*	моѐ /ma 'jo/	мою /ma 'ju/	мои /ma 'i/*
Genitive:	моего /mɐ jɪ 'vo/	моего /mɐ jɪ 'vo/	моей /ma 'jej/	моих /ma 'ix/
Prepositional:	моѐм /ma 'jom/	моѐм /ma 'jom/	моей /ma 'jej/	моих /ma 'ix/
Dative:	моему /mɐ jɪ 'mu/	моему /mɐ jɪ 'mu/	моей /ma 'jej/	моим /ma 'im/**
Instrumental:	моим /ma 'im/**	моим /ma 'im/**	моей /ma 'jej/	моими /ma 'i mʲi/

Case	<u>your/yours</u>			
	masculine	neuter	feminine	plural
Nominative:	твой /tvoj/	твоѐ /tva 'jo/	твоя /tva 'ja/	твои /tva 'i/
Accusative:	твой /tvoj/*	твоѐ /tva 'jo/	твою /tva 'ju/	твои /tva 'i/*
Genitive:	твоего /tvɐ jɪ 'vo/	твоего /tva jɛ 'vo/	твоей /tva 'jej/	твоих /tva 'ix/
Prepositional:	твоѐм /tva 'jom/	твоѐм /tva 'jom/	твоей /tva 'jej/	твоих /tva 'ix/
Dative:	твоему /tvɐ jɪ 'mu/	твоему /tva jɛ 'mu/	твоей /tva 'jej/	твоим /tva 'im/**
Instrumental:	твоим /tva 'im/**	твоим /tva 'im/**	твоей /tva 'jej/	твоими /tva 'i mʲi/

**Table 13 (cont'd)****Possessive (singular, reflexive) [cont'd]**

Case	<u>Pronoun /pronunciation/ one's own</u>			
	masculine	neuter	feminine	plural
Nominative:	СВОЙ /svoj/	СВОЁ /sva 'jo/	СВОЯ /sva 'ja/	СВОИ /sva 'i/
Accusative:	СВОЙ /svoj/*	СВОЁ /sva 'jo/	СВОЮ /sva 'ju/	СВОИ /sva 'i/*
Genitive:	СВОЕГО /svΛ jI 'vo/	СВОЕГО /svΛ jI 'vo/	СВОЕЙ /sva 'jej/	СВОИХ /sva 'ix/
Prepositional:	СВОЁМ /sva 'jom/	СВОЁМ /sva 'jom/	СВОЕЙ /sva 'jej/	СВОИХ /sva 'ix/
Dative:	СВОЕМУ /svΛ jI 'mu/	СВОЕМУ /svΛ jI 'mu/	СВОЕЙ /sva 'jej/	СВОИМ /sva 'im/**
Instrumental:	СВОИМ /sva 'im/**	СВОИМ /sva 'im/**	СВОЕЙ /sva 'jej/	СВОИМИ /sva 'i mi/

\* For masculine and plural forms, inanimate antecedents use the nominative form and animate antecedents use the genitive form.

\*\* Many forms look alike, but do not overlook these look-alikes. Always be careful when translating.

**Table 14****Possessive (plural)**

Case	<u>Pronoun /pronunciation/ our/ours</u>			
	masculine	neuter	feminine	plural
Nominative:	наш /naʃ/	наше /'na ʃi/	наша /'na ʃa/	наши /'na ʃi/
Accusative:	наш /naʃ/*	наше /'na ʃi/	нашу /'na ʃu/	наши /'na ʃi/*
Genitive:	нашего /'na ʃi vΛ/	нашего /'na ʃi vΛ/	нашей /'na ʃij/	наших /'na ʃix/
Prepositional:	нашем /'na ʃim/	нашем /'na ʃim/	нашей /'na ʃij/	наших /'na ʃix/
Dative:	нашему /'na ʃi mu/	нашему /'na ʃi mu/	нашей /'na ʃij/	нашим /'na ʃim/**
Instrumental:	нашим /'na ʃim/**	нашим /'na ʃim/**	нашей /'na ʃij/	нашими /'na ʃi mʲi/

	<u>your/yours</u>			
	masculine	neuter	feminine	plural
Nominative:	ваш /vaʃ/	ваше /'va ʃi/	ваша /'va ʃa/	ваши /'va ʃi/
Accusative:	ваш /vaʃ/*	ваше /'va ʃi/	вашу /'va ʃu/	ваши /'va ʃi/*
Genitive:	вашего /'va ʃi vΛ/	вашего /'va ʃi vΛ/	вашей /'va ʃij/	ваших /'va ʃix/
Prepositional:	вашем /'va ʃim/	вашем /'va ʃim/	вашей /'va ʃij/	ваших /'va ʃix/
Dative:	вашему /'va ʃi mu/	вашему /'va ʃi mu/	вашей /'va ʃij/	вашим /'va ʃim/**
Instrumental:	вашим /'va ʃim/**	вашим /'va ʃim/**	вашей /'va ʃij/	вашими /'va ʃi mʲi/

**Table 15****Possessive Interrogative**

<u>Case</u>	<u>Pronoun /pronunciation/ who's/of which/what's</u>			
	masculine	neuter	feminine	plural
Nominative:	чей /tʃʲej/	чьё /tʃʲjo/	чья /tʃʲja/	чьи /tʃʲi/
Accusative:	чей /tʃʲej/*	чьё /tʃʲjo/	чью /tʃʲju/	чьи /tʃʲi/*
Genitive:	чьего /tʃʲjɪ 'vo/	чьего /tʃʲjɪ 'vo/	чьей /tʃʲjej/	чьих /tʃʲix/
Prepositional:	чьём /tʃʲjom/	чьём /tʃʲjom/	чьей /tʃʲjej/	чьих /tʃʲix/
Dative:	чьему /tʃʲjɪ 'mu/	чьему /tʃʲjɪ 'mu/	чьей /tʃʲjej/	чьим /tʃʲim/**
Instrumental:	чьим /tʃʲim/**	чьим /tʃʲim/**	чьей /tʃʲjej/	чьими /tʃʲi mʲi/

\* For masculine and plural forms, inanimate antecedents use the nominative form and animate antecedents use the genitive form.

\*\* Many forms look alike, but do not overlook these look-alikes. Always be careful when translating.

**Prepositions:**

Recognizing the prepositions and knowing their meanings can be helpful. When prepositions are used in prepositional phrases, some prepositions require the object noun to be declined in a different case from the prepositional. Some prepositions take more than one case, changing meaning, depending upon which case follows. When paired with an object, a pronoun often is read as if it were an unstressed prefix to the object word, that is the two words are read as one larger word. In such cases, the rules of vowel reduction apply. The following chart gives pronunciation for the prepositions first when standing alone and then when spoken as part of a prepositional phrase.

**Table 16**

<u>Preposition</u> (Normal; Other Forms)	<u>Pronunciation</u> (Alone/In Context)	<u>Meaning</u>
без; безо	/bʲɛz; 'bʲɛ zʌ/, /bʲɪz; bʲɪ zʌ/ or /bʲɪ zʌ/*	without
для	/dlʲa/, /dlʲɪ/	for; for the purpose of
до	/do/, /da/ or /dʌ/*	up to
за	/zʌ/, /zʌ/ or /zʌ/*	behind; for (to get)
из	/iz/, /iz/ sometimes /iz/**	out of; from
из-за	/iz 'zʌ/; /iz zʌ/, /-zʌ/ or /iz zʌ/, /-zʌ/***	from behind
из-под	/is 'pɔt/; /is pʌt/, /-pʌd/, /-pʌt/, /-pʌd/†	from under
к; ко	/k; kɔ/, /k; kʌ/ or /kʌ/*	without
между	/'mʲɛz du/, /'mʲɛz du/	between; amidst
на	/nʌ/, /nʌ/ or /nʌ/*	on; onto
над; надо	/nat; 'nʌ dʌ/ see note †† for variants	above

\* The reading pronunciation of -o- is determined by its relative position to the object word's stressed syllable, as if the whole prepositional phrase was a single word. If immediately pre-stress, the pronunciation will be /a/, if more remote, it will be /ʌ/.

\*\* The -и- is read as /i/, if the preceding word ends in a hard consonant.

\*\*\* Combination of notes \* and \*\*

† The pronunciation of /o/ follows the rules of the note (\*), while the pronunciation of the final /d/ is affected by the rules of regressive assimilation of voicing.

†† /nat/, /nad/, /nʌt/, or /nʌd/; /nʌ da/, or /nʌ dʌ/; stress position and voice assimilation

**Table 16 (cont'd)**

<u>Preposition</u> (Normal; Other Forms)	<u>Pronunciation</u> (Alone/In Context)	<u>Meaning</u>
около	/'o kΛ tΛ/, /'o kΛ tΛ/	close, near to
о; об; обо	/o; op; 'o bΛ/, /a/; /ap; ab/; /'a ba; -bΛ/*	about
от; ото	/o; 'o tΛ/, /at/ad/; /'a ta/-tΛ/*	from; from the side of
перед; передо	/'pʲe rʲit; 'pʲe rʲi dΛ/, /'pʲe rʲit; 'pʲe rʲid/†	in front of
по	/po/, /pa/ or /pΛ/**	along; around; to‡
под; подо	/pot; 'po dΛ/; see note †† for variants	under; close to
при	/prʲi/, /prʲi/	during; by; at‡
про	/pro/, /pra/ or /prΛ/**	about‡
ради	/'ra dʲi/, /rΛ dʲi/**	for the sake of
с; со	/s; so/, /s/; /sa/ or /sΛ/**	with; from; off of‡
у	/u/, /u/	nearby; at the home of‡
через	/'tʃe rʲis/, /tʃi rʲis/ or /tʃi rʲiz/	through; across; over

\* First -o- will always read as /a/, as initial -o- in a word. /b/ affected by voice assimilation. Final /o/ ruled by relative position to stress of object word.

† перед and передо maintain the first syllable stress, so the first /e/ is not reduced. Final /d/ is affected by voice assimilation. Final -o of передо is considered post-stress in preposition rather than pre-stress to object word, so it remains read as /Λ/ in prepositional phrase.

\*\* Pronunciation determined by relative stress position in prep. phrase.

‡ has many more meanings based upon idiomatic expressions. Refer to dictionary.

†† /pat/, /pad/, /pAt/, or /pAd/; /pΛ da/, or /pΛ dΛ/; stress position and voice assimilation.

**Verbs: Aspect, Infinitive Types, Conjugational Endings, Past Tense Endings, Adjectival Forms and Declension Endings, Adverb Forms, Imperative Forms, and the Reflexive Particle -ся (-сь)**

Russian verbs reflect what is called *aspect*, and most verbs have two *aspects*, the *imperfective* and the *perfective*. The perfective verb is often an imperfective verb form with added prefixes or altered spellings, but some perfectives are completely different verbs. Each of these verbs are normally *conjugated* in the *present*, *past*, and *future tense* forms, as well as *conditional* forms and *imperative* forms, and each verb has several *deverbal* forms that create adjectives, adverbs, and the imperative. The adjectival forms are *declinable*, and can have *short forms*. Though the subject will not be discussed in any detail here, it should be noted that several verbs of motion (to walk, to wander, to run, and related verbs) group together three related verbs: two *imperfective* verbs, reflecting whether the motion has no specific direction or destination (multidirectional) or has one specific destination or direction (unidirectional), and one *perfective* verb (direction is irrelevant). Tables of the basic formations and endings are found below.

Aspect

Labeled the *imperfective* and the *perfective*, *aspect* denotes whether an action is time-limited or not. Logically, the *imperfective* reflects no time limitation or the on-going state of a verb. “I throw the ball,” “I am throwing the ball,” and “I was throwing the ball, when...” all reflect a state of action where time does not matter. The *perfective* expresses a time-limited or time-placed action, as in: “I threw...,” “I have thrown...” and “After I threw the ball...” While English verbs combine changes in the verb form with the use of *helper verbs* to denote

aspect, in Russian, the verb form, itself, reflects whether it is imperfective or perfective. As examples, here are some verb pairs that show a variety of differences presented as *imperfective/perfective* (Table 17):

**Table 17**

ГОТОВИТЬ; ПРИГОТОВИТЬ	/ga 'to vit <sup>j</sup> /; /pr <sup>j</sup> i ga 'to vit <sup>j</sup> /	to prepare (food)
ДВИГАТЬ; ДВИНУТЬ	/'d <sup>j</sup> v <sup>j</sup> i gat <sup>j</sup> /; /'d <sup>j</sup> v <sup>j</sup> i nut <sup>j</sup> /	to move forward
ДОСТАВАТЬ; ДОСТАТЬ	/dΛ sta 'vat <sup>j</sup> /; /da 'stat <sup>j</sup> /	to obtain (or reach)
БРАТЬ; ВЗЯТЬ	/brat <sup>j</sup> /; /v <sup>j</sup> z <sup>j</sup> at <sup>j</sup> /	to take

Because most Russian verbs can be paired as imperfective and perfective (a few verbs are only *imperfect*), it is best for the singer who is serious about adding Russian to their song repertoire to obtain a reference book of conjugated Russian verbs (see Appendix H for recommendations).

### The Types of Infinitive Endings

Russian verb infinitives have three basic types of ending: -ть, -ти, and -чь. The infinitive ending -ти is generally associated with verbs of motion, bringing, or carrying. Though the basic infinitive endings are only three, there are a limited number of letter combinations which, when immediately preceding these endings, create expanded endings of that can be grouped by similar characteristics of conjugation. These expanded endings include: -ать (-ять), -авать, -овать, -евать, -ывать (-ивать), -ить, -еть, -(н)уть, (rare) -сть (-зть), and (also rare) -ыть. As an example, Russian verbs ending in -ать (-ять), -авать, -евать, or -(н)уть, are conjugated in what is called the *first conjugation*, but most all of the verbs with the -ить ending are conjugated in the *second conjugation* (see below). Some examples of common verbs in their infinitive forms are (*imperfective / perfective*) (Table 18):

**Table 18**

вставать; встать	/fstɑ 'vɑtʲ/; /fstɑtʲ/	to stand up
гулять; погулять	/gu 'lʲɑtʲ/; /pʌ gu 'lʲɑtʲ/	to stroll
радовать; обрадовать	/'rɑ dɑ vɑtʲ/; /ɑ 'brɑ dɑ vɑtʲ/	to make happy
одевать; одеть	/ɑ dʲɪ 'vɑtʲ/; /ɑ dʲɪtʲ/	to dress someone
вызывать; вызвать	/'vi zi 'vɑtʲ/; /'vi zɑtʲ/	to call (send for)
настаивать; настоять	/'nɑ 'stɑ i vɑtʲ/; /nʌ stɑ 'jɑtʲ/	to insist
говорить; сказать	/gʌ vɑ 'rʲɪtʲ/; /skɑ zɑtʲ/	to speak; to tell
уметь; суметь	/u 'mʲɪtʲ/; /su 'mʲɪtʲ/	to be able (know how)
тянуть; потянуть	/'tʲɑ 'nutʲ/; /pʌ tʲɑ 'nutʲ/	to pull (draw)
приносить; принести	/'prʲi nɑ 'sitʲ/; /'prʲi nʲɪ 'sʲɪtʲi/	to bring to (carry to)
мочь; смочь	/'motʲ/; /smotʲ/	to be able
класть; положить	/'kʲlɑsʲtʲ/; /pʌ kʲɑ 'zʲɪtʲ/	to place (put)
грызть; разгрызть	/'grʲɪsʲtʲ/; /raz 'grʲɪsʲtʲ/	to gnaw (nibble)
умывать; умыть	/u mi 'vɑtʲ/; /u 'mitʲ/	to wash up
ходить – идти; пойти	/xɑ 'dʲɪtʲ/ – /it 'tʲi/; /pɑj 'tʲi/	to walk*

\*Presented as *multidirectional – unidirectional (imperfective); perfective*

Generally, Russian verbs that share the same form of expanded infinitive ending (-ать, -овать, -евать, -ить, -еть, -(н)уть, etc.) tend to be conjugated the same way.

### The Basic Conjugational Endings

There are two types of conjugation (first and second). Russian verbs are conjugated by removing the basic ending (-ть, -ти, or -чь) and adding the appropriate conjugational ending. Thus: встает(ь) becomes встает, встаете, встает, etc. The endings are as follows (Table 19):

**Table 19**First Conjugation

<u>Person</u>	<u>Ending*</u>	<u>Pronunciation</u>
1 <sup>st</sup> sing.	-ю (-у)	/ju/ (/u/)
2 <sup>nd</sup> sing.	-ешь (-ёшь)	/jɪʃ/ (/joʃ/)
3 <sup>rd</sup> sing.	-ет (-ёт)	/jit/ (/jot/)
1 <sup>st</sup> plural	-ем (-ём)	/jim/ (/jom/)
2 <sup>nd</sup> plural	-ете (-ёте)	/jɪ tʲɪ/ (/jo tʲɪ/)
3 <sup>rd</sup> plural	-ют (-ут)	/jut/ (/ut/)

\*-ю(т) after a vowel; -у(т) after a consonant. -ё- is used when the syllable is stressed.

Second Conjugation

<u>Person</u>	<u>Ending**</u>	<u>Pronunciation†</u>
1 <sup>st</sup> sing.	-ю (-у)	/ju/ (/u/)
2 <sup>nd</sup> sing.	-ишь	/jɪʃ/
3 <sup>rd</sup> sing.	-ит	/jit/
1 <sup>st</sup> plural	-им	/jim/
2 <sup>nd</sup> plural	-ите	/jɪ tʲɪ/
3 <sup>rd</sup> plural	-ят (-ат)	/jit/ (/at/ or /ʌt/)

\*\* -у and -ат follow the consonants -г-, -к-, -ж-, -ш-, -ч-, and -щ-.

†The [j] represents the palatalization of any preceding consonant, other than the consonants that remain unpalatalized. If preceded by a vowel, retain the full /j/-glide with /ju/ and /jit/, but not before the /i/-phoneme. For example: они устроят... /a ʲni u ʲstro jit/ (*They will arrange...*), but он устроит... /ɒn u ʲstro it/ (*He will arrange...*). If the preceding consonant is one that does not palatalize, the /i/-phoneme is replaced with the [ɪ]-allophone. For example: он служит... /ɒn ʲsɫu ʲzɪt/ (*He serves as...*).

Past Tense Endings

The past tense of a Russian verb is generally formed by taking the infinitive form, removing the basic ending (-ть, -ти, or -чь) and adding an ending from the list in Table 20 (below) depending upon the gender or number of the subject. For example: одева(ть) becomes одевал, одевала, одевало, etc. There are some exceptional cases of formation, but comprehensive Russian-English dictionaries usually provide these exceptions, as do verb conjugation reference texts (Table 20).

**Table 20**

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Ending</u>	<u>Pronunciation</u>
Masculine	-л	/ɫ/
Feminine	-ла	/ɫa/
Neuter	-лю	/ɫo/ or /ɫʌ/*
Plural	-ли	/ɫʲi/

\*depending upon whether the syllable is stressed or unstressed, respectively.

### Verbal Adjectives

Forming adjectives from Russian verbs is the most literary of grammatical actions. Such complicated forms are rarely used in conversation, but mostly occur in formal, educated writing. This writing, of course, includes the kind of poetic versification found in operas and art songs, so singers will have to sing these forms far more often than they might encounter them in Russian conversation. Forming Russian verbal adjectives is complicated by three factors: 1) there are four, separate grammatical forms; 2) each form launches from a different conjugational form of the verb, rather than from the infinitive; and 3) once the root is formed, the new adjective is fully declinable and so can use any of the adjectival declensional endings, which have to agree in gender or number with the modified noun. The four forms are Present Active, Past Active, Present Passive, and Past Passive.

### Forming the Verbal Adjectives

Present Active: forms from the *imperfective* only, using the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural conjugation of the verb. The final -т is replaced by -ш- and then the adjectival endings are added to that root (Table 21 [→ = changes to]):

**Table 21**

бегают → бегающ- → бегающий, therefore, бегающий человек (a running man).

бегающий человек	/bʲɛ ga ju ʃʲʃʲij tʃɪ tɑ 'vʲɛk/	a running man
стреляющая боль	/sʲtʲrʲi 'lʲa ju ʃʲʃʲa ja bolʲ/	a shooting pain
падающее дерево	/'pa da ju ʃʲʃʲi jɪ 'dʲe rʲɪ vʌ/	a falling tree

Past Active: forms from past-tense of either an *imperfective* or *perfective* verb; generally the final -л of the masculine form is replaced by the cluster -вш- and then the adjectival endings are added. Some verbs end with a consonant other than -л in the masculine form. For these verbs, only the -ш- is added after the full, masculine past form, and then the adjective ending is added (Table 22):

**Table 22**

падал → падавш- → падавшее, therefore, падавшее дерево (a tree that was falling).  
испёк → испёкш- → испёкшие, therefore, испёкшие булки (rolls that were baked).

плакавший мальчик	/'pʲta kav ʃʲʃʲij 'malʲ tʃik/	a boy who was crying
засмеявшаяся женщина	/zʌ sʲmʲi 'ja vʃa ja sʌ 'zɛn ʃʲʃʲi nʌ/	a lady who began laughing
падавшее дерево	/'pa dav ʃi jɪ 'dʲe rʲɪ vʌ/	a tree that was falling
испёкшиеся булки	/i 'sʲpʲok ʃi jɪ sʌ 'buʧ kʲi/	rolls that were baked

Present Passive: forms from the present-tense, 1<sup>st</sup> person plural (we) form of a *transitive imperfective* verb; simply take the full verb form and add the adjectival endings (Table 23 [→ = changes to]):

**Table 23**

открываем → открываемая, therefore, открываемая дверь (the door being opened).

бросаемый мяч	/bra 'sa jɪ mij 'mʲatʃ/	a tossed ball
открываемая дверь	/at kri 'va jɛ ma ja dʲvʲerʲ/	the door being opened
проливаемое молоко	/'pra lʲi 'va jɪ ml jɪ ml tɑ 'ko/	the milk being spilled

Past Passive: is the most involved formation, as there are three forms that are based upon either an infinitive or individual conjugational form and the conjugation type (first or second). Rather than explain exactly how these verbal adjectives are created, here is a list of examples that reflect the variations one might encounter (Table 24):

**Table 24**

взятый велосипед	/vʲɹʲa tɨj vʲɪ tʌ si 'pʲɛt/	the bicycle that was taken
открытая дверь	/at 'krɨ ta ja dʲvʲɛrʲ/	a door that had been opened
написанное письмо	/na 'pʲi sa nʌ jɪ pʲisʲ 'mo/	the written letter
данные правила	/'dan nɨ jɪ 'pra vʲɪ tʌ/	the given rules
закалённый воин	/zʌ ka 'lʲon nɨj 'vo in/	a hardened warrior
решённая судьба	/'rʲɛ 'ʃon na ja sudʲ 'ba/	determined fate
полученное богатство	/pa 'tu tʃɛn nʌ jɪ ba 'gats tvʌ/	received wealth
купленные милости	/'kup lʲɨn nɨ jɪ 'mʲɪ tʌ sʲtʲɪ/	bought favors/mercies

As usual, since the dieresis of -ë- (/jo/) is rarely printed, only a comprehensive dictionary and/or verb form reference helps to determine whether an -енн- form is read as /-ʲenn-/ or /-ʲonn-/.

## Verbal Adverbs

Perhaps the best way to describe Russian verbal adverbs (adverbs made from verbs) is to say that one action is happening or has happened while another action occurs. Therefore, a first verb modifies a second verb. Like adverbs in general, Russian verbal adverbs do not reflect gender or number, but, like Russian verbs, they do reflect aspect. The forms of verbal adverbs are as follows (Table 25):

**Table 25**

### Imperfective Form (→ = changes to)\*:

читать	→ читают	→ чита-	→ читая	/tʃi 'ta jɪ/*	(while) reading.
говорить	→ говорят	→ говор-	→ говоря	/gɒ va 'rʲa/	(“) speaking.
спешить	→ спешат	→ спеш-	→ спеша	/sʲpʲɪ 'ʃa/	(“) rushing.
вставать	→ вставают	→ встava-	→ вставая	/fstɑ 'va jɪ/*	(“) getting up.
заниматься	→ занимаются	→ занима-сь	→ занимаясь	/za ni 'ma jɪsʲ/*	(“) occupied with.

**\*Reminder:** the verbal adverb form has an orthographic similarity to feminine adjectives, but do not mistake these words for feminine adjectives. Therefore, when the verbal adverb ending is -я, the usual rules for unstressed /jɑ/ apply and the letter is read as /-jɪ/ (or /-ji/ , if interpalatal). Also, while the usual ending for this form is -я (/jɑ/), if the final letter of the verb root is -ж-, -ш-, -ч-, or -щ-, the ending must be written with the letter -а (/ɑ/) instead. Finally, for reflexive verbs which end in the particle -ся, the added particle is always -сь (/sʲ/), rather than -ся (/sɑ/).

### Perfective Form (→ = changes to)\*\*:

написать	→ написал	→ написа-	→ написав	/nɒ pʲɪ 'sɑf/	(after) writing.
сказать	→ сказал	→ сказа-	→ сказав	/skɑ 'zɑf/	(after) telling.
сунуться	→ сунулся	→ суну-	→ сунувшись	/su 'nu fʃɪsʲ/	(after) shoving.
перейти	→ перейдут	→ перейд-	→ перейдя	/pʲɪ rʲɪj 'dʲɑ/	(after) crossing.

\*\*The basic ending is -в, but reflexive verbs end in -вшись. The verb идти (to walk) serves as a root to several verbs that are formed by adding a prefix, such as пере- in the example above. These “prefixed идти,” *perfective*, verbal adverbs are formed like an *imperfective*, verbal adverb and so, end in -я.

Lexicon of Some Pronunciation Exceptions to Orthography

Though not comprehensive, the following is a lexicon of exceptions that a singer might encounter while preparing Russian vocal works. Many of the words of French origin are obsolete in modern speech, but are found in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poetry and plays by such authors as Lomonosov and Pushkin. Some of the more common technical vocabulary might be found in modern Russian operas by composers such as Shostakovich or Prokofiev. The transcriptions in this section reflect lyric diction, not speech pronunciation.

A singer would probably be safe to assume that if a Russian word is encountered that is not in a comprehensive Russian-English dictionary and is clearly recognizable as borrowed (especially, if it seems technical or specialized), it most likely will retain some form of its original pronunciation and so will contain similar phonetic exceptions to those listed below. Some technical and scientific words, though, have reached more common usage, and so have been *Slavicized* to the point of following standard Russian pronunciation rules. Such words are usually found in comprehensive Russian-English dictionaries without any special pronunciation noted. Conversely, many borrowed words (especially French) that are colloquially ubiquitous may still retain much or all of their foreign pronunciation, similarly to what happens in English when using words like *protégé*, *résumé*, or *malaise*.

One of the most comprehensive Russian dictionaries of pronunciation is *Orfoepicheskii Slovar' Russkogo Yazyka: Proiznoshenie, Udarenie, Grammaticheskie Formy* [An Orthoepical Dictionary of the Russian Language: Pronunciation, Stress, Grammatical Forms] by S. N. Borunova, V. L. Vorontsova and N. A. Yes'kova and edited by R. I.

Avanesov and N. A. Yes'kova (Moscow: Russkii Yazyk, 1988). Although it is slightly dated, it contains a great number of obsolete and poetic words that have been removed from the most recent pronunciation dictionaries. It is strongly recommended that the serious student of Russian vocal literature obtain a copy of this work, as well as one of the more recent offerings, such as *Novyi Orfoepicheskiy Slovar' Russkogo Yazyka: Proiznoshenie, Udarenie, Grammaticheskie Formy* [A New Orthoepical Dictionary of the Russian Language: Pronunciation, Stress, and Grammatical Forms] by T. F. Ivanova and edited by A. N. Tikhonov (Moscow: Russkii Yazyk Media, 2004). These dictionaries are, obviously, for Russians, so they use the Russian system of Cyrillic phonetic symbols. Also, they assume that the reader understands the standard rules of pronunciation, so the phonetic symbols are used only to show the exceptions, variations, and/or unacceptable pronunciations. It takes a little getting used to decoding the system, but once one understands it, the source will become invaluable.

As a preface to the lexicon, other than the conjunction *a* [meaning: *and* or *but*], no Russian word beginning with the letter -A- is of native Russian origin. Therefore, the largest set of exceptional words tends to be that beginning with -A-. Other large sets tend to come from the densest groups of words in Russian including those beginning with -M-, -П-, -С-, and -Т-.

e = /ɛ/ not /jɛ/ or [jɪ]

абитуриент	/a b <sup>j</sup> i tu r <sup>j</sup> i 'ɛnt/	secondary school graduate (Ger. – Abiturient)
абсент	/ap 'sɛnt/	absinthe (French – absinthe)
абсентеист	/ap sɛn tɛ 'ist/	absinthe user (French)
адаптер	/a 'dap tɛr/	adapter (technical English)
адекватный	/a dɛ 'kvat nij/	appropriate (French – adéquat; < German?)
адепт	/a 'dɛpt/	a follower, adherent (French – adepte)
адюльтер	/a d <sup>j</sup> ul <sup>j</sup> 'tɛr/	adultery (French – adultère)
альтернатива	/al <sup>j</sup> tɛr na 't <sup>j</sup> i va/	an alternative (French – alternative)
амбре	/am 'brɛ/	strong scent (French – ambré: perfume of amber gris)
анданте	/an 'dan tɛ/	andante (music; Italian; transliteration)
анестезия	/a nɛ stɛ 'z <sup>j</sup> i jɪ/	anesthesia (medical; Greek; plus derivatives)
аннексия	/an 'nɛk s <sup>j</sup> i jɪ/	annexation (plus derives.; Greek)
антенна	/an 'tɛ na/	antenna (Latin scientific term; transliteration)
антисептик	/an t <sup>j</sup> i 'sɛp t <sup>j</sup> ik/	antiseptic (derivs.; medical Latin < German?)
антитеза	/an t <sup>j</sup> i 'tɛ za/	antithesis (plus derivs; French – antithèse)
антре	/an 'trɛ/	entrée (transliteration of French – entrée)
ариетта	/a r <sup>j</sup> i 'ɛ ta/	arietta (transliteration of Italian)
астероид	/a stɛ 'ro it/	asteroid (scientific French – astéroïde)
атеизм	/a tɛ 'izm/	Atheism (plus derivatives; French – athéisme)
ателье	/a tɛ 'l <sup>j</sup> ɛ/	artist studio; dress shop (French – atelier)
аудиенция	/a u d <sup>j</sup> i 'ɛn tsi jɪ/	audience; formal meeting (derivs.; from Latin)
аутентичный	/a u tɛn 't <sup>j</sup> i t <sup>j</sup> nij/	authentic (plus derivatives; from French)
аутсайдер	/a u 'tsaj dɛr/	outsider (transliteration of English)
багатель	/bɔ ga 'tɛl <sup>j</sup> /	Bagatelle (music; French; phonetic)
баронесса	/bɔ ra 'nɛ sa/	baroness (probably from German)
бельведер	/b <sup>j</sup> il <sup>j</sup> v <sup>j</sup> ɪ 'dɛr/	belvedere; gazebo (French – belvédère)

бельканто	/bɛl <sup>j</sup> 'kan to/	Bel canto (music; Italian)
бижутерия	/b <sup>j</sup> i zu 'tɛ r <sup>j</sup> i ji/	costume jewelry (French – bijouterie)
бизнес	/'bɪz nɛs/	business (plus derivs.; English; transliteration)
бутерброд	/bu tɛr 'brɔt/	sandwich (from German)
вендетта	/v <sup>j</sup> ɪn 'dɛ ta/	vendetta (transliteration of Italian)
Вольтер	/vɔl <sup>j</sup> 'tɛr/	Voltaire (plus derivs.; translit. of French name)
геликоптер	/g <sup>j</sup> i l <sup>j</sup> i kap 'tɛr/	helicopter (translit. of French – hélicoptère; -g- for -h- is a common Russian substitution)
Генезис	/'gɛ nɛ z <sup>j</sup> is/	genesis; origin (from Latin via Greek)
грейпфрут	/grɛjp 'frut/	grapefruit (phonetic transliteration of English)
гротеск	/gra 'tɛsk/	grotesque (plus derivs.; French transliteration)
гульден	/'gul <sup>j</sup> dɛn/	a guilder (German – Gulden)
деградация	/dɛ gra 'da tsi ji/	deterioration (Latin; changed meaning)
деизм	/dɛ 'izm/	Deism (plus derivatives; French – Déisme)
дерби	/'dɛr b <sup>j</sup> i/	derby (plus derivatives; English via French?)
дервиш	/'dɛr v <sup>j</sup> ɪʃ/	dervish (Turkish or Persian)
детектор	/dɛ 'tɛ ktɔr/	detector (German – Detektor)
деформация	/dɛ far 'ma tsi ji/	deformation (derives.; French – déformation)
деци-	/dɛ tsi/	deci- (scientific prefix = one tenth; Ger. – dezi-)
додекафония	/dɔ dɛ ka 'fo ni ji/	dodecaphony (music; twelve tone music; Greek)
дрифтер	/'dr <sup>j</sup> ɪf tɛr/	drifter (English)
Дульцинея	/dul <sup>j</sup> tsi 'nɛ ji/	Dulcinée (French)
зеро	/zɛ 'ro/	zero (French – zéro)
Изабелла	/i za 'bɛ ta/	Isabella (Spanish/Italian; orthographic translit.)
индекс	/'ɪn dɛks/	index (English)

инженю	/in ʒɛ 'ɲu/	ingénue (French – ingénu)
интервал	/in tɛr 'vɑʔ/	interval; a space (French – intervalle; phonetic)
интерлюдия	/in tɛr 'lʲu dʲi jɪ/	interlude (music; Greek)
интермеццо	/in tɛr 'mjɛ tsʌ/	intermezzo (Italian; ortho-phonetic transcript.)
Интернационал	/in tɛr ,nɑ tsi ʌ 'nɑʔ/	International (institutional usage; French)
интерьер	/in tɛ 'rʲɛr/	interior (of a building; Fr. – intérieur; phonetic)
кабаре	/kʌ bɑ 'rɛ/	cabaret (French)
каденция	/kɑ 'dɛn tsi jɪ/	cadence; cadenza (music; Latin)
кафе	/kɑ 'fɛ/	café (French)
капелла	/kɑ 'pɛ ʔɑ/	choir; chapel (German - Kapelle)
кодекс	/'kɔ dɛks/	code (of law or principle; German – Kodex)
коктейль	/kɑk 'tɛjʎ/	cocktail (English; phonetic transliteration)
констебль	/kɑn 'stɛblʲ/	constable (English; phonetic transliteration)
кордебалет	/kʌr dɛ bɑ 'lʲɛt/	corps de ballet (French)
кузен	/ku 'zɛn/	male cousin (French – cousin; altered phonetic)
купе	/ku 'pɛ/	compartment (as on a train; French – coupé)
мадемуазель	/mʌd mu ɑ 'zɛʎʲ/	mademoiselle (French – ortho-phonetic translit.)
малера	/ma 'dɛ rʌ/	Madeira wine (French – Madère)
мейстерзингер	/mʲi stɛr 'zin ɡʲɪr/	Meistersinger (German; ortho-phonetic translit.)
метр	/mɛtr/	poetic meter (French – mètre; phonetic)
мизерере	/mʲi zɛ 'rɛ rɛ/	Miserere (music; Latin; ortho-phonetic translit.)
миннезингер	/mʲi nɛ 'zin ɡʲɪr/	Minnesinger (German; ortho-phonetic translit.)
модель	/mɑ 'dɛʎʲ/	model (derives.; French – modèle; phonetic)
модерато	/mʌ dɛ 'ra to/	Moderato (music; Italian; orthographic translit.)
модерн	/mɑ 'dɛrn/	modern (derivs.; French – moderne; phonetic)
монотеизм	/mʌ nʌ tɛ 'izm/	monotheism (derivs.; French – monothéism)

нео-	/nɛ o/	neo- (prefix = new – only; Greek)*
нонсенс	/'non sɛns/	nonsense (English; phonetic transliteration)
Одеон	/a dɛ 'on/	Odeon (French – Odéon)
отель	/o 'tɛlʲ/	hotel (French hôtel)
падре	/'pa drɛ/	padre; priest; monk (Italian – padre)
пантеон	/pʌn tɛ 'on/	pantheon (Latin - pantheon)
партер	/par 'tɛr/	theatre or pit orchestra (French – parterre)
пастель	/pa 'stɛlʲ/	pastel (French – pastel)
пастернак	/pʌ stɛr 'nʌk/	parsnip (German – Pastinak)
патетика	/pa 'tɛ tʲi kʌ/	pathos (plus derivatives; French – pathétique)
портмоне	/pʌrt ma 'nɛ/	purse (Fr. – porte-monnaie) /obs.; in Pushkin/
потенциал	/pʌ tɛn tsi 'aʃ/	potential (plus derives.; German – Potential)
поэтесса	/pa ɛ 'tɛ sʌ/	poetess (French – poétesse)
престо	/'prɛ sto/	Presto (music; Italian – presto)
претенциозный	/prʲi tɛn tsi 'oz nij/	pretentious (French – prétentieux)
продюсер	/pra 'dʲu sɛr/	producer (as in movies; American English)
протеже	/pʌ tɛ 'zɛ/	protégé (French)
регби	/'rɛg bʲi/	rugby (English; unknown origin of /ʌ/ to /ɛ/)
резюме	/rʲi zʲu 'mɛ/	résumé (French)
реквием	/'rɛ kʲvʲi ɛm/	requiem (Latin; via German)
ритурнель	/rʲi tur 'nɛlʲ/	ritornello (music; French – ritournelle)
свитер	/'svʲi tɛr/	sweater (English via German)
секретер	/sʲi kʲrʲi 'tɛr/	writing desk (French – secrétaire)
сентенция	/sɛn 'tɛn tsi jɪ/	maxim; adage /archaic/ (German – Sentenz)
сентиментальный	/sɛn tʲi mʲɪn 'talʲ nij/	sentimental (French)
септима	/'sɛp tʲi mʌ/	musical interval - seventh (German – Septime)

сет	/sɛt/	a set in tennis (transliteration of English)
сеттер	/'sɛ tɛr/	setter (transliteration of English)
сонет	/sa 'nɛt/	sonnet (French via German)
солитер	/sʌ l'i 'tɛr/	solitaire diamond (Fr.; ortho-phonetic trans.)
состенуто	/so stɛ 'nu to/	sostenuto (music; Italian; orthographic translit.)
спондей	/span 'dɛj/	spondee (poetry; derivs.; French – spondée)
тарантелла	/tʌ rʌn 'tɛ ʎa/	tarantella (music; Italian)
теизм	/tɛ 'izm/	theism (plus derivs.; French – théisme)
тембр	/'tɛm br/	timbre (music; Fr. – timbre; phonetic translit.)
темп	/tɛmp/	tempo (music; Italian; unknown origin of trunc.)
тенденция	/tɛn 'dɛn tsi jɪ/	tendency; trend; bias (German – Tendenz)
теннис	/'tɛ nɪs/	tennis (plus derivs.; prob. from French)
теология	/tɛ a 'ʎo g'i jɪ/	theology (derivs.; phonetic translit. of Greek)
терракота	/tɛ rʌ 'ko ta/	terra cotta (Italian)
терцет	/tɛr 'tset/	trio; terzetto (music; German – Terzett)
терция	/'tɛr tsi jɪ/	third (music; Greek)
теситура	/tɛ s'i 'tu rʌ/	tessitura (music; Italian)
тест	/tɛst/	psychological test (scientific; German)
тет-а-тет	/tɛ ta 'tɛt/	tête-à-tête (French; phonetic transliteration)
тоннель	/tʌ 'nɛlʃ/	tunnel (French)
тремоло	/'trɛ mo lo/	tremolo (Italian; phonetic transliteration)
филодендрон	/f'i ʎa 'dɛn drʌn/	philodendron (bot. Greek; ortho-phonetic trans.)
фламенко	/fʎa 'mɛn ko/	Flamenco (music; Spanish)
форель	/fʌ 'rɛlʃ/	trout (Ger.-Forelle; truncation origin unknown)
форте	/'fɔr tɛ/	forte (music; Italian)
фортепьяно	/fʌr tɛ 'p'jʌ nʌ/	fortepiano (music; Italian)

хабанера	/xʌ bɑ 'nɛ rʌ/	Habanera (Spanish – Habañera)
цитадель	/tsi ta 'dɛlʲ/	citadel (French – citadelle)
шимпанзе	/ʃim pɑn 'zɛ/	chimpanzee (Fr. – chimpanzé; ortho-phonetic)
шоссе	/ʃɑ 'sɛ/	highway (French – chaussée)
штемпель	/'ʃtɛm pʲilʲ/	rubber stamp; (plus derivs.; German – Stempel)
эдельвейс	/ɛ dɛlʲ 'vʲɛjs/	edelweiss (botanical German - Edelweiß)
Эдем	/ɛ 'dɛm/	Eden (Biblical; -n- to -m- origin unknown)
энергия	/ɛ 'nɛr gʲi ji/	energy (derivs.; scientific German – Energie)
эстет	/ɛ 'stɛt/	aesthete (derivs.; German – Ästhet; phonetic)
эссе	/ɛ 'sɛ/	essay (derivs.; French – essai; ortho-phonetic)
юмореска	/ju ma 'rɛ ska/	humoresque (Polish – humoreska, < French)

\*Do not confuse the negative, Russian prefix ‘не-’ that might precede a root that begins with -o-, such as in the case of “неоконченный” [*unfinished*] (не-оконченный not неоконченный), with the Greek-based prefix ‘нео-’ (meaning ‘neo-’ [*new*]). There are exceptions to this convention, so when in doubt, check a pronunciation dictionary.

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### Unstressed /o/=/o/ not /ɑ/ or [ʌ]

арпеджио	/ɑr 'pʲɛ dʒi o/	arpeggio (music; Italian; ortho-phonetic)
арпеджо	/ɑr 'pʲɛ dʒo/	arpeggio (music; Italian; phonetic)
боа	/bo 'ɑ/	boa constrictor; boa (long scarf) (French)
бомонд	/bo 'mont/	beau monde /fashionable society/ (French)
бонвиван	/bon vʲi 'van/	bon vivant (French)
бонмо	/bon 'mo/	bon mot /clever saying/ (French)

бонтон	/bon 'ton/	bon ton /high style; high society/ (French)
каприччио	/ka 'prʲi tʃi o/	capriccio (music; Italian; ortho-phonetic)
каприччо	/ka 'prʲi tʃo/	capriccio (music; Italian; phonetic)
мажордом	/mʌ ʒor 'dom/	major-domo (French – majordome; phonetic)
палашо	/pa 'ʎa t:so/	palazzo /palace/ (Italian; ortho-phonetic)
патио	/'pa tʲi o/	patio (Spanish via French; orthographic translit.)
радио	/'ra dʲi o/	radio (derivs.; English; orthographic translit.)
сольфеджио	/saɫʲ 'fʲɛ dʒi o/	solfeggio (music; Italian; ortho-phonetic)
сольфеджо	/saɫʲ 'fʲɛ dʒo/	solfeggio (music; Italian; phonetic)
фолио	/'fo ʎi o/	folio (Latin via French; orthographic translit.)
фортиссимо	/'far 'tʲi sʲi mo/	fortissimo (music; Italian; orthographic translit.)

ШЮ = ШУ = /ʃu/;

ЖЮ = ЖУ = /ʒu/

-шю- and -жю- are actually orthographic exceptions to the Russian spelling rule that states that -ю- never follows -ж-, -ч-, -ш-, or -щ-. Although the orthographic rule is broken, the phonetic rule for the consonants /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ is not: /ʃ/ (-ж-) or /ʒ/ (-ш-) [and /ts/ (-щ-)] are generally not palatalized. Understanding this prevents the mistake of singing -шю- as /ʃʲu/ or -жю- as /ʒʲu/.

амбушюр	/am bu 'ʃur/	embouchure (music; French; phonetic)
брошюра	/bra 'ʃu pa/	brochure; pamphlet (derivs.; French; phonetic)
парашют	/pʌ ra 'ʃut/	parachute (French; phonetic)
жюри	/ʒu 'ri/	jury (French; phonetic)*

\*In the most recent dictionaries, *жюри* follows the phonetic rules, as presented here, but in older editions of Russian pronunciation dictionaries, notably those edited by the Russian linguist, R. I. Avanesov, /ʒu 'ri/ is noted as being incorrect, implying that the word should be pronounced as /ʒʲu 'ri/. If a singer actually encounters this word, the modern pronunciation of /ʒu 'ri/, following the standard rule, should be fine. If a conductor wants the older version, then the singer can make the accommodation.

### Borrowed Words producing Alternate Spellings of Palatalized Vowels

#### /jɔ/ = ъO not ě

батальон	/ba ta 'lʲon/	battalion (French)
бульон	/bu 'lʲon/	broth, boullion (French)
каньон	/ka 'ɲon/	canyon (Spanish)
квадрильон	/kvɫ drʲi 'lʲon/	quadrillion (French)
компаньон	/kɫm pa 'ɲon/	companion (French)
котильон	/kɫ tʲi 'lʲon/	cotillion (French)
лосьон	/la 'sʲon/	face lotion (French)
медальон	/mʲɪ da 'lʲon/	medallion (French)
сандрильона	/sɫn drʲi 'lʲo na/	Cinderella (French - Cendrillon)
сеньор/синьор	/sʲi 'ɲor/	señor (Spanish); plus all derivatives
фьорд	/fʲort/	fjord (Norwegian)
шампиньон	/ʃɫm pʲi 'ɲon/	champion (French); obsolete poetic
шиньон	/ʃi 'ɲon/	chignon (French)

## Appendix G

### IPA Transcription and Transliteration Variations of Famous Russian Composer Names

	<b>Багакирев</b>	<b>Бородин</b>	<b>Глазунов</b>	<b>Глинка</b>	<b>Гречанинов</b>	<b>Даргомыжский</b>
	/ba ʈa kʲi rʲɪfʲ/	/ba ra ʈɪɪn/	/ɡʈa zu ɲoʈʲ/	/ɡlʲɪn ka/	/ɡrʲɪ ʈʲɪ ɲɪ nɐʈʲ/	/dɐr ɡa ɪmʲɪ ʈʲkʲɪjʲ/
Balakirev	Borodin	Glazunov	Glinka	Grechaninov	Dargomyzhsky	
Balakireff		Glazunoff		Grechaninoff	Dargomizhsky	
					Dargomuzhskii	
					Dargomuzhskij	
<b>Кюи</b>	<b>Малашкин</b>	<b>Мусоргский</b>	<b>Прокофьев</b>	<b>Раёманинов</b>	<b>Римский-Корсаков</b>	
/kʲu ɪʲ/	/ma ʈa ʃkʲɪɪn/	/mu sɐrʲkʲɪ sʲkʲɪjʲ/	/prɐ ɪko ʈʲɪʈʲfʲ/	/rɐx -mɐ-ɲɪ-nɐʈʲ/	/rʲɪɪm sʲkʲɪjʲ ɪkor sɐ kɐʈʲ/	
Cui	Malashkin	Musorgsky	Prokofiev	Rakhlmaninov	Rimsky-Korsakov	
Cui		Mussorgsky	Prokofieff	Rachmaninov	Rimsky-Corsakov	
Kui		Moussorgsky		Rachmaninoff	Rimsky-Korsakoff	
Kyui		Musorgskii			Rimskii-Korsakov	
		Musorgskij			Rimskij-Korsakov	
<b>Рубинштейн</b>	<b>Стравинский</b>	<b>Чайковский</b>	<b>Шостакович</b>			
/ru bʲɪn ʃʲɛjɪnʲ/	/strɐ ɪvʲɪjɪn sʲkʲɪjʲ/	/ʈʲɪ ɪko ʈʲsʲkʲɪjʲ/	/ʃɐ stɐ ɪko vʲɪʈʲɪʈʲ/			
Rubinstein	Stravinsky	Tchaikovsky	Shostakovich			
	Stravinskii	Chaikovsky	Schostakovich			
	Stravinskij	Tchaikowsky				
		Chaikowsky				
		Chaikovskii				
		Chaikovskij				

#### **Могучая Кушка**

/ma ɪgu ʈʲɐ ja ɪku ʈʃka/

Moguchaya Kuchka (coined by Vladimir Stasov /vʈa ɪdʲɪ mʲɪr ɪsta sɐʈʲ/)

The Mighty Little Heap or the Mighty Handful

Members: Balakirev, Borodin, Cui, Musorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov

## APPENDIX H

Suggested Reference Books to Aid in Russian Phonetic Transcription and PronunciationRussian Language Dictionaries and Related Texts

Katzner, Kenneth, ed. *English-Russian : Russian-English Dictionary Revised and Expanded Edition*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994.

Golovinsky, M. *A New English-Russian and Russian-English Dictionary*. Philadelphia: David McKay Co., 1936.

Beyer, Thomas R., Jr. *501 Russian Verbs: Fully Conjugated in All Tenses, Alphabetically Arranged by Imperfective Infinitives*. Hauppauge: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1992.

Gribble, Charles E. *Russian Root List with a Sketch of Word Formation*. 2nd ed. Columbus: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1981.

Borunova, S. N., V. L. Vorontsova and N. A. Yes'kova. *Orfoepicheskii Slovar' Russkogo Yazyka: Proiznoshenie, Udarenie, Grammaticheskie Formy* [An Orthoepical Dictionary of the Russian Language: Pronunciation, Stress, Grammatical Forms]. Edited by R. I. Avanesov and N. A. Yes'kova. Moscow: Russkii Yazyk, 1988.

Ivanova, T. F. *Novyi Orfoepicheskii Slovar' Russkogo Yazyka: Proiznoshenie, Udarenie, Grammaticheskie Formy* [A New Orthoepical Dictionary of the Russian Language: Pronunciation, Stress, and Grammatical Forms]. Edited by A. N. Tikhonov. Moscow: Russkii Yazyk Media, 2004.

Russian Spoken Pronunciation

Jones, Daniel, and Dennis Ward. *The Phonetics of Russian*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.

Russian Song Transcriptions with Diction Guides

Belov, Anton. *Libretti of Russian Operas. Vol. 1: Operas Based on the Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pushkin*. Edited by Ann Brash and Valeria Konstantinovskaya. Genesco: Leyerle Publications, 2004.

Richter, Laurence R. Any of the Series: [Name of Russian Composer]'s *Complete Song Texts: Russian Texts of the Complete Songs of [Composer's Name] with Phonetic Transcriptions, Literal and Idiomatic English Translations*. Mt. Morris: Leyerle Publications, 1999-2008.

## APPENDIX I

Roman Letter Transliteration for Cyrillic Letter Conversion Chart with Style Variations

Roman letter transliteration is the direct conversion from Cyrillic letters to Roman letters, usually without any concern for phonetics such as voicing/devoicing, assimilation, or special phonetic cases. Some phonetic adjustments might be made, such as “shto” for что, rather than “chto,” while others are not (the possessive endings -ero and -oro are more often transliterated as “-ego” and “-ogo,” rather than “-evo” and “-ovo”). Often palatalizing vowels are transliterated to reflect palatalization (prefixing the vowel with the letter -y- or -j-), but not always. The following chart presents the most common transliteration conversion with some often used alternatives.

a = а	m = м	shch = щ
b = б	n = н	(ignored) = ъ
v = в	o = о	y, ĭ = ы
g = г	p = п	' = ь
d = д	r = р	e = э
e, ye, je = е	s = с	yu, ju = ю
o, yo, jo = ө	t = т	ya, ja = я
zh = ж	u = у	
z = з	f = ф	
i = и	kh, x = х	
j, ĭ, ĭ, ĭ = ѣ	ts = ц	
k = к	ch = ч	
l = л	sh = ш, ч (see paragraph above)	

## APPENDIX J

Suggested Shorthand when Phonetically Transcribing Russian

One of the more cumbersome forms of symbolism in the phonetic transcription of Russian is the use of the [ʲ] for palatalization. As exemplified by the transcriptions printed in this text, the [ʲ] can create much clutter, especially in palatalized consonant clusters. My suggestion for personal, informal transcription is to borrow another symbol that generally means to tie together the pronunciation of a cluster of consonants as if one. That is the ligature or tie symbol [ \_ ]. The symbol may be reassigned to mean that a cluster is all palatalized by using the [ʲ] only on the critical consonant in a cluster and then binding the affected sounds (including the preceding vowel, if appropriate) with the tie symbol, as follows:

Formal: при бездне /prʲi 'bʲezʲ dʲnʲ/ at the abyss (*prep. case*)

Informal: при бездне /prʲi 'bʲez d\_nʲ/\*

Formal: симметрический /sʲimʲ mʲi 'tʲrʲi tʲʲi sʲkʲij/ symmetrical

Informal: симметрический /sʲim mʲi 'trʲi tʲʲi skʲij/

\*note the -p- is not palatalized

## APPENDIX K

Essays on Interesting Topics of Russian DictionThe Story of /O/: Is Russian /o/ open or closed?

It would seem that there should not be a question as to whether the Russian /o/ is closed or open, but there are interesting difficulties to be discovered in trying to answer this question conclusively. I discuss the issues here, as they pertain to the previous guide, but it must be understood that this subject continues to be open for discussion. Two points complicating the issue are 1) that the Russian /o/ sound is not a “pure” vowel but can be considered a diphthong, at least, and 2) that many native Russian speakers are not aware that they sound a diphthong (even a triphthong after certain labialized consonants) and may insist that it is an unchanging vowel throughout its articulation.<sup>331</sup> Those native speakers, who believe they are speaking a *monothong*, still conflict over whether it should be closed or open. In spoken Russian, this variance is most likely attributable to the many regional accents of native Russian speakers.<sup>332</sup> In the case of lyric diction, a decision must be made as to what the sung vowel is when sustained, no matter whether on- or off-vowels are involved.

Of the four commonly available guides to Russian lyric diction, two of them use the IPA symbol /o/ for the pronunciation of Russian /o/, and the two others use /ɔ/. The authors happen to divide into two pairings of a native Russian-speaking author and an Anglophone author: Piatak/Avrashov and Richter prefer /o/, while Belov and Sheil/Walters prefer /ɔ/.

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<sup>331</sup> Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika [Practical Phonetics]*, 34; Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 31–32; and, Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 57.

<sup>332</sup> Jones and Ward, 55.

Piatak and Avrashov do not directly describe the quality of /o/. They only make a generalization that is relative to /o/ in English:

There are only seven vowel sounds in Russian, and all but one [i]..., are similar to English vowel sounds: [ɑ], [ɛ], [i], [o], [u], [ə]. However, Russian vowel sounds are read slightly more open than in English. You may recall that the German... [e] is more closed than in English or Italian. Russian vowels are read approximately the same degree more open than in English.<sup>333</sup>

Though the English /o/ is not quite as closed as the German, it is generally considered to be more closed than in Italian, and the degree of openness of the English /o/ from the German is about the same as the Italian /o/ is from the English. Therefore, if one follows the above suggestion, the Russian /o/ should be about the same as the Italian /o/. Piatak and Avrashov never suggest that the Russian /o/ is open like the /ɔ/ in the English word *dog*. Similarly, Richter does not describe the specific formation of /o/ in Russian, but he uses direct comparison to Italian vowels: “The vowels of Russian are read essentially like Italian vowels...”<sup>334</sup>

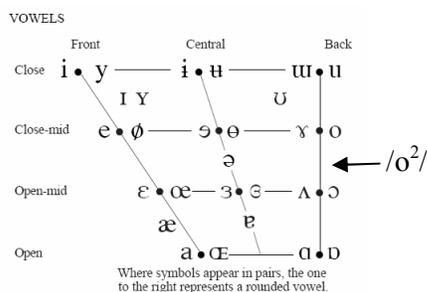
Since the above comparisons point to the Italian closed /o/ as their model, exactly what that is needs to be defined. American singers are generally trained to believe that the Italian /o/ lies between the IPA’s *Cardinal Vowel No. 7*, /o/, and *Cardinal Vowel No. 6*, /ɔ/. Cardinal /o/ is that of the German or the French (lips very round with the tongue quite high in back), and cardinal /ɔ/ is that of the open /ɔ/ in Italian, as in the word, *core* (from *cuore*), meaning *heart*. The American open /ɔ/, as in *dog*, is even more open than the Italian, with the lips less rounded and the tongue much lower. The most common source of the more relaxed,

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<sup>333</sup> Piatak and Regina Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias*, 7.

<sup>334</sup> Richter, *Tchaikovsky's Complete Song Texts*, ix.

Italian closed /o/ is John Moriarty's *Diction: Italian, Latin, French, German...the sounds and 81 exercises for singing them* (1975). The Italian /o/ was different enough from the German or French for Moriarty, that he felt the need to differentiate the transcription symbol of the sound by adding a superscript 2, that is /o<sup>2</sup>/, in his influential book.<sup>335</sup> If Moriarty's /o<sup>2</sup>/ was placed on the IPA quadrilateral vowel diagram, it would land about one-third of the way up the distance between *Cardinal Vowels No. 7*, /o/, and *No. 6*, /ɔ/, that is, nearer to /ɔ/, but with the lips more rounded and the tongue a little higher, that is, more closed (Fig. 2):



Vowel chart of the IPA (revised)<sup>336</sup>  
 /o<sup>2</sup>/ superimposed by author  
 Figure 2

In strict IPA symbolism, Moriarty's Italian /o<sup>2</sup>/ would be narrowly (allophonically) transcribed as [ɔ̞ː], which can be described as a more rounded, half-closed, open /ɔ/. Another creative, non-IPA symbol for half-closed /ɔ/, suggested by Luciano Canepari, is /σ/. Moriarty's use of an altered closed /o/ symbol essentially keeps the singer in touch with the closed element of the vowel, while warning the singer of the difference between it and cardinal /o/. The *superscript 2* is less complicated than the official IPA diacritics, as well.

<sup>335</sup> Moriarty, *Diction*, 15, 114, 151.

<sup>336</sup> International Phonetics Association, "Reproduction of The International Phonetic Alphabet (Revised to 2005)" [Association website], cited July 11, 2009, available at <http://www.langsci.ucl.ac.uk/ipa/vowels.html>.

Evelina Colorni (*Singers' Italian: A Manual of Diction and Phonetics*, 1970) and Luciano Canepari (*A Handbook of Pronunciation*, 2005), both native Italian speakers, stand in contradiction to Moriarty. They say that the Italian closed /o/ is *Cardinal Vowel No. 7*, the well-rounded, quite closed /o/. Colorni, in fact, states that the Italian closed /o/ is the same as the French and German,<sup>337</sup> while Canepari suggests that the French and Italian /o/'s are nearly the same, but the German /o/ is a more closed and rounded variant that deviates from the Italian model.<sup>338</sup> This variable understanding of how closed is Italian /o/ further clouds the issue, but in spite of the above opinions, the Italian /o/ is clearly more closed and rounded than *Cardinal Vowel No. 6* (/ɔ/). As for the cited authors of Russian diction, none of them likens the Russian /o/ to the highly closed and rounded /o/ found in German or French.

Conversely, there are the two texts of Belov and Sheil/Walters. These authors choose not only to use the IPA symbol of /ɔ/ for the pronunciation of Russian /o/, but they both strongly espouse the idea that this symbol means what it says, that Russian /o/ is not closed at all, but rather, is open — as open as the Italian, open /ɔ/. In Sheil's text, *A Singer's Manual of Foreign Language Dictions* (2004), Christine Walters (Komatsu), a specialist in Russian vocal literature and the author of the Russian diction chapter,<sup>339</sup> describes the sound of stressed Russian /o/ this way:

When stressed, o has the typical European pronunciation of the open o. It has the equivalent in German, French, Italian and Spanish, but our English form of this sound, as in the word law, is formed farther back in the mouth. The Russian [ɔ] has a forward, bright sound, with the lips

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<sup>337</sup> Evelina Colorni, *Singers' Italian: A Manual of Diction and Phonetics* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 24.

<sup>338</sup> Luciano Canepari, *A Handbook of Pronunciation: English, Italian, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Arabic, Hindi, Chinese, Japanese, Esperanto* (Muenchen: Lincom Europa, 2005), 126, 152, 171, 185.

<sup>339</sup> Walters-Komatsu, "Biography" [personal website]; at <http://christinekomatsu.tripod.com/Bio.htm>.

loosely rounded and slightly protruded for its formation. It should be noted that there is no closed o in the Russian language.<sup>340</sup>

The last statement refers to the fact that there are not two phonemes of stressed Russian /o/, as there are in the other languages common to singing, including English. The others have a closed /o/ and an open /ɔ/ phoneme, which can change the meaning of a word when exchanged for each other. In English, this difference is exemplified by *coat* and *caught*, which are /koʊt/ and /kɔt/, respectively. More will be discussed later in this essay about Russian having only one /o/-phoneme.

Beyond her Russian vocal coach, Ms. Davidovich, the other Russian language sources cited by Walters are: *Modern Russian* by Clayton Dawson, Charles Bidwell, and A. Humesky (1964); *The Structure and Development of Russian* by W. K. Matthews (1953); *Living Russian* by Aron Pressman (1958); *Russian On Your Own* by E. Vasilenko and E. Lamm (1978); *The Russian Language Today* by Dennis Ward (1965); and the Russian language dictionaries — Langenscheidt's *Taschenwörterbuch. Russisch-Deutsch, Deutsch-Russisch*, Karl Battner, ed. (1964); *Romanov's Russian-English, English-Russian Dictionary*, E. Wedel and A. S. Romanov, eds. (1964) and the *Russian to English Dictionary* by A. I. Smirnitsky (1991).<sup>341</sup>

Within this group of sources, there are some contradicting and confusing views as to the quality of the Russian /o/. Dennis Ward, a collaborating colleague of the renowned, Russian phonetic specialist, Daniel Jones, preferred using the symbol of /o/ and described the quality, as did his teacher, in such a way as to suggest the more rounded, half-closed open

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<sup>340</sup> Sheil, *A Singer's Manual*, 117.

<sup>341</sup> Sheil, 177–178.

/ɔ/.<sup>342</sup> This would be similar to Moriarty's /o<sup>2</sup>/. Whereas, in A. S. Romanov's dictionary, the phonetic table given in the introduction clearly defines the Russian letter -o-, when stressed, as “ = o in ‘cost’...” or /ɔ/.<sup>343</sup> W. K. Matthews first defines, in *The Structure and Development of Russian*, “o as in Fr. ‘chose’” and “ɔ as in Ger. ‘Kost’”<sup>344</sup> and then states that, “Normal Russian o is intermediate between o and ɔ.”<sup>345</sup> Later, Matthews presents a more detailed discussion:

Russian **o**, the only exclusively stressed vowel in the language, is another sound about which there is not a consensus of opinion. Ščerba and Miss M. I. Matusevič think that it resembles the distinctly open French ɔ in *note* and Italian ɔ of *notte*, whereas V. A. Bogorodickij and the Serbian R Košutić, who reproduce Henry Sweet's...classification of vowels into high, mid, and low, consider it to be a medium vowel, and Jones places it between his half-closed and half-open types, but nearer the latter. Comparison with the closely related Polish again shows Russian **o** to be a closer [more closed] sound than Polish ɔ and accordingly closer [more closed] than cardinal ɔ...Russian **o** to my ear is a medium sound with a tendency to closeness [being more closed], which is proved by the admitted ‘disintegration’ into **uo**.<sup>346</sup>

Though he clearly presents the varying opinions, Matthews, himself, stands in slight opposition with Daniel Jones, believing that, while Russian /o/ does sit between cardinal /o/ and /ɔ/, it is a little closer to /o/. In fact, throughout the rest of his text, Matthews uses the phonetic symbol of /o/ (albeit without the virgules) for Russian /o/. In *Modern Russian*, Dawson, Bidwell, and Humesky also use the IPA symbol for a closed /o/ for Russian /o/, but they only give “the very approximate English vowels...for...a rough comparison...” and

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<sup>342</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 55–56.

<sup>343</sup> A. S. Romanov and E. Wedel, eds., *Romanov's Russian-English: English-Russian Dictionary*, (New York: Pocket Books, 1963), 22.

<sup>344</sup> Matthews, *Structure and Development of Russian*, chart, viii.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

provide the word *port* to guide the student in making the Russian /o/-phoneme.<sup>347</sup> This causes more problems than benefits. First, the /o/-vowel in *port* is not at all “pure.” In phonological parlance, it is *rhotacized*, that is, *r*-colored (IPA diacritical mark /r/).<sup>348</sup> Americans are very familiar with *rhoticity* in words such as *sure*, *Earth*, *or* and *tar*. Speakers of educated, British English [so called, *Received Pronunciation (RP)*], on the other hand, will not *rhotacize* these vowels, but will use unaltered vowels. For example, the American pronunciation for *Earth* is /æʀθ/, but the *RP* is /æθ/, while the two different versions of *far* are /fæ/ and /fa/, respectively.<sup>349</sup> The other problem is that the quality of the /o/-phoneme in *port* is highly dependent upon regional accent. I am from New Jersey and pronounce *port* with an /o/-vowel that is decidedly midway between those in *row* and *dog* — a half-open, closed /o/, [ɔ] (similar to the vowel described by Matthews, above), so I say, /pɔrt/. Yet, the *American Heritage Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (*AHD*) prefers that all *-or-* related words, such as *for*, *port* and *horse* are read with an open /ɔ/ (the *AHD* uses the symbol -ô-), though it allows for the secondary pronunciation of /o/ (symbolized as -ō-). The *AHD*’s preferred pronunciation of *port* would then be /pɔrt/.<sup>350</sup> This seems a bit strange to this northeasterner, especially when the rule is applied to the word *horse*, but such is the problem at hand. If you say /pɔrt/, and I say /pɔrt/, which one is meant by Dawson and company? Without an audio example, one cannot know for sure. Aron Pressman comes down on the side of /ɔ/, in his concise text, *Living Language Conversation Manual: Russian* [also known as *Living Russian*] (1958):

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<sup>347</sup> Clayton L. Dawson, Charles E. Bidwell, and Assya Humesky. *Modern Russian I* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc, 1964), 3, 451.

<sup>348</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 263.

<sup>349</sup> Small, *Fundamentals of Phonetics*, 84; Marshall, *Singer's Manual of English Diction*, 8–14.

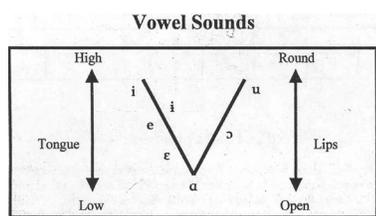
<sup>350</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992), xlv, 1410.

2. The letter O
  - a. When stressed, it is read like the *aw* as in *law*...<sup>351</sup>

It is possible, though, that the head of the Russian department at New York University in New York City, might pronounce the word *law* with a stereotypical New Yorker accent, making the vowel more rounded and closed than the neutral, mid-western accent, and perhaps, as a triphthong, like [l<sup>o</sup>ɔ<sup>ə</sup>]. Though I am being facetious about the latter part, I know from personal experience, that even after being well-trained, speakers from the New York/New Jersey area may produce certain open sounds as more rounded and closed than their mid-western counterparts. In light of the above variances within her sources, it could be fair to say that Walters' decision to use /ɔ/ for the sound of the Russian /o/ is personal opinion, perhaps based upon personal experience and ear, rather than definitive.

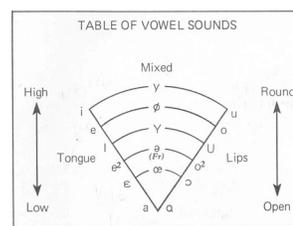
Anton Belov, of course, has the authority of being a native Russian speaker and singer, and so his choice carries some weight. In his introduction to Russian lyric diction, under a section entitled, "The Sounds of Russian," Belov presents a chart that seems to be derivative of a similar chart in John Moriarty's *Diction* (Fig. 3).

### Belov



From *Libretti of Russian Operas*<sup>352</sup>

### Moriarty



From *Diction*<sup>353</sup>

Figure 3

<sup>351</sup> Aron Pressman, *Living Language Conversation Manual: Russian* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1958), 7.

<sup>352</sup> Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas*, xii.

<sup>353</sup> Moriarty, *Diction*, 6.

In his chart, Belov uses the IPA symbol of /ɔ/ for the sound of the Russian /o/ and places that sound exactly midway between /u/ and /a/. Technically, in such a chart, the IPA cardinal vowels would divide the lip-rounding line into equal thirds with /u/ at the top, /a/ at the bottom, /o/ one third the way down from /u/, and /ɔ/ one third the way up from /a/, similarly to the Jones quadrilateral in Figure 4. Therefore, a vowel that bisects the line would fall exactly midway between /o/ and /ɔ/, making it more closed than /ɔ/ and more open than /o/, that is, half-closed or half-open. Yet, Belov unequivocally defines the sound as: “[ɔ] — approximates its Italian counterpart as in *occhi*.”<sup>354</sup> He clearly feels that Russian /o/ is open.

With authorities in Russian lyric diction standing at odds, how else might the issue be approached? Perhaps a thorough investigation would cover three areas of analysis: 1) comparison of prosaic descriptions by phonetic specialists; 2) objective, physical analysis and 3) direct, acoustical comparison. Within the area of objective, physical analysis, the various approaches could include tongue position analysis (mostly represented by drawings based upon x-rays), and articulator analysis via photographs of the lips, tongue and palate (using occlusion-indicator paint). The direct acoustical comparisons might be done through acoustical formant analysis (using a Fast Fourier Transform) or spectrogram visualization of the various open and closed /o/'s and Russian /o/.

### Prosaic Descriptions

I have attempted to find several, varying pronunciation guides on spoken Russian to compare. The most respected name in modern phonetics could arguably be that of Daniel Jones. One of his earliest publications on Russian pronunciation was as co-author with M. V.

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<sup>354</sup> Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas*, xii.

Trofimov on *The Pronunciation of Russian* (1923), which was a revision of Trofimov's work with J. P. Scott, *Handbook of Russian* (1918). Trofimov with Jones describes Russian /o/ as:

#### 7. Russian Normal **o**

198. The following is a description of the formation of the principal member of the Russian **o**-phoneme:

(i) *height of tongue*: nearer to 'half-open' than to 'half-closed';

(ii) *point of tongue which is highest*: centre of 'back';

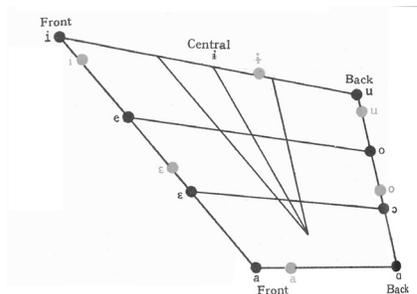
(iii) *position of lips*: medium lip-rounding.

199. Some Russian speakers substitute for the **o** above described an opener sound in which the tongue-position is lower than that of Cardinal Vowel No. 6 [/ɔ/].<sup>355</sup>

Paragraph 198 describes the more rounded, slightly more closed, open /ɔ/ that has already been discussed above. Paragraph 199, then, describes a variant similar to that mentioned by Matthews and possibly by Belov and Walters. An interesting detail in this variant, though, suggests that the lip-rounding is not different from the first formation (198), that is the lips are more rounded than for the cardinal vowel /ɔ/, while only the tongue changes, and thus, is lower than cardinal /ɔ/. This makes the variant vowel sound darker and more hollow in timbre than the standard example. A few pages earlier, Trofimov and Jones provide a superimposition of the Russian vowels onto the quadrilateral of cardinal vowels. The original chart prints the Russian vowels in red ink, but due to limitations in this printing, the Russian vowels appear as lighter gray in the reproduction below (Fig. 4).

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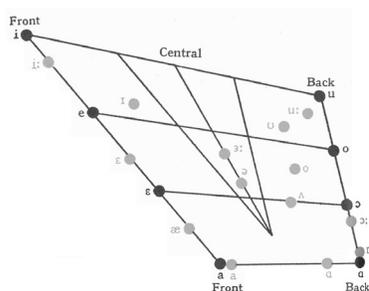
<sup>355</sup> Trofimov and Jones, *Pronunciation of Russian*, 58–59.



Russian vowels compared to the cardinal vowels  
from *The Pronunciation of Russian*<sup>356</sup>

Figure 4

In Trofimov and Jones's chart, the Russian /o/ lies at about the same point as Moriarty's /o<sup>2</sup>/ (See Figure 2). A second chart found in the Trofimov and Jones text is quite helpful in making another important distinction. This chart compares the cardinal vowels with English spoken vowels (again, lighter gray in color) (Fig. 5).



English vowels compared to the cardinal vowels  
from *The Pronunciation of Russian*<sup>357</sup>

Figure 5

Here, one can see that the English closed /o/ has far more lip-rounding and is much higher than the Russian /o/, while the English open /ɔ/ (shown as ɔ:) is less round and lower than cardinal /ɔ/, making it much less rounded, more open, and more back than the Russian /o/.

In the 1960's, Daniel Jones set out to revise and expand the work he had done with Trofimov, so working with a colleague in Russian language (Jones was a professor of

<sup>356</sup> Trofimov and Jones, *Pronunciation of Russian*, 54.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

phonetics), Dennis Ward, he began work on *The Phonetics of Russian* (University Press, 1969). Sadly, Jones died in 1967, and Ward had to complete the work and shepherd it through its publication.<sup>358</sup> The revised description of Russian /o/ is nearly the same as Trofimov's, but there is greater detail in the attempt to help the English speaker learn how to form the sound properly:

### The Russian o-phoneme

#### o

12.120 *Formation of the Russian sound o*

(1) *height of tongue*: between half-open and half-close but nearer to half-open than to half-close;

(2) *point of tongue which is highest*: centre of back;

(3) *position of lips*: medium lip-rounding.

12.121 o is a back vowel, slightly less than half-open, with medium lip-rounding.

12.122 Some Russian speakers use an opener sound than the one described above, the tongue-position being slightly lower than that of Cardinal Vowel no. 6 (Fig 8). Learners would do better however to aim at the closer variety of o.

12.123 The principal member of the Russian o-phoneme cannot be identified with any English vowel. The nearest is the sound of *aw* (as in *saw*), but the difference is considerable. The most usual English sound of *aw* (ɔ:) has a tongue-position somewhat lower than that of Cardinal Vowel no. 6 (Fig 8).

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12.125 The opener o-sound used by some Russian speakers (as mentioned in § 12.122) is not far removed from the 'average' English vowel in *hot*.

12.126 Many English speakers find difficulty in learning the produce the Russian o-sound. One method of acquiring this sound is as follows. If the learner has his pronunciation of the word *saw* (sɔ:) a vowel somewhat more open than Cardinal Vowel no. 6, he should try to make the vowel closer, i.e. raise the tongue slightly in the direction of o (Cardinal Vowel no. 7), at the same time making the lips slightly more rounded.

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<sup>358</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, ix.

12.127 If the learner has already learnt to make o (Cardinal Vowel no. 7), he may be able to acquire the Russian o by aiming at a sound intermediate between cardinal o and his English vowel in *saw*.<sup>359</sup>

These paragraphs make it ever clearer that Trofimov, Jones, Ward and authorities that descend from them believe that Russian /o/ is more closed and rounded than the cardinal /o/ to a degree that is similar to Moriarty's /o<sup>2</sup>/. They also prefer the IPA symbol of /o/.

Simon C. Boyanus, Professor of English Philology at the Leningrad Institute of Philology, History and Linguistics, as well as Lecturer in Russian and Phonetics in the University of London, published *A Manual of Russian Pronunciation* in 1935. This was then revised, expanded and published as *Russian Pronunciation: The Russian System of Speech Habits in Sounds, Stress, Rhythm, and Intonation together with a Russian Phonetic Reader* in 1955 (reprinted in 1967). For Boyanus, the Russian /o/ is in a more closed and rounded position on the vowel quadrilateral than cardinal, open /o/. It is in a similar place to what has been established above as /o<sup>2</sup>/. I refer to his chart from the 1967 reprint, here (Fig. 6):

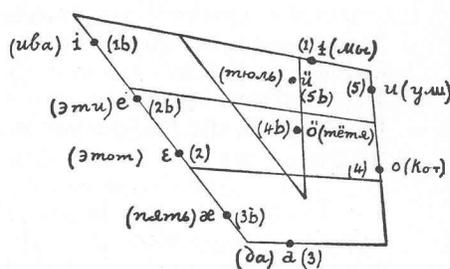


Fig. 25

The Five Types of Russian Stressed Vowels (Pure) compared with the Cardinal Vowels

from S. C. Boyanus, *Russian Pronunciation*<sup>360</sup>

Figure 6

<sup>359</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 55–56.

<sup>360</sup> Boyanus, *Manual of Russian Pronunciation*, 39 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

Further more Boyanus writes:

In order that the student should know the value of the Russian stressed vowels used in this chapter, their approximate equivalents in Southern English speech are given below.

Russian a=the first element of the diphthong *ai* in *I*.

“ o=the vowel in *or*.

“ ε=in the direction of the vowel in *air*.

“ e=the first element of the diphthong in *eight*.

“ i=sound represented with ee (but closer in quality).

“ u=the vowel in *rude*.<sup>361</sup>

It should be noted that the /o/ in “Southern English,” meaning southern England, is of a more closed quality. Jones and Ward say this about it:

12.129 Some Southern speakers of English, especially in London...have a vowel in such words as *saw* which is closer and more rounded than described above (§ 12.120). It is somewhat closer than Russian o.<sup>362</sup>

In the chapter entitled “Pronunciation of Russian Vowels,” Boyanus makes his final statement on the subject:

§ 10. Russian **o** with its ə-off glide is almost identical with the Southern English *or*.

The lips are protruded and rounded:  <sup>363</sup>

This conclusively places Boyanus in the /o<sup>2</sup>/ camp with Trofimov, Jones and Ward.

Two of the most prominent and renowned, native Russian phoneticists are Elena A. Bryzgunova and Ruben I. Avanesov. In her *Prakticheskaya Fonetika i Intonatsiya Russkogo Yazyka* [*Practical Phonetics and Intonation of the Russian Language*] (1963) Bryzgunova writes:

<sup>361</sup> Boyanus, *Manual of Russian Pronunciation*, 40.

<sup>362</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 56.

<sup>363</sup> Boyanus, 52.

In the Russian language, the phonological characteristics of the phoneme /o/ are: 1) the raising of the back of the tongue toward the mid-palate and 2) the rounding and extending of the lips. The phoneme /o/ is read with a small opening of the oral cavity.<sup>364</sup>

This description suggests, perhaps, an even more rounded sound than the previous descriptions, but certainly, it does not describe an open /o/ formation. Bryzgunova then relates some common errors in the pronunciation of the phoneme which also imply that a more rounded form is preferred:

In the production of pronouncing the phoneme /o/ by speakers of various languages, the following deviations have been noted:

1. Confusion of the phoneme /o/ and /u/ (pronouncing /'o trʌ/ for /'u trʌ/ [утро]; /'tʌʒ kʌ/ for /'tʌʒ kʌ/ [ложка])
2. Pronouncing /o/ with a more back or front articulation [of the tongue].
3. Pronouncing /o/ with lax [unrounded] labial articulation.<sup>365</sup>

“Confusion of the phoneme /o/ and /u/” would suggest that the /o/ must be rounded enough to cause such a confusion, and being concerned about lax or unrounded lips, also points to a more rounded pronunciation. Avanesov’s description in *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie: Uchebnoe Posobne dlya Studentov Pedagogicheskikh Institutov* [*Russian Literary Pronunciation: An Educational Textbook for Students of Pedagogical Institutes*] (revised, 1972) is more open to interpretation:

In the formation of the vowel /o/, the lower jaw descent is greater than for /u/, the opening of the mouth for /o/ is wider than for /u/, but narrower than for /a/; the tongue for the formation of /o/ draws backward and raises in its back toward the soft palate, however to a lesser degree, than for /u/. The lowered tip of the tongue draws back

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<sup>364</sup> Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika* [*Practical Phonetics*], 34 (Translated by Craig Grayson. See Appendix L for original).

<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

from the lower teeth (also to a lesser degree, than for /u/); [while] the root of the tongue is drawn toward the wall of the pharynx, but somewhat less, than for /u/. The lips are elongated forward and rounded, however to a lesser degree, than for /u/, in connection with that, the opening, formed by the lips and also being the boundary of the resonating cavity, is somewhat wider [larger], than for /u/.

One ought to note...the vowel /o/ is not entirely uniform throughout its duration: it begins with an /u/-colored onset, [and so] is read as if /<sup>u</sup>o/.

This way, the vowel /o/ as a phoneme is defined as labialized, mid-high.<sup>366</sup>

By describing the opening of the mouth as “wider than for /u/, but narrower than for /a/,” Avanesov seems to be establishing the roundness of the lips as halfway between *Cardinal Vowel No. 4*, /a/ (this is the fronted, less rounded, French /a/ vowel, as opposed to *Cardinal Vowel No. 5*, /a/) and *Cardinal Vowel No. 8*, /u/. This would make the lips slightly less rounded than exactly halfway between cardinal /o/ and /ɔ/, similar to /o<sup>2</sup>/. The tongue description of mid-high is like /o<sup>2</sup>/, but is a bit lower, making Avanesov’s Russian /o/ sound a bit darker or more hollow in timbre than /o<sup>2</sup>/.

It is rather obvious that a majority of these prominent authorities on Russian phonetics, both foreign and native Russian, agree upon a similar formation and quality of Russian /o/. It also can be inferred from their descriptions that Russian /o/ is quite similar to /o<sup>2</sup>/, and that the Russian phoneme is not as open as English, open /ɔ/ or cardinal /ɔ/.

Comparing a broad sampling of other Russian pronunciation guides, most do not go into detail about forming Russian vowels. Here is how some other authors describe Russian /o/:

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<sup>366</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie* [*Russian Literary Pronunciation*], 31–32 (Translated by Craig Grayson. See Appendix L for original text).

M Golovinsky (*Eng-Rus; Rus-Eng Dictionary*, 1936): O, o – has the sound of “o” in the English word “not” when short [unstressed], or as in the word “pole” when long [stressed].

Leon Stilman (*Russian Alphabet and Phonetics*, 1949): O, o all or awe, but with the lips more rounded.

James St. Clair-Sobell (*Pronunciation of Russian*, 1959): The five basic Russian vowels (a, e, i, o, u) are of the usual continental (Italian) type.

Tania Bobrinskoy, Irina Gsovskaya (*Pronounce Russian Correctly*, 1961): The stressed Russian o sounds like the aw in *fault* or *law*, but it is crisper.

Munir Sendich (*An Undergrad. Course in Transcriptional Phonetics of Russian*, 1988): Russian -- O...remember that the Russian--O sound is a completely rounded vowel and not half-rounded as in English...

Thomas R. Beyer, Jr. (*Pronounce it Perfectly in Russian*, 1994): When stressed, the sound O (as in *hello*) is represented by the Russian letter o. The Russian sound is read with the back of the tongue slightly raised and the lips extended and rounded.

Kasia M. Bernecka-Urban (*Russian Intonation and Pronunciation for the Beginners*, 2001): The Russian O, o positioned in a one-syllable word or in the stressed syllable of a two- or multi-syllable word, is read as a diphthong resembling the English “wa” or “wo” in “war,” “wall,” “wore,” or “swore.”<sup>367</sup>

These descriptions quite literally span the spectrum from less rounded (Bobrinskoy/Gsovskaya) to very rounded (Sendich) and from definite (St. Clair-Sobell) to ambiguous, even confusing (Bernecka-Urban). This may reflect some of the regionalisms mentioned by Matthews, Trofimov, Jones, and Ward, but it should also be noted that the majority of the descriptions above suggest sounds that are more rounded (“lips more rounded,” “lips

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<sup>367</sup> M. Golovinsky, *A New English-Russian and Russian-English Dictionary* (Philadelphia: David McKay Co., 1936), vii.

Leon Stilman, *Russian Alphabet and Phonetics, Slavic Studies: Russian Language Series* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), 3.

James St. Clair-Sobell, *Pronunciation of Russian* (The University of British Columbia, 1959), 3.

Tania Bobrinskoy and Irina Gsovskaya, *Pronounce Russian Correctly* (New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1961), 4.

Munir Sendich, *An Undergraduate Course in Transcriptional Phonetics of Russian: Phonetics Signs, Texts, Dictation, Intonation, and Tapes* (East Lansing: The Russian Language Journal, 1988), 5.

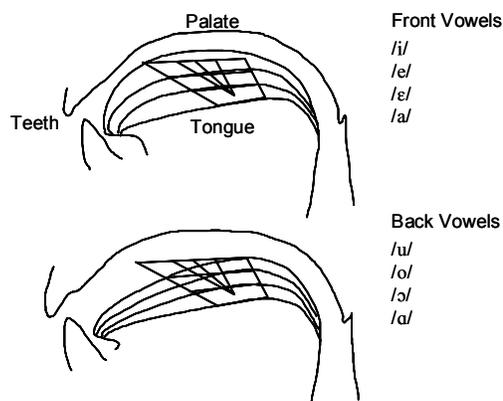
Thomas R. Beyer, Jr. and C. V. Starr, *Pronounce It Perfectly in Russian* (Hauppauge: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1994), 5.

Kasia M. Bernecka-Urban, *Russian Intonation and Pronunciation for Beginners* (Puchheim: Global Press, 2001), 5.

extended and rounded,” “well rounded and protruded lips,” “completely rounded”), much like /o<sup>2</sup>/ or even cardinal /o/, rather than the less rounded, cardinal /ɔ/. The tentative conclusion from the above prosaic descriptions may be that, though some Russians use the more open and less rounded form of /ɔ/, the preference seems to be for the half-closed, more rounded, style similar to Moriarty’s /o<sup>2</sup>/.

### Physical Analysis

Many Russian pronunciation texts use drawings called *schematic radiograms*, also referred to as *orograms*, which are derived from x-ray photographs of the tongue shape as seen from the side. This is due to the fact that the Jones/IPA vowel quadrilateral is a representation of the correlation between a vowel and the tongue formation in the mouth, also as seen from the side (Fig. 7).



Jones/IPA vowel quadrilateral superimposed upon side-view tongue positions for front vowels (top) and back vowels (bottom).

Figure 7<sup>368</sup>

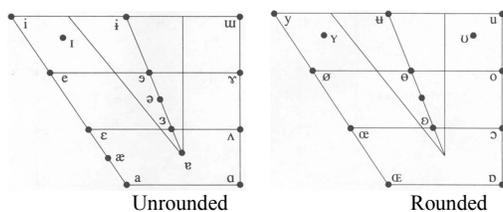
Some texts also show photos or drawings of the lip formation from the front (*labiograms*), at least for the *Cardinal Vowels*, while one text has stop-action photos, regular photos, x-rays and orograms of those x-rays showing tongue position, lip formation and changing action in

<sup>368</sup> Figure by Craig M Grayson.

the formation of each Russian speech sound. This last text, Kálmán Bolla's *A Conspectus of Russian Speech Sounds* (1981), also includes palato-lingual occlusion photos, as well as acoustical FFT and spectrogram charts.

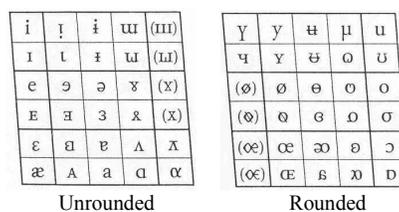
Another recent and unique contributor to phonetics has been Luciano Canepari, professor of Phonetic and Phonology in the department of Speech Sciences at the University of Venice in Italy. Founder of an expanded phonetic approach he calls *natural phonetics*, Professor Canepari has been attempting to create a system that represents all the sounds of many of the world's languages in great detail, as to their "articulatory, auditory, and functional phonetics."<sup>369</sup> Canepari's set of phonetic transcription symbols (he calls *canIPA*, for Canepari IPA, as opposed to the official IPA, or *offIPA*) expands the official IPA from 109 symbols for vowel and consonant articulations alone (53 other symbols cover intonation and modifying diacritical markings) to an imposing 824 unique symbols. Canepari nearly doubles the official IPA vowels from 28 to 52.<sup>370</sup> Therefore, Canepari uses a 30 space, rhomboid checkerboard to chart his vowel phonemes rather than the 6-space (sometimes expanded to 11-space), upside-down trapezoid of Jones and used by the IPA. To compare, here are both types of vowel charts (Fig. 8):

IPA Vowel Charts (28 symbols)



From Pullum/Ladusaw: *Phonetic Symbol Guide*<sup>371</sup>

Canepari Vowel Charts (52 + 8 symbols)



From Canepari: *A Handbook of Phonetics*<sup>372</sup>

Figure 8

<sup>369</sup> Canepari, *Handbook of Phonetics*, viii–xi, 92–96.

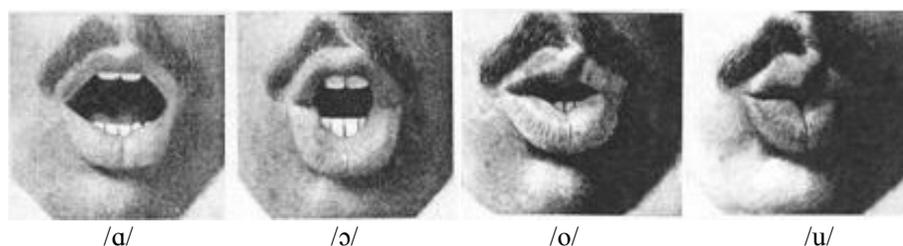
<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 82, 93, 166–168.

<sup>371</sup> Pullum and Ladusaw, *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, 295–296.

<sup>372</sup> Canepari, 115.

Canepari also produces orograms and labiograms for each of his vowel phonemes.<sup>373</sup> His orogram of the half-closed /ɔ/ is used in this essay, since no other source provides it. Canepari symbolizes the half-closed /ɔ/ with /σ/, and it is essentially the same phoneme as Moriarty's /o<sup>2</sup>/. For efficiency, the symbol /σ/ is used for half-closed /ɔ/ rather than /o<sup>2</sup>/.

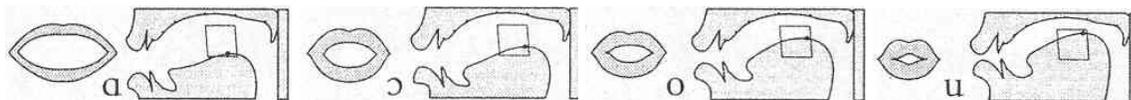
This section begins with a comparison of the orograms and labiograms of the lip-rounding cardinal vowels, then the orograms of half-closed /ɔ/ (/σ/) and pertinent Russian vowels are compared. Trofimov and Jones present labiograms of the cardinal vowels in the form of photographs. They show the differences of lip formations for each vowel. Here are the cardinal, lip-rounding vowels: No. 5, /a/; No. 6, /ɔ/; No. 7, /o/; and No. 8, /u/ as set out by Jones in partnership with Trofimov (Fig. 9):



Trofimov and Jones<sup>374</sup>

Figure 9

Canepari's *A Handbook of Phonetics* (2005) uses abstracted labio- and orograms derived from photos and x-rays. Here are Canepari's combined labio-orograms of the same vowels as above (Fig. 10):



Canepari

Figure 10<sup>375</sup>

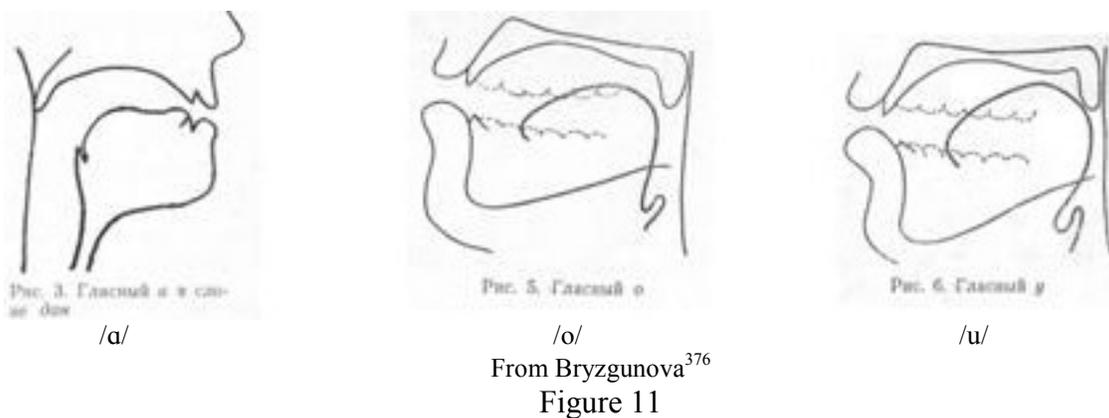
<sup>373</sup> Canepari, *Handbook of Phonetics*, 125.

<sup>374</sup> Trofimov and Jones. *Pronunciation of Russian*, 32–33.

<sup>375</sup> Canepari, 125.

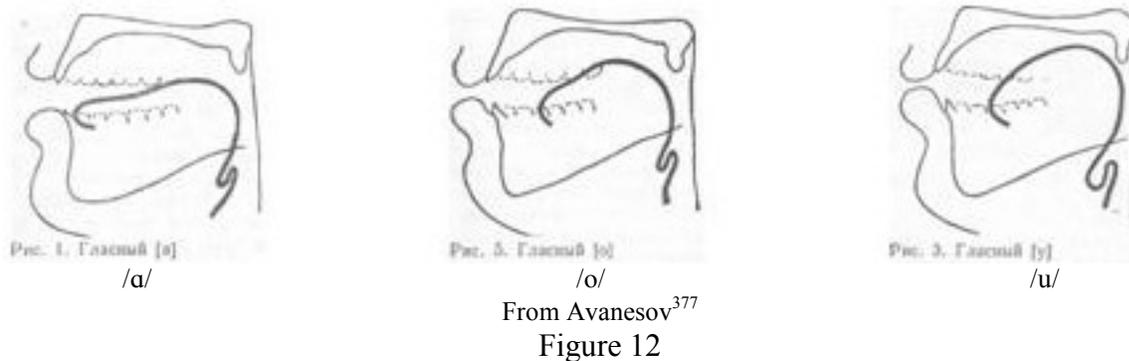
While the labiograms show the changes in lip formation, similarly to the Trofimov/Jones photos, the orograms show the changing articulation of the tongue and jaw, as well. One can see a closing up of the oral cavity by the combination of the tongue arching more and more toward the back part of the hard palate and the slight raising of the jaw, bringing the teeth closer together. The small rhombus superimposed upon the orograms represents Canepari's vowel quadrilateral of tongue positions, as pictured in Figure 8.

The following are the three Russian lip-rounding vowels. The first images are from Bryzgunova's *Prakticheskaya Fonetika I Intonatsiya Russkogo Yazyka*. These images have been slightly edited (removing secondary positions of the tongue) for greater clarity. (Fig. 11):

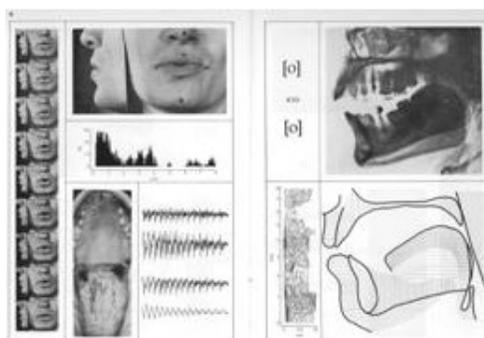


These somewhat imperfect orograms show the tongue significantly farther back toward the pharynx in spoken Russian than for the spoken cardinal vowels shown earlier. Avanesov's orograms from *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie* are reproduced here. (Fig. 12):

<sup>376</sup> Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika* [*Practical Phonetics*], 26, 35, 38.



These are somewhat more accurate orograms than Bryzgunova's, showing the closing of the lips, as well as a more detailed representation of the changes in tongue formation. Finally, Kálmán Bolla's work, *A Conspectus of Russian Speech Sounds*, is one of the most comprehensive and objective studies of Russian phonemes. Here is an example of an entire plate for the Russian /o/ phoneme (Fig. 13):



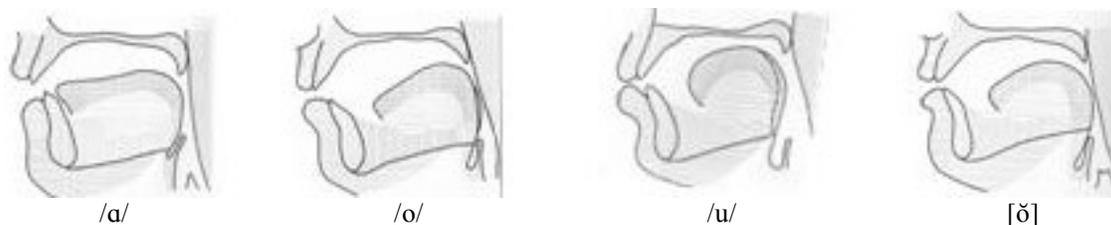
The Russian phoneme /o/ from Bolla, *A Conspectus of Russian Speech Sounds*<sup>378</sup>  
Figure 13

Bolla's plates contain stop-action photos, still photos (posed), palato-lingual occlusion photos, acoustical FFT charts, four-channel oscillograms, x-rays, schematic radiograms [orograms] and spectrogram charts pertaining to a labeled phoneme, along with the word spoken to produce the phoneme in context. The following are views of the formation of

<sup>377</sup> Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie* [*Russian Literary Pronunciation*], 29, 31, 30.

<sup>378</sup> Kálmán Bolla, *A Conspectus of Russian Speech Sounds*, trans. by László Varga (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1981), Plate 6.

Russian /a/, /o/, and /u/, as well as a so-called short /o/-allophone, [ɔ̃], from Bolla. These orograms have been directly derived from oral x-rays. (Fig. 14):



From Bolla<sup>379</sup>  
Figure 14

Though difficult to see in reduced size, there is a slight shift of the root of the tongue during the formation of /o/, and the dotted line in the /u/-ogram represents an even greater shift during that vowel's formation. Bolla's examples are of a single individual not a theoretical norm, so the orograms reflect the idiosyncrasies of the subject. It is difficult to see all of the tongue in the x-rays in Bolla's text, but the following is an example of how the orogram is derived. The corresponding orogram of /o/ is overlaid on its x-ray (Fig. 15):

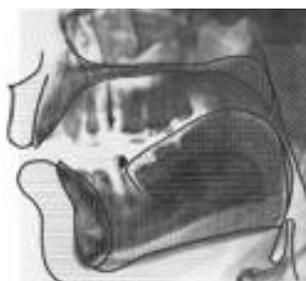
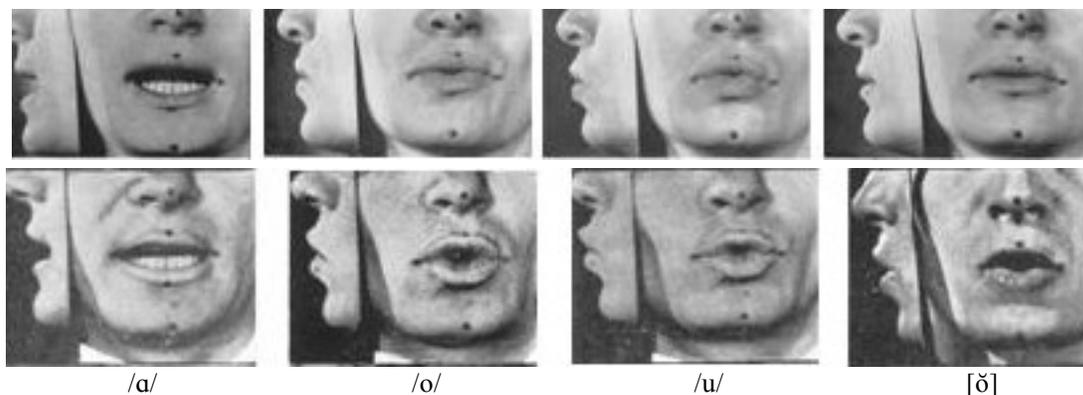


Figure 15<sup>380</sup>

Bolla also took still photos and strobe films (stop-action photos) of lip articulations. Here are lip formations corresponding to the previously referenced vowels — still photos above and excerpted (central position) stop-action photos below. (Fig. 16):

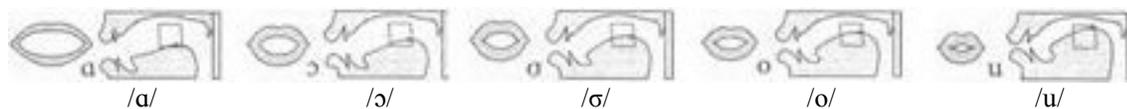
<sup>379</sup> Bolla, *Conspectus of Russian Speech Sounds*, plates 2, 6, 19, 24.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid*, plate 6.

Figure 16<sup>381</sup>

One can readily see the difference in the intensity of lip formation shown between the still photographs and the strobe excerpts. The excerpted strobe photos are used for later comparisons, as they seem to represent a more accurate reality of vowel formation in context.

The following illustration compares Canepari's orograms of the four cardinal lip-rounded vowels and /σ/ [half-closed /o/] (Fig. 17):

From Canepari<sup>382</sup>  
Figure 17

It can easily be seen how the lips gradually become more rounded, while the tongue arches higher toward the hard palate, and the jaw gradually closes down the oral cavity from /a/ through /u/. One can also see more similarity of openness between cardinal /a/ and /ɔ/ than between cardinal /ɔ/ and the other /o/-forms or cardinal /u/. (Fig. 18)

Figure 18<sup>383</sup>

<sup>381</sup> Bolla, *Conspectus*, plates 2, 6, 19, 24.

<sup>382</sup> Canepari, *Handbook of Phonetics*, 125.

Though the lip rounding seems gradual from /a/ to /u/, the tongue shape significantly changes between /ɔ/ to /σ/. (Fig. 19)

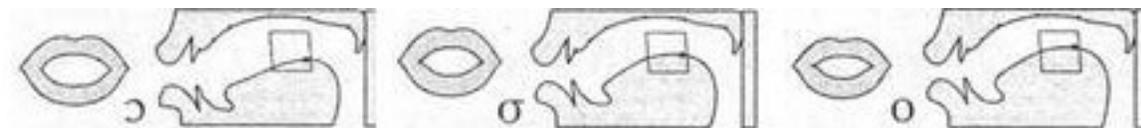


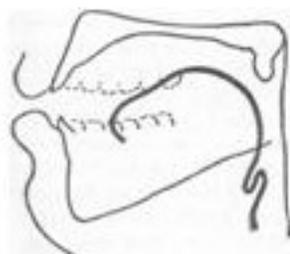
Figure 19<sup>384</sup>

Other than the lip rounding, the flatness of the blade of the tongue for /ɔ/ as compared to the arched curving of /σ/ (as well as /o/) will become a defining element for Russian /o/.

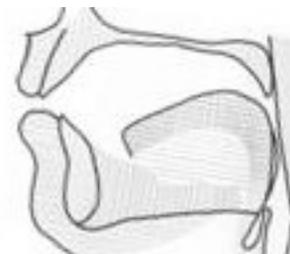
Here are the three orograms of Russian /o/ from Bryzgunova, Avanesov, and Bolla (Fig. 20):



From Bryzgunova, p. 35



From Avanesov, p. 31



From Bolla, plate 6

Figure 20<sup>385</sup>

These orograms depict rather different formations, perhaps reflecting the idiosyncrasies of the subjects. The lips seem similar in their closure across the examples (reflecting rounding), though Bryzgunova's subject seems a bit less rounded. In contrast, the tongue shapes are quite varied. The shape of the tongue blade shows the greatest variance from slightly concave (Avanesov) to quite flat (Bolla) to slightly arched (Bryzgunova). The distance of the tongue from the pharyngeal wall is also varied. Avanesov's and Bryzgunova's subjects are similar — they differ in shape more than distance — but Bolla's subject has a particularly retracted

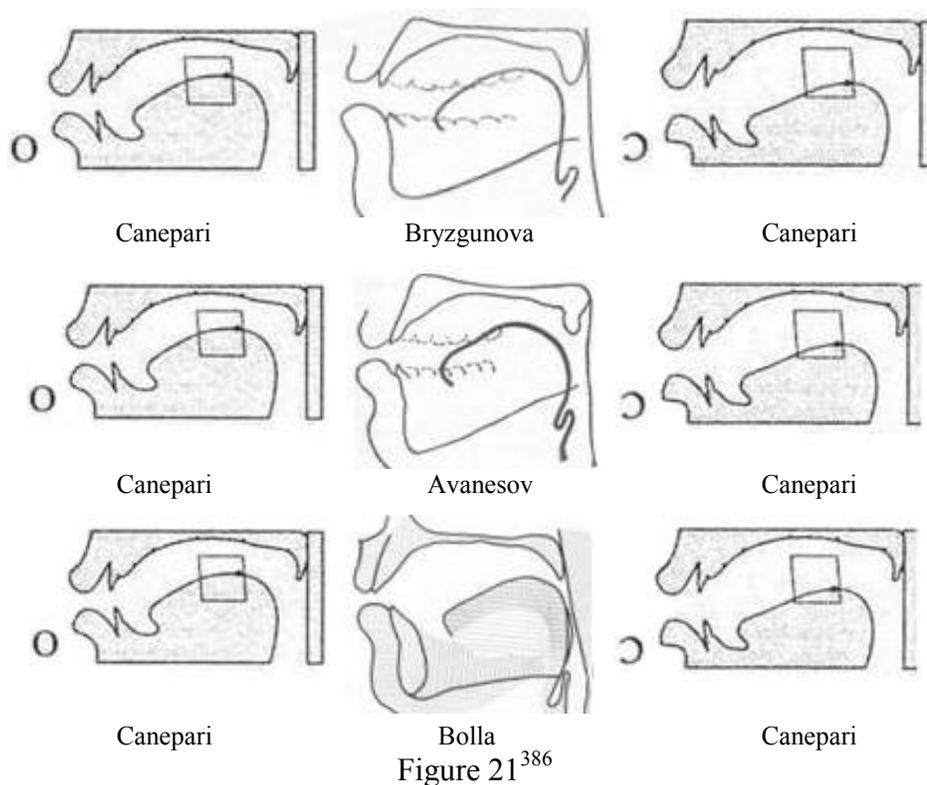
<sup>383</sup> Canepari, 125.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

<sup>385</sup> Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika [Practical Phonetics]*, 35; Avanesov, *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Literary Pronunciation]*, 31; Bolla, *Conspectus of Russian Speech Sounds*, plate 6.

tongue. The sound of each subject's /o/ should not be greatly different, but Bryzgunova's subject may sound a slightly more closed /o/ than the other two, even with less rounded lips, because of the more arched tongue position.

So, how does Russian /o/ compare with cardinal /ɔ/ and /o/, as well as /σ/? Compare *Cardinal Vowels No. 7, /o/, and No. 6, /ɔ/,* to the three examples above (Fig. 21):



The back of the tongue is as high for Russian /o/ as it is for cardinal /o/, and the lips are similarly rounded to the cardinal vowel, if not more so (Bolla). Bryzgunova's subject has a tongue shape that is nearly the same as Canepari's /o/, though the position is more retracted. The blade of the tongue appears to be flatter, even concave (like Canepari's /ɔ/), for Avanesov's and Bolla's subjects, and with more retracted tongues, they create just about the

<sup>386</sup> Canepari, 125; Bryzgunova, 35; Avanesov, 31; Bolla, plate 6.

same amount of acoustical space in the front half of the mouth cavity as for /ɔ/. This comparison may reveal a physiological reason for the confusion in categorizing Russian /o/. If the lips are as rounded as closed /o/ but the tongue blade is flattened like open /ɔ/, then the acoustical result may seem ambiguous. The mix of tongue flattening and lip rounding also fits the prosaic descriptions of the Russian /o/ given in Trofimov/Jones and Jones/Ward.

Comparing Russian /o/ to /σ/ and cardinal /ɔ/, Bryzgunova's example is closest to /σ/, while the tongue shape of the other two are closer to /ɔ/, though the back is higher (Fig. 22):

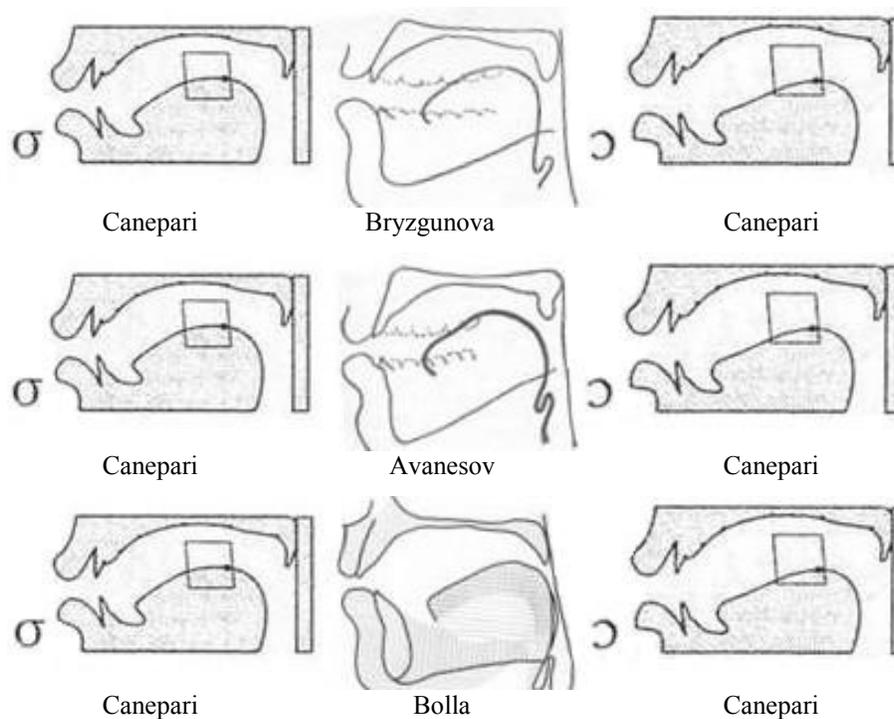
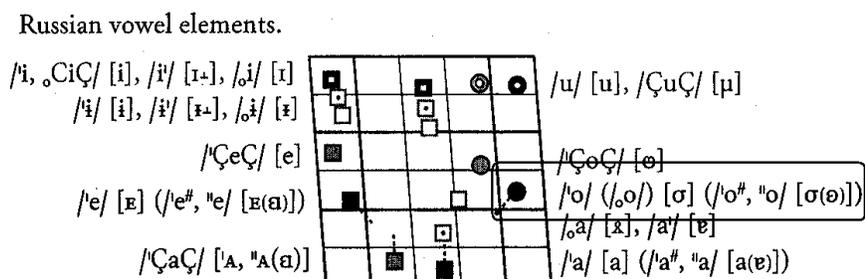


Figure 22<sup>387</sup>

In all three cases, the tongue is significantly drawn back toward the pharynx as compared to the non-Russian vowels. Bolla's subject is at the extreme with the tongue almost touching the pharyngeal wall. It should be mentioned that Canepari, in *A Handbook of Pronunciation*, places the Russian /o/ within the /σ/-square of his rounded vowel quadrilateral (Fig. 13).

<sup>387</sup> Canepari, 125; Bryzgunova, 35; Avanesov, 31; Bolla, plate 6.

Within that square, the Russian /o/-vowel is positioned toward the lower left corner, representing a slightly lowered tongue and less lip-rounding than /σ/ and suggesting a formation similar to Bryzgunova's subject (Fig. 23).



From Canepari, *Handbook of Pronunciation*: outline superimposed by author. Dashed line at bottom of placement dot represents the opening of the vowel over its duration, as discussed in descriptions of Russian /o/.

Figure 23<sup>388</sup>

Avanesov's and Bolla's subjects have more rounded lips than for /σ/, so their lips are formed more like closed /o/. The following illustration compares the lip shape of Bolla's subject with the labiograms provided by Trofimov/Jones for cardinal /o/ and /ɔ/ (Fig. 24):

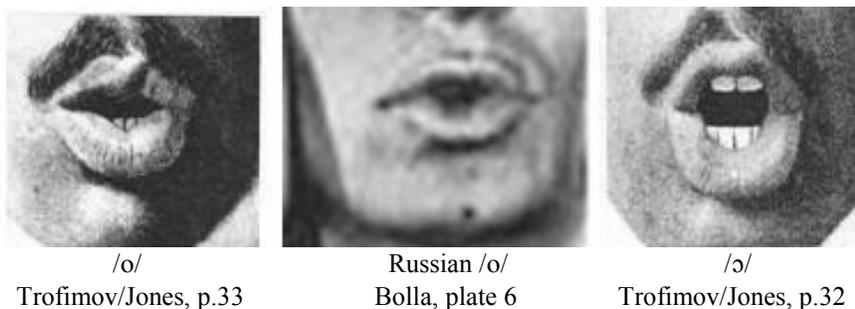


Figure 24<sup>389</sup>

Russian /o/ may be physiologically more like /σ/, in general, than either /o/ or /ɔ/, but the shape and position of the tongue creates a sound that has a hollowness like open /ɔ/, while the lip rounding creates a darker, rounder timbre like closed /o/.

<sup>388</sup> Canepari, *Handbook of Pronunciation*, 283.

<sup>389</sup> Trofimov and Jones, 33, 32; Bolla, plate 6.

### Acoustic Analysis

The last comparison is acoustical. Can an acoustic analysis of the harmonic structure of these vowels show any marked differences or similarities? Does the acoustical fingerprint of Russian /o/ look more like that of cardinal /o/, /ɔ/, half-closed /ɔ/ (/σ/), or a species unto itself? Modeled on the work of Bolla, I have recorded myself speaking the five vowels under comparison (/u/, /o/, /σ/, and /ɔ/, and the Russian /o/) and processed them through a Fast Fourier Transfer (FFT) analysis program, creating a graphic picture of the overtones and resonant formants of each vowel.

It is generally accepted by phonologists that there are four, narrow, frequency bands emphasized (resonated) by the human vocal tract that are critical to fully recognizing vowel differences. These resonant points are called *formants*, and the bands' center frequencies shift or change depending upon which vowel is being produced. There is also one other resonant frequency band, which falls within the same range as the basic four, that stays constant, especially in trained voices.<sup>390</sup> This constant frequency (centered between 2500 Hz and 3000 Hz, averaging 2800 Hz, depending upon certain factors) is known by several names in the singing profession, such as the *singer's ring*, *2800*, the *singer's formant*, and *squillo* (the Italian word for the *ringing of a bell*).<sup>391</sup> Though this formant is very important to singers and singing, it is the other four, changeable formants that are of importance here, since it is the shifting formants that create each vowel's fingerprint shown by the FFT analysis graphs.

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<sup>390</sup> Johan Sundberg, "The Acoustics of the Singing Voice," in *Scientific American: The Physics of Music*, edited by Carleen Maley Hutchins (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1978), 16–20; Clark, Yallop, and Fletcher, *An Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology*, third ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 243–249, 261–272; Small, *Fundamentals of Phonetics*, 107; William Vennard, *Singing: The Mechanism and the Technic*, revised ed. (New York: Carl Fischer, 1967), 125–137.

<sup>391</sup> Sundberg, "Acoustics of the Singing Voice," 18–23; Vennard, *Singing*, 89–90, 129; James Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 45–50.

The *normalized* (averaged over a large set of data points) frequency centers for these formants ( $F_n$ ) are  $F_1 = 500$  Hz;  $F_2 = 1,500$  Hz;  $F_3 = 2,500$  Hz; and  $F_4 = 3,500$  Hz.<sup>392</sup> These numbers can be misleading, since the variances are great, based not only on the vowel shape and color, but on physiological development (child or adult), sex (male or female), and relative voice type (high or low). The vocal formants can overlap, with higher formants reaching down into the range of the next lower formant and lower ones invading the next higher range. The frequency spread or spectrum to each formant center is more like this:  $F_1 <250$  Hz –  $>1000$  Hz;  $F_2 <600$  Hz –  $>3000$  Hz;  $F_3 <1900$  Hz –  $>4000$  Hz; and  $F_4 <2600$  Hz –  $>5000$  Hz. As might be expected, the lower end of the ranges tends to relate to the lowest-voiced, adult males, while the highest numbers are found with highest-voiced, younger, female children.<sup>393</sup>

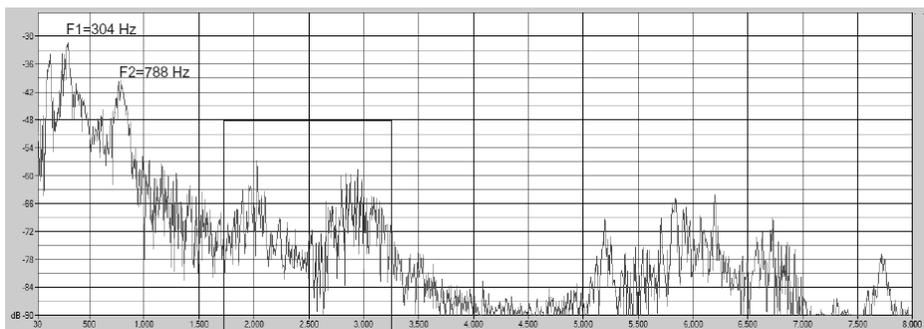
There usually is a wider separation between the second formant ( $F_2$ ) and the third ( $F_3$ ), than there is between  $F_1$  and  $F_2$  or  $F_3$  and  $F_4$ . Most phoneticians focus on  $F_1$  and  $F_2$  as the most important for vowel recognition, but as is demonstrated in the examples to come, the relationship of  $F_3$  to  $F_4$  can be important to the subtler differences that are encountered in Russian /o/. When looking at the following FFT graphs, several points must be kept in mind: I am only one subject with my own idiosyncrasies; I am adult male and a lower bass, which places all of my formants at the lower end of the spectrum; and I am an American, albeit, with a good Russian accent, but a non-native Russian speaker, none the less. Yet, as a point of comparison, the consistency afforded by being a single subject is still worth while.

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<sup>392</sup> Sundberg, "Acoustics of the Singing Voice," 19.

<sup>393</sup> Vennard, *Singing*, 137; Gordon E. Peterson and Harold L. Barney, "Control Methods Used in a Study of Vowels," *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* Vol. 24, no. 2 (1952), 182.

The first FFT graph is of *Cardinal Vowel No. 8*, /u/, as in the Italian word *tu* (Fig. 25):



A Fast Fourier Transfer (FFT) graph of cardinal /u/, as spoken by the author. The first two formants (F1; F2), their frequencies noted, are generally considered to define a vowel acoustically. The peak left of F1 is the fundamental pitch (F0) on which the vowel was spoken (here, approx. 150 Hz). The peaks within the outlined square are the third formant (F3) on the left and, on the right, a combination of the fourth formant (F4) and the *singer's formant* (F5). Since the vowel was spoken, not sung, F5 is not very prominent. It is the small peak that is centered at approximately 2600 Hz. The higher formants farther to the right, above 5000 Hz, are probably artifacts of nasality, not uncommon to the spoken vowel /u/.

Figure 25

The graph places frequency (pitch) on the horizontal axis going from the lower frequencies on the left to the higher frequencies toward the right of the scale. The vertical axis is the amplitude (loudness) of each frequency peak relative to the others. The scale of the vertical axis is in decibels (db), the standard unit for acoustical amplitude, but is configured for digital recording. Decibel levels below 0 db are shown in terms of negative decibels (-db), while 0 db is the threshold of sonic saturation (distortion) for analog-to-digital converters.

The first peak, or strong frequency, on the far left (low frequencies) is that of the fundamental pitch (F0) on which the vowel /u/ was spoken. In this case, it is approximately 150 Hz, which lies somewhere between D and E-flat below Middle C. If the human vocal tract did not have its resonant formants, the graph would look like a stair-step mountain range of ever lowering peaks, as the overtone frequencies go higher but get softer. The frequencies would follow the pattern of the fundamental multiplied by 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and so on. From a fundamental of 150 Hz, the first overtone would be 300 Hz, the second, 450 Hz, the third,

600 Hz, the fourth, 750 Hz, then 900 Hz, etc., each peak somewhat lower on the graph than the previous. The resonance points of the vocal tract, the *formants*, add to the amplitude (loudness) of any frequencies in their range and push up the peaks of the mountain range on those specific frequencies creating an uneven terrain.<sup>394</sup>

In the above FFT graph, since the first formant (F1) coincides with the first, natural overtone (300 Hz), this frequency actually peaks higher than the fundamental (150 Hz), which is normally the loudest frequency in, say, a stringed instrument. The second overtone (450 Hz) can be seen as a ledge off the right side of F1's peak, and the third overtone (600 Hz) shows up as a small peak in the valley made between F1 and F2. As F2 is quite near the frequency of the fourth overtone (750 Hz), that overtone just makes the F2 peak bulge out on its left side. Due to the huge discrepancy of amplitude between F2 and the next several natural overtones, 900, 1050, 1200, 1350, 1500, and 1650 Hz, and those overtones' close proximity to each other, it is very difficult to discern their individual peaks, beyond the jaggedness of a longer, precipitous slope that then starts to rise toward the peak of F3 (2000+ Hz). As the overtone series continues, the frequencies occur more closely together and drop to quite low amplitude, resulting in the rest of the acoustical prominences being higher formants and other resonant artifacts rather than the remaining overtones. So, one can see F3 at 2000 Hz and the combination of F4 and F5 (around 2600 Hz, for me) creating a peak centering at approximately 2900 Hz. There is also a cluster of resonances from around 5,250 Hz to about 6,750 Hz, peaking around 6000 Hz, which is probably an artifact of nasality, not uncommon for the spoken vowel /u/.

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<sup>394</sup> Sundberg, "Acoustics of the Singing Voice," 18; Clark, Yallop, and Fletcher, *Introduction to Phonetics*, 234–238, 240–257.

To understand the next comparisons, an explanation is necessary of how the formant frequencies relate to vowel formation. Eschewing the more complex acoustical physics, the first formant (F1) comes from the bent, tube-like space made from the full length of the vocal tract (the larynx to the lips) and is determined by the length and volume of the tube-like chamber and the size of opening or *aperture* made by the lips, that is, how rounded they are. The more rounded the lips, the smaller the aperture, and thus the lower the pitch or frequency of the first formant. Longer tubes and larger cavities with smaller openings make a lower pitch — think of empty bottles. The second formant (F2) relates to the position of the tongue in the mouth, as the back of the tongue lowers in the mouth, F2's frequency rises. The third (F3) and fourth (F4) formants are also related to the tongue shape, but are harder to track precisely as tongue shape to frequency, yet the relationship of F3 and F4 to each other seems to reflect the space made in the front of the mouth cavity by the shape of the blade of tongue (convex, flat, or concave). It seems that the more the tongue blade has a convex arch (toward the front of the hard palate), making the mouth cavity smaller, the more distinctly separated and rather equal in strength become the two peaks of F3 and F4. The flatter the blade, making a larger mouth cavity, the closer together the peaks become, almost becoming one peak in the graph for cardinal /ɔ/ below (see Fig. 33). Also, as the blade flattens out or becomes concave, F3 becomes more emphasized, dominating over an attenuated F4 (also Fig. 33). The complexity of the acoustics within the vocal tract is such that each formant is not isolated relative to a single formative element, as cleanly as just described. The shape of the tract as a whole creates the formant profile, therefore, even if the lips do not change shape, F1 can shift slightly as the tongue changes shape in the mouth, or, in the same way, if

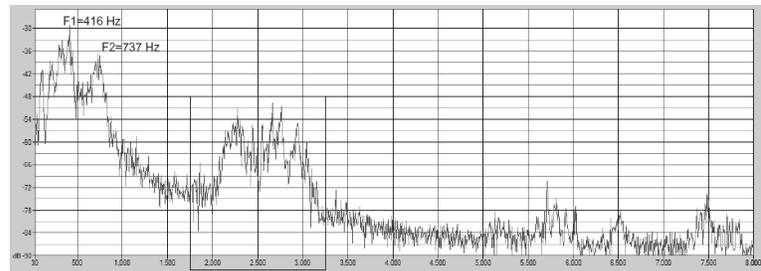
the tongue stays in one shape, F3 and F4 can shift, as just the lips change shape. These acoustic profiles reflect the totality of the oral and pharyngeal shape.

One major element must not be forgotten — the overall volume of the vocal tract. The shape of the lips and tongue affects portions of the volume, but the position of the larynx defines the whole volume, and in turn, the entire set of formant frequencies. Though the laryngeal position does not directly affect the individual vowel sounds, it does affect the perception of the vowel colors. For trained singers, a lowered laryngeal position is favored. A lowered larynx increases the volume of the entire vocal tract rather significantly, and in turn, lowers the frequencies of all of the formants at once. This produces a darker or richer timbre to the resonance of the voice and seems to increase the resonance of the *singer's formant* (F5).<sup>395</sup> Since F5 lies in a frequency region (2500 Hz – 3000 Hz), also shared by F3 and F4, the final acoustical result is that of a prominence of frequencies spanning from around 1700 Hz to about 3200 Hz with a peak around the 2800 Hz point. Again, because the acoustical examples given here are of spoken vowels rather than sung, the special singer's prominence is not strongly reflected. Yet, due to my training, even when speaking, my larynx tends to be in a lower position than an untrained subject of similar physique. Therefore, my entire set of formants is even lower on the spectrum than the average low-voiced, adult male.

The following FFT graphs depict the acoustical fingerprint of each of four versions of the /o/ phoneme spoken by the author: the first is *Cardinal Vowel No. 7* (closed /o/); the second /o/ phoneme is half-closed, open /ɔ/, or /σ/; the third is *Cardinal Vowel No. 6* (open /ɔ/); and the final graph is of Russian /o/.

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<sup>395</sup> Sundberg, "Acoustics of the Singing Voice," 19–20, 21 (graphs and captions at bottom of page).



Closed /o/ — extracted from speaking the French word *oiseau*

Figure 26

Figure 26 shows the FFT graph of a fully rounded, high back /o/-vowel. This is the kind of closed /o/ used in French or German. The important features are the quite low first two formants (F1 and F2) and the rather broad spread of the peaks of the higher 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> formants (F3, F5, and F4). The lower frequencies of F1 and F2 reflect quite rounded lips and a higher back of the tongue, while the broader peak separation of F3-F5 is related to the more convex arching of the tongue (actually, F5 has no relationship to the lip, tongue or buccal shape at all. F5 is the *singer's formant*, which has its origins in the larynx, and which is a bit more prominent here, because this particular vowel naturally causes the larynx to lower helping to resonate F5).

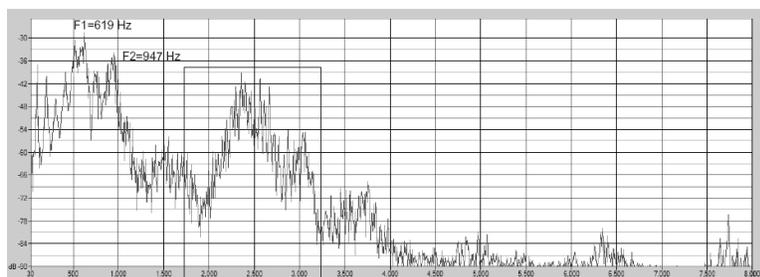
Comparing closed /o/ with /u/, one notes the shift of F1 from 304 Hz to the higher frequency of 416 Hz (musically, the span of a wide perfect fourth), due to the widening aperture of the lips, yet F2 actually lowers in frequency from 788 Hz to 737 Hz. Here, perhaps, F2 should be considered essentially unchanged, as most other physiological studies show, and the above example considered an anomaly. The bottom line is that the back of the tongue does not lower significantly from the /u/ position. The gap between F3 and F4 can be seen to begin to narrow, while F5, in my case, increases in strength suggesting a lowering of my larynx, which could also account for the lowering of F2. The narrowing of F3 and F4 suggests a slight flattening of the blade of the tongue.



Half-closed /ɔ/ or /σ/ — extracted from the Italian word *sono*

Figure 27

Analysis of my half-closed /ɔ/ reveals a more expected shape. My lip aperture is a bit wider than for closed /o/, shifting F1 only from 416 Hz to 432 Hz, but my tongue has lowered significantly, causing F2 to jump from 736 Hz to 903 Hz. The peaks of F3 and F4 have drawn even closer and, in this case, F5 has either dropped significantly or has risen up a bit in frequency to meld with F4. Again, the narrowing of F3 and F4 suggests the further flattening or lowering of the blade of my tongue.

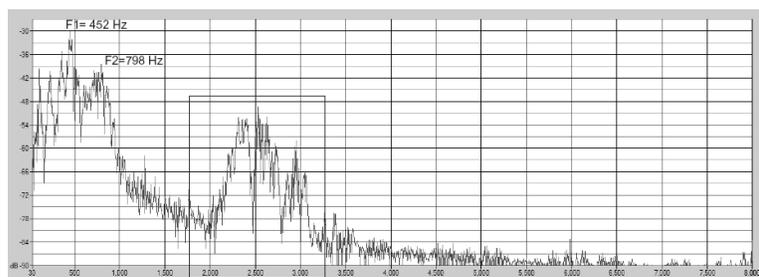


Open /ɔ/ — extracted from the Italian word *occhi*

Figure 28

Open /ɔ/ displays more drastic changes. F1 has leapt up nearly a musical tri-tone from 432 Hz to 619 Hz (over an octave from the F1 of my /u/ vowel at 304 Hz) signifying a much greater diameter to my lip aperture. F2 has gone from 903 Hz to 947 Hz, reflecting a slight lowering of the tongue. The most dramatic change is between F3 and F4. F3 apparently has raised and F4 lowered to the point where they nearly form a single mountain centered

between 2300 and 2400 Hz, probably incorporating F5, as well. This acoustical conglomerate is so powerful that it produces acoustical *side-bands* near 1500 Hz and above 3000 Hz, due to the interaction with F2, which is near 950 Hz [acoustical physics is mathematical – subtract 950 Hz from 2350 Hz and get a *resultant* frequency of 1400 Hz; add the numbers and get an *additive* frequency of 3300 Hz; nature isn't laboratory pristine, so these numbers are only approximate]. The acoustical mountain comes from a strong change in the shape of my tongue, specifically from a slightly arched blade for half-closed /ɔ/ to a very flat, if not slightly concave shape for open /ɔ/. The FFT graph then reflects the changes seen in the earlier orograms, especially the significant flattening of the front half of the tongue from /σ/ to /ɔ/, as depicted in the Canepari illustrations.



Russian /o/ — extracted from the Russian word *работа* (*work*)

Figure 29

Looking at the graph of my Russian /o/, one can see a very distinctive sound print. F1 and F2 (452 Hz and 798 Hz, respectively) have dropped almost to the formant frequencies of my closed /o/, meaning that my lips are quite rounded (though more the shape for half-closed /ɔ/) and the back of my tongue, though slightly lower, is nearly the same height as my /u/ vowel, and is much higher than open /ɔ/. The striking element is the mountain made by F3, F5, and F4. Though not as massive, the Russian /o/ formant cluster is clearly comparable to

that of open /ɔ/, strongly suggesting that the front half of my tongue is quite low in my mouth. In graphic representation, one can see that the left half of the chart looks similar to closed /o/, while the right half mimics open /ɔ/. These two strong acoustical elements exist together in one vowel sound: my lips and back of tongue are forming /o/, while the front of my tongue is shaping /ɔ/. No wonder the confusion, as Russian /o/ seems to be a fusion vowel. It is either a strongly rounded open /ɔ/ or a greatly opened (lowered) rounded /o/. So it seems that Russian /o/ is a phoneme unto itself and can be considered, in my opinion, as a kind of combination vowel.

#### Conclusion: Pedagogical Approach

Obviously, if one carefully reads the articulatory description of the Russian /o/ vowel given by Trofimov and Jones or, later, Jones and Ward, the mixing of articulator shapes is explained quite clearly. My interest is to express to singers how to form this idiomatic phoneme using concepts and terminology that would be very familiar. Therefore, my approach in the diction guide describes Russian /o/ in terms of being a combination vowel, where the lips form an Italianate, closed /o/ (that is, slightly more relaxed than a French or German /o/), while the tongue is shaped like open /ɔ/. The formation exercise either starts with an open /ɔ/ and slowly rounds the lips like closed /o/, or vice versa, starts with a closed /o/ and slowly lowers the tongue to a position like that of open /ɔ/.

One more choice must be made, though. Should the guide use the symbol for open /ɔ/, closed /o/, or introduce a third, unusual, phonetic symbol? The introduction of a new symbol might impress upon a singer the uniqueness of the Russian phoneme, but it also might just cause confusion and create another barrier to pursuing Russian vocal repertoire. I

firmly believe that using the IPA symbol of /ɔ/ will cause a singer to widen the lip rounding far too much; the exact opposite to the desired shape. Therefore, my guide will use the IPA symbol of /o/. The compromise is that a singer might not form a large enough buccal space (by not lowering the tongue enough) to sound authentically Russian. My position, though, is that a European sounding closed /o/ is still more Russian sounding than a wide open, American /ɔ/. Erring on the side of too closed is much better than too open, to my mind.

One final point is that Russian /o/ is *mono-phonemic*. What is meant by this is that Russians recognize /o/ as only one phoneme that occurs in a stressed syllable. Unlike Italian, French, German or English, Russian does not officially have an open /ɔ/ and a closed /o/, it only has /o/. This fact gives singers the flexibility to change the shape of the /o/-phoneme from more rounded to less rounded and from a higher tongue to a lower one, for the sake of good singing tone, without really sacrificing understandability or Russianness, as long as the vowel is somewhat rounded and doesn't sound like /a/. If one listens to many of the great, Russian opera singers on record, all kinds of /o/-sounds are heard within the same kind of spectrum as might be found among the great Italian opera singers. Lower-middle notes sound more idiomatic, while the upper and lower extremes open up enough to free the voice and keep beauty of tone. Frankly, too, the highest notes in a Russian singer's range are often sung essentially as /a/, just like any other singer of any nationality. As has been attributed to the inimitable Jessye Norman, ostensibly speaking to the great conductor Herbert Von Karajan at a rehearsal, when he demanded better diction on her high notes, she is to have said: "Maestro, anything above the staff is tone only."

### Shcha-Cha-Cha! The History of the Shifting Pronunciation of Ш

There are two reading pronunciations in Russian for the Cyrillic letter -ш-. They are /ʃʲʃʲ/, a palatalized, elongated /ʃ/, as is approximately produced in English when eliding the words “leash sheet,” and /ʃʲtʃʲ/, approximately produced when eliding “leash cheat.” Most of my sources consider the first pronunciation, /ʃʲʃʲ/, as preferred, because it comes from the Moscow accent, which is the favored accent for literature and the arts, including stage performance.<sup>396</sup> Where there is disagreement is in the historical phonetic evolution. Belov says, without any citation of source, that:

The sound of the letter ш underwent a certain transformation during the last century. It is historic fact that in the 1800's the letter was read as a combination of the soft sounds [ʃ] and [tʃ], that is [ʃtʃ]. The contemporary Moscow dialect norm, however, is to pronounce ш as an elongated softened form of [ʃ], that is [ʃ:]. You can still hear a [ʃtʃ] in the speech of some educated Petersburgians or the Russian émigrés in America and Western Europe. Because the [ʃtʃ] pronunciation sounds rather unnatural to most Russians, it is recommended that this letter be read the modern way.<sup>397</sup>

Also without citation Piatak and Avrashov say:

The pronunciation of the letter ш depends on the date the poem was written and the region of the Soviet Union in which the poet resided. The generally accepted pronunciation of ш currently is [ʃ:]; that is a long [ʃ] with the middle part of the tongue raised towards the hard palate. The songs of Prokofiev contain the pronunciation. However, for most of the songs you will sing, the correct sound is [ʃtʃ], since the poems predate general acceptance of the current sound. The cluster [ʃtʃ] is also currently the standard pronunciation in Leningrad [St. Petersburg].<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> A. P. Vlasto, *A Linguistic History of Russia to the End of the Eighteen Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 300–333, 356–377; G. O. Vinokur, *Russkoe Stsenicheskoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Stage Pronunciation]* (Moscow: Vsepossiiskoe Teatral'noe Obshchestvo [All-Russian Theatre Society], 1948), 21–31; Michael Shapiro, *Russian Phonetic Variants and Phonostylistics*. Edited by Bull, Chafe, Chrétien, et al., vol. 49, *University of California Publications in Linguistics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 3–6.

<sup>397</sup> Belov, *Libretti of Russian Operas*, xxvii.

<sup>398</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias*, 18.

It should be noted that even though Piatak and Avrashov do not use any palatalization symbolism with the /ʃ/ or /ʃtʃ/ phonemes, by description in the text they expect them to be palatalized, that is as /ʃʲ:/ and /ʃʲtʃʲ/. Richter and Sheil/Walters acknowledge only /ʃʲʃʲ/ as the appropriate reading of -ш-. Thus, most lyric diction sources suggest /ʃʲʃʲ/, but two native Muscovite Russian speakers, armed with the same historical information, recommend opposite pronunciations. There may be an issue of a generation gap between the authorities, but what of the dance of time and place?

It is generally accepted by scholars of Slavic linguistics that the sound that came to be represented by the Cyrillic letter -ш- was, in fact, /ʃʲtʃʲ/. This is the pronunciation, preserved through Russian Church Slavonic, which is used by the priests of the Russian Orthodox Church, today. Though the cluster might have been hardened to /ʃtʃ/ by some regional speakers, it still could be considered the common, orthoepical (proper) reading of -ш- for the majority of the Russian people over most of Russian history.<sup>399</sup> So then, how would another pronunciation develop and gain prominence at all? Russian linguistic development (including pronunciation), Russian demographics, and Russian political history are inextricably entwined. To understand the first fully, one must at least have a cursory understanding of the others.

As with most languages, accents in Russian developed between people living in different geographical regions. Americans are very familiar with the wide variety of regional accents in our own language, from the Southern Drawl to the Bostonian's "Pahk your Cah in Hahvuhd Yahd" to the New Yorker's "Coawffee" to the Midwestern flat accent. The

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<sup>399</sup> Vlasto, *Linguistic History of Russia*, 67–68; Comrie, Stone and Polinsky, *The Russian Language*, 33–35.

broadest Russian analogues are a Southern accent exemplified by those from Kursk, Riazan' and the area of the Don River, a Central transitional accent, including Moscow and Pskov, and a Northern accent that would include people from Novgorod and St. Petersburg. In recent times, these accents have been more finely subdivided, but the broader categories will suffice. The Northern Russian accent is characterized by the /o/-phoneme not being reduced to /a/, /ʌ/, or /ə/ when unstressed, but remaining /o/ (Slavic linguists call this phenomenon *okanye* /'o kə nɪ/ *оканье*), the letter -г- being read as /g/, and -шт- being read as /ʃʲtʃʲ/. The Southern accent is somewhat different from the Northern by reducing unstressed /o/ to /a/, /ʌ/, or /ə/ when unstressed (*akanye* /'a kə nɪ/ *аканье*), reading -г- as a voiced /x/, that is /χ/, yet, also, reading -шт- as /ʃʲtʃʲ/. The Central accent is truly transitional and borrows from both the Northern and Southern accents. Thus, the Central accent was (emphasis on “was”) characterized by *akanye* [Southern], but reading -г- as /g/ [Northern], while originally reading -шт- as /ʃʲtʃʲ/, as in both accents.<sup>400</sup> Sometime during the seventeenth century, though, a fashion of pronunciation arose changing from the fricative-affricative cluster of /ʃʲtʃʲ/ to the long, palatalized fricative, /ʃʲjʃʲ/ (nearly unique to Moscow until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries).<sup>401</sup> The land area and population of this Central region was not that great, so how did this pronunciation fashion become so popular as to gain a fifty/fifty occurrence with /ʃʲjʃʲ/ in modern Russian? Here is where understanding Russian political history is important.

The region of Eurasia that spans from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea and from the Carpathian mountains to the Volga River and Ural mountains is the region of the Eastern

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<sup>400</sup> Vlasto, *Linguistic History of Russia*, 300–333, 356–377.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, 323–328.

Slavic languages. It includes modern day Ukraine, Belorussia, the Baltic States, and Russia, but in its earliest incarnation it was known as the *Land of Rus'*. This region was a crossroads that saw domination by many ancient peoples, including Scythians (Huns and Goths), Khazars, and Scandinavians (known to Russians as Varangians). The Slavs are the root stock of modern Russia, but they were not in the line of power for many centuries. Over a few hundred years, a conjectured Common Slavonic language began to diversify into several dialects and then into the separate Slavic languages that are known today. By the ninth century, a distinctive Eastern Slavic language branch had developed encompassing what would become Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Russian.<sup>402</sup> It is during this period that written Slavonic began, after the creation of a Greek-based, Slavonic alphabet (now called *Glagolitic*) by two Orthodox missionaries, Methodius and Cyril. From the Glagolitic, the Cyrillic alphabet developed. It is these two alphabets (mostly the latter, Cyrillic) in which Old Church Slavonic and Russian Church Slavonic have been memorialized, and it has been through centuries of carefully handed-down tradition that the Church Slavonic pronunciation has been preserved.<sup>403</sup> This is why linguists assume that the Cyrillic letter -и- was assigned to the Slavic speech sound symbolized in IPA as /ɨʲtɨʲ/.

Though the Slavs were the people of Rus', the first great rulers were the Varangians (Scandinavians), who made Kiev their capital (present-day capital of the Ukraine). The *Kievan Period* lasted from the late ninth century into the early thirteenth century. During this time the Slavonic branches, Eastern, Western, and Southern became distinct from each other,

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<sup>402</sup> A. G. Sherrett, D. S. M. Williams, Sergei Hackel, and Muriel Heppell. "Earliest Peoples — Land of Rus' — Mongol Conquest — Rise of Moscow" in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia and the Soviet Union*, edited by Archie Brown, John Fennell, Michael Kaser and H. T. Willetts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 78–87.

<sup>403</sup> Terence R. Carlton, *Introduction to the Phonological History of the Slavic Languages* (Columbus: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1990), 34–56; Vinokur, *The Russian Language*, 1–10, 21–29.

and any sort of Common Slavonic went extinct. Beginning around the thirteenth century, the Eastern Slavonic dialects were diversifying and would soon develop into the separate languages of Ukrainian, Russian and Belorussian.<sup>404</sup>

At this point, in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, Russia fell to the invasion of Genghis Khan. Kiev fell in 1240, and so began the period of the Tartar Yoke (“Tartar” was the Russian term for the Mongols and remains a derogatory epithet, today). The opera *Prince Igor* by Rimsky-Korsakov deals with this period. From the early fourteenth century through the first half of the fifteenth century, still under the Yoke, native Slavic Russian leaders gained strength in a relatively small city called *Moskva*, what we call Moscow. These Russian princes first worked with the Mongols to gain and develop their own power, so when internal troubles weakened the Golden Horde, the Muscovite Slavs defeated the Mongols destroying their frightening reputation. By the mid 1400s, Moscow gained great strength and Ivan III (Ivan the Great) became Russia’s first true Slavic ruler. The march toward a unified Slavic state began, heralding the dawn of the Moscow or *Muscovite Period*.<sup>405</sup>

Technically, the Muscovite Period has not ended, as Moscow remains the governmental capital of Russia, but certainly, it is Imperial Moscow that the term most describes. Muscovite rule was only interrupted for 8 years (known as the Time of Troubles) between the death of Boris Godunov (famous to non-Russians by Musorgsky’s opera) in 1605, and the ascendancy of Mikhail Romanov, the first of the last line of Russian monarchs. It was during the reign of Mikhail’s son, Aleksei (1645-76) that a deeply embedded civil

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<sup>404</sup> Sherrett, Williams, Hackel, and Heppell. "Earliest Peoples — Land of Rus' — Mongol Conquest — Rise of Moscow," 78–87; Vlasto, 3–9, 300–301, 344–356.

<sup>405</sup> Muriel Heppell, "The Rise of Moscow — Ivan III — Ivan IV" in *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia*, 84–89; W. K. Matthews, *The Structure and Development of Russian*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), 126–138.

servant, named Grigoriĭ Kotoshikhin, penned a description of the internal workings of the Tsar's government entitled: *О Россiи в Царствование Алексея Михайловича* [*On Russia during the Reign of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich*].<sup>406</sup>

Kotoshikhin was a native Muscovite who lived from c. 1630 to 1667 (he was executed for killing his landlord in a drunken argument). Anne Pennington, the foremost orthographic and linguistic analyst of Kotoshikhin, citing A. I. Markevich, accounts that the seventeenth-century Muscovite may have written his description of the Muscovite State as part of a deal with the Swedish government to maintain asylum in Sweden. Kotoshikhin wrote in a style called *prikasnyiĭ yazyk*.<sup>407</sup> Literally, this means “command language,” as in the style in which one would write military orders, but it was the writing style for all mundane chronicling of bureaucracy and government, and so has been called *chancery style* in English. It stood in contrast with the high, florid style of the Church Slavonic, used for proclamations by both the Church and the Tsar, and chancery style tended to reflect the more direct vernacular of spoken Russian. Such a style of writing gives hints as to everyday syntax and grammar and, sometimes, colloquial pronunciation.<sup>408</sup>

Though Kotoshikhin began his career as a Court scribe, he was rather inconsistent in his writings as to grammar and spelling. He did show, though, a tendency to use the letter -III- (/ʃ/) when the correct letter would be -III- (/ʃʲtʃʲ/).<sup>409</sup> It is this and other orthographic confusions by Kotoshikhin and many other Muscovites of the time that places the emergence of the *Old Muscovite* pronunciation in the seventeenth century. These writings suggest a

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<sup>406</sup> Muriel Heppell, "Boris Godunov — The Time of Troubles — The Early Romanovs" in *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia*, 90–92; Vlasto, 368–369.

<sup>407</sup> Pennington, *Grigorii Kotoshikhin*, 1–7.

<sup>408</sup> Vlasto, 369; Matthews, 139–142.

<sup>409</sup> Pennington, *Grigorii Kotoshikhin*, 205–206.

fashion of pronunciation, favored by the aristocratic citizens of Moscow, in which one of the trademark idiosyncrasies was that the /t/-sound in the cluster /ʃʲtʃʲ/ (-шт-) was softened to such a degree as to be deleted, creating a /ʃ/ pronunciation similar to that when reading the letter -шт-.

The process of transition from Muscovite fashion to Muscovite accent is conjecture at best. It could be assumed that as Moscow rose in political power, those under that power wished to curry favor or fit in and so may have cultivated the accent. Thus, the accent would grow along with Moscow's influence. Once established as the accent of the elite and powerful, dissemination across society's strata would be relatively swift. Those generally isolated from high society, such as the clergy and academics, might retain the pronunciation of /ʃʲtʃʲ/, while anyone who was fashionable would use /ʃʲʃʲ/. Interestingly, Peter the Great built St. Petersburg (in a region that is solidly Northern accented) as a city of Arts and Letters, containing a great university and many libraries, museums and theaters. Both the Northern location and academic element of the city might cause a tendency toward the use of /ʃʲʃʲ/ in the local speech, and so it seems today, as mentioned by both Piatak and Belov. The fact that the Muscovite accent dates from the seventeenth century belies the suggestion by both our Muscovite authors that poets and composers from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would expect a pronunciation of /ʃʲtʃʲ/. By that time, the Muscovite fashion would have become the accent, and so it could strongly be argued that /ʃʲʃʲ/ might have been the favored pronunciation of the Muscovites Pushkin and Lermontov.

Whether the above conjecture has any basis in reality or not, two, much respected, native authorities on Russian orthoepical pronunciation, R. I. Avanesov and E. A.

Bryzgunova, recognize an equal occurrence of /ʃʲʃʲ/ (sometimes written as /ʃʲ:/) and /ʃʲtʃʲ/, in Russian speech. Both also express the preference of the Muscovite accent. First, Bryzgunova:

Throughout the presentation of material, the adopted system is [that] of the Moscow Phonological School, in which...the consonants -ш- [ʃʲ:] and -ж- [ʒʲ:] stand out as independent phonemes,...<sup>410</sup>

The phoneme -ш- has, in the Russian language, two equal, alternative pronunciations and consequently two types of articulation: /ʃʲ:/ and /ʃʲtʃʲ/...It is essential first to establish the articulation of -ш- and then to secure it through exercises by contrasting -ш- and -ш- in all possible combinations. In the given case, it is easier to establish the pronunciation of /ʃʲ:/.<sup>411</sup>

Then, Avanesov:

In place of the letter -ш-, a long, soft sibilant, [ʃʲʃʲ] is read...In place of -ш- it is also possible to sound as [ʃʲtʃʲ], alternately [ʃʲtʃʲʃʲ], with a very weak [tʃʲ] element...However such pronunciation is going out of use.<sup>412</sup>

As in regard to long, soft, sibilant phonemes in the Literary style...Such initial sound clusters appear as /ʃʲtʃʲ/ and /ʒʲdʒʲ/ (the soft clusters with the affricative in the second portion)...As far as the voiceless cluster is concerned, that sort was characteristic of the Old Leningrad [St. Petersburg] pronunciation...

As a result of weakening and...the loss of plosion...[these clusters] in the dialects, appear as /ʃʲ:/ and /ʒʲ:/; such was the orthoepical pronunciation of the Old Muscovite norm.<sup>413</sup>

Thus, Piatak prefers the St. Petersburg pronunciation, while Belov prefers the Muscovite.

As stated in passing above, Pushkin was Muscovite and lived after the firm establishment of the *Old Muscovite* accent, but Russian was his second language (French being his first) taught to him by his governess, who may or may not have had a Muscovite accent. Russian linguistic scholars interested in Pushkin's pronunciation may do the

<sup>410</sup> Bryzgunova, 45n. [Translation by Craig Grayson, see Appendix L for original]

<sup>411</sup> Ibid., 110–111. [Trans. by C. Grayson, see Appx. L]

<sup>412</sup> Borunova, et al. [*Orthoepical Dictionary*], 669, §75. [Trans. by C. Grayson, see Appx. L]

<sup>413</sup> Avanesov, [*Russian Literary and Dialectal Phonetics*], 172. [Trans. by C. Grayson, see Appx. L]

painstaking, comparative research necessary to discover how the poet may have spoken the letter -и-, but I am not such a scholar.

Another approach might consider the idea that many of the most influential composers of Russian song and opera were bourgeois or aristocratic Muscovites, and might have been inclined to use the *Old Muscovite* accent, expecting the same from their singers. Or perhaps, the singers of the Marinsky Theater in St Petersburg sang /ʃʲtʃʲ/, while those of Moscow's Bolshoi Theater sang /ʃʲʃʲ/. Yet, almost all Russian singers on recording, including the great basso, Fyodor Chaliapin, and his contemporaries, display the use of /ʃʲʃʲ/, so with such preponderance of evidence, this diction guide advocates for the pronunciation of /ʃʲʃʲ/, as recommended by Belov, Avanesov, and Bryzgunova.

### The Problem of *Schwa*

The purpose of developing the International Phonetic Alphabet was to assign absolute symbols to absolute sounds so that /a/, /e/, and /i/ in English would be /a/, /e/ and /i/ in French, Italian, German, Russian, Chinese, Farsi, Swahili, et cetera.<sup>414</sup> Anyone who has studied or experienced just two or three of the above languages in some depth will recognize the failing of the IPA in this endeavor. For example, even though /pa/ is the IPA transcription of the letter combination -pa-, found in words such as *papa* (English, Italian, German), *pater* (Latin), or *папа* (Russian), when one hears an Anglophone, an Italophone and a Russophone speak this ubiquitous syllable, three distinct colors can clearly be recognized. This common failing pales in comparison to the symbol and concept of /ə/, or schwa.

Schwa, /ə/, has a rather precise definition: an unrounded, mid-central, neutral vowel occurring in an unstressed syllable.<sup>415</sup> An unstressed position is not a secondary stress position (such as the -ta- syllable in the word *secretary*, in American speech), but is completely without stress. We tend to say **SE**-cre-**ta**-ry, so that Se- and -ta- retain rather specific vowel sounds, while the -cre- and -ry lose some or all of their specificity. In Standard American English the -ry retains a rather definite /i/-sound, yet in some southeastern American dialects, the -ry moves closer to a schwa, though it is a little higher in the mouth toward /ɛ/ or /ɪ/. The -cre- is a good example of the American schwa, which is close to, but not exactly, the vowel sound made when saying *um* (written in IPA as [ʌm]).

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<sup>414</sup> Clark, Yallop, and Fletcher, *An Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology*, 36–37; International Phonetic Association, "Report on the 1989 Kiel Convention," in *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, 19, no. 2 (1989), 67.

<sup>415</sup> R-M. S. Heffner, *General Phonetics*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin, 1949), 108–109; Laver, *Principles of Phonetics*, 280.

The sound is “close to, but not exactly” because technically, in the American English schwa, the tongue is slightly higher and more forward in the mouth than for the /ʌ/-phoneme found in a word like *but* ([bʌt] in IPA).<sup>416</sup> On very close listening, this schwa lies between /ʌ/ and /ɛ/, though it seems closer to /ʌ/.

While the schwa has a precise phonetic definition, it has no such absoluteness in its articulation or its perceived sound. Schwa is so subjugated and unimportant that it appears to be a shadow of a sound, thus to talk of an exact schwa is oxymoronic. This is the dilemma for the singer. If schwa has no precise sound, then how can we possibly sing such a vowel over any length of time? Enter *lyric diction*. For most languages, spoken and sung pronunciation differ in that specific decisions have been made by orators, poets, singers, composers, etc. over the centuries as to what a vowel sounds like when phonated over an extended duration (this is true for dramatic recitation, as well as singing). These decisions have become traditions, even rules, and are specific to each language. The altered sounds are accepted and expected by performer and audience member alike. Care is usually taken to assure the greatest clarity and understandability under the unusual condition of extended phonation.

Italian and Spanish technically have no schwa sound — all vowels are cardinal or secondary. French assigns to schwa an elegant, rounded sound, very close to /ø/, though it is a bit more relaxed.<sup>417</sup> German, perhaps, is the most varied with sounds from /ɛ/-like to /ʌ/-like to somewhat /ʊ/-like.<sup>418</sup> American and British English often reduce to some kind of

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<sup>416</sup> Laver, *Principles of Phonetics*, 285.

<sup>417</sup> Grubb, *Singing in French*, 43; Donnan, *French Lyric Diction*, 15.

<sup>418</sup> Odom and Schollum, *German for Singers*, 45.

cardinal or secondary vowel (e.g. /ɪ/, /ɛ/, or /ʊ/), next deferring to /ʌ/, but reserve the “textbook” schwa for specific cases.<sup>419</sup>

Some examples:

|                |                                           |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Secretary      | /ˈsɛ kɪɪ ˌtɛ ɪi/ or /ˈsɛ kɪɛ ˌtɛ ɪi/      |
| Between        | /bɪ ˈtwin/                                |
| Tomorrow       | /tu ˈmɑ ɪo:u/ or /tu ˈmɔ ɪo:u]            |
| About          | /ʌ ˈbɑ:ʊt/                                |
| Again          | /ʌ ˈɡɛn/                                  |
| Animal         | /ˈæ nɪ məl/ or /ˈæ nɪ mʊl/ or /ˈæ nə mʊl/ |
| Suspect (verb) | /sə ˈspɛkt/ or /sʊ ˈspɛkt/                |

To consider the practical effects of this choice, an example might help.

In Russian, unstressed vowels generally have specific sounds, even if those sounds are not related to the printed letter. The sound used is determined by fairly simple and straight forward rules. Those rules are discussed in the previous guide, but the use of the schwa is somewhat fluid. Professor Daniel Jones could fairly be considered the grandfather of the phonetic study of Russian for English speakers. He established a rather broad use of the schwa in most cases of remote stress, pre-stress and most all post-stress cases of /a/ and /o/. The cases where something other than schwa is to be transcribed are highly specific and rather rare.<sup>420</sup> Of course, Professor Jones was dealing with the spoken Russian language and not lyric diction, but his scholarly and historical influence survives to the present.

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<sup>419</sup> Small, *Fundamentals of Phonetics*., 80–82; Madeleine Marshall, *The Singer's Manual of English Diction* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1953), 150–162.

<sup>420</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, 50–55.

Jones' influence is most obvious in Piatak and Avrashov's anthology, *Russian Songs and Arias: Phonetic Readings, Word-by-Word Translation, and a Concise Guide to Russian Diction* (1991). Throughout the transcriptions, the symbol /ə/ seems to be employed in the pre- and post-stress cases delineated by the rules described by Jones, along with Trofimov, in *The Pronunciation of Russian*. In 1923, as well as in texts in the 1960s, Jones established that in Russian, the schwa is similar to the -a- in *about*. This definition is used in Piatak and Avrashov, as well as in several other, more recent diction and phonetics books, making it clear that the /ʌ/-like, unrounded schwa is represented by the /ə/-symbol.<sup>421</sup>

Yet, when a singer sees the symbol /ə/, she/he may thoughtlessly sing the rounded sound, more related to /ø/ than /ʌ/. This kind of closely rounded /ø/-sound does not exist in Russian. So, the singer often may come away from the Piatak and Avrashov transcriptions singing with an odd, and quite incorrect, French-like accent in the Russian songs transcribed in the anthology. As an example, a line from Glinka's *Сомнение* (Doubt),

... и тайно, и злобно кипящая ревность пылает!  
 (...and quietly, and meanly, boiling jealousy blazes!)

is transcribed in Piatak and Avrashov as,

/i 'tai nə i 'zlob nə kʲi 'pɑ ʃtʃə jə 'rɛv nəst̚ pi 'la jit/<sup>422</sup>

and might be carefully and confidently read by the singer as something like,

/i 'tai nø i 'zlob nø kʲi 'pɑ ʃtʃø jø 'rɛv nøst̚ pi 'la jit/

with each /ə/ being pronounced most elegantly in the forward, rounded style. If the transcription used the /ʌ/-symbol, instead of /ə/, and corrected for a few other transcription

<sup>421</sup> Piatak and Avrashov, *Russian Songs and Arias*, 7.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

anomalies discussed earlier in the Piatak and Avrashov critique, the transcription could easily produce a more idiomatic pronunciation. The above line would look like this:

/i 'tɑj nʌ i 'zʌb nʌ kʲi 'pʲɑ ʃʲjɑ ja 'rʲɛv nʌsʲtʲi pʲi 'tɑ jɪt/.

The conclusion of the above exposition is that the schwa is perceptually and conceptually too ambiguous for use in singing diction and that the IPA symbol, /ə/, is taken to be the rounded version used in French lyric diction too readily by many young singers. Therefore, in the previous Russian diction guide, the IPA symbol, /ʌ/, has been chosen to represent the reduction for /o/ and /ɑ/, in certain unstressed positions.

Russian Cyrillic: Cyril and Methodius and the Origins of a Slavic Alphabet <sup>423</sup>

Since this guide uses some historical facts and references to aid the student in understanding and remembering the Cyrillic letters, a short history of the Russian alphabet may help as well. The modern Russian alphabet is called the Cyrillic alphabet after one of its canonized originators, Saint Cyril (née Constantine) of Thessalonica. The term *Cyrillic* honors St. Cyril in name only, as the Old Cyrillic orthography was developed more than 20 years after the monk's death. The brothers Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius actually created and developed the Glagolitic alphabet with which they wrote down their translations of scripture, prayers and liturgy.

To the best of Slavic historians' knowledge, Russians, indeed all Slavs, did not have writing (therefore, no alphabet) until the mission of the two brothers to Great Moravia in the mid-ninth century CE.<sup>424</sup> Constantine and Methodius were chosen to head the mission, because they had been born and raised in Thessalonica, a city in a Slavic speaking part of Greek Macedonia, and spoke the Slavic language with native fluency. Methodius had been an administrator and governor of a Slavic speaking province, while Constantine was a secular and theological scholar of strong reputation, who was considered an accomplished linguist. In order to teach the Christian tradition from liturgy to scripture, the brothers had to translate the texts from Hebrew, Greek and Latin into Slavic, and, much more important, they had to create a written form of the Slavic sounds via an alphabet, in order to preserve and distribute their translations. The *Glagolitic* alphabet ("glagol," here, meaning "word," as in The Word)

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<sup>423</sup> This essay draws from four sources: Terence R. Carlton, *Introduction to the Phonological History of the Slavic Languages* (Columbus: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1990), 34–56; Vlasto, *Linguistic History of Russian*, 1–10; Vinokur, *Russian Language*, 21–29; and Matthews, *The Structure and Development of Russian*, 111–115.

<sup>424</sup> Carlton, *Phonological History of the Slavic Languages*, 39; Vlasto, *Linguistic History of Russian*, 5–6; Vinokur, *Russian Language*, 21; and Matthews, *The Structure and Development of Russian*, 111–112.



The Old Cyrillic alphabet has several letters that are no longer in use. None the less, the entire modern Cyrillic alphabet originated from within the old system. Chapter 9 covers the pertinent changes in Russian orthography and discusses some of the old spellings of some common words that a singer may encounter in pre-Revolutionary vocal literature (mostly from the nineteenth century). Also, Appendix B presents a chart of the modern Russian Cyrillic alphabet and includes the few obsolete letters that are still commonly found in Russian vocal publications.

## APPENDIX L

Russian Texts to Translations by Craig GraysonOriginal Russian texts to translations in Essay: The Story of /O/

From Bryzgunova's *Prakticheskaya Fonetika I Intonatsiya Russkogo Yazyka* [*Practical Phonetics and Intonation of the Russian Language*], page 34:

## Фонема о

В русском языке фонологическими признаками фонемы о являются: 1) средний подъем задней части языка, 2) округленность и вытянутость губ. Фонема о произносится при небольшом растворе ротовой полости (рис. 5). Фонема о неоднородна на протяжении своего звучания, она начинается с призвука у, который представители некоторых языков, например английского и французского, слышат гораздо лучше, чем сами русские.

При постановке произношения фонемы о у представителей различных языков отмечаются следующие отклонения:

1. Смещение фонем о и у (произношение *отро* вместо *утро*, *лужка* вместо *ложка*).
2. Произношение о с более задней или передней артикуляцией.
3. Произношение о с ослабленной губной артикуляцией.

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From Avanesov's *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie* [*Russian Literary Pronunciation*], pages 31-32:

p. 31:

## Гласный [о]

При образовании гласного [о] нижняя челюсть опущена больше, чем при [у], раствор рта при [о] шире, чем при [у], но уже, чем при [а]; язык при образовании [о] отодвинут назад и поднят в своей

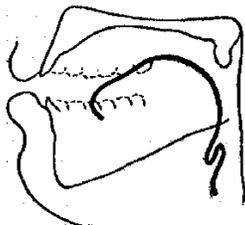


Рис. 5. Гласный [о]

задней части к мягкому нёбу, однако в меньшей степени, чем при [у]. Опущенный кончик языка отодвинут назад от нижних зубов (также в меньшей степени, чем при [у]); корень языка отодвинут к стенке глотки, но несколько меньше, чем при [у]. Губы вытянуты вперед и округлены, однако в меньшей степени, чем при [у], в связи с чем отверстие, образуемое губами и являющееся границей резонирующей полости, несколько более широкое, чем при [у].

\* Следует отметить, что в начале слова (как и после твердых согласных, о чем будет сказано ниже) гласный [о] не совсем одно-

31

p. 32:

роден в своем протяжении: он начинается с [у]-образного приступа: произносится как бы [ʏо].

Таким образом, гласный [о] как фонема определяется как лабиализованный, среднего подъема.

Original Russian texts to translations in Essay: Shcha-Cha-Cha!

From Bryzgunova's *Prakticheskaya Fonetika I Intonatsiya Russkogo Yazyka* [*Practical Phonetics and Intonation of the Russian Language*]:

Page 45, n17:

<sup>17</sup> При изложении материала принята система Московской фонологической школы, по которой согласные  $k^b \rightarrow g^b \rightarrow x^b$  являются позиционным изменением фонем  $k - g - x$ , согласные  $\{ш':\}$  и  $\{ж':\}$  выделяются как самостоятельные фонемы, в отличие от системы Ленинградской фонологической школы. Однако в практическом пособии фонема  $\{ж':\}$  в самостоятельном разделе рассматриваться не будет.

45

Page 110:

Фонема *щ* имеет в русском языке два равноправных варианта произношения и, следовательно, два типа артикуляции:  $\{ш':\}$  и  $\{ш'ч'\}$ . [При произношении  $\{ш':\}$  об-

Page 111:

**Устранение смешения фонем *щ* и *ш*.** При смешении фонем *щ* и *ш*, отмечаемом у представителей многих языков, например испанского, арабского, сомали, необходимо сначала поставить артикуляцию *щ*, а затем закрепить ее в упражнениях на противопоставление *щ* и *ш* во всех возможных сочетаниях. В данном случае легче поставить произношение  $\{ш':\}$ . [При переходе от

From Boranova, et al. *Orfoepicheskiy Slovar' Russkogo Yazyka: Proiznoshenie, Udarenie, Grammaticheskie Formy* [An Orthoepical Dictionary of the Russian Language: Pronunciation, Stress, Grammatical Forms]:

Page 669, §75:

§ 75. На месте буквы *ш* произносится долгий мягкий согласный  $\{ш^bш^b\}$ :  $\{ш^bш^bит\}$ ,  $\{ш^bш^bель\}$ ,  $\{ш^bш^bурит^b\}$ . На месте *щ* может звучать также  $\{ш^bч'\}$ , иначе  $\{ш^bт^bш^b\}$  с очень слабым элементом  $\{ч'\}$ :  $\{ш^bчит\}$  (щит),  $\{ш^bчель\}$  (щель),  $\{ш^bчурит^b\}$  (щурить). Однако такое произношение выходит из употребления.

From Avanesov's *Russkaya Literaturnaya I Dialektная Fonetika* [Russian Literary and Dialectal Phonetics]:

Page 172:

Однако в соответствии с долгими мягкими шипящими фонемами литературного языка и части говоров в других говорах мы находим иные весьма разнообразные звуки, явившиеся в результате того, что они сохранили разные стадии имевшего места фонетического процесса, а отчасти потому, что ими были пережиты разные фонетические процессы. Однако исходные звукосочетания, подвергавшиеся дальнейшим изменениям, были едины. Такими исходными звукосочетаниями являются  $\{ш'ч'\}$  ( $\{ш'т'ш'\}$ ) и  $\{ж'д'ж'\}$  (мягкие сочетания с аффрикатой во второй части), которые и сейчас употребляются в некоторых говорах. Что касается глухого сочетания, то оно было свойственно старому ленинградскому произношению: не чуждо ему было и аналогичное звонкое сочетание.

В результате ослабления, а потом и утраты взрыва (и, следовательно, упрощения второй части сочетания—аффрикаты в фрикативный звук) по говорам появляются  $\{ш':\}$ ,  $\{ж':\}$ ; таково было орфоэпическое произношение по старым московским нормам. Долгая фрикативная шипящая имеет тенденцию к отверде-

## APPENDIX M

Russian Singers Suggested for Listening

[transliterated name (main career dates)]

Sopranos

Valeriya Barsova (1920–1948)

Natalya Rozhdestvenskaya (1929–1960)

Galina Vishnevskaya (1944–1982)

Ljuba Kazarnovskaya (1992–present)

Anna Natrebko (2002–present)

Mezzo-Sopranos & Contraltos

Irina Arkhipova (1954–1990s)

Olga Borodina (1992–present)

Evgenia Verbitskaya (also, Eugenia and Yevgenia) (1950s–1970s)

Nadezhda Obukhova (1916–1943)

Sofya Preobrazhenskaya (also, Sofia and Sophia) (1928–1959)

Tenors

Ivan Kozlovsky (1920–1970)

Sergei Lemeshev (1926–1956)

Georgi Nelepp (1926–1956)

Vladimir Ivanovsky (1940–1968)

Georgy Shulpin (1940s–1970s)

Vladimir Atlantov (1964–1995)

Vladimir Galuzin (1980–present)

Sergej Larin (1981–2004)

Russian Singers Suggested for Listening (cont'd)Baritones

Pavel Lisitsian (1936–1966)

Yevgeny Kibkalo (also, Evgeny) (1950s–1970s)

Vladimir Chernov (1981–present)

Nikolai Putilin (1983–present)

Alexander Nikitin (1993–present)

Dmitri Hvorostovsky (1989–present)

Basses

Fyodor Chaliapin (also, Feodor; Shaliapin; Shalyapin) (1894–1936)

Mark Reizen (1921–1970s)

Alexander Pirogov (1924–1957)

Maxim Mikhailov (1930s–1957)

Boris Gmyrya (1936–1960s)

Ivan Petrov (1942–1970)

Boris Christoff (rarely: Christov; Khristov) (1946–1970s)

Alexander Ognivstev (1940s–1980s)

Nicolai Ghiaurov (1955–2003)

Nicola Ghiuselev (1960–2002)

Yevgeny Nesterenko (also, Evgeny) (1965–1980s)

Alexander Anisimov (1970s–1990s)

Vladimir Ognovenko (1989–present)

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Avanesov, R. I. *Modern Russian Stress*. Translated by D. Buckley. Edited by C. V. James, *Pergamon Oxford Russian Series*. Oxford: Pergamon Press Ltd., 1964.

Ruben Ivanovich Avanesov (b.1902–d.1982) was one of Russia's most respected linguists, specializing in Russian dialectology (the study of Russian regional accents) and *orthoepy* (the customary, proper pronunciation of words). He also was one of the founders of what is called the Moscow School of Russian phonological theory from the late 1930's.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> Fischer-Jørgensen, *Trends in Phonological Theory*, 331–332; Reinhold Olesch, "Ruben Ivanovič Avanesov: In Memoriam" in *Russian Linguistics* 9, no. 1 (1985): 145–47.

Avanesov, R. I. *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie: Uchebnoe Posobie Dlya Studentov Pedagogicheskikh Institutov [Russian Literary Pronunciation: Instructional Textbook for Students of the Pedagogical Institute]*. 5th ed. Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1972.

Considered one of the major texts on the orthoepical pronunciation of the Russian literary language. Contains short descriptions and *orograms* (line-drawings of the oral articulators from the side based upon x-rays) of the basic Russian vowels and the consonants, as well as descriptions of how vowels reduce under the rules of *akanye* and *ikanye*. Avanesov employs the Russian phonetic alphabet which assigns one basic phoneme or phonemic cluster to each Cyrillic letter (/a/ = /а/, /o/ = /о/, /я/ = /ja/, /т/ = /t/, /ш/ = /ʃ/, /щ/ = /ʃʲʃʲ/, /й/ = /j/, etc.) and then assigns /ь/ and /ы/ (the hard and soft signs) the roles of the two reduced phonemes, /ə/ and /ɪ/, respectively. Avanesov also uses IPA symbolism, including /ʌ/ for initial, unstressed -a- or -o-, or -o- in some prefixes, and /i̯/ for a fronted or palatal version of /ɪ/. Since the soft sign (/ь/) is assigned to the /ɪ/ phoneme, Avanesov represents palatalization either by an apostrophe /' (e.g. /т') or by a superscript -b- (e.g. /т<sup>b</sup>/). Complex sounds are symbolized by combining single elements [e.g. -ш- might be symbolized as /ш'т'ш'/, /ш<sup>b</sup>т<sup>b</sup>ш<sup>b</sup>/ (IPA: /ʃʲtʲʃʲ/), /ш'ш'/, /ш<sup>b</sup>ш<sup>b</sup>/, /ш':/ or /ш<sup>b</sup>:/ (IPA: /ʃʲʃʲ/)]. Avanesov's text describes the conditions under which adjustments are made to the pronunciation of vowels and consonants, due to assimilation and other forces. The final portion of the book provides two comprehensive tables. The first table lists the Cyrillic letters, how each can be read under different circumstances, and a number of examples. The second table reverses the elements showing each phoneme, the different possible Cyrillic letters under certain conditions and examples.

Avanesov, R. I. *Russkaya Literaturnaya I Dialektnaya Fonetika [Russian Literary and Dialectal Phonetics]*. Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1974.

One of the preeminent texts on the comparison of the Russian *literaturnyĭ* pronunciation and several of the major Russian dialects (regional accents), covering how the different regional accents are phonetically different from the *literaturnyĭ* style. The first part of the text discusses the development and principles of the Russian literary pronunciation style, while the second part delves into the elements of dialectical differences, such as *okanye* versus *akanye*, *yakanye* versus *ekanye* versus *ikanye*, and the many variants using a mixture of the elements. Discussions on the consonants are fewer and focus mostly on letters with complex sounds including -ш-, -ч-, and -н-, but also, -с- and -ж-. The detailed essays on vowel reduction and the complex consonant -ш- are most useful.

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Beyer, Thomas R., Jr. *501 Russian Verbs: Fully Conjugated in All Tenses, Alphabetically Arranged by Imperfective Infinitives*. Hauppauge: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1992.

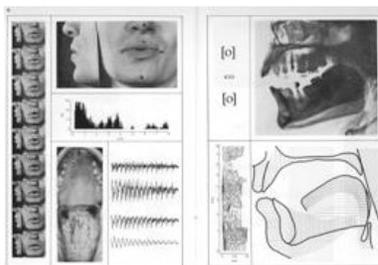
Beyer, Thomas R., Jr., and C. V. Starr. *Pronounce It Perfectly in Russian*. Hauppauge: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1994.

Bičan, Aleš. *Phoneme in Functional and Structural Phonology* [World Wide Web at <http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/bican/bic-001.pdf>]. *Linguistica Online*, September 1, 2005 [accessed on February 5, 2012].

Bobrinsky, Tania, and Irina Gsovskaya. *Pronounce Russian Correctly*. New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1961.

Bolla, Kálmán. *A Conspectus of Russian Speech Sounds*. Translated by László Varga. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1981.

Bolla's *Conspectus* is a scientific analysis of Russian speech sounds, analyzing the Russian vowel and consonant phonemes and allophones. Bolla uses stroboscopic filming, still photography, FFT acoustical spectrum analysis, palatal/lingual interactive dye analysis, four-channel, formant filtration, x-ray, acoustical spectrometry and schematic orograms to capture the articulation and acoustical signature of each Russian speech sound. Plates of the resulting photos and graphs, labeled with the analyzed sound are printed. An example of one of these plates is presented for Russian /o/:



The Russian phoneme /o/ from Bolla<sup>427</sup>

In addition to these plates, Bolla prosaically describes the “articulatory and acoustical characteristics” of each of the sounds.<sup>428</sup> The text begins with some general information on language, speech, and phonetic transcription, and also describes the special laboratory equipment and examination methods utilized to produce the plates of analysis. Though Bolla’s section on the articulatory and acoustical parameters of Russian vowels draws from data gathered from several subjects, his plates reflect the analysis of only one person, which introduces an unavoidable bias of subject idiosyncrasy. The thoroughness of the testing and analysis help to mitigate this defect. Many of the authorities of Russian pronunciation rely upon how they themselves speak or what the author thinks should happen to produce a sound, rather than objective reality. Bolla’s work significantly reduces such bias, helping to clarify and more firmly establish the exact articulations of the more difficult to discern Russian phonemes.

Borunova, S. N., V. L. Vorontsova, and N. A. Yes'kova. *Orfoepicheskii Slovar' Russkogo Yazyka: Proiznoshenie, Udarenie, Grammaticheskie Formy [(an) Orthoepical Dictionary of the Russian Language: Pronunciation, Stress, Grammatical Forms]*. Edited by R. I. Avanesov and N. A. Yes'kova. Moscow: Russkii Yazyk, 1988.

<sup>427</sup> Kálmán Bolla, *A Conspectus of Russian Speech Sounds*, trans. by László Varga (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1981), Plate 6.

<sup>428</sup> Bolla, *Conspectus of Russian Speech Sounds*, 63–101.

While authored by Borunova, Vorontsova and Yes'kova, the remarks and endnotes on pronunciation are by Avanesov. The 1988 release is a reprint of a 1980 publication, listing 63,500 Russian words, each with its unusual and emblematic grammatical forms, alterations of spelling, stress shifting, and orthoepical pronunciation. Common errors of form and pronunciation are presented with warnings. There is also an appendix that summarizes much of the pronunciation information found in Avanesov's *Russian Literary Pronunciation*. This dictionary from the 1980's contains many unusual and old-fashioned words that are no longer found in newer comprehensive Russian-English dictionaries, and so can be helpful in the pronunciation of older, poetic, and obsolete words.

Boyanus, S. C. *A Manual of Russian Pronunciation*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd., 1935. Reprint, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Boyanus was a native Russian speaker who wrote fluently in English about Russian pronunciation. He had a degree in English language and literature, an English wife, and wrote a book on the pronunciation of English.<sup>429</sup> Daniel Jones and Dennis Ward mention Boyanus's work as being extremely important in producing their revision of the Trofimov and Jones text.<sup>430</sup> The 1967 publication is a reprint of Boyanus's 1935 work. Boyanus begins with the Russian consonants, rather than the vowels and takes the subject through palatalization and what he calls "palatalization in juxtaposition," which are the rules for assimilation of palatalization in consonant clusters. Boyanus presents all the combinations that one might find in clusters by transcribing each cluster individually, after stating a rule.

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<sup>429</sup> Monica Partridge, "Simon Boyanus 1871–1952" in the *Slavonic and East European Review* 31, no. 77 (June, 1953): 534–36.

<sup>430</sup> Jones and Ward, *Phonetics of Russian*, ix.

The approach gets quite complicated rather quickly, producing rather long lists of combinations. In his vowel section, Boyanus uses similar quadrilateral charts to Trofimov, including comparative charts of Russian to English vowels. He covers glides, stressed and unstressed vowels and diphthongs. He ends with lengthy discussions on stress and rhythm and intonation. Assimilation of voicing and devoicing is integrated into the discussions of the individual consonants. Like Trofimov and Jones, Boyanus uses the older version of the IPA with special fonts, including the *Palatal Hook*.

A criticism of Boyanus's text is that he often refers to his own pronunciation as a model but has some personal idiosyncrasies that are not orthoepical pronunciation. For example, Boyanus states, "A very unsatisfactory transliteration of the Russian letter **х** has crept into the English written language: **kh** instead of **h**...My Russian **х** is not far from the English **h** in **hot**, **howl**."<sup>431</sup> In Russian, the pronunciation of /h/ for Cyrillic -х- is generally not considered orthoepical. Bryzgunova even describes speaking /h/ for /x/ as a common error of foreign speakers.<sup>432</sup> Avanesov discusses /h/ only as a dialectal alternate to /ɣ/, the voiced partner to /x/.<sup>433</sup> Another idiosyncrasy of Boyanus is his pronunciation of the unstressed, adjectival ending spelled as -ой (normally read as /əj/) as /ij/.<sup>434</sup> Such pronunciation is considered an unusual form of *akanye* by Avanesov (termed "не-а" [нɛ а]), and so is not orthoepical.<sup>435</sup> Boyanus's text is detailed in its descriptions of articulation, provides some very helpful exercises and is quite comprehensive.

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<sup>431</sup> Boyanus, *Manual of Russian Pronunciation*, 13.

<sup>432</sup> Bryzgunova, *Prakticheskaya Fonetika [Practical Phonetics]*, 118.

<sup>433</sup> Avanesov, *Russkaya Literaturnaya i Dialektnaya Fonetika [Russian Literary and Dialectal Phonetics]*, 233–237.

<sup>434</sup> Boyanus, 60–62.

<sup>435</sup> Avanesov, [*Russian Literary and Dialectal Phonetics*], 148–149.

Brockett, Oscar G. *History of the Theatre*. Fifth ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1987.

Bryzgunova, Elena A. *Prakticheskaya Fonetika I Intonatsiya Russkovo Yazyka [Practical Phonetics and Intonation of the Russian Language]*. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovckovo Universiteta [Publishing House of Moscow University], 1963.

Elena Bryzgunova is considered one of the foremost authorities on the correction of Russian pronunciation and speech errors. *Prakticheskaya Fonetika* covers the subject in depth. The text first discusses each Russian speech sound, employing diagrams and detailed articulatory descriptions. Also included are descriptions of common deviations from the orthoepical (due to regional or foreign language accent) and therapeutic solutions to these errors. Bryzgunova provides many exercises to help train troubled speakers. The last part of the text is devoted to the correct intonation of Russian phrases, which is of little pertinence to singers, as they will generally be singing a composed melody. Bryzgunova's articulatory and common error descriptions are very useful.

Canepari, Luciano. *A Handbook of Pronunciation: English, Italian, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Arabic, Hindi, Chinese, Japanese, Esperanto*. Muenchen: Lincom Europa, 2005.

———. *A Handbook of Phonetics: Natural Phonetics: Articulatory, Auditory and Functional*. Muenchen: Lincom Europa, 2005.

Carlton, Terence R. *Introduction to the Phonological History of the Slavic Languages*. Columbus: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1990.

Castel, Nico. *A Singer's Manual of Spanish Lyric Diction*. New York: Excalibur Publishing, 1994.

Cheek, Timothy. *Singing in Czech: A Guide to Czech Lyric Diction and Vocal Repertoire*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2001.

Clark, John, Colin Yallop, and Janet Fletcher. *An Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology*. Third ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Clubberley, Paul. *Russian: A Linguistic Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

One of the most recent comprehensive presentations of Russian phonology and linguistics.

Colorni, Evelina. *Singers' Italian: A Manual of Diction and Phonetics*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1996.

Comrie, Bernard, Gerald Stone, and Maria Polinsky. *The Russian Language in the Twentieth Century*. Second ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

An excellent study of the more recent Russian linguistic trends backed by a number of large, demographic surveys carried out in the post-Soviet 1990s.

Constable, Peter G. "Proposal to Encode Phonetic Symbols with Palatal Hook in Ucs [Unicode Code Symbols]." Dallas: SIL International, 2003.

Cox, Richard Garner. *Singing in English: A Manual of English Diction for Singers and Choral Directors*. Lawton: American Choral Directors Association, 1990.

Cox, Richard Garner. *The Singer's Manual of German and French Diction*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1996.

Davydov, Mikhail V., Lev A. Novikov, and Valentin I. Fatyushchenko. *A Short Course of Russian Phonetics*. Edited by O. S. Akhmanova. Moscow: Higher School Publishing House, 1968.

Dawson, Clayton L., Charles E. Bidwell, and Assya Humesky. *Modern Russian I*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc, 1964.

Derbyshire, William W. "Reviews: Laurence R. Richter. Mussorgsky's Complete Song Texts." *The Slavic and East European Journal* 47, no. 4 (2003): 711-12.

Derwing, Bruce L., and Tom M. S. Priestly. *Reading Rules for Russian: A Systemic Approach to Russian Spelling and Pronunciation*. Columbus: Slavica Publishers, 1980.

Derwing first developed this text for his Russian phonetics and phonology classes at the University of Alberta in the late 1960s. Priestly took over the class and added to the work of Derwing. The most significant addition was of the pronunciation variations that occur in rapid, Russian speech, as opposed to literary pronunciation. The authors' intention was to provide a set of clear rules to address the many phonetic and phonemic variations and changes that occur in Russian pronunciation, due to the influences of individual phonemes upon each other when in combination.<sup>436</sup>

Though the aim was to simplify and clarify through systemization, the result is greater complexity, and often, obscurity. Assimilation of voice, palatalization, articulation,

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<sup>436</sup> Derwing and Priestly, *Reading Rules for Russian*, iv, 1–10.

and vowel substitutions and adjustments in Russian are complicated yet integral. Derwing and Priestly is not recommended for beginning (or even intermediate) students in Russian. The text is helpful in understanding many of the finer details and problems of the various kinds of assimilation in Russian. One of the more important ideas conveyed by Derwing and Priestly is that of the boundary, defining the beginning and end of different kinds of phonemic influence. All of Derwing and Priestly's rules are defined and regulated by specific boundaries (e.g. assimilation of palatalization does not cross the word boundary, while certain letters allow or deny palatalization).

Derwing and Priestly also include stylistic variants. The styles are defined in the text as Contemporary Standard Russian (*CSR*), Old Moscow (*OM* – usually called Old Muscovite), Literary Style, Stage Pronunciation, Rapid Russian (*RR*), and Younger Generation style (*YG* – in this case referring to 1970s, Soviet youth, since the publication occurred in 1980). Derwing and Priestly mostly use the Cyrillic phonetic symbolism while employing the Slavicist version of the IPA in specific cases (e.g. /ts/, /tʃ/, /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ are replaced by /c/, /č/, /š/, and /ž/, respectively). Derwing and Priestly's rules are graphically represented as algebraic formulas with letters such as “C” representing consonants and “V” representing vowels, slashes (/) and number signs (#) representing different types of boundaries and arrows indicating the path of change, such as “o → a, when unstressed,” to depict the general *akanye* rule. These formulas can get quite large and complicated, but the individual explanations and examples are clear and helpful. A number of exceptional words do not fit any general rules and so become rules of one, which Derwing and Priestly call *ad hoc* rules.

The bulk of the rules are derived from Avanesov's *Russkoe Literaturnoe*

*Proiznoshenie* [*Russian Literary Pronunciation*], as well as Avanesov and Ozhegov's *Russkoe Literaturnoe Proiznoshenie i Udarenie* [*Russian Literary Pronunciation and Stress*]. The next, most common, in-text reference is to M. V. Panov, specifically his *Russkaja Fonetika* [*Russian Phonetics*] and *Fonetika Sovrenennogo Russkogo Literaturnogo Jazyka* [*Phonetics of Modern Russian Literary Language*]. Panov is often cited when in opposition to Avanesov. Derwing and Priestly published a revised and abridged version of their work in 2010, entitled *Pronunciation Rules of Russian*. This later version is much diminished in helpful information from the original, so the 1980 publication is recommended for personal ownership.

Diringer, David. *The Alphabet: A Key to the History of Mankind*. 2nd Revised ed. New York: Philosophical Library, 1953.

———. *Writing*. Edited by Glyn Daniel. Vol. 25, *Ancient Peoples and Places*. New York: Frederick A Praeger, Inc., 1962.

Donnan, Thomas M. *French Lyric Diction*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1994.

Feinberg, Lawrence E. "Stem Structure, Hierarchy and Russian Verbal Accent." In *New Studies in Russian Language and Literature*, edited by Anna Lisa Crone and Catherine V. Chvany. Columbus: Slavica Publishers. Inc., 1986.

Fischer-Jørgensen, Eli. *Trends in Phonological Theory*. Translated by Niels Davidsen-Nielsen. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1975.

Forsyth, James. *A Practical Guide to Russian Stress*. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1963.

- Gardiner, S.C. *Old Church Slavonic: An Elementary Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Golovinsky, M. *A New English-Russian and Russian-English Dictionary*. Philadelphia: David McKay Co., 1936.
- Gribble, Charles E. *Russian Root List with a Sketch of Word Formation*. 2nd ed. Columbus: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1981.
- Groen, B. M. "On the Phonological Feature of Palatalisation in Contemporary Standard Russian." In *Studies in Russian Linguistics*, edited by A. A. Barentsen, B. M. Groen and R. Sprenger. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992.
- Grubb, Thomas. *Singing in French: A Manual of French Diction and French Vocal Repertoire*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1979.
- Hamilton, William S. *Introduction to Russian Phonology and Word Structure*. Columbus: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1980.
- Harris, John. "Deletion." In *The Blackwell Companion to Phonology*, edited by Marc van Oostendorp, Colin Ewen, Elizabeth Hume and Keren Rice. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.
- Hart, David K. *An Introduction to Russian Linguistics, Topics in the Structure of Russian Series*. Columbus: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1996.
- Heffner, R-M. S. *General Phonetics*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin, 1949.

Heppell, Muriel. "The Rise of Moscow — Ivan III — Ivan IV." In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia and the Soviet Union*, edited by Archie Brown, John Fennell, Michael Kaser and H. T. Willetts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Ivanova, T. F. *Novyi Orfoepicheskii Slovar' Russkogo Yazyka: Proiznoshenie, Udarenie, Grammaticheskie Formy [a New Orthoepical Dictionary of the Russian Language: Pronunciation, Stress, and Grammatical Forms]*. Edited by A. N. Tikhonov. Moscow: Russkii Yazyk Media, 2004.

A revision of the earlier publication by Borunova et al. This version is much reduced in both the number of words (40,000 versus 63,500) and the notes on pronunciation, compared to the Borunova. Missing are most of the older, arcane, and obsolete words, as well as the in depth pronunciation section. The much reduced pronunciation section is still derived from Avanesov's work. Ivanova's dictionary is more easily acquired than the Borunova.

Jakobson, Roman. *Slavic Languages: A Condensed Survey*. Edited by Ernest J. Simmons. Second ed, *Columbia Slavic Studies*. New York: King's Crown Press, 1955.

Jensen, Hans. *Sign, Symbol and Script: An Account of Man's Effort to Write*. Translated by George Unwin. 3rd Revised ed. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1970.

Jones, Daniel. *The Phoneme: Its Nature and Use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.

The career of Daniel Jones encompasses more than Russian phonetics. An early member of the International Association of Phonetics (from 1904), Jones studied with the

Association's first president, Paul Passy. His first work as a phonetician was in the French language, but Jones edited a series of readers on Asian languages, translated Passy's work on French pronunciation, wrote several, phonetic transcription readers of English, French, and German, and published; *The Pronunciation of English* (1909), *Dictionary of English Pronunciation* (1917), and *An Outline of English Phonetics* (1918), all before becoming the Chair of Phonetics at University College London in 1921.<sup>437</sup> Early in Jones's career, he learned about the concept of the phoneme from a paper by the Russian phonetician, Lev V. Shcherba (1880-1944) [also printed as Ščerba], a student of Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, and the founder of the St. Petersburg School of phonology. Jones championed the idea of the phoneme in England. After writing several articles on the subject and using the term in his own work at university, Jones finally wrote *The Phoneme: Its Nature and Use*.<sup>438</sup>

Jones' unique contribution to the study of phonetics was the idea of the *Cardinal vowels*, a set of eight, specific vowels established by the shape and position of the tongue and lips. The vowels are graphically represented on a quadrilateral chart that abstracts the vertical and horizontal positions of portions of the tongue. The Cardinal vowels take up eight, absolute positions on the quadrilateral, and are, in numerical order from 1 to 8 (high-front-unrounded to low-front-unrounded to low-back-unrounded to high-back-rounded), /i/, /e/, /ɛ/, /a/, /ɑ/, /ɔ/, /o/, /u/.<sup>439</sup> Jones' quadrilateral chart looks like this:

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<sup>437</sup> J. Windsor Lewis, "Daniel Jones (1881–1967)" in *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* [*Journal of English and American Language and Literature*] 29, no. 4 (Dec. 1981): 343–44; Fischer-Jørgensen, *Trends in Phonological Theory*, 50–51.

<sup>438</sup> Fischer-Jørgensen, 50–51.

<sup>439</sup> Trofimov and Jones, 27–41.

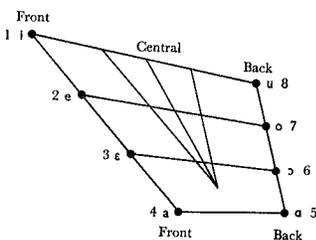


Fig. 8. Diagram illustrating the tongue-positions of the eight primary Cardinal Vowels<sup>440</sup>

Jones, Daniel, and Dennis Ward. *The Phonetics of Russian*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.

After Jones first aided Trofimov in producing *The Pronunciation of Russian* (1923), he became one of the foremost, English-speaking authorities on Russian phonetics. Late in his life, Jones worked with Dennis Ward to revise and expand the work done with Trofimov. Much of *The Phonetics of Russian* (1969) had been completed by the time of Jones' death in 1967, but a good deal was finished by Ward before publishing. Daniel Ward acknowledges the work of not only Trofimov with Jones, but also Boyanus (with N. B. Jopson), Avanesov, and Bryzgunova, establishing an influential pedigree that pervades the work of many phoneticians of the Russian language.<sup>441</sup>

*The Phonetics of Russian* follows the plan of the Trofimov/Jones work, beginning with the physiology of speech, moving through the classification of vowel and consonant sounds and ending with discussions on the concept of the phoneme and written transcription using the IPA. A second part begins the specifics of Russian phonetics. The descriptions of the phonemes are duplicates of Jones' work with Trofimov, but Ward provides greater detail. The unique contributions made by Ward are the extensively expanded sections on similitude and assimilation and on intonation. Most important, while Trofimov and Jones phonetically

<sup>440</sup> Jones and Ward, 18.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid, ix.

listed the many assimilative combinations found in Russian, Ward attempts to establish general rules that can be applied to novel situations. Some idiomatic Russian assimilations are limited to a very small number of words and do not represent any general rule, so Ward provides lists of these unusual cases.

*The Phonetics of Russian* also uses older IPA symbols, as well as diacritics with some vowels (e.g. /ö/, /ü/, and /ɛ+/). Jones and Ward expand the IPA symbolism from the Trofimov, though, to include palatalized symbols that are now defunct, such as /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ (/ʃ̣/ and /ʒ̣/ in the modern *Palatal Hook* font). *The Phonetics of Russian* is still one of the most comprehensive texts on Russian literary pronunciation in English.

Joos, Martin. *Acoustic Phonetics*. Vol. 23, *Language Monograph*. Baltimore: Linguistic Society of America, 1948.

Kagan, Olga, and Frank Miller. *V Puti [on the Way]*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1996.

Katzner, Kenneth, ed. *English-Russian : Russian-English Dictionary Revised and Expanded Edition*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994.

Kiparsky, Valentin. *Russian Historical Grammar: Volume 1 — the Development of the Sound System*. Translated by J. I. Press. Revised ed. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979.

Koerner, E. F. K., and R. E. Asher, eds. *Concise History of the Language Sciences: From the Sumerians to the Cognitivists*. Oxford: Pergamon, 1995.

Kuz'mina, S. M., senior ed. *Russkoe Stsenicheskoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Stage Pronunciation]*. Moscow: Nauka [Academy of Science USSR: Institute of Russian Language], 1986.

Kuz'mina is the general editor of and a contributor to this book of essays on several topics about the Russian theatre and the development and modern practices of pronunciation for the stage. The comparative statistics between the most famous Russian theatres as to pronunciation style, such as *ikanye* versus *ekanye* and *shshokanye* versus *shchokanye* are very helpful. Also important are the essays on the history of modern, Russian stage diction.

Ladefoged, Peter. *Preliminaries to Linguistic Phonetics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971.

Laver, John. *Principles of Phonetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Leeming, H., Faith C. M. Kitch, I. Paul Foote, M. H. Shotton, Jennifer Baines, and M. A. Nicholson. "Language and Literature." In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia and the Soviet Union*, edited by Archie Brown, John Fennell, Michael Kaser and H. T. Willetts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Lubensky, Sophia, Gerard L. Ervin, and Donald K. Jarvis. *Nachalo: When in Russia... [Beginning: When in Russia...]*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1996.

Marshall, Madeleine. *The Singer's Manual of English Diction*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1953.

Matthews, W. K. *The Structure and Development of Russian*. Cambridge: University Press, 1953.

- Moriarty, John. *Diction: Italian, Latin, French, German; the Sounds and 81 Exercises for Singing Them*. Boston: E. C. Schirmer Music Co., 1975.
- Nandris, Grigore. *Old Church Slavonic Grammar*. London: The Athelone Press (University of London), 1965.
- Odom, William, and Benno Schollum. *German for Singers: A Textbook of Diction and Phonetics*. New York: Schirmer Books and Prentice Hall International, 1997.
- Padgett, Jaye. "Russian Voicing Assimilation, Final Devoicing, and the Problem of [V] (or, the Mouse That Squeaked)." University of California, 2002.
- Padgett, Jaye, and Marija Tabain. "Adaptive Dispersion Theory and Phonological Vowel Reduction in Russian." Santa Cruz, 2003.
- Pennington, Anne E., Editor and Translator. *Grigorii Kotoshikhin: O Rossii V Tsarstovanie Alekseyia Mikhailovicha [About Russia under the Reign of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich]: Text and Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Peterson, Gordon E., and Harold L. Barney. "Control Methods Used in a Study of Vowels." *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* Vol. 24, no. 2 (1952): 175-84.
- Piatak, Jean, and Regina Avrashov. *Russian Songs and Arias: Phonetic Readings, Word-by-Word Translation, and a Concise Guide to Russian Diction*. Dallas: Pst...Inc., 1991.
- Pressman, Aron. *Living Language Conversation Manual: Russian, The Living Language Courses*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1958.
- Pullum, Geoffrey K., and William A. Ladusaw. *Phonetic Symbol Guide*. Second ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Richter, Laurence R. "Reviewed Work: *Russian Songs and Arias* by Jean Piatak; Regina Avrashov." *The Slavic and East European Journal* Vol. 38, no. 2 (Summer) (1994): 401-04.

———. *Tchaikovsky's Complete Song Texts: Russian Texts of the Complete Songs of Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky with Phonetic Transcriptions, Literal and Idiomatic English Translations*. Mt. Morris: Leyerle Publications, 1999.

Roca, Iggy, and Wyn Johnson. *A Course in Phonology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.

Romanov, A. S., and E. Wedel, eds. *Romanov's Russian-English : English-Russian Dictionary*. New York: Pocket Books, 1963.

Rosengrant, Sandra F., and Elena D. Lifschitz. *Focus on Russian: An Interactive Approach to Communication*. 2nd ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996.

Seaman, Gerald. "National Element in Early Russian Opera, 1779-1800." *Music & Letters* 42, no. 3 (1961): 252-62.

———. "The Rise of Russian Opera." In *New Oxford History of Music: The Age of Enlightenment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Sendich, Munir. *An Undergraduate Course in Transcriptional Phonetics of Russian: Phonetics Signs, Texts, Dictation, Intonation, and Tapes*. East Lansing: The Russian Language Journal, 1988.

- Shapiro, Michael. *Russian Phonetic Variants and Phonostylistics*. Edited by W. E. Bull, W. L. Chafe, C. D. Chrétien, M. B. Emeneau, Mary R. Haas, Harry Hoijer, L. D. Newmark, D. L. Olmsted and R. P. Stockwell. Vol. 49, *University of California Publications in Linguistics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.
- Sheil, Richard F. *A Singer's Manual of Foreign Language Dictions*. Sixth ed. New York: YBK Publishers, 2004.
- Small, Larry H. *Fundamentals of Phonetics: A Practical Guide for Students*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998.
- St. Clair-Sobell, James. *Pronunciation of Russian*: The University of British Columbia, 1959.
- Stapp, Marcie. *The Singers Guide to Languages*. San Francisco: Teddy's Music Press, 1996.
- Stark, James. *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
- Stilman, Leon. *Russian Alphabet and Phonetics, Slavic Studies: Russian Language Series*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1949.
- Sundberg, Johan. "The Acoustics of the Singing Voice." In *Scientific American: The Physics of Music*, edited by Carleen Maley Hutchins, 16-23. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1978.
- Taruskin, Richard. "Ital'yanshchina." In *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Trofimov, M. V., and Daniel Jones. *The Pronunciation of Russian*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923.

Trofimov with Jones can be considered the parent generation of a pedigree of authors of English language texts on Russian pronunciation. *The Pronunciation of Russian* is foundational, if somewhat incomplete. It advances from the basics of phonetics through speech physiology through the basic sounds of Russian speech. The details of assimilation and similitude are barely covered. Written in the early 1920's, the style of IPA is historical. There is no use of virgules and little use of brackets, as is presently prescribed by phonetics.<sup>442</sup> Also, the printing font of several of the IPA symbols is outmoded. Trofimov and Jones use symbols such as  $\text{ʈ}$ ,  $\text{ʈʃ}$ ,  $\text{ɖ}$ , and  $\text{ɖʒ}$  – single, complex characters that are now printed as the combination of two symbols:  $\text{ts}$ ,  $\text{tʃ}$ ,  $\text{dz}$ , and  $\text{dʒ}$ . Also, Trofimov and Jones use the *Palatal Hook* style of font for palatalized consonants. Their choice of IPA symbol for Russian velar -l- is generally plain  $/l/$ , but the velarized version,  $/ḷ/$ , is often referenced as an alternative transcription. An odd velarized  $/g/$  symbol ( $/g̣/$ ) is printed for voiced  $/x/$ , instead of the more common  $/ɣ/$ . Highly useful offerings from Trofimov and Jones are the comparisons of Russian sounds to English (British) sounds in charts and descriptions. Also, the English-speaking Jones brings a perspective to the phonemes of Russian that addresses a common problem – native Russian speakers are often less aware of the idiosyncratic phonetic features of their own language than foreigners.

Vennard, William. *Singing: The Mechanism and the Technic*. Revised ed. New York: Carl Fischer, 1967.

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<sup>442</sup> Laver, 550–552; 556–561.

Vinogradov, V. V. *The History of the Russian Literary Language from the Seventeenth Century to the Nineteenth: A Condensed Adaptation into English with Introduction by Lawrence L. Thomas*. Edited by Lawrence L. Thomas and Francis J. Whitfield. Madison: The University of Wisconsin, 1969.

Vinokur, G. O. *Russkoe Stsenicheskoe Proiznoshenie [Russian Stage Pronunciation]*. Moscow: Vsepossiiskoe Teatral'noe Obshchestvo [All-Russian Theatre Society], 1948.

Russian stage pronunciation shares many of the same principles with Russian lyric diction. The Vinokur is a relatively concise booklet covering basic speech physiology and phonology, the specific needs of and approach to speaking on the stage, orthoepy, and the common Russian accents from the standpoint that an actor may have to reproduce a particular regional accent for a character.

———. *The Russian Language: A Brief History*. Translated by Mary A. Forsyth. Edited by James Forsyth. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.

Vlasto, A. P. *A Linguistic History of Russia to the End of the Eighteen Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

Wall, Joan. *International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers: A Manual for English and Foreign Language Diction*. Dallas: Pst...Inc., 1989.

———. *Diction for Singers: A Concise Reference for English, Italian, Latin, German, French and Spanish Pronunciation*. Dallas: Pst...Inc., 1990.

Walters-Komatsu, Christine. *Http://Christinekomatsu.Tripod.Com/Bio.Htm* [Internet].

Christine Komatsu, 2005 [cited July 11 2009].

Ward, Dennis. *Russian Pronunciation: A Practical Course*. New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1958.

Dennis Ward (1924-2008) studied German and Russian in 1942, at Christ's College in Cambridge, England. After time in the military, Ward returned to his studies in 1947, and completed his degree with honors. In 1949, Ward became the first lecturer in Russian at the University of Edinburgh establishing the Russian department at the university. Ward became an Emeritus professor in 1985, leaving the University of Edinburgh with one of the most prestigious Russian departments in the world as his legacy.<sup>443</sup>

*Russian Pronunciation: A Practical Course*, published in 1958, was one of Ward's earlier publications. It was considered an experiment in pedagogy, as it used the Cyrillic phonetic system employed by the Russian schools of phonology.<sup>444</sup> Ward's concise volume covers the basic Russian phonemes and fundamental rules of pronunciation (called *reading rules*). The text offers very little of the detail presented in Jones and Ward, but it is clear and informative.

Weiler, Sherri Moore. "Solving Counterproductive Tensions Induced by Russian Diction in American Singers." Dissertation, Florida State University, 2004.

This work should be avoided, due to poor scholarship.

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<sup>443</sup> "Professor Dennis Ward" [obituary] in *The Scotsman*, April 30, 2008 [Internet: accessed March 8, 2011, Available at <http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/obituaries/-Professor-Dennis-Ward.4032593.jp>]

<sup>444</sup> Ward, *Russian Pronunciation*, ix-x.

Weiler, Sherri Moore. *Sherri Moore Weiler* [Website at <http://www.sherriweiler.com>].  
Modified June, 2010 2008 [cited August 8 2010].

Worth, Gerta Hüttl. *Foreign Words in Russian: A Historical Sketch, 1550-1800*. Edited by  
W. E. Bull, C. D. Chrétien, M. B. Emeneau, M. R. Haas, Harry Hoijer, D. L. Olmsted  
and R. P. Stockwell. Vol. 28, *University of California Publications in Linguistics*.  
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963.