

1. The Russian nationalist composers of the 19th century, or the Russian “Kuchka,” sought to define a thoroughly Russian form of opera. Their minimum formal music training and goal of composing opera that was honest to the Russian declamation “Formlessness in the name of truth” put them at polar opposite ends with the German style and its strict conservatory training. Modest Mussorgsky, who lived from 1839 to 1881, can be considered the most original of the “Russian Five,” which included Mily Alexeyevich Balakirev, Cesar Cui, Alexander Borodin and Nikolay Andreyevich Rimsky-Korsakov. Influenced by Glinka’s 1836 historical opera *A Life For The Czar*, a choral drama whose lead character is a bass, Mussorgsky too set *Boris Godunov*, the lead in his 1868 opera masterpiece *Boris Godunov*, as a bass. Verdi and Wagner also influenced Mussorgsky: Verdi, in regard to his intense dramatic confrontations and Wagner with his Leitmotif technique and through-composed opera form. Further, Liszt influenced Mussorgsky with his thematic transformation technique in which orchestration changes under a melody that remains the same. This technique, (also used by Glinka and thus labeled by Tchaikovsky as the “Glinka variation technique”), was used by most Russian composers. Lastly, Mussorgsky was influenced by Berlioz’s chromatic harmony, orchestration and asymmetrical phrase rhythm.

Following Glinka’s lead, Mussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov* is a historical opera and its libretto was adapted from a Pushkin play. Also following Wagner’s, and most others who came after lead, dialogue is without periodic or lyrical phrasing and instead opts for realistic pure declamation. A significant element in the opera’s plot is its total lack of love interest, making for an original and thus branded Russian approach to plot. Further original, though not unprecedented at the time, is its consequent shift of focus to the

Russian peasants. It can be argued that Russia, beyond its composers but also many writers of all sorts, was the first to put a spotlight on the potency of its (and many other nations') largest population, the peasants. Interest in peasants' lives and their relation to the czar as a "father figure" informed Russian thought for years to come and *Boris Gudonov* definitely takes responsibility in this movement. In the opera's case, the Czar Boris is insane, contributing to the opera's rejection by the Moscow Opera. Succumbing to pressure, Mussorgsky revised the opera in 1871-72 to include a "love" interest, which included a due singing, more melodic recitation and folk song insertions. The original construction of scenes or tableaux, instead of acts, was abandoned for a Prologue and 4-act structure. These revisions allowed the opera to premier in St. Petersburg in 1874, but met with little success nonetheless.

Mussorgsky uses a variety of scales including octatonic, modal, whole-tone and major and minor. Meters are usually irregular and change frequently in accordance with the Russian language's irregular accents and he employs extremely little strict or imitative counterpoint. The first composer to depart from triadic tonality to a "pitch-centricity" tonality, Mussorgsky prolonged a single pitch, generally the mode's tonic, through non-tonal, contrapuntal voice leading. Chromatic 5-6 exchanges link harmonic areas instead of the usual, conservatory-enforced extremely hierarchical progressions of non-Russians. Thus, the harmony, instead of controlling lines functionally, lends support, color and power to them. Traditional tonal progressions are still employed, however. For the first time, parallelism abounds in Mussorgsky's music. With little to no formal training, Mussorgsky integrates Russian folk and church polyphony in their original form, as heterophonic textures and parallelism of the central melodic line. As mentioned

before, Mussorgsky pairs Wagner-like “naturalistic” declamation with traditional symmetry and lyricism, especially in the revised opera.

The prologue of the opera is the only part featuring strict and imitative counterpoint; the rest abandons it almost entirely. The prelude also includes the opera’s “seed” Leitmotif. The central progression of the first scene or Act is completely contrapuntal and chromatic, constructed via contrapuntal movements around the central progression of C# - C-natural – C# within the minor c# Aeolian key. After moving to A (VI) from i, Mussorgsky enharmonically reinterprets the C# of the following i harmony to a D-flat in order to move to non-tonal b-flat minor 6 harmony. Likewise, further on, G-flat enharmonically acts as F# (iv) before moving chromatically upwards to G-natural harmony, leading to iv’s dominant, C-natural. The emphasis on the subdominant, not to mention before even reaching proper dominant harmony, is popular among the Russian Five. Fm’s dominant C-natural motivates the single pitch-centricity to govern the rest of the opera. After moving from fm – b-flat minor, the key of D-flat/C# occurs suddenly with zero preparation. Mussorgsky then simply moves the 3rd of this harmony up chromatically to f#m, subdominant harmony once again. Shifting once again between sharps and flats via enharmonic respellings, Mussorgsky moves into the random harmony of e-flat (or d#) minor. The subdominant of that harmony is then reached with A-flat harmony (also being the V/C#, the “tonic” key, when respelled as G#). A choral dialogue of the Pilgrims’ chorus then occurs via chromatic ascension to am harmony, starting a half step higher than the previous Pilgrims’ chorus. This indicates the role of chromaticism in both governing harmonic shift to shift and its highlighting connections between disparate sections. After moving to E-flat, E-flat’s subdominant A-flat (G#)

occurs, thus preparing the first seemingly “authentic” cadence as A-flat moves to D-flat/C# and the opening theme returns in c# (Aeolian) harmony.

Act II is based upon the A-E-flat tri-tone, sounding the chiming clock important to the story of the 2nd Act, or scene. The tritone is enharmonically respelled as D# - A for its recapitulation during Boris’ final hallucination, and is left unresolved. Act II contains six periods and can be categorized into two groups of three in musical and dramatic symmetry. The ostinato tonic G to C# tritone of the 1st period is overlaid with a step up tritone of A – E-flat. Beginning with Period 2, the E-flat to A tritone pitches are directly opposed to the act’s background tonal plan, enhancing the already present symmetry. Thus, the periods in order move from E-flat to E-flat minor to A/f# minor to D/E-flat major while the tritone pitches are A-natural to E-flat/D# and the perfect 5th is between E-flat and A-flat, which occurs (in opposite direction), beginning in Period 3. Verdi’s influence, in addition to Boris’ dramatic and passionate confrontation, is apparent in Periods 3-6, based on the Italian Double Aria form. A slow movement aria occurs at the end of Period 3 (after moving from an overall covert 5ths progression of D-flat to A-flat to E-flat), following Verdi’s a-b-a—b prime – c – a prime + Coda structure. Periods 4 & 5 feature a prolonged Tempo di Mezzo, whose main harmonic areas outline the initial overlaid tritone of A-E-flat-A. A “Cabaletta” follows for Period 6, the Scene with the Chiming Clock. The tritone harmonic progression is emphasized again, moving from a minor – E-flat – A-flat major, thus resolving the A-E-flat tritone into its perfect 5th of A-flat to E-flat.

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, the most refined member of the Russian Five, experimented with octatonic and whole-tone scales. Stravinsky’s only teacher, he

greatly influenced Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* in addition to other 20th century composers. Rimsky-Korsakov, like Mussorgsky, used the "Glinka variation technique," in which a "series of melodic repetitions varies as to the orchestration, but the melody never changes its character or melodic profile" (Burnett, Lecture 24). His use of static octatonicism, in which there is no harmonic progression, but rather the scale, in any permutation, is arpeggiated. Known as the Korsakovian scale, two different types were identified by the composer, 1: Melodic (C02): C-D-E-flat-F-F#/G-flat-A-flat-A-natural-B-natural-C and 2: Harmonic (C01): C-C#/D-flat-E-flat-E-natural-F#-G-A-B-flat-C. These scales are featured in works such as Stravinsky's ballets *Rite of Spring* and *Firebird* (strongly influenced by Rimsky-Korsakov's 1889-90 opera ballet *Mlada*), as well as his neo-classical period works. In addition to the octatonicism, Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* borrowed the heavy Russian folk styles imbued in Korsakov's (and somewhat in the rest of the Russian Five's) works, notably *Mlada*. Both *Mlada* and *Rite of Spring* employ motives of short rhythmic repeated patterns, without development. Further, *Rite of Spring* borrows the frequent meter changes that support different motives present in ACT II, Scene 4 of *Mlada*. Lastly, octatonicism supports diminished harmony present in both *Rite of Spring* and *Mlada*, which destabilizes the tonal center and ends up acting as a dominant substitute. A chromatic counterpoint occurs via a combination of octatonic patterns with chromatic scales, fitting in with the diminished harmony underneath.

2. Chaikovsky's 1877 Symphony No. 4 in F Minor follows the Romantic tendency in that it's pictorial, as well as programmatic in its portrayal of Chaikovsky's fear of his homosexuality leading to homophobic outside Europe. This programmatic quality is weaved into the entire work. From the get-go, the opening fanfares on trumpets

and horns represent “the tenacity of fate” and permeate the symphony, embedded into Chaikowsky’s various emotional mindsets: the exposition’s opening theme (“depression”), second key theme group (“dream-state”) and so on and so forth. Along with A-flat/G#, the main dyad conflict is D-natural/D-flat, derived from the unfurled F diminished chord (whose 7th arpeggiation is arpeggiated in the opening movement) . Inspired by Wagner’s *Ring Cycle*, which he felt to be more symphonic than operatic, Chaikowsky sought to create a symphony that was more or at least as theatric as it was symphonic, making his 4th an “operatic” symphony. Beethoven’s 5th symphony, obsessed with fate, in his case the doom of his never-to-be cured deafness and Bizet’s fate-themed opera *Carmen*, likely informed Chaikowsky’s 4th symphony as well as Schumann’s Symphony No. 1 in B-Flat during the intense horn call opening the first movement (though, unlike Schumann’s melodic call to nature, Chaikowsky’s is an exclamation of desperation).

Chaikowsky’s 4th Symphony reflects Russian nationalism and style in its use of fourth-related sequences, which consequently arpeggiates the tonic f minor diminished chord. Further, he uses enharmonic respellings and chromatic movements to shift harmony. Structurally, Chaikowsky relies upon Theme Groups and Lyrical Transitions to shape the uniqueness of the symphony’s form. For example, after the Introduction (which cadences interestingly via an A-flat Augmented 6th moving to fm (i)), the Exposition’s 1st theme group arpeggiates the F diminished 7 chord from the introduction. Representing depression and hopelessness, the 1st theme group consists of an A section (“Valse Triste” and in 9/8) and a very lengthy B section. The B section consists of opening theme variations and literal restatements. Moving from fm (i), he transposes the opening theme

to am before utilizing a D-flat Aug. 6 chord to move back to the A section in fm for the counterstatement. The 2nd Key Theme group is reached after A-flat 6/4 harmony moves to its dominant E-flat diminished 7 – E-flat 6/5 and then back to its I, however in a-flat minor this time. This unexpected key area, the parallel minor of the relative major, though prepared more than some other Russian composers, nonetheless represents a relatively random non-tonally directed key shift with a move from a 4-flat to a 7-flat system. The two theme groups form the Exposition, and a lyrical transition in B Major (enharmonic C-flat) (III/iii) moves to the Closing, Counterstatement and Codetta in B Major, an even more remote departure from the tonic fm, being a tritone apart. The Russian-like fourth-related sequences that arpeggiate the f diminished chord follow in the 2# system of the Development: bm moves to em – am – gm – cm – fm. It starts up again moving from e-flatm – a-flatm. The arpeggiated f diminished 7 chord completes itself then via movement from am – b-flat m – bm. Lastly, a minor thirds cycle then occurs to lead to the Recapitulation, moving from D-flat Aug. 6 to B-flat Aug. 6 to d minor (key of the 1st Key Theme Group of the Recapitulation). Thus, the 1st theme group, though maintaining its 4-flat system, is transposed to d minor, vi/i. d minor's 1-flat system takes over during the Recapitulation's 2nd key. Next, a Chaikowsky-ian innovation of a Lyrical Transition occurs to return to tonic, albeit parallel, harmony. The transition, in F Major, brings back the D-natural/D-flat conflict present from the symphony's opening measures. After the Codetta, the sectionalized Coda commences, in which the polonaise motive of "Fate" returns, its D-natural/D-flat conflict raised for the final time and resolved into f minor. Despite its resolution into tonic harmony, the coda's system departs from the Intro resolution in its beginning in a 4-flat system, but final end in a 7-flat system.

Johannes Brahms' symphonies, written between 1876 and 1884, are responsible for transforming the subdominant from a passive to an active chord via counterpoint. Though experimented with and relied upon by Russian nationalist composers, Brahms makes harmonic areas from the cycle of fifths subdominant side function as equal dominant substitutes. In addition to this feat, Brahms, along with Chaikowsky, were the first to demolish the barrier against symphonic composition as critics insisted on maintaining the bar of Beethoven. Similarly to Chaikowsky, Brahms outlines the tonic triad (though major and not diminished) in his 1883 Symphony No. 3 in F, Op. 90. Further, Brahms' symphony is programmatic like Chaikowsky's, his saying being "Frei aber Froh" – Free But Happy. The "but," in the middle of the saying is represented in the middle chord of the opening three chords (F-Fdim.7-F), thus introducing the A-natural/A-flat conflict to govern the symphony. Brahms also travels to III# as a key area in a strange atonal fashion; III as major in a major key (FM), as Chaikowsky traveled to iii as minor in a minor key (fm). The 1st movement outlines the tonic triad as stated above, via a F-A-F6/4-C progression before a cadence on F (I). Movement II is in C (V) harmony, while Movement III features a backwards thirds relationship (present in Chaikowsky's Recapitulation of Symphony No. 4's 1st movement) from Cm (v) – A-flat (Trio) – Cm (v). The v as minor eliminates its function within movements, but is shown externally in the 2nd and 3rd movements. The 4th movement continues in cm (v), before bringing back the A-flat/A-natural dyad conflict in moving to Fm (i) then to FM/fm and finally to FM (I, with an A-natural) for the Coda.

Brahms' 1883 Symphony No. 3 in F, 1st Movement features contrapuntal, chromatic and enharmonic chord movements, expansion of IV as a goal, symmetrical

expansions, diminished harmony of the tonic key and movement to both III and iii as a 2nd key. The Exposition's 1st key area is in F major, but moves to F diminished 7 and then to D-flat (Flat-VI). The F-A/A-flat-F motto is thus worked out there, and the A-natural/A-flat dyad conflict introduced. The motto is then transposed to A-C-A for the Bridge in F (I) harmony. E7 (V7/III#) is reached via D-flat/C# harmony. A fourths cycle ensues, from E7-A-dm. After moving from dm to G# diminished 7, a contrapuntal chord displaces V, and instead takes the harmony to A (III#) for the 2nd key area. The closing, however, is in A minor (iii), modeled after Beethoven's *Waldstein* Sonata (C – E [2nd Key] – em [closing]). The 2nd ending of the exposition leads to the Development, featuring a Dominant cycle from A minor – C#m - AM – D- G- D. The C to C# occurrence between A minor and C#m completes the augmented triad of F-A-C# begun in the first measures. A subdominant cycle then occurs when D moves to E-flat and then to B-flat. Later on, from F, A-flat 7 moves to D-flat (Flat-VI) harmony in a 4ths progression. The dyad conflict of D-flat/D-natural occurs here as D-flat moves to F Dim. 7 and then back to F (I) for the 1st Key Area's Recapitulation. The missing dominant from essentially the entire 1st movement finally presents itself in the coda when F6/4 moves to C7 (V7) and back to F (I), resolving the A-flat/A-natural conflict. This complete substitution of dominant harmony for subdominant harmony was an innovation in symphonic form and structure. Lastly, Brahms emphasizes the symmetry taking more prominence in his time and future symphonic works, in which F symmetrically expands outwards to E – A (2nd Key) – D (2nd Key in Recap), and its dominant C expands outwards contrapuntally to D-flat – A-flat – E-flat (precise mid-point of the

Development). This further substitutes for dominant harmony, as it extends the tonic area in a contrapuntal symmetrical fashion, displacing the importance of the dominant.

3. Franz Liszt's (1811-1886) 4th Symphonic Tone Poem, *Orpheus*, written in 1853-54, was conceived as an introduction to the premiere Weimar performance of Gluck's *Orpheus*, conducted by Liszt. Liszt looked at Orpheus as a symbol of art's civilizing influence. Its use of the striking octatonic scale and blurring of tonality make the tone poem nearly Impressionistic. Based on the Transformation of Themes technique, there is no polarity of Tonic and Dominant as present in the Classical sonata. However, it is still based on a loosely constructed sonata-rondo form. Liszt relates 3rd to the tonic as was Romantic norm, and 2 diminished 7th chords are interlocked within the octatonic scale: from C#-E-flat-E-natural-G-A-B-flat within C-C#-E-flat-E-natural-F#-G-A-B-flat. The introduction sets up the tritone E-flat-A 3-flat system. With the premiere of theme IA, E-flat and A appear as part of an octatonic collection with C-natural and F# missing. The octatonic collection is completed with C and F#, switching to the A-D 3# system, as the 1st key Theme 1a shifts from C7 - F(IV) - C(I) - F# - G (V). Relating to 3rds, Liszt then moves to E (III#) for the somewhat atonal 2nd key area. The E then relates to its minor third below, or vi, with C#m harmony; E then returns and moves up a 3rd to G#m for the Developmental Theme IIb, which cadences a third away to Cm. Liszt begins the PCA ascension during Theme IIb where C# moves to D-E-flat-E-natural. PCA 5 (F) is saved for the Retransition with Theme 1b in G7 (V7) harmony. For the Recapitulation of Theme 1a, the formal dominant continues in dominant 7 harmony; however, Liszt significantly moves to C7 afterwards acting as V7/IV, rather than I. The chromatic bass continuing the PCA prolongs G however, via PCAs 6 and 7 (F# and G). PCAs 6 and 7 are

repeated for Recap. IIa, which is transposed a 4th down. The chromatic bass is supported by harmonies above. Dominant implications recur within the transition to the return of Theme Ia, via a structural V6/4 – 5/3, implying C. Thus, 1A returns in its original key; however, C7 displaces tonic harmony and acts as V7/IV, moving to F. The PCA continues to rise, needed to once and for all resolve the B-flat/B-natural dyad conflict persisting within C7 harmony. The PCA rises from G (7) to A-flat (8), remaining on A-flat for the Recapitulation of Theme IIb, the E-flat/E-natural dyad conflict present between vacillating Cm/CM/cm harmonies. The coda follows, in which the coda is interestingly reached through descending 3rds. The opening octatonic collection is restated, and the PCA rises from A-natural (9) to A# (10) and finally to B-natural (11), resolving to C (0). The PCA's B-natural occurs at the only structural dominant in the entire piece, as G (V) moves to C (I), instead of C acting as V7/IV previously.

Richard Strauss's 1889 Tone Poem, *Don Juan*, Op. 20 represents the culmination of the "New German School" of Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner. Similarly to List's tone poem, *Orpheus*, in which an arch exists, leading to an important central buildup and an equally important release, Strauss's *Don Juan* does the same, however, with a more tangible plot, whose various means of presentation ebb and flow in musical drama. That is, an exposition of themes first presents the scenario, leading to programmatic development in which thematic transformations take place, crises, climaxes, and an epilog(s). Thus, Strauss goes beyond Liszt and Brahms in a purely programmatic sense as an entire story is weaved into the poem rather than existing as a somewhat abstract idea to relate music to. Like Liszt, Strauss takes on a loosely defined Sonata-Rondo form and presents two dyad conflicts. Typical of Romantic music and also akin to Liszt's tone

poem, Strauss relates keys by thirds. Via chromatic voice leading however, Strauss maintains harmonic ambiguity through having one or more voices move up or down as a half step, crippling the power of the prevailing harmonic area through the consequent creation of distantly related chords. A harmonic innovation of Strauss unprecedented in Liszt and Brahms' is the major modes constant inflection toward the flat side of the 5th's cycle, including the parallel minors: G/gm and E/em. In accordance with Strauss' allegiance to the plot, his tendency toward flat keys within the overall major key foreshadows the death of the lead character, Don Juan, whose E major tonality abruptly shifts to its parallel e minor in the Epilog, leading to the work's end and his death. The missing pitch, or 3rd (G-natural), is thus the death pitch as in Verdi's *Othello*.

Don Juan's exposition arpeggiates an E-B-G-natural em triad, as em/EM is the 1st Key Theme Group, representing the mood "Stormy." However, C-natural, Flat-VI harmony begins the piece before moving to em (presenting the G-natural/G# conflict), then to E (I). The first theme, A, is flying fanfare, while the 2nd, reached at an E6/4 harmony, is Don Juan's Theme. After moving to C, a 3rds cycle follows beginning on B (V). Beyond all the characteristics stated previously, Strauss is innovative in his overlapping of themes on top of the other, as shown in the Closing, in which Love Theme 3 (L3) is accompanied by Love Theme 2 (L2), further enhancing the allegiance to the plot, as each theme represents a different "love" of Don Juan. In the Development (which prolongs C through its leading tone, B-natural and its half-step upper neighbor, C# via C-Bdiminished 7-B9-B7-C (Recap.)). In C (Flat-VI) harmony, the Development with its new horn "Heroic Don Juan" theme introduced, experiences thematic transformations and

melds with previous themes displaying all facets of Don Juan's personality, those of hero, lover and comic.

Brahms' 1878 Violin Concerto In D, Op. 77 opens with a 1st Theme Group, as does Strauss, and also implies the parallel minor via an F-natural/F# conflict similarly to Strauss. Brahms' also similarly breaks up the 1st Key Theme Group into an a and an a prime motive, a starting on D (I) harmony and a prime on A (V); Strauss also moves from I to V between A and B of his 1st Key Theme Group. Lastly, V is reached by both Brahms and Strauss via moving chromatically; Strauss moves to B (V) via C and Brahms moves to A (V) via g# diminished 7 harmony. After the Recap of Don Juan's Themes, an expansion of the Heroic Theme replaces the 2nd theme group of Love Themes, balancing out the earlier expansion of the Exposition's Love Theme 1. This, in addition to the expansion of L1 in the Exposition, acts as the two climactic passages of the poem, at roughly symmetrical points in the piece. Lastly, a prolonged plagal cadence ending in the parallel minor (signifying "Death" occurs with an am (iv) pedal during the Epilogue. In it, C resolves within the am triad, and after moving to e (parallel minor i for Don Juan's death), the G# resolves down to G-natural.