

Cascadian Chorale — June 2026

Rachmaninov Vespers

Program Notes

All-Night Vigil, op.37 (1915)

Sergei Vasilyevich Rachmaninov (1873–1943)

*Vespers*

- |                                     |                             |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Priidite, poklonimsia            | “Come, let us worship”      |
| 2. Blagoslovi, dushe moya, Ghospoda | “Bless the Lord, O my soul” |
| 3. Blazehn muzh                     | “Blessed is the man”        |
| 4. Svete tihy                       | “Gladsome light”            |
| 5. Nine otpushchayeshi              | “Lord, now lettest thou”    |
| 6. Bogoroditse Devo                 | “Rejoice, O virgin”         |

*intermission*

*Matins*

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 7. Shestopsalmiye                  | The Six Psalms (The Lesser Doxology)       |
| 8. Hvalite imia Ghospodne          | “Praise the name of the Lord”              |
| 9. Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi      | “Blessed art thou, Lord”                   |
| 10. Voskreseniya Hristovo videvshe | “Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ” |
| 11. Velichit dusha moya Ghospoda   | “My soul magnifies the Lord”               |
| 12. Slavosloviye velikoye          | The Great Doxology                         |
| 13. Tropar: “Dnes spaseniye”       | Troparion: “Today salvation has come”      |
| 14. Tropar: “Voskres iz groba”     | Troparion: “Thou didst rise from the tomb” |

*First Hour*

- |                        |                                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 15. Vzbrannoy voyevode | “To thee, the victorious leader” |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|

## **All-Night Vigil, opus 37**

by **Sergei Vasilyevich Rachmaninov** (1873–1943)

### Prelude: Russian Sacred Music

Other than Rachmaninov's Vigil and a smattering of miniatures by composers of the previous generation, Russian music occupies a neglected niche in the repertoire of modern American choirs. More's the pity, for the Russian choral tradition is rich and quite distinctive from its Western cousins. Just as Western Europe developed different varieties of medieval chant, such as Gregorian in Rome and Sarum in England, Russia had its distinctive type, called znamenny chant, with roots stretching to ancient Byzantium. When thirteenth-century Tatars conquered Kiev, hitherto the center of Russian culture, the churches of Novgorod and Moscow preserved znamenny chant, but only barely.

The Renaissance brought to Western European music new imaginative vibrancy, with sacred polyphony and secular madrigals, but these innovations missed Russia entirely. Not until Vasily Titov (c.1650–c.1715) did Russia give rise to a native-born composer of international stature. The eighteenth century brought greater influences from the West, as the tsars in St. Petersburg hired leading Italian musicians to direct their resident orchestras and singers. New heights arose with the sacred, unaccompanied "choral concertos" of Dmitri Bortniansky (1751–1825), written for the Imperial Court Chapel. Bortniansky's music often sounds like a juxtaposition of Italian lyricism and Haydnesque buoyancy. The works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Cherubini, and other Western masters came to be imitated and performed throughout Russia. The Court Chapel even presented the world premiere of Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* in 1824.

The mid-nineteenth century brought a decline in choral writing as Russian composers—like their Western contemporaries—devoted themselves more to opera and orchestral music. Alexei Lvov (1799–1870) used his post as director of the Imperial Court Chapel to exert authoritarian censorship over liturgical music in the Russian church. He enforced an extremely conservative musical language: pared-down four-part harmonizations of simple, repetitive chant. Then came the Divine Liturgy by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893), composed in 1878. It controversially flouted the church's monopoly on sacred music, having been crafted for concerts rather than worship services. However, even this crucial work was largely tied to Lvov's compositional style, limiting its appeal today.

In the 1880s, two prominent ensembles dominated Russian choral music. In the northern city of St. Petersburg, Alexander Arkhangelsky (1846–1924) founded the first professional chorus in Russia tied neither to church, nor court, nor opera house. Meanwhile, in Moscow, the Synodal Choir sang services and concerts at the Cathedral of the Dormition in the Kremlin. These two

choirs raised Russian choral music to a new level of excellence, with emphases on tuning, balance, and artistic subtlety. A new clutch of composers arose who devoted their energies to writing sophisticated, nuanced, carefully crafted music with a distinctively Russian sound. They wholly embraced znamenny chant as raw material for new works, just as their orchestrally-minded compatriots had done with Russian folksong. Most prominent among these composers were Alexander Kastalsky (1856–1926), Alexander Grechaninov (1864–1956), Viktor Kalinnikov (1870–1927), and Pavel Chesnokov (1877–1944). Many choral composers of the era had trained as singers in, or served on the faculty of, the Synodal Choir under its expert conductor, Vasily Sergeyevich Orlov (1856–1907).

### Rachmaninov Before the Vigil

Sergei Rachmaninov was born into an aristocratic family at their estate near Novgorod, a medieval city prominent in Russian culture and history—an estate, yes, but the only land left to a formerly wealthy family. (Any number of Chekhov plays aptly describes their declining fortunes.) When Sergei was but nine years old, the family sold their last land holdings and moved 120 miles north, to a dingy apartment in the metropolis of St. Petersburg. His parents separated, and he lived with his mother, siblings, and maternal grandmother. As a child, Sergei often took his beloved grandmother to the various churches and cathedrals. This formative musical experience left a lasting mark on his future compositional output: he often imitated the sound of church bells in his orchestral and piano writing, and throughout his life he embraced the largely stepwise melodic motion and frequent returns to a home pitch found in znamenny chant. While but a boy Rachmaninov was witnessing the great rebirth of Russian choral music. After these jaunts through the city with his grandmother, he often returned home to play the chants on the piano. Music was clearly his destiny.

In 1885, at the encouragement of his cousin, the renowned pianist Alexander Siloti, Rachmaninov transferred from the music conservatory in St. Petersburg to its rival in Moscow. He seemed physically destined to play piano: his bearing was tall and aristocratic, and his hands were extremely large (for a bit of musical humor, search YouTube for “Rachmaninov had big hands”). But by temperament he was shy and reserved, and found himself drawn to composition. Having taken classes from Stepan Smolensky (1848–1909), the director of the Synodal Choir, Rachmaninov dabbled in unaccompanied sacred choral music along the lines of Bortniansky. He himself even taught a class for prospective choral trainers, for a little income. But the true hints of greater accomplishments can be found in his First Piano Concerto (1891) and graduation opera, *Aleko* (1892). These early efforts were encouraged by Tchaikovsky, Taneyev, and Arensky, the leading composers in Moscow. Soon the Prelude in C-sharp minor (1892) came to be played throughout Europe, positioning him as heir apparent to the great

Russian Romantic tradition. This came to an abrupt end when Alexander Glazunov—who is believed to have been drunk—conducted the disastrous first performance of Rachmaninov's First Symphony in 1897.

The creative crisis that followed has been blown a bit out of proportion by popular writers. It is true that Rachmaninov destroyed the symphony in anger and frustration. But Rachmaninov did not, in fact, stop composing entirely. Though he did feel his compositional skills to be stymied, he merely shifted his emphasis to conducting, working as an assistant at the Bolshoi Theater. He also began the career that would later become his bread and butter, that of a touring pianist. Upon deciding to write a new piano concerto, in part to bolster his developing pianistic career, severe depression took hold. Here the writers have it correct: it was only through the twice-weekly intervention of a psychologist, whose famous hypnotic suggestion—"You will begin your concerto... you will work with great ease... the concerto will be excellent."—provided the young composer the mental means whereby to achieve the Second Piano Concerto (1900), which remains his most famous large-scale work. A masterful Cello Sonata (1901) soon followed, plus two more one-act operas (*The Miserly Knight* and *Francesca da Rimini*, both 1905). Rachmaninov had suddenly found his mature voice, and discovered that audiences loved it.

Sadly, revolutionary fervor in Russia began to sour against aristocrats like Rachmaninov, so he and his new family settled for a time in Dresden, Germany. Here followed the melodious Second Symphony (1907), First Piano Sonata (1907), Third Piano Concerto (1909), and brooding tone-poem *The Isle of the Dead* (1909). He took his first tour to America, where he was invited to become the regular conductor of the Boston Symphony, but declined. Returning to Russia, he focused again on piano works: the Preludes, op.32 (1910), *Études-tableaux*, op.33 (1911), and Second Piano Sonata (1913). One wonders if this sudden flurry of piano works was an attempt to divert attention from the ubiquitous C-sharp-minor Prelude, which audiences and concert promoters alike demanded he play. The inspired decade from 1902 also brought some forty songs, including *Lilacs* (1902) and the wordless Vocalise (1912).

Two large-scale choral works also occupied this period. The unaccompanied Divine Liturgy, op.31 (1910), followed and developed the tradition established by Tchaikovsky twenty years earlier. Thanks largely to the development of Russian choirs, Rachmaninov's Liturgy is more harmonically elaborate than his mentor's, but this very attribute caused trouble with the country's strict religious authorities. (This was not the first such instance in the composer's life: because he was not a frequent church-goer, his marriage in 1903 had to take place in a barracks chapel rather than a grand church.) Soon there followed a choral symphony, *The Bells* (1913), setting a rather free Russian translation of Edgar Allan Poe. This Rachmaninov came to respect as his greatest work, and not without reason. These two works, at the flowering of his maturity, evoke in different ways the church bells and religious liturgies he so loved as a small child. And

in these two works, one liturgical and the other poetic, Rachmaninov set the stage for his greatest choral masterpiece.

The 1913–14 concert season was extremely demanding for Rachmaninov, now one of the leading pianists and conductors in Russia, with forty-four concerts including eight in England. He passed the following spring and summer as usual at the family estate, called Ivanovka, near the city of Tambov, three hundred miles southeast of Moscow. The composer himself managed the estate, per the old feudal style. (Fans of *Downton Abbey* would recognize some of the supervisory tasks Rachmaninov undertook.) The First World War broke out in August. His recitals and concerto appearances continued unabated that fall, but now proceeds often went to the war effort. He composed but fitfully that year—merely a few sketches to be taken up many years later.

#### About Rachmaninov's All-Night Vigil

Regarding his activities of January and February 1915, Rachmaninov later said: “I composed my Vesper Mass [i.e., All-Night Vigil] very quickly; it was completed in less than two weeks. The impulse to compose it came to me after hearing a performance of my Liturgy, which I did not like at all.” It is possible that the performance in question was the one that he himself had conducted the preceding February. In any case, the two-week period was probably merely the concluding phase of composition: Rachmaninov, like many of the greats, tended to compose in his head over weeks or months before putting his thoughts to paper.

Several features of the work were demanded by religious tradition and authorities. But each of these restrictions Rachmaninov turned into great strengths. For example, the Orthodox church had banned instruments in worship (which holds still today), hence the All-Night Vigil is set for unaccompanied chorus, as was the Liturgy before it. But here he made a considerable advance on the earlier work. He learned, from Kastalsky and other choral specialists, the usefulness of what can be termed choral orchestration. To demonstrate the many ways in which Rachmaninov excelled at this skill, I resort to a bulleted list.

- The work is scored for a standard four-part chorus, but almost never does the ensemble behave in four simple voices. Each part, at different points in the score, splits into two and even three lines.
- Often a melodic line is doubled at the octave—as is often found in orchestral writing—which results in less complex counterpoint but a thicker texture.
- At other times, he requires the voices to combine. On one occasion, the low altos, tenors, and baritones sing in exact unison, creating a wholly new timbre.

- The basses, tenors, and even (shock of shocks!) altos get the melody much more frequently than the sopranos. (Perhaps his special fondness of the alto voice stems from his older sister, who had been accepted into the company of the Bolshoi opera but died before she could take up the post.)
- The sopranos' high range is reserved for particular moments, and never goes higher than an A. On the other hand, the basses are often in their basement, and in three movements descend into the sub-basement domain of a bottom B-flat.
- Three movements include incidental moments for a tenor soloist, and one features an alto soloist, though Rachmaninov also allows choral sections to sing those parts.
- At times certain sections of the chorus are directed to hum rather than sing.

All of these elements combine to create a fluid, constantly changing sonority that helps to maintain the listener's interest. More crucially, these various means are always used to the artistic ends of reinforcing the text and the expressivity of the music. When Rachmaninov wants us to hear a particular melodic line or line of text, he writes the music such that it is impossible *not* to hear it. When a composer can combine such craft with great emotional expressivity, he has truly become a master of the medium.

Tradition also restricted Rachmaninov by requiring that certain movements include ancient chants as melodic material. Kastalsky helped Rachmaninov to select which chants would fit best. Of the nine chants used, most are znamenny. Kastalsky, in fact, had been a major figure in resurrecting znamenny chants from the neglect they had suffered since being pushed aside in the seventeenth century in favor of two other varieties of chant that Rachmaninov also uses. Movements 2 and 15 use so-called Greek chants, which have nothing to do with Greece but involve some simple melismas (melodic turns involving more than one note per syllable). Kievan chant, heard in movements 4 and 5, recalls Ukrainian folksong by alternating recitation with choral refrains. But knowledge of these chants is not a requirement, for Rachmaninov treats them as he would any other melody. As Kastalsky wrote in an article previewing the premiere: "One should hear what has become of the simple, straightforward melodies in the hands of a major artist!"

Even more remarkable are Rachmaninov's melodies in the movements that do *not* require chant. He called these "conscious counterfeits," also translatable as "deliberate falsifications." Those tunes move largely stepwise (without big leaps) and have syncopated rhythm (accenting off-beats to reflect the text)—in other words, they are very much like chant. A listener thus does not need to know which melodies are chant and which aren't, for Rachmaninov has crafted his work to be without seams. (Comparison can be made to Duruflé's use of Gregorian chant in his Requiem.) This was, after all, not Rachmaninov's first exposure to the chants he loved in his

youth: from his First Symphony to the Symphonic Dances, his very last composition, chant is a frequent background presence.

The All-Night Vigil service takes place the evening before a major feast, such as Easter. Yet even Rachmaninov called this his “Vesper Mass,” and the service is only truly “all night” in monasteries. Churches instead conflate the evening Vespers service with the early-morning Matins service into one Vigil. In worship, some of the texts are variable from one Vigil to another, but Rachmaninov set only those texts which do not change. This may imply that he intended it to be performed as part of a worship service, though we have no direct evidence to that. In fact, given that complete Vigil or Liturgy cycles were only rarely performed liturgically, but more often in concerts, we can safely assume that Rachmaninov would have expected his music to appear in concert, with liturgical use as only a remote possibility. During his lifetime only separate chunks were ever performed liturgically. Many modern concerts respectably incorporate selections of chant to mimic a Vigil service. However, just as today Mozart masses are performed without liturgical considerations, sometimes one hears merely that which Rachmaninov has provided, without adornment.

### What You Will Hear

The Vigil service begins as the priest enters simply, swinging his thurible of incense, through a curtained door. He pronounces a brief blessing, to which the choir responds with “Amen”—here begins Rachmaninov’s music. Four times the priest and choir summon the people to worship, expanding the call slightly each time. This is the most homophonic movement in Rachmaninov’s Vigil, meaning that all the voices sing the same words to roughly the same rhythm at the same time. It begins in six parts—three parts in close harmony, doubled at the octave—but expands to eight parts and more open harmony as each proclamation continues. The tune is not from chant, but such is Rachmaninov’s skill and familiarity with the idiom that the casual listener would never know.

The low altos (or alto soloist) take the chant melody in the second movement, accompanied by the lowest voices. The basses’ harmonization changes slightly from time to time. Rachmaninov juxtaposes that “low” sonority with the “high” sonority of top tenors plus altos and sopranos. He begins to stretch ever so slowly the traditional norms of Orthodox choral singing. Liturgically, this would be sung while the priest swings his thurible, blessing the congregation. The text blesses or praises God for creating all things. To Rachmaninov, this is a contemplative, calm moment: blessing God is an internal act.

In the third movement, “Blessed is the man,” Rachmaninov again explores textural possibilities. The middle voices sing the psalm text while the full ensemble responds with “Alleluia” as a

refrain. After a few verbatim repetitions, the “Alleluias” move a step higher each time, eventually beginning a sixth higher than at the start. At the end of the movement, Rachmaninov returns to the original pitch by three trifold statements of “Alleluia.”

“Gladsome light” is based on a Kievan chant from the third century. During the traditional Orthodox rite this chant is sung while all the lamps and candles are lit. Just as the church gets brighter bit by bit, Rachmaninov slowly adds voices to the texture: first tenors alone, eventually joined by the upper voices, and finally by the basses. The tenor soloist takes the role of the priest, intoning praise to God.

In the fifth movement the tenor gets a more extended role, and indeed it is a specific character, that of Simeon in the New Testament. He was the old man who met the infant Jesus in the temple and declared, as had been prophesied that he would, that this child was the savior. In this prayer, known in the West as the “Nunc dimittis,” Simeon declares his readiness for death. Surrounding the soloist’s Kievan chant, the slow, steady pace of the altos and tenors could be interpreted as either a gentle lullaby, the tolling of bells, or the gait of an old man. Liturgically, at this point children enter the church and are laid on the ground, after which the priest raises them up to their parents. The movement closes with the basses descending to an extraordinarily low bottom B-flat. When Rachmaninov first played this section for Nikolai Danilin (1878–1945), who was to conduct the premiere, the maestro’s response was: “Where on earth are we going to find such basses? They are as rare as asparagus at Christmas.” But years later the composer attested: “I knew the voices of my countrymen”—and he was right. He had hoped that this movement would be played at his funeral, a wish which was unfortunately not realized.

The following prayer, comparable to the “Ave Maria,” is surely the most well-known piece of Russian church music. The melody seems to be chant—especially the middle section led by the altos—but in fact it is pure Rachmaninov. Only briefly does this movement rise above *piano* (soft), but it is a powerful moment. After a final blessing and the extinguishing of light, the monastic Vespers service ends here.

All his life, Rachmaninov was interested in the sound of bells. In the seventh movement, the sopranos and tenors mimic bells that greet worshippers to Matins service. The tune, found largely in the altos, is an old znamenny chant. Demonstrating the composer’s sense of choral orchestration, at one point the chant is assigned to all the altos, one-half the tenors, and one-third of the sopranos. After a great pealing of bells of different sizes, the chorus sings delicately and homophonically, almost in the style of a Protestant hymn.

Rachmaninov brings a more overtly jubilant mood to the eighth movement. Symbolically in honor of Christ’s resurrection, candles and lamps are lit for Matins. Altos and basses intone the znamenny chant in octaves while sopranos and tenors, much divided, add fanfares and filigree.



Just as the resurrection is the heart of Christian theology, the ninth movement is the heart of Rachmaninov's Vigil. Set to znamenny chant, the text is the biblical narrative of the women who arrive at Jesus' tomb to anoint the body, but instead are greeted by an angel who tells them of the resurrection. Rachmaninov pays close attention to syllabic stress and spoken pacing. Each episode in the story is interrupted by a devotional prayer: "Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your ways." These different sections are linked with a single held note, often hummed. The closing third of this movement ("Glory to God the Father...") evidently had special meaning to Rachmaninov, for he incorporated this music into his final composition, the Symphonic Dances (1940); at the appropriate juncture, he even wrote "Alleluia" into that score's manuscript.

There is in Matins a series of texts that change for different feast days: a litany, versicles, and a reading from the Gospels recounting a witness to Jesus' resurrection. Then follows the "Veneration of the Cross," when the New Testament is moved to the midst of the worshippers, and is symbolically hailed as akin to the face of Christ. This forms Rachmaninov's tenth movement, wherein women and men trade monolithic statements of an original chant-like tune, interspersed with moments when they sing together.

Rachmaninov's setting of the Magnificat—the prayer of Mary reflecting on the honor God has given her by appointing her to bear the baby Jesus—is unique among all the dozens I have encountered by assigning the melody not to womanly voices, neither to the chorus as a whole, but to the basses. Each line of Mary's text is separated by an acclamation in the upper voices (everyone except the basses): "More honorable than the cherubim, and more glorious than the seraphim...." These interruptions are part of the Orthodox rite for Easter. Mary's lines differ subtly to evoke the specific mood of the text, which to Rachmaninov is often different than tradition would imply.

The twelfth movement, called "The Great Doxology," compares to the Gloria in the Catholic mass, with some text added from the Te Deum and Psalm 90 ("Lord, you have been our dwelling place"). Here is a tour de force of choral orchestration. Each section of voices, at some point, takes the fourth-century znamenny chant. At the start, the altos sing the tune while tenors sustain chords underneath, as would orchestral woodwinds. Bells peal at the mention of Jesus Christ ("You alone are the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father, Amen."). In the Orthodox service, the priest would intone the words "in your light we shall see light" at the moment of sunrise; Rachmaninov assigns this moment as the preparation for one of the most sustained climaxes of the Vigil, when the sopranos twice reach to A-flat. The close is likewise strong, but, as with every movement of this Vigil, the actual final chord is soft.

Next follow two troparia based on znamenny chants. A troparion is an ancient poetic form found in Orthodox services. These two are short, meditative hymns to the resurrection, as Rachmaninov winds down the Vigil from the expansive pronouncements that came before. The

penultimate section includes a chant that Rimsky-Korsakov had used in his then popular *Russian Easter Festival Overture* (1888), and that Rachmaninov himself had used in his early *Fantaisie-Tableaux*, opus 5 (1893), for two pianos.

At this point the monastic service of Matins would conclude, but Rachmaninov's Vigil is not over yet. In monasteries, the monks would chant another short service called First Hour, after which they sing this hymn from the feast day of the Annunciation, when Mary was informed that her unborn child would be the savior. The close of Rachmaninov's Vigil is in fact the shortest of all fifteen movements, but it contains the longest period of unbridled joy. At times the composer adopts the simple imitative techniques that Bortniansky used in his choral concertos. Despite the grand hymn of praise and victory, Rachmaninov manages to end his Vigil gently. To him, every act of devotion is an internal one.

#### Postlude: Revolution and Decline

Soon after completing the Vigil, Rachmaninov played it privately on the piano to his two closest chorally inclined colleagues, Kastalsky and Danilin. (The latter had been a fellow student with Rachmaninov at the Moscow Philharmonic School, and had premiered the Liturgy in 1911.) This was the last piece that Rachmaninov took to his old composition teacher Sergei Taneyev, who was very impressed and who died months later. One advisor who died too early to hear the work was Smolensky, who had done so much to resurrect the old znamenny chants to current choral use, and to whose memory Rachmaninov dedicated the Vigil.

The first performance of Rachmaninov's All-Night Vigil took place a mere two months after its completion, on March 10, 1915, sung by the Moscow Synodal Choir conducted by Danilin at the Great Hall of the Nobility in Moscow. Sponsored by Kastalsky, five more performances took place in a few weeks, all of them extremely well attended. Rachmaninov later averred that every performance under Danilin revealed the work differently, but that each interpretation was equally attractive. The Vigil was well received by its audiences, but the religious authorities were displeased with the liberties Rachmaninov took with the traditional chants. Perhaps the reason they allowed the performances was that the income went to the war effort, for the First World War was by then raging.

The War shattered Rachmaninov's life. From its first months, with the establishment of the Eastern Front, Russia's military fought a more brutal battle even than the horrors to the west. As the war developed, Russia's economy and population suffered so greatly that self-appointed government councils (called "soviets") rose up in revolution in many cities. The tsar and other royalty were deposed and murdered. Aristocratic landowners like Rachmaninov were no longer revered: their estates were looted, vandalized, and often destroyed. (Ivanovka was later

restored and is now a museum.) Amid the chaos, Rachmaninov was able to secure an exit visa for him and his family, ostensibly for a concert engagement in Sweden. They escaped via Finland—using the same border crossing that the exiled Lenin had used to triumphantly enter Russia months earlier—and wandered Europe until finally settling in New York City. There he entirely ceased composing, instead devoting his energies to concertizing in order to support his family. They developed a household along pre-revolutionary traditions: Russian was spoken, Russian customs were embraced, the servants were Russian, and even most of his guests were fellow exiled Russians. He began recording and became one of the world's best-paid musicians. He built a posh villa on Lake Lucerne in Switzerland.

Eventually he began composing again, including the Fourth Piano Concerto (1927), the Corelli Variations (1931) for solo piano, the famous Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini (1934) for piano and orchestra, the Third Symphony (1936), and perhaps his greatest orchestral work, the Symphonic Dances (1940). But these works continued the same Late Romantic style that he had always employed, and none were embraced wholly. In 1939 he said that he felt “like a ghost wandering in a world grown alien. I cannot cast out the old way of writing and I cannot acquire the new.” During the Second World War he again fled Europe, settling near Los Angeles, where he died at home, just miles from the homes of two other eminent European exiles, Stravinsky and Schoenberg.

And what of the tradition that Rachmaninov had perfected in his All-Night Vigil? The new Communist regime dismantled the country's ancient religious infrastructure. In 1918, the Synodal Choir was dissolved, its school re-christened as the People's Choral Academy. Most composers and conductors, including Danilin and Chesnokov, found work at the Bolshoi Theater, the Moscow Conservatory, or other secular institutions. But the most prominent Russian composers, such as Shostakovich and Prokofiev, rarely wrote choral music other than political propaganda. After Stalin's death in 1953, some of the strictures were relaxed, and in 1957 Rachmaninov's Vigil finally received a complete presentation during the Orthodox liturgy in the Soviet Union. Only in recent decades has this music truly gained a foothold in both Russia and the West. The ancient traditions are coming to be researched, understood, and appreciated, with Rachmaninov's Vigil leading the charge. Just as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was the great final accomplishment of the Classical Era symphony, and Wagner's *Ring* the culmination of German Romantic opera, here we have the apex of Russian choral music, centuries in the making.

## Vespers

### 1. Priiditye, poklonimsya ["Come, let us worship"]

<p>Amin.  Priidite, poklonimsia Tsarevi nashemu Bogu.  Priidite, poklonimsia i pripadem Hristu  Tsarevi nashemu Bogu.  Priidite, poklonimsia i pripadem samomu Hristu  Tsarevi i Bogu nashemu.  Priidite, poklonimsia i pripadem Yemu.</p>	<p>Amen.  Come, let us worship the King, our God.  Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ,  the King, our God.  Come, let us worship and fall down before the very Christ,  the King and our God.  Come, let us worship and fall down before him.</p>
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### 2. Blagoslovi, dushe moya, Ghospoda ["Bless the Lord, O my soul"]

<p>Amin.  Blagoslovi, dushe moya, Ghospoda.  Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi.  Ghospodi Bozhe moy, vozvelichilsia yesi zelo.  Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi.  Vo ispovedaniye i v velelepotu obleklsia yesi.  Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi.  Na gorah stanut vodi.  Divna dela Tvoya, Ghospodi.  Posrede gor proyduť vodi.  Divna dela Tvoya, Ghospodi.  Fsia premudrostiyu sotvoril yesi.  Slava Ti, Ghospodi, sotvorivshemu fsia.</p>	<p>Amen.  Bless, my soul, the Lord.  Blessed are you, Lord.  Lord my God, you are very great.  Blessed are you, Lord.  You are clothed in honor and majesty.  Blessed are you, Lord.  The waters stand upon the mountains.  Marvelous are your works, Lord.  The waters flow between the hills.  Marvelous are your works, Lord  In wisdom you made all things.  Glory to you, Lord, who created all.</p>
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### 3. Blazehn muzh ["Blessed is the man"]

<p>Blazeh muzh,  izhe ne ide na sovet nechestivih. Alliluiya.  Yako vest Ghospod put pravednih,  i put nechestivih pogibnet. Alliluiya.  Rabotayte Ghospodevi so strahom,  i raduytesia Yemu s trepetom. Alliluiya.  Blazheni fsi nadeyushchiisia nan. Alliluiya.  Voskresni, Ghospodi, spasi mia, Bozhe moy. Alliluiya.  Ghospodne yest spaseniye,  i na liudeh Tvoih blagosloveniye Tvoye. Alliluiya.  Slava Ottsu, i Sinu, i Sviatomu Duhu,  i nine i prisno, i vo veki vekov. Amin.  Alliluiya, slava Tebe, Bozhe.</p>	<p>Blessed is the man  who walks not in the counsel of the wicked. Alleluia.  For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,  but the way of the wicked will perish. Alleluia.  Serve the Lord with fear,  and rejoice in him with trembling. Alleluia.  Blessed are all who take refuge in him. Alleluia.  Arise, Lord. Save my people, my God. Alleluia.  The Lord is salvation,  and upon your people is your blessing. Alleluia.  Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  both now and forever, and to ages of ages. Amen.  Alleluia. Glory to you, God.</p>
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4. Svete tihiy ["Gladsome light"]

<p>Svete tihiy sviatiya slavi, Bessmertnago,  Otsa Nebesnago, Sviatago Blazhennago, Iisuse Hriste.  Prishedshe na zapad solntsa,  videvshe svet vecherniy.  Poyem Otsa, Sina i Sviatago Duha, Boga.  Dostoin yesi vo fsia vremena  pet biti glasi prepodobnimi,  Sine Bozhiy, zhibot dayay:  temzhe mir Tia slavit.</p>	<p>Gladsome light of the holy glory, of the immortal one,  the heavenly Father, holy and blessed, Jesus Christ.  Now that we come to the setting sun,  and behold the light of evening.  We praise the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: God.  Worthy are you at every moment  to be praised in hymns by reverent voices,  Son of God, giver of life:  therefore the world glorifies you.</p>
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5. Nine otpushchayeshi ["Lord, now lettest thou"]

<p>Nine otpushchayeshi raba Tvoyego, Vladiko,  po glagolu Tvoyemu s mirom;  yako videsta ochi moi spaseniye Tvoye,  yezhe yesi ugotoval pred litsem fseh liudey,  svet vo otkroveniye yazikov,  i slavu liudey Tvoih Izrailia.</p>	<p>Now let your servant, Lord, depart in peace,  according to your word,  for my eyes have seen your salvation,  which you have prepared before the face of all people,  a light to enlighten the Gentiles,  and the glory of your people, Israel.</p>
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6. Bogoroditse Devo ["Rejoice, O virgin"]

<p>Bogoroditse Devo, raduysia,  Blagodatnaya Mariye, Ghospod s Toboyu.  Blagoslovenna Ti v zhenah,  i blagosloven Plod chreva Tvoyego,  yako Spasa rodila yesi dush nashih.</p>	<p>God-bearer virgin, rejoice  full of grace, Mary, God is with you.  Blessed are you among women,  and blessed is the fruit of your womb,  for the savior of our souls have you borne.</p>
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*Matins*

7. Shestopsalmiye [The Six Psalms]

<p>Slava v vishnih Bogu, i na zemli mir,  v chelovetseh blagovoleniye.  Ghospodi, ustne moi otverzeshi,  i usta moya vozvestiat hvalu Tvoyu.</p>	<p>Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,  good will among men.  Lord, open my lips,  and my mouth will proclaim your praise.</p>
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8. Hvalite imia Ghospodne ["Praise the name of the Lord"]

<p>Hvalite imia Ghospodne. Alliluiya.  Hvalite, rabi Ghospoda. Alliluiya.  Blagosloven Ghospod ot Siona,  zhiviy vo Iyerusalime. Alliluiya.  Ispovedaytesia Ghospodevi, yako blag. Alliluiya.  Yako v vek milost Yego. Alliluiya.  Ispovedaytesia Bogu Nebesnomu. Alliluiya.  Yako v vek milost Yego. Alliluiya.</p>	<p>Praise the name of the Lord. Alleluia.  Praise the Lord, his servants. Alleluia.  Blessed be the Lord from Zion,  he who dwells in Jerusalem. Alliluiya.  Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. Alleluia.  For his mercy endures forever. Alleluia.  Give thanks to the God of heaven. Alleluia.  For his mercy endures forever. Alleluia.</p>
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9. Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi ["Blessed art thou, O Lord"]

<p>Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi, nauchi mia opravdaniyem Tvoim Angelski sobor udivisia, zria Tebe v mertvih vmenivshasia, smertnuyu zhe, Spase, krepot razorivsha, i s Soboyu Adama vozdvigsha, i ot ada fsia svobodshcha.</p> <p>Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi... "Pochto mira s milostivnimi slezami, o uchenitsi, rastvoriayete?" Blistayaysia vo grobe Angel, mironositsam veshchashe: "Vidite vi grob, i urazumeyte: Spas bo voskrese ot groba."</p> <p>Blagosloven yesi, Gospodi... Zelo rano mironositsi techahu ko grobu Tvoyemu ridayushchiya, no predsta k nim Angel, i reche: "Ridaniya vremena presta, ne plachite, voskreseniye zhe apostolom rtsite."</p> <p>Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi... Mironositsi zheni, s miri prishedshiya ko grobu Tvoyemu, Spase, ridahu. Angel zhe k nim reche glagolia: "Chto s mertvimi zhivago pomishliayete? Yako Bog bo voskrese ot groba!"</p> <p>Slava Ottsu, i Sinu, i Sviatomu Duhu. Poklonimsia Ottsu, i Yego Sinovi, i Sviatomu Duhu, Sviatey Triotse vo yedinom sushchestve s Serafimi zovushche: "Sviat, Sviat, Sviat, yesi, Ghospodi!" I nine, i prisno, i vo veki vekov. Amin. Zhiznodavtsa rozhdshi, greha, Devo, Adama izbavila yesi. Radost zhe Yeve v pechali mesto podala yesi; padshiya zhe ot zhizni, k sey napravi, iz Tebe vplotiviysia Bog i chelovek. Alliluiya, slava Tebe Bozhe!</p>	<p>Blessed are you, Lord; teach me your ways. The angels were filled with awe, when they saw you among the dead. By destroying, Savior, the power of death, you raised up Adam, and saved all men from hell.</p> <p>Blessed are you, Lord... "Why do you mingle myrrh with tears of compassion, O you women disciples?", cried the radiant angel to the myrrh-bearers: "Behold the tomb, and understand: the savior is risen from the dead."</p> <p>Blessed are you, Lord... Very early in the morning the myrrh-bearers ran to your tomb, sorrowing, but an angel came to them and said: "The time for sorrow has ended; weep not, but announce to the apostles that he is risen."</p> <p>Blessed are you, Lord... The myrrh-bearers were sorrowful as they neared your tomb, but the angel said to them: "Why do you count the living among the dead? Since he is God, he has risen from the tomb!"</p> <p>Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We worship the Father, and his Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Holy Trinity, one in essence; With the seraphim we cry: "Holy, holy, holy, are you, God!" Now, and forever, and to ages of ages. Amen. Since you gave birth to the giver of life, O virgin, Adam is delivered from sin. You gave joy to Eve, rather than sadness; the God-man who was born of you has restored life to those who had fallen from it. Alleluia. Glory to you, God!</p>
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10. Voskreseniya Hristovo videvshe ["Having beheld the resurrection"]

<p>Voskreseniye Hristovo videvshe, poklonimsia Sviatomu Ghospodu Iisusu, yedinomu bezgreshnomu. Krestu Tvoyemu pokloniyemsia, Hriste, i sviatoye voskreseniye Tvoye poyem i slavim: Ti bo yesi Bog nash, razve Tebe inogo ne znayem, imia Tvoye imenuyem. Priidie fsi vernii, poklonimsia sviatomu Hristovu voskreseniyu: se bo priide krestom radost fsemu miru, fsegda blagosloviashche Ghospoda, poyem voskreseniye Yego: raspiatiye bo preterpev, smertiyu smert razrushi.</p>	<p>Having beheld the resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless one. We venerate your cross, Christ, and we hymn and glorify your holy resurrection: for you are God, and we know no other than you; we call on your name. Come, all faithful, let us venerate Christ's holy resurrection: for behold, through the cross joy has come to all the world; ever blessing the Lord, let us praise his resurrection: for by enduring the cross for us, he has destroyed death by death.</p>
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11. Velichit dusha moya Ghospoda ["My soul magnifies the Lord"]

<p>Velichit dusha Moya Ghospoda, i vozradovasia duh Moy o Boze Spase Moyem. Chestneyshuyu Heruvim, i slavneyshuyu bez sravneniya Serafim, bez istleniya Boga Slova rozhdsheyu, sushchuyu Bogoroditsu Tia velichayem. Yako prizre nas mireniye rabi Svoeyey, se bo otnine ublazhat Mia fsi rodi. Chestneyshuyu Heruvim... Yako sotvori Mne velichiye Silniy, i sviato imia Yego, i milost Yego v rodi rodov boyashchimsia Yego. Chestneyshuyu Heruvim... Nizlozhi silniya so prestol i voznese smirenniya; alchushchiya ispolni blag i bogatiashchiyasia otpusti tshchi. Chestneyshuyu Heruvim... Vospriyat Izrailia, otroka Svoeyego, pomianuti milosti, yakozhe glagola ko ottsemnashim, Avraamu i semeni yego dazhe do veka. Chestneyshuyu Heruvim...</p>	<p>My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my savior. More honorable than the cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, without defilement you birthed the Word of God, true bearer of God, we magnify thee. For he has regarded the lowliness of his maid-servant. For behold, all generations shall call me blessed. More honorable than the cherubim... For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name, and his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. More honorable than the cherubim... He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. More honorable than the cherubim... He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he promised to our fathers, Abraham, and to his posterity for ever. More honorable than the cherubim...</p>
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12. Slavosloviye velikoye [The Great Doxology]

<p>Slava v vishnih Bogu, i na zemli mir, v chelovetseh blagovoleniye. Hvalim Tia, blagoslovim Tia, klaniyem Ti sia, slavoslovim Tia, blagodarim Tia, velikiya radi slavi Tvoyeya. Ghospodi, Tsariu Nebesniy, Bozhe Otche Fsederzhiteliu. Ghospodi, Sine Yedinorodniy, Iisuse Hriste, i Sviatiy Dushe. Ghospodi Bozhe, Agnche Bozhiy, Sine Otech, vzemliay greh mira, pomiluy nas; vzemliay grehi mira, primi molitvu nara. Sediay odesnuyu Ottsa, pomiluy nas. Yako Ti yesi yedin sviat, Ti yesi yedin Ghospod, Iisus Hristos, v slavu Boga Ottsa. Amin. Na fsiak den blagoslovliu Tia i voshvaliu imia Tvoye vo vek i v vek veka. Spodobi, Ghospodi, v den sey bez greha sohranitisia nam. Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi, Bozhe otets nashih, i hvalno i proslavleno imia Tvoye vo vek. Amin. Budi, Ghospodi, milost Tvoyana na nas, yakozhe upovahom na Tia. Blagosloven yesi, Ghospodi, nauchi mia opravdaniyem Tvoim. (Istseli dushu moyu.) (K Tebe pribegoh.) Ghospodi, pribezhishche bil yesi nam v rod i rod. Az reh: Ghospodi, pomiluy mia, istseli dushu moyu, yako sogreshih Tebe. Ghospodi, k Tebe pribegoh, nauchi mia tvoriti voliu Tvoyu, yako Ti yesi Bog moy: yako u Tebe istochnik zhivota; vovete Tvoyem uzrim svet. Probavi milost Tvoyu vedushchim Tia. Sviatiy Bozhe, Sviatiy Krepkiy, Sviatiy Bessmertniy, pomiluy nas. Slava Ottsu i Sinu i Sviatomu Duhu, i nine i prisno, i vo vek i vekov Amin.</p>	<p>Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward man. We praise you, we bless you, we worship you, we glorify you, we give thanks to you for your great glory. Lord, heavenly king, God the Father almighty. Lord, only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and Holy Ghost. Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; You who takes away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. You who sits at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are holy, you alone are the Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen. Every day I will bless you and praise your name for ever and ever. Vouchsafe, Lord, to keep us this day without sin. Blessed are you, Lord, God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is your name forever. Amen. Let your mercy, Lord, be on us, as we have set our hope in you. Blessed are you, Lord; teach me your ways. (Heal my soul.) (I flee to you.) Lord, you have been our refuge, from generation to generation. I said: Lord, have mercy on me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against you. Lord, I flee to you; teach me to do your will, for you are my God: for with you is the fountain of life. and in your light we shall see light. Continue your mercy on those who know you. Holy God, holy mighty, holy immortal, have mercy on us. Glory to the Father, and Son, and the Holy Ghost, both now and ever and to ages of ages. Amen.</p>
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13. Tropar: "Dnes spaseniye" [Troparion: "Today salvation"]

Dnes spaseniye miru bist, poyem Voskresshemu iz groba i Nachalniku zhizni nasheya: razrushiv bo smertiyu smert, pobedu dade nam i veliyu milost.	Today salvation has come to the world; let us sing to him who rose from the dead, the author of our life: having destroyed death by dying, he has given us victory and great mercy.
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14. Tropar: "Voskres iz groba" [Troparion: "Thou didst rise"]

Voskres iz groba i uzi rasterzal yesi ada, razrushil yesi osuzhdeniye smerti, Ghospodi, fsia ot setey vrage izbaviviy, yaviviy zhe Sebe apostolom Tvoim, postal yesi ya na propoved, i temi mir Tvoy podal yesi fselenney, yedine Mnogomilostive.	You did rise from the tomb, and burst the bonds of Hades; you did destroy the condemnation of death, Lord, releasing mankind from the snares of the enemy, you did show yourself to your apostles, and sent them to proclaim you, and through them you have granted peace to your world, O you, plenteous in mercy.
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*First Hour*

15. Vzbrannoy voyevode ["To thee, the victorious leader"]

Vzbrannoy voyevode pobeditelnaya, yako izbavlshesia ot zlih, blagodarstvennaya vospisuyem Ti rabi Tvoi, Bogoroditse; no yako imushchaya derzhavu nepobedimuyu, ot fsiakih nas bed svobodi, da zovem Ti: raduysia, Nevesto Nenevestnaya.	To you, victorious leader of triumphant hosts, we, your servants delivered from evil, offer hymns of thanksgiving, O God-bearer, since you possess invincible might, free us from all calamities, so that we may cry to you: "Rejoice, O unwedded Bride."
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