

carlis

# **RUSSIAN CHORAL MUSIC**



FROM  
**UKRAINE, CAUCASIA, RUSSIA,  
GUR'YA, GEORGIA, VORONIA**

**Byzantine, (Orthodox Church)  
Women's, Men's,  
Mixed Choruses**

NOTES BY HENRY COWELL

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 8754

FOLKWAYS RECORDS - New York



# RUSSIAN CHORAL MUSIC

Georgian Songs (1 and 2)  
Now I See My Beloved  
The Storm  
Caucasian Folk Song  
Why Are The Bells Ringing  
From Kiev To Luben  
The Gushi Serenade  
The Rim Bursts

FOLKWAYS RECORDS AND SERVICE CORP.  
43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., U.S.A.

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES INSIDE POCKET

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 8754



# Russian Choral Music

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES ON THE RECORDINGS  
BY HENRY COWELL

SPONTANEOUS CHORAL SINGING IS A FOLK TRADITION AMONG MOST SLAVIC PEOPLES, AND PARTICULARLY IN RUSSIA. THE SENSE OF HARMONIZING BY EAR IS SO STRONG THAT GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER MET BEFORE CAN SING TOGETHER AS THOUGH REHEARSED. USUALLY THIS IS DONE EITHER WITH AN ALL MEN'S GROUP, OR AN ALL WOMEN'S GROUP; AT PRESENT ONE FINDS SOME MIXED GROUPS IN SUCH SPONTANEOUS HARMONY. ONE REASON THAT THIS IS POSSIBLE IS BECAUSE THERE ARE FEW CHORDS USED; IN RUSSIA PROPER, IT IS USUALLY THE MINOR SUBDOMINANT, FOLLOWED BY THE TONIC (MAJOR OR MINOR, OWING TO THE TUNE), AND OFTEN WINDING UP ON THE TONIC UNISON. IN GEORGIA AND SOME OTHER CAUCASIAN LANDS, THE FUNDAMENTAL CHORD IS AN OPEN FIFTH ON THE TONIC, FOLLOWED BY AN OPEN FIFTH ON THE SUBTONIC (A WHOLE STEP BELOW).

AT THE PRESENT TIME, COMPOSERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO WRITE TUNES AND HARMONIZE THEM IN FOLK STYLE, AND TO ARRANGE FOLK TUNES, ADAPTING THE NATURAL HARMONIZATION TO SLIGHTLY MORE SOPHISTICATED FORMS.

## SIDE 1

BAND 1  
BAND 2  
GEORGIAN SONGS (1 AND 2): THESE ARE TRADITIONAL GEORGIAN SONGS WITH SPONTANEOUS HARMONIZATION AFTER THE STYLE OF ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSIC, USING ARCHAIC BYZANTINE MODES, AND BASED ON CHORDS IN OPEN FIFTHS WHICH HAVE REMAINED A TRADITION FROM EARLY CHRISTIAN TIMES - THE TRADITION OF ORGANUM.

BAND 3  
NOW I SEE MY BELOVED: A GUR'YAN FOLK SONG BY A WOMEN'S CHORUS, OFTEN BASED ON OPEN FIFTHS, SOMETIMES WITH LOWERED 7TH DEGREE OF THE SCALE, SOMETIMES WITH RAISED 7TH AND 4TH DEGREES.

BAND 4  
THE STORM: A MIXED CHORUS SINGS THIS FAST, RHYTHMICAL GUR'YAN FOLK SONG AND DANCE. THE BASIC INTERVAL IN THE HARMONY IS THE ARCHAIC OPEN FIFTH, ON D. THE MELODY, RUNNING ALONG D, E, F#, G, A, SHIFTS UNEXPECTEDLY TO C NATURAL, D, E, F NATURAL, G. THE FOUNDATION CHORDS, INSTEAD OF BEING ORDINARY TRIADS, CONSIST OF D, G, A, (STARTING CHORD) C, F NATURAL, G, (INTERMEDIATE CHORD) AND THE FINAL CHORD, E, B. THIS WHOLE CONCEPT, A COMPOSED ONE, IS CLEARLY TAKEN FROM THE BYZANTINE MODAL SYSTEM, WITH NEW BUT APPROPRIATE HARMONIES ADDED BY THE COMPOSER OR ARRANGER.

BAND 5  
CAUCASIAN FOLK SONG: A MEN'S CHORUS IN THIS SELECTION COMPOSED, AND SUNG WITH ALMOST AN OPERATIC STYLE RATHER THAN FOLK, BUT BASED ON BYZANTINE MODES, AND GEORGIAN TRADITIONAL TONE COMBINATIONS.

## SIDE 2

BAND 1  
WHY ARE THE BELLS RINGING: A COMPOSED GYPSY-LIKE TUNE, SUNG BY A MIXED CHORUS, ACCOMPANIED BY ACCORDIAN. IT GIVES THE FEELING OF A DORIAN MODE, ALTHOUGH THE 3RD DEGREE OF THE SCALE IS SOMETIMES FLAT, SOMETIMES NATURAL.

"WHY ARE THE BELLS RINGING IN THE TOWER?

MAYBE THEY ARE CHATTERING ABOUT US, VANIA.

LET THEM CHATTER, PERHAPS THEY WILL TIRE OF IT.

WE ARE IN LOVE, VANIA, BUT WE MUST PART.

WE CAN NEVER SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN. HOW GOOD IT WAS WHEN WE USED TO MEET AT THE BIRCH TREE."

BAND 2  
FROM KIEV TO LUBEN: MEN'S CHORUS IN A SONG ABOUT A GAY TRIP FROM KIEV TO LUBEN, ACCOMPANIED BY BALALAIKA. A COMPOSED, DRAMATIZED STYLE, VERY FAST AND RHYTHMIC, WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF OFF-BEAT FALSETTO YELLS, WHISTLING, AND HAND CLAPS BY THE SINGERS THE BETTER TO GET A GOOD DANCE RHYTHM. THIS IS THE SORT OF THING TO WHICH AMERICAN AUDIENCES ARE MORE ACCUSTOMED IN THE WAY OF RUSSIAN CHORAL SINGING.



**BAND 3**

**THE GUSLI SERENADE: A RHYTHMICAL WOMEN'S CHORUS; THERE ARE TWO PARTS WHICH KEEP TO THE TONIC MAJOR CHORD, AND TWO OTHER LOWER PARTS WHICH CONFINED THEMSELVES TO THE CHORD OF THE RELATIVE MINOR. THE INTERWEAVING AND ALTERNATION GIVES THIS CHORUS ITS ORIGINAL QUALITY.**

"THE GUSLI MUSICIANS ARE PLAYING  
AT THE GATE,  
AND HOW THEY PLAY!  
EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT IT,  
HOW EVERYONE IS TALKING!  
THEY ALL KNOW I HAVE A JEALOUS  
HUSBAND,  
AND HOW JEALOUS HE IS!  
HE DOES NOT LET ME GO OUT ALONE,  
OH, NO HE DOES NOT LET ME GO!  
WHEN HE DOES, HE CAUTIONS:  
'DON'T STAY OUT TOO LATE MY  
WIFE,  
NOT TOO LATE!  
BE HOME IN THE EARLY EVENING,  
BUT IN THE EARLY EVENING!  
THE SUN WAS GONE A LONG TIME,  
IT WAS ALREADY DARK!  
AND I REMEMBERED AND RECALLED  
ALL HIS WARNINGS.  
AS I NEARED HOME AND APPROACHED  
THE GATES, FRIGHTENED,  
I HEARD HIM MAD WITH RAGE!  
AND HOW THE WHIP HIT ME,  
OH, HOW IT HIT ME!"

**BAND 4**

**THE RIM BURSTS: WOMEN'S VOICES A CAPPELLA, WITH GYPSY STYLE OF STARTING AT A SLOW TEMPO AND GATHERING SPEED THROUGHOUT.**

"SPRING FEVER STRIKES AND THE  
RIM BURSTS!  
A MAIDEN FOOLED A KOSSAK FRIEND;  
- THINKING ONCE, AND THEN AGAIN -  
BEING STRUCK HERSELF;  
- JUST THINKING, HE LIVES FAR  
AWAY -

WHOSE HOUSE IS THIS HAS NOT BEEN  
SEEN?  
WHOSE DAUGHTER NOT BEEN WOODED?  
- THINKING ONCE AND THEN AGAIN -  
BEING STRUCK HERSELF;  
- JUST THINKING, HE LIVES FAR  
AWAY -

WHOSE HOUSE IS THIS UNMARKED?  
WHOSE DAUGHTER NOT BEEN WED?  
- THINKING ONCE AND THEN AGAIN -  
BEING STRUCK HERSELF;  
- JUST THINKING HE LIVES FAR  
AWAY -

I'LL PUT MY JACKET ON AND GO FOR  
A WALK;  
I DON'T MIND THE GOSSIPS AS LONG  
AS THE BOYS NOTICE ME.  
AT WORK IN THE GARDEN OR ON THE  
ROAD I TORE MY SHOE;  
I DON'T MIND, AS LONG AS THE  
BOYS NOTICE ME.

MOTHER STOPPED ME FROM GOING OUT;  
AND WOULD NOT LET ME GO FOR A  
STROLL.

I LOVED NONE, BUT PETER AND  
DANIEL, WANTED STEPHAN,  
BUT MARRIED IVAN.

I FELL IN LOVE WITH GRISHA, IT  
WAS MY FATE,  
THINKING HE WAS CURLY, BUT HE  
HAPPENED TO BE BALDY."