

The following articles were printed in IAMA's Winter 1995 issue of *Notes*.

-Elena Bulgakova

After a long sleep, Russia is now experiencing a spiritual resurrection. New churches are being founded. It is a true miracle in this country. Christianity reveals a genuine way of life to people, that of getting acquainted with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Six years ago the first Adventist theological school, Zaoski Theological Seminary, opened in Russia. It is a place where future church ministers can study and prepare to do their work.

Our Music Department has been functioning for four of these six years. Students major in Church Music Service. Our first student will graduate in 1995 with a BA in Music Ministry.

Because Russia's rich music traditions have formed over

many centuries, a great emphasis is placed on music in the Russian church. It is a special gift from our Lord.

God in His eternal love gave us an ability to express the most subtle inner experiences in music. What we can't explain through speech is easily revealed in music. Matters beyond words become clear in music.

When the Music Department was established, an official choir was founded. It takes an active part in the Zaoski church service, providing a special atmosphere of spiritual hope, beauty and communication with our Creator. Besides singing, our music students study choral conducting since many Russian churches have choirs and need good conductors.

The Music Department also offers its students an academic music curriculum, including music history and theory, sacred music, church service order. Theology and other general subjects are also learned.

Special attention is given to the spiritual education of future music ministers and their dedication to the ministry of glorifying the Lord. Teachers and students study music which can be used during the church service. A preference is given to lofty music which leads to spiritual growth.

We believe that music in the church is like a prayer, addressing God. That's why the works of Bach, Mozart, Bortnianski, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov are favorites. Modern sacred music is also

played in churches. Many students compose sacred music which is played in church meetings for the youth.

During their studies, music students take part in evangelistic campaigns, youth meetings, help teach Bible in other Adventist churches and teach children good music. The future church minister has to be able to do many different things: sing in a choir and conduct, play a

musical instrument, and make music arrangements for the church service. Our students study very hard. They all wish the day had more than 24 hours!

Since our Music Department staff is young, it is very interesting and easy to communicate with one another. In our free time we have meetings with the students where we learn about each other and share our spiritual experiences. During these

special times we understand each other better and feel a closeness to God.

We believe our music ministry will reach its goal of showing people the way to spiritual growth, truth, salvation, and a better life.

Elena Bulgakova is Dean of Music Department at Zaoski Theological Seminary in Russia.

Choral Beginnings at Zaoski Seminary

-Elena Godunova

The Adventist choral music tradition in Russia, the Ukraine and Belorussia is a rich and wonderful legacy. When the Adventist movement first began in Russia, choir singing was an important part of the service.

No matter how large or small the church was, even if it had only 15-20 members, a choir was organized. Everybody became a choir member, even those with rather poor vocal abilities.

Each Sabbath God was praised with Psalms. Our generation is amazed at how our grandparents and parents sang the most complicated music works not fully knowing the music and without a professional choral conductor.

The history of our seminary choir began with the founding of the Zaoski Seminary in 1989. The first choir was comprised of theology students and staff. As the seminary developed, the choir grew too. Our present forty-five member choir includes theology and music students as well as staff members.

The goal of the choir is to spread the Good News. For the choir members and for me as the conductor, singing in the church is an inseparable part of the worship service at the seminary. We take an active part in the development of the Adventist movement in Russia, having participated in evangelistic campaigns in Moscow, Ryazan, Serpuchov, other Russian and Belorussian cities.

Some of the newly baptized church members began attending evangelistic meetings just to listen to the music and singing. Many people have come to God, because of the music.

The seminary choir has also taken part in some radio broadcasts and has made a recording of sacred music by Russian composers which is available on cassette tape and compact discs.

Most of our choir members are young people. There is also a male chorus at the seminary.

We want to resurrect Russian sacred music and to sing works by Bortnianski, Berezovski, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Arkhangelski,

Shvedov and Tchesnokov. The works of foreign classical composers, Protestant hymns and spirituals are also included in the choir's repertoire. We want to improve the music preferences of our young people because they will help decide music preferences of the church in the future.

The members of the choir become acquainted with each other during the rehearsals and appearances. We also have a

tradition of having parties where choir members and their families can celebrate their birthdays and other holidays. These meetings are always interesting and often humorous.

Our future plans include expanding our repertoire and making a new recording. We would also like to sing some Adventist folk songs too.

We are thankful to the Lord for giving us an opportunity to glorify Him with our singing and

to reveal His beauty and share the Good News with others.

Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant and praise is comely.

Psalms 147:1

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