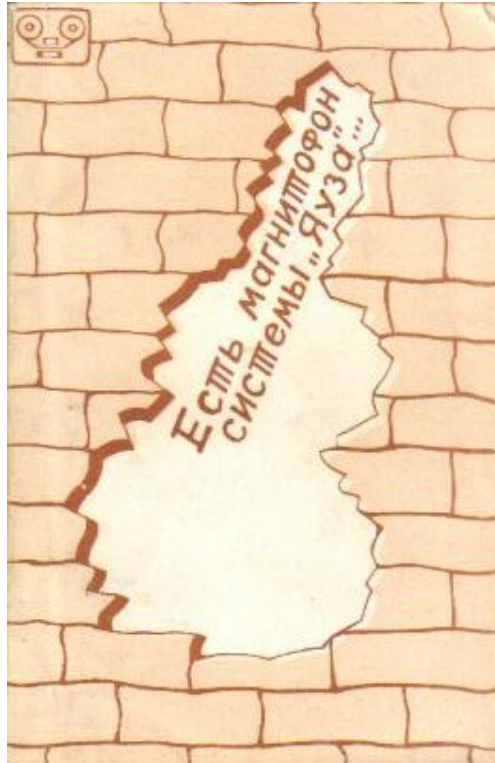


Он стоит, как монумент и,
Заполняя всю квартиру,
Потихоньку тянет ленту
И питание из сети.

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Magnitizdat as Cultural Practice

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¹ “It stands like a monument and/filling the entire apartment/it quietly pulls the tape/and electricity from the outlet.” Excerpted from his song, “Ni odnoj nenuzhnyj gajki” [Not a single unnecessary screw]. Picture, by Valerij Indiushin, is the cover of Uklejn 1991.

Introduction:

March 20, 1974: Soviet musicologist Vladimir Frumkin sits with his wife Lydia in the departure hall of Leningrad's Pulkovo airport. Within minutes, they will be on an airplane, flying off to an uncertain future in emigration. But for now Frumkin waits anxiously for his luggage, which is undergoing its final customs inspection. In his bags, aside from clothes, books, and personal items, he has packed a selection of reel-to-reel tapes representing his favorite recordings of songs written and performed by his friend Bulat Okudzhava, recordings that he and his colleagues had made in Moscow and Leningrad apartments over the past decade. He left behind his treasured tapes of another friend, dissident bard Aleksandr Galich, suspecting (no doubt correctly) that they would never be allowed out of the country. He has risked bringing the others, though, having been assured that they will not be confiscated. (The day before, he had submitted the tapes to the customs officers for review, and waited four hours before they emerged, smiling, to return the tapes and approve their export.) Nonetheless, it is with no small amount of relief that Frumkin reclaims the suitcases with the recordings from the customs officer for the final time.

Later, upon arriving in the United States, Frumkin will discover that his recordings have all been effectively erased: the customs officers brought them into contact with a powerful magnet, randomizing the particles on the tape surface until only a buzz remained.

Thus, it would seem, is *magnitizdat* demagnetized.

. . .

I have chosen to begin this paper with Frumkin's story of departure because it throws into high relief a number of themes that I will develop below. First, like *samizdat*, *magnitizdat* is a complex phenomenon in which a fragile artifact (in this case, sounds captured on tape) is made resilient, if not indestructible, through a concerted practice (in

this case, dubbing). For the customs officers' casual act of sonic vandalism may have destroyed Frumkin's tapes, but it was unable to destroy the sounds encoded upon them. Those sounds had already been transferred onto hundreds if not thousands of other tapes by the incessant labors of a vast ad-hoc network of enthusiasts that, by the late 1960s, spread out from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok, from Arkhangelsk to Alma-Ata.² Secondly, while the erasure of Frumkin's *magnitizdat* tapes was not an act without precedent, the mere fact that he considered it worthwhile to attempt to bring several kilograms of recordings with him into emigration demonstrates a crucial difference in the regime's attitudes toward *magnitizdat* and *samizdat*. To wit: it is harder to imagine an exile sending a suitcase full of the complete works of Solzhenitsyn through customs in the mid-1970s. Lastly, this story underlines an important epistemological difference between *magnitizdat* recordings and *samizdat* texts. Frumkin, in addition to being an accomplished musicologist, is himself a gifted performer of *avtorskaia pesnia*, the genre his recordings represented. As such, he no doubt knew, and could perform from memory, most if not all of the songs recorded on the bulky reel-to-reel tapes. That he would use valuable space in transporting the tapes is testament to the extraordinary value of *performance*, a value that both encompasses and exceeds the written text. In Russian, the word for the intangible, performative aspects of a song, that which is not captured by transcription of words and notes onto paper, is *intonatsia*. It was the *intonational* value of Okudzhava's breathy voice and slightly-out-of-tune guitar arpeggiations that made the recording a unique and valuable artifact for its owner. For comparison's sake, if you knew a collection of Joseph Brodsky's poems by heart, losing a *samizdat* copy of them would not be a tragedy: the poems could be completely recovered by typing them out on paper.³ The same cannot be said of losing a recording; your ability to perform Okudzhava's songs, inspired and valuable as your rendition may be on its own terms, would not be a one-to-one replacement of the rich intonational world enacted by his original interpretation. When dealing with *magnitizdat*, then, it is important to remember

² Frumkin, Vladimir, personal communication March 2006.

³ To be fair, something would be lost—the visual and tactile sensations of the book itself. As Ann Komaromi (2004) has noted, *samizdat's* material aspect “began to seem symbolic of the era, an integral part of the special experience of reading samizdat” (603).

that the term assumes a practice (dubbing and distribution), a medium (tape), and a subject: not “text” but the performance—the *intonation*—of text.

This paper is divided into three sections. In the first, I make some general remarks about the historical and socio-political significance of *magnitizdat* as it pertained to *avtorskaia pesnia*, the genre most closely associated with it during the Soviet era. In the second, I discuss the extent to which *magnitizdat* recordings of *avtorskaia pesnia* served as a method for disseminating unofficial poetry to a wide Soviet audience. In this section I also engage in a fairly fine-grained musical analysis of a number of songs in an attempt to demonstrate the profound ontological changes that occur when a poem is delivered musically. Then, by way of conclusion, I briefly compare and contrast the historical practice of *magnitizdat* with contemporary methods of the dissemination of *avtorskaia pesnia*, focusing in particular on the different modes of listening engendered by each. My overarching goals here are twofold: first, to provide a broad sense of *magnitizdat*’s significance to the *avtorskaia pesnia* tradition; and second, to identify the points of contact and divergence between *magnitizdat* recordings of sung poetry and the *samizdat* publication of poetic texts.

Part I: Situating *Magnitizdat*

The word *magnitizdat* has been the victim of some terminological confusion, having been frequently misused as a synonym for the musical genre of *avtorskaia pesnia*.⁴ As this paper deals with their interrelationship, the distinction between the two needs to be spelled out at the onset. *Avtorskaia pesnia* is the genre of unofficial and semi-official sung poetry that enjoyed its first efflorescence during the post-Stalinist Thaw and continues in attenuated form to the present day. The genre’s performers, called “bards”

⁴ See Platonov 2004:29. As has been argued elsewhere (e.g., Platonov 2004, Sokolova 2002, Daughtry 2004 and forthcoming), the term *avtorskaia pesnia* (commonly translated as “authors’ songs” but perhaps better rendered, as Svetlana Boym (1995:148) suggests, as “auteur songs”) is itself highly contested. Other terms used to define the genre in question include but are not limited to *samodeiatel’naia pesnia* (amateur song), *bardovskaia pesnia* (bard song), *gitarnaia poezia* (guitar poetry), and *poeticheskaia pesnia* (poetic song).

(in Russian, “*bardy*”), are singer-songwriters who compose their own music and verse, and accompany themselves, usually on acoustic guitars.⁵ During the genre’s Soviet peak, the genre became associated with: (1) a compositional aesthetic that radically privileged poetic value over musical sophistication; (2) a progressive ethics that promoted sincerity, friendship, and individualism; and finally, what is important for our discussion, (3) a grassroots method of dissemination that circumvented the state censorship apparatus. It was this unique dissemination network that came to be known as *magnitizdat*. The term, derived from the root to the Russian words for magnet, magnetic tape, and tape recorder, thus overlaps with *avtorskaia pesnia* but is not coterminous with it. It describes a mode of dissemination that encompassed all unofficial recordings: poetic recitation, novels read on tape, interviews, and music, from gypsy romance to jazz to rock to the music of the bards. Nonetheless, *avtorskaia pesnia* was unquestionably the genre most closely associated with this practice.

Magnitizdat was enabled by the arrival, in the early 1960s, of affordable reel-to-reel tape recorders in Soviet stores.⁶ As ethnomusicologist Peter Manuel has demonstrated in India, the advent of the tape recorder posed a global “challenge to the one-way, monopolistic, homogenizing tendencies of the ‘old’ media,” one in which “oppositional or affirmative tendencies or potential may lie less in the specific *content* of the media than in the *means* of production of that content” (1993:2). In the Soviet case, the echo of Marx here is especially piquant: by relinquishing control of the means of (musical) production, did the ruling class unwittingly furnish the masses with a weapon for waging revolution against the existing regime? If so (and switching metaphors), was this dose of pure Marxism the straw that broke the back of the Leninist state? Some bards have argued exactly this: that the nationwide *avtorskaia pesnia* movement—enabled by

⁵ The genre’s most prominent three figures were Bulat Okudzhava (1924-1997), Vladimir Vysotskij (1938-1980), and Aleksandr Galich (1918-1977). Other important Soviet-era practitioners who continue to perform today include Veronika Dolina, Aleksandr Dulov, Aleksandr Gorodnitskij, Iulij Kim, Mikhail Kochetkov, Iurij Kukin, Viktor Luferov, Sergej Nikitin, Aleksandr Mirzaian, Aleksandr Sukhanov, and Aleksandr Turianskij. In addition to these a vibrant younger generation of post-Soviet bards has emerged in recent years.

⁶ Gene Sosin (1975:277) cites figures originally published in *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo* to the effect that domestic production of reel-to-reel recorders went from 128,000 in 1960 to over one million a decade later (also cited in Smith 1984:95, Platonov 2004:27).

the tape recorder, fed by the bards' uncensored songs, and celebrated *en masse* at numerous major festivals across the country beginning in the 1960s—constituted the first truly alternative mass movement in which Soviet citizens were allowed to collectively imagine and perform alliances that challenged the unified authority of the regime. It should be noted that this view, resembling what Ann Komaromi (2004:599-600) describes as the “idealistic ‘heroic’ discourse” characterizing Cold War attitudes toward *samizdat*, is held by a relatively small minority. Most members of the *avtorskaia pesnia* community acknowledge that the genre’s relationship to the regime was much more complicated than the labels of “oppositional” or “protest music” would suggest. Indeed, it is widely known that, in addition to the technical and literary intelligentsia who made up the backbone of the movement, *magnitizdat* recordings were enjoyed by secret fans at the highest levels of state power. Of all bards, Vladimir Vysotskij’s popularity with state officials was unmatched, as the following story illustrates:⁷

The famous Polish actor Daniel Ol’brykhsnij writes: “The chekists liked [Vysotskij’s] recordings so much, that at their next, I think it was the fifty-fifth, anniversary of the Cheka-NKVD-KGB they approached the leadership with a request that Vysotsky be invited [to perform] for this gala event. They offered, by the way, an enormous honorarium. Clearly, Vysotsky accepted the summons. On the tape of that concert I heard thunderous applause. (Perevozshchikov 1997)⁸

Among Vysotskij’s several hundred compositions are a number of songs that fairly transparently criticize the regime.⁹ The irony of his popularity within the KGB ranks was not lost on Vladimir Novikov, one of the genre’s most prominent scholars, who was recently interviewed on the radio station Ekho Moskvyy:

Novikov: The people who worked for [the KGB] were the first Vysotskij scholars. First of all, they listened to him with pleasure.

Interviewer: So the relationship between [Vysotskij and the KGB] was a normal one. If you translate it to the human level.

⁷ Here and throughout this paper all translations are my own.

⁸ Perevozshchikov notes that, as of his writing, documentary evidence of this concert had not yet been uncovered.

⁹ For an example, see the song “Okhota na volkov” (The wolf hunt), a transparent allegory for the relationship between the authoritarian regime and its brainwashed public.

Novikov: Have you read Orwell? Do you know what doublethink is? They listened to him with pleasure. Then they went to work and [picked up where they left off], arresting people... (Novikov 2005)

The inherent oppositional charge of *avtorskaia pesnia* continues to be a subject of debate among the genre's historians. According to Novikov, "*avtorskaia pesnia* was a form of opposition [placing] the thinking segment of society against the communist regime" (2000:10). By contrast, in the words of physicist and accomplished bard Aleksandr Mirzaian: "*Avtorskaia pesnia* is not a form of protest, as some have tried to present it, but a method of comprehension [*sposob osmysleniia*], a form of dialog with one another and with the world" (1996:4, see also Platonov 2004:31). As the Thaw sputtered and the Stagnation expanded, a number of bards, most notably Aleksandr Galich and Iulij Kim, did use the genre as a vehicle for oppositional thought. But these figures represented a very small minority in relation to the overwhelming mass of bards whose music was—on the most obvious, representational level—resolutely apolitical. *Magnitizdat* archivist Vladimir Kovner's summation of the truly subversive in *avtorskaia pesnia* confirms this:

Looking back, I see that, as far as I am aware, no one was imprisoned for distributing *magnitizdat* (thank God!). I think that from the point of view of undermining the foundation of the state, *samizdat* was much more dangerous. A large portion of *samizdat* was sharply-political (which for the KGB was a synonym for anti-Soviet). It's enough just to look at the most popular works of *samizdat*: Varlam Shalamov's "Kolymskie rasskazy," Evgeniia Ginsburg's "Krutoj marshrut," the works of Solzhenitsyn, Pasternak's "Doktor Zhivago," the works of Sakharov, Amal'rik, Bukovskij, Turchin and many more. On that "explosive" level in *magnitizdat* [I would only place] the songs of Galich, including two songs co-written with Shpalikov and a song cycle of Kim's where everything was called by its name. To this list you could add a pair of Okudzhava's songs: "Chernij kot" and "Master Grisha," where Bulat speaks in highly transparent allusions. (Kovner 2004b)

Yulij Kim himself agreed with this assessment. In an interview discussing the social impact of *magnitizdat*, he downplayed its image as an inherently oppositional medium by saying: "*Magnitizdat* was relatively limited in its repertoire. For the most part, it circulated songs—only songs" (2002). Kim's dismissive qualifier—"only songs"—

presumes that the truly subversive material lay elsewhere: namely, within the pages of *samizdat*.

Indeed, the relative dearth of overtly oppositional songs, along with the institutional ties that developed between the bard movement and the Komsomol in the late 1960s,¹⁰ collectively served to distance *magnitizdat* from the more consistently subversive *samizdat* in the eyes of Soviet authorities. While the central figures of the *magnitizdat* world were subject to surveillance, searches and occasional seizures, their KGB handlers seemed to regard their activities as distributors of unofficial music as secondary, concentrating instead on their activities, however peripheral, in the world of *samizdat* and/or dissidence. In a set of memoirs on the “golden era of *magnitizdat*,” Vladimir Kovner related more than one incident in which the KGB confiscated materials from his or his friends’ apartments; in each of these incidents the KGB chose to keep all of the *samizdat* publications they found, but eventually returned the *magnitizdat* recordings to their owners. This does not mean, however, that the purveyors of *magnitizdat* lived without fear—far from it. During an interview with the KGB shortly before he emigrated, Kovner’s interrogator brought up his illicit distribution of Galich recordings. “‘Yes, but no one has ever been imprisoned for [circulating] Galich,’ I note. ‘No one has *yet* been imprisoned,’ is his ominous answer” (2004c).

Perhaps the most important difference between *samizdat* and *magnitizdat*, from a socio-historical perspective, was that of scale. While the grassroots, underground nature of *samizdat* and *magnitizdat* distribution makes their quantification a necessarily speculative exercise, it is clear that the latter was an order of magnitude more vast than the former. Once again, Kovner is a reasonable authority:

In comparison with *magnitizdat*, the work involved in distributing *samizdat* was terribly labor-intensive and slow; therefore it was much easier for the KGB to find and isolate the “publishers” . . . and, as we know, in some cases, the readers as well. On the other hand, *magnitizdat* was growing like a snowball. After every performance of a bard in an apartment-concert or even on a concert stage new sources of *magnitizdat* quickly appeared; after every instance of dubbing more

¹⁰ In 1968 the Komsomol began actively collaborating with the Moscow Amateur Song Club (Klub samodeiatel’noj pesni, commonly referred to by the initials KSP) (Karimov 2004:85).

and more people turned into “publishers.” Of course, the KGB could always seek out the ten most active people, but among the masses, if [they were to decide to make arrests], they would have to grab hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people who possessed recordings of bard songs. To our happiness, neither Khrushchev nor Brezhnev had an appetite for repressions on a Stalinist scale. (2004b)

As these examples indicate, in *magnitizdat* we have a historical phenomenon that is clearly related to, but in a number of important ways distinct from, its older sibling *samizdat*. A common uncensored, rhizomic distribution structure binds the two practices together, as does a partial overlap of audience. More precisely, the smaller audience of *samizdat* was almost totally subsumed within the exponentially larger audience of *magnitizdat*: nearly all people in the Soviet Union who were actively reading *samizdat* were also listening to *magnitizdat*—while the opposite cannot be said, as Kovner’s comment illustrates. In the matter of scale, then, as well as in the concentration of overt oppositional thought, the two practices diverge.

Before consigning *avtorskaia pesnia* and its *magnitizdat* distribution to the realm of the pseudo- or faux-oppositional (as Pyotr Vail and Aleksandr Genis famously did),¹¹ I would like to at least briefly note one argument in favor of the subversive nature of the genre, an argument that relies upon the performative dimension of song that I mentioned earlier. For the entire length of its Soviet-era existence, *avtorskaia pesnia* was condemned by its detractors and hailed by its proponents for the degree to which its musical dimension sharply diverged from that of official song. Indeed, the Spartan musical field opened up by the bards was instantly recognizable: the untrained voice, ranging in intensity from an intimate whisper to a hoarse shout, adhering to pitches only slightly more than the singer of *Sprechstimme*, striving for the sonic representation of sincerity, was paired with the lonely, “primitive strumming” of the guitar, which, as often as not, was slightly out-of-tune. These sounds, so distinct from the more polished tones and lush ensembles of the official Soviet stage (*estrada*) and the burnished voices and marshal accompaniment of the mass song compelled some people on both sides of the

¹¹ In an article critiquing Vladimir Vysotskij’s oppositional *bona fides* that extended to the entire genre, Vail and Genis wrote: “Pseudo-protest is always attractive, for it simplifies life, providing a necessary outlet for negative emotions, while carrying no obligation for serious thought or . . . action.” (1978)

ideological fence to see in them the grounds for imagining an alternative universe, one in which the intonation of the individual replaced the grand march of history, in which the largest functional collective was the *kompaniia*, the group of friends gathered in a kitchen or around a campfire to sing. That these sounds were distributed independently of the will of the state multiplied any subversive dimension that listeners chose to hear in them, regardless of the apolitical nature of the texts. My phrase, “chose to hear,” is central: the genre as a whole was at most latently and implicitly oppositional, and as such was always open to the subjectivity of the listener.

Part II—The Effect of Music on Verse

In his presentation at the now-legendary 1967 “All-Union Seminar on Issues of Amateur (Authors’) Song,” organized by the Komsomol on the banks of the Klyazma near Petushki, Vladimir Frumkin issued the following challenge:

[We mustn’t] forget that a song is a synthetic work of art; it acts incredibly subtly on various aspects of the psyche, and music plays, perhaps a subservient, but in no way an insignificant role. And so, I call upon all of you here . . . : let’s adopt a comprehensive approach to [the analysis of] song . . . Literary scholars work very confidently with texts, musicologists analyze intonation and rhythm. But let’s try to unite the one with the other. (1967)

In the decades that have elapsed, very few people have heeded this call—the vast bulk of scholarship continues to examine *avtorskaia pesnia* as a collection of poetic texts, the musical dimension of which is largely bracketed off, or at best described journalistically. Today’s conference, however, has compelled me to pick up Frumkin’s forty-year-old glove in order to provide some sense of the important ontological differences between *magnitizdat* recordings and *samizdat* texts. For if the *magnitizdat* phenomenon deserves a term of its own, it is less because of the distinction between media—tapes versus printed pages—but because of the experience of the fusion of music and text that it enables.

I have chosen to focus here, for reasons that will become clear below, on one of the peripheral regions of the *avtorskaia pesnia* corpus: songs composed to extant poems

of underground poets. In the decades preceding perestroika, a number of bards—Aleksandr Dulov, Evgenij Kliachkin, Sergej Nikitin, Viktor Berkovskij, Aleksandr Sukhanov, and Aleksander Mirzaian, among others—became well-known for performing musical interpretations of other poets’ works. While some of these poems were officially recognized, a great many of them were only available in *samizdat* and *tamizdat* editions. This phenomenon begs a number of questions. How did the bards’ treatments of these poems affect their distribution? What effect did singing a poem have on its reception? Most fundamentally, what is gained when a poem is delivered musically? Why sing a poem instead of reading it? Answering these questions will shed additional light on the differences between *samizdat* and *magnitizdat*.

On the most practical level, the presence of a formal melody (as opposed to the more metaphorical “music of the verse” that can be argued to exist latently in a printed poem) provides an powerful mnemonic device for the audience. In this sense, the musical dimension can be likened to rhyme, meter, and other periodic devices that lend structure to one’s experience of text.

Beyond helping a poem “stick” in the mind of the listener, the twin musical paradigms of melody and rhythm can function symbolically as a separate text, interacting with or playing off of the verbal text. Leningrad bard Yurij Kukin famously illustrated this very property by singing the text of a Soviet-era advertisement:

“TU-104 samyj luchshij samolet!”
(The TU-104 is the best airplane!)

to the melody of Chopin’s funeral march. The ironic clash of meanings that ensues is one in which music provides metacommentary on the verbal text that augments—or, as in this extreme case, inverts—its referential meaning. While often de-emphasized in the bards’ discourse, where the supposed primacy of the poetic text is sacrosanct, in fact the dialectical relationship between music and text is an ever-present element of *avtorskaia pesnia* in performance.

In addition to this expansion of the field of reference that music provides, the phenomenology of a poem, the way it is experienced in the flow of time, is profoundly altered when it is sung. How a poem “unfolds” when read from the page is a matter

controlled by the reader, who is free to move back up and repeat a line, pause while digesting a metaphor, or even skip to the end. A poem sung, by contrast, unfolds in a unilinear temporality determined by the singer. Most frequently, this results in the poem becoming stretched out across a broader expanse of time than a reader, or a declaiming poet, would feel comfortable using. This act of temporal stretching, augmented by the manipulation of pitch and rhythm, allows the singer to alter the listener's experience of the poem's sense and structure. Taken too far, temporal and other musical manipulations can impede one's comprehension of the text. (This is an exceedingly common phenomenon in popular music—indeed, I am at a loss to explain the lyric content of a number of my very favorite American pop tunes, whose melody and rhythm seem to wrestle lyrical content into a subservient position.) But in the case of *avtorskaia pesnia*, generic expectations demand that the text remain comprehensible. Here, then, the implicit goal of synchronizing and slowing down our experience of a poem is to provide new opportunities for enhanced apperception.

Lastly, within the Soviet context, the musical setting of poems often served to mask their true authorship. As I mentioned above, during the pre-perestroika period, a number of bards sang songs based on the works of poets who were commonly regarded as ideologically suspect, and some of whom were actively censored. Moscow bard Andrei Anpilov once listed the poets that his friend Aleksandr Mirzaian performed. After gaining access to *samizdat* and *tamizdat* texts:

[i]t seemed natural that Aleksandr would turn to composing songs based on the verses of various poets. But what poets! Tsvetaeva, Kharms, Brodskij, Sosnora, Tarkovskij, Chukhontsev, Kuznetsov. This poetry was unsoviet, unliberal, lacking sentiment, icy and scorching, Nietzschean, fatal. (2002)

Even earlier, Leningrad bard Evgenij Kliachkin gained a quiet notoriety for singing songs to the texts of Joseph Brodsky, whose verse, by the mid-1960s, was almost completely banned. As a result, in concert Kliachkin often sang these songs without attributing them. Many people I have spoken to have said that they discovered Brodsky not through *samizdat* publications but rather through *magnitizdat* recordings of Kliachkin's (or, to a

lesser degree, Mirzaian's) interpretations. In this sense, bards of the period played an important role as popularizers of poets who had no official outlets for publication.

Brodsky's relationship to the bards is a complex one. While it is known that he was at least somewhat interested in guitar poetry when young,¹² he later expressed disdain for bards' attempts to set his poems to music. When asked how he felt about Evgenij Kliachkin's settings, Brodsky famously promised that if he met Kliachkin on the street he would break his guitar over his head. The aesthetic reservations of the poet notwithstanding, I propose that the bards' musical renditions of Brodsky are worthy of our attention, both on their own merits and for their socio-historical role as vehicles for disseminating his poems. In the remainder of this section I examine a number of interpretations of a single poem by Joseph Brodsky, entitled "Stanzas" ("Stansy"). Written in 1962 in the album of his close friend Elena Valikhan, the modest poem of three stanzas has been given radically differing treatment by a half-dozen bards. Here is the poem in its original printed form, along with word-for-word and poetic translation:

¹² In 1963, Vladimir Frumkin met the 23-year-old poet at the apartment of their mutual friend Aleksandr Rutshtejn. Frumkin had brought along his reel-to-reel recorder in the hopes of making a *magnitizdat* recording of Brodsky declaiming his verse. To his surprise, Brodsky refused to read his own poems, and rather sang a number of "underworld songs" (*blatnye pesni*), including the legendary "Murka," as well as several pieces written by Gleb Gorbovskij (excluding the famous "Kogda kachajutsja fonariki nochnye" but including the equally infectious "Na divane, na divane, na divane"). (Frumkin, personal communication, see also Frumkin 2005:73-4)

[Figure 1]

Стансы (1962)

Ни страны, ни погоста
Neither country nor graveyard
не хочу выбирать.
Do I want to choose.
На Васильевский остров
To Vasil'evskij Island
я приду умирать.
I will come to die.
Твой фасад темно-синий
Your dark-blue façade
я впотьмах не найду.
I will not find in the darkness.
Между выцветших линий
Between the faded rows [of houses]
на асфальт упаду.
I will fall on the asphalt.

И душа, неустанно
And [my] soul, untiringly
попешая во тьму,
Hurrying into the darkness,
промелькнет над мостами
Will flicker above the bridges
в петроградском дыму,
In the Petrograd smoke,
и апрельская морось,
And [there will be an] April drizzle,
под затылком снежок,
Snow beneath my head,
и услышу я голос:
And I will hear a voice:
– до свиданья, дружок.
Goodbye, friend.

И увижу две жизни
And I will see two lives
далеко за рекой,
Far across the river,
к равнодушной отчизне
To the indifferent fatherland
прижимаясь щекой,
Pressing [my] cheek,
– словно девочки-сестры
As if two little sisters
из непрожитых лет,
From unlived years,
выбегая на остров,
Running onto the island,
машут мальчику вслед.
Wave to a boy.

Stanzas (1962)

*I do not wish to choose
My country or my grave.
But I'll return to die
On Basil Island's shores.
In darkness I won't find
Your house's dark-blue walls.
Between the faded rows
Upon the street I'll fall.

My soul will ceaselessly
Hurry into the night,
And flicker past the bridge
In Petrograd's thick smog.
And in the April rain,
The snow beneath my head,
I'll hear a voice call out:
«Goodbye, my little friend.»

My cheek pressing on my
Indifferent fatherland,
I'll see a pair of lives
Across the river bank,
And like two sisters from
The years I will not see,
They'll run onto the isle
And wave goodbye to me.*

The first *magnitizdat* performance of this poem that I will present is one by the author himself. In an undated recording, Brodsky performed the poem thusly:

[TRACK ONE: Brodsky reading “Stansy”]

Brodsky’s idiosyncratic reading style, resembling nothing so much as liturgical chant, has been the subject of much scholarly comment (e.g., Brodsky 2002, Loseff and Polukhina 1999). It is, in its own way, quite musical. So much so, in fact, that it lends itself surprisingly well to musical notation. Expressed in musicological terms, Brodsky’s performance of the poem conforms to a meter of five beats. Each line of the first stanza is a variation on a single melodic pattern: scalar movement up a minor third, then a pause for a clear caesura, followed by a brief jump of roughly a half step and a return to the third scale degree (musicologists would call this an “*appoggiatura*”). The pattern could be notated like this:

[INSERT transcription]

Brodsky eliminates the caesura after the close of the first stanza, while transposing the melodic pattern upward by roughly a quarter tone in the second stanza, before descending several steps for the last one. His rendition builds in intensity and volume over the first two stanzas, and sharply falls off in the third to a lower pitch and volume. The effect is that of a classic dramatic arc: a gradual increase in tension to a clear climax followed a rapid denouement. The building blocks of this arc are the hypnotizing waves of the five-beat performed line. Strict adherence to this formal structure of delivery produces a grand dramatic effect, but does so at the expense of emphasis on individual words, all of which feel as if they are held captive by the form. This declamatory style, while idiosyncratic for a Russian poet, is absolutely idiomatic for Brodsky; with slight variations, it is the pattern he applied to all of his readings.

At this point, before we even reach the bards’ sung versions, the difference between text and performance—or, for our purposes today, between *samizdat* and *magnitizdat*—are already clear. While the poem in printed form looks as I typed it

above—a regular succession of three four-line stanzas—Brodsky’s declamation alters its perceived structure. By articulating an exaggerated caesura throughout the first stanza, heightening the salience of stanza two over stanza one and, through inversion, of stanza three over stanza two, Brodsky’s reading effectively reformats the poem. His performance can be graphically translated thus: [FIGURE 2; REPLAY TRACK 1]

Figure 2: Joseph Brodsky’s recitation of “Stansy”

Ни страны, ни погоста
не хочу выбирать.
На Василь- евский остров
я приду умирать.
Твой фасад темно-синий
я впотьмах не найду.
Между вы- цветших линий
на асфальт упаду.

И душа, неустанно
поспешая во тьму,
промелькнет над мостами
в петроградском дыму,
и апрельская морось,
под затылком снежок,
и услышу я голос:
— до свиданья, дружок.

И увижу две жизни
далеко за рекой,
к равнодушной отчизне
прижимаясь щекой,
— словно девочки-сестры
из непрожитых лет,
выбегая на остров,
машут мальчику вслед.

While Brodsky's verse was seen in *samizdat* form and heard in his voice by many among the Leningrad and Moscow elite, a far greater number were introduced to it as interpreted by Evgenij Kliachkin, who composed music to the text in June 1965. Kliachkin (1934-1994), an engineer by profession, began writing songs in his native Leningrad in 1961. By 1965 he had entered his "Brodsky period," by the end of which he would have accumulated over a dozen songs based on Brodsky's poems. A member of the Leningrad song club "Vostok," Kliachkin never performed his Brodsky cycle there, having been warned that there would be two KGB agents at every performance (Frumkin, personal communication). Nonetheless, as I mentioned above, he frequently performed the Brodsky songs elsewhere, usually without attributing them, and recordings of these performances "enhanced Brodsky's popularity immensely in the Soviet Union" (ibid).

Kliachkin, although a self-taught musician,¹³ was widely praised for being one of the most musically sophisticated of the bards. He interpreted Brodsky's poem as an erratic, almost carnivalesque waltz, with a wildly unpredictable chord progression. Kliachkin's tight, tense vibrato, while out of the ordinary for bards (who generally prefer a more speech-like intonation that conveys the "sincere" and unfettered communication of the bard to the listener), is highly infectious here, propelling the song forward. Twice in the piece Kliachkin introduces a short instrumental figure that does not fit into the meter of the waltz. To my ear, this figure has the effect of magnifying the salience of the line preceding it. Text is also magnified through melodic ornamentation. In a move that further contrasts with the hyper-realistic, conversational tone of most *avtorskaia pesnia*, Kliachkin stretches a number of words out, often singing multiple notes per syllable. The result, roughly transcribed onto the page, with emphasized words in red underline, looks like this:

[FIGURE 3; PLAY TRACK 2, FIRST VERSE]

¹³ He did take music theory lessons with Vladimir Frumkin for two months. At the end of this period, Frumkin advised his student to quit, fearing that a systematic understanding of theory would stifle Kliachkin's fresh, idiosyncratic approach to harmony.

Figure 3: Evgenij Kliachkin performs “Stansy”

Ни страны, ни пого-оста
не хочу выбирать.
На Васильевский остров
я приду умирать.
Твой фасад темно-си-иний
я впотьмах не найду. *instrumental figure*
Между выцветших ли-и-иний
на асфальт упаду.
И душа, неуста-анно
поспешая во тьму,
промелькнет над моста-а-ами
в петроградском дыму,

This progression repeats twice, and in so doing Kliachkin makes one of the more radical rewritings of the original: Brodsky’s three stanzas are here heard as two.

[TRACK 2: PLAY SECOND VERSE]

и апрельская мо-орось,
под затылок снежок,
и услышу я голос:
– до свиданья, дружок.
к равнодушной отчи-изне
прижимаясь щекой, *instrumental figure*
я увижу две жи-и-изни
далеко за рекой,
– словно девочки-се-естры
из непрожитых лет,
выбегая на остров,
машут мальчику вслед.
машут мальчику вслед.

Taken together, the mood of Kliachkin’s piece is, to put it mildly, markedly different from Brodsky’s trance-like reading, with a different set of images in the foreground, a different stanzaic structure, a different, more drawn-out temporality, and the addition of a whole new set of musical signifiers.¹⁴

Over the years, Brodsky’s poem has been given a number of interpretations by the bards. Aleksandr Mirzaian composed a version soon after Brodsky emigrated to the U.S. in 1972. Modest, sparse, sung with a restrained energy bordering on fury, Mirzaian’s version evokes the tradition of gypsy guitar playing that has inspired more than one generation of bards. Here, while Mirzaian’s intonation of the text is rather neutral—neither melody nor enunciation are employed to emphasize individual words—his rewording of several lines of the original poem is so thorough as to render the result something approaching a co-authored work, what in Russian would be called a song “*po stikham Brodskogo*.” (Changes to the original are written in bold italics.)

[FIGURE 4: PLAY TRACK 3]

¹⁴ Of course, Kliachkin also makes a number of purely textual alterations: Brodsky’s line “ya pridu umirat” becomes “ya *vernus*’ umirat”; “pod zatyikom snezhok” becomes the nonsensical “pod zatylok snezhok”; and the last line is repeated. Kliachkin also reshuffles two sets of lines (“ya uvizhu . . .shchekoj” becomes “k ravnodushnoj . . . rekoj”) in a way that seems to me more logical than the original.

Figure 4: Aleksandr Mirzaian performs “Stansy”

Ни страны, ни погоста
не хочу выбирать.
На Васильевский остров
я приду умирать.
Твой фасад темно-синий
в темноте не найду.
Между **замерших** линий
на асфальт упаду.

И душа, **словно странник**
удаляясь во тьму,
проплывет над мостами
в петроградском дыму,
Где меня с радиолой
Ждет последний трамвай
И услышу **твой** голос
И отвечу, «прощай.»

И увижу две жизни
далеко за рекой,
к равнодушной отчизне
прижимаясь щекой,
– словно девочки-сестры
из непрожитых лет,
выбегая на остров,
машут мальчику вслед.
выбегая на остров,
машут мальчику вслед.

These textual changes, as well as the more subtle ones effected by Kliachkin, parallel the “loss of control over a text, once it was released into samizdat circulation,” discussed by Ann Komaromi in her recent article on *samizdat* (2004:604).

Interpretations of Brodsky’s poems have continued well into the post-Soviet era, Most recently, Oleg Mitiaev, who bears the double-edged distinction of being the most commercially successful of the genre’s post-Soviet practitioners, released an album of Brodsky songs composed by his friend and frequent collaborator, Leonid Margolin. In Margolin and Mitiaev’s hands, Brodsky’s poem is transformed into a transparently nostalgic, sentimental romance. While a financial success, this version has received decidedly cool reviews within the *avtorskaia pesnia* community.

[FIGURE 5, PLAY TRACK 4]

Figure 5: Oleg Mitiaev performs “Stansy”

Ни страны, ни погоста
не хочу-у-у-у-у-у выбирать.
На Васильевский остров
я приду-у-у-у-у-у умирать.
Твой фасад темно-синий
я впотьмах не найду.
Между вы-ы-ы-ыцветших линий
на асфальт упаду.

Perhaps the most thorough rethinking of Brodsky’s poem was accomplished by an obscure bard from Dnepropetrovsk named Oleg Lubiagin. While he had heard of Brodsky earlier, Lubiagin was introduced to the poet’s works about ten years ago, when a friend brought him a fish wrapped in a newspaper upon which was printed one of Brodsky’s poems (what to call this—*rybizdat?*). In any event, that inauspicious introduction sparked a period of deep study that resulted in over twenty compositions. Lubiagin’s musical language is more cosmopolitan than many of his compatriots, steeped in jazz and rock but also grounded in the homegrown tradition of underworld songs (*blatnaia pesnia*), and in particular the works of Arkadij Severnij. Like Mitiaev’s romance, Lubiagin’s interpretation is in a two-beat (duple) meter, contrasting with Kliachkin’s and Mirzaian’s waltzes and Brodsky’s five-beat recitation. But within the regular one-two-one-two pulse of this piece, the space between lines varies considerably: Lubiagin’s phrases are dropped in at irregular and unpredictable intervals, creating a sense of spontaneity. Lubiagin also uses instrumental breaks more frequently than the other bards, creating a lineation that matches the stanzaic breaks of the original, while setting off the last two lines of each stanza for special emphasis. There is so much space around the lines in this performance that the effect for me is the opposite of Mirzaian’s

performance: every line here feels emphasized. On the page, Lubiagin’s rendition would look something like this:

[FIGURE 6; PLAY TRACK 5]

Figure 6: Oleg Lubiagin performs “Stansy”

Ни страны,

ни погоста

не хочу выбирать.

На Васильевский остров

я приду умирать.

Твой фасад темно-синий

я впотьмах не найду. *instrumental figure*

Между выцветших линий

на асфальт упаду. *instrumental break*

In the second stanza, however, Lubiagin conspicuously stretches out one syllable, effectively raising its salience above all others:

И душа-а-а-а-а,

неустанно

поспешая во тьму,

промелькнет над мостами

в петроградском дыму,

и апрельская морось,

под затылком снежок, *instrumental figure*

и услышу я голос:

– до свиданья, дружок. *instrumental break*

The end of the poem is followed by an extended, cathartic instrumental section that concludes with a muted restatement of the musical figure that began each interstanzaic instrumental breaks.

[TRANSCRIPTION]

I am tempted to read this figure as a conscious leitmotif for the *dusha* that was so drawn out in stanza two. Even if one rejects this extra bit of musical symbolism, Lubiagin's rendition is an example in which the musical aspect of performance is approached as a separate generator of non-referential meaning.

Ultimately, whether one prefers Brodsky's ritualistic chant, Kliachkin's eclectic waltz, Margolin's sentimental romance, Mirzayan's modernist treatment, or Lubiagin's cosmopolitan jazz-rock, it is clear that these songs represent radically different readings of the poetic text. So different, in fact, that one could easily argue that they constitute different poems, different works altogether.

[Insert Figures comparing the five performances]

The point I am trying to illustrate here is not the superiority of one performance over another, but the way in which music composition and performance can transform a singular *samizdat* artifact into a multitude of new texts, each with its own subtexts and contexts. One could, I suppose, use my analytical sketch as the basis for critiquing one or another of these performances, arguing for example that the collection of words Kliachkin emphasized in his performance are less central to the poem than those emphasized by Lubiagin. But, as any ethnographer knows, such structural matters are not the basis upon which people generally establish aesthetic preferences. In an informal survey I conducted on an internet forum dedicated to *avtorskaia pesnia* that I moderate, respondents threw their passionate support to Kliachkin and Mirzaian, arguing over which variation was better, but found Lubiagin to be so far off base as to be unworthy of comment, despite my repeated calls for them to critique his version of Brodsky's poem. Meanwhile, Mitiaev's commercially-produced song, while predictably derided by my respondents, is circulating among ever greater numbers of listeners, writing over the legacy of Klyachkin's recording and even Brodsky's original to become the definitive performance for thousands of Russians.

This is the challenge for scholars of music the world over: balancing historical inquiry and philological/musicological analysis with a study of reception, of the ways in which sound lives in the lives of performers and listeners. In addition, the scholar of *magnitizdat* must also focus on a host of factors specific to the medium: the quality of the recording, its source, the political and logistical barriers that impeded its distribution, the paths by which it was disseminated, the presence of alternate recordings and competing performances, and the effect of deterioration. This last factor cannot be overemphasized: there really was no pure reproduction in *magnitizdat*, only a parade of related but distinct cultural artifacts, combinations of composition, performer's intent, the recorder's talents, microphone levels, tuning of the guitar, ambient sounds, and, with each generation of dubbing, the ever increasing entropic wave of the tape's hiss. More alarming is the literal deterioration of the fragile tapes themselves, many of which are now approaching the

half-century mark. Despite the heroic efforts of *magnitizdat* archivists, every day more and more tapes crumble into dust, the passage of time accomplishing that which the Leningrad customs officers could not.

Part III: *Magnitizdat* vs. the *Internetizdat*
A Comparative Phenomenology of Listening

I remember [in the mid-1960s] a tiny room, four pairs of friends (not without beer, of course), in place of air—blue tobacco smoke, and the *magnitofon* with tapes of Okudzhava, Vysotskij, Galich, until two or three in the morning. I assume such a scene was completely typical for those times.¹⁵

В старой песенке поется:
После нас на этом свете
Пара факсов остается
И страничка в интернете...
-*Vitalij Kalashnikov*¹⁶

In *magnitizdat*'s heyday, from the mid-1960s to the late-1970s, the recordings themselves were prized as objects, dependent upon but distinct from the specific content encoded on them. Obtained through great effort, and surrounded with a perceived (and very sexy) whiff of danger, the reel-to-reel tape conferred significant symbolic capital upon its owner.¹⁷ The ministrations required to keep a *magnitizdat* dubber operational

¹⁵ Kovner 2004a.

¹⁶ “In an old song it is sung/After we depart this world/A pair of faxes will remain/and a page on the internet.” This excerpt is the epigraph on the www.bards.ru website.

¹⁷ Vladimir Frumkin told me a story about a friend of his whose substantial collection of jazz tapes earned him respect and popularity among the Leningrad intelligentsia. After emigrating to the United States, Frumkin's friend was dismayed to find that, in his new social milieu his unique and priceless collection of jazz masterpieces had been instantaneously transformed into an odd pile of poor-quality reel-to-reel recordings that

were time-consuming and labor-intensive. The thin and extremely fragile tapes (Svema or “Type 6” from the town of Shostka, the eponymous tape of Pereiaslavl’, German Agfa if you were very lucky) were in constant danger of stretching—causing the pitch to “swim,” (*zvuk plavaet*)—or breaking altogether. Gluing broken tape together with minimal audio interference was regarded as a crucial “art” for *magnitizdat*’s craftsmen (Kovner, personal communication). The compact recorders, whose cost was roughly equivalent to an engineer’s monthly salary, moved, incognito, from one kitchen concert to the next, nestled inside backpacks on their owners’ backs. The very names of the recorders—Spalis, Astra, Iauza—took on a slightly numinous quality, especially after one of them was immortalized by Galich himself in his famous ode to uncensored culture, “We’re no worse than Horace” (*My ne khuzhe Goratsii*):

[TRACK 6]

Бродит Кривда с полосы на полосу,
Untruth roams from region to region [or page to page],
Делится с соседской Кривдой опытом,
Sharing her experience with the neighboring Untruth,
Но гудит напетое вполголоса,
But that which is softly sung in half-voice [loudly] resounds,
Но гремит прочитанное шепотом.
But that which is read in a whisper thunders.

Ни партера нет, ни лож, ни яруса,
There's no concert hall, no balconies,
Клака не безумствует припадочно,
No sycophants hired to wildly rave,
Есть магнитофон системы «Яуза»,
There is a Iauza tape recorder,
Вот и все!
That is all!
А этого достаточно!
But that is all that's needed!

could in no way compete with the quality of commercially-available records. With his treasure re-read as trash, the social magnet lost his attractive charge, a fact that he lamented greatly.

The Iauza-5 reel-to-reel recorder¹⁸



The *magnitizdat* recordings that emerged from the *avtorskaia pesnia* enthusiasts' machines simultaneously enabled and demanded a particular type of listening—the contemplative group, huddled silently around a recorder, as in the quoted description above. The primacy of text over music, which consequently privileged comprehension of the unfolding lyrics over embodied engagement with the music's "groove," combined with the poor sound quality of recordings to create a situation in which these songs were listened to with an intense concentration bordering on fury. The groups of people who gathered to listen to the latest tape of Galich, acquired through the untiring efforts of one or more members, did not consider his songs to be in any sense "background music."

¹⁸ Picture of Iauza courtesy of <<http://oldradio.ru/radios/129.shtml>> (Accessed 25 March 2006. Permission requested.)

According to the bard enthusiasts' reminiscences, this was focused, social listening to—no, devouring of—sound.

Fast forward to the present day, and we are confronted with a state of affairs that involves both continuity and radical disjuncture with *magnitizdat's* past. The onset of a crude form of market capitalism in the post-Soviet space has been given much attention elsewhere, as has the removal and partial replacement of censorship (e.g., Shleifer 2005, Klein 2001). Suffice it to say that the *avtorskaia pesnia* community was not immune to these societal changes; in fact, the mere survival of the genre is testament to its creative engagement with them. In the late 1980s, faced with the ascendancy of the Russian rock scene, an influx of previously unavailable foreign music, and the gradual dismantlement of the aesthetic system against which the bards had defined themselves, many figures, including the patriarch himself, Bulat Okudzhava, predicted the death of *avtorskaia pesnia* (1997). Indeed, the cultural salience of the genre is surely not what it used to be in the 1960s and 1970s, when *avtorskaia pesnia* was a “craze [that] swept the country like a forest fire,” until “from every window, every courtyard, emanated the voices of Okudzhava, Vysotsky, Galich” (Sarnov 1998:392). But neither is it moribund. Today's situation is a complex one, involving the nostalgic presentation of classic first- and second-generation bards (such as Okudzhava and Kliachkin), the commercialization of a number of younger ones (such as Mityaev), and a creative efflorescence on the margins of the marketplace. (Lubiagin, who has no commercial releases and rarely concertizes, is marginal even within this group).

A burgeoning supper club scene in Moscow provides multiple concerts of *avtorskaia pesnia* most nights of the week. At the *Gnezdo Glukharya*, in the old city center, 250-300 rubles will purchase a ticket to hear well-known bards perform lightly-amplified songs while efficient waiters quietly serve the audience, which sits, eating dinner, drinking, and smoking at small tables arranged in a fan around the guitar-shaped stage. Compact disks, generally priced at 150 rubles, are sold in the foyer.

In keeping with new and evolving social patterns and the wide availability of recordings and playing devices, listening to *avtorskaia pesnia* has become more of a solitary activity, something conducted in your car (if you have one) or on earphones at the computer terminal. At outdoor festivals, by contrast, singing around the campfire

remains the intense social activity that it was during the Soviet period. Non-commercial, *magnitizdat* recording continues at festivals and house-concerts, although these recordings are increasingly distributed not from hand to hand but as digital files on the internet.

Of course, the death of music censorship did spell, in a strict sense, the death of *magnitizdat*. However, according to some, the old pressure exerted by authoritarian government strictures has to some extent been replaced by a new pressure exerted by commercialism and emergent consumerism. Where *avtorskaia pesnia* was once positioned as an aesthetic alternative to official music, it is now marketed as an aesthetic alternative to American-influenced popular music (*popsa*).¹⁹ The result: grassroots music distribution still has a place in 21st-century Russia.

The paragons of the contemporary distribution networks—of what one could logically call *internetizdat*—are two websites: www.bards.ru, run by computer programmer Sergej Kalinin out of Krasnoyarsk, and www.bard.ru, operated from music producer and computer entrepreneur Andrej Khorlin's apartment on the outskirts of Moscow. As of this writing, Khorlin's website contains 37,772 songs, as well as thousands of song texts, over 7,000 photographs, and hundreds of scholarly and journalistic articles. In addition to serving as an immense and easily-accessible virtual archive of classic and contemporary recordings (all of which can be listened to *gratis* as a low-fidelity mp3 file, many of which can be purchased as high-quality WAV files on compact disks through the website), Khorlin's website and a growing number of *avtorskaia pesnia*-related chatrooms have vastly increased communication among members of the far-flung *avtorskaia pesnia* community, effectively blurring the border between those musicians and fans based in Russia and those in the Russian-speaking émigré world.

In the digital age, with the distinction between original and copy rendered moot and the barriers to distribution effectively removed, the formidable challenges and subsequent triumphs that characterized Soviet-era *magnitizdat* have largely disappeared.

¹⁹ At the same time, many members of the older generation insist, the genre is taking on the contours of pop music. See Daughtry forthcoming for a discussion of the tension between opposition to pop and emulation of pop within the *avtorskaia pesnia* community.

Replacing them are an emerging set of challenges imported from the West. For example, the issue of intellectual property did not generally trouble those on the production or the distribution side of the *magnitizdat* network forty, or even fifteen, years ago. Some people did sell recordings in the 1960s and 1970s, it is true, but the majority of participants passed recordings on to their friends free of charge. As a rule, neither artists nor recorders placed any restrictions on the dubbing of the tapes they made and distributed. That a recording made in a Moscow kitchen would eventually make its way to the far reaches of the Soviet Union was considered the singular mark of a bard's success.

In today's financially-strained environment, however, with an increasing number of bards turning to music as their sole professional activity, dubbing a recording for a friend means that a struggling artist was deprived of a potential 150 rubles. Khorlin, the manager of www.bard.ru, recently encountered a bard who angrily demanded that the songs from one of his recent albums be removed from the website, as they were placed there without his permission and were giving people free access to music they might otherwise buy. Khorlin, in rebuttal, has argued that his website serves as a powerful advertisement for the bards, giving people a sense of their music through free access to lo-fi mp3, and encouraging them to purchase hi-fi recordings. When placed upon the background of economic uncertainty and general privation that effects the overwhelming majority of the *avtorskaia pesnia* community, the potential for the genre's commodification, lamented as it may be by those who enjoyed the free flow of music and ideas in the Soviet period, holds out the prospect of a slim financial lifeline for a large number of struggling bards. Their ambivalence toward this situation is crystallized in a recent song by a young bard from the city of Perm' named Grigorij Danskoj. The song, entitled "*Grustnye razmyshleniia meditativnogo kharaktera o sushchnosti deneg*" ("Melancholy Reflections of a Meditative Character on the Significance of Money"), provides a window into the tribulations of post-Soviet *avtorskaia pesnia*, and an apt stopping point for this discussion of *magnitizdat's* post-Soviet iteration.

Не говори со мной о деньгах –
Do not speak to me of money –
Я не знаю что это такое.
I do not know what that is.
Поговори со мной о покое.
Speak to me of peace of mind.
О счастье со мной поговори.
Of happiness speak to me.
Но ты говоришь: «Деньги, деньги!»
But you are saying, «money, money!»
Как будто бы я экономист.
As if I am an economist.
А я никакой не экономист.
But I am no kind of economist.
Я самодеятельный артист.
I'm an amateur artist.

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