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# Competing Visions of Love and Brotherhood: Rewriting *War and Peace* for the Soviet Opera Stage

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**Abstract:** When Sergei Prokofiev chose to adapt *War and Peace* for the Soviet opera stage in the 1940s, he faced both operatic conventions and Soviet ideological demands that ran counter to the philosophy and structure of Tolstoy's sprawling masterpiece. Prokofiev's early decision to split his opera into *Peace* and *War*, making the first a romantic love story of individuals and the second a collective story of the people's love for Mother Russia, marked a major divergence from Tolstoy. This article explores how Prokofiev reworked Tolstoy's philosophy of love and human connection to make his opera acceptable for the Soviet stage. Moving away from Tolstoy's family ideal in *Peace*, with its basis on intimate sibling bonds, Prokofiev shifted the family to *War*, turning it into a national Russian family of Father Kutuzov, Mother Russia and their children – the Russian people. The opera uses choral glorification of these heroic parents to foster on a national scale the type of intimacy Tolstoy had advocated in the home.

Sergei Prokofiev's *War and Peace* – conceived just before Hitler's invasion of Russia and still unpremiered at the composer's death – is a love story, or possibly even two love stories. One traces Andrei Bolkonsky's and Pierre Bezukhov's love for Natasha Rostova, the other, the Russian people's devotion to their homeland. The two are united by parallels and symbolism, but the first remains a story of Eros and individuals in a highly Europeanised world, while the second is a collective tale of national love for Mother Russia. Like the opera it inspired, Tolstoy's novel takes up opposing worlds and scales – the French versus the Russian, the personal versus the national – yet it does so in a way that ultimately points to their indivisibility. The spirit of brotherly love runs through all levels of the text, from intimate family ties, to moments of epiphany that bridge the chasm between nations at war, to a philosophy of history that embraces the interconnectivity and interdependence of human existence. Prokofiev's opera also celebrates this feeling of brotherhood and of belonging to a larger whole. Yet despite this shared ethical value, the opera's divided structure and the treatment of love that this structure (and the mandates of Stalinist culture) imposed, brought Prokofiev's *War and Peace* into stark opposition with the underlying philosophy of Tolstoy's novel.

In choosing to adapt *War and Peace* in the Stalinist 1940s, Prokofiev was faced with both operatic conventions and Soviet ideological demands that ran counter to the philosophy and structure of Tolstoy's sprawling, non-operatic, non-Soviet masterpiece. In the first place, Tolstoy's famous depictions of the details of everyday family life lacked the dramatic force expected of a grand historical opera subject such as the 1812 war with Napoleon. Further, his emphasis on individual motivations and interests conflicted sharply with the Soviet ideal of collective, heroic purpose.

Russian commentators on operatic adaptations have traditionally tended to regard fidelity to source text (especially to classics as illustrious as *War and Peace*) as a virtue, and *War and Peace* has been no exception.[1] Yet I wish to argue that it was precisely the opera's non-Tolstoyan depiction of love – something recent scholars have talked little about – that became a central element in making Prokofiev's new masterpiece dramatically effective as opera and acceptable for the Soviet stage. Taking into account the excruciating revision process Prokofiev was forced to undergo as he attempted to keep up with ideological shifts of the 1940s, we can trace the link between the philosophy of love put forth in the opera and its acceptability to Soviet norms.

Much of the scholarship on Prokofiev's adaptation has focused on its more overtly political aspects: the dictates of Soviet officials during the revision process and the portrayal of Field Marshal Kutuzov, who became a stand-in for Stalin.[2] In Soviet Russia, however, even the depiction of love had political ramifications, and these have not been seriously explored.[3] This article will return to Prokofiev's source text to examine how Prokofiev reworked Tolstoy's vision of love to meet both operatic and Soviet demands (which sometimes – but not always – ran in tandem). In the process, both *Peace* and *War* became more traditional love stories, the first romantic in focus, and the second national, following the model of Mikhail Glinka and the *Kuchka*. Neither was true to Tolstoy's philosophy of human connection.

Previous commentators on Prokofiev's adaptation of *War and Peace* have tended to accept the removal of family scenes as a practical necessity, without considering the philosophical ramifications of their absence. In the novel, however, family love, and specifically the bond between siblings, serves as a model for broader human

[1] For a general discussion of adaptation criteria in such cases, see Alexander Burry, *Multi-Mediated Dostoevsky: Transposing Novels into Opera, Film, and Drama* (Evanston, 2011), 18–19. Caryl Emerson summarises the *War and Peace* fidelity debate in 'Leo Tolstoy and the Rights of Music under Stalin (Another Look at Prokofiev's Party-Minded Masterpiece, *War and Peace*)', *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 14 (2002), 1–14; here 1–4. The librettist for *War and Peace*, Mira Mendelson, was praised after the 1 July 1942 vetting of the opera for 'staying close to Tolstoy's text': see M.A. Mendel'son-Prokof'eva, *O Sergee Sergeeviche Prokof'eve: Vospominaniia dnevniki (1938–1967)* (Moscow, 2012), 111. It is characteristic that Georgii Polianovskii felt the need to begin his review of the original 1945 concert performance with a discussion of the impossibility of capturing Tolstoy's masterpiece in operatic form. He then went on to praise Prokofiev and Mendelson for their selection of material: *Vecherniaia Moskva* (3 July 1945), 3.

[2] See Nathan Seinen, 'Kutuzov's Victory, Prokofiev's Defeat: The Revisions of "War and Peace" ', *Music & Letters* 90 (2009), 399–431; Simon Morrison, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years* (New York, 2009); Richard Taruskin, 'War and Peace', *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie. *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O002216 (accessed 20 November 2012); Rita McAllister, 'Prokofiev's Tolstoy Epic', *The Musical Times* 113 (1972), 851–5. A notable exception is Emerson's 'Leo Tolstoy and the Rights of Music', which examines the opera through the lens of Tolstoy's aesthetic doctrine and views on music.

[3] Suggesting that 'romantic love and its loss' is what 'conventional opera does best' and what opera audiences care most about, Emerson notes that some musicians in support of the project in 1942 advised Prokofiev to scale back and retitle the opera *Natasha Rostova*. Prokofiev, however, would not agree ('Leo Tolstoy and the Rights of Music', 1). Although Prokofiev's refusal was surely true to the ideology of Tolstoy's masterpiece, Emerson does not pursue this intriguing strand of enquiry about love. The other scholars whose work I cite in this article treat love as a musical or plot motivator without exploring its ideological ramifications.

connection and brotherhood. This kind of love binds the individual characters in both peace and war, showing the sameness of the two worlds. In the opera, meanwhile, even in the first version of the libretto (before Soviet officials became involved), Prokofiev removed the sibling relationships in *Peace* and used choruses, rather than individuals, to represent this type of connection in *War*. As a result, Tolstoy's ideal of family connectedness disappeared from the domestic side of the opera and reappeared – transformed and expanded – as the folk–national love that dominates and unifies *War*. This love and brotherly connection provided an acceptable alternative to Tolstoy's gentry-family idylls, both operatically compelling and politically appropriate for Soviet realities. In *War*, then, Prokofiev makes the choral, communal love of 'Mother Russia' the operatic alternative to the intimate, novelistic family. In so doing, he brings back a form of love central to the nineteenth-century nationalist tradition – love of Russia – and combines it with the Tolstoyan model to create a dramatic, unifying alternative to the love plot that drives *Peace*.

Philip Bullock has noted the importance of the libretto for Soviet critics, as 'the element of an opera that could be most readily analysed, understood and even censored within the terms established in literature'.[4] The letters Prokofiev received calling for revisions often referred to the music in fairly general terms (describing what it should evoke without recourse to musical terminology), whereas they noted specific lines in the libretto that should be cut or altered. Following this lead, I will focus primarily in what follows on the *War and Peace* libretto, examining aspects of plot, character and structure most accessible to critics with a stake in 'Sovietising' Tolstoy's masterpiece, and will limit commentary on the music to the type of concerns raised by critics on the Committee on Arts Affairs.

## Tolstoy's unity in division

Although many early critics were bothered by the mixture of genres in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and felt that the stories of individuals' lives worked at cross purposes with the vision of history endorsed by Tolstoy, later scholars have argued for the book's internal coherence.[5] Tolstoy created this coherence, they contend, by embodying his philosophy of history in the fictional half of the work, both at the level of the individual's experience and in the mass scenes of war.[6] Edward Wasiolek, for example, has suggested: 'The point

[4] Philip Ross Bullock, 'Staging Stalinism: The Search for Soviet Opera in the 1930s', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18 (2006), 83–108; here 96.

[5] For a discussion of the work's early reception and critics' troubled reactions to the strange mixture of genres, see Gary Saul Morson, *Hidden in Plain View: Narrative and Creative Potentials in 'War and Peace'* (Stanford, 1987), 37–41, 49–51.

[6] At the crux of the matter stands Tolstoy's handling of two opposing ideas: free will versus historical necessity. On the surface, it appears that individuals have agency in the novel and act by free will, yet on the macro-scale Tolstoy claims that the fates of nations are controlled by historical laws (inevitability), not the wills of individuals (he attacks the idea of 'great men' such as Napoleon controlling history). Isaiah Berlin described this as a conflict of 'two systems of values, the public and the private', and argued that the 'terrible dilemma' at the heart of the work is 'never finally resolved' (*The Hedgehog and the Fox* (Chicago, 1978), 30–1). Tolstoy argues that the assumption of 'man's free will as something capable of influencing historical events … would destroy the

of the long theoretical discussion of history that dominates the later portions of *War and Peace* is to prove that necessity and freedom are resolved in the concrete historical act – the same point that Tolstoy has dramatised in the best moments of the domestic portions of the novel.'[7] The individual actions of the characters are in fact working towards the same ends as the theoretical passages, all illuminating a single, integrated worldview. Or, as Paul Debreczeny argues: 'What gives the novel viable organic unity is that principles of historical analysis are applied to the portrayal of individual characters, and a sense of freedom informs the depictions of historical events.'[8]

Alongside this (no longer) new wave of scholarship, I would suggest that Tolstoy's depiction of love offers another instance where individual lives exemplify broader Tolstoyan truths. Tolstoy scholars have long noted the importance of family in his works as well as his lifelong dedication to the ideal of brotherhood, and siblings play a crucial role in linking these two themes.[9] Recognition of Tolstoy's use of sibling bonds as the basis and model for his ideals of unity and brotherhood leads to a perplexing question, however, when we turn to the opera, where siblings and family life are virtually absent: how can Prokofiev retain Tolstoy's philosophy of human connection and his ideal of brotherhood without recourse to the sibling bonds and familial intimacy on which Tolstoy bases them? Or, put another way: in an opera that came to focus on more grandiose aspects of the heroism and patriotism of the Russian people, was there no place for Tolstoy's model of love and brotherhood?

For a Tolstoyan hero, love begins with the family, and the types of bonds a character forms in this tiny microcosm of society become emblematic of the bonds he or she will form with humanity at large. Natasha Rostova exudes warm, intuitive,

possibility of the existence of laws, that is, of any science whatsoever. If there is even a single body moving freely, then the laws of Kepler and Newton are negativised and no conception of the movement of the heavenly bodies any longer exists.' Lev Tolstoi, *Voina i mir*, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Iubileinoe izdanie) (hereafter PSS), 90 vols. (Moscow, 1928–59), XII: 338. All translations are by Louise and Aylmer Maude: *War and Peace*, ed. Amy Mandelker (Oxford, 2010) (hereafter WP).

[7] Edward Wasiolek, '*War and Peace*: The Theoretical Chapters', in *Leo Tolstoy's* War and Peace, ed. Harold Bloom (New York, 1988), 87–102; here 87.

[8] Paul Debreczeny, 'Freedom and Necessity', in Bloom, ed., *Leo Tolstoy's* War and Peace, 41–53; here 45.

[9] References to the 'family idea' (*mysl' semeinaia*) are ubiquitous in Tolstoy scholarship, as Tolstoy himself referred to this as the central idea in *Anna Karenina* (see the diaries of Tolstoy's wife: S.A. Tolstaia, *Dnevniki v 2-kh tomakh* (Moscow, 1978), 1: 502). For scholarship on Tolstoy and the family, see Edwina Cruise, 'The Ideal Woman in Tolstoi: *Resurrection*', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 11 (1977), 281–6; Cruise, 'Women, Sexuality and the Family in Tolstoy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Tolstoy*, ed. Donna Tussing Orwin (Cambridge, 2002), 191–205; Anne Hruska, 'Love and Slavery: Serfdom, Emancipation, and Family in Tolstoy's Fiction', *Russian Review* 66 (2007), 627–46; Olga Karpushina, 'The Idea of the Family in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*: The Moral Hierarchy of Families', in *Anna Karenina on Page and Screen*, ed. Helena Goscilo and Petre Petrov (Pittsburg, 2001), 63–92; M. V. Stroganov, ed., *'Mysl' semeinaia' v russkoi literature: sbornik statei i materialov* (Tver, 2008). For recent work on Tolstoy and brotherhood, see Andrew Donskov and John Woodsworth, eds., *Lev Tolstoy and the Concept of Brotherhood: Proceedings of a Conference held at the University of Ottawa 22–24 February, 1996* (New York, 1996). I argue for the importance of siblings to Tolstoy's philosophy in *Siblings in Tolstoy and Dostoevsky: The Path to Universal Brotherhood* (Evanston, in press).

all-embracing love for her brothers Nikolai and Petya, for her cousin Sonya, and for her parents, and she consistently reaches out – to friends, relations, strangers at a ball, wounded soldiers, anyone with whom she comes into contact – with the same type of spontaneous affection. The Bolkonskys, as soberly undemonstrative as the Rostovs are impulsive, share a more spiritual, cerebral bond, and interact with others using a similar spiritual intensity, formed of a desire for a deep connection based on a shared moral outlook. By contrast, Hélène Kuragina has incestuous relations with her brother Anatole and establishes her position in society through the channels of erotic desire.[10]

Tolstoy carefully constructs a parallel between dominant family feelings and a character's relations to the wider world. Compare, for example, Nikolai's reunion with his family on his first leave from the army with the reception he receives when he returns to his regiment. In the first case, he is swarmed by his adoring relations: 'more hugging, more kissing, more outcries, and tears of joy. He could not distinguish which was Papa, which Natasha, and which Petya. Everyone shouted, talked, and kissed him at the same time.'[11] Then, after his leave: 'Rostov experienced the same feeling as when his mother, his father, and his sister had embraced him, and tears of joy choked him so that he could not speak. The regiment was also a home, and as unalterably dear and precious as his parents' house.'[12]

Nikolai experiences the regiment as a family of brothers, but we will never know whether the other soldiers share this view. Tolstoy only shows us the regiment through Nikolai's eyes, keeping a tight control on our perception. This rootedness in the singular is important. Artistically, it allows Tolstoy to use an individual's experience to represent a broader truth. Nikolai's loving glance equates the feeling of family closeness that comes from an accumulation of shared experience (home) with the closeness of physical proximity and shared living conditions (army). Staying within Nikolai's viewpoint, Tolstoy avoids engaging with the *difference* between true family love and this inherently broader and less personal family-like connection, and instead attempts to elide the two. Philosophically, the Tolstoyan expansion of love resists the urge to philosophise its way into abstraction, but remains rooted in the connection between discrete individuals. In Tolstoy's world, one can only love concrete people, not abstract ideas. As he explained in his late religious treatise, *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1894): 'The man who … loves his family, knows whom he loves: Anna, Dolly, John, Peter, and so on', whereas 'humanity is a fiction, and it is impossible to love it'.[13]

Somewhere between these two extremes – family and humanity – lies the nation. In *The Kingdom of God* – a work that was not part of the Soviet sanctioned Tolstoy corpus[14] – love of nation is the farthest stretch of this emotion. Tolstoy argues that love of self is

[10] I discuss this pattern in 'The Sibling Bond: A Model for Romance and Motherhood in *War and Peace*', *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 18 (2006), 1–15, and in *Siblings in Tolstoy and Dostoevsky*.
[11] PSS 10: 5; WP 318.
[12] PSS 10: 124; WP 423.
[13] Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You: Christianity Not as a Mystic Religion but as a New Theory of Life*, trans. Constance Garnett, rpt (New York, 2005), 77, 78.
[14] For a discussion of Tolstoy's Soviet legacy and which texts were available to the public, see Rosamund Bartlett, *Tolstoy: A Russian Life* (New York, 2011), 416–54.

natural to all people, and this love can be transferred outward to family, clan, tribe, or state, but there is a 'weakening of sentiment in proportion to the extension of its object'; 'Love of one's own people who are of the same blood, the same tongue, and the same religion as one's self is possible, though far from being so strong as love of self, or even love of family or clan. But love for a state, such as Turkey, Germany, England, Austria, or Russia is a thing almost impossible' because 'it is only an imagined sentiment'.[15]

Tolstoy's organic vision of love radiating out to those who share most differs from many traditional formulations of brotherhood. Christian brotherhood, for instance, necessitates loving indiscriminately, demanding that one not only love one's neighbour (literally 'close one' in Russian (*blizhnii*)), but even enemies with the same feeling of selfless, brotherly tenderness. In biblical terms, the indiscriminate love required by 'brotherhood in Christ' leaves no place for individuals, as all are part of one body (1 Corinthians 12: 12–27). Similarly, many national or ethnic conceptions of brotherhood involve an undistinguishing, wider sense of connection, as in Benedict Anderson's well-known formulation of the 'imagined community': 'it is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'.[16] By this theory, one might love one's 'brother Slavs' without knowing or truly caring for any *one* personally – an idea Tolstoy ridicules in Part VIII of *Anna Karenina*.[17] Tolstoy remained sceptical about the feasibility of brotherhood at the group level, without recourse to individual bonds – face-to-face interactions or shared experiences, however brief – that affirm the other's shared humanity. He held that one must be able to love real people in order to love the larger group they represent.

In *War and Peace*, Tolstoy manages to depict expansive love that remains rooted in actual human connections. During the army review, for example, Nikolai's intense love for the Tsar spreads to all the men around him: 'I love and forgive everybody now', he thinks.[18] Even in this moment, Nikolai's love is not focused on an abstract concept of Russia, but on the real men around him. Such moments can transcend even national boundaries, as when Nikolai exchanges a 'brotherly smile' with his host in a German village and exclaims: 'Hoch Oestreicher! Hoch Russen! Kaiser Alexander hoch!' to which the German replies: 'Und die ganze Welt hoch!' After this exchange 'they looked at each other with joyful delight and brotherly love'.[19] The nations' unity is based on the bond between two concrete but unrelated individuals who, roused by the excitement of impending war, sense their shared humanity. In another famous instance during Pierre's trial, the French General, Davout, shares a

[15] Tolstoy, *Kingdom of God*, 77. In the mid-twentieth century, Russian village writers often referred to their village as the 'small homeland' (*malaia rodina*). See Kathleen Parthé, *Russian Village Prose: The Radiant Past* (Princeton, 1992), 6–9. Tolstoy would have approved of this model for basing the idea of homeland on the close and personal.

[16] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London, 2006), 6.

[17] Tolstoy attacks the idea of Russians going to war to defend their 'brother Slavs' in Serbia, the more so because this is brotherhood that calls for bloodshed.

[18] PSS 9: 302; WP 263.

[19] PSS 9: 156–7; WP 136.

look with him that saves Pierre. 'At that moment an immense number of things passed dimly through both their minds, and they realized that they were both children of humanity and were brothers.'[20]

The type of love Tolstoy idealises in the home – the warm, spontaneous affection and compassion exhibited by the Rostovs, or the more thoughtful, spiritual compassion displayed by the Bolkonskys – becomes the model for the type of love Tolstoy aimed to depict and foster on a larger scale. In Andrei's moment of clarity that comes with his first, nearly fatal wound, he experiences the Christian love of all humanity that his sister, Marya, has preached. With his second wound, this love is applied to his greatest enemy: Anatole Kuragin. Through depicting family love and the need for belonging and brotherhood as existing equally in home and regiment, among intimates and between strangers brought together by the fortuities of war, Tolstoy found another way to bring together the seemingly opposed strands of *War and Peace* into an aesthetically and philosophically coherent whole. When the type of love that unites men on the battlefield is no different from the love they experience in their childhood home, the distance between these two worlds collapses. Prokofiev's opera, by contrast, bypasses this unifying tendency, seeking at all times to keep war on a different emotional plane from peace. Rather than proving the indivisibility of wartime and peacetime reality, Prokofiev would rely on the contrast between the two in structuring his opera, and in fact would be forced to make this contrast increasingly extreme.

## Moving away from Tolstoy: Prokofiev's division

When Prokofiev and his librettist and second wife, Mira Mendelson, set about turning Tolstoy's *War and Peace* into an opera in 1941, they tried to be faithful to Tolstoy in both language and philosophical outlook.[21] Assuming that their audience would know Tolstoy's novel, the pair did not attempt to create a filled-in plot, but instead provided a series of vignettes that capture essential human emotions and states of being (much as Tchaikovsky had done in *Eugene Onegin*).[22] On the philosophical side, they were sensitive to Tolstoy's belief that unity of purpose and selfless desire to serve the nation never moved history.[23] As Tolstoy explains in the novel:

It is natural for us who were not living in those days to imagine that when half Russia had been conquered and the inhabitants were fleeing to distant provinces, and one levy after

[20] PSS 12: 39; WP 1036. While there are other factors at play besides the rosy recognition of brotherhood that Tolstoy emphasises in his commentary (shared social class arguably trumping pure humanitarian feeling), here again, the sense of brotherhood is rooted in two specific individuals who, through their moment of connection, have accessed a universal truth.

[21] In compiling the libretto, Mendelson drew heavily on Tolstoy's own prose. See Mendel'son-Prokof'eva, *O Sergee Sergeeviche Prokof'eve*, 64.

[22] McAllister claims that the spectator 'is required to base his experience in the theatre directly upon Tolstoy, to think *through* the novel' ('Prokofiev's Tolstoy Epic', 851). For a discussion of the implications of this kind of relationship between opera and source text, see also Caryl Emerson, *Boris Godunov: Transpositions of a Russian Theme* (Bloomington, 1986), 149.

[23] As Nathan Seinen has noted, Prokofiev's initial plan for the opera stayed true to Tolstoy by 'concentrating on the role played by the common people' rather than on Kutuzov ('Kutuzov's Victory', 408).

another was being raised for the defence of the Fatherland, all Russians from the greatest to the least were solely engaged in sacrificing themselves, saving their fatherland, or weeping over its downfall … But it was not really so. It appears so to us because we only see the general historic interest of that time and do not see all the personal human interests that people had. Yet in reality those personal interests of the moment so much transcend the general interests, that they always prevent the public interest from being felt or even noticed.[24]

Prokofiev's musical model for capturing all these personal interests within the larger nation – represented by the chorus – was Musorgsky's treatment of the *narod* in *Boris Godunov*, with prose recitative dialogue and the use of solo voices in the chorus to break up the sense of a monolithic whole.[25]

Despite this attempt at fidelity, Prokofiev and Mendelson's opera inevitably departed from Tolstoy's unifying vision through the early decision to split *War* and *Peace* into two distinct halves.[26] The scene that originally inspired Prokofiev to tackle the project – Natasha's reunion with the dying Prince Andrei – became the node that would link *Peace* and *War*, as it was the only scene in which the couple appeared together. The two halves were further unified in Prokofiev and Mendelson's vision by a close parallelism.[27] It is routine to note that the siege on Natasha's virtue in Part I by the seductive Anatole Kuragin and the saving of her honour by the bumbling Pierre is mirrored by the invasion of Russia in Part II by the equally lustful French and Russia's rescue by Kutuzov and the humble Russian *narod*.[28] What this summary downplays, however, is that the two halves are based around two different kinds of love, an opposition that runs directly against Tolstoy's philosophy of history and his ideals for human connection. Rather than making the societal level an extension of the personal, the opera has them governed by different forces and forms of

[24] PSS 12: 13–14; WP 1014.

[25] We hear echoes of *Boris* throughout the 1942 *War* (some of which survive in the final version), as, for example, in the street scene in Moscow (scene 11 in the final version), where Prokofiev has peasants sound out the writing on a decree syllable by syllable, much like the comic monk, Varlaam, in *Boris Godunov* sounding out the warrant for Grisha Otrepev's arrest. In noting Prokofiev's debt to *Boris*, Richard Taruskin calls the scene of the burning of Moscow 'veritably a second Kromï Forest' ('War and Peace'). But while Kromï closes Musorgsky's opera, Prokofiev was forced to change his final scene and to end with a homophonic *slava* ('glory') chorus that brings his *War and Peace* in line with a more conservative strand of nineteenth-century Russian nationalist operas such as *A Life for the Tsar* (and its 1937 Soviet adaptation, *Ivan Susanin*), *Ruslan and Liudmila* or *Prince Igor*.

[26] This split is not unlike the division many early critics made between distinct halves of 'war' and 'peace' in Tolstoy's novel, which they thought did not hold together as a unified whole (see Morson, *Hidden in Plain View*, 49).

[27] Given how closely the couple worked, I will not attempt here to distinguish between their contributions. After the initial writing of the libretto, in which Mendelson took the leading role, for simplicity's sake I will refer to the opera as Prokofiev's.

[28] See, for example, Emerson, 'Leo Tolstoy and the Rights of Music', 5; Morrison, *People's Artist*, 177; Taruskin, 'War and Peace'. A similar parallel has been noted in the novel by Debreczeny ('Freedom and Necessity', 45–6). Another instance that demonstrates this parallel is the way the introduction of the guests during the ball (Act I scene 2) is mirrored by the introduction of the regiments in the first scene of Act II, with each name called aloud, followed by ball guests/ Kutuzov commenting on the new arrival.

attachment – romantic love versus folk–national connectedness. Put simply, in Soviet Russia, Prokofiev could not make history purely the background to a romantic love story after the manner of so many European historical operas. When dealing with history, however, he still chose to motivate the drama through a love story, turning from romantic love to the love of Russia, just as many nineteenth-century Russian 'nationalist' composers had done before him.

In so rigidly splitting *Peace* and *War*, then, Prokofiev's original version of the opera, which he completed in 1942, takes a first major step away from Tolstoy. Although Prokofiev obviously had the constraints of Soviet acceptability in mind, I would propose that at this stage these changes were based more on the genre requirements of transposing novel into opera. In the revision process that followed, however, the opera would then be pushed further and further from the ideology of its literary source. When Prokofiev sent the opera to Moscow for review in 1942, he was hopeful for a speedy staging, given general enthusiasm for the project and the topical relevance of the wartime plotline. At his death over a decade later, the complete opera still awaited its premiere. Over those years Prokofiev would create a series of revised versions, desperate to appease censorship boards and members of the theatre so as to see his masterpiece performed; a process that has received careful study and documentation that will not be repeated here in detail.[29] Instead, I contrast Prokofiev's initial vision from 1942 with the final version that made it to the Soviet stage (the version known to audiences today), in order to show the increasing distance between the opera's depiction of love and Tolstoy's original conception.

The piano–vocal score was first vetted in Moscow in 1942, after which Prokofiev received letters from Mikhail Khrapchenko (chairman of the Committee on Arts Affairs, 1939–48) and Semyon Shlifstein (Soviet musicologist and consultant to the Committee on Arts Affairs, 1939–44) with recommendations for revisions. Later Samuil Samosud (musical director of the Bolshoi Theatre) and many others became involved in requesting further changes and giving advice. The primary concerns of the original reviewers involved enhancing the opera's emotional impact and making the Russian people appear more heroic. They were bothered by Prokofiev's inclusion of too many everyday details and dialogue, which – while true to Tolstoy – diffused the dramatic energy and failed to capture the 'greatness of the national spirit' (*velichie narodogo dukha*) and the 'spiritual heights and inner strength of the Russian people'.[30] While these comments might make dramatic sense for any opera, they bore greater

[29] See especially Seinen, 'Kutuzov's Victory'; the revision process is also discussed by Morrison, *People's Artist*; Taruskin, 'War and Peace'; McAllister, 'Prokofiev's Tolstoy Epic'.

[30] The letter from Khrapchenko was dated 19 June 1942, and is reprinted in Irina Medvedeva, 'Istoriia prokof'evskogo avtografa, *ili* GURK v deistvii', in *Sergei Prokof'ev: k 100-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia: pis'ma, vospominaniia, stat'i*, ed. M.P. Rakhmanova (Moscow, 2007), 216–39; here 224. These critics were right that much of Tolstoy's sprawling work does not make for rousing, patriotic opera. The recitative style favoured by Prokofiev could not capture the grandeur of the wartime struggle in the manner that these critics desired. As Musorgsky found when revising his *Boris Godunov*, prose recitative could potentially be heard as unserious, and certainly as less exalted than full-fledged aria-like melodic lines. See Richard Taruskin, *Musorgsky: Eight Essays and an Epilogue* (Princeton, 1993), 256–61.

weight in the Soviet context where the portrayal of 'the people' carried deep ideological significance.

The 'personal interests of the moment' on which Tolstoy's philosophy of history rested were precisely what critics on the Committee of Arts Affairs found most objectionable. As Khrapchenko chided: 'After all, we're talking about the fates of the nation, the people, and not just the life path, joys and sorrows of individual distinguished representatives of the epoch.'[31] Khrapchenko also complained about the 'abundance of conversation' and Shlifstein explained that 'the personal world' should 'yield its place to the expression of the people's elemental principle'.[32] Clearly, the intimate family bonds that played such an important role in Tolstoy had no place in this vision. *Peace*, which indisputably had to remain focused on individuals, required much less reworking than *War*. While many scenes remained virtually the same, the one major change was the forced addition of the ball (scene 2) where Natasha and Andrei first meet and fall in love. In *War*, Prokofiev had to make myriad alterations, including a new scene depicting the war council at Fili, giving Kutuzov the opportunity for a patriotic aria after making his decision to surrender Moscow.[33]

With the removal of many individuals from *War* and the increased emphasis on unified choruses, the final version of the opera separates the worlds of *Peace* and *War* even further than did the original version of 1942. The two halves are set in different spaces governed by different rules of time: the drawing room and ballroom capture the immediate present in which the individual experiences life, while the war-council hut and battlefield exist in historical time in which a nation carries out its destiny. These two fundamentally different chronotopes come with their own unique musical styles: one intimate and lyrical, interwoven with Western European dance rhythms; the other epic and triumphant, permeated with folk songs and patriotic hymns.[34] Perhaps most important, *Peace* addresses the lives of individuals, while *War* shifts to the national scale, or in Rita McAllister's description, the opera offers 'two sets of *tableaux vivants*, contrasting the personal and the communal'.[35] In other words, the personal love of Part I and the communal love of Part II have their corresponding conventional types of opera.

## Peace and individual desire

Prokofiev's Part I, *Peace*, is dominated by amorous love. In each scene Natasha is the object of male desire and, as in a typical French or Italian romantic opera, Eros

[31] Letter reprinted in Medvedeva, 'Istoriia prokof'evskogo avtografa', 224.
[32] Reprinted in Medvedeva, 'Istoriia prokof'evskogo avtografa', 227, 231.
[33] The scene of the war council at Fili was added due to pressure from the Bolshoi musical director, Samosud. See Seinen, 'Kutuzov's Victory', 419.
[34] After the 1945 concert performance in Moscow, as rumours flew that *War and Peace* would soon receive its premiere in New York, D. Rabinovich described the music to the American public as being concentrated 'at two opposite poles' – the 'lyrical and tender' versus the 'epic and heroic': 'Prokofieff's Opera is Epic of War and Peace', *American-Soviet Music Review* 1 (1946), 28–30, here 28. Simon Morrison also notes that Prokofiev 'strove for intimate character portraits' in the peace scenes and for 'historical panorama' in the war scenes (*People's Artist*, 177).
[35] McAllister, 'Prokofiev's Tolstoy Epic', 851.

provides the driving force of the action. The opera opens with Andrei below Natasha's window on the Rostovs' estate at Otradnoe, gaining a renewed faith in life as he is enchanted by her poetic soul. Although the scene draws heavily on Tolstoy, Prokofiev's emphasis on romantic love turns away from Tolstoy's depiction of more unrestricted spiritual searching. The opera privileges the influence of Natasha over the effects of the natural world in transforming Andrei's outlook; his thoughts shift directly from: 'There's something entirely, entirely special in her, in this girl who wanted to fly away into the sky' to (two lines later): 'Where does this unwarranted spring-like feeling of gladness and renewal come from? No, life is not over at thirty-one; it does not pass in vain.' For Tolstoy's Andrei, it takes not only a girl on a moonlit night, but also a second viewing of the old 'dying' oak that has now sprung into leaf in order to bring about his spiritual rejuvenation. The second set of lines Prokofiev chose ('Where does this…') are taken from the moment of oak viewing, not from listening to Natasha. Debreczeny even argues that Tolstoy emphasises the impersonality of Andrei's feelings when he first encounters Natasha: 'She is not important as a person; what is important is Andrey's reaction to a young creature to whom – he painfully realises – he means nothing.'[36]

From original to final version of this first scene, Prokofiev heightened the focus on Eros and Natasha, making *Peace* a more traditional love story. The second major change he made to *Peace*, alongside the addition of the ball scene, was to create a duet for Natasha and Sonya on their balcony, giving Andrei ample time to become enthralled by his muse.[37] The words of the duet come from Vasily Zhukovsky (1783–1852), Russia's first Romantic poet, who was well known for his translations and adaptations of English and German literature. More significantly, Tchaikovsky had already set the same poem as a duet for Liza and Polina in *The Queen of Spades*. Both operas use domestic music making to establish the time and place of the action, in this case rooting listeners in the early nineteenth century (the harp introduction underlines the associations with salon music).

As various scholars have noted, Tchaikovsky's influence can be widely felt across Part I (though much more so in the final version with the added ball scene).[38] While many of the nineteenth-century Russian 'nationalist' composers kept romantic love as a minor embellishment to otherwise nationally focused plotlines, Tchaikovsky made it a focal point, creating a powerful musical idiom for the depiction of amorous desire, from the 'Romeo and Juliet' Overture via *Swan Lake*, *Eugene Onegin* and *The Queen of Spades*, to *Sleeping Beauty*. Drawing on Tchaikovsky therefore not only helped to root *War and Peace* in the Russian operatic tradition, but also created a palimpsest that reinforced the romantic idyll in Peace.[39] The inter-text with Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, moreover, is multivalent. Prokofiev reused portions of the incidental music he

[36] Debreczeny, 'Freedom and Necessity', 47.
[37] The duet was composed in April 1949, and added in what Taruskin terms the 'fifth version' ('War and Peace').
[38] McAllister, 'Prokofiev's Tolstoy Epic', 851; Taruskin, 'War and Peace'.
[39] Rachmaninov had made similar allusions to Tchaikovsky's musical depictions of love in his first opera, *Aleko* (1892).

had composed for a dramatic adaptation of Pushkin's novel (the project was planned for 1936, but aborted before making it to the stage) and recycled for Natasha, much of the music originally intended for his own earlier Tatiana.[40] Their themes of youthful love complement each other: Tatiana's naiveté and isolation from society at the Larina estate during her early infatuation with Onegin are paralleled by Natasha's innocence and countryside seclusion at Otradnoe, where she sings her duet with Sonya.

In Tolstoy's more complex world, Andrei is searching for meaning and purpose beyond what romantic love can provide. His reawakening is specifically a desire to unite with a larger whole, to be connected with everyone: 'everyone must know me, so that my life may not be lived for myself alone while others live so apart from it, but so that it may be reflected in them all, and they and I may live in harmony!'[41] These sentiments echo his feelings while in the army, such as before the Battle of Austerlitz: 'if I want this – want glory, want to be known to men, want to be loved by them, it is not my fault that I want it and want nothing but that and live only for that. Yes, for that alone! … what am I to do if I love nothing but fame and men's love?'[42] Such continuity between peace and war is not possible in Prokofiev's divided world.

From the moonlit night, Prokofiev's initial impulse was to skip over the romantic union of Andrei and Natasha and move directly to its rupture. In the 1942 version, he omitted the moment of first union between his hero and heroine, never bringing the couple together in *Peace*, and saving the vision of them together for the scene at Andrei's deathbed in *War*. In the added scene 2, however, where the influence of Tchaikovsky is felt most strongly, Natasha is swept up by dance music – polonaise, mazurka and waltz, with their intimations of seduction and infidelity – as she and Andrei fall in love.[43] The scene also gave Prokofiev the opportunity to include two choruses – one a setting of a poem by Konstantin Batyushkov (1787–1855), the other an Ode by Mikhail Lomonosov (1711–65) sung during the Tsar's arrival at the ball – that provide unifying moments of choral glorification and period colour (a peacetime equivalent of the army choruses in *War*). Along with the added duet in scene 1, these diegetic songs pay tribute to Russia's early literary greats, adding a patriotic element to *Peace* and shifting the balance from recitative towards more 'singable' melody.[44]

[40] The first staging took place at Princeton University in February 2012. A free-verse English translation by Caryl Emerson of Krzhizhanovsky's script is available in *Sergey Prokofiev and His World*, ed. Simon Morrison (Princeton, 2008), 115–90. The Russian original, alongside a new translation by James Falen, which respects the metre and rhyme scheme of the Onegin stanza and was created for the production, will be published in *Pushkin Review* (forthcoming).

[41] PSS 10: 158; WP 452.

[42] PSS 9: 324; WP 281–2.

[43] Although the audience is aware that Natasha and Andrei are falling in love, their dialogue while dancing does not actually capture this. Instead there seems to be a disconnection: Andrei reminds Natasha of the night at Otradnoe and she comments on the beauty of the ball, as if participating in a different conversation.

[44] Ivan Dzerzhinsky's *Quiet Flows the Don* (1935) became the model for the 'song opera' (*pesennaia opera*), a form that 'was principally constituted of solo numbers and choruses in a simple and accessible musical language based on popular models' (Bullock, 'Staging Stalinism', 91). After the

After Prokofiev, reluctantly, had added a moment of unity at the ball, he moved straight to the scene of Natasha's humiliation at the Bolkonskys', which depicts the *dis*harmony caused by this intended match. In both original and final versions, the scene at the Bolkonskys' (which became scene 3 once the ball had been added) emphasises the role of Andrei's family in priming Natasha to be seduced. She enters with the firm belief that '[i]t's not possible that they won't love me. I am so ready to do everything that they wish, so ready to love the Old Prince because he is [Andrei's] father, and the Princess is his sister. There's no reason for them not to love me.' Faced with the Old Prince's rudeness and Marya's coldness – conveyed in Prokofiev's characteristic recitative dialogue style – Natasha's feelings burst out in an aria ('Perhaps he'll come today…') as she imagines Andrei's return and her desperate need for the reassurance of his love. Romantic love is the singular exalting force that can bring forth truly lyrical music in *Peace*.

The rejection Natasha has just experienced by her future in-laws leaves her all the more susceptible to the attention and admiration of Anatole Kuragin in the next scene in Hélène's drawing room, a bastion of French visitors and fashions. In Tolstoy's novel, even more strongly than in the opera, Natasha's amorous affairs are placed in a Western European context, both spatially and literarily removing her from the grounding base of family life. The abduction plot was a cliché of the eighteenth-century romance and gothic novel and at this point Natasha becomes a classic novel heroine.[45] The ball, where her most serious romantic attachment springs up, was itself a foreign import to Russia, its forms, music and modes of interaction all borrowed from the French, English and Italians. Tolstoy contrasts this kind of formulaic, European socialising to the 'natural' Russian music of the balalaika and Natasha's 'Russian dance' that she performs on the rustic estate of a neighbour, familiarly known as 'Uncle'. That experience she shares with her brother, safely ensconced among healthy forms of connection. At the opera house, when Natasha first encounters Anatole, however, she is dazedly watching a French grand opera.[46]

From here, Anatole pursues her to his sister's salon, where a French actress entertains the company with a recitation from Racine's *Phèdre*. With biting irony, Tolstoy does not refer to the work by name, simply noting: 'Mademoiselle George looked sternly and gloomily at the audience and began reciting some kind of French verses describing her guilty love for her son.'[47] He highlights both the French name of the actress (which is emphasised in the Russian text by the use of a different alphabet) and the fact that she is speaking in French, integrating into the drawing room a hint of the national struggle that would consume Russia. The casual reference to 'some kind of' verses (*kakie-to stikhi*) belittles any dignity the reading might

attack on Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth* in 1936, composers were required to aim for this more accessible musical style.

[45] Anatole's love letter is written for him by Dolokhov, who at this point is fashioning himself as a Byronic hero.

[46] Margo Rosen has convincingly identified the opera as Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*: 'Natasha Rostova at Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*', *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 17 (2005), 71–94.

[47] PSS 10: 340; WP 614.

have held, while the incest at the heart of *Phèdre* is of course also reflected in the incestuous relations between Hélène and Anatole. The foreignness and artificiality of these settings is important for Tolstoy because it contrasts so sharply with his beloved family contexts and the wholesomeness of Russian music and dance that he endorses. In Prokofiev's opera, these Europeanised, sensually charged spaces and contexts make up the majority of Natasha's world. Consequently, the forms of love she encounters are based on amorous desire, often in decadent or corrupt form, without the balance of the more sustaining familial love that permeate Tolstoy's novel.

Tolstoy structured *War and Peace* around three main families: the Rostovs, the Bolkonskys and the Kuragins. In condensing the sprawling novel into a manageable operatic plotline, Prokofiev and Mendelson necessarily made heavy cuts, removing most of the 'un-operatic' family life.[48] This material would certainly not have been acceptable to the Committee on Arts Affairs, given their complaints mentioned above about the emphasis on 'everyday details' (*bytovym podrobnostiam*).[49] The concern was both dramatic and ideological, as such quotidian details diminished the heroic image of the period and its participants. The issue was of particular concern in *War* with its ideologically fraught portrayal of the *narod*, but I would suggest that the cutting of domestic life in *Peace* also had significant consequences, reshaping the characters in ways that have not been fully explored. For example, Tolstoy first introduces his Natasha in her home, caught up in childhood play with her siblings, cousin and a beau too young to be a serious suitor. It is this setting and these familial connections that most prominently define her. Embedded in the Rostov family, Natasha exhibits her spontaneous affection in heart-to-hearts with Sonya, night-time visits in bed with her mother, lighthearted play with Petya and intimate conversations with Nikolai that are infused with shared memories and associations.

Comparison of the treatment of the brother–sister pairs at the heart of each of the major families in the shift from novel to opera shows how Prokofiev's libretto inevitably distorted Tolstoy's vision. First, Prokofiev and Mendelson eliminated Nikolai Rostov from the opera entirely, and in so doing, removed Natasha's primary connection in the novel, her anchor and pivot. Tolstoy's Natasha shares many of her most unhindered moments of intimacy with her brother: the carriage ride after Uncle's when they wish they could remain together forever, Nikolai harmonising with her when she sings, the tête-à-tête on Nikolai's first morning home on leave from the army when she displays her burned arm, and their discussion of shared childhood memories and dreams before the mummers arrive. Nikolai's love of Natasha offers a chaste, sustaining alternative to amorous love in Tolstoy; he dreams of her when away at war, and she connects him with his innocent childhood past.[50] In the opera, without her older brother present, she becomes almost entirely the object of erotic love.

[48] Mendelson wrote of the pain it caused her to leave out 'many superb pages' because they would not fit in the opera (*O Sergee Sergeeviche Prokof'eve*, 79).

[49] Letter from Khrapchenko to Prokofiev (published in Medvedeva, 'Istoriia prokof'evskogo avtografa', 224).

[50] Tolstoy's belief in the corrupting power of amorous desire grew over the course of his life (culminating in his advocacy of abstinence even in marriage). As early as *War and Peace*, sexual

The sibling bond in Prokofiev's Bolkonsky family is also reduced, although with less drastic consequences for this less demonstrative, more private family. While Marya and Andrei are both present in Part I, they are never seen together and Andrei never speaks of his sister. Many of Marya's finest moments in the book occur with her brother (giving him the icon before he departs for war, helping him tend for his newborn son), with her sister-in-law the little Princess Lise (who does not feature in the opera), or with her father at his death. For Tolstoy she plays a saintly didactic role, as a model of the kind of non-sexual, selfless caring he idealised and attributed to his unknown mother.[51] In the epilogue he writes: '[she] promised in her heart to do better and to accomplish the impossible – in this life to love her husband, her children, [her nephew] Nikolenka, and all her neighbours [*vsekh blizhnikh*], as Christ loved mankind'.[52]

Such virtues are not 'operatic' in the sense of being externally dramatic, but are composed of the quotidian struggles of existence that fall beyond the conventional material of nineteenth-century grand opera. In Prokofiev's version, similarly, we see Marya only as a secondary figure in Natasha's love plot. In her first 'aside' where we hear her true thoughts, Marya asks: 'What can I talk about now with this frivolous, dressed-up girl?' (Act I scene 3). This is a corrupting moment for Marya's sibling bond with Andrei, as she turns her brother's fiancée into a rival, instead of a new sister.[53] In the novel, Marya overcomes her resentment and ends up a soul mate (and ultimately a sister-in-law) for Natasha. But the moment Prokofiev chooses to 'operatise' brings Andrei and Marya's relationship more in line with that of Anatole and Hélène in the last of the major families: the Kuragins. Their corrupted, incestuous sibling bond is the one Prokofiev emphasises and fills out most fully, devoting scenes 4 and 7 to their shared milieu. Slanting his portrayal of siblings in this way allows Prokofiev to maintain Eros as the primary, if not exclusive, type of love present in Part I, in a way that flattens the characters and arguably cuts off much of their Tolstoyan (if not their operatic) potential.

The erotic love that permeates Part I of the opera is a project of personal fulfilment, focused exclusively on the possession of one individual. By loving Natasha, none of the characters is led to broader feelings of human connection (and the same applies for Natasha herself). Indeed, in Pierre's final reflections in the closing scene

desire is portrayed as suspect and polluting (see, for instance, Pierre's guilty feelings leaning over the snuff box when he first desires Hélène, or Marya's feeling of sinfulness at desiring 'earthly love' (*liubov' zemnaia*) and a family). I analyse Natasha and Nikolai's relationship and discuss Tolstoy's use of sibling relations as an alternative to romantic love in 'The Sibling Bond'.

[51] For more on the family models for characters in the novel, see Brett Cooke, 'Tolstoi i novyi Darvin(izm): evolutsionnye struktury v romane "Voina i mir"', in *Lev Tolstoi i mirovaia literatura: materialy III mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii v Iasnoi Poliane, 28–30 avgusta, 2003*, ed. Galina Alekseevna (Tula, 2005), 195–203; here 198; A.N. Wilson, *Tolstoy* (New York, 1988), 23; Aylmer Maude, *The Life of Tolstoy*, 2 vols. (London, 1929), II: 422.

[52] PSS 12: 290; WP 1264.

[53] Although she regrets in another aside that she cannot reach out to Natasha with love, the impression of the episode – Marya's only appearance in the opera – is decidedly negative. Prokofiev confines her to a recitative style that gives no room for the sort of lofty sentiments usually conveyed in aria.

of Part I, he admits that in his search for inner peace (*soglasie s samim soboi*), the attempt to help his 'close ones', and the ideals of brotherhood that he sought in Freemasonry were overcome in his heart by his feelings for Natasha. And Natasha, in turn, thinks only of herself as she catapults from one romance into another, throwing off Sonya and her family in her infatuation. Her love in the opera is wholly isolating, as can be clearly seen in Prokofiev's treatment of the ball where Natasha first dances with Andrei. The stage directions state that they find themselves alone after the dance, and in the 1991 Kirov production, the rest of the guests literally disappear from the stage, visually confirming that the entire focus is on the romantic love between two individuals; the opera itself gets swept up in the couple's romance.

The isolating self-absorption of Eros in Prokofiev's opera contrasts with Tolstoy's vision. At the ball at the Iogels', 'Natasha fell in love the very moment she entered the ballroom. She was not in love with anyone in particular, but with everyone. Whatever person she happened to look at she was in love with for that moment.'[54] Similarly, after dancing with Andrei at her first adult ball (the one Prokofiev depicts), she gives him a smile that says: 'I'm happy and I love everybody, and you and I understand it all.'[55] Andrei himself is not so important as the object of her love, just as she was not important (as an individual) in his spiritual reawakening at Otradnoe. Tolstoy's ball scene closes with Natasha's thought that 'all the people at the ball alike were good, kind, and splendid people, loving one another; none of them capable of injuring another – and so they ought all to be happy'.[56] She is experiencing something akin to universal brotherhood.[57]

In Tolstoy, characters are at their best when, like Natasha in her joy at the ball, they can see all people as worthy of love. Tolstoy did not turn these moments of exaltation into a permanent state, but showed that they can be triggered by various kinds of interactions and emotions, like the glance that saves Pierre during his trial, or Nikolai's love for the Tsar during the army review which spreads to all the men around him. The parallel between Natasha's feeling of expansive love in peacetime and Nikolai's feeling in the army is but one instance of the indivisibility of these two realities in Tolstoy's novel. In both *Peace* and *War*, everything begins and ends with the individual; the only difference is that the mass scenes present the individual in aggregate. Tolstoy shows that people who move between the spaces of war and peace are not changed by the move; they do not become faceless members of 'the chorus' just because they happen to be at Borodino.

To this end, Nikolai is an invaluable asset to Tolstoy's artistic and philosophical mission. Although not the most glamorous character, nor the first that enters anyone's mind when thinking about the novel, Nikolai is essential to its fibre. He is not heroic in the world–historical Hegelian sense, only in the down-to-earth

[54] PSS 10: 49; WP 358.
[55] PSS 10: 205; WP 493.
[56] PSS 10: 206; WP 494.
[57] Later in the novel, during her moral regeneration, Natasha experiences this kind of universal brotherhood at a deeper level in the church when she prays for peace (PSS 11: 74).

Tolstoyan one.[58] Wherever Nikolai goes, he is always Nikolai Rostov, and like a true Rostov, his world is always present and immediate. He serves as the perfect reminder that each member of the army is a person with individual needs and feelings, as well as being part of the organic whole. When shown the army through Nikolai's perspective, we do not see it as an abstract force where men lose themselves in the patriotic struggle to rid Russia of her oppressor, as war becomes in Prokofiev's opera.

With Nikolai absent from the opera, no parallelism existed between love in home and army, nor would such a parallel have served the artistic structure Prokofiev was obliged to adopt in order to make his message sufficiently grand for a Soviet wartime opera. Family love is not a uniting principle; there are no complete families in Part I and the only crossovers between the two worlds of *Peace* and *War* are Andrei, who is never seen with his family, and the orphaned Pierre, who feels out of place in both worlds. Prokofiev removed all healthy sibling relationships from Part I and upped the scale of Part II to the point where individual family bonds among soldiers are no longer there to serve as a model for expansive love. We are not only missing Nikolai, but also the moment when Pierre finds himself in the midst of battle and regards the artillery battery as a 'family circle – separated from all else'.[59] Instead of drawing together peacetime and wartime reality through the type of love they exercise, Prokofiev relied on his structure of opposing love in the two halves.

While Prokofiev was clearly at home with romantic love plots at the time of composing *War and Peace* – with *Romeo and Juliet* recently completed and *Cinderella* (begun in 1940) well under way – he must have known that such a plotline would not be sufficient for a Soviet wartime opera based on a work such as *War and Peace*. The romantic love presented in *Peace* would have to be counterbalanced by something more powerful, less focused on individuals, and of greater use to the war effort. Platon Kerzhentsev, chairman of the Committee on Artistic Affairs, had stated back in 1937, when *War and Peace* was proposed as an opera, that it would need to focus on 'the heroic struggle of the Russian people', not on 'the spirit of Pierre Bezukhov and Natasha Rostova'.[60] A look at Soviet literary scholarship on *War and Peace* offers a model for the way such a reading could be teased out of Tolstoy's novel.

Lenin's writings on Tolstoy focused on his depiction of contemporary Russia and consequently are difficult to apply to a historical work such as *War and Peace*. Khrapchenko, however, bequeathed the world a 660-page tome, *Lev Tolstoy as an Artist* (1963), that offers a standard party line on *War and Peace*. Quoting one of Tolstoy's diary entries, in which Tolstoy claimed that for a work to be good, one must love the fundamental idea in it, and that 'in *War and Peace* I loved the idea of the people' (*mysl' narodnuiu*), Khrapchenko reads *War and Peace* as a criticism of the falseness of aristocratic life and a tribute to the strength of the people as the 'deciding

[58] Brett Cooke links the positive portrayal of Nikolai to the fact that his character was based on Tolstoy's own father, and traces the 'improvement' of Nikolai over the various drafts of *War and Peace* ('Tolstoi i novyi Darvin(izm)', 197).

[59] PSS 11: 232; WP 852.

[60] RGALI, fund 962, list 3, folder 331, p. 58. Quoted in Seinen, 'Kutuzov's Victory', 410.

force of societal development'.[61] According to Khrapchenko, 'the fates of the people and of the individual characters in *War and Peace* are tightly interwoven'.[62]

These comments adhere to the views Anatoly Lunacharsky (Commissar of Enlightenment, 1917–29) expounded in a 1927 article, where he called *War and Peace* 'a portrayal of collective actions' and praised the 'protest against human egoism, vanity, superstition, and the striving to raise people to universal [*obshchechelovecheskikh*] concerns'.[63] Similarly, the literary critic S.P. Bychkov comments in a 1949 essay on *War and Peace* that over the course of the war, the heroes – Pierre, Andrei, Natasha, Marya and others – 'became part of the life of the nation: the war required them to think on the scale of Russia as a whole, thanks to which their personal lives were immeasurably enriched'.[64] In a later, revised version of the article (published in 1955), he added a section explaining that the 'collective image of the people' is the main hero of the novel, and that individual characters' worth is related to their position in relation to the people, with the most positive characters the closest.[65] Konstantin Fedin (writer and head of the Soviet Writer's Union, 1959–71) similarly praised Tolstoy for the strength with which he depicts 'that giant of history – the Russian people!'[66]

A Soviet *War and Peace*, then, could not tell the story of individuals. Indeed, in Khrapchenko's words, each of the heroes must learn that 'it is precisely the renunciation of individualistic principles and ideals which signified the wider manifestation of human strength and possibility. Rejecting the avowal of one's "I" as the centre of the universe opens before us the richness of our surrounding world, the beauty of life.'[67] From comments like this, it is clear that in a Soviet adaptation of *War and Peace*, it would not be enough for unity to be felt in the home, with extensive philosophical essays to show how the individual experience was a microcosm for the global scale. Instead, Prokofiev moved Tolstoy's ideal of family unity out of the home and expanded it into the national love that comes to dominate Part II of the opera (which, as mentioned earlier, also linked his opera with nineteenth-century 'nationalist' models). Ironically, this solution actually dovetails with the path Tolstoy laid out in *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, where love begins with the self and expands outward to family (the most immediate extension of self), clan, and ultimately nation.[68] By this logic, to inculcate a stronger sense of national love, it would make sense to turn the nation into an extension of the family.[69]

[61] Mikhail Khrapchenko, *Lev Tolstoi kak khudozhnik* (Moscow, 1963), 96, 115. S.P. Bychkov cites the same diary entry: *Narodno-geroicheskaia epopeia L. N. Tolstogo "Voina i mir"* (Moscow, 1949), 20.

[62] Khrapchenko, *Lev Tolstoi kak khudozhnik*, 173.

[63] Anatoly Lunacharsky, 'O tvorchestve Tolstogo', reprinted in *L. N. Tolstoi v russkoi kritike: sbornik statei*, ed. I. Mikhailova (Moscow, 1960), 453–75; here 470.

[64] Bychkov, *Narodno-geroicheskaia epopeia*, 23.

[65] Bychkov, 'Roman "Voina i mir"', in *L. N. Tolstoi: Sbornik statei*, ed. I. Trofimov (Moscow, 1955), 181.

[66] K.A. Fedin, 'Iskusstvo L'va Tolstogo', reprinted in *L. N. Tolstoi v russkoi kritike: sbornik statei*, 500–4; here 502 (the article was originally published in 1953).

[67] Khrapchenko, *Lev Tolstoi kak khudozhnik*, 164. Khrapchenko is clearly echoing Lunacharsky's discussion of *War and Peace* in 'O tvorchestve Tolstogo'.

[68] Tolstoy, *Kingdom of God*, 77.

[69] Many scholars have commented on the link between nationalism and the idea of the family. Thomas Eriksen even posits that 'nationalism promises to satisfy some of the same needs that

## Prokofiev's unity: *War* and national love

*War* takes up the metaphor of family love. As Russia is besieged, her children come together as one body to defend their motherland. Just as Tolstoy turns the blushing, virgin Natasha into a fertile mother in the epilogue of his novel, Prokofiev's parallel for Natasha is the fertile *Matushka Rus'*, the mother of an entire people. In grand operatic predecessors, such as *Les Huguenots* or *Les Troyens*, the historical events often provided background for the individual love plots. In *War and Peace*, however, the individual love plot is subsumed by broader national concerns. Mother Russia herself emerges as the beloved in *War*, and thus the form of love that drives the action is familial, rather than romantic. Sometimes using Moscow as a synecdoche for Russia, the Russians rally around their love for 'our mother, Moscow!' (*matushka nasha, Moskva*) and refer to themselves as her sons. At one point the people's words about Mother Russia are followed directly by Andrei musing about his love for Natasha, cementing the parallel between the two beloveds. At another moment, Andrei mocks the German generals who refuse to take into account 'private individuals' (*chastnykh lits*) as they affirm to each other: 'the theatre of war must be widened' (literally 'carry over to a wider space' (*perenest' v prostranstvo*)). Andrei states: '[I]n their theatre of war was my father, who died of grief. The French have destroyed my home and are going to ravage Moscow.' His lamentation draws a clear parallel between the people of Russia and his own family, between Moscow and his own beloved family estate.[70]

In her seminal study of the Soviet novel, Katerina Clark notes a parallel between the social organisation of the traditional peasant family and the metaphors used by the State. Traditional Russian culture featured both the 'small family' (*malaia sem'ia*), composed of immediate blood relations, and the 'great family' (*bol'shaia sem'ia*), which included recruited members who lived with the family but did not share actual blood ties. In a parallel move, writers in the 1940s often referred to the nuclear family as the 'small family', and Soviet society as the 'great family'.[71] This leap from immediate connections to the metaphorical national family is enacted by Part II of Prokofiev's opera. Given the lack of complete families in Part I (there are no mothers at all, for instance), the only intact family in Prokofiev's *War and Peace* is Mother Russia, Father Kutuzov, and their children – the Russian people.

General Kutuzov sings about 'white-stoned mother-Moscow', and in turn, the soldiers sing about him as a father: 'Kutuzov leads us, our own father leads us.' Prokofiev sets these words as a march-like chorus that both unites the people with a single voice and provides a rousing patriotic melody to move the audience. Over the course of successive revisions, as Seinen has shown, Kutuzov's character became the

kinship was formerly responsible for': *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London, 2002), 107.

[70] This passage also dovetails with the meaning encoded in terms such as 'motherland', 'fatherland' and 'homeland'. As Steven Grosby has noted, these terms imply 'a form of kinship that revolves around the image of a bounded territory': *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2005), 43.

[71] Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Bloomington, 2000), 116. This is similar to the village writers' use of the 'small homeland' (*malaia rodina*) to refer to their village (Parthé, *Russian Village Prose*, 6–9).

most contentious issue.[72] Prokofiev was forced to transform him from Tolstoy's wise, slightly comic figure who accepts that a leader cannot control the outcome of war, into a stand-in for Stalin – a heroic leader of foresight with the force and control over events to personally direct Russia's victory.[73] In Tolstoy we see intimate moments, such as Kutuzov's parting with Andrei, where he tells the young man: 'for you I am not a Serene Highness, nor a prince, nor a commander-in-chief, but a father!'[74] Prokofiev's Kutuzov could not sink to the level of these individual family bonds; as the symbolic father of a nation he had to remain elevated and aloof. In order to heighten Kutuzov, Prokofiev was made to 'perpetrate an arioso', just as Musorgsky had done to 'restore Tsar Boris to full tragic dimension on the operatic stage'.[75] Kutuzov's new aria, which appears in the added war council scene, raises him above prosaic recitative into the lofty realm of lyrical melody.[76] Prokofiev later integrated Kutuzov's grand melody into the scene of Andrei's death and the final chorus that closes the opera.[77]

Along with Mother Russia and father Kutuzov, the people themselves are united in siblinghood, often referring to each other as '*brattsy*'.[78] In the final scene, when Pierre and the Russian prisoners are released from captivity, everyone embraces while exclaiming: 'Brothers, little doves! Dear relatives!' (*Brattsy, golubchiki! Milye rodimye!*). This 'national family' love that replaces Eros in Part II was ideologically necessary because it offered a model strong enough to unite a nation against its oppressor. But, unlike Tolstoy's vision of unity, it did not grow out of individual family bonds.

In the opera, this type of brotherly love remains a distinctly Russian phenomenon. James Parakilas notes that grand operas map their 'moral terrain … by divisions of the chorus that represent opposed nations, social groups or political factions'.[79] Using this type of traditional mapping, Prokofiev chose to have Russian and French

[72] Seinen, 'Kutuzov's Victory', esp. 420.

[73] In 'Some Words About *War and Peace*', Tolstoy specifically rejects the idea of heroes in art: 'For an historian considering the achievement of a certain aim, there are heroes; for the artist treating of man's relation to all sides of life there cannot and should not be heroes, but there should be men' (PSS 16: 10; WP 1311).

[74] PSS 11: 174; WP 799. Prokofiev included this scene, but removed these lines so that in the opera Kutuzov ends with a more forceful exclamation about making the French eat horseflesh.

[75] Taruskin, *Musorgsky,* 261. Notably, Prokofiev never allows Napoleon to move into this lyrical register.

[76] Herbert Lindenberger notes that 'whenever a play is transformed into an opera, we note at once that the characters assume a more formal, often a more heroic stance than they did when they simply spoke their lines': *Opera: The Extravagant Art* (Ithaca, 1984), 19. There is a similar shift in 'heroic stance' when the music moves from recitative into aria.

[77] Clark's study of the Soviet novel helps explain part of the need for this reinterpretation of Kutuzov's role. Clark argues that the 1930s saw a shift from lateral metaphors of brotherhood to vertical ones of father–son: 'The father-and-son paradigm replaced the Five-Year Plan ideal within the "family" in terms of a hierarchy of maturity and care': *The Soviet Novel*, 129. At the time Prokofiev was writing, his *War and Peace* had to be grounded in this new family metaphor that gave pride of place not to the fraternally united people, but to the benevolent father–Stalin figure.

[78] This echoes Anderson's claim that 'the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship' or 'fraternity' (*Imagined Communities*, 7).

[79] James Parakilas, 'The Chorus', in *The Cambridge Companion to Grand Opera*, ed. David Charlton (Cambridge, 2003), 76–92; here 82.

choruses in *War* sing of opposing types of love. Like the pernicious Kuragins in Part I, the French in Part II stay rooted in lustful, amorous love. While the Russian *narod* is concerned with saving Moscow's honour, drawing a parallel to a violated virgin (such as Natasha in Part I),[80] during their looting of Moscow the French soldiers sing a folk song about trying to seduce a girl (taking her to a green garden to pick 'ripe cherries'). The melody comes from a traditional French folk song, 'La belle si nous étions', but Prokofiev has the soldiers sing it in Russian, and their lyrics diverge quite strongly from those of the French original.[81] Rather than a nostalgic ode to the joys of youthful love, the song becomes a lustful attempt to lure a girl into sin. Manipulating their song in this way, Prokofiev made the French soldiers a fitting counterpart to Anatole Kuragin.

The true love in *War* is Russia's familial, folk–national love. The desire to heighten the people's heroic status may explain the Committee on Arts Affairs' request for more patriotic choruses, but these choruses serve an additional function as love songs for Mother Russia. The familial love they glorify is a collective venture that unites voices and people as a Russian family. While it might sound ridiculous for a commoner on the streets of the burning city to start speaking of his love for '*matushka Moskva*', once the music shifts from individual voice lines to a chorus, we accept the expression of such grandiose, collective sentiments.[82]

Such expression links *War and Peace* to the tradition of nineteenth-century Russian nationalist operas that similarly take Russia herself as the ultimate beloved. Glinka's fairy tale opera, *Ruslan and Liudmila* (1842), ends not with a glorification of its eponymous couple, but with a celebration of the fatherland (*otchizna*).[83] Borodin's *Prince Igor* (unfinished at the composer's death in 1887; first performed 1890) begins with a chorus glorifying Rus'. In Act I of Musorgsky's historical opera *Khovanshchina* (unfinished at the composer's death in 1881; first performed 1886), the people of

[80] They sing: 'For the honour of Moscow arise, people!'

[81] The Russian in the opera translates as: ' "Go with me, my sweetheart, into the green garden. The cherries have long been ripe, it's time to pick them. Let's go and toil my darling, in the garden green." "I can't go with you. I've stumbled, sweetheart. I can't find my pinafore anywhere. What shall we collect them in, sweetheart? The basket has no bottom. If you want to know the truth, sweetheart, I just don't want to and that's that." ' The following is a translation of the lyrics used by Poulenc in his arrangement (included in the *Chansons françaises*), from 1946: 'Sweetheart, when we used to go to the woods / We used to eat nuts to our hearts' content. / We could eat as much as we wanted.' Refrain: 'Sweetheart, you've got me overwhelmed / Overwhelmed by your beauty. Sweetheart, when we used to go to the fishpond / We used to help little ducklings swim. / We let them swim as much as we wanted.' (Refrain) 'Sweetheart, when we used to sit by the oven / we used to eat hot cakes. / We could eat as much as we wanted.' (Refrain) 'Sweetheart, when we used to sit in the garden / We used to sing day and night. / We could sing as much as we wanted.' (Refrain) (I am grateful to Hartley Miller for this translation).

[82] Lindenberger writes of the chorus as 'a magnifying force that could lend the medium [of opera] an epic quality' (*Opera*, 36).

[83] Glinka's choice to glorify the 'fatherland' instead of the 'motherland' was anachronistic (the shift in rhetoric took place under Peter the Great) and emphasised the opera's imperial agenda. See Joanna Hubbs, *Mother Russia: The Feminine Myth in Russian Culture* (Bloomington, 1988), 203. The finale of *Ruslan and Liudmila* begins with everyone singing the praises of Lel', but the people ask for something greater than just this love, and in answer, the curtains on stage open to reveal an image of ancient Kiev and the chorus beings to rejoice.

Moscow sing a lament for suffering 'dear Mother Russia' (*rodnaia matushka Rus'*).[84] In *War and Peace*, however, it is not grief, but love that has been collectivised. The people are not lamenting, but fighting to protect their beloved Mother Russia. Thus Prokofiev's choruses, while participating in the generic conventions of European grand opera (by defining opposing nations), are at the same time filling a characteristically Russian function, helping to make Russia the opera's ultimate beloved.

The frequent recurrence of patriotic choruses and their melodic themes in the orchestra became central to the musical fibre of *War*, encoding folk–national love into the musical structure of the opera. Seinen notes the final choral glorification of Kutuzov, but it is also a glorification of the Russian family.[85] Singing in unison, the Russian people triumphantly proclaim:

> Glory to the Motherland, our sacred Motherland,
> Glory to our native army,
> Glory to Fieldmarshal Kutuzov.
> Hurrah!

The opera celebrates motherland (*rodina*), kin (*rodnoi*), army (the people) and, finally, in pride of place, the father – Kutuzov (Stalin) – ending with a 'hurrah!' that reminds us that this is wartime patriotism.[86]

In contradistinction to Tolstoy's words about the near-impossibility of loving a nation, the Soviet person had to feel at one with the nation. In Tolstoy's novel, moments of brotherhood are experienced through the eyes of the participants, but opera cannot control our vantage point in this way. Though music can help us to enter a character's emotional state, the audience can physically view the action through no eyes but its own, which necessarily remain outside of the action.[87]

[84] As David Brown explains: 'the peasants in *Khovanshchina* lament the broader tragedy of Russia itself through the universal medium of corporate song … Grief has been ritualized, elevated from the (multi-)personal to the collective, and made, if not so poignant, the more weighty.' *Musorgsky: His Life and Works* (Oxford, 2002), 271.

[85] Prokofiev was forced to add the final chorus (quite reluctantly) in 1942, after an audition of the opera with Samosud, and then to replace it in 1947 with a new chorus based on the melody of Kutuzov's aria, as a way to give proper glory to Stalin's stand-in (Seinen, 'Kutuzov's Victory', 414, 422).

[86] The philosophy of history Tolstoy expounds in the Second Epilogue would seem to be at cross-purposes with this *slava* chorus. In the closing passage of the book, after describing the difficulty people had in accepting Copernicus's conclusion that the earth moved round the sun, Tolstoy claims that: 'so in history the difficulty of recognising the subjection of personality to the laws of space, time, and cause, lies in renouncing the direct feeling of the independence of one's own personality … In the first case it was necessary to renounce the consciousness of an unreal immobility in space and to recognise a motion we did not feel; in the present case it is similarly necessary to renounce a freedom that does not exist, and to recognise a dependence of which we are not conscious' (PSS 12: 341; WP 1308). This dependence would render the individual actions of one Kutuzov meaningless on their own; they would fall subject to the same interdependence that governs all human action.

[87] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York, 2006), 60. Hutcheon also makes a similar observation about film, noting the author's greater control on the reader's visual focus (62). Boris Gasparov analyses this potential in relation to Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades*, suggesting that we – the audience – hear Tomsky's ballade about the three magical cards 'through Hermann's ears'.

However, as Carolyn Abbate has argued, this division between our perception and that of the characters is an essential feature of opera, where 'music is not produced by or within the stage-world, but emanates from other loci as secret commentaries for our ears alone'.[88] The final version of *War and Peace* makes this 'music for our ears' a central asset. Characters who are 'unaware that they are singing'[89] can express sentiments they would never have been fully cognisant of, let alone put into words, in historical reality. The collective love they express as a result was precisely what Prokofiev needed to convey.

## Conclusion

As Prokofiev unwillingly moved further from Tolstoy, he took greater advantage of the potential of opera. The critics pushing him understood that national love could be powerfully evoked through music, and specifically through unison singing.[90] By emphasising text less in the final version and putting greater weight on the music, Prokofiev ultimately created a *War and Peace* that could stand as an operatic alternative to Tolstoy, rather than a pale imitation.[91] When the people forcefully express their love for *matushka Moskva* in song, their music proves more moving than the written word. Listening to their rousing final chorus, the viewer – Soviet or contemporary – is meant to be infected by the people's feeling of patriotism and brotherly unity.

Just as Soviet citizens in wartime were supposed to shift into a collective consciousness, putting the good of the Soviet Union before their individual well-being, Prokofiev's opera also shifts from depiction of an individual love interest to the glorification of national love. Natasha literally disappears from the opera after Andrei's death: her individual plot and individual love lose meaning in the face of the national struggle to defend beloved *matushka Rus'*.[92] In this way, *War and Peace* follows

Consequently, in Gasparov's interpretation, Hermann's 'hidden thoughts – the instant connection he has made between the story he is listening to and his passion – affect the music of Tomsky's tale, resulting in an uncanny resemblance between the theme of the three cards and the love leitmotif': *Five Operas and a Symphony: Word and Music in Russian Culture* (New Haven, 2005), 152. I believe the music allows for greater ambiguity; the audience does not know if it is Hermann making these connections between the cards and his passion, or if an outside narrative presence in the music is drawing the two together.

88 Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 1991), 119.

89 Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 119.

90 Prokofiev, of course, was aware of this himself. His patriotic Six Songs (op. 66) was published in 1935. Anderson calls 'unisonance', 'the echoed physical realization of the imagined community'. *Imagined Communities,* 145.

91 As Caryl Emerson stresses, *War and Peace* was a particularly un-operatic source text: 'all those meandering asymmetrical sentences that stretched out for whole paragraphs' plus 'almost unrelieved War, unstageable and unsingable' in Part II ('Leo Tolstoy and the Rights of Music', 1–2). With a more poetic, tightly structured source text focused on a dramatic love story, less radical changes would be needed.

92 The Opéra national de Paris staging from 2000 has Natasha appear on stage during the closing moments and embrace Pierre, but this is not justified by anything in the libretto or stage directions (cond. Gary Bertini, dir. Francesca Zambello, dir. for video François Roussillon (Arthaus-Musik, 2009)).

the model of Dzerzhinsky's Party-sanctioned opera of 1935, *Quiet Flows the Don*, in which the protagonist, Grigory, 'transcends his feelings for his lover at the very end, thereby affirming the primacy of the political over the personal'.[93] The Soviet ideal for opera was that it would 'convey the feelings of the masses' and provide a 'heroic uplift'.[94] According to Lunacharsky, whose ideas from the 1920s reappeared in the Committee of Arts Affairs in the 1930s,[95] the operatic stage could depict:

> some mighty conflict and end it with a solemn apotheosis in victory … Then the theatre would enable people to lose their sense of separation in the midst of an organised collective experience that can never be forgotten – an experience almost as strong as an attack, when through bayonets, to the sound of a military march, they go forward to their death or to victory – an experience which would leave an imprint on their souls for the rest of their lives.[96]

In 'losing their sense of separation', the audience members should feel themselves at home in the 'great family' of Mother Russia and her people.

In this Prokofiev was successful. After hearing the 1945 concert performance, one spectator wrote: 'You achieved Tolstoy's main goal – … you proclaimed – for those with ears to hear – the triumph of goodness and love.'[97] This love, though, was no longer the kind Tolstoy represented in *War and Peace*. The continuity between *Peace* and *War* was gone. The sibling ties that provided Tolstoy's model for expansive feelings of love and brotherhood had been removed. But for the Soviet opera stage, Prokofiev's national family singing the glory of the Motherland was more powerful than any model that could be drawn from Tolstoy.

[93] Bullock, 'Staging Stalinism', 103.
[94] Platon Kerzhentsev, chairman of the Committee of Arts Affairs (1936–8), quoted in Marina Frolova-Walker, 'The Soviet Opera Project: Ivan Dzerzhinsky vs. *Ivan Susanin*', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18 (2006), 181–216; here 198.
[95] See Frolova-Walker, 'Soviet Opera Project', 189.
[96] Anatolii Lunacharskii, 'Novye puti opery i baleta', *Proletarskii muzykant* 6 (1930), 8. Quoted in Frolova-Walker, 'Soviet Opera Project', 188.
[97] Maria Iudina (9 June 1945), quoted in Medvedeva, 'Istoriia prokov'evskogo avtografa', 238.