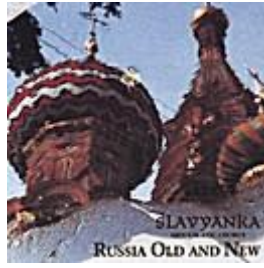


Mp3 Slavyanka - Russia Old And New



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Deep bass and high tenor voices lift you with their expression of the Slavic soul in song. A mix of Russian folk, composed and orthodox church music including such composers as Moussorgsky, Okhudjava, Shostakovich, and Chesnokov. 18 MP3 Songs WORLD: Eastern European, WORLD: World Traditions

Details: This is an album of Russian choral music - sacred, secular, classical and folk. Through this music one can hear some of the many voices of the people of Russia- from times long ago, from times very recent. But this album is also intended to be more than just a collection of Russian songs. It is intended as a kind of journey down through Russian history, a pilgrimage, if you like, to visit some of those places where Russian spirit and Russian soul have taken form in music. And before setting out on such a journey, it might perhaps be useful to keep in mind some of the major elements that shaped Russian musical life. It will help us first of all to remember how basically different and separate Russian cultural history has been from that of the West. Alone of the major European powers, Russia developed from Eastern and Orthodox roots in Greece and Byzantium, rather than from Western and Catholic roots in Rome and Western Europe. Russia never shared in the profound cultural upheavals of Europe as the West moved from the Middle Ages into the Renaissance, the Age of Discovery, and the Reformation. On the contrary, the great Christian schism between the East and the West in 1054, the position of Russia on the far edge of Europe, and above all the invasion and domination of Russia for the better part of three centuries by the Mongols - all conspired to reinforce the separation and isolation of Russian culture from that of the West, a separation with the most profound consequences for Russian cultural life. Although the choral music of Russia now draws on many sources, two traditions are at its center. The first of these traditions is the music of the Russian Orthodox Church. Early church music, derived directly from ancient Byzantine chant, is the musical expression of a faith that is austere, timeless, otherworldly, deeply

transcendent in spirit - an while later church music incorporates many elements from other sources, this mystical, unearthly, haunting character of the ancient church is never far below the surface. The second of these traditions is Russian folk music - unabashedly pagan in spirit, rooted in the land and the earthy vitality of peasant life. The Church did much to suppress any development of a secular music tradition until the 17th century. But this music not only survived - carried by itinerant troubadours and oral tradition, it flourished, a living embodiment of Russian spirit. Nothing could be further from the austere purity of Byzantine chant - yet it is with the broad spectrum formed by these two poles that much of Russian musical history has developed. With the demise of the former Soviet Union has come a virtual explosion of interest in rediscovering the "old" Russian music, especially traditional folk music and church music; as well as all kinds of experiments with more contemporary styles. Yet many artists in Russia honestly fear that Russian culture is at this point shattered; that the events of the twentieth century - a revolution, a civil war, the brutalities of the Stalin period, the devastation of the Second World War, the relentless imposition of the Soviet "overculture", the stagnation and failure of political and economic systems - have virtually destroyed that fabric of shared imagination connecting the Russian people to their inner spiritual truths and to their outer common life. But even as Russians struggle to reclaim their musical past as a source of strength and vision, a curious thing has been happening: this music has been taking root beyond Russia. Carried abroad to Europe and America by Russian emegres, who left Russia after the Revolution, it has been steadfastly sustained and nurtured as a tradition almost entirely separate from musical changes within Soviet Russia. It was from this migr tradition that Europeans and Americans first felt the power and presence of this music. And now, as non-Russians increasingly not only listen to but perform this music, it has become true that this is no longer a music just for Russians - it has become a world music, a music ofr all people. Paradoxically, the more "Russian" the music is, the more deeply we non-Russians seem to connect to it. It touches some hidden part of us, a place that in some strange way we all recognize intuitively as our own. -- Paul Andrews, Slavyanka Founding Music Director

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