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**VASILY KALAFATI'S OPERA *TSYGANY*
("THE GYPSIES") AFTER ALEXANDER PUSHKIN
(1899, REVISED 1937)**

1. Vasily Kalafati and his Work: Reappraisal and Rediscovery. This article is devoted to the life and works of composer and teacher Vasily Pavlovich Kalafati (born 10 February [O. S. 29 January] 1869, Yevpatoriya, Crimea; died 20 March 1942, Leningrad), who is undoubtedly the best-known composer of Greek origin belonging to the Russian National School. V. Kalafati was not particularly well-known in Greece, at least not in the musical world, until the beginning of the 21st century. However, his work in Russia was significant: originally a student of Nikolai Rimsky–Korsakov at the Saint Petersburg conservatory, he later joined the faculty of the same institution as a professor of composition. He passed on the essential principles of the Russian National School and his teacher Rimsky–Korsakov to new generations of composers. His name was first added to music encyclopedias in 1918–1919¹. Russian musicologists have acknowledged the importance of his teaching activity in composition and theoretical subjects.

Vasily Kalafati's work belongs to the New Russian Music School and he has a place in the world history of opera. More than 160 of his

¹ See [9, 841] and [1, 1094].

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compositions, written between 1889 and 1941, have survived. Among them is his unique² one-act opera *Tsygany* (“The Gypsies”) (1899, revised 1937). This work is based on a poem *The Gypsies* by Alexander Pushkin (1824), in which the Great Russian poet included some of his personal experiences. The story of a civilized young man who finds love and loses it among the gypsies of the steppes is very common to the Russian people. It follows not only the theme of unrequited love and sorrow, but also the theme of love and freedom, telling the tragic love story between the Russian Aleko and a free-spirited gypsy girl Zemfira. The fateful passions that cause the tragedy are jealousy, rage and thirst for revenge.

The first version of Kalafati’s one-act opera in 3 scenes *The gypsies* (1899) unfolds in 7 sections interspersed with the musings of the three main characters: the gypsy girl Zemfira; Aleko, the outsider; and Zemfira’s father, each in a style of its own. The opera was composed in the final years of Kalafati's studies at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. Both the orchestrated and the vocal score are salvaged in Kalafati’s archive. This opera was the basis of his cantata *Gypsies* after Pushkin, which was presented as a graduation exam in 1899, securing his future as a prominent composer. Russian newspapers reported on the performance of fragments from his cantata at the graduation concert at the conservatory on 19 May 1899. Unfortunately, the cantata has not been salvaged in the archive.

Vasily Kalafati made musical presence more scenic and complete in the second version of one-act *Gypsies* opera in 3 scenes (1st February 1937),

² Kalafati’s uncompleted opera *Sardanapal’* (1897–1899) by Byron is salvaged in his file. Lord Byron wrote his historical tragedy in blank verse *Sardanapalus* in 1821; its Russian translation was made by Piotr Isayevich Weinsberg (1830–1908). Nikolay Cherepnin (1873–1945) wrote the cantata *Sardanapal’* (1898), a graduation work in the Rimsky–Korsakov’s composition class. Probably, Kalafati was influenced by this event and created a free-flowing libretto using only a few of the original characters.

libretto by Sergey Yur'evich Levik (1883–1967)³. The opera's vocal score and some orchestrated fragments, such as the Introduction, the vocal quartet *Ptichka bozhiya ne znaet* ("God's Bird Doesn't Know") op. 3 (1900) and *Tsyganskaya pesnya* ("Gypsy Song") are preserved in the Kalafati's file. The composer later presented this part of his opera as *Gypsy Song* for soprano and a large symphony orchestra, op. 19 (1927). The opera was written for a large symphony orchestra, soloists, choir and narrator and follows the specific characteristics of Kalafati's orchestration: a rich and exuberant palette of the painter, who knows how to use the sounds. The orchestrated score however has not yet been found. We could study both versions of the opera from a historical viewpoint today.

As a lexicographer, Kalafati did a great job of systemizing and unifying the basic Russian music theory terminology from European languages. He published the Pocketbook dictionary of music term *Sputnik muzikanta* ("The Musician's Companion", Ruslan: St. Petersburg, 1911, 1914)⁴ [15].

Kalafati was a man of moral and teaching talent who "won the appreciation of his colleagues and the love of his students" [2, 879]. Indeed, many of them mentioned him with love in their memoirs. Among Kalafati's students, who described him and his pedagogical approach in their reminiscences were: Igor Stravinsky, Nicolas Slonimsky, Boris Asaf'yev, Alexander Gauk, Ilya Musin, Heino Eller, Yuri Tyulin etc⁵.

³Sergey Yur'evich (Izrail' Yulianovich) Levik (1883–1967) was a Russian baritone singer, teacher, translator and writer.

⁴Kalafati's dictionary was among the first Russian Pre-revolutionary encyclopedias of music terminology. The first Russian lexicographer was the musicologist Modest Dmitrievich Rezvoy (1806–1853). Various kinds of musical dictionaries were also published by Polikarp Dmitriyevich Perepelitsyn (1818–1887), Alexander Ivanovich Rubets (1837–1913), Nikolay Mikhaylovich Lisovsky (1854–1920), Nikolay Fedorovich Findeisen (1868–1928), Alexander Alexandrovich Ilyinsky (1859–1920), Alexander Leont'evich Maslov (1876–1914), Antonin Viktorovich Preobrazhensky (1870–1929) etc.

⁵See [11, 42–45], [2, 879], [16, 25, 32, 55], [13, 26–28], [17, 20–21], [14, 82], [20, 91, 96, 100–105].

Kalafati's catalogue of students totals more than 170 names so far. It includes composers, conductors, theorists and musicologists from Russia, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Dagestan, England, Estonia, Georgia, Ukraine and the USA.⁶ The importance of Kalafati's teaching career at the Saint Petersburg conservatory should be presented to Russian music audiences.

There has been an interest in Kalafati's work both in Russia and Greece since the beginning of the 21st century. His compositions are often performed at the St. Petersburg International Music Festivals, especially in concerts dedicated to the anniversary of the complete lifting of the Siege of Leningrad. Kalafati's march for symphony orchestra *The Stars of the Kremlin* (1941)⁷, which won him a final prize in a competition staged during the siege of Leningrad in 1942, closed the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the town's liberation. The festive concert "The Leningraders, 900 Days for Life" took place in Moscow in 2014 and later was presented in many Russian cities.

Almost all of Kalafati's symphonic and many chamber works have been presented in Greece during the last 10 years. The composer's *A-minor Symphony* op. 12 (1899), a diplomatic work in Rimsky-Korsakov compositional class and often played at the Russian Symphony Concerts, was recorded by the Athens Philharmonia Orchestra in 2017. The Athenian public heard two of Kalafati's most notable works: Firstly, the Piano

⁶ There are more than 10 composers with international careers and many composers from the National schools of the former USSR recorded in Kalafati's student catalogue.

⁷ Kalafati took part in a writing competition for a Revolutionary song or March, dedicated to the 24th anniversary of October Revolution. He wrote *March* for symphony orchestra and won the 2nd prize. The title *Stars of the Kremlin* was added later. Boris Asaf'yev was the president of competition's board. Leningraders listened to both the first performance of *The Stars of the Kremlin* and its recording from the radio in 1941 [24].

Quintet op. 7, which won him a Glinka prize⁸ in the chamber music competition (string quartet) in St Petersburg in 1907 [19, 5–75]. The second composition was the symphonic poem *Légende* in C major, op. 20 for a large symphony orchestra and chorus (in memory of Schubert, 1928), which won him a prize at the 1928 International Schubert Competition in Vienna⁹. Some of the composer's piano pieces were also recorded in Greece¹⁰.

Within the text I use the transliteration system of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001), except in the case of some name endings (e.g., Stravinsky instead of Stravinskiy) and names which are familiar to English speakers under a different form (e.g., Yuri instead of Iuriy, *Tsygany* instead *Tsïganiï*). Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky are spelled in their accepted English ways. *The New Grove's* system is retained throughout in the Bibliography and footnotes.

2. Kalafati's Archive during the Siege of Leningrad. Vasily Kalafati's family lived on 6 *Bol'shaya Moskovskaya* Street (house 6, apartment 16) in Leningrad, from 1922 until his death in 1942. He remained there with his family during the siege of Leningrad. We do not know precisely the reasons for that decision. Both Vasily and his son Mikhail Kalafati (1924–1942), a highly gifted young musician, died of starvation during the siege of Leningrad¹¹. His second wife Olga

⁸ The Piano Quintet, op. 7 was printed by M. P. Belaieff– Leipzig in 1909.

⁹ Kalafati won the second prize (in the Russian zone) at the 1928 International Columbia Graphophone Competition in Vienna, devoted to the centennial anniversary of Schubert's death. The symphonic poem *Légende*, op. 20 is preserved in Kalafati's archive.

¹⁰ The pianist Mary-Victoria Voutsas recorded Kalafati's *Five Preludes*, op. 7 and included them on the CD "Hellenic Song: A Musical Migration" in 2015.

¹¹ Mikhail Vasil'yevich Kalafati was buried in Piskarevskoe cemetery, however no information is held about his father's burial, see <http://visz.nlr.ru/blockade>.

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Mikhaylovna Morrison– Kalafati, adopted daughter of General Mikhail Reznikov, survived the siege and carried his last words on to his children: “What a shame...”

Kalafati’s archive (works, posters, personal archives, newspapers, magazines, collection of old watches etc.) remained at the above address and was inherited by his eldest son Anatoly Vasil’evich Kalafati (1911–2015), a pianist, composer and honored artist of the Chuvash Republic. Anatoly participated in the Second World War and reported that during the siege “everything in my father’s house was ruined in a barbaric and heartless way: his personal belongings, memoirs, calendars and old photographs with genuine signatures...” Anatoly donated some of his father’s printed scores to Manuscript Departments of libraries in Leningrad. He took the archive to Cheboksary and systematically compiled a catalogue of Vasily Kalafati’s works, thus presenting us with valuable information regarding the dates and first performances. An important part of the file was kept in his home until 2004 and later sold as a result of health problems¹².

The Music Department of the Ionian University in Corfu, Greece bought the Kalafati archive in 2006. In the next year, I was allowed to make use of the documentation in the Music Library of the Hellenic Music Research Lab (HMRL). I submitted my dissertation, titled “Vasily Pavlovich

¹² My last conversation with Anatoly Kalafati was at his 99th birthday. Later on, a Russian friend travelled to Cheboksary and held an interview with him. She reported that Anatoly kept the most important documents at his home: old photographs with genuine signatures and some of his father’s most valuable work. Anatoly, who was a blind man at that age, packed and kept the folder under his bed and nobody was allowed to see this archive. I hoped that the orchestra score of second version of the opera *Gypsies* (1937) was also stored there. Anatoly donated all original documents to the Union of Saint Petersburg Composers before his death. The organisation informed me that only the printed score of *Aria of Joann* from Kalafati’s uncompleted cantata *Joann Damaskin*, after A. Tolstoy, op. 18 (1913) and many printed scores of salon music are stored there.

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Kalafati (1869–1942): The Life and Works of the Forgotten Composer and Teacher of Russia” at the Ionian University in 2012.

I have presented part of Kalafati’s published and unpublished works, as well as a detailed complete catalogue of his works. These materials allow us to make the necessary additions and amendments to the chronology of his works, which in all existing reference works is incomplete and inaccurate. Kalafati’s works written after the October Revolution remained particularly obscure because few of them were ever published. No traces of these works could be found in the repositories of music manuscripts in Saint Petersburg and Moscow. The present thesis casts new light on the composer’s late works from the years 1929 to 1942. [7]

3. Kalafati’s one-act opera *Tsygany* after Pushkin (1899, revised 1937).

The first presentation of Kalafati’s archive and the announcement of the survival of the one-act opera *Tsygany* after Pushkin, took place in the International conference “Rimsky–Korsakov and his Heritage in Historical Perspective”, held by the St Petersburg Museum of Theatrical and Musical Art and Rimsky–Korsakov Memorial Apartment Museum in St Petersburg, 19th-22nd March 2010. Conference proceedings, published as an electronic book, are available on the web in both Russian and English. The Ionian University of Corfu, Greece took part in the group exhibition, presenting some of Kalafati’s early compositions, written during his studies with Rimsky–Korsakov which were in a similar style to the pedagogical approach of his teacher [6].

I arrived on 17 March 2010 in St Petersburg, to make some appointments with the composer’s grandchildren and order materials

regarding Kalafati's opera from the St Petersburg National Library¹³. On that exact day, a chamber music concert was held within the St Petersburg Festival "From the Avant-Garde to the Present Day", dedicated to the 65th anniversary of the complete lifting of the Siege of Leningrad. The public listened to Kalafati's march *The Stars of the Kremlin* (1941)¹⁴ and his chamber works (among others *Ptichka bozhiya ne znaet* op. 3, a vocal quartet with which his opera begins).

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin (1799–1837) wrote his narrative poem *The Gypsies* in 1824 and included it in his *Southern Poems* (1827). He also wrote his verse novel *Eugene Onegin* at the same time. Both *Onegin* and *The Gypsies* had true and dramatic dialogues.

Numerous of Pushkin's works were transformed into operas and ballets. *The Gypsies* was no exception. The poem was widely known in Russia and popular abroad¹⁵. It was used for educational purposes by the Russian conservatories¹⁶. According to the research of Boris Gasparov, Pushkin's poem has inspired no fewer than eighteen operas and a half a dozen ballets [5, 159]. Among them, operas written by Russian composers

¹³ In the Manuscript Department, Archive of N.A. Rimsky–Korsakov is kept an original manuscript: "Rimsky–Korsakov, *The Gypsies*, text of the cantata for the graduating students' examination in the conservatory (Prologue and Act 1)." See [22].

¹⁴ Kalafati's *Torzhstvienniy Marsh Udarnikov* ("Solemn March of Stakhanovite Workers' Movement) (1931–1933) op. 25 for a chamber orchestra, ordered by L.O.O. SOYUZKINO, was initially written in 1931 and performed in Leningrad by Tassler's Free Orchestra on 15th April 1931. The new edition for a large symphony orchestra (1932) is preserved. This is the same exact work as Kalafati's last work *The Stars of the Kremlin* (1941), with few, trivial changes. The composer made a new edition and sent it to the competition, with the title *March*. Nor did the Moscow concert present this work in "first global performance", neither did Vasily Kalafati "predict the end of WWII", as was written by the Russian press [23, 24].

¹⁵ Prosper Mérimée made a prose translation of Pushkin's *Gypsy* in French and it influenced his novel *Carmen* (1845) and Bizet's homonymous opera (1875). The main lines of Bizet's *Carmen*, the two main characters, the leading themes and keywords in Carmen's song "Stab me, burn me" come straight out of Pushkin's *Gypsies*.

¹⁶ Vasily Andreyevich Zolotaryov wrote "Aleko's recitative" during his studies with Rimsky–Korsakov [21, 187]. Shostakovich wrote the opera *Gypsies* (1919–20) during his studies with Maximilian Steinberg, but partially destroyed it later [12, 134].

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are: Rachmaninoff's *Aleko* (1893, a graduation work at the Moscow conservatory)¹⁷, Mironov's *The Gypsies* (1900), A. N. Shefer's *The Gypsies* (1901),¹⁸ A.A. Ziks (1901)¹⁹ and K.M. Galkauskas' homonymous operas (1908, a graduation work in Rimsky–Korsakov's compositional class) etc.

There was a centenary celebration of Alexander Pushkin birth's in Russia in 1899. The St Petersburg's premiere of Rachmaninoff's opera *Aleko* (1882) took place on 27 May 1899 at the Tauride Palace, with the staff, chorus and ballet of the Imperial *Mariinsky* Theatre in Saint Petersburg, under the baton of the composer. Fyodor Shalyapin starred in the leading role of Aleko. The tenor Ivan Vasil'ievich Ershov (1867– 1943) performed the role of the Young Gypsy. The soprano Mariya Deysha–Sionitskaya (1859– 1932), who also took part at the Moscow premiere, sung the part of Zemfira. This performance may be one of the reasons for proposing the text of Pushkin's *Gypsies* for the graduation exams of St. Petersburg Conservatory the same year.

Another graduation work was Kalafati's one-act opera in 3 scenes *The Gypsies* after Pushkin (21st January– 20th March 1899). The opera's orchestra and vocal score have been kept in Kalafati's archive. It could be described as a romantic work with a simple plot, whose duration is no more than one hour. Kalafati composed a cantata *The Gypsies*, in fact, as a graduation requirement set by his composition teacher Rimsky–Korsakov at the St Petersburg Conservatory in 1889. Alexander Khessin²⁰, a member

¹⁷ The Russian libretto was written by Vladimir Nemirovich–Danchenko and was an adaptation of the poem *The Gypsies* by Alexander Pushkin.

¹⁸ The opera in 3 acts and 4 scenes *The Gypsies* by Nikolay Sergeyevich Shefer (1866–1914) had a libretto by the composer, in which were added some other poems by Pushkin. It was premiered on 17th [O.S. 30] December 1901 in St. Petersburg.

¹⁹ Alexander Aleksandrovich Ziks (Six, 1874–1945) was a Russian composer and musicologist. He wrote the operas *Ovod* ("Botfly"), *Aristokraty* ("Aristocrats"), *Gypsies* etc

²⁰ Alexander Borisovich Khessin (1865–1955) was a Russian composer, conductor and teacher. Khessin introduced many operas in a concert performance before they were staged during his chairmanship of the Soviet Opera Company of the All-Russian Dramatic Society in Moscow (1943–53). Among them were Prokofiev's *War and Peace*,

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of Solovev's²¹ class, had to write a short cantata based on the same text. The Russian papers reported on the performance of fragments from the cantatas of Kalafati and Khessin at the concert of the new graduates of the Conservatory on 19th May 1899. These facts are supported by a review held in the Kalafati's archive (without date, author or name of publication) and *Reminiscences of Rimsky-Korsakov* by Vladimir Yastrebtsev, who attended the concert [18, 82].

“...The poem's text *The Gypsies*' by Pushkin was proposed to the composers Messrs. Kalafati (composition class of Professor Rimsky-Korsakov) and Khessin (Professor Soloviev). Of the two, the first one passed almost unnoticed and only two numbers were performed from his work. The skills of the latter were brighter; the poem's melody was illustrated with specific and more appropriate music than the compositions of Mr. Kalafati, which we have previously heard.

In the break, the Honorable President of the Russian Musical Society distributed diplomas and letters of recommendation to the graduates of the year.”

Vladimir Yastrebtsev was present at the festive concert on 19 May 1899, thanks to Rimsky-Korsakov, who gave him two tickets. He reported that Vasily Kalafati (Rimsky-Korsakov's class) and Alexander Khessin (Soloviev's class) graduated from the Class of Theory of Composition of that year. The C. M. Schroder factory's²² grand piano was won by Alexander

Koval's *Sevastopol'tsy* and Kasyanov's *Foma Gordeyev*. He also staged the Moscow's premieres of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, Moniuszko's *The Haunted Manor*, Smetana's *Dalibor* and Taneyev's *Oresteia*.

²¹ Nikolay Feopemptovich Soloviev (1846–1916) was a Russian music critic, composer, and teacher at the St Petersburg Conservatory (1874–1909, from 1885 Professor). He thought the Theory of Composition and among his students were Samuel Maikapar and David Chernomordikov.

²² Schroeder & Sons (also known as Schroeder Brother or Die Pianofortefabrik C. M. Schröder) was a small firm that built pianos and player pianos in St Petersburg, New York and Pittsburgh; their pianos appeared to be very well made instruments.

Mende (Professor Karl van Ark's²³ piano class). During the break, Yastrebtsev congratulated Rimsky–Korsakov on his name-day celebration and learned that Korsakov was leaving Saint Petersburg and had to catch a train for Elisavetgrad at the same day [19, 82].

Vasily Kalafati revised many of his early works during his mature period. As I mentioned in the introduction of the article, among them was the second version of one-act *Gypsies* opera in 3 scenes (1937). The composer used the help of the well-known singer, translator and writer Sergey Levik for the libretto. The opera does not have an Opus and consists of 14 sections. The handwritten vocal score of the opera (1937), about 10 fragments (some of which are orchestrated), as well as the composer's notes for the libretto, have survived.

There are significant differences between the two versions of the opera. The first version was written for different types of voices;²⁴ it has 7 sections²⁵ and does not have a narrator. Furthermore, the choir has an important role. Even though Kalafati's way of composing is still simple and easy, his opera matches the traditions of romantic music and has a well-developed harmony (the influence of Rimsky–Korsakov's school is obvious). The introduction,²⁶ the first scene and the opera's finale in the second edition are completely different.

²³ Karel Karlovich van Akr (1842–1902) was a Russian pianist and composer of Dutch origin. He studied with Theodor Leschetizky (in Polish Teodor Leszetycki) (piano) and Nikolay Ivanovich Zarembo (composition) at the St Petersburg conservatory. He started his teaching career at the St Petersburg conservatory in 1862 and was appointed Professor of Piano in 1876.

²⁴ Zemfira – soprano; Young Gypsy – alto (notes by the composer), Aleko – tenor or baritone (Fa Key is used somewhere in the music texture) and the Old man – bass.

²⁵ The Final Horus “There is no happiness among you” is missing in the 2nd edition.

²⁶ The first version's introduction was incorporated in the introduction of the vocal quartet *Ptichka bozhiya ne znaet*, op. 3.

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Example 1. Vasily Kalafati, *The Gypsies*, first edition (1899). Introduction of the opera, a manuscript of the 2nd page.

Ionian University of Corfu, Greece, Hellenic Music Research Library.

I would like to concentrate on the second version of *The Gypsies* opera by Kalafati in this article. Its composition's dates have wrongly been stated in the Gasparov's article and in many musical encyclopedias as 1939–1941. One Italian encyclopedia reads that in 1936 Kalafati wrote the symphonic suite *Gypsies* for soloists, choir and orchestra [3]. On the other hand, *Grove Music Online* mentions only the Khessin cantata *Gypsies* from

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1899, and claims that Kalafati composed the suite *Gypsies* in 1912 [4]. As I mentioned before, the composer's notes for the libretto are stored in Kalafati's file. They were used for writing the opera synopsis by the researcher. According to the memoirs of Kalafati's grandson, Yuri Vladimirovich Eltekov, "there should be a gypsy with a bear on the stage of the opera."

Vasily Kalafati's one-act opera *The Gypsies* (1937, second version), libretto by Sergey Levik (1883–1967).

*After *The Gypsies* («Цыганы») by Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837)*

Without an Opus

Movements/ Sections: 1 Act (14 Sections)

Language: Russian

Instrumentation: Voices, Chorus, Orchestra, Narrator

Time: 18th century

Place: A Gypsy camp on the Danube river bank

Opera Roles

Zemfira – Soprano

Aleko – Baritone

Old Man, Zemfira's father – Bass

Young Gypsy – Tenor

Narrator – The poet Pushkin

Chorus, silent roles: Gypsies

Synopsis

The opera's plot starts with the poet Pushkin greeting the public and the scene opens with a presentation of a gypsy camp on the Danube river. The gypsies prepare a meal while singing about the freedom of their nomadic existence. The Old man, Zemfira's father tells an old story about a

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man exiled to the shores of the black sea²⁷. Zemfira brings Aleko, a Russian man who has problems with the law, to live in the camp and presents him to her father. Aleko and the young Zemfira once loved each other, but her passion quickly dwindled after two years. Zemfira has her own child and lives with Aleko in the gypsy tabor. She is next to the cradle and sings an erotic song; he feels she has cooled down with him now. Zemfira's father remembers his own youth and unhappy love. Mariula abandoned him and their young daughter for someone else. Hearing this story, Aleko is outraged that Zemfira's father took no revenge on Mariula. Aleko becomes jealous when Zemfira transfers her affections to a younger gypsy man and kills them both. The gypsies, led by Zemfira's father, do not seek to prosecute him but will not live with a murderer and consequently banish him. Aleko, having forsaken the civilized society to live with Zemfira and the gypsy tribe, ends up doubly exiled.

1st scene. *“A gypsy camp. The fire burns. One can listen to the bear sounds, the women's songs and the children's cries. There is also a blacksmith's sounds heard”* (notes by the composer). *The gypsies prepare a meal and sing of the freedom of their nomadic existence. The Old man tells a story. It is evening. “The young gypsy Zemfira brings Aleko, who has problems with the law, to live in the camp and presents him to her father”* (notes by the composer).

2nd scene: *“Two years later in the gypsy camp. Aleko is now a real gypsy. The bear mumbles, Aleko turns her on the leash ... It is noon. The Old man has sat in the sun to warm up his frozen blood. Zemfira is next to the cradle and sings an erotic song; Aleko feels she has cooled down with*

²⁷ In Pushkin's Gypsies, the Old man speaks about the roman poet Ovid. The best known Latin poet of his time had been exiled to Tomis (now Constanta, Romania) by decree of the emperor August, in 8 AD. Ovid spent the last ten years of his life there. Alexander Pushkin was exiled by another emperor 1800 years later. He wrote the poem apostrophe *To Ovid* (1821) and *The Gypsies* (1824) during his southern exile in Kishinyov (1820– 1824).

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him now. Her father tells a story about Zemfira's mother Mariula". Mariula remained faithful to him for just one year. Abandoning her young daughter, she left him for someone else. "Aleko does not agree with the gypsies' free choosing of their partners, but he feels differently and vengeful" (notes by the composer).

3rd scene: Zemfira appears with her young lover and warns him that her husband is jealous. As dawn comes, Aleko catches them together. In a torment of jealousy he kills the Young Gypsy first and then Zemfira. All the gypsies gather and take the bodies. Led by Zemfira's father, they spare Aleko's life but cast him out forever. The Old man explains to him that he has no place among the gypsies who have free will to live their life without restrictions. Aleko is left alone. Dawn is breaking. The orchestra closes the stage with a repetition of the Old man's leitmotiv (which develops into a five-phone fugue) and elements from the opera's introduction. Every movement dies, complete silence follows.

Principal Arias and Numbers

1st scene (Zemfira, Aleko, the Old man, Chorus)

- i). Introduction. The poet Pushkin comes and greets the audience²⁸.
- ii). Chorus and Vocal Quartet (*Ptichka bozhiya ne znaet* op. 3)²⁹.

²⁸ The text is taken from the Epilogue of Pushkin's *Gypsy*: lines 540-544 and 550-544. Translated by G. R. Ledger as a project for the Internet (<http://www.pushkins-poems.com/Gypsies03.htm>).

*"By the magic powers of inspired song, I met within the steppe's
expanse, Along the boundaries of old
In the darkened corridors of my mind, camps,
Some visions arise and linger on The peaceful wagons of the gypsies,
Now of happy, and now of a mournful kind. The children of freedom beneath
the skies."*

²⁹ *"The bird loved by God knows nor strife nor care,
Of trouble and turmoil he is unaware,
His nest he builds not too fussily,
Not expecting to have there a lifetime stay."*

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iii) The Old man (monologue).

iv). Duet of Zemfira and his father (Zemfira comes and brings Aleko in the camp).

v) Duet of Zemfira and Aleko (*“Tell me my friend, do you not regret; All that which you have thrown away forever?”*).

2nd scene (Zemfira, Aleko, the Old man)

vi). Scene by the Cradle (*Gypsy song* of Zemfira op. 19).

viii). Aleko and Zemfira’s father (duet). Aria of Aleko (*“But how she loved me!”*).

ix.) Old Gypsy's Story (*“Long ago, he loved Mariula...”*).

3rd scene (The Young Gypsy, Zemfira, Aleko, the Old man, Chorus)

x). Duet of Aleko and the Old man.

xi). Duet of Zemfira and the Young Gypsy.

xii). Duet of Zemfira and Aleko (*“I curse your murder”*).

xiii) Monologue of the Old man (*“Leave us, proud man”*).

xiv). Orchestral epilogue (Fife-voice fugue).

Kalafati was inspired by Rachmaninoff’s *Aleko*. He chose the same voice types for his opera’s second version just like Rachmaninoff, but followed the original plot of Pushkin’s poem. Other differences are: the chorus, consisting of Gypsies, has silent roles and vocalizes in the introduction and the first scene. Dancing scenes are not included among the opera’s sections. The part of Young Gypsy (Zemfira’s lover) is not well developed.

*In the darkest night on the branch he dreams,
And when the sun arises at dawn,
The voice of God he hears in the morn,
And sings his song while his feathers he preens...”*

Музыкальный театр: источниковедение

The focus in Kalafati's opera falls on the role of the Old man, Zemfira's father. This personage brings "the truth" in the dramatic plot of Kalafati's opera. The Old Gypsy is the wise man of the tribe who has known the extremes of joy and sorrow. This role has three principal arias: the Old man's monologue in the beginning of the opera (1st scene) and the Old Gypsy's story from the 2nd scene. His remembrance of his year of love and abandonment by Zemfira's mother, packs as much dramatic power as Aleko's aria "But how she loved me!" and contains music of exceptional mournful beauty. Seeking the symmetry, the composer closes this opera again with the monologue of the Old man "Leave us, proud man" (3rd scene).

We cannot speak about the existence of leitmotifs. However, the Old man's entrance in the scene is sometimes accompanied by a leitmotif in the orchestra, which is present in the opera's Introduction and Finale. Furthermore, the orchestra closes the stage with a repetition of the Old man's leitmotiv, which develops into a five-phone fugue. Characteristic motifs from the introduction, which tie the stage action, are discovered at the end of the opera and among the orchestra episodes.

The opera's Introduction starts with an apotheosis (syncopations in the rhythm, fortissimo, marcato), the instruments play in parallel octaves and the choir vocalises. At the same time, the strings start a melody in the style of perpetual motion that goes up in the high register of the instruments, fills with chromaticisms, becomes increasingly more difficult and follows the simple ternary form. Somewhere the percussions imitate the sound of blacksmith's anvil and hammer.

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Example 2. Vasily Kalafati, *The Gypsies*, second edition (1937). Introduction of the opera, a manuscript of the 1st page.



Ionian University of Corfu, Greece, Hellenic Music Research Library.

In my opinion, only two nicest parts from the first version of the opera have not been changed in its second version: the mixed vocal quartet and piano in the style of Pre-Classical Music *Ptichka bozhiya ne znaet* op. 3, dedicated to Rimsky–Korsakov and the wonderful *Tsyganskaya pesnya* op. 19, with an oriental melody– fragment from the 2nd scene of the opera³⁰.

So, the first scene starts with the vocal quartet. The composer wrote a choral using the joyful song in trochaic tetrameter set on Pushkin's *Ptichka bozhiya ne znaet*. This piece is definitely one of the parts of Kalafati's cantata, presented at the graduation exam in 1899. Judging by the very fact that Rimsky–Korsakov supported his students' best

³⁰ The *Gypsy song* is located in the first scene in the first version of the opera.

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compositions by promoting their publication, it seems that the vocal quartet op. 3 is among Kalafati's first mature works. Editions M.P. Balaieff-Leipzig printed two versions of this work in 1900.³¹

Example 3. Vasily Kalafati, *Ptichka bozhiya ne znaet/ Glücklich lebt vor Noth geborgen* op. 3, dedicated to N. Rimsky-Korsakov. Printed by M. P. Belaieff –Leipzig, 1900, 3rd page.

Николаю Андреевичу Римскому-Корсакову.

„Птичка Божія не знаетъ.“
„Glücklich lebt vor Noth geborgen.“

В. Калафати, Op. 3.

А. ПУШКИНЪ.
Bodenstedt.

Adagio.

SOPRANO.

ALTO.

TENORE.

BASSO.

Piano.

Adagio.

rit. molto.

a tempo.

dim.

rit.

a tempo.

И прав - ка Бо - жи - я не
Глѣбк - ѣтхъ lebt vor Noth ge -
И прав - ка Бо - жи - я не
Глѣбк - ѣтхъ lebt vor Noth ge -
И прав - ка Бо - жи - я не
Глѣбк - ѣтхъ lebt vor Noth ge -
И прав - ка Бо - жи - я не
Глѣбк - ѣтхъ lebt vor Noth ge -

2224
von Pöschel

Hellenic Music Research Lib

Ionian University of Corfu, Greece, Hellenic Music Research Library.

There is a symmetry between the opera's scenes (the 1st and 3rd scenes contain 5 sections), whereas the second scene is the lyrical centre of the opera. Its most extended aria is the *Gypsy song* of Zemfira in the beginning of the second scene. The text of Pushkin's *Ode to Liberty*, the *Song of Zemfira*, written in iambic tetrameter, inspired many Russian

³¹ The mixed quartet and piano accompaniment *Ptichka bozhiya ne znaet / Glücklich lebt vor Noth geborgen* op. 3, was presented in German in Bern, Switzerland in the 1910s. Edition M.P. Balaieff-Leipzig printed two versions of op. 3 in 1900 (both Russian and German text): for mixed vocal quartet and piano (PL 2224) and for mixed vocal quartet and symphony orchestra (PL 2225).

Музыкальный театр: источниковедение

composers to set it in music, from which the most notable are the romances by Tchaikovsky and Verstovsky³².

In Kalafati's opera, Zemfira's *Gypsy Song* is written in oriental style, with ornamental phrases and melismata in a double harmonic minor scale (Hungarian or Gypsy scale). After two years of living together with Aleko, Zemfira has replaced her love with hate. The Soprano's single extended solo is cast in the libretto as a lullaby to her child. She sings a text, which does not tend to induce drowsiness or sleep, covered with passionate music:

*“Old husband, harsh husband, stab me,
Old husband, harsh husband, burn me;
I am strong and fear neither fire nor blade.
Stab me, burn me!
I hate you, I despise you;
I love another and I'll die still loving.”*

The Gypsy Song has a beautiful melody, its rhythm patterns in 6/8 add a special grace and movement; the same musical material is treated with different variational techniques, the melismatas lead us to think about using spaces smaller than the usual European system and the chromatic passages somewhat resemble glissando. The song resembles gypsy slow songs, with a complex and often non-squared verse and a melody in large diapason. In comparison, the musical text of Zemfira is more common in the rest of the opera [7]. Though Zemfira doesn't make eye contact with Aleko during the song, there can be no doubt that it is directed at him.

³² First set in music by Mikhail Vielgorsky in 1825, Aleksey Verstovsky in 1832, Gurilyov (1849), Alyabiev 1860, Anton Rubinstein (1868, in German), and Pauline Viardot (1882). Tchaikovsky's *Song of Zemfira* was written in 1860s, without an opus number, A minor, 4/4, for a middle or high voice.

Музыкальный театр: источниковедение

Example 4. Vasily Kalafati, *Gypsy song*, op.19 (1927), manuscript of the 1st page.

Ionian University of Corfu, Greece, Hellenic Music Research Library.

Aleko's aria "But how she loved me" is short and in no sense can be compared to Aleko's Cavatina in Rachmaninoff's opera. This scene is staged differently in Kalafati's opera; it starts with the duet of Aleko and Zemfira's father. In his central aria, Aleko remembers the time when he and Zemfira were in love and subsequently his intense pain when she becomes cold, feeling caged by his possessiveness and finds love with another man. The composer supplied some of his most seductive and tragic music to describe Aleko's pain. The Old Gypsy's attempts to dissuade him from his intentions of revenge are unsuccessful. To restore his wounded pride, Aleko kills both Zemfira's Gypsy lover and the woman he loves.

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Listeners define value of music and identify with Aleko's pain. But as the opera comes to an end, all of us know that this is the wrong side. Our civilizing impulses make us incapable of understanding freedom, as Zemfira's father tells Aleko: "*Not for freedom was you born, You want it for yourself alone.*"

From the light and joy of the beginning of the opera, the music brings us to the absolute darkness and loneliness. In the opera's starkly tragic ending Aleko goes into exile again bewailing his complete isolation, because the gypsies turn their backs on him. Dawn is breaking. The orchestra closes the stage with a repetition of the Old man's leitmotiv. Every movement dies, complete silence follows.

4. Conclusion

Kalafati's opera *The Gypsies* is full of beautiful music and passion. Invited by Pushkin, the composer wrote fine music for these verses and perhaps somehow expresses nostalgia for his homeland, the steppes and the free life.

The opera demonstrates characteristic qualities of Kalafati's work: deep tenderness, hidden passion, elegiac tone and tenderly expressive melody. The composer correctly understood the melody of the Russian language; the accompaniment gently surrounds the arias and duets of the opera and enhances their main features. It also demonstrates his melodic talent, love of chromatic passages and harmonic gift. The opera's music flows as a narrative poem with a thin, incessant movement, passion, beautiful colors and nostalgia.

Essential features of the Hungarian Folk and Gypsy music (syncopation, the Hungarian and Pentatonic scales, and Phrygian cadenza) are identified in the opera. The major part of melodies are written in Russian style, whereas the harmony is more advanced, there are chromatic

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passages and the augmented scale is used (sometimes we discover tritons, augmented sevenths and generally difficult intervals in the arias).

Kalafati's musical writing was modernized in the 1930s by more contemporary trends and this was inevitable. The opening of new horizons and the acquaintance with the new tendencies of Western music in the 1920s and 1930s in Russia surely influenced Vasily Kalafati. Comparing the 1st and 2nd edition, one can see how far the composer developed from 1899 to 1937.

In general, the one-act opera *The Gypsies* is a short musical work; it is of middle difficulty and is suitable to be staged by a professional or amateur opera troupe. Even though the orchestrated full score has not yet been found, the opera's score could be orchestrated in the style of the fragments which survived in Kalafati's archive. I would like to conclude my article hoping that some of the opera's fragments (for example, the Introduction, the *Gypsy song*, op. 19 and the vocal quartet, op. 3) could be presented in a concert performance in the future. *The Gypsies* opera by Kalafati is an unknown and unperformed Russian opera from the interwar period. The fact that it was found and preserved for future generations shines new light on the history of Russian music and becomes a global scientific novelty.

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