

**MP3** Alexander Knaifel – *In Air Clear and Unseen: Stanzas with Tyutchev for Piano and String Quartet* (1994). Oleg Malov (piano), András Keller (violin), Keller Quartet

Александр Кнайфель — «В эфире чистом и незримом, строфы с Тютчевым» для фортепиано и струнного квартета (1994). Олег Малов (фортепиано), Андреш Келлер (скрипка), Келлер-квартет  
[http://sias.ru/upload/music/2018-18/Alexander\\_Knaifel\\_In\\_Air\\_Clear\\_and\\_Unseen.mp3](http://sias.ru/upload/music/2018-18/Alexander_Knaifel_In_Air_Clear_and_Unseen.mp3)

*Key Words*

*Knaifel, In Air Clear and Unseen (1994), Tyutchev, Russian music, post-minimalist music, significations, semantic import, sub-text, intonation.*

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# In Air Clear and Unseen (1994): Texts, Sub-Texts and Intonations Within the Piano Quintet of Alexander Knaifel

*Abstract*

*In Air Clear and Unseen: Stanzas with Tyutchev for Piano and String Quartet* (1994) is a work that can be regarded as seminal within the mature oeuvre of the Russian composer Alexander Knaifel. Compositionally ascetic and harmonically static to the point of inertia, the work comprises, paradoxically, a complex array of significations as its intended semantic import. In connection, it demonstrates a wide variety of both musical and linguistic strategies not only to convey and facilitate these intended significations, but also to obscure them, with many of the strategies employed appearing radical and/or aiming to extend the role of both performer and listener. With much of Knaifel's later oeuvre currently unpublished, what follows is the first published analysis of the work; the first in-depth examination and critique of these strategies, discussed within the context of Knaifel's approach to meaning.

*Ключевые слова*

*Кнайфель, «В эфире тихом и незримом» (1994), Тютчев, русская музыка, пост-минимализм, значения, семантика, подтекст, интонация.*

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**«В эфире чистом и незримом» (1994): тексты, подтексты и интонации в фортепианном квинтете Александра Кнайфеля**

*Аннотация*

«В эфире чистом и незримом», строфы с Тютчевым для фортепиано и струнного квартета» (1994), — ключевое произведение в контексте зрелого творчества русского композитора Александра Кнайфеля. Аскетизм выразительных средств и статичный, почти инертный характер гармонии не противоречит тому, что произведение заключает в себе сложный комплекс смыслов. Автор использует разнообразные методы — как музыкальной, так и отчасти лингвистической природы, — не только для того, чтобы передать эти смыслы и облегчить их восприятие, но и для того, чтобы завуалировать их. Некоторые из использованных методов достаточно радикальны и направлены на то, чтобы расширить функции как исполнителя, так и слушателя. Значительная часть позднего творчества Кнайфеля остается неопубликованной; эта статья — первый анализ данного произведения и первое углубленное исследование этих методов, осуществленное в контексте кнайфелевского подхода к музыкальной семантике.

Resident in St Petersburg, Alexander Aronovich Knaifel (b. 1943) is one of Russia's leading contemporary composers. His mature oeuvre constitutes what Svetlana Savenko calls: 'the most singular phenomena in modern art — [this] owing not only to the composer's highly original language — the very matter of his music, but also its unique spirit — the conception, the atmosphere, the inner sense and the message'.<sup>1</sup> Employing quasi-serialist techniques during the early Sixties and establishing a reputation as one of the leading exponents of the second ('post-Trinity') generation Soviet avant-garde, Knaifel has, from 1970 onwards, adopted an approach that is often described as 'post-minimalist'. In truth, however, his mature compositions differ notably from the minimalist archetype. They are characterized by extreme asceticism rather than by the more commonly employed repetitive technique, thus making him more comparable to the likes of La Monte Young and Morton Feldman than to either Steve Reich or Philip Glass. With over eighty compositions to date, many of these employing highly unusual scorings, pitch combinations and performance techniques, Knaifel's compositional language is, on the whole, marked by the gradual development of monophonic lines and single, sustained pitches; these being juxtaposed with periods of silence that evolve almost imperceptibly over durations lasting, on occasions, over two hours. His works also often defy genre definition and/or are quizzical in title, with *Jeanne* (1970–78), *Nika* (1983–84), *Agnus Dei for Four Instrumentalists a Cappella* (1985) and *Through a Rainbow of Involuntary Tears: Trio for Female Singer and Cellist* (1988) being notable examples.

What especially characterises Knaifel's post-minimalist music, however, is his approach to meaning in that each work functions primarily as a mode of discourse. Thus, his aesthetic can also be regarded as the antithesis to the purer American minimalist aesthetic which focuses upon abstraction. From 1978 onwards, Knaifel's works aim to engender a more

<sup>1</sup> Savenko S. 'The Magic of Alexander Knaifel's Message' in Tsenova V. (ed.). *Underground Music from the Former USSR*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997. P. 174.

complex array of significations, including those that are more abstract or ethereal. Significantly, he also aims to obscure meaning in the belief that 'truth' must be hidden and revealed gradually in order for it to have validity. In this, he employs strategies — both musical and non-musical — that make it more difficult for the listener to grasp the significations that he intends. For example, the extreme asceticism in his compositional language means that, paradoxically, there are almost no musical signifiers to support the highly complex sets of significations imbued within the work. His post-1978 output is predominantly narrative: this also being at odds with a musical structure that is severely limited in teleology. Indeed, the meditative state that listening to a highly static form commonly produces also seems in conflict with the cognition needed to perceive and understand a semantic import. In this, his music, while renowned compositionally, is often viewed as problematic in a semiological capacity, with the issues and paradoxes in question becoming more pronounced during the late Eighties and early-to-mid Nineties.

*In Air Clear and Unseen: Stanzas with Tyutchev for Piano and String Quartet* (1994) is a composition that has received international recognition and acclaim.<sup>2</sup> Compositionally ascetic, miniature in both resources and duration, and with a seemingly conventional chamber scoring, the work is unconventionally written, notated at least in part without bar lines, and scribed by hand, with performance instructions adorning much of its eleven-page (and as yet unpublished) A2-sized manuscript. Its structure comprises three movements: I — *In Some Exhausted Reverie*; II — *An Autumn Evening*; and III — *In Air Clear and Unseen*; this final movement also giving the work its title. Each movement is presented as a distinctly separate physical and musical entity. Each of the three movements has a different scoring, with the first being written for solo piano, the second for string quartet and the third for both (solo) piano and string quartet. Knaifel states that the third movement has been conceived — and is indeed, intended to be perceived — 'not as a string quintet but as more than a string quintet'.<sup>3</sup> Musicologist Ekaterina Blazhkova states that: 'there is neither the first nor the second part, neither violin nor cello; in other words, as regards timbre, there is no individualization of single instruments but all of them singing as one'.<sup>4</sup> This is alluded to by the preferred seating arrangement drawn on the bottom right-hand corner

<sup>2</sup> Following the work's critical success on the independent European label ECM (*Svete Tikhy*: ECM1763) in 2002, its first and third movements were used as the soundtrack/closing credits to François Ozon's award-winning film 'Le Temps Qui Reste' (France: 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Knaifel: Interview with author (Interpreter: Natalia Vakulenko); 6<sup>th</sup> June 2012, St. Petersburg.

<sup>4</sup> Blazhkova E. *Svete Tikhy*: ECM1763: 2002: CD liner notes to accompany recording.

of page 2 of the score, as shown in *Figure 1*. Knaifel's preferred durations are also indicated in the score: Movement I should be 'approximately 10 minutes', Movement II 'approximately 7 minutes', and Movement III 'approximately 7.5 minutes', with the duration for the composite whole also being given as 'approximately 24 to 25 minutes'.

*Figure 1*: Knaifel's preferred seating plan for *In Air Clear and Unseen* as indicated in the score:



Within his performance instructions, Knaifel also states that despite its obvious structural divisibility, the work is to be realized not as three separate movements but as a single, continuous composition, writing: «три части этого цикла исполняются без перерыва» ['The three movements are to be played without a break'].<sup>5</sup> Paradoxically, however, he also states that while functioning as a single paradigm, «первая, как и вторая части могут также исполняться отдельно» ['the first and/or the second movement can also be performed separately'],<sup>6</sup> thus accentuating the divisibility in question. In this, Knaifel introduces an aleatoric element, allowing the performers to make certain choices but within a given range of possibilities, thus ensuring that the overall premise remains largely under his control.

The work itself, unusually for Knaifel, has its genesis in two previous, consecutive compositions: *Madness: White Music for Chamber Orchestra* (1987) and *Through a Rainbow of Involuntary Tears* (1988). Both were written following an intense period during the early Eighties in which Knaifel consolidated his mature compositional aesthetic and style and produced what he refers to as his 'quiet giants': *Nika* (1983–84) and *Agnus Dei for Four Instrumentalists a Cappella* (1985). Both of these are scored for unusually large resources and span two hours or more in duration; yet both are highly ascetic and structurally static, almost to the point

<sup>5</sup> Performance instruction 1; page 2 of the score.

<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to note that the first movement (for solo piano) has been both performed and recorded by Oleg Malov as a separate work under the title: 'Postludia — In Some Exhausted Reverie' [1992]: see Megadisc Records: MCD 7855: 2006.

of inertia. Knaifel discusses how during this period he met Nikolay Vishnevsky, a descendent of a woman named Elena Petrovna Van der Vliet, a maid employed in the royal household of Tsar Alexander II, to whom Tyutchev had dedicated his final set of poems. These were a collection of six short verses (three penned on business cards) written in 1872, the penultimate year of Tyutchev's life, but publically unknown and, as yet, unpublished. Discussing how he was given by Vishnevsky, a copy of the six poems, Knaifel states that: 'three sheets of embossed paper with texts of unknown poems by Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev were handed over to me by Nikolay Vladimirovich Vishnevsky in the early 1980s. <...> Nikolay Vladimirovich's mother — Elena Alekseyevna — was the niece and foster child of Elena Petrovna Van der Vliet (née Elena Frolova) — the maiden of Her Majesty. It was her (with the initials E. F.), a very young lady at that time, to whom Tyutchev had presented-dedicated six poems in 1872, including three quatrains that he had written on his personal business cards'.<sup>7</sup>

Knaifel discusses how he was inspired by this event to create a trilogy of works that utilize, albeit in very different capacities, Tyutchev's poetry, with all three works being linked not just contextually but also semantically and compositionally. The two compositions mentioned above — *Madness* (1987) and *Through a Rainbow of Involuntary Tears* (1988) — both employ the same two texts: the first by Anna Akhmatova and the second by Tyutchev. Both works also share, at least in part, the same compositional material. The third and final work, however — *In Air Clear and Unseen* — employs as will be seen, four Tyutchev verses that do not appear within the other two compositions. While utilising several musical fragments that are present within *Through a Rainbow of Involuntary Tears*, the work does not employ any compositional material from *Madness*. While seemingly a much later work, *In Air Clear and Unseen* was in fact initially conceived alongside the other two, originating as a one-movement composition for string quartet, with its now second movement being completed in September 1987, thus prior to the writing of *Through a Rainbow of Involuntary Tears*. It is, chronologically, therefore, the second of the three works, with parts of *Rainbow* citing it, and not the other way around. Its two outer movements however, were written five years later in January 1992 and March 1992, respectively, with all dates being inscribed within the score. It is interesting to note that a fourth Tyutchev work, *E. F. and the Three Visiting Cards of the Poet* (2008), commissioned by the Louth Arts Festival<sup>8</sup> and composed by Knaifel in memory of Vishnevsky who died in

<sup>7</sup> As cited by the composer in *Alexander Knaifel: A Composer* [2012].

<sup>8</sup> This marks Knaifel's first and so far only Irish commission.

1995, directly utilizes the three unpublished poems written by Tyutchev on his business cards. *E. F. and the Three Visiting cards of the Poet* received its world premiere in Drogheda, near Dublin on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009 and provided the finale to a concert of Knaifel's chamber music in which *In Air Clear and Unseen* was performed immediately prior to it. Of this fourth composition, Knaifel states that: 'Time passed and I suddenly realized that I owed an enormous debt to that person [Vishnevsky] who, by this time had passed away. He had known that Tyutchev was a favourite poet of mine and Tyutchev, on his deathbed, had addressed these poems to a girl who was sixteen. He saw life, youth and beauty. In her image, he had felt the mortality and his own parting with it. Certainly the discovery of these calling cards is significant to people who know Russian life and culture.'<sup>9</sup>

Knaifel's approach to discourse, as formulated in 1978, is concerned with engendering two distinct types of meaning, each having a different intended phenomenology. First, there are *imported meanings*: meanings which are socially constructed and emanate from society, produced either by himself or by others. Second, there are *existential meanings*: these being defined as metaphysical significations which are allegedly inherent within the universe, existing beyond any social construction and which collectively constitute, according to Knaifel, an 'external reality'. Whilst having a tangible relationship to the musical work in that they are intended to be perceived by the listener, the fact that they are not imbued within the musical text means that they cannot strictly be classed as part of its semantic import. Their relationship to the work is purely associative.

In this, Knaifel regards the meaning being communicated as one that is wholly and entirely external to *himself* as the producer of the musical text. In this, his own role within this context is part producer/part receiver in that he is merely facilitating the perceptibility of these external meanings rather than actively communicating a set of significations which he has himself conceived. As such, the situation is three-fold, with Knaifel perceiving the process as an act of communication that not only involves the message passing from himself as producer via the musical text, but from himself in the form of a vessel or channel through which the message — one that is entirely separate and external in higher existential meaning — may flow and be accessed via the musical performance. Of this, Knaifel states that: 'it is not God, nor even close to God, but a unique atmosphere, an inner sense, an essence; almost proof of the existence of God; something that is fleeting... fragile. Something that has its basis elsewhere, in things that are not of this world and not of my own making.'<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> As cited by the composer in *Alexander Knaifel: A Composer* (2012).

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Knaifel: Interview with author (Interpreter: Natalia Vakulenko); 6<sup>th</sup> June 2012, St. Petersburg.

In this, Knaifel's aim in utilising the four Tyutchev poems is to convey a complex array of significations that utilise both of these types of meaning. The significations that he intends to convey in relation to the work can be summarised as follows:

Figure 3: Intended meanings within *In Air Clear and Unseen*:

Type of Meaning	Category of Signification
Imported Meanings	<b>Narrative:</b> directly emanating from the Tyutchev texts.
Imported Meanings	<b>Conceptual 1:</b> the wider (contextual) significations that the Tyutchev texts engender: i.e. interpretants of those within the narrative: e.g. notions about 19 <sup>th</sup> century Russian life. <b>Conceptual 2:</b> the concepts that Knaifel himself wishes to signify that go above and beyond those intended by Tyutchev.
Existential Meanings	Metaphysical significations that Knaifel believes constitute an 'external reality'.

In relation, Knaifel employs five distinct strategies to both convey and more crucially, obscure the above significations. These can be defined as:

Figure 4: Strategies employed within *In Air Clear and Unseen* to either convey or obscure meaning:

I —	<b>Denotative/Connotative:</b> employed in relation to either musical or linguistic signifiers, or both.
II —	<b>Phenomenological:</b> employed in relation to psycho-acoustic phenomena and the experiential qualities that it engenders.
III —	<b>Intra-textual:</b> the use of structural connections inherent within the work.
IV —	<b>Inter-textual:</b> the use of significations outside of and beyond the work but referred to by those within it.
V —	<b>Intoning of texts</b> — used in relation to the linguistic signifiers present in the score.

As will be seen, Knaifel constructs a context in which musical and linguistic signifiers are usually employed separately to each other. Each, in the main, is employed at a different point within each movement, and is associated with a separate semantic strategy and/or a separate set of

significations. In this, he rejects the more usual practice whereby musical signifiers are used in conjunction with linguistic signifiers to complement and consolidate the same meanings that are engendered by them. Generally, in this work, in cases where linguistic signifiers have been employed to convey imported meanings, the strategies employed are not denotative and are used either to obscure meaning or to create ambiguity in relation to the significations intended.

As shown in *Figure 5*, the first movement, *In Some Exhausted Reverie*, is linked semantically to only one of the Tyutchev poems: a four-stanza text entitled 'On the Way Back' (written while Tyutchev was returning to St. Petersburg from Königsberg in 1859). The narrative imbued within Tyutchev's poem, as well as the wider contextual significations that arise from it, serve as the only intended significations for this movement in relation to imported meanings. The third line of the fourth stanza, 'in some exhausted reverie' is employed as the movement's title.<sup>11</sup> Crucially, no other references to the poem exist within the work — the movement itself employs no linguistic signifiers. In this, Knaifel uses an inter-textual strategy, intending that the listener recognise the reference to the poem employed in the title, recall the poem, and from this, its associated narrative and contextual significations. Crucially, the musical signifiers employed in the movement — these being highly ascetic — are neither denotative nor even connotative in that their function is to facilitate only existential meaning and not to convey any of the imported meanings intended. At no point do the music signifiers aim to illuminate

Figure 5: Knaifel's use of Tyutchev verses within *In Air Clear and Unseen*:

Movement / Title	Tyutchev Verse(s) Employed	Type of Usage
I — <i>In Some Exhausted Reverie</i>	'On the Way Back' (1859)	Citation from fourth stanza used as title
II — <i>An Autumn Evening</i>	'An Autumn Evening' (1830)	Title from poem used as title of movement Text of poem fully intoned throughout movement
III — <i>In Air Clear and Unseen</i>	'My Soul Would Like to be a Star' (1829) 'It's There, Still There' (1849)	Citation from the second stanza used as title Text of poem fully intoned throughout movement

<sup>11</sup> The full texts of all four Tyutchev poems (in both Russian and English) can be found in the Appendix.

Tyutchev's narrative or any associated meanings. Here, given the negation of linguistic signifiers as well as the lack of association between music and semantic import, Knaifel's aim is clearly to obscure meaning, having made the connections within the movement so implicit.

As to the musical signifiers themselves, this first movement, scored for solo piano, is marked 'molto sostenuto, pianissimo — dolcissimo sempre', a dynamic marking that is continuous throughout. Slow in tempo to the point of stasis, it comprises 93 bars, segmented into 21 miniature fragments, all of which are notated separately and aligned vertically as individual paradigms within the score, the first three of which are shown in *Figure 6*. Noticeably ascetic both melodically and harmonically, the fragments range from one bar (on occasions, one note) to thirteen bars in length, with the first nine fragments of the 21 being entirely monophonic. Narrow in intervallic structure, encompassing predominantly minor seconds and major thirds, the majority of the fragments are modal (Phrygian), centred around the polarity of E, and in the main occupy the treble register. The material within each fragment, with the exception of that which is one note, is characterized in the majority by an expansion in duration: i.e. by the use of single crotchets or minims, all of which are either tied or interspersed by rests and which progress into minims and semibreves, with the final note in each fragment being a semibreve.

Figure 6: Movement I — Fragments 1–3 (bars 1–9):

In addition to an instruction to use the sustaining pedal from the beginning of each fragment until its end, a number of performance instructions are also given in order to structurally conjoin each fragment to the next. Each of the notes that end each and every fragment is accessorized with its own tie as well as with a pause, irrespective of length or harmonic structure. A round pause is used for the first 20 fragments, and a square pause employed for the last. Of the round pause, Knaifel states that: «неопределённо долго» [‘this is to sound indefinitely’].<sup>12</sup> A further instruction states that the square pause is to sound: «очень долго» [‘for a very long time’]. Two aspects are significant here. First is the fact that while each fragment is notated separately, each is sonically joined to the next. All 21 fragments therefore function collectively as a single continuum with Knaifel omitting the silence that so often dominates his oeuvre. In the case of fragment 14, he instructs that the final five bars of its thirteen-bar duration are to sound: ‘как бы неожиданной тенью’ [‘like an unexpected shadow’], this shown in *Figure 7*. Second, is the fact that again, there is an aleatoric element in that the duration of each of these final notes is not prescribed. As such, the performer (pianist), while not able to separate the fragments, can however elongate each one, thus intensifying the sense of continuum and stasis.

Aiming to facilitate an array of existential meanings, Knaifel discusses how, if utilised fully, this type of continuum creates in the mind of the listener, two distinct types of aural response. The first involves a heightened sense of perceptibility, activated by what Paul Hillier refers to as: ‘a focus on the internal qualities of sound’: this being what he defines as the ‘point aspect’ of minimalism.<sup>13</sup> Knaifel’s structure, while being devoid of the repetitive techniques usually found in the minimalist form and negating, in connection, the forward motion derived from the multiple repetition (and possible phasing) of short structures, utilises extreme asceticism and single sustained pitches which, he claims, heightens the listener’s awareness to an even greater degree through transparency, stylistic purity and the isolation of the material. The second type — this building upon the first — is derived from stasis; from the act of focusing upon these inner sound qualities over an extended length of time: this causing a distortion of temporality and a phenomenology which is often referred to as a ‘meditative state’. In this, Knaifel discusses the importance that he places upon inertia and silence; upon the psychological, physiological and kinaesthetic effects caused by the limitations in teleological development, stating that: ‘such

<sup>12</sup> Performance instruction 2; page 2 of the score.

<sup>13</sup> Hillier P. *Arvo Pärt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. P. 16.

a phenomenology, in fact creates a form of beauty. Touching the sound produces energy, the inexhaustible, the burning moment, fire. <...> It is only by consuming oneself through the act of sustained focus, that one liberates the energy from which beauty can result. Such a message is all but Promethean. It would sooner be the little flame, almost forgotten deep inside of oneself, which gently sparkles in the pages dominated by calm and silence, by sonorous refinements on the edge of audibility’.<sup>14</sup>

Three aspects are important in this context. First, is that the meanings intended within the work are not all equivalent in terms of their semantic value, with the imported meanings connected to the poems being of less importance to Knaifel than those which are existential. Second, in aiming to ‘obscure’ the significations (both imported and existential) that he wants to engender, Knaifel creates a paradoxical situation in which the meanings that he deems to be the greatest in value are those which he obscures the most. This approach has its roots within the Gnostic tradition whereby, in accordance with the philosophies of Christian mysticism, a hierarchy of listening is employed so that only the ‘ideal’ listener can be granted privileged spiritual knowledge in the form of mystical enlightenment or religious insight. Of this, Knaifel states that: ‘it has to be this way. Here, we are dealing with sacred concepts. Some element of mystery has to be preserved. We are approaching ideas and notions that are esoteric and delicate’.<sup>15</sup> Such an approach is clearly problematic; not least in that it hints at the composer taking an elitist view not only in relation to meaning but also in relation to music as a (potential) signifier of meaning, and indeed, of the entire semiological process — an accusation which Knaifel himself strongly refutes. Asserting that his music is for all, he suggests that any lack of comprehension is due not to semiological, compositional or even cultural factors, but to the level of ‘passivity’ on the part of the listener whom, he states, needs to be in a very specific state of being in order to gain access to the phenomenology and significations intended. In this, a crucial aspect can be noted: the fact that he places the onus for the reception of meaning directly onto others, emphasising that they have a choice as to whether to experience that intended phenomenology and to access the intended significations or not. Of this, Savenko states that: ‘the composition of [this] music, as a priestly art in the ancient time, turns out to be an esoteric occupation and a metier for the initiated. However, Knaifel is by no means an advocate of an elitist art, for each person is free to enter into a dialogue with a composition and unravel its existential mystery in the same way as one unravels the

<sup>14</sup> As cited by the composer in *Alexander Knaifel: A Composer* [2012].

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

riddles of being'.<sup>16</sup> This, I suggest, is in itself problematic: the notion that we are able to consciously choose our own states at will, be these psychological, phenomenological or spiritual. This brings us to the third aspect: to the fact that the performer also has an element of choice due to the aleatorism outlined above. In this, the performer has the means by which to accentuate or even prolong the continuum created, thus increasing the potential for the intended phenomenology and therefore in theory, the listener's access to existential meanings. As such, Knaifel is giving the performer not only considerable responsibility but moreover, free will: the freedom to choose whether or not they wish to be acutely proactive within the music semiological process.

Figure 7: Fourteenth fragment of Movement I, indicating instruction: 'like an unexpected shadow':



The second movement, *An Autumn Evening*, scored for string quartet, uses similar strategies to connect the listener to both the imported and the existential, although here, Knaifel intends that the phenomenology in relation to the existential be increased. Ascribing both a semantic and personal importance to the movement; to the fact that it was composed during the Eighties following the realisation of his mature compositional approach, with it also being closer in proximity to the earlier two Tyutchev works, Knaifel creates a hierarchy in relation to the work's three movements. He attaches a higher value to this particular movement in terms of how it should function as a signifier, with the movement becoming the pivot point in relation to the work as a whole. As such, Knaifel employs a number of semantic strategies not present in the previous movement, some of which are fairly radical. As mentioned, Knaifel also includes an option for the first and/or the second movement to be performed separately: both of

these options foregrounding and accentuating the second movement, with this also signifying its prescribed value. Knaifel states that: '[The second movement] stands alone, and has the possibility to stand alone. When I positioned it alongside the other two [movements I and III], I knew that something from that time [1987] had touched it and burns inside of it. It shines more brightly. This is why it may be played as a discrete entity. It is strong enough in this respect, the strongest of the three [movements]'.<sup>17</sup>

The movement is marked 'L'istesso tempo pianissimo – dolcissimo sempre', thus indicating that its tempo is to remain constant despite a change in meter. The movement comprises 42 bars and is characterized by the polyphonic inter-relationship of four separate melodic lines, devoid in the main of any harmonic structure. Unconventionally, all four parts are equal in compositional value, as stated above. Again these parts are notated unconventionally, with each being segmented across two or three staves, irrespective of the fact that their range (just over an octave in each case) requires only one staff. Each melodic line comprises a series of smaller, inner fragments of between one and four bars in length. Each of these fragments is noticeably ascetic, comprising in most instances, a single sustained pitch or at most, a small unit of three or four pitches. Again, each sustained pitch – or, in the case of the longer units, each final note – is marked with a tie which again conjoins one note or one fragment to the next. Each of the end notes is marked not with a pause on this occasion but with a circle, of which Knaifel states in the performance instructions that: «все звуки обведённые кружком, как бы плавно угасают (подобно звукам идиофона) независимо от других звуков» ['All sounds circled, are to be played as if they are gently fading away (like sounds of an idiophone) independent of the other sounds'].<sup>18</sup> The circle also has an aleatoric aspect in that all circled semibreves (i.e. longer durations) may be played, if desired, with «тон сильной доли» ['a strong action'], whilst all circled minims (shorter durations) may be played with «тон слабой доли» ['a weaker action']. Crucially, Knaifel also marks different bars (or different successions of bars) with the symbol 'number/minim', thus altering the duration of the notes included and, as such, the duration of the fragment. The possibility to extend the duration of each and every note at the performers' discretion is also added, with Knaifel stating that: «в продолжение = чуть больше "number/minim" (везде, где это возможно)» ['with the duration written "number/minim" equalling more than written (wherever possible)'].<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Savenko S. 'The Magic of Alexander Knaifel's Message'. Op. cit. P. 181.

<sup>17</sup> Alexander Knaifel: Interview with author (Interpreter: Natalia Vakulenko); 6<sup>th</sup> June 2012, St. Petersburg.

<sup>18</sup> Performance instruction 4; page 2 of the score.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

As shown again in *Figure 5*, the movement is linked semantically to a different Tyutchev text, 'An Autumn Evening' (1830): a short, one-stanza poem comprising only 12 lines. Here, the movement takes the poem's title, thus providing a more explicit connection to the narrative and concepts intended, albeit again an inter-textual one. Crucially, the movement also utilizes all of the linguistic signifiers taken from 'An Autumn Evening': these being inscribed (in Russian) within the score, thus having a far greater presence within the work than was the case in the previous movement. The text itself is divided across all four string parts with the rhythmic component of each of the musical fragments being derived from the rhythmic structure inherent within the linguistic signifiers, as shown in *Figure 8*. In this, the linguistic signifiers function as a compositional device. What is crucial, however, is that the linguistic signifiers are *intoned* throughout the movement. That is to say that they are not sung, spoken or uttered audibly within the course of the work's performance, but are intended by Knaifel to be 'thought' by the performers in conjunction with their instrumental playing. Of this, Knaifel states that: «словесный текст не звучит, но интонируется, как если бы он звучал» ['the verbal text does not sound but is intoned as if it were sound']<sup>20</sup>, with Savenko, stating that: 'the universal character of this conception is stressed by a selection of texts inscribed into the score and intended for the musicians to "sing in their minds" (these texts may also be read aloud before the performance or placed in the programme as a commentary to a concert)'.<sup>21</sup>

Figure 8: Linguistic signifiers employed within Movement II: Rhythmic correspondence with musical text:

The image shows a musical score for Movement II, Figure 8, illustrating the rhythmic correspondence between linguistic signifiers and musical text. The score is written for four string parts: Violino 1, Violino 2, Viola, and Violoncello. The music is in 4/4 time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes. The text is written in Russian and is distributed across the four parts. The text includes: "Есть в свет- лос- ти", "о- сень-", "них", and "ве- че- ров". The score also includes performance instructions such as "p" (pianissimo) and "f" (fortissimo), and a tempo marking: "p [stesso tempo (molto sostenuto)], pianissimo - dolcissimo sempre".

<sup>20</sup> Performance instruction 1; page 4 of the score.

<sup>21</sup> Savenko S. 'The Magic of Alexander Knaifel's Message'. Op. cit. P. 184.

The use of text intoning is a somewhat controversial strategy, and utilised by Knaifel within this particular context to obscure imported meaning, while simultaneously engendering existential meaning. Present on occasions within the European tradition as well as within a modernist context — Luigi Nono's 'Fragmente-Stille, An Diotima' (1979–1980) written for string quartet and requiring its performers to 'sing inwardly, in their autonomy', fragments of the poem 'Diotima' (1797) by F. Hölderlin being a notable example — its usage here is of the utmost seriousness and intended neither as jest nor as a private game. Whereas Nono's use of the intoned text in 'Fragmente-Stille, An Diotima', with which Knaifel is familiar, is intended primarily for the performer — Nono stating in the preface to the score that for listeners, the text should remain invisible — Knaifel's intention here differs in a key respect. As unlikely as it may seem, Knaifel employs this strategy as a means of existential communication, or at least as an 'exchange' between *all* parties: producer, performer and listener, thus focusing far more acutely upon a three-way interchange. He states that: 'a word once uttered, once defined, loses its absolute power'<sup>22</sup>, with the cellist Elizabeth Wilson asserting that: 'Not only for the performer, but for the listener, this search for the middle ground between articulated meaning and mute intuition, between sound and silence, between the recited word and the vibration of a gut or steel string leads to a new hovering perception, revealing the core of an idea which might be destroyed if its expression becomes too explicit'.<sup>23</sup> Blazhkova further states that:

For it to stay profound and intimate, the [linguistic signifiers in these cases] do not ring out loud but are sung by the performers 'to themselves', as if they were sounded. Intonation gesture [...] is laconic; stylistic analogies with idioms of any musical styles are annihilated and the performers concentrate their attention entirely on the touching quality. Careful pianissimo-dolcissimo sempre, along with the inner continuity of the intonational flow, creates the crystal-clear texture.<sup>24</sup>

Significantly, Knaifel employs this strategy in the conviction that communication as intended will successfully occur. Crucially, he makes the distinction between an 'explicit' mode of communication — i.e. the transference of meaning derived directly from the linguistic signifiers

<sup>22</sup> Knaifel A. *Svete Tikhy*: ECM1763: 2002: CD liner notes to accompany recording.

<sup>23</sup> Wilson E. 'The Music of Alexander Knaifel: The Path Towards the Light' — reproduced in *Alice in Wonderland*. Netherlands Opera: Koninklijk Theater Carre, Amsterdam, 4<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> September 2001. P. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Blazhkova E. *Svete Tikhy*: ECM1763: 2002: CD liner notes to accompany recording.



themselves and thus intended to be a reasonable approximation of the whole — and ‘implicit’ communication, i.e. what he refers to as the ‘partial <...> and inexact’<sup>25</sup> transference of meaning, merely as an essence of the whole, as a form of metonymy. This would suggest that the compositional device mentioned above, that of musical and linguistic rhythms operating in unity is also a semantic one: the music signifiers unusually functioning not only in conjunction with the linguistic, but also connotatively to consolidate the transference of meaning. Knaifel again states that: ‘I am not under any illusion as to the impossibility in this context of the true meaning of the text being revealed. This would require superhuman and telepathic abilities that are of course beyond our control. <...> What I am referring to here is the communication of an idea, a concept, an emotion <...> which somehow becomes part of a dialogue between all who are present.’<sup>26</sup> In this, the movement becomes, at least in intent, a quest to realize a more direct and psychologically involved experience in which the listener is expected to actively participate and surrender themselves to an existential happening that requires their full concentration. Likewise, the role of the performer has developed from conventional instrumentalist to that of ‘messenger’.

Two further points can be noted, however. Although the responsibility of the performer has actively increased — the musicians now being asked to create an existential happening over and above a continuum that engenders a meditative state — paradoxically, the freedom awarded has also become greater from the previous movement. Not only are there more aleatoric options included within the score, but also the players can actively choose to reject Knaifel’s instruction in that they may, theoretically, opt out of intoning the text since it has no audible dimension. Here, the notion of free will becomes even more controversial in that Knaifel takes a greater risk in offering his performers more choice within a context to which he attaches greater importance. Second, is the role that string writing plays in the transference of the existential, with Knaifel also ascribing a greater value to the sonic qualities of string instruments than to those of the piano. In this, he subscribes to the commonly held view that the string quartet is the ideal compositional model in relation to polyphonic writing, as well as believing that it has spiritual significance in terms of its timbre. Blazhkova states that:

It is in striving for the ideal of the 19th century chamber music performance he had acquired from his father that Knaifel found the new potential for the traditional instrumental ensemble: The middle movement of the cycle, ‘An

<sup>25</sup> Alexander Knaifel: Interview with author (Interpreter: Natalia Vakulenko); 6<sup>th</sup> June 2012, St. Petersburg.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

Autumn Evening’, is performed just by the quartet without the piano, thus applying the original principle of the string singing derived, as the composer puts it, from the feeling of the instrumental ‘chain breathing’. Here the string quartet, on the one hand, is the symbol of romantically beautiful art of the 19th century, the supreme chamber ensembles of Tchaikovsky and Borodin, on the other hand, it is the expression of the absolute timbral unity akin to a chorus of human voices.<sup>27</sup>

The third and final movement, scored for both (solo) piano and string quartet actively consolidates these approaches, thus re-emphasising their significance. Again marked ‘*L’istesso tempo pianissimo — dolcissimo sempre*’, it comprises 55 bars, although it differs in part from the previous two movements in that its asceticism is much more pronounced. Encompassing only fourteen fragments, the first eight of these are harmonic rather than monophonic, and are characterized by single sustained pitches, interspersed with what are now extended periods of silence, with fragment eight, although notated with rests, having no pitch whatsoever. Of the three fragments that begin the movement — these being scored for solo piano — Knaifel writes «Очень осторожно, как в тени отзвучавшего квартета, чуть на предыдущем (угасающем) звучании или позже, но не расставаясь с этим звучанием внутренне» [‘[To be played] very carefully, in the shadow of the quartet which has died away, emanating from the previous (fading) sound, but not as if parting with this sound entirely’].<sup>28</sup> Curiously, the numbering of the bars begins only once these three fragments have commenced (at what is ostensibly bar 9), thereby suggesting that they serve as a prequel; the piano again being awarded a lesser value than the strings. The string parts that follow — these having been reduced to mainly sustained pitches - are again notated across either one, two, three or four staves. Likewise, the emphasis is again on the separation of pitches within each melodic line, and, in general, across each of the parts, while all pitches are again conjoined through the use of ties and circled notes. Knaifel indicates that ‘all parts [are to] sound and imperceptibly fade into the background, independent of all the other parts’.<sup>29</sup>

Again, despite the above, Knaifel employs a number of additional strategies to produce a continuum, all of which are foregrounded through transparency and the asceticism in form, texture and harmonic language. Of note is the fact that he utilizes a degree of unity in terms of the fragments’ compositional style and material. Each fragment has certain commonalities: all are the same in terms of texture; each is characterized primarily by the

<sup>27</sup> Blazhkova E. *Svete Tikhly*: ECM1763: 2002: CD liner notes to accompany recording.

<sup>28</sup> Performance instruction 1; page 8 of the score.

<sup>29</sup> Performance instruction 2; page 4 of the score.

use of minims, and interspersed by intermittent silences; each also employs the same intervallic structure as well as the same register in pitch. The note durations are also comparable in that every fragment is extended in its final note duration, with the performers again having the option of a further extension. Further strategies to create a continuum include the reduction in tempo as well as a repetition in pitch at bars 1 and 2, followed by an extended period of silence at bar 5 (piano — unmarked bar). Of this, Blazhkova states that: ‘creating his cycle, Knaifel had a feeling that it was more natural for him to speak in a quiet voice and address others (maybe in a dialogue) hoping for the opportunity to hear an inner voice, within each of us, and get in resonance with it. And this voice rings out in the sound continuum of his cycle with a tender, trembling note expressing the Christian ideal of humanity in the inmost self, with its imperishable quality of a gentle, quiet spirit, which is of the highest value in the sight of God.’<sup>30</sup>

Semantically, the movement is linked to not one but two Tyutchev poems: ‘My Soul Would Like to be a Star’ (1829) and ‘It’s There, Still There’ (1849), as shown in *Figure 5*. Each utilises a different strategy for conveying or facilitating meaning. Similarly, as with the first movement, this movement’s title (and as such, the title of the entire work), *In Air Clear and Unseen*, is taken directly from the final line of the first poem. Again, no other reference to the poem exists within the work. The linguistic signifiers of the second poem ‘It’s There, Still There’, are again fully intoned (in Russian), thus the movement’s title and its corresponding text originate from two different literary sources. It is in this final movement, however, that Knaifel’s own intended imported significations are given precedence. These are derived using a distinct semantic device: the isolation and foregrounding of key words and phrases in the Tyutchev texts which are then conjoined to create further sets of significations that were not intended by Tyutchev. In this, the strategy employed is intra-textual as opposed to inter-textual. As seen in *Figure 9*, Knaifel foregrounds all the words and phrases within all four poems that refer (either explicitly or implicitly) to colour and autumn (autumn, Knaifel stating, being a metaphor for the colours crimson and gold). Taking all the colours identified (azure, crimson and gold), Knaifel ascribes to this new collective unit or trope, a metonymical meaning: that of the colours of Russian iconography. Of this, Blazhkova states that:

The Theotokos<sup>31</sup> colour symbols blend into the landscape lyrics. From the autumn palette the poet chooses the colours of Theotokos’ iconography:

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> ‘Theotokos’ is the Greek title of Mary, mother of Jesus.

golden, crimson and azure. Her face in icons appears in the sea of golden grace. Crimson is the colour of the Burning Bush — the icon showing the prototypes from the Old Testament of Christ’s incarnation. The azure is the symbol of Theotokos’ virginity.<sup>32</sup>

*Figure 9:* Symbolic use of colour in all four of Tyutchev’s poems:

‘On the Way Back’	‘An Autumn Evening’	‘My Soul Would Like to be a Star’	‘It’s There, Still There’
<b>Blue in the distance.</b>	There is a wistful charm, a tenderness, Mysterious and soft,	<b>Scorching sun, They are like gods, burning brighter</b>	<b>Unreachable, unchanged, bright-burning</b>
<b>Enveloped in the autumn mist.</b>	<b>in autumn’s even:</b> The trees in weird and brilliant garments dress, The gory leaves to whispered talk are given;	In air clear and unseen.	
<b>In azure looking lakes...</b>	Above the sad and orphaned earth, the skies		

*Figure 10:* Theotokos Icon showing the three colours prominent in Russian iconography:



<sup>32</sup> Blazhkova E. *Svete Tikhy*: ECM1763: 2002: CD liner notes to accompany recording.

From this, Knaifel constructs two extended narratives, each functioning as a set of interpretants. In the first, as shown in *Figure 11*, autumn turns into spring; this being a metaphor for spiritual growth and rebirth. The second — again having a connection to the notion of colour and concerning specifically poems three and four — uses the concepts of silver and white light: these having further metonymical meaning: that of purity and of Man's ascent into Heaven, with Blazhkova stating that:

In Tyutchev, nature's anguish in autumn with its warning of pending storms and winter in existence is chaste and religious — nature retires to rest and sleep so that in spring it may blossom into life. The godlike pride of anguish bears the stamp of humble martyrdom — the theme of Christian sacrifice, anticipation of the unspeakable glory that is to appear in the world, of the joy into which the pains of spiritual birth shall pass <...> Knaifel, similarly to Tyutchev, transforms the tangible light flows into music — no matter what they may be: a tenderness, mysterious and soft, in autumn's evening <...> above the sad and orphaned earth, or the light of distant stars glowing in air clear and unseen.<sup>33</sup>

Figure 11: Extended narratives in Air Clear and Unseen:

<b>Dimension I</b>	Autumn	Spiritual Rebirth (Spring)	
<b>Dimension II</b>	Iconography (three colours)	Silver	White light

Finally, according to Knaifel, both of these are connected by one single further concept: what he calls 'Eternity-time'. This, he defines as eternal timelessness, stating that: 'this expresses vividly the image of time expanding to the borders of eternity <...> And it is not just the reality of the future but the eternity brought to us in Christ's incarnation as if His coming is a seed containing this eternity'.<sup>34</sup> This involves, fundamentally, the concept of time as a continuous present, as opposed to the passing of time as relegated to the past. What is significant, however, is that this, given its very nature, functions semantically at the point where both narrative and music finish and is thus, in a sense, beyond the significations conveyed with regards to narrative and musical time. This has serious implications, I would argue, for its depiction using the musical medium. Blazhkova again states that:

In the third movement "In Air Clear and Unseen" the restrained "recitation" of the piano (un solo pedale alla fine as in the first movement), which starts playing, as the composer notes, as if "under the veil of the fading sounds of the quartet", naturally answers the descending "cues" of the strings from the previous movement. The transparency of the dialogue melts away in the "instrumental gesture" of the cycle's last phrase, each syllable of which is gently passed from one instrument to another as if following the light of the distant star.<sup>35</sup>

### Conclusion

There is no doubt as to the extraordinary compositional abilities of Alexander Knaifel; this being evident in his originality, in his vision, in his control over various materials, even in his ability to create works of exceptional beauty as indeed, 'In Air Clear and Unseen' surely is. On an existential level, irrespective of the issues that this examination raises, Knaifel's music does engender a certain phenomenology. This is not in question. The problem, however, lies in whether or not such a music meets its own success criteria; in whether the kinds of significations intended are truly engendered in performance. First, there is his approach to imported meanings and the fact that the onus is upon others to realise the esthetic process required. Problems arise in that Knaifel relies heavily upon the listener's own pre-existing knowledge and understanding of the Tyutchev texts; essentially, upon the listener's ability to make a series of inter-textual and intra-textual references that have been prescribed. Putting aside the fact that attaching a prescribed meaning to an inter-textual strategy negates the post-structuralist notion that interpretants are infinite, do such strategies not also rely heavily upon a *cultural* understanding? Would, for example, a non-Russian audience be as fully conversant in Tyutchev as a Russian one — so much so as to make the contextual, conceptual and structural connections intended? If not elitist, then the work is, I suggest, not accessible to an international audience either. Further issues arise in that the listener is also required to know and understand the actual specifics of the poems, despite Knaifel's assertion that only the 'essence of the whole' is intended to be realised through the process of intonation. Unless the poems have been memorised in their entirety, read aloud before the performance or cited in the programme notes, then the listener has no way of accessing the words and phrases that are intended to signify both colour and extended narrative in the third movement, given that no linguistic signifiers are heard in performance. Further issues arise from the contradiction in subscribing a very specific

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Knaifel A. *Svete Tikhy*: ECM1763: 2002: CD liner notes to accompany recording.

<sup>35</sup> Blazhkova E. *Svete Tikhy*: ECM1763: 2002: CD liner notes to accompany recording.

meaning — then giving free will to both performer and listener to act against what is required to engender those meanings. This suggests the involvement of a very specific kind of performer or listener: one who understands both Knaifel's aesthetic and intentions and who will adhere to them unquestionably. In creating a context whereby we have to proactively search for meaning, Knaifel is therefore creating a music that may, at best, be understood by very few, given the levels of penetration required, not to mention the awareness needed in realising that certain significations are also purposefully hidden. Of this, Savenko states that 'the cherished knowledge cannot be shared directly, being accessible exclusively through figurative expression and indirect allusions; through silences and stasis. The listener has to be worthy of the opus'.<sup>36</sup> The biggest problem, I suggest, however, lies in the use of the minimalist form; in the fact that Knaifel constructs a melodic, harmonic and teleological structure that simply cannot signify the semantic complexities and abstraction that he intends. Whilst fully acknowledging these difficulties, Knaifel maintains, however, that there is a real and tangible possibility that his aims can be realized in full. He states that: 'everything can be connected to just one sound. This seems like a paradox, but it is not my problem. There are difficulties for the listener in these contexts. This, I understand. But again, this is not my problem. It is the problem of our time and of the listener's own response to the messages around them'.<sup>37</sup> While such problems are undoubtedly very real, this is still a music that is worthy enough to demand a closer scrutiny, both compositionally and semantically, with its paradoxes and contradictions making it all the more fascinating.

<sup>36</sup> Savenko S. 'The Magic of Alexander Knaifel's Message'. Op. cit. P. 181.  
<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

## Appendix:

### Поem 1:

#### На возвратном пути

Грустный вид и грустный час — Дальний  
  путь торопит нас...  
Вот, как призрак гробовой,  
Месяц встал — и из тумана  
Осветил безлюдный край...  
Путь далек — не унывай...  
Ах, и в этот самый час,  
Там, где нет теперь уж нас,  
Тот же месяц, но живой,  
Дышит в зеркале Лемана...  
Чудный вид и чудный край — Путь далек —  
  не вспоминай...  
Родной ландшафт... Под дымчатым  
  навесом  
Огромной тучи снеговой  
Синеет даль — с ее угрюмым лесом,  
Окутанным осенней мглой...  
Всё голо так — и пусто-необъятно  
В однообразии немом...  
Местами лишь просвечивают пятна  
Стоячих вод, покрытых первым льдом.  
Ни звуков здесь, ни красок, ни движенья —  
Жизнь отошла — и, покорясь судьбе,  
В каком-то забытии изнеможенья,  
Здесь человек лишь снится сам себе.  
Как свет дневной, его тускнеют взоры,  
Не верит он, хоть видел их вчера,  
Что есть края, где радужные горы  
В лазурные глядятся озера...  
(1859)

#### On the Way Back

Sad view and sad hour —  
The long way urges us ...  
That's like a ghost grave,  
Month up — and out of the fog  
Illuminated the deserted region ...  
Way far — do not be sad ...  
Oh, and at this very hour,  
Where there is no now I have,  
That same month, but a living,  
Breathing in the mirror ... Lehmann  
Glorious views and a wonderful land —  
Way far — Do not Think ...  
Native landscape ... Under  
  the smoky roof  
Huge clouds of snow  
Blue in the distance — with its  
  gloomy forest  
Enveloped in the autumn mist ...  
All bare so — and empty-immense  
In the monotony of the silent ...  
Places a translucent spots  
Stagnant water covered with first ice.  
No sound here, no paints, no motion —  
Life moved away — and submit  
  to her fate,  
In some exhausted reverie,  
Here, people only dream about  
  themselves.  
As the light of day, their eyes glaze over,  
They do not believe they even saw  
  them yesterday,  
What is the edge where the rainbow  
  mountains  
In azure looking lakes ...

## Поэт 2:

**Осенний вечер**

Есть в светлости осенних вечеров  
Умильная, таинственная прелесть:  
Зловещий блеск и пестрота  
дерев,  
Багряных листьев томный, легкий шелест,  
Туманная и тихая лазурь  
Над грустно-сиротеющей  
землю,  
И, как предчувствие сходящих бурь,  
Порывистый, холодный ветер  
порою,  
Ущерб, изнеможенье — и на всем  
Та кроткая улыбка  
увяданья,  
Что в существе разумном мы зовем  
Божественной стыдливостью страданья.  
(1830)

## Поэт 3:

**Душа хотела б быть звездой**

Душа хотела б быть звездой,  
Но не тогда, как с неба полночи  
Сии светила, как живые очи,  
Глядят на сонный мир земной —  
Но днем, когда, сокрытые  
как дымом  
Палящих солнечных лучей,  
Они, как божества, горят светлей  
В эфире чистом и незримом.  
(1829)

**Autumn Evening:**

There is a wistful charm, a tenderness,  
Mysterious and soft, in autumn's even:  
The trees in weird and brilliant garments  
dress,  
The gory leaves to whispered talk are given;  
Above the sad and orphaned earth, the skies  
Lie veiled and chill, the sun's departure  
mourning,  
And gusty winds with sudden anger rise,  
Of pending storms the cold and angry  
warning...  
Fatigue, decline, and — over all — the worn  
And wasting spirit's smile, doomed soon  
to vanish,  
That lights a sufferer's face and that is born  
Of modesty, the godlike pride of anguish.

**My Soul Would Like to be a Star**

My soul would like to be a star  
But not from the sky midnight  
These luminaries, as lively eyes,  
Looking at the sleepy world of earth —  
But in the afternoon, when,  
as the smoke of hidden  
Scorching sun,  
They are like gods, burning brighter  
In air clear and unseen.

## Поэт 4:

**Еще томлюсь тоской желаний**

Еще томлюсь тоской  
желаний,  
Еще стремлюсь к тебе душой —  
И в сумраке воспоминаний  
Еще ловлю я образ твой...  
Твой милый образ, незабвенный,  
Он предо мной, везде, всегда,  
Недостижимый, неизменный, —  
Как ночью на небе звезда.  
(1849)

**It's There, Still There <sup>38</sup>**

Still haunted by a longing desire,  
a past love's madness,  
Dull pain and longing my heart fill.  
Your image, hid amid the shadows  
Of memory, lives in me still.  
I think of it with endless yearning,  
'Tis e'er with me though from me far,  
Unreachable, unchanged, bright-burning  
As in the sky of night a star...

<sup>38</sup> This particular translation, as made by Irina Zheleznova, has been given in the notes to accompany recording: Svete Tikhy: ECM1763: 2002.

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