The FORUM

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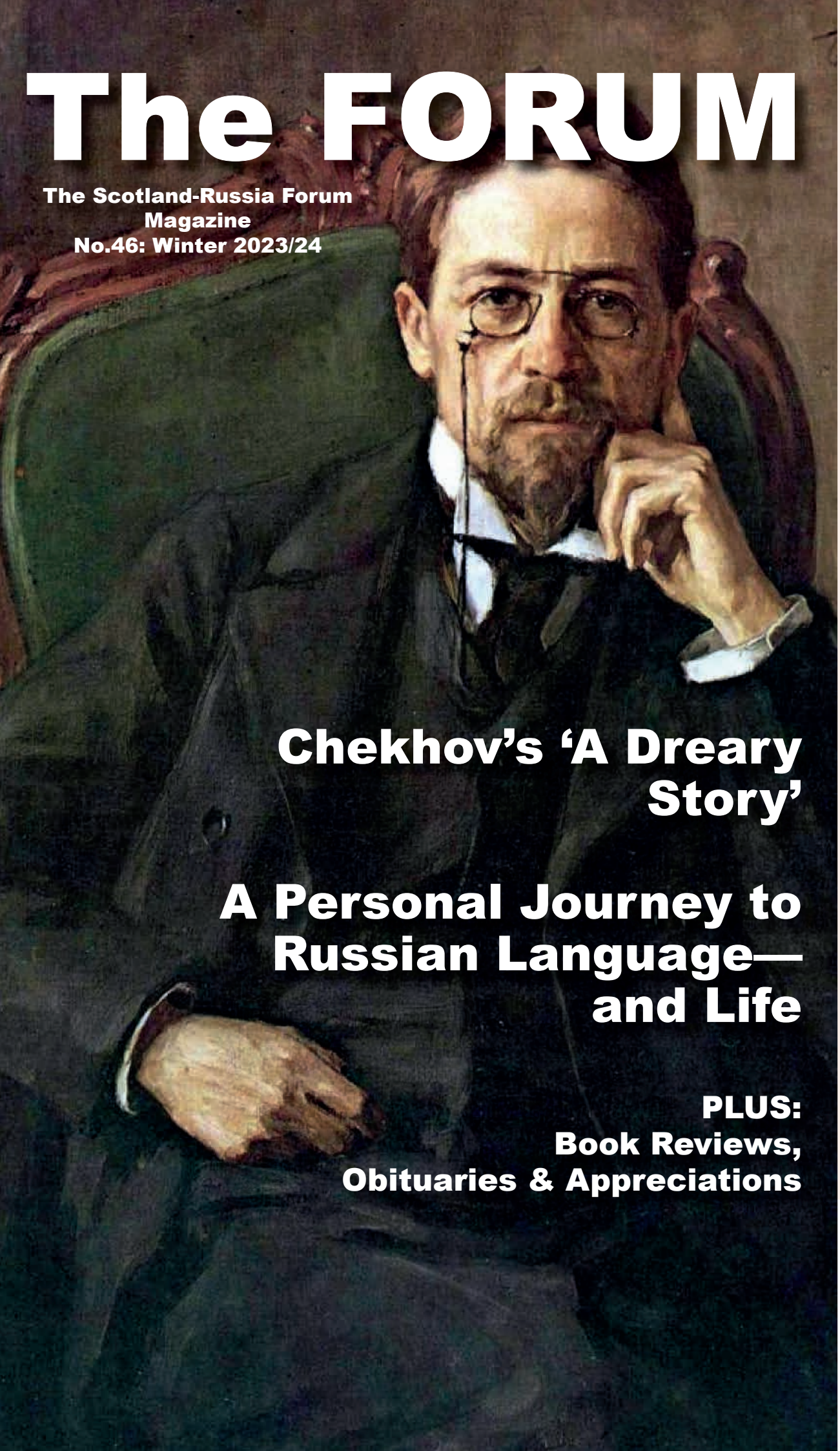

Chekhov's 'A Dreary Story'

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SRF
ФШР

Front cover: *Portrait of Anton Chekhov* (1898) by Osip Emmanuilovich Braz, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

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The aim of the Scotland-Russia Forum is to promote interest in Russia and its neighbours in order to improve understanding of those countries in Scotland.

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What's Up, Doc? Chekhov's 'A Dreary Story'

by Tom Hubbard

Hang on. "A Dreary Story" – will such a title attract readers to Chekhov (let alone to the present article)? It's how Constance Garnett translated the title of this long short story of 1889. Ivy Litvinov's rendering of "A Dull Story" doesn't sound any more promising.

How about a Scots alternative – "A Dreich Story"? "Dreich" is not altogether distant from the meaning of "Скучная", and might suggest a darkly humorous tone to the novella, even that blend of comedy and tragedy so characteristic of this author. There's a reference, in this story, to the gravedigger in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and those familiar with the play may recall a remark by the Prince: "Hath this fellow no feeling of his business? He sings at grave-making." Hamlet himself will shortly jest with a skull in hand.

Chekhov was a doctor. Medics and gravediggers need to have a well-developed sense of humour if they are to stay sane in their respective professions. "A Dreary Story" is narrated by an elderly professor of medicine, Nikolai Stepanovich, of considerable reputation and status, who confesses his disillusionment with his family, his colleagues and students in drab university buildings, and with himself. The mechanistic middle-class routine of his life is to an extent mitigated by his near-religious devotion to science and to a lingering sense of professional pride. Moreover, while he has come to feel that he has nothing in common with his wife and daughter, he is at least close (and more fatherly) to his beloved ward Katya. Even this relationship, though, while tender on both sides, is not without its problems: Nikolai Stepanovich has no interest in the theatre, which he finds trivial, but Katya's ambitions are in this direction. Like her guardian in his sphere, she eventually becomes disenchanted. She anticipates the tragic would-be actress Nina, in Chekhov's first play, *The Seagull* (1896), who has to accept her mediocrity in a tawdry milieu.

"A Dreary Story" has been compared, at times superficially, to Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, which precedes Chekhov's story by some three years. Inept comparisons are at least understandable, and I may have been guilty of such at a first reading of the two works. It's easy enough to consider that Chekhov's Nikolai Stepanovich is presented more sympathetically than Tolstoy's Ivan Ilyich, not least on the grounds that the former is a doctor and the latter is a lawyer. They are both eminent in their respective professions, but that counts for nothing if one believes that medical folk are more useful to society than jurists. From this perspective, medics save lives (or make the attempt); lawyers are in it for the money. The first group seeks to curtail the agony; the second, only too often, prolongs it.

In Victorian England, earlier in the 19th century, the moral universe seemed to be a pretty clear-cut affair. In Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* (1853), those who diagnose are more admirable than those who judge—or worse, delay a judgment and therefore cause anxiety to those at the sharp end of a civil court case. Allan Woodcourt is one of the novel's heroes as he gently tends to the indigent chimney-sweeper Jo; he's introduced somewhat blandly to the reader by his future wife as "a gentleman of a dark complexion – a young surgeon. He was rather reserved but I thought him very sensible and agreeable." On the other hand, a Chancery solicitor called Vholes is a sinister villain: "Dressed in black, black-gloved, and buttoned to the chin, there was nothing so remarkable in him as a lifeless manner, and a slow fixed way he had of looking at Richard [his client and victim]".

It all gets rather more complex when we come to Chekhov and Tolstoy at the end of the century. Certainly, the doctors in Chekhov's works are on the whole practical, conscientious men who just get on with the job in the most difficult circumstances while all around them are either freaking out or sinking in provincial melancholy. His lawyers are rogues. For his part, Tolstoy was no fan of the courts (or of any instrument of the state and church, for that matter).

It all gets rather more complex when we come to Chekhov and Tolstoy at the end of the century.

Yet Chekhov's Nikolai Stepanovich doesn't consider his profession as necessarily superior; he's pretty even-handed: "for any educated man," he declares, "the only traditions that can exist are those of the University as a whole, with no distinction between medicine, law etc." (Translation: Constance Garnett).

One of his colleagues tells of how, in the theatre, he spotted two students, one seemingly in law and the other in medicine; it was the medic who was drunk and loud. Called as an expert witness in a court case, Nikolai Stepanovich has his attention drawn by a fellow expert to the obnoxious style of the public prosecutor as he grills the defendants;

however, “I believe that I did not exaggerate at all when I told him that the prosecutor’s manner was no ruder than that of the authors of serious articles to one another”. Such petty academic back-biting, it’s implied, involves contributors to scientific and medical journals. Meanwhile, in *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, the dying protagonist finds that his physician is just as officious as the members of his own profession: “Just as he in court put on an air towards the accused, so in precisely the same way this famous doctor put on an air towards him.” (Translation: Peter Carson).

Both Nikolai Stepanovich and Ivan illyich come to see that all is not well with their Russian bourgeois lives, whatever their calling, at the end of the century.

Both Nikolai Stepanovich and Ivan Ilyich come to see that all is not well with their Russian bourgeois lives, whatever their calling, at the end of the century; this does not bode well for the ensuing decades. Is their culture – in the broadest sense of that word – at all superior to that of the peasantry? Tolstoy would have said no; Chekhov would be more universally sceptical. The Russian word “poshlost” sums up the phenomenon whereby the spiritual quality of life exists in inverse proportion to its material counterpart: it concerns middle-class lifestyles best described in English as “naff”, “uncool”, at times “twee”. “Poshlism”, according to Vladimir Nabokov, “is not only the obviously trashy but mainly the falsely important, the falsely beautiful, the falsely clever, the falsely attractive.”

It helps that the first syllable of the Russian term hints, in English, at social climbing (“Darling, I’ve actually talked to a duchess!” – Nabokov’s example). On a novel by the popular Polish writer Henryk Sienkiewicz, Chekhov wrote: “There is the devil’s own plenty of discussion on domestic felicity and on love […] one feels overcome by mawkishness and embarrassment, as if after a slobbery kiss.” (1895; translation: Bernard Guerney). Nikolai Stepanovich prefers the simple diet he followed as a student, but his pretentious family – in recognition of his status – now feed him “with a purée with little white things like circles floating about in it, and kidneys stewed in madeira”. (Translation: Constance Garnett).

In Ivan Ilyich, aspirational individualism leads, in the acquisition of fashionable household stuff, to a pathetic uniformity: “everything dark and shiny – everything that all people of a certain type do to be like all people of a certain type”.(Translation: Peter Carson).

It is Nikolai Stepanovich who has the edge in ultimate self-awareness. Whereas Ivan Ilyich approaches his death with a too-late recognition of the phoneyness of his life, mingled with dread and self-pity, Nikolai Stepanovich is more analytical (as befits a scientist?).

Despite his assertion of the university as a multi-disciplinary institution, he considers that he’s been too much of the specialist; his consciousness has been fragmented, never inter-connecting into a whole: “The absence of what my philosophic colleagues call a *general* idea I have detected in myself only just before death.” (Translation: Constance Garnett; my italics). The polymath Patrick Geddes (1854-1932) would later revive the Scottish educational philosophy of *generalism*, of thinking “round the whole circle, not in scraps and bits”. It was said of Geddes that for him “watertight compartments are useful only to a sinking ship”. That reads almost like an epitaph for the pre-Revolutionary Zeitgeist at once ruthlessly and compassionately discerned by Anton Chekhov. •

The polymath Patrick Geddes would later revive the Scottish educational philosophy of *generalism*, of thinking ‘round the whole circle, not in scraps and bits’.

***• This article forms part of the Scotland-Russia Forum’s ongoing project,* “Chekhov in Scotland”.**

A Personal Journey to Russian Language—and Life

by Ewan Paterson

We welcome here the new Secretary of the Scoland-Russia Forum, Ewan Paterson, making his debut contribution to the magazine.

I started learning Russian after easily getting to grips with the alphabet on an introductory course provided by my work in 2007/8. I had expressed interest in either Russian or Arabic, wanting to try something exotic. At the time this firm had offices and/or projects in Russia and Arabia. My office was on St Andrew Square in Edinburgh, and the times were interesting with lots of money for construction projects, the sphere I work in, and international projects. Our directors went over to Tripoli for a site visit, and I did drawings for a proposed TV station tower there. I’m very grateful to this company for providing me this experience and opportunity to be introduced to Russian. Unfortunately, since the Great Recession, I doubt there are any similar staff benefits in at least my industry.

I think I had an interest in Russia from seeing perplexing news stories on the TV in my childhood in the 90s. I remember seeing maps in my childhood with the USSR on them and was intrigued that this huge country could exist and then disappear so recently. The first time I noticed this, the particular adult I asked about this “USSR” flatly refused to discuss it with this eight-year-old, really strange!

Later in life, Russia and the Soviet Union was something to be studied and understood as part of developing a political and philosophical understanding of the past and our current society. Without going into detail, my views have crystallised and pretty much align with Alasdair MacIntyre, and for example, his work “After Virtue”.

I continued my studies with Kate Forrest at the

Edinburgh University community evening classes. Then I found the SRF and Natasha Samoilova. My interest in the language was further reinforced when I blazed through the English translations of Russian classic novels, my first being *Anna Karenina*, and my favourite being *Oblomov*.

I studied in these evening classes for a few years but then nearly gave up, because on meeting Russians I found I could hardly understand them or be understood. Instead of giving up, I decided to wholeheartedly pursue learning Russian. I sought out Russian speakers and they helped me to a degree.

I studied in these evening classes for a few years but then nearly gave up, because upon meeting Russians I found I could hardly understand them or be understood. Instead of giving up, I decided to wholeheartedly pursue learning Russian. I sought out Russian speakers and they helped me to a degree. I soon realised I needed to spend some time living in Russia and thankfully the SRF under Jenny Carr was helping organise English teachers for posts in Rostov-on-Don. The recently deceased Joe Wake was instrumental in this, and I'm sincerely grateful to him for helping me achieve this formative experience.

I was very upset by and after the event of the 24th of February; now I've come to accept what happened and come to terms with it. At the time I was eagerly awaiting the world waking from the nightmare of the previous two years. The bad dream continues, on a slightly different track. I hope and expect life will return to a more reasonable and rational course, the sooner the better.

My five-year-old son now lives in Saint Petersburg, and I have visited him in October last year and February this year. I hope to be able to continue to visit regularly and support him. His mother moved him back there in August last year. In many ways he is better off growing up in Saint Petersburg than the kind of places he would be growing up in the UK. I'm impressed by the nurseries I've seen in Russia, far more professional than the ones I've seen here, far more adequate to support a parent who works. I was alarmed about his nursery experience in the UK when he repeatedly came home proclaiming he was a boy, not a girl, no doubt explicable due to being repeatedly questioned about his self-proclaimed gender by our pious, and well meaning, state representatives. My, limited, impression of childhood and schooling in Russia is that there is far less bullying, and it would be a much friendlier and less isolating experience than in the UK. So providing something like the purges of the 30s don't return, I'm sure he is safe and will thrive.

I'm so grateful for the existence of the SRF, to learn Russian and gain some understanding of this great culture has immeasurably enriched my life. I want to support the SRF so that more people may have the chance to receive the kind of experience and support I have had. To create and nourish cultural links is undoubtedly an activity supportive of peace, understanding and mutual benefit. •

Playing with Fire: The Story of Maria Yudina, Pianist in Stalin's Russia

by Elizabeth Wilson

Yale University Press. 2022. 331pp. £25.00.

In Elizabeth Wilson, Maria Yudina has the ideal biographer. Like Yudina, Wilson is a musician and wordsmith, using Yudina's articles, diaries, letters as the foundation for her *Playing With Fire*. Not only has Wilson written biographies of Dmitri Shostakovich and Mstislav Rostropovich, but she studied the cello in Moscow under Rostropovich, having met him at the Edinburgh Festival in the early 1960s when she was just 14 years old. This means that Wilson has first-hand knowledge and experience of Russian culture during the Soviet era and thus is able to illuminate for us the life and career of a woman who was allegedly Stalin's favourite pianist whilst being antagonistic to everything he stood for.

Born in 1899, Maria Veniaminovna Yudina began studying the piano at seven and, by the time she was a young teenager, she was a pupil at the St Petersburg Conservatoire. At 16 she was learning composing and conducting, reading philosophy and involving herself fully in the musical, literary, intellectual and political tumult of revolutionary Russia. Religion was a beacon in her life. From an educated Jewish family, she wrote in her diary at 17: "I only know one way to God: through Art". Aged 20, she was baptised into the Russian Orthodox Church although later, as Russian Communism developed, she allied herself with the Josephite dissenters who argued that the Orthodox Church was becoming too close to the Soviet state.

In the 1920s, Yudina was on the staff of the St Petersburg Conservatoire, and began her concert career. This section of the book in particular shows her unique contribution to music scholarship and to teaching the piano. She went out of her way to perform the work of young composers, even students, and encouraged her piano students to sing Bach chorales before studying his keyboard music. The book also explores her range of metaphor as she observed her students' movement and hand positions as they played. All this contributes to a reader's appreciation of different composers and ways of interpreting their work.

Tempestuous and independent, Yudina was dismissed from the (by now) Leningrad Conservatoire, moving first to Tiflis and then to Moscow, developing her career as a concert pianist all the while. During the "Great Patriotic War" she barely rested, broadcasting regularly on the radio, playing for the troops and in hospitals—even for the besieged of Leningrad, arriving at the military airport with a kitbag stuffed with

Deceit

by Yuri Felsen

Translated by Bryan Karetnyk

London, Prototype Publishing. 2022. 320pp. £12.

Yuri Felsen's debut novel *Deceit*, first published in Paris in 1930 and now translated into English by Bryan Karetnyk, offers a glimpse of émigré life a century ago.

The novel is a diary, written by Felsen's anonymous hero as he records his experience of exile. His principal concern is one of finding love with fellow émigré Lyolya Heard. By turns ridiculous, poetic, even Proustian in his prose, Felsen's diarist describes his inner world as he confronts the harsh realities of life.

Although on the surface the prose can appear florid, the text's underlying absurdity is easily detected: as highlighted by Karetnyk at an event at the Golden Hare bookshop in Edinburgh in November 2022, a sardonic interpretation comprises the deceit of the novel's title. The diarist lies to himself about a love affair the reader can clearly tell is doomed from the beginning and holds an image of himself that is at odds with reality.

At turns likeable, infuriating and unwittingly funny, the diarist draws the reader into the Russian émigré scene. Karetnyk's inventive translation invites the reader into an interior world that seems both entirely foreign and unexpectedly familiar a hundred years after it was first penned. •

—Sarah Gear

as much food as it could hold. Now in her early forties, her close friends included the likes of Mikhail Bakhtin, Pavel Florensky and Boris Pasternak. In 1947, Pasternak read the first chapter of *Doctor Zhivago* to a small, invited audience in Yudina's Moscow flat.

Life became somewhat easier for artists during the Khrushchev years, and Yudina was active in persuading the authorities, and the composer himself, to allow Stravinsky's return from exile, to visit and conduct in the Soviet Union.

The final 50 pages of the book include the expected notes, bibliography, index and a superb select discography with its own introduction. There is also a six page appendix which tackles the story at the beginning of Armando Ianucci's film *The Death of Stalin*. One night Stalin is supposed to have listened to a broadcast concert with Yudina playing Mozart's Piano Concerto No 23 and telephoned for a copy of the recording. The concert had not been recorded: the pianist, the orchestra were recalled to the concert hall, and an audience brought in for a recording to be ready for Stalin the following morning. Wilson's rigorous research exposes this as a myth, emanating perhaps from one of "Shostakovich's tall stories", she suggests.

This insight shows what a treasure this book is: it reveals the full life of a remarkable musician in the foreground of a matchless tapestry of the art and artists of 20th century Russia. •

—Vin Arthey

Russian in Plain English: A very Basic Russian Starter for Complete Beginners

by Natalia V. Parker
London & New York, Routledge. 2020. 283pp. £35.99.

Natalia Parker's introductory book *Russian in Plain English* is unique in its detail-oriented yet very learner-friendly approach, as it invites complete beginners, both independent learners and students, to embark on a rewarding journey of discovering Russian language and aspects of Russian life and culture.

Parker's approach to teaching Russian is based on her pedagogical research in language acquisition and information retention. The novelty of this book is in introducing the Russian alphabet gradually throughout its lessons, giving learners an opportunity to build their confidence though engaging reading exercises. Parker implements principles of spiralling, building upon previously acquired skills as she introduces new materials in small and easy-to-handle chunks.

The author always addresses her readers directly and explains new materials in an accessible and encouraging language. Simple grammar patterns engage learners in Russian communicative situations from the very first pages of the book and allow them to immediately apply the results of their learning to real-life situations.

Many cameos about Russian culture and lifestyle, accompanied by images, make a delightful addition to one's learning: they range from the Hermitage and samovars to Parker's babushka and her hometown of Tula.

With this well-designed and learner-friendly book, those who always wanted to learn some Russian but were somehow deterred by its Cyrillic alphabet and complex grammar, are in for a real treat. •

—Mikhail Vodopyanov

Natasha Black (1922-2023)

An Appreciation
by Dairmid Gunn

In the early 1980s I had the pleasure and privilege of meeting Natasha Black. I had given a talk, at which she was present, on my love affair with the culture and people of Russia. It struck a chord in her heart as the prevailing British attitude towards Russia during the Cold War years was generally unfriendly. We became friends, a friendship that lasted until her death. Through my conversations with her I learnt more about the mainsprings of Russia than I had had from reading its rich literature and dwelling on my own experiences in Moscow in the 1960s.

At an early age Natasha, who was born into a cultured family, experienced the horror of the Second World War on the Western Front and in Moscow. In a strange way the years of conflict had brought out from within her a love of people and life in general, attributes that were never to leave her. At the end of the War she acted as an interpreter for a high ranking Soviet delegation to Germany and was present at the Nuremberg Trials of Nazi war criminals, an experience that she described as a baptism of fire.

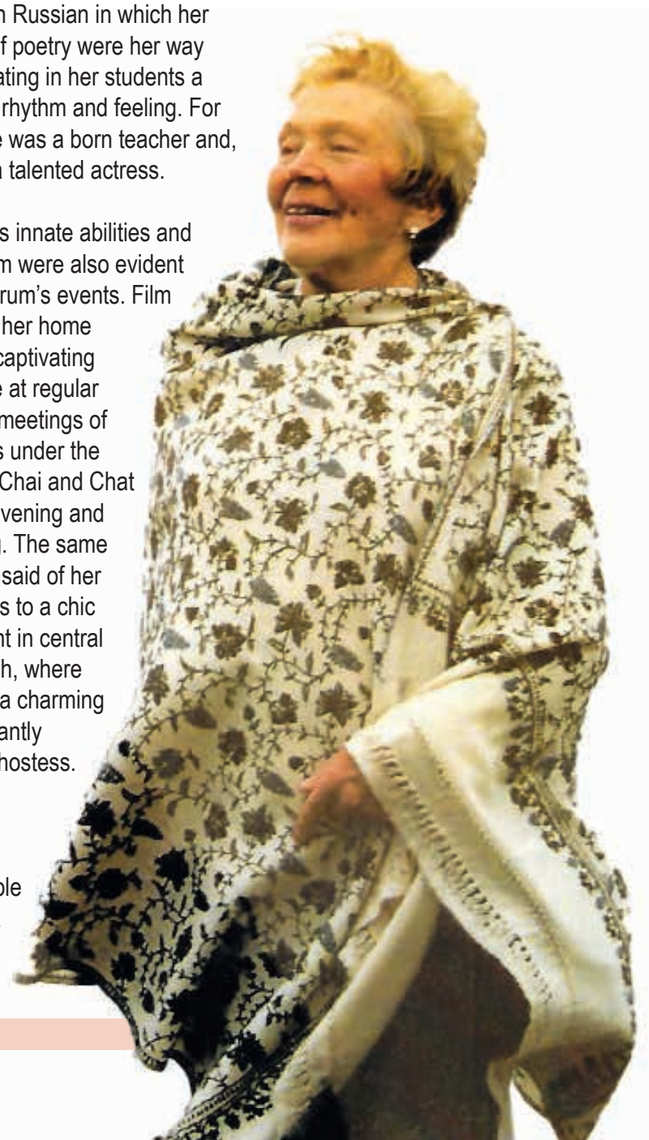
Later in her career she moved to India, where her work there honed her skills as a lecturer and interpreter. They were happy years as the colour and exoticism of India appealed to her artistic instincts, and the decorative art there brought to her mind the subtle refinements of her own cultural experiences.

A post at Heriot-Watt University brought her to Edinburgh, where she made many friends and eventually settled. A step-son and step-nephew from her short and happy marriage to a Scot provided great support for her in Edinburgh. Similar support was given by her daughter, Tanya, in Moscow, whom she visited regularly. Her presence in Edinburgh was a great boon to both Heriot-Watt University and the Scotland-Russia Forum (and its predecessors). At the former she acquired an outstanding reputation for her teaching skills in spoken Russian in which her recitals of poetry were her way of inculcating in her students a sense of rhythm and feeling. For them she was a born teacher and, indeed, a talented actress.

Natasha's innate abilities and dynamism were also evident at the Forum's events. Film nights at her home and her captivating presence at regular informal meetings of members under the name of Chai and Chat were enlivening and enriching. The same could be said of her invitations to a chic restaurant in central Edinburgh, where she was a charming and elegantly dressed hostess.

Natasha was a remarkable lady. At a celebratory lunch to mark her 100th birthday she was presented with a bouquet of flowers by the Lord Provost in person. Earlier, on the occasion of her birthday she had received a letter of good wishes from the King. Well deserved and appreciated acknowledgements. Her gifts to her many friends were her incomparable company, her anecdotes and reminiscences and the occasional glimpse from within her of the magic of the Russian soul.

She will be greatly missed. •



Memories of Peter Harvey

by Jennifer Scarce

I first met Peter some years ago when he drove a friend and myself to see an exhibition in the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow and also to have lunch in the café afterwards.

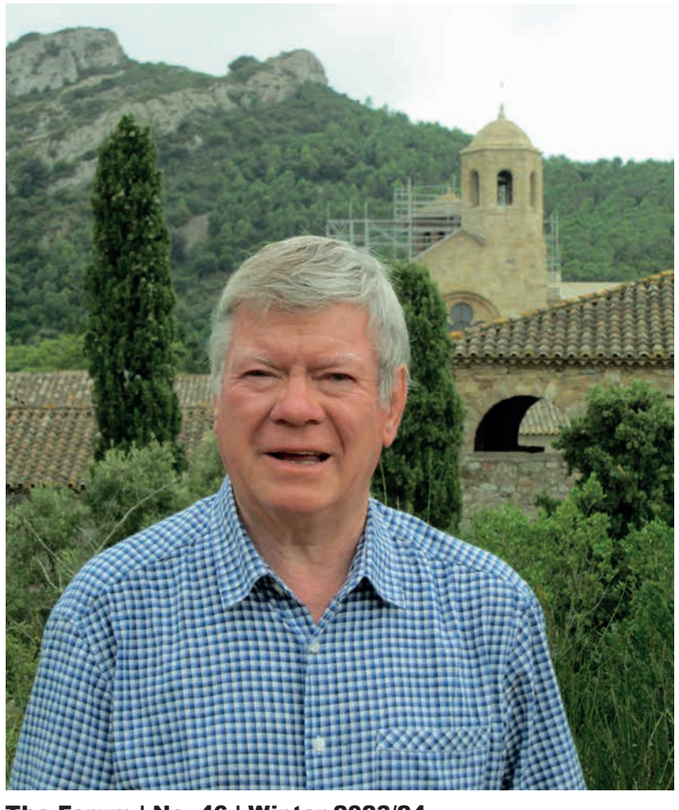
I do not recall how the Scotland-Russia Forum (SRF) initiated the event but it was an opportunity to learn about Peter and his enthusiasm for Russia. He had trained as an engineer and also received a Ph.D at Glasgow University and then worked in the Soviet Union for several years with General Electric. He spoke objectively and well of his work and the professionalism of his Russian colleagues. He had already taken some courses in Russian and was naturally able to develop his language skills which he continued after he retired. He lived for a few years in France in Montpellier where he made contacts with a local group of friends of Russia which he continued to maintain after his return to Scotland to live in East Linton.

Russian, French language studies, gardening, walking and cycling still gave him time to work with the SRF as a dedicated and efficient Treasurer and active supporter of talks and events. SRF moved from the Scotland-Russia Institute to Summerhall and currently has no permanent home. Peter realised this and decided to revive Chai and Chat, which had begun at the Scotland-Russia Institute, by starting an informal group to meet once a month at the easily accessible Mercure Hotel for lunch and chat. He welcomed Scottish-based locals with a knowledge and love of Russian language and culture, Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and also Russian speakers from Latvia and Moldova. He was a kindly but stern taskmaster who wanted us to speak Russian, join him in singing Russian folk songs and bring along items of interest. Chai and Chat Mercure is a great success and focus for SRF; members have talked about translations of Scots poetry into Russian, the introduction of tango into Russia via Latvia.

We have ventured beyond the Mercure with a summer outing on 21st July 2022 to Aberdour at the invitation of Frank Glynn and Anne Gibson, and a Christmas party on 1st December at the Café Gallery where delicious food was prepared by Natalya Mislin. Peter's most ambitious project for Chai and Chat members where I came to know him well was a trip to Moscow and the Golden Ring and was able to share my work experience in the travel industry with him.

When I checked my extensive files I found that we had begun in late 2019 to work with Ian Dickson Travel, now sadly defunct, to develop an itinerary and to deal with all the bureaucracy involved in organising flights, accommodation, local Russians and the essential visas. Finally we reached an itinerary of ten days concentrating on Moscow, Kolomna, Rostov, Yaroslavl and Suzdal visiting their Kremlins, monasteries, museums and catching ballet, opera, folklore and markets where we found them.

We hoped to go to Russia in June 2021 but it was certainly clear by 2022 that we had to cancel the visit. After four years work I would like to be optimistic and hope that we can revive this tour in the capable hands of Regent Travel, and honour Peter's final legacy to SRF. •



Joe Wake: Teaching English in Russia

by Charles Palmer

I first met Joe around 15 years ago while I was the council officer responsible for Glasgow's twinning relationship with Rostov-on-Don in southern Russia. Joe introduced me to a young Irish student at the time who had just graduated from Glasgow University; he was intending sending her to Russia to teach English and he thought that Rostov would be the ideal place. The venture worked out so well that subsequently Joe and I continued our alliance over the years helping Russian language graduates to connect and work in universities all over that country. Eventually I retired from the council but we both continued this work under the banner of the Scotland-Russia Forum. Having previously worked for the British

Council and started his career as a language teacher, Joe had great enthusiasm for the Russian language and for the country itself. However as I got to know him better I realised that this was by no means his only passion and he was also fluent in German and quite comfortable in a number of other languages. During our regular meetings he also spoke of his great affection and dedication to the Dunedin Scottish Country dance group of which he was founder member. I could see that the latter was an ideal conduit for his international mindset as he had helped organise many dance festivals with groups from all over Europe.

Finally Joe and I met up again near the end of last year and we had a very positive chat about restarting our program for teaching English in Russia during this current year 2022. However as it turned out Mr Putin and the Kremlin had other plans and unfortunately ours had to be abandoned. It was a privilege to have known and worked with you Joe. •

Mountains in the Russian Caucasus.

Please read with a similar train-like rhythm to the original (sort of 'da-DA-da, da-DA-da, da-DA')—it'll sound all over the shop otherwise!

Baggage

by Samuil Marshak
Translated into Scots by Ross Fitzpatrick

Come a'; hear what once did betide!
Tae a wifey fae auld East Kilbride.
A tragedy, wha' kens nae ilk,
Begins doon by fair Castlemilk:

An auld biddie stood wi' her bags;
A puddock,
A craw,
An' some fags.
An auld china mug,
A muckle great rug,
And a yappity little white dug.

The auld yin tramped afftae her seat,
Clinging on tae her four green receipts
Wha' detailed a list o' her bags;
The puddock,
The craw,
An' the fags.
The auld china mug,
The muckle great rug,
An' her yappity little white dug.

The porters were nane the best pleased –
Big bags lik' thon bugger the knees.
'All aboard!' Crammed in ticht were the bags;
The puddock,
The craw,
An' the fags.
The auld china mug,
The muckle great rug,
An' the yappity little white dug.

But as soon as the whistle was tooted,
Aff the wagon a little dug scooted!
An' it wisnae tae station Carmunnock
(An' nae thanks tae the dozy auld puddock),
Cam' a cry frae amangst a' the bags;
The puddock,
The craw,
An' the fags;
An' the auld china mug,
An' the muckle great rug…
— 'Whaur on earth is thon yappy wee dug?'

Scarcely had the driver been telt,
When a feral auld wolfhound he smelt.
They huckled him in wi' the bags;
The puddock,
The craw,
An' the fags;
'Twixt the auld china mug
An' the muckle great rug,
There once again slevered a dug.

As the train reached a halt at the station,
So too did the falsification.
The driver unloaded the bags;
The puddock,
The craw,
An' the fags;
The auld china mug,
The muckle great rug,
And this howlin' great beast o' a dug.

This creature's roars couldnae be ended,
Whilst on the man granny descended:
'You dobber! You eejit! You lummox!
Ye've left my wee Sam in Carmunnock!'
An' she booted him intae the bags;
The puddock,
The craw,
An' the fags;
An' the auld china mug,
An' the muckle great rug.
'Awa' back there and find my wee dug!'

'Pair wifey, I hear yer frustration!
But I'll gie ye a good explanation.
We've safely delivered yer bags;
Yer puddock,
Yer craw,
An' yer fags.
Yer auld china mug,
Yer muckle great rug;
Now we come tae the fate o' yer dug.

'See, we Scots have a rare affectation,
Ca'd: "Accelerated Expiration".
Whit time we have here simply flies in,
'Til our final train o'er the horizon.
But life as a miserable blackguard
Disnae hauf leave ye withered and haggard —
So it seems to me, your bonnie pup
Is simply a Scotsman grown up!