



PROLOGUE

Moscow, 1812, just before Napoleon's invasion of Russia and the burning of the city. As the story begins ("Prologue") we meet "Pierre," a wealthy aristocrat having an existential crisis, living a slothful life of wine, philosophy, and inaction.

1. PROLOGUE (1)

(An accordion plays as Andrey finishes putting on his uniform. He gives a last goodbye to Natasha and then leaves.)

PIERRE

There's a war going on
 Out there somewhere
 And Andrey isn't here (2)
 There's a war going on
 Out there somewhere
 And Andrey isn't here

ALL

There's a war going on
 Out there somewhere
 And Andrey isn't here
 There's a war going on
 Out there somewhere
 And Andrey isn't here

And this is all in your program (3)

You are at the opera (4)

Gonna have to study up a little bit
 If you wanna keep with the plot
 Cuz it's a complicated Russian novel
 Everyone's got nine different names

So look it up in your program

We'd appreciate it, thanks a lot (5)

Da da da

Da da da

Da da da

Natasha!

ANNOTATIONS

(1) This song was actually one of the last written; originally the show started right in the middle of Pierre's self-loathing anthem, "Pierre." After the first two workshops at Ars Nova, a consistent piece of feedback was that it took people a while to remember who was who. And so I decided (a bit spitefully) to write a proper prologue, à la *Romeo & Juliet*, laying out as clearly as possible, and employing the honored preschool music tradition (I taught preschool for three years) of the cumulative song form, to drill these characters into people's heads.

(2) You wouldn't know it from the recording, but Andrey does appear, silently/usually dreamily, several times in the staging: at the very top, leaving Natasha for the war; during "No One Else," reading Natasha's love letters as she sings to him in the snow; during "The Opera," creeping through as a ghostly, bloody soldier being disemboweled by creepy robed Illuminati; and during "Letters," reading Pierre's letter. He's also romping about on guitar during most of Act 2, and playing the triangle during "The Abduction." This is because Rachel Chavkin is an astoundingly good actor.

(3) The program for the show is indeed very helpful. It includes the synopsis, and the family tree (pages 120–21) with amazing drawings by our costume designer, Paloma Young, which she updates every time we get a new cast member.

(4) I like to call the show an "electropop opera" because of the presence of electronic synths, and sfx that infect the score once Anatole arrives; "pop" because of the more traditional song forms in various popular styles that make up the show's arias ("Pierre" as an indie rock tune; "No One Else" as a golden-era Broadway popular song; "Charming" as a contemporary hip-hop tune; "So Alone" as a country/folk ballad); and "opera" because of the sung-through format, the touches of Russian classical music, the emotional gravitas of the music, and the more recitative-like sections that mimic Tolstoy's prose. Also "opera" is fun and cool sound and provocative, and pays homage to Tolstoy's own snarky views; he saw it as an overly intellectual and snarky form of the aristocracy, and thus hated it. So I take some pleasure in subverting the label and applying it to a score that is in a more populist style (that I hope Tolstoy would have enjoyed!).

(5) I believe my original lyric here was "What did you expect?" but Rachel suggested quite wisely that maybe during our opening number we should be, you know, nice to the audience.



OPPOSITE: Amber Gray, Kazino, 2013.

NATASHA

Natasha is young
She loves Andrey with all her heart

ALL

She loves Andrey with all her heart
Natasha is young
And Andrey isn't here

SONYA

Sonya is good
Natasha's cousin and closest friend

ALL

Natasha's cousin and closest friend
Sonya is good
Natasha is young
And Andrey isn't here

MARYA D.

Marya is old-school, a grande dame of Moscow
Natasha's godmother, strict yet kind

ALL

Natasha's godmother, strict yet kind
Marya is old-school
Sonya is good
Natasha is young
And Andrey isn't here

And this is all in your program
You are at the opera
Gonna have to study up a little bit
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So look it up in your program
We'd appreciate it, thanks a lot
Da da da
Da da da
Da da da

ANATOLE!

ANATOLE

Anatole is hot
He spends his money on women and wine

ALL

He spends his money on women and wine

Anatole is hot

Marya is old-school

Sonya is good

Natasha is young

And Andrey isn't here

HÉLÈNE

Hélène is a slut (6)

Anatole's sister, married to Pierre

ALL

Anatole's sister, married to Pierre

Hélène is a slut

Anatole is hot

Marya is old-school

Sonya is good

Natasha is young

And Andrey isn't here

DOLOKHOV

Dolokhov is fierce, but not too important

Anatole's friend, a crazy good shot

ALL

Anatole's friend, a crazy good shot

Dolokhov is fierce

Hélène is a slut

Anatole is hot

Marya is old-school

Sonya is good

Natasha is young

And Andrey isn't here

Chandeliers and caviar

The war can't touch us here

Minor characters!

BOLKONSKY

Old Prince Bolkonsky is crazy

MARY

And Mary is plain

(6) I am aware of the problems with... however, Hélène brazenly owns her... and has reclaimed the word with pride... Slut by Dossie Easton and Janet W... book on non-monogamous relations...

*Great works
are only great
they are accessible
comprehensible to*

—LEO TOLSTOY, *WHAT IS ART?*



Gray, Kazino, 2013.

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Chandeliers and caviar
The war can't touch us here
Minor characters!

BOLKONSKY

Old Prince Bolkonsky is crazy

MARY

And Mary is plain

(6) I am aware of the problems with the word "slut"; however, Hélène brazenly owns her loose sexuality, and has reclaimed the word with pride (à la *The Ethical Slut* by Dossie Easton and Janet W. Hardy, an excellent book on non-monogamous relationships).

*Great works of art
are only great because
they are accessible and
comprehensible to everyone.*

—LEO TOLSTOY, *WHAT IS ART?*

(7) For fun I just looked up my original draft of this tune, and it is a lyrical nightmare:

Natasha loves Andrey but she's antsy.
Sonya and Natasha are cousins, and Sonya is good.
Marya Dmitriyevna is Natasha's godmother. She
loves her, she loves her.
Anatole spends all his money. He's a dandy and
ruled by passions.
Hélène is Anatole's sister and Pierre's wife.
She's a bit of a slut.
And Dolokhov, his friend, is fierce.
Wouldn't wanna mess with him.
Mary and the Old Prince are minor characters.
They'll get things going and you'll never
see them again.
Balaga drives the troika. You'll see him later,
he's just for fun.

All hail simplicity!

(8) This was the very first full song I wrote, on a beloved Yamaha upright in my old Williamsburg apartment. I was listening to a lot of Arcade Fire at the time, and wanted to imbue Pierre's character with that band's sense of epic tragedy. I'm also a nut for the 2-against-3 rhythm in the piano part; this rhythm appears throughout the show, especially in "Natasha Lost" and "The Ball."

(9) The first use of Tolstoy's prose in the show. I employed a pretty loose adaptive technique throughout, trying to keep Tolstoy's voice and amazing imagery intact, while giving myself free license to revise and paraphrase to make things more lyrically satisfying. I used Aylmer and Louise Maude's 1922 translation, which was the first English translation and was overseen by Tolstoy himself; I also referenced Anthony Briggs (the first one I read), Constance Garnett (an old-school classic), and Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (the most recent, and my favorite). The show is an adaptation of Volume 2, Part 5 (or "Book 8" if your translation breaks the novel into books instead of volumes and parts), and this is the first line of Chapter 1 of that section:

"After Prince Andrew's engagement to Natasha, Pierre without any apparent cause suddenly felt it impossible to go on living as before."

(Various translations transliterate Natasha's fiancé as Andrey, Andrew, or Andrei; I just like the "y" ending best. But the only "correct" spelling is "Андрей.")

MARY & BOLKONSKY

Andrey's family, totally messed up

BALAGA

And Balaga's just for fun!

ALL

Balaga's just for fun!

Balaga is fun
Bolkonsky is crazy
Mary is plain
Dolokhov is fierce
Hélène is a slut
Anatole is hot
Marya is old-school
Sonya is good
Natasha is young
And Andrey isn't here (7)

And what about Pierre?
Dear, bewildered and awkward Pierre?
What about Pierre?
Rich, unhappily married Pierre?
What about Pierre?
What about Pierre?
What about Pierre?

2. PIERRE (8)

PIERRE

It's dawned on me suddenly
And for no obvious reason
That I can't go on
Living as I am (9)

The zest of life has vanished
Only the skeleton remains
Unexpectedly vile
I used to be better

CHORUS

Ah . . .
Oh Pierre! Our merry feasting crank
Our most dear, most kind, most smart and eccentric

A warm-hearted Russian of the old school
His purse is always empty
Cuz it's open to all
Oh Pierre
Just one of a hundred sad old men
Living out their final days in Moscow (10)

PIERRE

I drink too much
Right now, my friend fights and bleeds
And I sit at home and read
Hours at a time
Hours at my screen (11)
Anything, anything
Abandoned to distraction
In order to forget
We waste our lives
Drowning in wine
I never thought that I'd end up like this
I used to be better
And the women they all pity me
Cuz I'm married
But not in love
Frozen at the center

WOMEN

Il est charmant; il n'a pas de sexe (12)
He is charming; he has no sex

CHORUS

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Just one of a hundred sad old men
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PIERRE

There's a ringing in my head
There's a sickness in the world
And everyone knows

(10) Tolstoy: "For Moscow society Pierre was the nicest, kindest, most intellectual, merriest, and most magnanimous of cranks, a heedless, genial nobleman of the old Russian type. His purse was always empty because it was open to everyone. . . . Pierre was one of those retired gentlemen-in-waiting of whom there were hundreds good-humoredly ending their days in Moscow (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 1)

The descending D-major arpeggio in the clarinet here is a sort of theme for Pierre; it appears again in "Dust and Ashes" and "The Great Comet of 1812." Those two songs also use similar chord progressions.

(11) This is the lyric I get asked about the most. It indeed an anachronistic reference to computer/photo screens. The show originally had more of that going on—Act 2 was going to start with Pierre watching war footage on TV—but we eventually came to a more delicate anachronistic tone. But I love this line, and do think it's exactly what Pierre would be doing if he were transplanted to today.

(12) The first French in the show; *War & Peace* famously begins with a full paragraph almost entirely in French. Many members of Russian society at the time spoke French in an effort to be "more European" ironically at the same time that Napoleon's army was beginning its invasion. Tolstoy, a profound nationalist and lover of all things Russian, disapproved of this custom and tends to only have his less enlightened characters use it (and Pierre's French is hilariously bad).



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(13) "... as with a buzzing in his head after dinner or supper ... he said to himself: 'It doesn't matter. I'll get it unraveled. I have a solution ready, but have no time now—I'll think it all out later on!' But the later on never came." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 1)

(14) "Sometimes he consoled himself with the thought that he was only living this life temporarily; but then he was shocked by the thought of how many, like himself, had entered that life and that Club temporarily, with all their teeth and hair, and had only left it when not a single tooth or hair remained." (Ibid.)

(15) "In moments of pride, when he thought of his position it seemed to him that he was quite different and distinct from those other retired gentlemen-in-waiting he had formerly despised: they were empty, stupid, contented fellows, satisfied with their position, 'while I am still discontented and want to do something for mankind. But perhaps all these comrades of mine struggled just like me' ... after living some time in Moscow he no longer despised, but began to grow fond of, to respect, and to pity his comrades in destiny, as he pitied himself." (Ibid.)

(16) There is a bit of Bruce Springsteen's "Adam Raised a Cain" going on here.



ABOVE: Katrina Yaukey, A.R.T., 2015.

But pretends that they don't see
"Oh, I'll sort it out later"
But later never comes (13)

PIERRE & MEN

And how many men before
Good Russian men
Believing in goodness and truth

PIERRE

Entered that door
With all their teeth and hair
And left it toothless and bald (14)

You empty and stupid
Contented fellows
Satisfied with your place
I'm different from you
I'm different from you
I still want to do something

Or do you struggle too?
I pity you, I pity me, I pity you
I pity you, I pity me, I pity you (15)

CHORUS

Ah ... (16)

PART I

Meanwhile, the young, newly engaged Natasha Rostova and her cousin Sonya arrive in "Moscow" to stay the winter with Marya D., Natasha's godmother, while Natasha waits for her fiancée, Andrey, to return from the war. Marya D. tells Natasha that she must visit her future in-laws, a demented, miserly old prince and his spinster daughter ("The Private and Intimate Life of the House"), to win their affection and secure the marriage, which is critical to the Rostovs' status and fortune. However, Natasha's visit ends in disaster ("Natasha & Bolkonskys") and she leaves missing Andrey more than ever ("No One Else").

CHAPTER I

3. MOSCOW (17)

PIERRE

Raz dva tri!

(*Natasha and Sonya arrive on sleighs.*)

NATASHA

Marya Dmitriyevna Akhrosimova

MARYA D.

Countess Natalya Ilyinichna Rostova

NATASHA

You must call me Natasha

SONYA

Marya Dmitriyevna Akhrosimova

MARYA D.

Sofia Alexandrovna Rostova

SONYA

You must call me Sonya

MARYA D.

Welcome

Welcome to Moscow

Where faded and fading princesses live

I'll take you where you must go

Pet you a bit

And I'll scold you a bit

My goddaughter, my favorite, Natasha

I will touch you on the cheek

NATASHA & SONYA

My cousin and I

Are so pleased to be with you

While we wait on our fiancées

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MARYA D.

Bring in their things! (18)

What are you dawdling for?

Get the samovar ready!

You're half frozen, I'm sure!

(17) This song was one of the harder ones to write, as there is soooooo much exposition in it; it went through a lot of revisions. For the most part I tried to lay things out as bluntly as possible, while also establishing Natasha and Sonya's friendship and the fact that Marya D. is awesome.

(18) Lots of Tolstoy here! "The count's things? Bring them here," she said, pointing to the portmanteaus and not greeting anyone. "The young ladies"? There to the left. Now what are you dawdling for?" she cried to the maids. "Get the samovar ready! ... You've grown plumper and prettier," she remarked, drawing Natasha (whose cheeks were glowing from the cold) to her by the hood. "Foo! You are cold! Now take off your things, quick!" she shouted to the count who was going to kiss her hand. "You're half frozen, I'm sure! Bring some rum for tea! ... Bonjour, Sonya dear!" (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 6)

In the very first draft of the show, Natasha's father (who is also visiting in the novel) was a character too, but eventually it became apparent that Marya fulfilled all the authority figure needs of the story. All hail simplicity!



Welcome to
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(13) "... as with a buzzing in his head after dinner or supper... he said to himself: 'It doesn't matter. I'll get it unraveled. I have a solution ready, but have no time now—I'll think it all out later on!' But the later on never came." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 1)

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In the very first draft of the show, Natasha's fiancée (who is also visiting in the novel) was a character, but eventually it became apparent that Marya D. was all the authority figure needs of the story. All hands on deck, simplicity!

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(14) "Sometimes he consoled himself with the thought that he was only living this life temporarily; but then he was shocked by the thought of how many, like himself, had entered that life and that Club temporarily, with all their teeth and hair, and had only left it when not a single tooth or hair remained." (Ibid.)

(15) "In moments of pride, when he thought of his position it seemed to him that he was quite different and distinct from those other retired gentlemen-in-waiting he had formerly despised: they were empty, stupid, contented fellows, satisfied with their position, 'while I am still discontented and want to do something for mankind. But perhaps all these comrades of mine struggled just like me' ... after living some time in Moscow he no longer despised, but began to grow fond of, to respect, and to pity his comrades in destiny, as he pitied himself." (Ibid.)

(16) There is a bit of Bruce Springsteen's "Adam Raised a Cain" going on here.



ABOVE: Katrina Yaukey, A.R.T., 2015.

But pretends that they don't see
"Oh, I'll sort it out later"
But later never comes (13)

PIERRE & MEN

And how many men before
Good Russian men
Believing in goodness and truth

PIERRE

Entered that door
With all their teeth and hair
And left it toothless and bald (14)

You empty and stupid
Contented fellows
Satisfied with your place
I'm different from you
I'm different from you
I still want to do something

Or do you struggle too?
I pity you, I pity me, I pity you
I pity you, I pity me, I pity you (15)

CHORUS

Ah ... (16)

PART I

Meanwhile, the young, newly engaged Natasha Rostova and her cousin Sonya arrive in "Moscow" to stay the winter with Marya D., Natasha's godmother, while Natasha waits for her fiancée, Andrey, to return from the war. Marya D. tells Natasha that she must visit her future in-laws, a demented, miserly old prince and his spinster daughter ("The Private and Intimate Life of the House"), to win their affection and secure the marriage, which is critical to the Rostovs' status and fortune. However, Natasha's visit ends in disaster ("Natasha & Bolkonskys") and she leaves missing Andrey more than ever ("No One Else").

CHAPTER I

3. MOSCOW (17)

PIERRE

Raz dva tri!
(Natasha and Sonya arrive on sleighs.)

NATASHA

Marya Dmitriyevna Akhrosimova

MARYA D.

Countess Natalya Ilyinichna Rostova

NATASHA

You must call me Natasha

SONYA

Marya Dmitriyevna Akhrosimova

MARYA D.

Sofia Alexandrovna Rostova

SONYA

You must call me Sonya

MARYA D.

Welcome
Welcome to Moscow
Where faded and fading princesses live
I'll take you where you must go
Pet you a bit
And I'll scold you a bit
My goddaughter, my favorite, Natasha
I will touch you on the cheek

NATASHA & SONYA

My cousin and I
Are so pleased to be with you
While we wait on our fiancées
Fighting in the war

MARYA D.

Bring in their things! (18)
What are you dawdling for?
Get the samovar ready!
You're half frozen, I'm sure!

(17) This song was one of the harder ones to write, as there is soooooo much exposition in it; it went through a lot of revisions. For the most part I tried to lay things out as bluntly as possible, while also establishing Natasha and Sonya's friendship and the fact that Marya D. is awesome.

(18) Lots of Tolstoy here! "The count's things? Bring them here," she said, pointing to the portmanteaus and not greeting anyone. "The young ladies"? There to the left. Now what are you dawdling for?" she cried to the maids. "Get the samovar ready! ... You've grown plumper and prettier," she remarked, drawing Natasha (whose cheeks were glowing from the cold) to her by the hood. "Foo! You are cold! Now take off your things, quick!" she shouted to the count who was going to kiss her hand. "You're half frozen, I'm sure! Bring some rum for tea! ... Bonjour, Sonya dear!" (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 6)

In the very first draft of the show, Natasha's father (who is also visiting in the novel) was a character too, but eventually it became apparent that Marya fulfilled all the authority figure needs of the story. All hail simplicity!

Welcome to
Moscow
Where faded
and fading
princesses live

THE GREAT COMET



time someone explicitly narrates. From
I wanted not just to tell the story, but
's *novel* on stage. He is such a master
ibing characters' inner monologues and
eir feelings through minute physical
arms, glittering eyes), and I did not want
text to sacrifice his language and style.
technique also helps invite the audience
ry, as these lines are usually given
ience members.

at Sonya is mostly just a narrator in Act 1,
her Act 2 aria "Sonya Alone" all the more
heartbreaking.

zing line actually comes from the first
t Pierre: "In Moscow he felt at peace, at
nd dirty as in an old dressing gown."

melody is the very first thing I wrote
how. It comes back in "The Ball" and
asha."

zing clarinet solo here is played by Mark
Original Cast Recording; while this song
mmed, this was an obvious candidate
ng block, but I never had the heart to
ent, which establishes so much about
s love and the musical culture of the

Grace McLean and Denée Benton,

Bring some rum for the tea!
Sonyushka bonjour
And Natasha my darling
You've grown plumper and prettier

NATASHA

My cheeks are glowing from the cold

SONYA

She said (19)

Gazing at Marya with kind, glittering eyes

MARYA D.

Welcome

Welcome to Moscow

Scruffy and cozy

Like an old dressing gown (20)

SONYA

Countess Natalya

NATASHA

Sofia Alexandrovna

SONYA

How beautiful you looked in the snow

NATASHA

Cousin dear I love you

Trust no one but you

But I can't bear this waiting

I cry and I cry

Andrey where are you?

I want him now, at once

To embrace him and cling to him

No one can understand

I love him

I know him

He loves me only (21)

He'll come home one day

And take me away

I want nothing more

I want nothing more

Hmmm . . . (22)



(23) This name is totally made up, but appropriately it was my grandmother's favorite drink (a raspberry liqueur). (And it of course rhymes with "afford" . . . see, sometimes this show does rhyme!)

(24) Boston is actually a pretty fun card game—I learned it in college, when my housemates and I worked our way through every card game in *Hoyle's Rules of Games* (while drinking lots of red wine). When we did this show at A.R.T., Grace McLean would sometimes do an outrageous wink here.

(25) "Well, now we'll talk. I congratulate you on your betrothed. You've hooked a fine fellow! I am glad for your sake and I've known him since he was so high." She held her hand a couple of feet from the ground. Natasha blushed happily. "I like him and all his family. Now listen! You know that old Prince Nicholas much dislikes his son's marrying. The old fellow's crotchety! Of course Prince Andrew is not a child and can shift without him, but it's not nice to enter a family against a father's will. One wants to do it peacefully and lovingly. You're a clever girl and you'll know how to manage. Be kind, and use your wits. Then all will be well." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 1)

MARYA D.

First thing tomorrow to Madame Chambord's (23)
Dresses, dresses, we'll buy what we can afford
Then dinner and a game of Boston (24)
Then you'll read to me while I knit!
How wonderful to have you here
Instead of these gossips and crybabies

NATASHA & SONYA

You'll take us where we must go
Pet us a bit
And scold us a bit

SONYA

Her goddaughter, her favorite, Natasha
She will touch you on the cheek

(Sonya leaves.)

MARYA D.

Well, now we'll talk (25)
I congratulate you and Andrey
You've hooked a fine fellow!
One of the finest matches in all of Russia
I am glad and relieved
He'll be the family's saving grace

NATASHA

I blush happily

MARYA D.

But his father, Prince Bolkonsky, much dislikes his
son's marrying
The old fellow's crotchety!
Of course Prince Andrey's not a child
But it's not nice to enter a family against a father's will
One wants to do it peacefully and lovingly
But you're a clever girl
Just be kind to Andrey's sister
And when the sister loves you
So will the father
And all will be well

CHAPTER 2

4. THE PRIVATE AND INTIMATE
LIFE OF THE HOUSE (26)

BOLKONSKY

I've aged (27)
I've aged so very much
I fall asleep at the table
My napkin drops to the floor
I'm full of childish vanities
I forget things
And I live in the past
I've aged so very much
People enjoy me though
I come in for tea in my old-fashioned coat and
powdered wig
And I tell stories
And utter scathing critiques
This old-fashioned house
With its gigantic mirrors and powdered footmen
And this stern, shrewd old man
A relic of the past century
With his gentle daughter
Is a majestic and agreeable spectacle

MARY

But besides the couple of hours during which we have
guests
There are also twenty-two hours in the day
During which the private and intimate life of the
house continues

BOLKONSKY

Bring my me slippers (28)

MARY

Yes father yes father

BOLKONSKY

Bring me my wine

MARY

Yes father yes father

(26) This song has also undergone a lot of revision, especially as the structure of the show became clearer; originally I conceived that the show would be a little more episodic, with one big song for each of the eleven characters. However, as Natasha's stories became clearer, this song in particular became more and more like an odd detour in the story. So it has been revised with pretty much every line both to make it tighter and to make the Bolkonsky story relate more closely to Natasha's.

(27) "The prince had aged very much that year. He showed marked signs of senility by a tendency to fall asleep, forgetfulness of quite recent events, remembrance of remote ones, and the childish vanity with which he accepted the role of head of the household in opposition. In spite of this the old man inspired in his visitors alike a feeling of respectful veneration especially of an evening when he came in to tea in his old-fashioned coat and powdered wig and, arousing anyone, told his abrupt stories of the past, or uttered yet more abrupt and scathing criticisms of the present. For them all, that old-fashioned house with its gigantic mirrors, pre-Revolution furniture, powdered footmen, and the stern shrewd old man (himself a relic of the past century) with his gentle daughter and the pre-Frenchwoman who were reverently devoted to him, presented a majestic and agreeable spectacle. But the visitors did not reflect that besides the couple of hours during which they saw their host, there were twenty-two hours in the day during which the private and intimate life of the house continued." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 2)

(28) There is a bit of Tom Waits going on here.

MARYA D.

First thing tomorrow to Madame Chambord's (23)
 Dresses, dresses, we'll buy what we can afford
 Then dinner and a game of Boston (24)
 Then you'll read to me while I knit!
 How wonderful to have you here
 Instead of these gossips and crybabies

NATASHA & SONYA

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 Pet us a bit
 And scold us a bit

SONYA

Her goddaughter, her favorite, Natasha
 She will touch you on the cheek

*(Sonya leaves.)***MARYA D.**

Well, now we'll talk (25)
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 You've hooked a fine fellow!
 One of the finest matches in all of Russia
 I am glad and relieved
 He'll be the family's saving grace

NATASHA

I blush happily

MARYA D.

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 son's marrying
 The old fellow's crotchety!
 Of course Prince Andrey's not a child
 But it's not nice to enter a family against a father's will
 One wants to do it peacefully and lovingly
 But you're a clever girl
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 And when the sister loves you
 So will the father
 And all will be well

CHAPTER 2

4. THE PRIVATE AND INTIMATE
LIFE OF THE HOUSE (26)**BOLKONSKY**

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 And utter scathing critiques
 This old-fashioned house
 With its gigantic mirrors and powdered footmen
 And this stern, shrewd old man
 A relic of the past century
 With his gentle daughter
 Is a majestic and agreeable spectacle

MARY

But besides the couple of hours during which we have
 guests
 There are also twenty-two hours in the day
 During which the private and intimate life of the
 house continues

BOLKONSKY

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MARY

Yes father yes father

BOLKONSKY

Bring me my wine

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(26) This song has also undergone a lot of surgery, especially as the structure of the show became clearer; originally I conceived that the show would be a little more episodic, with one big song for each of the eleven characters. However, as Natasha & Pierre's stories became clearer, this song in particular felt more and more like an odd detour in the storytelling. So it has been revised with pretty much every transfer, both to make it tighter and to make the Bolkonskys' story relate more closely to Natasha's.

(27) "The prince had aged very much that year. He showed marked signs of senility by a tendency to fall asleep, forgetfulness of quite recent events, remembrance of remote ones, and the childish vanity with which he accepted the role of head of the Moscow opposition. In spite of this the old man inspired in all his visitors alike a feeling of respectful veneration—especially of an evening when he came in to tea in his old-fashioned coat and powdered wig and, aroused by anyone, told his abrupt stories of the past, or uttered yet more abrupt and scathing criticisms of the present. For them all, that old-fashioned house with its gigantic mirrors, pre-Revolution furniture, powdered footmen, and the stern shrewd old man (himself a relic of the past century) with his gentle daughter and the pretty Frenchwoman who were reverently devoted to him presented a majestic and agreeable spectacle. But the visitors did not reflect that besides the couple of hours during which they saw their host, there were also twenty-two hours in the day during which the private and intimate life of the house continued." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 2)

(28) There is a bit of Tom Waits going on here.

ABOVE: Blake DeLong, *Kazino*, 2013.**BOLKONSKY**

If you're not too busy
Fiddling with your incense and icons?

MARY

No father no father

BOLKONSKY

My daughter, the pilgrim
The saintly old maid (29)

MARY

And I have no friends
No, never go anywhere
For who would take care of him

BOLKONSKY

Silence, silence!

MARY

Yes father yes father

BOLKONSKY

I can hurt you

BOTH

I can hurt you

MARY

But I never ever ever ever would
This is just how it is
I'm always to blame
Father I love you father
And time moves on
And my fate slips past
And nothing ever happens to me
And Countess Natalya Rostova is coming for tea

NATASHA

I know they'll like me
Everyone has always liked me (30)

BOLKONSKY

Natasha is young
And silly and dumb
Just a kitten of a thing
Why can't he wait 'til I'm dead?
It won't be long now

MARY

And time moves on
And my fate slips past
Is this all I'll make of my life?
Will I never be happy?
Will I never be anyone's wife?

BOLKONSKY

Ah, what's this? A young suitor? (31)
Ha! Who'd want you my girl?
Don't waste my time
Now get out of my house!

Why am I cursed with two children
Who both want to marry beneath their place?

Oh, maybe I'll marry someone myself
Some cheap French thing (32)

Oh that offends you does it?

Ah, come in my dear,
Come in my dear, come in

MARY

And he draws her to him
And he kisses her hand
Embraces her affectionately
And I flush and run out of the room

BOLKONSKY

Come back here
Let an old man have his fun

MARY

But she's just using you papa
Wants your money papa!
To take advantage of your weakness like that
It's disgusting
My voice breaks

BOLKONSKY

It's my money and I'll throw it where I want
Not at you!
And not at Andrey's harlot!
Insolent girl!
Insolent girl!

(29) Mary has a pretty hard time during *Grigori* but as Rachel likes to say, she really "wins & Peace": she ends up inheriting everything marrying Natasha's brother Nikolai, and then live the happiest ever after of anyone in the (Natasha and Pierre also end up together, later, but only *somewhat* happily ever after, only after Natasha and Andrey reconcile, which you should read the book!)

(30) This used to be at the top of the next scene inserted it here, and had the Bolkonskys displease Natasha a bit, to keep the story a little more

(31) There's a bit of audience participation in *Grigori* Mary and Bolkonsky both pick audience members as their love interests . . . in general I actually like "audience participation" (it gives me the jeebies when I have to do it), but this tiny moment is quick and harmless, and Nick Belton is just fantastically ridiculous in this scene. Also, hilarious when Josh Groban secretly came to see the show under wraps, he ended up being the only male ten feet of Gelsey Bell at this moment . . . and Gelsey (and the audience!) had a real fun

(32) An allusion to another cut character, Mademoiselle Bourienne, a French woman living with the Bolkonskys that the count does indeed take a lascivious interest in.

Ah, what's this
A young suitor



ABOVE: Blake DeLong, Kazino, 2013.

BOLKONSKY

If you're not too busy
Fiddling with your incense and icons?

MARY

No father no father

BOLKONSKY

My daughter, the pilgrim
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MARY

And I have no friends
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Silence, silence!

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To take advantage of your weakness like that
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BOLKONSKY

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Not at you!
And not at Andrey's harlot!

Insolent girl!
Insolent girl!

(29) Mary has a pretty hard time during *Great Comet*, but as Rachel likes to say, she really "wins *War & Peace*": she ends up inheriting everything, and marrying Natasha's brother Nikolai, and they basically live the happiest ever after of anyone in the book. (Natasha and Pierre also end up together, many years later, but only somewhat happily ever after. And this only after Natasha and Andrey reconcile, while . . . well you should read the book!)

(30) This used to be at the top of the next song; I inserted it here, and had the Bolkonskys discuss Natasha a bit, to keep the story a little more focused.

(31) There's a bit of audience participation here, as Mary and Bolkonsky both pick audience members as their love interests . . . in general I actually don't like "audience participation" (it gives me the heebie-jeebies when I have to do it), but this tiny moment is quick and harmless, and Nick Belton is just fantastically ridiculous in this scene. Also, hilariously, when Josh Groban secretly came to see the show at A.R.T. and we were still trying to keep his involvement under wraps, he ended up being the only male within ten feet of Gelsey Bell at this moment . . . and so he and Gelsey (and the audience!) had a real fun time.

(32) An allusion to another cut character, Mademoiselle Bourienne, a French woman living with the Bolkonskys that the count does indeed take a lascivious interest in.

*Ah, what's this?
A young suitor?*



(33) "At such moments something like a pride of sacrifice gathered in her soul. And suddenly that father whom she had judged would look for his spectacles in her presence, fumbling near them and not seeing them, or would forget something that had just occurred, or take a false step with his falling legs and turn to see if anyone had noticed his feebleness, or, worst of all, at dinner when there were no visitors to excite him would suddenly fall asleep, letting his napkin drop and his shaking head sink over his plate. 'He is old and feeble, and I dare to condemn him!' she thought at such moments, with a feeling of revulsion against herself." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 2)

Gelsey really breaks my heart in this section, every time. Incidentally, Jason Eagan at Ars Nova once gave Gelsey an enunciation note here, because he was hearing "I disgust myself." Which of course is itself a pretty amazing lyric.

(34) It really cracks me up that the Servant is the only character in the show with a real proper "theme" or "leitmotif" (repeated again in "A Call to Pierre" and "Find Anatole") . . . though Pierre's D-major arpeggio and Natasha's "love theme" come close.

(35) In my favorite staging in the whole show, Rachel has Natasha and Mary sing this song seated at a tiny table with four audience members. . . . It is such a joy to watch the people at that table slowly realize what is about to happen to them.

(36) I don't really know why this song kind of has a reggae groove. But it does.

Where—
Where—
Where are my glasses?
Where are they?
Where are my glasses?
Oh God—
Oh God I'm frightened
Oh God I've aged, I've aged so very much
Where are my glasses?
Where are my—
Where are my glasses?

MARY

They are there upon his head
They are there upon his head
The pride of sacrifice
Gathers in my soul
They are there upon his head

And he forgets things
He lives in the past
He falls asleep at the table
His napkin drops to the floor
His shaking head
Sinks over his plate

He is old and feeble
And I dare to judge him
I disgust myself

I disgust myself (33)

5. NATASHA & BOLKONSKYS**SERVANT**

May I present the Countess
Natalya Rostova (34)

MARY

Oh
Oh, hello
Won't you come in

NATASHA

Hello

(Natasha and Mary awkwardly move to a table in silence.) (35)

MARY

And from the first glance I do not like Natasha (36)
Too fashionably dressed
Frivolous and vain
Her beauty, youth, and happiness.
My brother's love for her (37)

And my father—

BOLKONSKY

I do not wish to see her!

MARY

I know at any moment he might indulge
in some freak (38)

NATASHA

I'm sorry the Prince is still ailing

BOLKONSKY

Songstress!

NATASHA

I am not afraid of anyone

But such hesitation
Such unnatural manners

And from the first glance I do not like Princess Mary
Too plain and affected

Insolent and dry
I shrink into myself
Assume an offhand air

MARY

Which alienates me still more

NATASHA & MARY

Constrained and strained (39)

Constrained and strained

Constrained and strained

Irkome

Irkome

(37) "From the first glance Princess Mary did not like Natasha. She thought her too fashionably dressed, frivolously gay and vain. She did not at all realize that before having seen her future sister-in-law she was prejudiced against her by involuntary envy of her beauty, youth, and happiness, as well as by jealousy of her brother's love for her." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 7)

(38) "She had decided to receive them, but feared lest the prince might at any moment indulge in some freak, as he seemed much upset by the Rostovs' visit." (Ibid)

Insane phrases like this are why I love adapting class literature.

(39) My love of minor 2nds comes from singing in my high school jazz choir, the Lakewood High School Roadshow. (Lakewood is just outside of Cleveland, Ohio.) Big unending love and thanks to Gerry Wondrak (who also taught me about vocalese; see the notes to "Natasha & Anatole"), and also my high school choir teacher John Drotleff (who exposed me to Brahms and Rachmaninoff and Ives and every great Requiem and too many other things to list). These two teachers are the reason I'm a composer, and they have my eternal gratitude. Support arts education!



OPPOSITE: Gelsey Bell, A.R.T., 2015.

ABOVE: Paul Pinto, A.R.T.



"At such moments something like a pride of
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presence, fumbling near them and not seeing them,
ould forget something that had just occurred, or
a false step with his failing legs and turn to see
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Where are my glasses?

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Gathers in my soul
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I disgust myself (33)

5. NATASHA & BOLKONSKYS

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Natalya Rostova (34)

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Oh, hello
Won't you come in

NATASHA

Hello
*(Natasha and Mary awkwardly move to a table in
silence.)* (35)

MARY

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Too fashionably dressed
Frivolous and vain
Her beauty, youth, and happiness.
My brother's love for her (37)

And my father—

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Which alienates me still more

NATASHA & MARY

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Constrained and strained
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youth, and happiness, as well as by jealousy of her
brother's love for her." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 7)

(38) "She had decided to receive them, but feared lest
the prince might at any moment indulge in some freak,
as he seemed much upset by the Rostovs' visit." (Ibid)

Insane phrases like this are why I love adapting classic
literature.

(39) My love of minor 2nds comes from singing in
my high school jazz choir, the Lakewood High School
Roadshow. (Lakewood is just outside of Cleveland,
Ohio.) Big unending love and thanks to Gerry Wondrak
(who also taught me about vocalese; see the notes to
"Natasha & Anatole"), and also my high school choir
teacher John Drotleff (who exposed me to Brahms and
Rachmaninoff and Ives and every great Requiem and
too many other things to list). These two teachers are
the reason I'm a composer, and they have my eternal
gratitude. Support arts education!



OPPOSITE: Gelsey Bell, A.R.T., 2015.
ABOVE: Paul Pinto, A.R.T.

(40) "Dear Natalie," said Princess Mary, "I want you to know that I am glad my brother has found happiness...." She paused, feeling that she was not telling the truth. Natasha noticed this and guessed its reason. "I think, Princess, it is not convenient to speak of that now," she said with external dignity and coldness, though she felt the tears choking her." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 7)

(41) In the original *Ars Nova* run, there was a different song here: "If He Were Here Now." It was very dear and pleasant, but after getting to know Phillipa Soo better it was clear that she was a superstar, and that her voice demanded a better song. She had read the book during that first run, and so while getting ready for the Off-Broadway transfer we talked a lot about Natasha; Pippa in particular loved some earlier scenes in the novel (especially Vol. 2, Pt. 4, Ch. 10) that expressed Natasha's philosophical and spiritual sense of wonder, full of joy and life, a youthful and magical quality that draws all these people (including Andrey, Anatole, and Pierre) to her... so a lot of this text comes from those earlier scenes, highlighted in Pippa's emails.

IF HE WERE HERE NOW

If he were here now
I would not be so silly and afraid of things
I would simply embrace him
Cling to him
And lost in his eyes
His childlike eyes
I wouldn't be so lost

If he were here now
I would make him laugh as he used to laugh
Make him smile his smile
Blush his blush
I would stare into his eyes
Oh how I see those eyes!
I love him alone
Nothing else matters
But that face and those eyes
Where is he?

Better not to think of him
Better to forget him for the present
Oh, but if he were here now

The lights of the street lamps
Flicker in the snow
So sad, so in love
So softened and tender
So lost and young
And I don't know where I'm going

(The Prince enters in his dressing gown.)

BOLKONSKY

Ah! Ah, madam!
Countess Rostova, if I am not mistaken—
Oh! Oh I beg you to excuse me, excuse me, my
costume, these underthings—
I did not know, my poor girl
God is my witness
I came in such a costume only to see my daughter
God is my witness, I didn't know
My poor girl

MARY

And he looked at her once
Head to toe
And left muttering

NATASHA

I must take my leave

MARY

Please wait—

Dear Natalie (40)

I want you to know how glad I am my brother has
found happiness

NATASHA

Is that the truth?
I think it is not convenient to speak of that now
Dear Princess

MARY

She said
With such dignity and coldness

NATASHA

Though I felt tears choking me
What have I said, what have I done?
Crying like a child
Oh, they were so awful!
Oh, it all hurts so terribly
Andrey
Where are you?

6. NO ONE ELSE (41)

NATASHA

The moon— (42)

First time I heard your voice
Moonlight burst into the room
And I saw your eyes
And I saw your smile
And the world opened wide
And the world was inside of me

And I catch my breath
And I laugh and blush
And I hear guitars (43)
You are so good for me

I love you I love you I love you I love you I love you

Oh the moon

Oh the snow in the moonlight

And your childlike eyes

And your distant smile

I'll never be this happy again

You and I

And no one else

We've done this all before

We were angels once

Don't you remember?

Joy and life

Inside our souls

And nobody knows

Just you and me

It's our secret

This winter sky

How can anyone sleep? (44)

There was never such a night before!

I feel like putting my arms round my knees

And squeezing tight as possible

And flying away

Like this...

Oh the moon (45)

Oh the snow in the moonlight

(42) The moon scene comes from even earlier in the book (Vol. 2, Pt. 3, Ch. 2); in the novel, Andrey and Natasha are both looking at the moon, and Andrey hears Natasha and Sonya's voices coming from the room above him:

"He got up and went to the window to open it, as he opened the shutters the moonlight, as if it had long been watching for this, burst into the room. Prince Andrew leaned his elbows on the window and his eyes rested on that sky.

His room was on the first floor. Those in the room above were also awake. He heard female voices overhead.

"Just once more," said a girlish voice above him, "Prince Andrew recognized at once.

"But when are you coming to bed?" replied another voice.

"I won't, I can't sleep, what's the use? Come to bed the last time."

(43) Also earlier in the book, there is an amazing scene (Vol. 2, Pt. 4, Ch. 7) where Natasha and the family spend the night at a peasant's house, and an amazing character "Uncle" plays guitar and Natasha becomes ecstatic and starts dancing wildly... she wanted to have this scene in the show somewhat but there just wasn't a place to put it... so instead we have this little mention of guitars here, and of course we get to see Natasha in this kind of peak ecstasy during "Balaga" and the dance break in "Abduction." This scene is really well done by Lily James et al. in the 2016 BBC miniseries.

(44) "Oh, how can you sleep? Only look how glorious it is! Ah, how glorious! Do wake up, Sonya!" she said almost with tears in her voice. "There never, never was such a lovely night before!"

Sonya made some reluctant reply.

"Do just come and see what a moon!... Oh, how lovely! Come here... Darling, sweetheart, come here! The moon you see? I feel like sitting down on my heels, putting my arms round my knees like this, straining tight, as tight as possible, and flying away! Like this..." (Vol. 2, Pt. 3, Ch. 2)

(45) I call the string counterpoint the "Bollywood strings" here... Kronos Quartet has an amazing album of Bollywood music with Asha Bhosle that features a lot of these kind of slidey chromatic unison string melodies; I think The Beatles' "Within You Without You" was probably sliding around in my head here too.

"Dear Natalie," said Princess Mary, "I want you to that I am glad my brother has found happiness... caused, feeling that she was not telling the truth. She noticed this and guessed its reason. 'I think, yes, it is not convenient to speak of that now,' she with external dignity and coldness, though she felt tears choking her." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 7)

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Could simply embrace him
Looking to him
And lost in his eyes
Childlike eyes
Couldn't be so lost

He were here now
Could make him laugh as he used to laugh
Like him smile his smile
Watch his blush
Could stare into his eyes
How I see those eyes!
Leave him alone
Nothing else matters
That face and those eyes
Where is he?

Never not to think of him
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'Just once more,' said a girlish voice above him which Prince Andrew recognized at once.

'But when are you coming to bed?' replied another voice.

'I won't, I can't sleep, what's the use? Come now for the last time.'

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(45) I call the string counterpoint the "Bollywood strings" here. . . . Kronos Quartet has an amazing album of Bollywood music with Asha Bhosle that features a lot of these kind of slidey chromatic unison string melodies; I think The Beatles' "Within You Without You" was probably sliding around in my head here too.



And your childlike eyes
 And your distant smile
 I'll never be this happy again (46)
 You and I
 You and I
 You and I
 And no one else
 Maybe he'll come today
 Maybe he came already
 And he's sitting in the drawing room
 And I simply forgot (47)

PART II

The next night Natasha is introduced to decadent Moscow society at "The Opera"; there she meets Anatole, a young officer and notorious rogue ("Natasha & Anatole"); after their interaction Natasha feels confused, and tries to remember her love for Andrey ("Natasha Lost").

CHAPTER 3

7. THE OPERA

MARYA D.
 The opera, the opera!
 Hold up your dresses and jump out quickly

SERVANT
 Ladies (48)
 Welcome to the opera

SONYA
 Bare arms and shoulders
 Brilliant uniforms
 Pearls and silk
 Glittering before our eyes
 Feminine envy
 A whole crowd of memories
 Desires and emotions
 Natasha, smooth your gown

(46) The immersive staging of the show was an add-on gimmick; it came from the novel's embrace of all of humanity, old and rich and poor, from the lowliest troika driver himself. So the audience itself is an essential part of the show: in staging the action amid the audience, we get a cast as huge as Tolstoy's. This is a moment to watch the audience; often there are very young and very old women right next to amazing Natasha, Denée Benton, as she sings the lines, and it's incredible and beautiful to see different generations process this portrayal of love through such different eyes.

(47) "But perhaps he'll come today, will come immediately. Perhaps he has come and is sitting in the drawing room. Perhaps he came yesterday and forgotten it." She rose, put down the guitar, and returned to the drawing room." (Vol. 2, Pt. 4, Ch. 10)

I pretty much always cry on these lines. It's on those astonishing Tolstoyian moments, that manage to convey so simply and perplexingly so much of humor, sadness, naïveté, and profound depth of his most beautiful and paradoxical characters.

(48) For some reason there is a bit of "Marian the Librarian" going on harmonically here. Which does not quite make sense, though this section does feel like an old-school-musical to me, à la the "Ascot Gavotte" scene in *My Fair Lady*.

OPPOSITE: Denée Benton.



ABOVE: Denée Benton, A.R.T., 2015.

CHORUS

Natasha, smooth your gown

NATASHA

Looking in the glass
I see I am pretty
Not a girl anymore
I've never felt like this before

Hundreds of eyes
Looking at my bare arms
My bare arms and neck
My bare arms and shoulders

CHORUS

The two remarkably pretty girls
Had not been seen in Moscow in many years
Everybody knew vaguely of Natasha's engagement
One of the finest matches in all of Russia

SONYA

Look, there's Alexey, home from the war at last

MARYA D.

He has changed
Dear me, Michael Kirilovich has grown still stouter!

CHORUS

There's Boris and Julie, engaged
And Anna Mikhaylovna, what a headdress
she has on! (49)

HÉLÈNE

And is that Natasha

CHORUS

And is that Natasha
And is that Natasha

NATASHA

They are looking at me
They are talking about me!
They all like me so much
The women envious
The men calming their jealousy

SERVANT

Announcing Fedya Dolokhov
He dominates Moscow's most brilliant young men
He stands in full view
Well aware he's attracting attention
Yet as much at ease as though he were in his own room

MARYA D.

Dolokhov was in the Caucasus
And he killed the Shah's brother!
Now all the Moscow ladies are mad about him
Dolokhov the assassin! (50)

SERVANT

Announcing Countess Hélène Bezukhova
The queen of society
Beautiful, barely clothed
Plump bare shoulders, and much exposed neck
Round which she wears a double string of pearls

CHORUS

Hélène and Dolokhov, arm in arm
Pierre the cuckold sits at home
Pierre the cuckold sits at home
The poor man

PIERRE

No, I am enjoying myself at home this evening (51)

NATASHA

Oh, that neck
Oh, those pearls

HÉLÈNE

So beautiful
What a charming young girl
So enchanting (52)

NATASHA

I blush scarlet

MARYA D.

Countess Bezukhova, Pierre's wife
Have you been here long?
And where is dear Pierre?
He never used to forget us

(49) These are all other wonderful characters in the novel; Boris was Natasha's childhood crush.

(50) Dolokhov also once proposed to Sonya; when she turns him down, he gets so mad that he sends Count Rostov out of all of his money in a poker game, nearly ruining the family; Brittain Ashford and I typically hint at this by sharing a deliciously bitter little look here.

(51) When I was performing in the show, these were my favorite lines to sing.

(52) Harmonically there's a little hint of "Charm" here.



*Plump bare
shoulders
and much
exposed neck*



CHORUS

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(51) When I was performing in the show, these were my favorite lines to sing.

(52) Harmonically there's a little hint of "Charming" here.

Plump bare
shoulders
and much
exposed neck

(53) Major props to Gelsey Bell and Paul Pinto; they are two amazing avant-garde vocalists, and we worked this section out together, taking full advantage of their supernatural voices. We tried very hard to make this scene work simultaneously as a parody of opera (as Tolstoy writes) and an actually amazing extended vocal technique moment, inspired by the vocal works of Ligeti, Crumb, Joan La Barbara, Meredith Monk, and Phil Minton.

(54) Again, Tolstoy hated opera, and his description of it is hilarious: "The floor of the stage consisted of smooth boards, at the sides was some painted cardboard representing trees, and at the back was a cloth stretched over boards. In the center of the stage sat some girls in red bodices and white skirts. One very fat girl in a white silk dress sat apart on a low bench, to the back of which a piece of green cardboard was glued. They all sang something. When they had finished their song the girl in white went up to the prompter's box and a man with tight silk trousers over his stout legs, and holding a plume and a dagger, went up to her and began singing, waving his arms about. . . . After her life in the country, and in her present serious mood, all this seemed grotesque and amazing to Natasha. She could not follow the opera nor even listen to the music; she saw only the painted cardboard and the queerly dressed men and women who moved, spoke, and sang so strangely in that brilliant light. . . . And feeling the bright light that flooded the whole place and the warm air heated by the crowd, Natasha little by little began to pass into a state of intoxication she had not experienced for a long while . . . the idea occurred to her . . . to lean over to Hélène and tickle her." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 9)

**NATASHA**

Yes Pierre, that good man
A little sad, a little stout
He must come visit us

HÉLÈNE

I will implore him to do so

MARYA D.

There's a woman one should stay far away from

Now Natasha
The curtain rises

CHORUS

The curtain rises

NATASHA

Everyone in the boxes and the stalls became silent
All the men, old and young, in uniform and
evening dress
All the women in the hall
With gems on their bare flesh
Turned their whole attention
With curiosity to the stage

*(Two singers perform a scene from an avant-garde opera.
It is grotesque and amazing.)* (53)

NATASHA

Grotesque and amazing
I cannot follow the opera (54)
Or even listen to the music
I see painted cardboard
Queerly dressed actors
Moving and singing so strangely in the lights
So false and unnatural
I'm ashamed and amused
And everyone else seems oblivious (55)
Yes everyone feigns delight

SONYA

And feeling the flood of brilliant lights
The warm perfumed air heated by the crowd
Natasha little by little
Began to pass into a state of intoxication

(Natasha joins the singers in the opera.)

NATASHA

Oh I'd tickle you all if I could
Oh I'd tickle you all if I could

SONYA

And then
A rush of cold air (56)

NATASHA & SONYA

An exceptionally handsome man walked in
With a confident yet courteous air (57)

HÉLÈNE

This was Hélène's brother
Anatole Kuragin
He moved with a swagger
Which would have been ridiculous
Had he not been so good-looking
And though it was the middle of the act
He walked right down the aisle
His sword and spurs jangling
His handsome perfumed head held high
And he looked right at Natasha

ANATOLE

Mais charmante

HÉLÈNE

And he took his place in the front row next to
Dolokhov

NATASHA

How handsome he is
How intoxicating

SONYA

In the second act there were tombstones
The moon over the footlights
Horns and contrabass
Black cloaks and daggers in their hands

NATASHA

I turn around again and our eyes meet
He gazes straight into my eyes
He is talking about me

(55) Once in rehearsal Pippa blanked here, and "And everyone else seems to get it!"; one of Ra and my all time favorite mangled lyrics.

(56) "During the entr'acte a whiff of cold air came from Hélène's box, the door opened, and Anatole entered stooping and trying not to brush against anyone." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 10)

Anatole's entrance is the first use of electronica in the show; he literally electrifies the room (and Natasha didn't figure out this dramaturgical justification until the electronic elements until much of the score was written; originally "Private and Intimate Life" had beats in it too, but those got removed.

The electronica also leaves when Anatole does at the end of "Pierre & Anatole," trailing out over "Natasha Very Ill" as the last effects of his involvement are felt. And then the electronic cataclysm at the end of "The Great Comet of 1812" is not Anatole, but rather the Comet. Or Pierre. Or Natasha. Or Napoleon. Or God. Or Something.

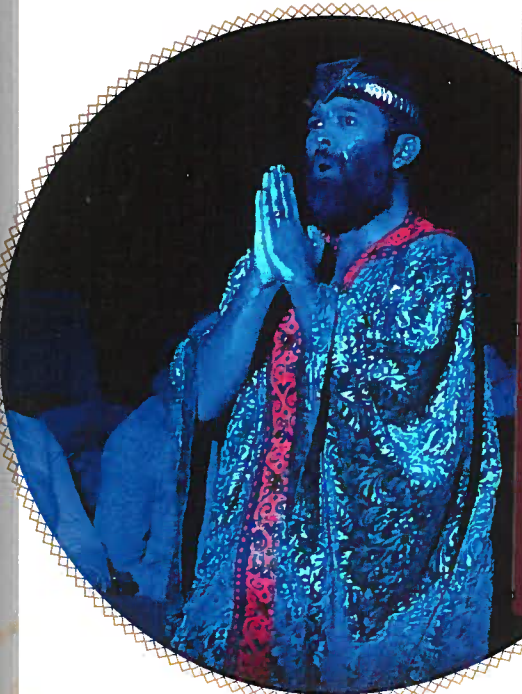
(57) "Natasha . . . saw an exceptionally handsome adjutant approaching their box with a self-assured yet courteous bearing. This was Anatole Kuragin whom she had seen and noticed long ago at the ball in Petersburg. He was now in an adjutant's uniform with one epaulet and a shoulder knot. He moved with a restrained swagger which would have been ridiculous had he not been so good-looking and had his handsome face not worn such an expression of good-humored complacency and gaiety. Though the performance was proceeding, he walked deliberately down the carpeted gangway, his sword and spurs slightly jingling and his handsome perfumed head held high. Having looked at Natasha as she approached his sister, laid his well gloved hand on the edge of her box, nodded to her, and leaning forward asked a question, with a motion toward Natasha. 'Mais charmante!'" (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 9)



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The moon over the footlights
Horns and contrabass
Black cloaks and daggers in their hands

NATASHA

I turn around again and our eyes meet
He gazes straight into my eyes
He is talking about me

(55) Once in rehearsal Pippa blanked here, and sang "And everyone else seems to get it!"; one of Rachel's and my all time favorite mangled lyrics.

(56) "During the entr'acte a whiff of cold air came into Hélène's box, the door opened, and Anatole entered, stooping and trying not to brush against anyone." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 10)

Anatole's entrance is the first use of electronica in the show; he literally electrifies the room (and Natasha). I didn't figure out this dramaturgical justification of the electronic elements until much of the score was written; originally "Private and Intimate Life" had some beats in it too, but those got removed.

The electronica also leaves when Anatole does at the end of "Pierre & Anatole," trailing out over "Natasha Very Ill" as the last effects of his involvement are felt. And then the electronic cataclysm at the end of "The Great Comet of 1812" is not Anatole, but rather the Comet. Or Pierre. Or Natasha. Or Napoleon. Or God. Or Something.

(57) "Natasha . . . saw an exceptionally handsome adjutant approaching their box with a self-assured yet courteous bearing. This was Anatole Kuragin whom she had seen and noticed long ago at the ball in Petersburg. He was now in an adjutant's uniform with one epaulet and a shoulder knot. He moved with a restrained swagger which would have been ridiculous had he not been so good-looking and had his handsome face not worn such an expression of good-humored complacency and gaiety. Though the performance was proceeding, he walked deliberately down the carpeted gangway, his sword and spurs slightly jingling and his handsome perfumed head held high. Having looked at Natasha he approached his sister, laid his well gloved hand on the edge of her box, nodded to her, and leaning forward asked a question, with a motion toward Natasha. 'Mais charmante!'" (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 9)



OPPOSITE: Paul Pinto, A.R.T., 2015.

THE GREAT COMET

Tolstoy made writing the music for this section easy! The orchestra is indeed playing an advised storm of chromatic scales and diminished chords.

The style I used to set a lot of the more conversational or novelistic text is highly influenced by a tradition called "vocalese," in which lyrics are written for famous jazz solos, resulting in these very rhythmic melodies (Lambert, Hendricks & Ross are my favorite purveyors of the style). Again, thank you, Gerry Brak!

The basic beat for this tune working on my way home on a bus, coming home from a writing retreat in which I felt like I hadn't gotten enough work done. There's also a fun game going on between Anatole and the piano; the piano player tries to follow Anatole's lead as closely as possible, with any small rhythmic variations in the actor's performance creating a loose, polyphonic sound (which is further complicated by a rhythmic piano loop that also plays in the track).

*Every time
I look at him
He's looking
at me*

PHOTOGRAPH BY: Lucas Steele, A.R.T., 2015.

SONYA

Candles burning
A crimson throne
The Tsar wails a mournful tune
They all wave their arms
And everybody cheers
"Bravo, bravo!"

NATASHA

Every time I look at him
He's looking at me
Every time I look at him
He's looking at me
Every time I look at him

SONYA

A terrible noise, a clatter in the crowd
A storm of chromatic scales and diminished
sevenths (58)
With rapturous faces everyone was shouting
Screaming and shouting, "Bravo!"

CHORUS

Bravo, bravo
Bravo, bravo
Bravo, bravo

SONYA

And then
A rush of cold air
And Anatole entered the box

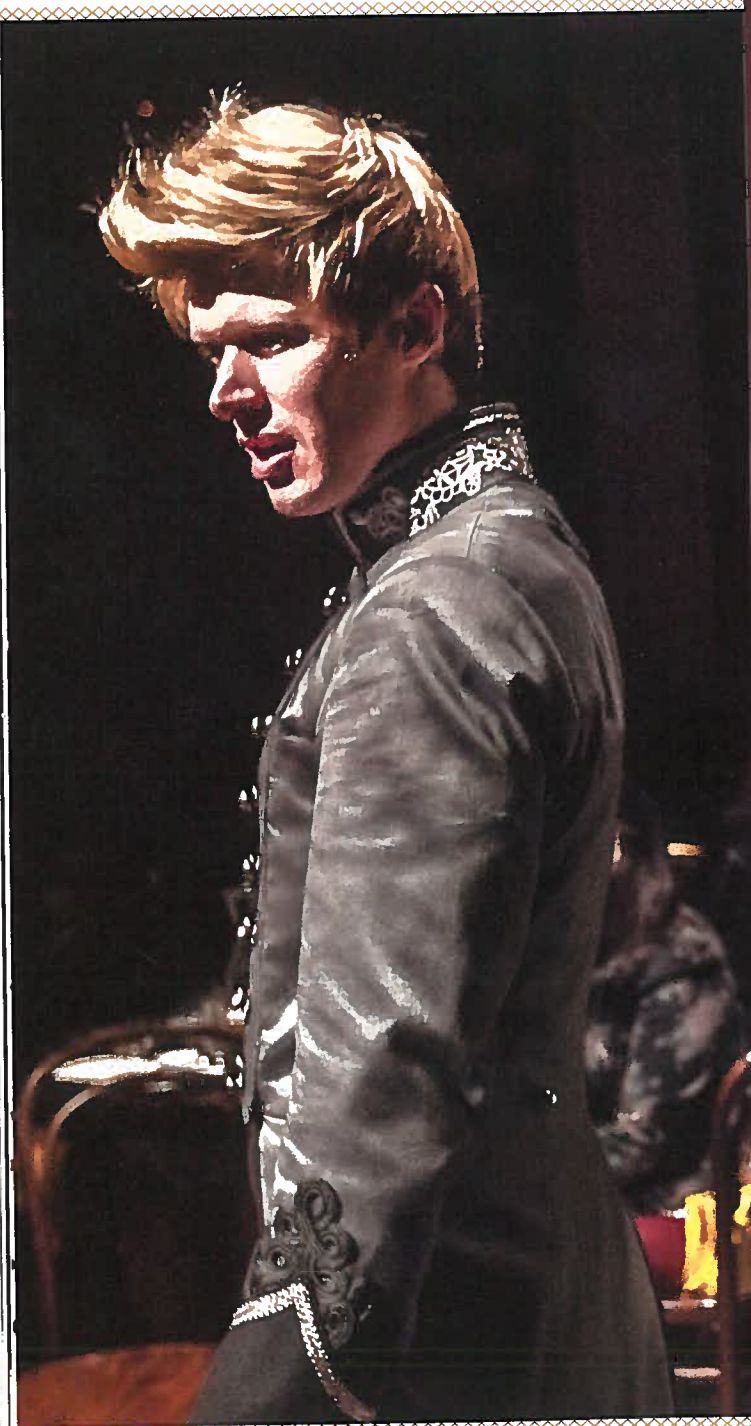
CHAPTER 4

8. NATASHA & ANATOLE (59)

ANATOLE

I have long wished to have this happiness
Ever since the Naryshkins' ball
Where I had the well-remembered pleasure of
seeing you
How do you like the performance?
Last week Semenova fell down on the stage





ABOVE: Lucas Steele, Kazino, 2013.

NATASHA

He is sensible and simple
 Bold and natural
 So strange and agreeable
 There is nothing formidable
 His smile is most naive
 Cheerful and good-natured
 And he's as handsome up close as at a distance
 And he's as handsome up close as at a distance

ANATOLE

And do you know, Natasha
 We are having a costume tournament soon
 You ought to come, please come!

NATASHA

Oh—

ANATOLE

You ought to come, please come!

NATASHA

Oh I—

ANATOLE

And I never remove my smiling eyes
 From your face, your neck, your bare arms
 And I never remove my smiling eyes
 From your face, your neck, your bare arms

NATASHA

I know for certain that he is taken by me
 I know for certain that he is enraptured by me
 I feel him looking at my shoulders
 My face, my neck, my bare arms

ANATOLE

And I look you in the eye

NATASHA & ANATOLE

And I look you in the eye

NATASHA

And looking into his eyes
 I am frightened
 There's not that barrier of modesty
 I've always felt with men

I feel so terribly near
 I fear that he may seize me from behind
 And kiss me on the neck
 How do you like Moscow?

ANATOLE

At first I did not like it much
 Because what makes a town pleasant
Ce sont les jolies femmes
 Isn't that so?
 But now I like it very much indeed
 Do come to the costume tournament Countess
 Do come! (60)
 You will be the prettiest there
 You will be the prettiest there
 Do come, dear Countess, and give me this flower
 as a pledge

We are speaking of most ordinary things

NATASHA

Yet I feel closer to you than I've ever felt with any
 other man
 No one else is here (61)
 No one else can see us
 Your eyes
 Your eyes
 Your eyes
 Oh your eyes

ANATOLE

It's all right, Natasha, I'm here
 It's all right, Natasha, I'm here

NATASHA

So near to me
 Nothing between us

BOTH

So near to me
 Nothing between us
 Smile at me
 There is nothing between us

(Anatole leaves.)

(60) The weird little cello counterpoint here is my favorite thing in this song, and probably has a bit of "I Am the Walrus" going on.

(61) This is where the chorus of "No One Else" came from; it can be very neat to write things out of order, creating all sorts of cool foreshadowings and echoes

*Seize the moments of
 happiness, love and be
 loved! That is the only
 reality in the world,
 all else is folly.*

—LEO TOLSTOY

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BOTH

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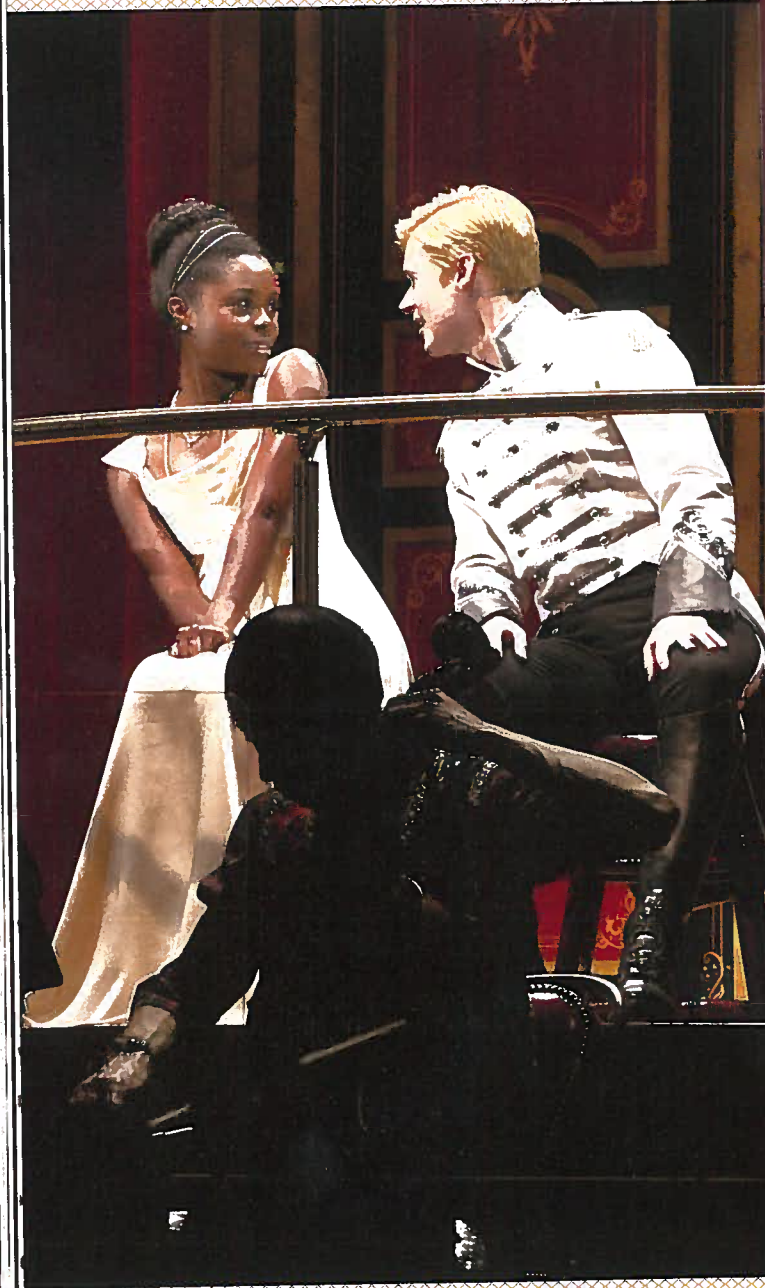
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—LEO TOLSTOY



ABOVE: Denée Benton and Lucas Steele, A.R.T., 2015.

9. NATASHA LOST (62)

NATASHA

I smile, I shake
And the opera continues
And I'm quite submissive to the world I am in
My previous life is slipping away from me
My distant past is gone, is gone

And the rest of the night
I can't take my eyes from him
His glittering eyes
And his tender smile

And as I am leaving
Flushed and nervous
He touches my arm
And I turn around
And he's looking at me
With his glittering eyes
And his tender smile

O God! I am lost! (63)
How could I let him?
Everything is dark, obscure, and terrible
I don't understand this
O God! I am lost!

Back in the theater, full of lights
Where tenors jumped about in tinsel jackets
Young girls and old men cried "bravo!" in rapture
There it all seemed simple
But now, alone
I am tortured

My conscience gnaws away at my heart
Am I spoiled for Andrey's love or not?
Oh I can soothe myself with irony: (64)
Nothing! It was nothing
I didn't lead him on at all
No one will ever know
I'll never see him again
Nothing has happened
And Andrey can love me still
O God, why isn't he here?

And yet it was like there was nothing between us
No veil, no modesty
Just his face and strong hands
His glittering eyes
And his tender smile
That bold handsome man who pressed my arm

PART III

Anatole, his friend Dolokhov, and Pierre go out drinking; they are met by H el ene (Pierre's wife and Anatole's sister), who taunts Pierre. Anatole declares his intention to have Natasha, although he himself is already married. Pierre finds his wife's familiarity with Dolokhov offensive and challenges him to a duel, almost getting himself killed ("The Duel"). Afterward, Pierre reflects on his life ("Dust and Ashes"). Natasha and her family go to church ("Sunday Morning"); later, H el ene arrives and invites Natasha to the ball that night ("Charming"), where Anatole seduces Natasha ("The Ball").

CHAPTER 5

10. THE DUEL (65)

ANATOLE

Good evening Pierre
Studying?

PIERRE

Yes. How was the opera?

ANATOLE

Lovely
Natalya Rostova was there

PIERRE

Oh, oh dear Andrey's betrothed?
I have known her family for years
And long carried affection for her

ANATOLE

Yes, charming

(62) This song came out of nowhere, almost fully formed; I found the opening chord progression while listening to Bj ork and playing around on an analog synth patch, and then ended up improvising most of the song in one take. The synth harp here is a tribute to *Les Mis rables*.

(63) "O God! I am lost!" she said to herself. "How could I let him?" She sat for a long time hiding her flushed face in her hands trying to realize what had happened to her, but was unable either to understand what had happened or what she felt. Everything seemed dark, obscure, and terrible.

There in that enormous, illuminated theater where the bare-legged Dupont, in a tinsel-decorated jacket jumped about to the music on wet boards, and young girls and old men, and the nearly naked H el ene with her proud, calm smile, rapturously cried "bravo!"—there in the presence of that H el ene it had all seemed clear and simple; but now, alone by herself, it was incomprehensible." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 10)

(64) Sometimes during rehearsal Pippa would sing, "Oh I can soothe myself with ironing," here instead.

(65) This is one of the biggest changes from the novel; the duel actually takes place many years earlier (Vol. 2, Pt. 1, Ch. 4-5), but I transplanted it here so that Pierre could have a bit more action in Act 1. Actually the first draft of the show did not have the duel here, but instead had another scene from early in the book where Pierre et al. get roaring drunk and end up tying a bear to a policeman and dumping them into the river. We actually did a workshop with this, using a large stuffed bear. This idea did not survive that workshop.

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Look, Dolokhov's coming round and we are off
to the Club
Will you come old man?

PIERRE

I will come

ANATOLE

Lend me fifty rubles?

(Dolokhov arrives with many bottles of vodka.)

DOLOKHOV

Drink drink

Gonna drink tonight

Gonna drink tonight

Gonna drink

Gonna drink

Gonna drink tonight

Gonna drink tonight

Gonna drink tonight

Gonna

DOLOKHOV, ANATOLE & PIERRE

Drink drink

Gonna drink tonight

Gonna drink tonight

Gonna

Gonna drink

Gonna drink tonight

Gonna drink tonight

Gonna drink tonight

(They drink and dance.) (66)

ALL

Drink with me my love (67)

For there's fire in the sky

And there's ice on the ground

Either way my soul will die

Whoa. . . .

PIERRE

The doctors warn me

That with my corpulence

Vodka and wine are dangerous for me (68)



(66) Rachel likes to call this "the moment when we break the play"; indeed, when the strobe lights and throbbing bass kick in here, and our glorious cast comes in screaming in outrageous punk outfits, the bewilderment and delight in the audience is intoxicatingly palpable. The music here is heavily influenced by a lot of my favorite early EDM artists, including Squarepusher, Amon Tobin, Richie Hawtin, Autechre, and Phitek; other electronic influences on the score include James Blake and Matthew Dear.

(67) These lyrics are totally made up, but they feel Russian to me, and they foreshadow the comet/the French burning down Moscow and then freezing. And geekily they are also a slight homage to George R. R. Martin.

(68) This is another choice bit from Chapter 1 (the basis for "Pierre"): "Though the doctors warned him that with his corpulence wine was dangerous for him, he drank a great deal. He was only quite at ease when having poured several glasses of wine mechanically into his large mouth he felt a pleasant warmth in his body, an amiability toward all his fellows, and a readiness to respond superficially to every idea without probing it deeply."



OPPOSITE: Lucas Steele, Kazino, 2013.

(69) Pierre is probably in his early 30s, but life expectancy was pretty grim in Russia back then (averaging from 28 to 32 years). Plus Pierre is just a crank, so Anatole and his friends tease him. We futzed with the approximate ages of the characters a bit to suit our needs, and were never super-precious about it; but if pressed, Rachel and I would say their ages are: Natasha ~19; Sonya ~21; Anatole, Dolokhov, mid-20s; Hélène, Mary, late 20s; Pierre, Andrey, early 30s; Marya D., early 50s; Bolkonsky, 60s; Balaga, probably a few millennia into immortal.

(70) This section used to happen after the duel; it got moved when "Dust and Ashes" was added, and we needed to stay focused on Pierre in the aftermath.

A pleasant
warmth in
my body
A sentimental
attachment to
my fellow men

But I drink a great deal
Only quite at ease
After pouring several glasses
Mechanically into my large mouth

ALL

Then I feel
A pleasant warmth in my body
A sentimental attachment to my fellow men
(*Hélène arrives and sidles up to Dolokhov.*)

HÉLÈNE

Keep drinking old man (69)

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

Keep drinking old man

HÉLÈNE, ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

Drink the whole night through
Keep drinking old man

ALL

Keep drinking old man
Drink the whole night through
Keep drinking old man
(*Pierre continues to drink, too much.*)

DOLOKHOV

Now Anatole
What women tonight?
Moscow ladies
Or Gypsy girls?
French actresses?

ANATOLE

Natasha, Natasha
Her arms, her shoulders
Her neck, her feet

HÉLÈNE

The air of a connoisseur

ANATOLE

I will make love to her

DOLOKHOV

Better not, monsieur
She's first-rate
But nothing but trouble

ALL

Better wait 'til she's married (70)

DOLOKHOV

Anatole is a married man
A fact known only to his intimates
A Polish landowner of some small means
Had forced him to marry his daughter

ANATOLE

Nevermind about that now
It doesn't matter, I don't give a damn
Just as a duck is made to swim in water
God has made me as I am
All I care for is gaiety and women
And there's no dishonor in that
As long as there's money and vodka
I'll keep a feather in my hat

ALL

Whoa . . .

PIERRE

I used to love
I used to love
I used to be better

CHORUS

Keep drinking old man

HÉLÈNE

Yes drink drink drink
Drink drink drink
God, to think I married a man like you

PIERRE

Don't speak to me, wife
There is something inside me

HÉLÈNE

Dolokhov pour me another



ABOVE: Amber Gray, Kazino, 2013.

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ABOVE: Amber Gray, Kazino, 2013.

(71) Nick Choksi singing this section makes me extremely happy. Also he does a very bizarre hopping dance here, that is just the right combination of gleeful and psychotic.

(72) In the novel, the duel is instigated by Dolokhov taking a leaflet out of Pierre's hands:

"Well, now to the health of handsome women!" said Dolokhov, and with a serious expression, but with a smile lurking at the corners of his mouth, he turned with his glass to Pierre.

"Here's to the health of lovely women, Peterkin—and their lovers!" he added.

Pierre, with downcast eyes, drank out of his glass without looking at Dolokhov or answering him. The footman, who was distributing leaflets with Kutuzov's cantata, laid one before Pierre as one of the principal guests. He was just going to take it when Dolokhov, leaning across, snatched it from his hand and began reading it. Pierre looked at Dolokhov and his eyes dropped, the something terrible and monstrous that had tormented him all dinnertime rose and took possession of him. He leaned his whole massive body across the table.

"How dare you take it?" he shouted. . . . Dolokhov looked at Pierre with clear, mirthful, cruel eyes, and that smile of his which seemed to say, 'Ah! This is what I like!'

"You shan't have it!" he said distinctly.

Pale, with quivering lips, Pierre snatched the copy.

"You . . . ! you . . . scoundrel! I challenge you!" he ejaculated, and, pushing back his chair, he rose from the table." (Vol. 2, Pt. 1, Ch. 4)

Hilariously we actually tried this thing with the leaflet at Ars Nova; Pierre stumbled into the audience and



PIERRE

Something terrible and monstrous

DOLOKHOV

Here's to the health of married women!

And a smile lurks at the corner of my mouth

Here's to the health of married women, and their lovers!

DOLOKHOV & CHORUS

Here's to the health of married women! (71)

Here's to the health of married women, and their lovers!

Here's to the health of married women!

Here's to the health of married women, and their lovers!

PIERRE

How dare you touch her?

DOLOKHOV

You can't love her (72)

PIERRE

Enough!

You bully, you scoundrel!

I challenge you!

DOLOKHOV

Oh, a duel!

Yes, this is what I like

HÉLÈNE

He will kill you!

Stupid husband!

PIERRE

So I shall be killed!

What is it to you!

Anatole, my guns

ANATOLE

Oh! This is horribly stupid (73)

PIERRE

Just show me where to go

And tell me when to shoot

ANATOLE

Just wait 'til you're close enough

You'll never hit him from forty paces

DOLOKHOV

Well let's begin!

This is child's play (74)

SERVANT (DENISOV) (75)

As the adversaries have refused a reconciliation,

we shall please proceed with the duel

Ready your pistols, and on the count of tri,

begin to advance

ALL

Raz! Dva! Tri!

(They start toward each other.)

ANATOLE

Pierre, hold your fire

Pierre, hold your fire

Pierre, not yet!

(Pierre fires early; Dolokhov is hit.)

DOLOKHOV

No! . . .

Shot by a fool

PIERRE

No wait—

I didn't—

DOLOKHOV

Quiet old man

My turn

PIERRE

My turn

ANATOLE

Pierre, stand back!

(Pierre walks toward Dolokhov with his chest exposed. Dolokhov shoots. Pierre is unharmed.)

DOLOKHOV

Missed

Missed

started reading an audience member's program which Dolokhov then ripped out of his hands, le to "How dare you take it! / You can't have it!" T during full-on strobe light madness. Maybe two audience members, ever, understood what was supposed to be happening. . . . I really don't know what we were thinking!

(73) I love Lucas Steele so much.

(74) There's a little *Hamilton* Easter egg here now added during the A.R.T. run, with much love to Lir knew that Broadway would become such a duelfe

(75) Denisov, a military officer and friend to Nata brother Nikolai, is probably my favorite character in the book that isn't in the show; he has a speech impediment that is transliterated in various ways by different translators, usually as a lisp: "As the advewsawies have wefused a weconciliation . . ." We actually tried having Paul do this for a while, but it was so out of left field that it kind of detracted fr you know, the duel.

Paul holds a gong during these lines, playing it on "Tri!" . . . at Ars Nova and Kazino it was a little thin maybe seven inches in diameter; when we first sta this scene for our much larger version at A.R.T., rehearsing in the beautiful and massive old Colonia Theater, Or Matias and I looked at each other and said, "We're gonna need a bigger gong."



ABOVE: Dave Malloy, *Ars Nova*.

OPPOSITE: Nick Choksi, *A.R.T.*, 2015.

(71) Nick Choksi singing this section makes me extremely happy. Also he does a very bizarre hopping dance here, that is just the right combination of gleeful and psychotic.

(72) In the novel, the duel is instigated by Dolokhov taking a leaflet out of Pierre's hands:

"Well, now to the health of handsome women!" said Dolokhov, and with a serious expression, but with a smile lurking at the corners of his mouth, he turned with his glass to Pierre.

"Here's to the health of lovely women, Peterkin—and their lovers!" he added.

Pierre, with downcast eyes, drank out of his glass without looking at Dolokhov or answering him. The footman, who was distributing leaflets with Kutuzov's cantata, laid one before Pierre as one of the principal guests. He was just going to take it when Dolokhov, leaning across, snatched it from his hand and began reading it. Pierre looked at Dolokhov and his eyes dropped, the something terrible and monstrous that had tormented him all dinnertime rose and took possession of him. He leaned his whole massive body across the table.

"How dare you take it?" he shouted. . . . Dolokhov looked at Pierre with clear, mirthful, cruel eyes, and that smile of his which seemed to say, "Ah! This is what I like!" "You shan't have it!" he said distinctly.

Pale, with quivering lips, Pierre snatched the copy. "You . . . ! you . . . scoundrel! I challenge you!" he ejaculated, and, pushing back his chair, he rose from the table." (Vol. 2, Pt. 1, Ch. 4)

Hilariously we actually tried this thing with the leaflet at Ars Nova; Pierre stumbled into the audience and



PIERRE

Something terrible and monstrous

DOLOKHOV

Here's to the health of married women!
And a smile lurks at the corner of my mouth
Here's to the health of married women, and their
lovers!

DOLOKHOV & CHORUS

Here's to the health of married women! (71)
Here's to the health of married women, and their
lovers!
Here's to the health of married women!
Here's to the health of married women, and their
lovers!

PIERRE

How dare you touch her?

DOLOKHOV

You can't love her (72)

PIERRE

Enough!
You bully, you scoundrel!
I challenge you!

DOLOKHOV

Oh, a duel!
Yes, this is what I like

HÉLÈNE

He will kill you!
Stupid husband!

PIERRE

So I shall be killed!
What is it to you!
Anatole, my guns

ANATOLE

Oh! This is horribly stupid (73)

PIERRE

Just show me where to go
And tell me when to shoot

ANATOLE

Just wait 'til you're close enough
You'll never hit him from forty paces

DOLOKHOV

Well let's begin!
This is child's play (74)

SERVANT (DENISOV) (75)

As the adversaries have refused a reconciliation,
we shall please proceed with the duel
Ready your pistols, and on the count of tri,
begin to advance

ALL

Raz! Dva! Tri!

(They start toward each other.)

ANATOLE

Pierre, hold your fire
Pierre, hold your fire
Pierre, not yet!

(Pierre fires early; Dolokhov is hit.)

DOLOKHOV

No! . . .
Shot by a fool

PIERRE

No wait—
I didn't—

DOLOKHOV

Quiet old man
My turn

PIERRE

My turn

ANATOLE

Pierre, stand back!

(Pierre walks toward Dolokhov with his chest exposed.
Dolokhov shoots. Pierre is unharmed.)

DOLOKHOV

Missed
Missed

started reading an audience member's program, which Dolokhov then ripped out of his hands, leading to "How dare you take it! / You can't have it!" This during full-on strobe light madness. Maybe two audience members, ever, understood what was supposed to be happening. . . . I really don't know what we were thinking!

(73) I love Lucas Steele so much.

(74) There's a little *Hamilton* Easter egg here now, added during the A.R.T. run, with much love to Lin. Who knew that Broadway would become such a duelfest!

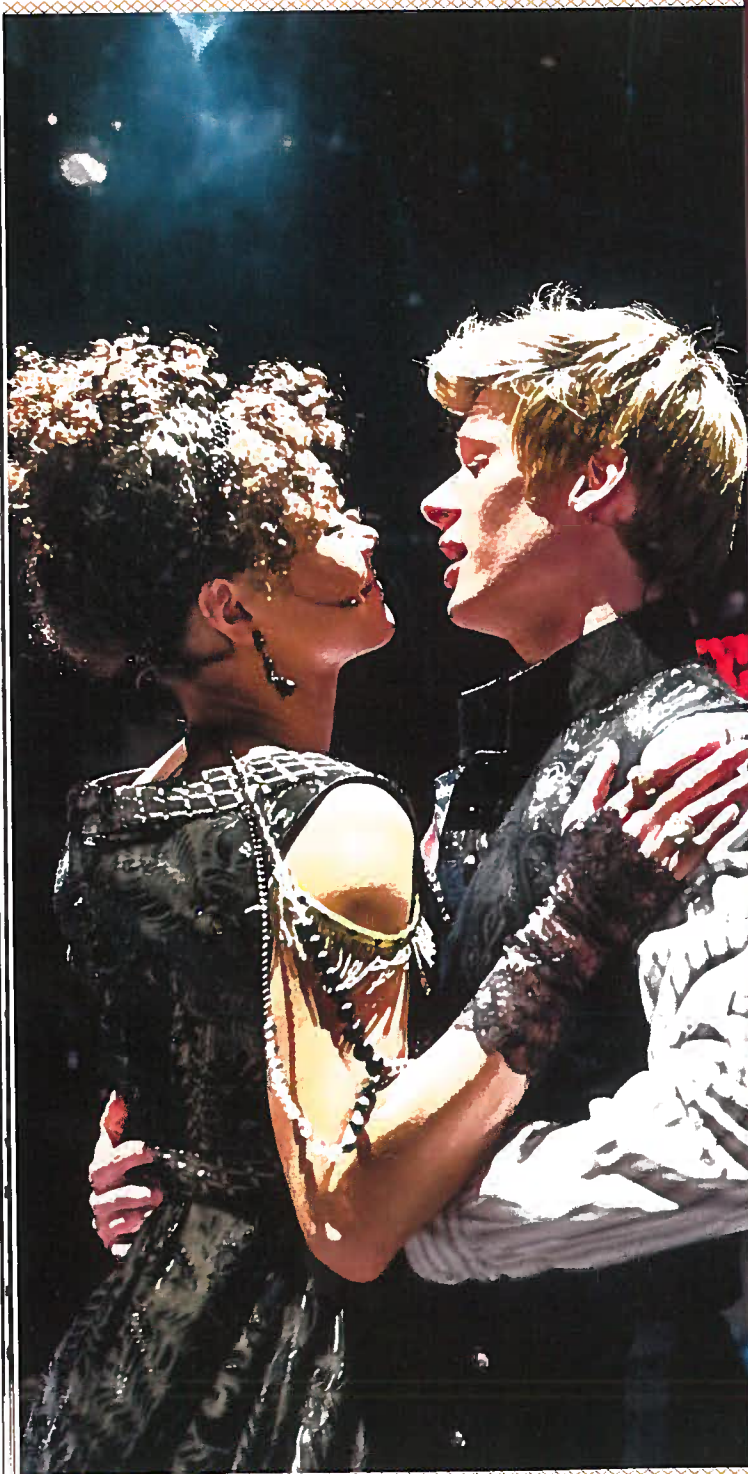
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ABOVE: Dave Malloy, *Ars Nova*.

OPPOSITE: Nick Choksi, *A.R.T.*, 2015.



ABOVE: Amber Gray and Lucas Steele, Kazino, 2013.

Oh my mother, my angel
My adored angel mother! (76)

HÉLÈNE
Take him away

SERVANT (DENISOV)
The sun is rising
The duel is at an end
And Pierre Bezukhov is the winner

PIERRE
Winner?

HÉLÈNE
You are a fool
(Two club-goers laugh at Pierre as they leave.)

ANATOLE
Well sweet sister (77)
You certainly bring out the beast in men

HÉLÈNE
What can I say?
It's a gift

ANATOLE
I adore you
Will you ask Natasha to the ball tonight?

HÉLÈNE
Of course
Dear brother
(She leaves. Anatole turns to Pierre.)

ANATOLE
Come on old man
Let's get you home

PIERRE
In a moment

ANATOLE
Sleep it off
And be happy
We live to love another day

11. DUST AND ASHES (78)

PIERRE

Is this how I die?
Ridiculed and laughed at
Wearing clown shoes (79)
Is this how I die?
Furious and reckless
Sick with booze
How did I live?
I taste every wasted minute
Every time I turned away
From the things that might have healed me
How long have I been sleeping?

Is this how I die?
Frightened like a child
Lazy and numb
Is this how I die?
Pretending and preposterous
And dumb

How did I live?
Was I kind enough and good enough?
Did I love enough?
Did I ever look up
And see the moon (80)
And the stars
And the sky?
Oh why have I been sleeping?

They say we are asleep
Until we fall in love (81)
We are children of dust and ashes
But when we fall in love we wake up
And we are a God
And angels weep
But if I die here tonight
I die in my sleep

All of my life I spent searching the words
Of poets and saints and prophets and kings
And now at the end all I know that I've learned
Is that all that I know is I don't know a thing (82)

(76) Pierre used to have an echo of this here: "M / Missed / Such a storm of feelings." But those I got turned into the next song, "Dust and Ashes."

(77) In the novel, it's implied that Anatole and Hélène have an incestuous relationship. We hint at it here there. . . .

(78) The biggest change going into A.R.T. was adding this song. In retrospect I can't believe we did the show for so long without it; this rumination on suicide legacy, and divinity is an essential part of Pierre's journey that was only hinted at before. A lot of not realizing this sooner was probably just my own acting shyness, and not wanting to make Pierre's part involve too much "acting," which terrifies me . . . (see page for more).

(79) Rachel and I often talked about Pierre as a "sad clown"; having the naive innocence of a child, but weighed down and heartbroken by all the experience life has thrown at him. So this seemed a nice place to plant that image a bit more firmly.

(80) A little touch of Natasha . . .

(81) This is one of the most famous quotes from *War & Peace*, but it actually doesn't come from this section of the novel, or even from any of *Comet's* characters; it is said by Denisov as he is writing a love letter, very early in the novel (Vol. 1, Pt. 2, Ch. 4): "You see, my friend," he said, "we sleep when we don't love. We are children of the dust . . . but one falls in love and one is a God, one is pua' as on the first day of creation. . . ."

Just like with "No One Else," writing this song later let me do some fun echoing; the chord progression of the chorus is the same as the "And this bright star . . ." section of "The Great Comet of 1812," making that song seem to call back to this one, even though "Comet" was written first! A similar chord progression also appears in "Pierre" and the end of "The Duel."

(82) "Nothing has been found out, nothing discovered," Pierre again said to himself. "All we can know is that we know nothing. And that's the height of human wisdom." (Vol. 2, Pt. 2, Ch.1)



Oh my mother, my angel
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HÉLÈNE

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(83) Originally the lyric here was "Shoot me in the head or gut / I just don't care," but that felt a little too on the nose, so then it became "Bury me or forget me / I just don't care"; and then one night in a practice room that inexplicably morphed into "Bury me in burgundy / And comb my hair" . . . which I still kind of love, but seemed just a little too Dylan-surreal for this particular moment; so we settled on this hybrid. ("Burgundy" refers to both the color, symbolizing aristocracy and pretension, and the wine.)

(84) Some of the ideas in this song are loosely adapted from scenes much later in the novel, in which Pierre is taken prisoner by the French and has yet another spiritual transformation (he does that a lot!) after many talks with a fellow prisoner, Karataev. This culminates in Vol. 4, Pt. 3, Ch. 12: "While imprisoned in the shed Pierre had learned not with his intellect but with his whole being, by life itself, that man is created for happiness, that happiness is within him, in the satisfaction of simple human needs, and that all unhappiness arises not from privation but from superfluity."

*We are
children of
dust and ashes
But when we
fall in love
we wake up*

So easy to close off
Place the blame outside
Hiding in my room at night
So terrified
All the things I could have been
But I never had the nerve
Life and love
I don't deserve

So all right, all right
I've had my time
Close my eyes
Let the death bells chime

Bury me in burgundy
I just don't care (83)
Nothing's left
I looked everywhere

Is this how I die?
Was there ever any other way my life could be?
Is this how I die?
Such a storm of feelings inside of me?

But then why am I screaming?
Why am I shaking?
Oh God, was there something that I missed?
Did I squander my divinity?
Was happiness within me the whole time? (84)

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We are children of dust and ashes
But when we fall in love we wake up
And we are a God
And angels weep
But if I die here tonight
I die in my sleep

They say we are asleep
Until we fall in love
And I'm so ready
To wake up now

I want to wake up
Don't let me die while I'm like this



OPPOSITE: Josh Groban, Broadway, 2016.

(85) Another addition for the A.R.T. run; after "Dust and Ashes," the mood needed to stay a bit more somber, and we had to get to "Charming" a bit quicker . . . so I used this rewrite to clarify some imagery in Act 2's "Letters," by enacting this old Russian tradition of candles and mirrors, which Natasha and Sonya do earlier in the novel. (Vol. 2, Pt. 4, Ch. 12)

(86) Sonya used to have a beautiful bit here, which got cut after we added "Dust and Ashes," again to keep the momentum up. But it's still on the Original Cast Recording, and I love it, and it reminds me of Christmas at my grandparents':

SONYA

Marya Dmitryevna likes Sundays
And knows how to keep them
The whole house has been scrubbed and cleaned
Roast goose and suckling pig
Filled our noses with glee
We wear holiday dresses
Travel by troika to church

MARYA D.

God is everywhere

I want to wake up
God don't let me die while I'm like this
Please let me wake up now
God don't let me die while I'm like this

I'm ready

I'm ready

To wake up

CHAPTER 6

12. SUNDAY MORNING

SONYA

Early Sunday morning
Natasha and I lit a candle, looked in the mirror (85)

NATASHA

I see my face

SONYA

Don't be silly

They say you can see your future
In the long row of candles
Stretching back and back and back
Into the depths of the mirror
In the dim confused last square
You'll see a coffin or a man
Everyone sees a man

NATASHA

I see the candles
Stretching back
So far away
I see the mirrors
I see a shape in the darkness
Is it him or is it—
He's lying down
Oh Sonya why is he lying down?
I'm so frightened!
Andrey will never come
Or something will happen to me before he does

MARYA D.

Sunday morning!
Time for church! (86)

NATASHA

I suffer more now than before
The theater and Anatole
That man who aroused such terrible feelings
I don't understand
Have I broken faith with Andrey?
Am I guilty?

SONYA

After church, Marya left for Prince Bolkonsky's

MARYA D.

The rudeness of that man!
I'll straighten him out!

NATASHA

That terrible old Prince
I can't bear to think of it
I'll shut myself in my room
And try on new dresses

SONYA

And just after Marya left
There was a knock at the door (87)
Natasha had just turned her head to the glass
When she heard a voice that made her flush

13. CHARMING (88)

HÉLÈNE

Oh my enchantress (89)
Oh you beautiful thing
Charming, charming
Oh, this is really beyond anything
These dresses suit you
This one, "metallic gauze"
Straight from Paris
Anything suits you, my charmer (90)
Oh how she blushes, how she blushes,
my pretty! (91)

(87) The knock is actually Héléne playing a waltz as she enters in her Jabba's palace Luke Skywalker Jedi robe. . . . At Ars Nova, when we were much scrappier and leaner, we actually did not have a dedicated pit drummer; the actors did all the drumming, including Amber, who played drums (for the first time!) on "Private and Intimate Life," and rocked the house.

(88) Writing this tune was actually a huge struggle. I had never really written anything so "pop" in my life. It took me a while to set aside my too-cool-for-school inhibitions and embrace my inner Beyoncé. The piano line came first, followed by the kick and snare, which owe a heavy debt to Prince's "Housequake."

(89) "Oh, my enchantress!" she cried to the blushing Natasha. "Charming! No, this is really beyond anything my dear count," said she to Count Rostov who had followed her in. "How can you live in Moscow and go nowhere?" . . . She looked at Natasha's dresses and praised them, as well as a new dress of her own made of 'metallic gauze,' which she had received from Paris and advised Natasha to have one like it. "But anything suits you, my charmer!" she remarked." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 12)

(90) Natasha used to have a wonderful little bit here but we removed it to make the song a proper star song for Héléne:

NATASHA

A smile of pleasure never left my face
This grand dame of the opera
Who seemed so unapproachable
And seemed so important
Now she seems
To like me

(91) "How she blushes, how she blushes, my pretty!" said Héléne. "You must certainly come. If you love somebody, my charmer, that is not a reason to shut yourself up. Even if you are engaged, I am sure your fiancé would wish you to go into society rather than be bored to death." (Ibid.)

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(92) It's true, Hélène does not know how to pronounce "charmante"! (Though the chorus does, in "Pierre," and Anatole does, in "The Opera.") This very sly and subtle character touch was originally a result of my not having done very well in high school French . . . and then later liking the supercool rhythm of the melody too much to change it. And Hélène is bit of a dilettante, and it's actually pretty hilarious to me that she is so confidently butchering the French in the chorus of her big song, so . . . in the end this works for me!

Rachel will also tell you that I actually mispronounce English words in my shows on a semiregular basis. Most notably "particu-LAR-ily" (in *Three Pianos*). And in "Preparations," I kept insisting that Anatole say "dwdalling" (which just sounds more like the word to me) . . . and in between Kazino and A.R.T. we decided to change our pronunciation of "Moscow" to the proper one (Mos-co), correcting my midwestern diphthong (Mos-COW).

(93) Hélène actually says this amazing line to Natasha's father, earlier, at the opera: "How is it you're not ashamed to bury such pearls in the country?"

(94) "My brother dined with me yesterday—we nearly died of laughter—he ate nothing and kept sighing for you, my charmer! He is madly, quite madly, in love with you, my dear."

Natasha blushed scarlet when she heard this." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 12)

(95) This is the place where in performance Amber Gray magically becomes the only person in the room, or indeed in all of existence, and you giddily submit to this sublime ascendancy and realize that all is right with the world.

Oh how she blushes, how she blushes, my pretty!

Charmante, charmante! (92)

You are such a lovely thing

Oh where have you been

It's such a shame to bury pearls in the country (93)

Charmante, charmante, charming

Now if you have a dress

You must wear it out

How can you live in Moscow and not go nowhere?

So you love somebody, charming

But that's no reason to shut yourself in

Even if you're engaged

You must wear your dress out somewhere

My brother dined with me yesterday (94)

But he didn't eat a thing

Cuz he was thinking 'bout you

He kept sighing about you

Oh how she blushes, how she blushes, my pretty!

Oh how she blushes, how she blushes, my pretty!

Charmante, charmante!

You are such a lovely thing

Oh where have you been

It's such a shame to bury pearls in the country

Charmante, charmante, charming

Now a woman with a dress

Is a frightening and powerful thing

You are not a child

When you're draped in scarlet and lace

Your fiancé would want you to have fun

Rather than be bored to death

Alliez dans la monde

Plutôt que de dépérir d'ennui!

My brother is quite madly in love

He is quite madly in love with you, my dear (95)

Oh how she blushes, how she blushes, my pretty!

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Oh where have you been

It's such a shame to bury pearls in the country
Charmante, charmante, charming

It's such a shame to bury pearls in the country
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Such a shame to bury pearls in the country
Charmante, charmante, charming

Such a shame to bury pearls in the country
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NATASHA

What once seemed so terrible (96)

Now seems simple and natural

She knows that I'm engaged

And still she talks so frankly

So it must be all right!

HÉLÈNE

There is a ball at my house tonight

You must come

Oh your wide-open, wondering eyes!

You will be the prettiest there!

How the thought of throwing them together amuses me!

You must come

NATASHA

I will come

CHAPTER 7

14. THE BALL

ANATOLE

Waiting at the door

Waiting at the door

Waiting

Waiting at the door

Waiting at the door

Waiting

How I adore little girls

They lose their heads at once

(The ball begins; they dance.) (97)

NATASHA

I am seized by feelings of vanity and fear (98)

There is no barrier between us

(96) The weird little high synth sounds here are based on bowed glass, and are used throughout the show as Anatole's "seduction sound"; they are also present throughout his entrance in "The Opera," in "Natasha & Anatole," and all through "The Ball," culminating in the kiss (which uses a combination of synth sounds and live wineglasses).

(97) This melody was heavily influenced by lots of Russian classical music, specifically Tchaikovsky and Borodin (whose string quartets are my second-favorite string quartets in the world).

(98) In the novel, this seduction actually begins at a recital by a French actress, Mademoiselle George (whom Anatole is of course sleeping with). That was the original plan for the show too; Natasha and Anatole's duet would happen while Gelsey (our Mary) recited/sang some haunting creepy French verses. Eventually it seemed simpler and more dramatic to go straight to the dancing, and have a proper Russian ball, both gesturing to an iconic moment in *War & Peace* (when Natasha and Andrey first dance) and giving our amazing choreographer, Sam Pinkleton, a place to flex his dark sexy Illuminati ballroom muscles.

"Anatole was at the door, evidently on the lookout for the Rostovs. Immediately after greeting the count he went up to Natasha and followed her. As soon as she saw him she was seized by the same feeling she had had at the opera—gratified vanity at his admiration of her and fear at the absence of a moral barrier between them. . . . Mademoiselle George looked sternly and gloomily at the audience and began reciting some French verses describing her guilty love for her son. . . . 'Adorable! divine! delicious!' was heard from every side. Natasha looked at the fat actress, but neither saw nor heard nor understood anything of what went on before her. She only felt herself again completely borne away into this strange senseless world—so remote from her old world—a world in which it was impossible to know what was good or bad, reasonable or senseless." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 13)

(92) It's true, Hélène does not know how to pronounce "charmante"! (Though the chorus does, in "Pierre," and Anatole does, in "The Opera.") This very sly and subtle character touch was originally a result of my not having done very well in high school French . . . and then later liking the supercool rhythm of the melody too much to change it. And Hélène is bit of a bluetante, and it's actually pretty hilarious to me that she is so confidently butchering the French in the chorus of her big song, so . . . in the end this works for me!

Michelle will also tell you that I actually mispronounce English words in my shows on a semiregular basis. Most notably "particu-LAR-ily" (in *Three Pianos*). And "Preparations," I kept insisting that Anatole say "dwadling" (which just sounds more like the word to me) . . . and in between Kazino and A.R.T. we decided to change our pronunciation of "Moscow" to the proper one (Mos-co), correcting my midwestern diphthong (Mos-COW).

(93) Hélène actually says this amazing line to Natasha's father, earlier, at the opera: "How is it you're not ashamed to bury such pearls in the country?"

(94) "My brother dined with me yesterday—we nearly died of laughter—he ate nothing and kept sighing for you, my charmer! He is madly, quite madly, in love with you, my dear."

"Natasha blushed scarlet when she heard this." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 12)

(95) This is the place where in performance Amber Gray magically becomes the only person in the room, or indeed in all of existence, and you giddily submit to this sublime ascendancy and realize that all is right with the world.

Oh how she blushes, how she blushes, my pretty!
Charmante, charmante! (92)
You are such a lovely thing
Oh where have you been
It's such a shame to bury pearls in the country (93)
Charmante, charmante, charming

Now if you have a dress
You must wear it out
How can you live in Moscow and not go nowhere?
So you love somebody, charming
But that's no reason to shut yourself in
Even if you're engaged
You must wear your dress out somewhere

My brother dined with me yesterday (94)
But he didn't eat a thing
Cuz he was thinking 'bout you
He kept sighing about you

Oh how she blushes, how she blushes, my pretty!
Oh how she blushes, how she blushes, my pretty!
Charmante, charmante!
You are such a lovely thing
Oh where have you been
It's such a shame to bury pearls in the country
Charmante, charmante, charming

Now a woman with a dress
Is a frightening and powerful thing
You are not a child
When you're draped in scarlet and lace
Your fiancé would want you to have fun
Rather than be bored to death
Alliez dans la monde
Plutôt que de dépérir d'ennui!

My brother is quite madly in love
He is quite madly in love with you, my dear (95)

Oh how she blushes, how she blushes, my pretty!
Oh how she blushes, how she blushes, my pretty!
Charmante, charmante!
You are such a lovely thing
Oh where have you been

It's such a shame to bury pearls in the country
Charmante, charmante, charming
It's such a shame to bury pearls in the country
Charmante, charmante, charming
Such a shame to bury pearls in the country
Charmante, charmante, charming

NATASHA

What once seemed so terrible (96)
Now seems simple and natural
She knows that I'm engaged
And still she talks so frankly
So it must be all right!

HÉLÈNE

There is a ball at my house tonight
You must come
Oh your wide-open, wondering eyes!
You will be the prettiest there!
How the thought of throwing them together amuses me!
You must come

NATASHA

I will come

CHAPTER 7**14. THE BALL****ANATOLE**

Waiting at the door
Waiting at the door
Waiting
Waiting at the door
Waiting at the door
Waiting

How I adore little girls
They lose their heads at once

(The ball begins; they dance.) (97)

NATASHA

I am seized by feelings of vanity and fear (98)
There is no barrier between us

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Whispers and moans and ringing in my ear
There is no barrier between us.

Divine, delicious
But I do not see or hear anything
I'm borne away to a senseless world
So strange, so remote
I don't know good from bad

Anatole
Anatole
I'm so frightened

ANATOLE
You are enchanting

NATASHA
And as we danced he pressed my waist and hand (99)
And told me I was

NATASHA & ANATOLE
Bewitching

ANATOLE
And I love you

NATASHA & ANATOLE
Bewitching

ANATOLE
And I love you

NATASHA
And during the *ecossaise*, (100) he

NATASHA (& ANATOLE)
Gazed/(Gaze) in my eyes

NATASHA
And said nothing, just

NATASHA (& ANATOLE)
Gazed/(Gaze) in my eyes

NATASHA
My frightened eyes
Such confident tenderness
I could not say what I had to say.

(99) "Anatole asked Natasha for a valse and as he danced he pressed her waist and hand and told her she was bewitching and that he loved her. During the *ecossaise*, which she also danced with him, Anatole merely gazed at her. Natasha lifted her frightened face to him, but there was such confident tenderness in her affectionate look and smile that she could not, without looking at him, say what she had to say. She lowered her eyes.

"Don't say such things to me. I am betrothed to another, she said rapidly. . . . She glanced at Anatole. Anatole was not upset or pained by what she said.

"Don't speak to me of that! What can I do?" she said. "I tell you I am madly, madly, in love with you! Is it my fault that you are enchanting?" (Ibid.)

(100) This is my favorite word in the show (it's a French line dance).

*But I do
not see or
hear anything
I'm borne away
to a senseless
world*

OPPOSITE: Denée Benton and Lucas Steele, A.R.T., 2015.

(101) I call the strings here and at the very end of the song the "Strings of Doom."

(102) "I cannot come to visit you but is it possible that I shall never see you? I love you madly. Can I never . . . ?" and, blocking her path, he brought his face close to hers.

His large, glittering, masculine eyes were so close to hers that she saw nothing but them.

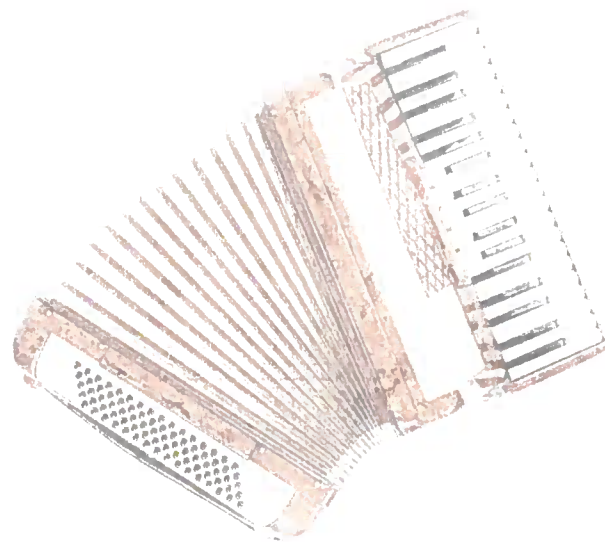
'Natalie?' he whispered inquiringly while she felt her hands being painfully pressed. 'Natalie?'

'I don't understand. I have nothing to say,' her eyes replied.

Burning lips were pressed to hers, and at the same instant she felt herself released, and Hélène's footsteps and the rustle of her dress were heard in the room." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 13)

(103) The use of wineglasses here was inspired by my absolute favorite string quartet, George Crumb's incredible "Black Angels." All of the actors and musicians play a glass here; the last one to stop is Hélène.

(104) For me, a composer who started out doing avant-garde free jazz and experimental, DIY black box theater, writing this show was like taking a huge master class in Broadway musicals, and figuring out what the formal structure of the best shows is, and then following that structure even when my avant-garde cool wanted to subvert it (see above notes on "Prologue"). This song follows a tried and true piece of musical theater wisdom, that Act 1 should end with all of your characters in extreme jeopardy, so that the audience will want to, you know, come back. My favorite example of this is *West Side Story*, which ends Act 1 with "The Rumble" and the death of Bernardo and Riff.



ANATOLE

Don't lower your eyes
I love you
I am in love dear
I am in love

Gaze in my eyes
I love you
You are bewitching
What can I do
Darling what can I do

NATASHA

Don't say such things
I am betrothed
I love another

ANATOLE

Don't speak to me of that!
When I tell you that I am madly, madly, in love with
you!
Is it my fault that you're enchanting?

NATASHA

I'm so frightened
I don't understand anything tonight

ANATOLE

I'm here now
(Natasha breaks away.) (101)

ANATOLE

Natalie! (102)

NATASHA

I can feel your eyes upon me

ANATOLE

Blocking her path, I bring her face close to mine

NATASHA

His large, glittering, masculine eyes are so close to
mine
That I see nothing else

ANATOLE

Is it possible that I should never see you again?
I love you madly!
Can I never?
Natalie?

NATASHA

You press my arm
You press my arm

ANATOLE

Natalie?

NATASHA

You're hurting my hands

ANATOLE

Natalie?

NATASHA

I don't understand
I have nothing to say

(They kiss.) (103)

NATASHA

Burning lips pressed to mine
Tell me what just happened

I'm trembling

So frightening

Andrey

But I love you

Of that there is no doubt

How else could all of this have happened?

How else could we have kissed?

It means that I have loved you from the first

It means that you are kind, noble, and splendid

And I could not help loving you

I will love you Anatole

I'll do anything for you

NATASHA & ANATOLE

I'll do anything for you (104)



ABOVE: Denée Benton and Lucas Steele, *A.R.T.*, 2015.

01) I call the strings here and at the very end of the song the "Strings of Doom."

02) "I cannot come to visit you but is it possible that I shall never see you? I love you madly. Can I ever...?" and, blocking her path, he brought his face close to hers.

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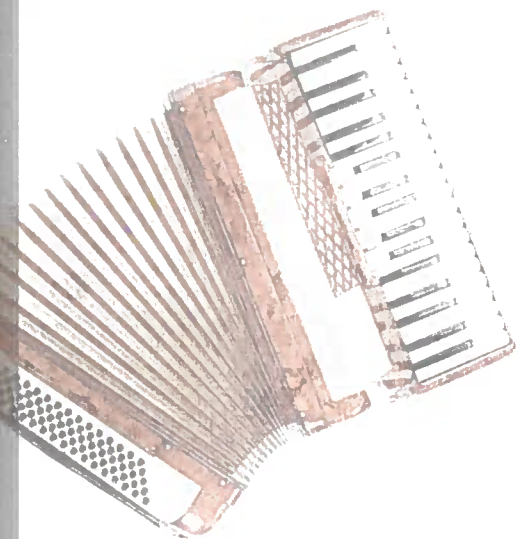
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What can I do
Darling what can I do

NATASHA

Don't say such things
I am betrothed
I love another

ANATOLE

Don't speak to me of that!
When I tell you that I am madly, madly, in love with you!
Is it my fault that you're enchanting?

NATASHA

I'm so frightened
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ANATOLE

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(Natasha breaks away.) (101)

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That I see nothing else

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Natalie?

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Natalie?

NATASHA

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I will love you Anatole
I'll do anything for you

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ABOVE: Denée Benton and Lucas Steele, *A.R.T.*, 2015.

(105) This tune was inspired by the tripled octave melodies of Funkadelic, and a lyric from Bob Dylan's "Not Dark Yet"; I wrote it under headphones (and a deadline) in a blazing hot Brooklyn apartment, while my future wife was running around packing (we were moving in together at the end of that August); she still remembers the sound of me shrieking "Natalie Natalie Natalie!" as I recorded myself doing all the harmonies.

Also, I love funky harpsichord.

(106) There is a bit of Dirty Projectors going on in the choral hocketing here.

PART IV

Natasha and Anatole make plans to elope, and Natasha breaks off her engagement with Andrey ("Letters"). Sonya finds out about the plan and realizes it will mean Natasha's ruin ("Sonya & Natasha"); she determines to stop her at any cost ("Sonya Alone"). That evening Anatole and Dolokhov plan for the elopement ("Preparations") and call on their trusted troika driver, "Balaga," to take them to Natasha's house. However, "The Abduction" is thwarted at the last moment by Marya D.

CHAPTER 8

15. LETTERS (105)

ALL

In nineteenth century Russia we write letters
We write letters
We put down in writing
What is happening in our minds

Once it's on the paper we feel better
We feel better
It's like some kind of clarity
When the letter's done and signed

PIERRE

Dear Andrey
Dear old friend
How goes the war?
Do we march on the French splendidly?
Do our cannons crack and cry?
Do our bullets whistle and sing?
Does the air reek with smoke?

I wish I were there
With death at my heels

Dolokhov is recovering (106)
He will be all right the good man
And Natasha is in town
Your bride-to-be, so full of life and mischief
I should visit

I hear she is more beautiful than ever
How I envy you and your happiness

Here at home
I drink and read and drink and read and drink
But I think I finally found it
What my heart has needed

For I've been studying the Kabal
And I've calculated the number of the beast
It is Napoleon

Six hundred three score and six (107)
And I will kill him one day

He's no great man
None of us are great men
We're caught in the wave of history (108)

Nothing matters
Everything matters
It's all the same
Oh if only I could not see it
This dreadful, terrible *it!* (109)

ALL

In nineteenth century Russia we write letters
We write letters
We put down in writing
What is happening in our minds

NATASHA

Dear Andrey—
What more can I write
After all that has happened?
What am I to do if I love him and the other one too?
Must I break it off?
These terrible questions

NATASHA & PIERRE

I see nothing but the candle in the mirror
No visions of the future
So lost and alone (110)

NATASHA

And what of Princess Mary—

(107) I snuck this little line in for A.R.T., both to the pace of this section a little more frantic, and nod to the insane Kabbalistic numerology bender Pierre goes on later in the book. . . . Assigning a number to each letter, he adds up the values of and Napoleon's names, trying different combinations in Russian and French until he finds versions ("L'Empereur Napoleon" and "L'russe Besuhof") that add up to 666, which he interprets as a call for him to assassinate the devil, Napoleon. (Vol. 3, Pt. 1, Ch. 15)

(108) This is an incredibly abridged reduction of Tolstoy's many musings on "history" throughout the novel, especially the Epilogue.

(109) From the last line of Chapter 1: "Nothing is trivial, and nothing is important, it's all the same—only to save oneself from it as best one can," thought Pierre. "Only not to see it, that dreadful it!"

(110) Pierre and Natasha's only interaction in the show until their final scene; I had imagined that they would both be singing this in their own little worlds, but Rachel gave this moment some extra-dream-world kick by having them lock eyes and sing directly at each other. Hot!



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Does the air reek with smoke?

I wish I were there
With death at my heels

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He will be all right the good man
And Natasha is in town
Your bride-to-be, so full of life and mischief
I should visit

I hear she is more beautiful than ever
How I envy you and your happiness
Here at home
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What more can I write
After all that has happened?
What am I to do if I love him and the other one too?
Must I break it off?
These terrible questions

NATASHA & PIERRE

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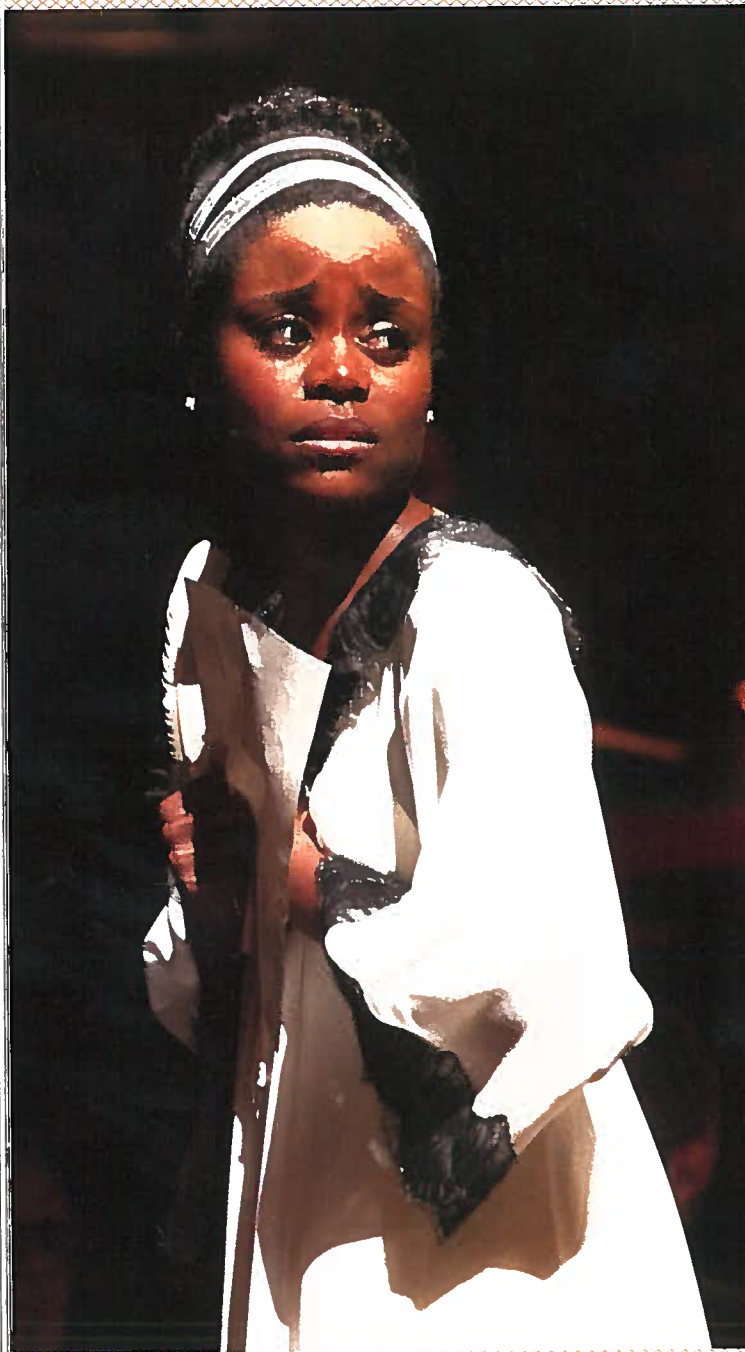
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ABOVE: Denée Benton, A.R.T., 2015.

MARY

Dear Natasha
I am in deep despair at the misunderstanding there is
between us
Whatever my father's feelings might be
I beg you to believe that I cannot help loving you
He's a tired old man and must be forgiven
Please, come see us again

NATASHA

Dear Princess Mary—
Oh what am I to write!
How do I choose
What do I do
I shall never be happy again

PIERRE

These terrible questions

MARY

I'm so alone here

NATASHA & PIERRE

So alone in here

MARY

And I see nothing

NATASHA, PIERRE & MARY

I see nothing but the candle in the mirror
No visions of the future
So lost and alone

ALL

In nineteenth century Russia we write letters
We write letters
We put down in writing
What is happening in our minds

ANATOLE

Dear Natalie
A love letter
A love letter
A love letter

NATASHA

A letter from him, from the man that I love

DOLOKHOV

A letter which I composed

ALL

A love letter
A love letter . . .

ANATOLE

Natalie Natalie Natalie
I must love you or die
Natalie Natalie Natalie
If you love me say yes
And I will come and steal you away
Steal you out of the dark
Natalie Natalie Natalie
I want nothing more
Natalie Natalie Natalie
I must love you or die
Natalie Natalie Natalie
If you love me say yes
And I will come and steal you away
Steal you out of the dark
Natalie Natalie Natalie
I want nothing more

Just say yes

Just say yes

Just say yes

NATASHA

Yes, yes, I love him!
How else could I have his letter in my hand? (111)
I read it twenty times
Thirty times, forty times!
Each and every word
I love him, I love him

(Natasha sleeps. Sonya arrives and reads Anatole's letter.)

CHAPTER 9**16. SONYA & NATASHA (112)****SONYA**

How was it I noticed nothing?
How could it go so far?

(111) This incredible moment of love-blind teen always gets a big laugh.

(112) Formally this song was written in the mold of Bruce Springsteen's sprawling 70s epics, e.g. "Rosalita" and "Jungleland." Something about the organ just seemed to suit the melodrama and youspunk of the scene very well. This song has also undergone a lot of little changes and snips over the years; has been a constant balancing act of trying to stay true to the weird ebb and flow of an actual fight while still keeping the momentum driving to the finale the whole time. Most of the lyrics here are direct lines of dialogue from the novel.

*If you love me
say yes
And I will
come and
steal you away*

MARY

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 between us
 Whatever my father's feelings might be
 I beg you to believe that I cannot help loving you
 He's a tired old man and must be forgiven
 Please, come see us again

NATASHA

Dear Princess Mary—
 Oh what am I to write!
 How do I choose
 What do I do
 I shall never be happy again

PIERRE

These terrible questions

MARY

I'm so alone here

NATASHA & PIERRE

So alone in here

MARY

And I see nothing

NATASHA, PIERRE & MARY

I see nothing but the candle in the mirror
 No visions of the future
 So lost and alone

ALL

In nineteenth century Russia we write letters
 We write letters
 We put down in writing
 What is happening in our minds

ANATOLE

Dear Natalie
 A love letter
 A love letter
 A love letter

NATASHA

A letter from him, from the man that I love

BOLOKHOV

A letter which I composed

ALL

A love letter
 A love letter . . .

ANATOLE

Natalie Natalie Natalie
 I must love you or die
 Natalie Natalie Natalie
 If you love me say yes
 And I will come and steal you away
 Steal you out of the dark
 Natalie Natalie Natalie
 I want nothing more
 Natalie Natalie Natalie
 I must love you or die
 Natalie Natalie Natalie
 If you love me say yes
 And I will come and steal you away
 Steal you out of the dark
 Natalie Natalie Natalie
 I want nothing more

Just say yes

Just say yes

Just say yes

NATASHA

Yes, yes, I love him!
 How else could I have his letter in my hand? (111)
 I read it twenty times
 Thirty times, forty times!
 Each and every word
 I love him, I love him

(Natasha sleeps. Sonya arrives and reads Anatole's letter.)

CHAPTER 9**16. SONYA & NATASHA (112)****SONYA**

How was it I noticed nothing?
 How could it go so far?

(111) This incredible moment of love-blind teen logic always gets a big laugh.

(112) Formally this song was written in the mold of Bruce Springsteen's sprawling 70s epics, e.g. "Rosalita" and "Jungleland." Something about the rock organ just seemed to suit the melodrama and youthful spunk of the scene very well. This song has also undergone a lot of little changes and snips over the years; has been a constant balancing act of trying to stay true to the weird ebb and flow of an actual fight, while still keeping the momentum driving to the finish line the whole time. Most of the lyrics here are direct lines of dialogue from the novel.



*If you love me
 say yes*

*And I will
 come and*

steal you away



ABOVE: Denée Benton, A.R.T., 2015.

(113) Denée is *such* an amazing brat here.



ABOVE: Brittain Ashford, A.R.T., 2015.

It can't be that she loves him
It can't be
Natasha

(Natasha awakes and sees Sonya.)

NATASHA

Sonya, you're back
And with the tender resolve that often comes
at the moment of awakening
I embraced my friend
But noticing Sonya's look of embarrassment
My face expressed confusion
And suspicion

Sonya, you've read the letter?

SONYA

Yes

NATASHA

Oh Sonya, I'm glad
I can't hide it any longer!
Now you know, we love one another!
Oh Sonya, he writes, he writes
He writes, he writes, he writes

SONYA

And Andrey?

NATASHA

Oh Sonya, if you only knew how happy I am!
You don't know what love is

SONYA

But Natasha, can that all be over?

NATASHA

I do not grasp the question

SONYA

Are you refusing Prince Andrey?

NATASHA

Oh, you don't understand anything!
Don't talk nonsense, just listen (113)

SONYA

But I can't believe it, I don't understand

How you loved one man a whole year
And suddenly—
You've only known him three days!
Natasha, you're joking!

NATASHA

Three days?
It seems to me I've loved him a hundred years
It seems to me I've never loved before

I had heard that it happens like this
And you must have heard it too

But it's only now

That I feel such love

It's not the same as before

He's my master and I am his slave (114)

What can I do?

Sonya, what can I do?

I'm so happy

And so frightened

Why can't you understand?

I love him!

SONYA

Then I won't let it come to that, I shall tell!
Bursting into tears

NATASHA

What do you mean?
For God's sake, if you tell, you are my enemy!
You want me to be miserable

You want to tear us apart

For God's sake, Sonya, don't tell anyone,
don't torture me

I have confided in you

SONYA

What has happened between you?
What has he said to you?
Why doesn't he come to the house and openly ask for
your hand?

Why this secrecy?

Have you thought what his secret reasons may be?

(114) Rachel and I are both committed to diverse casting, to totally embracing the idea that people of any race can play any character in a show that is not explicitly about race; but it's also important to us to stay fully awake to the added layers of meaning that diverse casting can create, and to realize that sometimes these layers can take the audience out of the story you are trying to tell. This line is a direct quote from the Tolstoy (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 15)—("As soon as I saw him I felt he was my master and I his slave, and that I could not help loving him. Yes, his slave! Whatever he orders I shall do. You don't understand that. What can I do? What can I do, Sonya?")—vividly and shockingly depicting Natasha's ecstatic and reckless state of mind. When Denée joined us as Natasha, this line took on a new and unintentional connotation: a black woman singing this line about a white man in twenty-first-century America will inevitably cause the audience to think of American slavery. I reached out to both Denée and Rachel, and found that all three of us had a similar experience upon hearing this line with our new casting: an initial flinch, followed by a contextualization, and a realization that this is just a profoundly messed-up thing for anyone to say about a relationship. At A.R.T. we kept the line in, but it's definitely still an open question for me (as of August 2016). Denée and Rachel are amazing collaborators, and the three of us are still talking it through, discussing the pros and cons of the line, getting feedback from other artists and audience members, trying out alternatives, and in general working together to try to unravel all the complexities and find a solution that serves the contexts of both the original Tolstoy and our contemporary adaptation.

(113) Denée is *such* an amazing brat here.



ABOVE: Brittain Ashford, A.R.T., 2015.

It can't be that she loves him
It can't be
Natasha

(*Natasha awakes and sees Sonya.*)

NATASHA
Sonya, you're back
And with the tender resolve that often comes
at the moment of awakening
I embraced my friend
But noticing Sonya's look of embarrassment
My face expressed confusion
And suspicion
Sonya, you've read the letter?

SONYA
Yes

NATASHA
Oh Sonya, I'm glad
I can't hide it any longer!
Now you know, we love one another!
Oh Sonya, he writes, he writes
He writes, he writes, he writes

SONYA
And Andrey?

NATASHA
Oh Sonya, if you only knew how happy I am!
You don't know what love is

SONYA
But Natasha, can that all be over?

NATASHA
I do not grasp the question

SONYA
Are you refusing Prince Andrey?

NATASHA
Oh, you don't understand anything!
Don't talk nonsense, just listen (113)

SONYA
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And suddenly—
You've only known him three days!
Natasha, you're joking!

NATASHA
Three days?
It seems to me I've loved him a hundred years
It seems to me I've never loved before
I had heard that it happens like this
And you must have heard it too
But it's only now
That I feel such love
It's not the same as before
He's my master and I am his slave (114)
What can I do?
Sonya, what can I do?
I'm so happy
And so frightened
Why can't you understand?
I love him!

SONYA
Then I won't let it come to that, I shall tell!
Bursting into tears

NATASHA
What do you mean?
For God's sake, if you tell, you are my enemy!
You want me to be miserable
You want to tear us apart
For God's sake, Sonya, don't tell anyone,
don't torture me
I have confided in you

SONYA
What has happened between you?
What has he said to you?
Why doesn't he come to the house and openly ask for
your hand?
Why this secrecy?
Have you thought what his secret reasons may be?

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(115) Sometimes during rehearsal Brittain will sing "I burst into flames" here instead.

*Pure and complete
sorrow is as impossible as
pure and complete joy.*

—LEO TOLSTOY, *WAR AND PEACE*

NATASHA

I don't know what the reasons are
But there must be reasons!
Sonya, one can't doubt him!

SONYA

Does he love you?

NATASHA

Does he love me?
Why, you've read his letter, you've seen him.
I can't live without him

SONYA

Natasha, think of our family
And think of Prince Andrey

NATASHA

Andrey said I was free to refuse him

SONYA

But you haven't refused him, or have you?

NATASHA

Perhaps I have
Perhaps all is over between me and Bolkonsky
Would you think so badly of me?

SONYA

I won't succumb to your tender tone Natasha
I don't trust him, Natasha!
I'm afraid for you, Natasha!
Afraid you are going to your ruin

NATASHA

Then I'll go to my ruin, yes I will, as soon as possible!
But it's not your business!
It won't be you, it'll be me, who'll suffer
Leave me alone, yes leave me alone!
I hate you Sonya!
I hate you Sonya!
I hate you, I hate you!
You're my enemy forever!

SONYA

I burst into sobs (115)

(Natasha runs out of the room.)



OPPOSITE: Denée Benton and Brittain Ashford, A.R.T., 2015.

(116) Brittain Ashford is a singer/songwriter I've known for years. Some of her songs about heartbreakingly fierce loyalty and love reminded me of Sonya; specifically a gorgeous tune called "Brooklyn Lullaby," from her album *there, but for you, go i*. Brittain hadn't done theater since high school, so it took a few beers to convince her to come do a workshop for this new show I was writing (she and Gelsey are the only two performers who have been in the show from that first workshop all the way to Broadway); once she signed on, I wrote "Sonya Alone" specifically for her, in a freezing cold rehearsal room in Helsinki.

Structurally this song owes a huge debt to Éponine's "On My Own" from *Les Misérables*; the huge heartbreaking ballad at the top of Act 2 sung by a character that seemed somewhat inconsequential in Act 1.

(117) "Hard as it was for Sonya, she watched her friend and did not let her out of her sight. The day before the count was to return, Sonya noticed that Natasha sat by the drawingroom window all the morning as if expecting something. . . . Natasha was in a strange and unnatural state. She answered questions at random, began sentences she did not finish, and laughed at everything.

After tea Sonya noticed a housemaid at Natasha's door timidly waiting to let her pass. She let the girl go in, and then listening at the door learned that another letter had been delivered.

Then suddenly it became clear to Sonya that Natasha had some dreadful plan for that evening. Sonya knocked at her door. Natasha did not let her in.

"She will run away with him!" thought Sonya. "She is capable of anything. There was something particularly pathetic and resolute in her face today. She cried as she said good-by to Uncle," Sonya remembered. "Yes, that's it, she means to elope with him, but what am I to do?" thought she, recalling all the signs that clearly indicated that Natasha had some terrible intention. "The count is away. What am I to do? Write to Kuragin demanding an explanation? But what is there to oblige him to reply? Write to Pierre, as Prince Andrew asked me to in case of some misfortune? . . . But perhaps she really has already refused Bolkonsky—she sent a letter to Princess Mary yesterday. And Uncle is away. . . ." To tell Marya Dmitriyevna who had such faith in Natasha seemed to Sonya terrible. "Well, anyway," thought Sonya as she stood in the dark passage, "now or never I must prove that I remember the family's goodness to me and that I love Nicholas. Yes! If I don't sleep for three nights I'll not leave this passage and will hold her back by force and will and not let the family be disgraced," thought she." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 15)

NATASHA

And without a moment's reflection
I wrote the answer to Princess Mary
I'd been unable to write all morning

All our misunderstandings are at an end
Forget everything and forgive me
But I can't be Andrey's wife

17. SONYA ALONE (116)

SONYA

Hard as it is (117)

In the coming days

I watch my friend

In her strange unnatural state

Don't let her out of my sight

She trails off

Stares at nothing

Laughs at random

And the letters come

She waits by the window

And I listen at the door

Until one day

I see by the sad look on her face

There is a dreadful plan in her heart

I know you are capable of anything

I know you so well my friend

I know you might just run away

What am I to do?

Who do I ask for help?

Is it all on me?

Is it all on me?

I will stand in the dark for you

I will hold you back by force

I will stand here right outside your door

I won't see you disgraced

I will protect your name and your heart

Because I miss my friend

I know you've forgotten me

I know you so well my friend

I know you might just throw yourself over
But I won't let you
I won't let you
It's all on me

And I remember this family
I remember their kindness
And if I never sleep again

I will stand in the dark for you
I will hold you back by force
I will stand here right outside your door
I won't see you disgraced
I will protect your name and your heart
Because I miss my friend
Because I miss my friend
Because I miss you, my friend

CHAPTER 10

18. PREPARATIONS

(Pierre runs into Anatole on the street. Pierre is drunk, Anatole in a hurry.)

PIERRE

Ah, Anatole! Where are you off too? (118)

ANATOLE

Pierre, good man
Tonight I go away, on an adventure
You'll not be seeing me for some time
I've found a new pleasure
And I'm taking her away
I'll send you a letter from Poland

PIERRE

Ha! An elopement!
Fool, you are married already!

ANATOLE

Don't talk to me of that!
I will not deprive myself of this one!
Tonight! I take her tonight!
Lend me fifty rubles?

(118) In the novel Pierre actually runs into Anatole on his way to Marya D.'s, after the botched abduction. The description of Anatole is pretty hilarious here:

"In a sleigh drawn by two gray trotting-horses that were bespattering the dashboard with snow, Anatole and his constant companion Makarin dashed past. Anatole was sitting upright in the classic pose of military dandies, the lower part of his face hidden by his beaver collar and his head slightly bent. His face was fresh and rosy, his white-plumed hat, tilted to one side, disclosed his curls and pomaded hair besprinkled with powdery snow.

'Yes, indeed, that's a true sage,' thought Pierre. 'He sees nothing beyond the pleasure of the moment, nothing troubles him and so he is always cheerful, satisfied, and serene. What wouldn't I give to be like him!' he thought enviously." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 19)

*She waits by
the window
And I listen
at the door*

(116) Brittain Ashford is a singer/songwriter I've known for years. Some of her songs about heartbreakingly fierce loyalty and love reminded me of Sonya; specifically a gorgeous tune called "Brooklyn Lullaby," from her album *there, but for you, go i*. Brittain hadn't done theater since high school, so it took a few beers to convince her to come do a workshop for this new show I was writing (she and Gelsey are the only two performers who have been in the show from that first workshop all the way to Broadway); once she signed on, I wrote "Sonya Alone" specifically for her, in a freezing cold rehearsal room in Helsinki.

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And the letters come

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And I listen at the door

Until one day

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There is a dreadful plan in her heart

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I know you so well my friend

I know you might just run away

What am I to do?

Who do I ask for help?

Is it all on me?

Is it all on me?

I will stand in the dark for you

I will hold you back by force

I will stand here right outside your door

I won't see you disgraced

I will protect your name and your heart

Because I miss my friend

I know you've forgotten me

I know you so well my friend

I know you might just throw yourself over
But I won't let you
I won't let you
It's all on me

And I remember this family
I remember their kindness
And if I never sleep again

I will stand in the dark for you
I will hold you back by force
I will stand here right outside your door
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I will protect your name and your heart
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Because I miss my friend
Because I miss you, my friend

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She waits by

the window

And I listen

at the door



(119) In which Dolokhov reveals that he somehow has omniscient narrator status when it comes to the actions of the woman he once loved and proposed to.



ABOVE: Nick Choksi, A.R.T., 2015.

PIERRE

Ah, that's a true sage
Living in the moment
What I wouldn't give to be like him!

DOLOKHOV

The plan for Natalie Rostova's abduction
Had all been arranged and the preparations made
On the day that Sonya decided to save her (119)
That was the day that the game was to be played
Natasha was to be on her back porch at ten
Anatole and his troika would scoop her up and then
They'd ride forty miles to the village of Kamenka
Where an unfrocked priest was to make 'em get wed
Then back into the troika off they'd go
Take the Poland highroad to the wedding bed

ANATOLE

Passports, horses, ten thousand rubles I have
taken from my sister
And another ten thousand raised with
Dolokhov's help

DOLOKHOV

We were gathered in my study drinking up some tea
Just Anatole the two wedding witnesses and me
An abacus and paper money strewn on the desk
Persian rugs and bearskins hanging grotesque
Anatole was walking with his uniform unbuttoned
Walking to and fro
To and fro
To and fro

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

To and fro
To and fro
To and fro
To and fro

DOLOKHOV

Now wait!
You better
Just
Give it up now
Why dontcha

While there's still time!
You'd really better drop it all
Give it up now!
While there's still time!
Do you know?

ANATOLE

What, teasing again?
Fool don't talk nonsense!
Go to the devil! Eh?
Really this is no time for your stupid jokes

DOLOKHOV

I am not joking, I am talking sense
This is serious business, a dangerous business
Come here, come here, come here Anatole!
Why would I joke about it?
Me of all people
Who found the priest, raised the money, got the
passports, got the horses?

ANATOLE

And well I thank you for it
Do you think I am not grateful?

DOLOKHOV

And now you'll carry her away but will they let it stop
there?
You haven't thought this through or do you just don't
care?

Now listen to me tell it to you one last time
They will take you to the court and convict you for
your crime

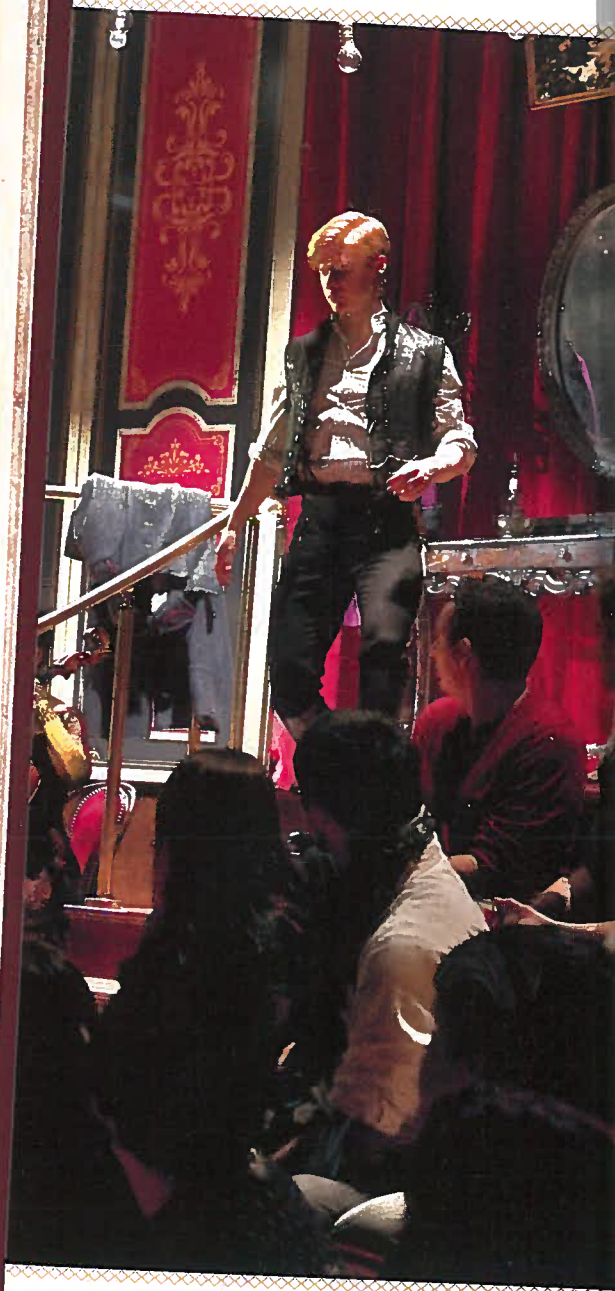
Already married and you're playing with a little girl
Don't you know, don't you think, don't you know?

ANATOLE

Nonsense, nonsense!
I'm scowling and grimacing
Didn't I explain it to you, didn't I, what?

DOLOKHOV

And here Anatole
With the stubborn attachment small-minded
people have



ABOVE: Lucas Steele, A.R.T.

(119) In which Dolokhov reveals that he somehow has omniscient narrator status when it comes to the actions of the woman he once loved and proposed to.



ABOVE: Nick Choksi, A.R.T., 2015.

PIERRE

Ah, that's a true sage
Living in the moment
What I wouldn't give to be like him!

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You'd really better drop it all
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Do you know?

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there?
You haven't thought this through or do you just don't
care?
Now listen to me tell it to you one last time
They will take you to the court and convict you for
your crime
Already married and you're playing with a little girl
Don't you know, don't you think, don't you know?

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Nonsense, nonsense!
I'm scowling and grimacing
Didn't I explain it to you, didn't I, what?

DOLOKHOV

And here Anatole
With the stubborn attachment small-minded
people have



ABOVE: Lucas Steele, A.R.T.

(120) This is one of my favorite Tolstoyian insights in the novel: "And Anatole, with the partiality dull-witted people have for any conclusion they have reached by their own reasoning, repeated the argument he had already put to Dolokhov a hundred times." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 16)

(121) Anatole is totally into feet.

(122) "Balaga," and indeed the staging of the entire show, was inspired by a trip I took to Café Margarita in Moscow (see page 12). The song really wrote itself; the Tolstoy is so musical and fantastic, with the "more than once" refrain built into these incredibly vivid little vignettes depicting Balaga's supernatural powers. And this is one of my favorite moments in the book; that Tolstoy interrupts the plot to introduce us to this wild and wonderful character is such a great example of the novel's all-encompassing embrace of humanity.

Also Paul Pinto is just the greatest.



For conclusions they've worked out for themselves
Repeated his argument to me for the
hundredth time (120)

ANATOLE

If this marriage isn't valid
Then I'm off the hook
But if it is valid, it really doesn't matter!
No one abroad is gonna know a thing about it
Isn't that so now don't you know?
Don't talk to me, don't don't what what
Ah go to hell now
I'm clutching my hair!
It's the very devil!
Here, feel how it beats!

(He presses Dolokhov's hand to his heart. A light comes up on Natasha across the room.)

*Ah mon cher, mon cher
Quel pied, quel regard!*
What a foot she has, (121) what a glance!
A goddess!

And my handsome lips
Mutter something tender to myself

It's time!
It's time!
Now then! Nearly ready? You're dawdling!
The driver is here
The driver is here
Balaga is here!

19. BALAGA (122)

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

Hey Balaga
Ho Balaga
Hey hey ho Balaga
Hey hey Balaga
The famous troika driver

Hey Balaga
Ho Balaga

Hey hey hey Balaga
Hey hey Balaga
The famous troika driver

BALAGA

Who's that madman flying at full gallop down the
street (123)

Who's that madman knocking people over
Running people down
While his fine gentlemen
Hold on to their seats

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

It's Balaga!

BALAGA

Driving mad at twelve miles an hour

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

Balaga!

BALAGA

Comin' straight at you
Get out my way, get out my way

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

Balaga!

BALAGA

Lashin' my whip at horses and peasants

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

Balaga!

BALAGA

Risking skin and life twenty times a year
For my fine fine gentlemen
Yessir hey ho yessir
Yessir yessir yessir

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

More than once!

BALAGA

From Tula (124) to Moscow and back in just one night

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

More than once!

(123) "More than once when Anatole's regiment was stationed at Tver he had taken him from Tver in the evening, brought him to Moscow by daybreak, and driven him back again the next night. More than once had enabled Dolokhov to escape when pursued. More than once he had driven them through the town with Gypsies and 'ladykins' as he called the cocottes. More than once in their service he had run over pedestrians and upset vehicles in the streets of Moscow and had always been protected from the consequences by 'my gentlemen' as he called them. He had ruined more than one horse in their service. More than once they had beaten him, and more than once they had made him drunk on champagne and Madeira, which he loved; and he knew more than one thing about each of them which would long ago have sent an ordinary man to Siberia. They often called Balaga into their orgies and made him drink and dance at the Gypsies', and more than one thousand rubles of their money had passed through his hands. In their service he risked his skin and his life twenty times a year, and in their service had lost more horses than the money he had from them would buy. But he liked them; liked that mad driving at twelve miles an hour, liked upsetting a driver or running down a pedestrian, and flying at full gallop through the Moscow streets. He liked to hear those wild, tipsy shouts behind him: 'Get on! Get on!' when it was impossible to go any faster." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 16)

(124) In the novel it's "Tver," but that word is hard to sing; so I substituted Tula, the town where Tolstoy's estate, Yasnaya Polyana (where he wrote War & Peace), is located.



(120) This is one of my favorite Tolstoyian insights in the novel: "And Anatole, with the partiality dull-witted people have for any conclusion they have reached by their own reasoning, repeated the argument he had already put to Dolokhov a hundred times." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 16)

(121) Anatole is totally into feet.

(122) "Balaga," and indeed the staging of the entire show, was inspired by a trip I took to Café Margarita in Moscow (see page 12). The song really wrote itself; the Tolstoy is so musical and fantastic, with the "more than once" refrain built into these incredibly vivid little vignettes depicting Balaga's supernatural powers. And this is one of my favorite moments in the book; that Tolstoy interrupts the plot to introduce us to this wild and wonderful character is such a great example of the novel's all-encompassing embrace of humanity.

Also Paul Pinto is just the greatest.

For conclusions they've worked out for themselves
Repeated his argument to me for the
hundredth time (120)

ANATOLE

If this marriage isn't valid
Then I'm off the hook
But if it is valid, it really doesn't matter!
No one abroad is gonna know a thing about it
Isn't that so now don't you know?
Don't talk to me, don't don't what what
Ah go to hell now
I'm clutching my hair!
It's the very devil!
Here, feel how it beats!

(He presses Dolokhov's hand to his heart. A light comes up on Natasha across the room.)

*Ah mon cher, mon cher
Quel pied, quel regard!
What a foot she has, (121) what a glance!
A goddess!*

And my handsome lips
Mutter something tender to myself

It's time!
It's time!
Now then! Nearly ready? You're dawdling!
The driver is here
The driver is here
Balaga is here!

19. BALAGA (122)**ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV**

Hey Balaga
Ho Balaga
Hey hey ho Balaga
Hey hey Balaga
The famous troika driver

Hey Balaga
Ho Balaga

Hey hey hey Balaga
Hey hey Balaga
The famous troika driver

BALAGA

Who's that madman flying at full gallop down the
street (123)

Who's that madman knocking people over
Running people down
While his fine gentlemen
Hold on to their seats

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

It's Balaga!

BALAGA

Driving mad at twelve miles an hour

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

Balaga!

BALAGA

Comin' straight at you
Get out my way, get out my way

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

Balaga!

BALAGA

Lashin' my whip at horses and peasants

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

Balaga!

BALAGA

Risking skin and life twenty times a year
For my fine fine gentlemen
Yessir hey ho yessir
Yessir yessir yessir

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

More than once!

BALAGA

From Tula (124) to Moscow and back in just one night

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

More than once!

(123) "More than once when Anatole's regiment was stationed at Tver he had taken him from Tver in the evening, brought him to Moscow by daybreak, and driven him back again the next night. More than once he had enabled Dolokhov to escape when pursued. More than once he had driven them through the town with Gypsies and 'ladykins' as he called the cocottes. More than once in their service he had run over pedestrians and upset vehicles in the streets of Moscow and had always been protected from the consequences by 'my gentlemen' as he called them. He had ruined more than one horse in their service. More than once they had beaten him, and more than once they had made him drunk on champagne and Madeira, which he loved; and he knew more than one thing about each of them which would long ago have sent an ordinary man to Siberia. They often called Balaga into their orgies and made him drink and dance at the Gypsies', and more than one thousand rubles of their money had passed through his hands. In their service he risked his skin and his life twenty times a year, and in their service had lost more horses than the money he had from them would buy. But he liked them; liked that mad driving at twelve miles an hour, liked upsetting a driver or running down a pedestrian, and flying at full gallop through the Moscow streets. He liked to hear those wild, tipsy shouts behind him: 'Get on! Get on!' when it was impossible to go any faster." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 16)

(124) In the novel it's "Tver," but that word is hard to sing; so I substituted Tula, the town where Tolstoy's estate, Yasnaya Polyana (where he wrote War & Peace), is located.





BALAGA

A narrow escape from a wild Cossack fight

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

More than once!

BALAGA

They've beaten me and slapped me with their gloves

ANATOLE & DOLOKHOV

More than once!

BALAGA

Made me drunk on champagne, which I love!

ALL

Hey Balaga

Ho Balaga

Hey hey ho Balaga

Hey hey Balaga

The famous troika driver

Hey Balaga

Ho Balaga

Hey hey hey Balaga

Hey hey Balaga

The famous troika driver

ANATOLE

Who's that slowpoke we abuse with wild
and tipsy shouts

BALAGA

Who knows things that would get you sent
straight to Siberia

If anyone found out

ALL

It's Balaga!

BALAGA

Driving mad at twelve miles an hour

ALL

Balaga!

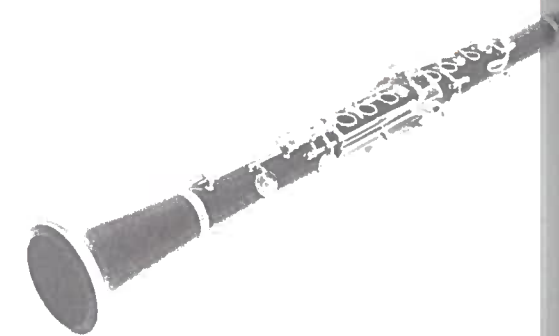
BALAGA

Comin' straight at you

Get out my way, get out my way



*Driving mad
at twelve miles
an hour*



OPPOSITE: Paul Pinto, A.R.T., 2015.

(125) The preferred term for Romani living in Russia; this was changed from "Gypsies" . . . see note 127.

(126) There used to be a hilarious little vaudeville exchange between Anatole and Balaga here, pulled straight from the novel, but it got cut for length:

ANATOLE
What horses have you come with? Eh?

BALAGA
Your special beasts

ANATOLE
Well, listen, Balaga!
Drive all three to death and get me there in three hours, eh?

BALAGA
And when they are dead, then what shall I drive?

ANATOLE
Mind, I'll smash your face in! Don't make jokes!

BALAGA
Then as fast as ever the horses can gallop,
so fast we'll go!

ANATOLE
Ah! Well, sit down

BALAGA
I'll stand, Anatole Vasilyevich

ANATOLE
Sit down; nonsense! Have a drink!
And a large glass of Madeira for him!

BALAGA
My eyes sparkle at the sight of the wine

DOLOKHOV
That's the way, that's the way
That's the way, that's the way
That's the way, hey hey!

ALL
Balaga!

BALAGA
Drinking and dancing with my Ruska Roma (125)

ALL
Balaga!

BALAGA
Riding my horses into the ground
For my fine fine gentlemen
Yessir hey ho yessir
Yessir yessir yessir

ALL
More than once!

BALAGA
Driven you round with ladies on your laps

ALL
More than once!

BALAGA
Taken you places not on any maps

ALL
More than once!

BALAGA
Galloped faster than ordinary men would dare

ALL
More than once!

BALAGA
Jumped my troika right into the air

And I never ask for rubles
Except maybe once a year
I don't do this for rubles
I do it cuz I like 'em!

ALL
And we like Balaga too!

ANATOLE
Whoa . . .

ALL
Whoa . . . (126)

20. THE ABDUCTION

ANATOLE

Everyone raise a glass! Whoa!

Well, comrades

We've had our fun

Lived, laughed and loved

Friends of my youth

When shall we meet again?

I'm going abroad

Goodbye my Gypsy lovers (127)

All my revels here are over

Well, goodbye, Matryosha

Kiss me one last time, whoa

Remember me to Steshka

There, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye

Wish me luck my Gypsy lovers

Now goodbye, goodbye, goodbye

ALL

Goodbye my Gypsy lovers

All my revels here are over

Well, goodbye, Matryosha

Kiss me one last time, whoa

Remember me to Steshka

There, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye

Wish me luck my Gypsy lovers

Now goodbye, goodbye, goodbye

Hurrah!

Smash the glasses on the floor! (128)

(They dance.) (129)

Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!

Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!

(They dance more. Pierre drunkenly
raises a glass.) (130)

(127) "Gypsy" is a controversial word; it is considered a racial slur by many Romani and non-Romani people and should not be used by non-Romani people to refer to a person's ethnic identity, unless that person explicitly desires to be called such. That said, there are many people who do self-identify as Gypsy, and many Romani musicians who use the term to describe themselves and their music; and the word has a long history on Broadway (via Styne/Sondheim and the Gypsy Robe tradition) with a definition that is detached from its ethnic etymology. It's also the best translation of the word used by Tolstoy (цыган, or Tsygan). I agonized about this word quite a bit, but in the end I did it in for this moment (while changing it in some other places) because of both the historical context and the purely positive way in which Anatole is using it. It is my hope that using the word in this positive way (as many Romani musicians do) can in some small way have a positive effect on the perception of a group that is quite demonized and persecuted. For a more thorough discussion, complete with lots of links, see my annotation on genius.com.

(128) This phrase is actually from Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*. I love this phrase, and have put it in two other shows of mine (*Three Pianos* and *Preludes*), and dream of the day when the budget and Equity and general safety concerns will somehow let me actually do a show with lots and lots of glass breaking.

(129) This big dance break was added for A.R.T., where Sam Pinkleton really went nuts in the best possible way. The band plays little bits of "Prologue," "Letters," and a vaguely Russian-sounding melody that is slightly inspired by Pink Floyd's "The Trial" here.

(130) Pierre isn't *really* there, but at this moment in the show it's pretty much a free-for-all jamboree; Natasha and Sonya are here dancing too (Natasha brings Anatole his violin), and Marya is playing a giant floor tom throughout.



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BALAGA
Your special beasts

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BALAGA
And when they are dead, then what shall I drive?

ANATOLE
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BALAGA
Then as fast as ever the horses can gallop,
so fast we'll go!

ANATOLE
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BALAGA
I'll stand, Anatole Vasilyevich

ANATOLE
Sit down; nonsense! Have a drink!
And a large glass of Madeira for him!

BALAGA
My eyes sparkle at the sight of the wine

DOLOKHOV
That's the way, that's the way
That's the way, that's the way
That's the way, hey hey!

ALL
Balaga!

BALAGA
Drinking and dancing with my Ruska Roma (125)

ALL
Balaga!

BALAGA
Riding my horses into the ground
For my fine fine gentlemen
Yessir hey ho yessir
Yessir yessir yessir

ALL
More than once!

BALAGA
Driven you round with ladies on your laps

ALL
More than once!

BALAGA
Taken you places not on any maps

ALL
More than once!

BALAGA
Galloped faster than ordinary men would dare

ALL
More than once!

BALAGA
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And I never ask for rubles
Except maybe once a year
I don't do this for rubles
I do it cuz I like 'em!

ALL
And we like Balaga too!

ANATOLE
Whoa . . .

ALL
Whoa . . . (126)

20. THE ABDUCTION

ANATOLE
Everyone raise a glass! Whoa!

Well, comrades
We've had our fun
Lived, laughed and loved
Friends of my youth
When shall we meet again?
I'm going abroad

Goodbye my Gypsy lovers (127)
All my revels here are over
Well, goodbye, Matryosha
Kiss me one last time, whoa
Remember me to Steshka
There, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye
Wish me luck my Gypsy lovers
Now goodbye, goodbye, goodbye

ALL
Goodbye my Gypsy lovers
All my revels here are over
Well, goodbye, Matryosha
Kiss me one last time, whoa
Remember me to Steshka
There, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye
Wish me luck my Gypsy lovers
Now goodbye, goodbye, goodbye

Hurrah!
Smash the glasses on the floor! (128)

(They dance.) (129)

Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!
Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!

(They dance more. Pierre drunkenly
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(131) This is a small nod to Levin's amazing mowing scene from *Anna Karenina*.

(132) This (and the drops of wine) is an actual toast a Russian might give before a journey, graciously supplied by a Russian director, Andrei Boltenko. It very loosely translates as "Good luck! A toast for the road! Let's go!"

(133) One of my favorite things in the show is when a group of Russians in the audience exclaims, "It's true, it's true!" at this moment.

(134) This duet used to be between Dolokhov and the orchestra violist, and was written for our original violist, Pinky Weitzman, a dear friend. After Pinky left the show, it was always a delight to see the look on the new viola players' faces when they were told about their big "acting moment." At A.R.T., we added a dedicated quartet (now a septet for Broadway) of roving actor-musicians, so this part is now played by the awesome Pearl Rhein (who coincidentally has the soundboard-holes of a violin tattooed on her stomach!).

(135) There's a bit of *Les Misérables* going on here. Also, fun fact: Nick Choksi can't whistle; so either Andrey (who's been rocking out in the pit during this section) or our music director Or does it.

*Vsego horoshego
Na pososhok
Poekhali*

PIERRE

Whoa!

Here's to happiness, freedom, and life!

May your travel be swift as a scythe cuts through
the grass! (131)

May your sorrows be counted and numbered as many
As drops of wine and vodka that stay in my glass!

Vsego horoshego

Na pososhok

Poekhali (132)

Vsego horoshego

Na pososhok

Poekhali

ALL

Vsego horoshego

Na pososhok

Poekhali

Vsego horoshego

Na pososhok

Poekhali

Na pososhok!

Poekhali!

Come on, let's go!...

(They start to leave.)

ANATOLE

No, wait!

Shut the door!

First we have to sit down!

That's the way

It's a Russian custom (133)

(They shut the door and all sit down for a moment.)

All right

(They start to leave.)

DOLOKHOV

Wait, wait, wait!

Where's the fur cloak? (134)

I have heard what elopements are like
She'll rush out more dead than alive
Just in the things she is wearing
If you delay at all, there'll be tears and "Papa"
and "Mama"

And she's frozen in a minute and must go back
But you wrap the fur cloak round her
And you carry her to the sleigh
That's the way
That's the way

ALL

That's the way

That's the way

BALAGA

Let's get outta here!

And the troika tore down Nikitski Boulevard
Whoa! Giddyup, now! Whoa! Whoa!

ALL

Hey Balaga

Ho Balaga

Hey hey ho Balaga

Hey hey Balaga

The famous troika driver

Hey Balaga

Ho Balaga

Hey hey hey Balaga

Hey hey Balaga

The famous troika driver

DOLOKHOV

When they reached the gate Dolokhov
whistled (135)

The whistle was answered, and a maidservant
ran out

MAIDSERVANT

Come in through the courtyard or you'll be seen;
she'll come out directly

DOLOKHOV

Dolokhov stayed by the gate



ABOVE: *Company*, A.R.T., 2015.

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*Vsego horoshogo
Na pososhok
Poekhali*

PIERRE

Whoa!
Here's to happiness, freedom, and life!
May your travel be swift as a scythe cuts through
the grass! **(131)**
May your sorrows be counted and numbered as many
As drops of wine and vodka that stay in my glass!

*Vsego horoshogo
Na pososhok
Poekhali (132)*

*Vsego horoshogo
Na pososhok
Poekhali*

ALL

*Vsego horoshogo
Na pososhok
Poekhali*

*Vsego horoshogo
Na pososhok
Poekhali
Na pososhok!
Poekhali!*

Come on, let's go!...
(They start to leave.)

ANATOLE

No, wait!
Shut the door!
First we have to sit down!
That's the way
It's a Russian custom **(133)**
(They shut the door and all sit down for a moment.)

All right
(They start to leave.)

DOLOKHOV

Wait, wait, wait!
Where's the fur cloak? **(134)**

I have heard what elopements are like
She'll rush out more dead than alive
Just in the things she is wearing
If you delay at all, there'll be tears and "Papa"
and "Mama"
And she's frozen in a minute and must go back
But you wrap the fur cloak round her
And you carry her to the sleigh
That's the way
That's the way

ALL

That's the way
That's the way

BALAGA

Let's get outta here!
And the troika tore down Nikitski Boulevard
Whoa! Giddyup, now! Whoa! Whoa!

ALL

Hey Balaga
Ho Balaga
Hey hey ho Balaga
Hey hey Balaga
The famous troika driver
Hey Balaga
Ho Balaga
Hey hey hey Balaga
Hey hey Balaga
The famous troika driver

DOLOKHOV

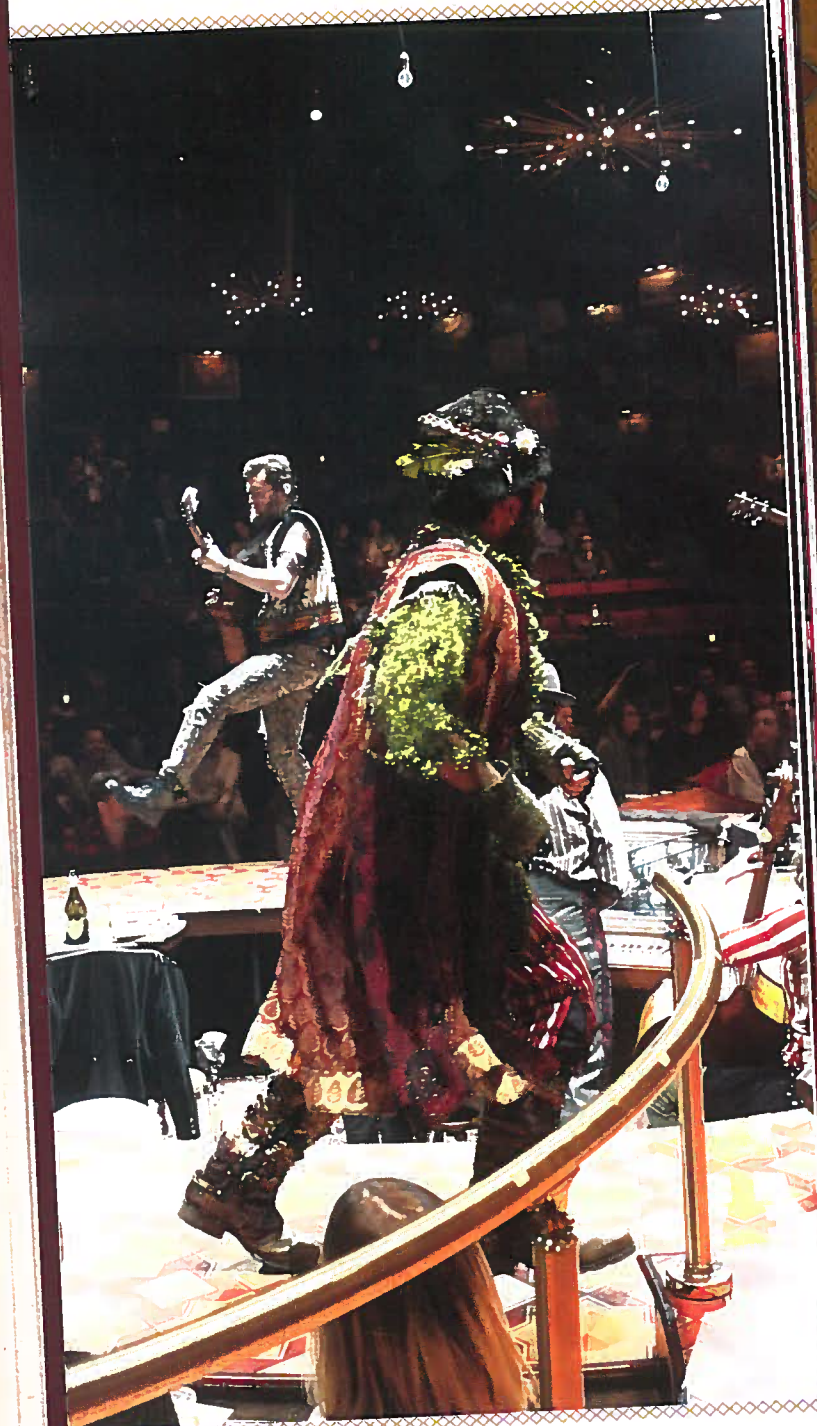
When they reached the gate Dolokhov
whistled **(135)**
The whistle was answered, and a maidservant
ran out

MAIDSERVANT

Come in through the courtyard or you'll be seen;
she'll come out directly

DOLOKHOV

Dolokhov stayed by the gate



ABOVE: *Company*, A.R.T., 2015.

(136) So thankful that I am here on Earth during the same time Grace McLean is visiting.

"You shameless good-for-nothing! . . . A nice girl! Very nice!" said Marya Dmitrievna. "Arranging meetings with lovers in my house! It's no use pretending: you listen when I speak to you!" And Marya Dmitrievna touched her arm. "Listen when I speak! You've disgraced yourself like the lowest of hussies. I'd treat you differently, but I'm sorry for your father, so I will conceal it."

Natasha did not change her position, but her whole body heaved with noiseless, convulsive sobs which choked her. Marya Dmitrievna glanced round at Sonya and seated herself on the sofa beside Natasha.

"It's lucky for him that he escaped me; but I'll find him!" she said in her rough voice. "Do you hear what I am saying or not?" she added.

She put her large hand under Natasha's face and turned it toward her. Both Marya Dmitrievna and Sonya were amazed when they saw how Natasha looked. Her eyes were dry and glistening, her lips compressed, her cheeks sunken.

"Let me be! . . . What is it to me? . . . I shall die!" she muttered, wrenching herself from Marya Dmitrievna's hands with a vicious effort and sinking down again into her former position.

"Natalie!" said Marya Dmitrievna. ". . . when your father comes back tomorrow what am I to tell him? Eh?" Again Natasha's body shook with sobs.

"Suppose he finds out, and your brother, and your betrothed?"

"I have no betrothed: I have refused him!" cried Natasha.

"That's all the same," continued Dmitrievna. "If they hear of this, will they let it pass? He, your father, I know him . . . if he challenges him to a duel will that be all right? Eh?"

"Oh, let me be! Why have you interfered at all? Why? Why? Who asked you to?" shouted Natasha, raising herself on the sofa and looking malignantly at Marya Dmitrievna.

"But what did you want?" cried Marya Dmitrievna, growing angry again. "Were you kept under lock and key? Who hindered his coming to the house? Why carry you off as if you were some Gypsy singing girl? . . . Well, if he had carried you off . . . do you think they wouldn't have found him? Your father, or brother, or your betrothed? And he's a scoundrel, a wretch—that's a fact!"

Anatole followed the maid into the courtyard
Turned the corner, ran up to the porch

(Anatole is stopped by Marya D.)

MARYA D.

You will not enter my house, scoundrel!

DOLOKHOV

Anatole, come back!

Betrayed! Betrayed!

Betrayed, Anatole! Betrayed!

Come back!

Betrayed, Anatole! Betrayed! Betrayed!

(Dolokhov rushes in and rescues Anatole. They flee.)

PART V

After scolding a grief-stricken Natasha ("In My House"), Marya D. sends out "A Call to Pierre," asking him to help handle the crisis. Pierre kicks Anatole out of Moscow ("Find Anatole"/"Pierre & Anatole"); Natasha poisons herself ("Natasha Very Ill"). Andrey returns. Pierre explains the scandal to him and asks him to be compassionate, but Andrey is unable to forgive ("Pierre & Andrey"). Finally, Pierre visits Natasha ("Pierre & Natasha"). After their meeting, Pierre experiences a moment of enlightenment while seeing "The Great Comet of 1812" in the night sky.

CHAPTER 11

21. IN MY HOUSE (136)

MARYA D.

You shameless good-for-nothing

You vile, shameless girl

In my house

In my house

A nice girl! Very nice!

You dirty nasty wench of a thing
Now don't you say one word
In my house
In my house
Horrid girl, hussy!

It's lucky for him he escaped, but I'll find him
Now you listen to me when I speak to you!
Now you listen to me when I speak to you!
In my house!
In my house!
Do you hear what I am saying or not?

SONYA

Natasha's whole body shook (137)
With noiseless, convulsive sobs
Marya touched her hand to her face

NATASHA

Don't touch me!

Let me be! What is it to me? I shall die!

MARYA D.

What are we to tell your father? Eh?

In my house!

In my house!

What are we to tell Prince Andrey? Eh?

Oh what do we tell your betrothed?

NATASHA

I have no betrothed, I have refused him!

SONYA

Natasha, come here, kiss me

Press your wet face to mine

NATASHA

Don't touch me!

MARYA D.

Why didn't he come to the house?

Why didn't he openly ask for your hand?

You were not kept under lock and key!

Carrying you off like some Gypsy girl! (138)

And if he had carried you off, don't you think your father would have found him?

"He is better than any of you!" exclaimed Natasha getting up. "If you hadn't interfered . . . Oh, my God! What is it all? What is it? Sonya, why? . . . Go away!" And she burst into sobs with the despairing vehemence with which people bewail disasters they fear they have themselves occasioned. Marya Dmitrievna was to speak again but Natasha cried out:

"Go away! Go away! You all hate and despise me!" and she threw herself back on the sofa." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5 Ch. 16)

(137) There is a bit of "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" going on here.

(138) The one time in the show where "Gypsy" is indeed used as a slur; Marya is at her ugliest here.

You dirty nasty
wench of a thing
Now don't you
say one word
In my house
In my house

(136) So thankful that I am here on Earth during the same time Grace McLean is visiting.

"You shameless good-for-nothing! . . . A nice girl! Very nice!" said Marya Dmitrievna. "Arranging meetings with lovers in my house! It's no use pretending: you listen when I speak to you!" And Marya Dmitrievna touched her arm. "Listen when I speak! You've disgraced yourself like the lowest of hussies. I'd treat you differently, but I'm sorry for your father, so I will conceal it."

Natasha did not change her position, but her whole body heaved with noiseless, convulsive sobs which choked her. Marya Dmitrievna glanced round at Sonya and seated herself on the sofa beside Natasha.

"It's lucky for him that he escaped me; but I'll find him!" she said in her rough voice. "Do you hear what I am saying or not?" she added.

She put her large hand under Natasha's face and turned it toward her. Both Marya Dmitrievna and Sonya were amazed when they saw how Natasha looked. Her eyes were dry and glistening, her lips compressed, her cheeks sunken.

"Let me be! . . . What is it to me? . . . I shall die!" she muttered, wrenching herself from Marya Dmitrievna's hands with a vicious effort and sinking down again into her former position.

"Natalie!" said Marya Dmitrievna. ". . . when your father comes back tomorrow what am I to tell him? Eh?"

Again Natasha's body shook with sobs.

"Suppose he finds out, and your brother, and your betrothed?"

"I have no betrothed: I have refused him!" cried Natasha.

"That's all the same," continued Dmitrievna. "If they hear of this, will they let it pass? He, your father, I know him . . . if he challenges him to a duel will that be all right? Eh?"

"Oh, let me be! Why have you interfered at all? Why? Why? Who asked you to?" shouted Natasha, raising herself on the sofa and looking malignantly at Marya Dmitrievna.

"But what did you want?" cried Marya Dmitrievna, growing angry again. "Were you kept under lock and key? Who hindered his coming to the house? Why carry you off as if you were some Gypsy singing girl? . . . Well, if he had carried you off . . . do you think they wouldn't have found him? Your father, or brother, or your betrothed? And he's a scoundrel, a wretch—that's a fact!"

Anatole followed the maid into the courtyard
Turned the corner, ran up to the porch

(Anatole is stopped by Marya D.)

MARYA D.

You will not enter my house, scoundrel!

DOLOKHOV

Anatole, come back!

Betrayed! Betrayed!

Betrayed, Anatole! Betrayed!

Come back!

Betrayed, Anatole! Betrayed! Betrayed!

(Dolokhov rushes in and rescues Anatole. They flee.)

PART V

After scolding a grief-stricken Natasha ("In My House"), Marya D. sends out "A Call to Pierre," asking him to help handle the crisis. Pierre kicks Anatole out of Moscow ("Find Anatole"/"Pierre & Anatole"); Natasha poisons herself ("Natasha Very Ill"). Andrey returns. Pierre explains the scandal to him and asks him to be compassionate, but Andrey is unable to forgive ("Pierre & Andrey"). Finally, Pierre visits Natasha ("Pierre & Natasha"). After their meeting, Pierre experiences a moment of enlightenment while seeing "The Great Comet of 1812" in the night sky.

CHAPTER II

21. IN MY HOUSE (136)

MARYA D.

You shameless good-for-nothing

You vile, shameless girl

In my house

In my house

A nice girl! Very nice!

You dirty nasty wench of a thing
Now don't you say one word
In my house
In my house
Horrid girl, hussy!

It's lucky for him he escaped, but I'll find him
Now you listen to me when I speak to you!
Now you listen to me when I speak to you!
In my house!
In my house!
Do you hear what I am saying or not?

SONYA

Natasha's whole body shook (137)
With noiseless, convulsive sobs
Marya touched her hand to her face

NATASHA

Don't touch me!

Let me be! What is it to me? I shall die!

MARYA D.

What are we to tell your father? Eh?
In my house!
In my house!
What are we to tell Prince Andrey? Eh?
Oh what do we tell your betrothed?

NATASHA

I have no betrothed, I have refused him!

SONYA

Natasha, come here, kiss me
Press your wet face to mine

NATASHA

Don't touch me!

MARYA D.

Why didn't he come to the house?
Why didn't he openly ask for your hand?
You were not kept under lock and key!
Carrying you off like some Gypsy girl! (138)
And if he had carried you off, don't you think your
father would have found him?

"He is better than any of you!" exclaimed Natasha getting up. "If you hadn't interfered . . . Oh, my God! What is it all? What is it? Sonya, why? . . . Go away!"

And she burst into sobs with the despairing vehemence with which people bewail disasters they feel they have themselves occasioned. Marya Dmitrievna was to speak again but Natasha cried out:

"Go away! Go away! You all hate and despise me!" and she threw herself back on the sofa." (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 16)

(137) There is a bit of "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" going on here.

(138) The one time in the show where "Gypsy" is indeed used as a slur; Marya is at her ugliest here.

*You dirty nasty
wench of a thing
Now don't you
say one word
In my house
In my house*

(139) The melody here was originally written a third lower; Pippa one day casually asked if she could "try taking it up a little." Thanks, Pippa!

(140) The first time Natasha refers to herself in the third person. I was pretty loose and instinctual about the rules for how and when people narrate themselves, and whether they use first or third person; in this moment I think the device portrays how cracked and outside of herself Natasha is, setting us up for her attempted suicide a couple of songs later.

All that night
she did not
sleep or weep
She sat at
the window
Waiting for him

Your father, I know him
He will challenge him to a duel and what then? Will
that be all right? Eh?
He's a scoundrel, he's a wretch! That's a fact!

NATASHA

He is better than any of you I say
He is better than any of you I say
Why did you interfere! Oh God, what is it all?!
What is it?!
Who are you to tell me anything?!
Sonya, why?!
Go away!
Everyone, go away!

Marya Dmitryevna tried to speak again but Natasha
cried out
Go away! Go away! You all hate and
despise me! (139)
And she threw herself down on the sofa

MARYA D.

Natasha!
Natalya . . .

I put a pillow under her head
Covered her with two quilts
Brought her a glass of lime-flower water
But Natasha did not respond
Well, let her sleep
Let her sleep

(Marya D. leaves.)

NATASHA

But Natasha was not asleep (140)
Her face was pale
Her eyes wide open
All that night she did not sleep or weep
She sat at the window
Waiting for him



OPPOSITE: Grace McLean, A.R.T., 2015.

(141) This was by far the hardest song to write; it went through tons of versions. Originally it was actually quite slow and stodgy, as it's between two older characters . . . but it was always a slog; there's just so much info that has to happen here, and I was getting very bogged down. So then one night in frustration (while in rehearsal for Kazino), I tried to mentally trick myself, and decided to just make it the coolest song in the show, taking elements of Marya's "In My House" beat and the gossiping choral hocketing and 19th century harpsichord from "Letters," having the chorus just scream a lot, and adding more fun "What?!"s for me to sing. Which surprisingly kind of worked!

(142) Sometimes during rehearsal I would sing "I have been snorkeling" here instead.



(143) Marya D. as quest-giver, as she is at the end of "Moscow" (which originally contained a more direct echo of this, "You must go to Bald Hills"). There is a bit of Obi-Wan's "You must go to the Dagobah system" going on here.

22. A CALL TO PIERRE (141)

(A servant hands a letter to Pierre.)

SERVANT

A letter from Marya Dmitryevna asking you
to come and visit her
On a matter of great importance
Relating to Andrey Bolkonsky and his betrothed

PIERRE

What?
What can they want with me?

(He arrives at Marya D.'s.)

MARYA D.

Pierre, old friend I'm sorry it's late
I'm sorry I haven't seen you about
Where have you been?
Where have you been?

PIERRE

I have been studying (142)

MARYA D.

Pierre old friend we need your help
Pierre old friend the family name
We need your help
We need your help
There's ruin at the door

PIERRE

Marya?

MARYA D.

Natasha has let down the family

PIERRE

What?

MARYA D.

Natasha has broken with Andrey

PIERRE

What?

MARYA D.

Natasha has tried to elope

PIERRE

What?

MARYA D.

Natasha and Anatole Kuragin!

PIERRE

What?

MARYA D.

We need your help
We need your help
There's ruin at the door

PIERRE

Natasha, that charming girl?
I can't believe my ears
So I am not the only man
Chained to a bad woman
And Anatole, that stupid child
They'll lock him up for years
For Anatole is a married man!

MARYA D.

Married? He's married?

PIERRE

Yes

MARYA D.

Oh wait 'til I tell her

PIERRE

Poor Andrey

MARYA D.

And when Andrey comes home
He will challenge Anatole to a duel
And get himself killed
And all will be ruined

You must go see your brother-in-law (143)
And tell him that he must leave Moscow
And not dare to let me set my eyes on him again

PIERRE

At once



ABOVE: Scott Stangland, A.R.T., 2015.

(141) This was by far the hardest song to write; it went through tons of versions. Originally it was actually quite slow and stodgy, as it's between two older characters . . . but it was always a slog; there's just so much info that has to happen here, and I was getting very bogged down. So then one night in frustration (while in rehearsal for Kazino), I tried to mentally trick myself, and decided to just make it the *coolest song in the show*, taking elements of Marya's "In My House" beat and the gossiping choral hocketing and 19th century harpsichord from "Letters," having the chorus just scream a lot, and adding more fun "What?!"s for me to sing. Which surprisingly kind of worked!

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And tell him that he must leave Moscow
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PIERRE

At once



ABOVE: Scott Stangland, A.R.T., 2015.

Ah, Pierre
Sweet husband
You don't know
what a plight
our Anatole
has had

CHAPTER 12

23. FIND ANATOLE

PIERRE

Anatole, find Anatole
Anatole, find Anatole
The blood rushes to my heart
It's difficult to breathe
Anatole, find Anatole
Anatole, find Anatole
Not at the ice hills (144)
Not at Matreshka's
Not at Komoneno's
Anatole, find Anatole
Anatole, find Anatole
To the Club

And at the Club all is going on as usual
The members eat their dinners
And gossip in small groups

PIERRE & CHORUS

Have I heard of Kuragin's abduction?
Is it true Natasha is ruined?

PIERRE

Nonsense, nonsense
Nothing has happened
Everything is fine

(Pierre's house.)

ANATOLE

Natasha
Natasha
It is essential that I see Natasha
How can I see her?

HÉLÈNE

Anatole, come Anatole
Anatole, hush Anatole

(Marya D.'s house.)

NATASHA (145)

What? What?

I don't believe that he is married
I don't believe you
And I stare like a hunted wounded animal
He can't be married!

(Pierre's house.)

SERVANT (to Pierre)

Good evening sir
Prince Anatole is in the drawing room with
the Countess (146)

HÉLÈNE

Ah, Pierre
Sweet husband
You don't know what a plight our Anatole
has had (147)

PIERRE

Be quiet
I will not greet you
At this moment you are more repulsive to me
than ever

Anatole, come Anatole
Anatole, must speak to you

ANATOLE

Anatole followed with his usual jaunty step
But his face betrayed anxiety

PIERRE

Pierre closed the door and addressed Anatole without
looking at him (148)

24. PIERRE & ANATOLE (149)

(During this scene, Natasha prepares to poison herself.)

PIERRE

You promised Countess Rostova to marry her and
were about to elope, is that so?

ANATOLE

Mon cher
I don't consider myself bound to answer questions
put to me in that tone

(144) I have no idea what "the ice hills" are (it's taken directly from the book), but I do know that I want to go there.

(145) This section used to be in the slow, bad version of "A Call to Pierre." But intercutting the multiple locations seemed to help drive this section much, much better.

(146) The Servant plays the little triangle bit here. Back at Ars Nova, when I was Pierre and also the MD and piano player, Paul (our Assistant MD back then) played piano in this song (and the rest of the show), and so had to jump up for this line; that's why the piano drops out for the rest of the song (which actually makes it spare and scarier).

(147) Hélène used to have another really juicy line here, taken from the novel: "Hélène stopped / Seeing in the forward thrust of her husband's head / in his glowing eyes and resolute gait / the terrible rage and strength/which I knew so well." But, you know, momentum.

(148) We stage this moment with Pierre looking directly at Anatole. It is HOT.

(149) The opening beats of this song are a little battle between the acoustic orchestra and the electronica track, setting the stage for the battle between acoustic Pierre and electronica Anatole.

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(150) We actually use a stool from the audience instead of a paperweight here. This was always a great moment for me to work out any stress I was feeling during previews (sorry, Lucas!)

(151) This bizarre numbering of objectives comes straight from the novel:

"I shan't be violent, don't be afraid!" said Pierre in answer to a frightened gesture of Anatole's. 'First, the letters,' said he, as if repeating a lesson to himself. 'Secondly,' he continued after a short pause, again rising and again pacing the room, 'tomorrow you must get out of Moscow.'

'But how can I? . . .'

'Thirdly,' Pierre continued without listening to him, 'you must never breathe a word of what has passed between you and Countess Rostova. I know I can't prevent your doing so, but if you have a spark of conscience . . .' Pierre paced the room several times in silence.

Anatole sat at a table frowning and biting his lips. (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 20)

Most of the rest of this song is word-for-word Tolstoy.

(152) There's a heartbreaking little touch in the novel here, where Pierre sees that a button on Anatole's coat is loose, causing him to offer the money. I tried to squeeze it in but couldn't quite make it work dramatically.

PIERRE

My face, already pale
Becomes distorted by fury
I seize you by the collar with my big big hands
And I shake you from side to side
Until your face shows a sufficient degree of terror
When I tell you I must talk to you!

ANATOLE

Come now, this is stupid!
What what don't don't!

PIERRE

You're a scoundrel and a blackguard
And I don't know what deprives me of the pleasure
Of smashing your head in with this!

(He takes a heavy paperweight and lifts it threateningly, but at once puts it back in its place.) (150)

Did you promise to marry her?

ANATOLE

I didn't think of it. I never promised, because—

PIERRE

Have you any letters of hers?
Any letters?

I shan't be violent, don't be afraid

(Anatole hands Pierre a pack of letters.)

First, the letters **(151)**
Second, tomorrow you must get out of Moscow

ANATOLE

But how can I?

PIERRE

Third
You must never breathe a word of what has happened
between you and the Countess
Now I know I can't prevent your doing so
But if you have a spark of conscience—
Pierre paces the room several times in silence

ANATOLE

Anatole sits at a table frowning and biting his lips

PIERRE

After all, you must understand
That besides your pleasure
There is such a thing as other people, and their
happiness and peace

And that you are ruining a whole life
For the sake of amusing yourself!
Amuse yourself with women like my wife
With them you're within your rights
But to promise a young girl to marry her
To deceive, to kidnap
Don't you understand that that's as cruel
As beating an old man or a child?

ANATOLE

Well I don't know about that, eh?
I don't know that and I don't want to
But you have used such words to me
"Scoundrel" and so on
Which as a man of honor
I will not allow anyone to use

PIERRE

Is it satisfaction you want?

ANATOLE

You could at least take back your words, eh?
If you want me to do as you wish?

(Natasha drinks the poison.)

PIERRE

Fine I take them back, I take them back!
And I ask you to forgive me
And if you require money for your journey— **(152)**

ANATOLE

Anatole smiled
The reflection of that base and cringing smile
Which Pierre knew so well in his wife
Revolted him



ABOVE: Lucas Steele and Scott Stangland, A.R.T., 2015.

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"But how can I? . . ."

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PIERRE

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ANATOLE

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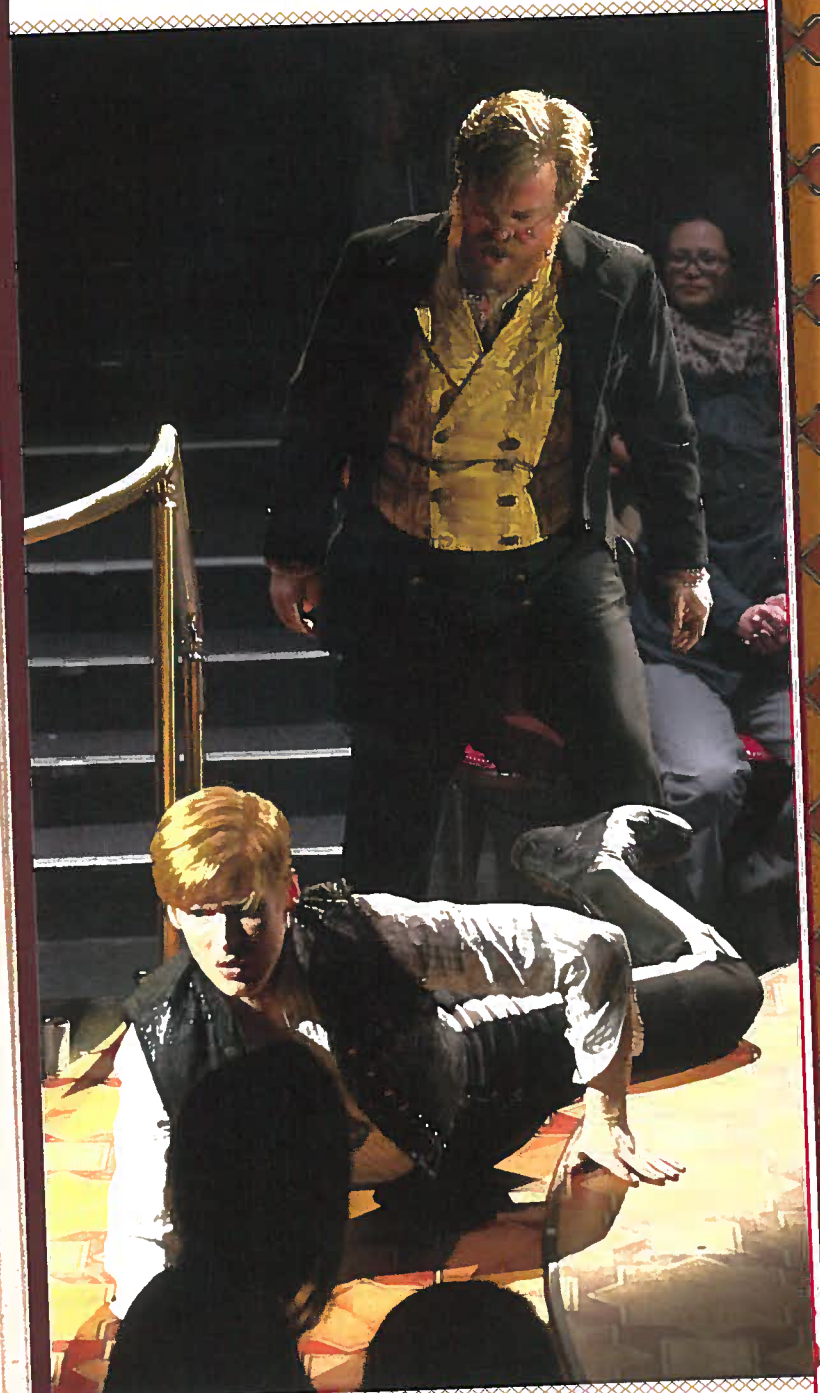
(Natasha drinks the poison.)

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ANATOLE

Anatole smiled
The reflection of that base and cringing smile
Which Pierre knew so well in his wife
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ABOVE: Lucas Steele and Scott Stangland, A.R.T., 2015.

THE GREAT COMET

(153) I love this line, because it evokes the famous X-Men villains, the Brood.

(154) I wrote this last note (a high C#) as a joke, in a spastic moment of composer frustration with not knowing how to end the song. I actually had forgotten that I had even written it, and then at rehearsal Lucas got to it and just . . . did . . . THAT.

(155) There is a bit of Radiohead going on in this song.

*There's a new
wrinkle on
your forehead
old friend*

PIERRE

Oh, vile and heartless brood! (153)

ANATOLE

Next day Anatole left
For Petersburg! (154)

CHAPTER 13

25. NATASHA VERY ILL (155)

SONYA

Natasha very ill
The whole house
A state of alarm and commotion
Natasha very ill
Having poisoned herself
With a bit of arsenic
She woke me in the middle of the night
And told me what she had done
And the doctors
And the antidotes
And now she is out of danger
But still so weak
And Andrey is to return
We wait with dread

26. PIERRE & ANDREY

(Andrey visits Pierre.)

ANDREY

Well, how are you?
Still getting stouter?

PIERRE

There's a new wrinkle
On your forehead old friend

ANDREY

It's good to see you
I've been away too long

PIERRE

My friend, you are in need
Your face is gloomy



OPPOSITE: Nicholas Belton, A.R.T., 2015.

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(157) We actually originally had two different actors playing the two Bolkonskys (Andrey was perhaps going to be one of the cellists from the orchestra), but then this line indicated the much cooler choice of having the roles double-cast.

ANDREY

No, I am well
There's a war going on (156)

Forgive me for troubling you
I have received a refusal from Countess Rostova
And have heard reports of your brother-in-law having
sought her hand
Or something of that kind
Is this true?

PIERRE

Something of that kind

ANDREY

Here are her letters
Please give them to the Countess

PIERRE

Natasha is ill
She has been at death's door

ANDREY

I much regret her illness

PIERRE

And he smiled like his father (157)
Coldly, maliciously

ANDREY

Well, it doesn't matter

PIERRE

You told me once
A fallen woman should be forgiven

ANDREY

But I didn't say that I could forgive
I can't

Yes, ask her hand again
Be magnanimous, and so on
Yes, that would be very noble
But I can't be that man
If you wish to be my friend
Never speak of that again

Well, goodbye

(Pierre takes the letters to Natasha.)

CHAPTER 14**27. PIERRE & NATASHA (158)****PIERRE**

Natasha was standing
In the middle of the drawing room
With a pale yet steady face
When I appeared in the doorway
She grew flustered and I hurried to her
I thought that she would give me her hand
But instead she stopped
Breathing heavily
Her thin arms hanging lifelessly
Just in the very pose
She used to stand in as a young girl
When she went to the middle of the ballroom to sing
But the look on her face was quite different

NATASHA

Peter Kirilovich—

PIERRE

Pierre

NATASHA

Prince Bolkonsky was your friend—
He is your friend
He once told me that I should turn to you

PIERRE

Pierre sniffed as he looked at her, but he didn't speak
'Til then he had reproached her, and tried to
despise her
But now he felt such pity for her
That there was no room in his soul for reproach

NATASHA

He is here now
Tell him to—tell him to forgive me

PIERRE

Yes, I will tell him to forgive you
But, he gave me your letters—

NATASHA

No, I know that all is over

(158) This is another song that I wrote mostly through improvisation, recording myself singing the libretto at the piano. The text is almost all word-for-word Tolstoy. (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 22)

*And all people live, not
by reason of any care
they have for themselves,
but by the love for them
that is in other people.*

—LEO TOLSTOY, *TALES FROM TOLSTOY*

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(160) A common piece of musical theater wisdom is that characters “sing when their emotions become too great for speech to contain them”; but that theory has always struck me as a bit narrow. Thus this deliberate inversion.

And a greater
sense of pity,
tenderness, and
love overflowed
Pierre's heart

I know that it never can be
But still I'm tormented by the wrongs I've done him
Tell him that I beg him to forgive, forgive
Forgive me for everything

PIERRE

Yes I will tell him, tell him everything
But—
But I should like to know one thing
Did you love—
Did you love that bad man?

NATASHA

Don't call him bad
But I don't know, I don't know at all

PIERRE

She began to cry
And a greater sense of pity, tenderness, and love
overflowed Pierre's heart
He felt the tears begin to trickle underneath his
spectacles
And he hoped that no one would see
We won't speak of it anymore
We won't speak of it, my dear
But one thing I beg of you, consider me your friend
And if you ever need help, or simply to open your
heart to someone
Not now, but when your mind is clear
Think of me—

Pierre grew confused (159)

NATASHA

Don't speak to me like that
I am not worth it!

PIERRE

Stop, stop, stop!
You have your whole life before you—

NATASHA

Before me? No, all is over for me!

PIERRE

All over?

(*Music stops.*) (160)

If I were not myself,
but the brightest, handsomest,
best man on earth,
and if I were free—
I would get down on my knees this minute
and ask you for your hand
and for your love.

(*Music resumes.*)

NATASHA

And for the first time in many days
I weep tears of gratitude
Tears of tenderness
Tears of thanks
And glancing at Pierre
Oh Pierre
I leave the room smiling

PIERRE

And restraining tears of tenderness
Tears of joy which choke me
I throw my fur coat on my shoulders
Unable to find the sleeves
Outside, my great broad chest
Breathes in deep the air with joy
Despite the ten degrees of frost
And I get into my sleigh

28. THE GREAT COMET OF 1812 (161)**PIERRE**

Where to now?
Where can I go now?
Not to the Club
Not to pay calls
Mankind seems so pitiful
So poor
Compared to that softened, grateful, last glance
She gave me through her tears

(161) This song was inspired by both Angelo Badalamenti's music at the end of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* and The Singers Unlimited's *Christmas*, an amazing vocal jazz album that plays at my house pretty much nonstop every December. Harmonically, the song is almost identical to “Pierre,” except that it resolves to D-major as opposed to E-minor.

I still can't read this final paragraph of Tolstoy's without weeping. Even in translation, this beautiful and ambiguous depiction of the comet transcends language, evoking such a vast and complicated feeling of terror, hope, insignificance, and rebirth. . . . It is the pinnacle of the sublime in art for me. Here it is in its entirety:

“Where to now, your excellency?” asked the coachman
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“Home!” said Pierre, and despite twenty-two degrees of frost Fahrenheit he threw open the bearskin cloak from his broad chest and inhaled the air with joy.

It was clear and frosty. Above the dirty, ill-lit streets above the black roofs, stretched the dark starry sky. Only looking up at the sky did Pierre cease to feel how sordid and humiliating were all mundane things compared with the heights to which his soul had just been raised. At the entrance to the Arbat Square an immense expanse of dark starry sky presented itself to his eyes. Almost in the center of it, above the Prechistenka Boulevard, surrounded and sprinkled on all sides by stars but distinguished from them all by its nearness to the earth, its white light, and its long uplifted tail, shone the enormous and brilliant comet of 1812—the comet which was said to portend all kinds of woes and the end of the world. In Pierre, however, that comet with its long luminous tail aroused no feeling of fear. On the contrary he gazed joyfully, his eyes moist with tears, at this bright comet which, having traveled in its orbit with inconceivable velocity through immeasurable space, seemed suddenly—like an arrow piercing the earth—to remain fixed in a chosen spot, vigorously holding its tail erect, shining and displaying its white light amid countless other scintillating stars. It seemed to Pierre that this comet fully responded to what was passing in his own softened and uplifted soul, now blossoming into a new life.” (Vol. 2, Pt. 5, Ch. 22)

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THE GREAT COMET

CHORUS

It was clear and cold
Above the dirty streets
Above the black roofs
Stretched the dark starry sky

PIERRE

This vast firmament
Open to my eyes
Wet with tears

CHORUS

And there in the middle
Above Prechistensky Boulevard
Surrounded and sprinkled on all sides by stars
Shines the Great Comet of 1812
The Brilliant Comet of 1812

PIERRE

The comet said to portend
Untold horrors
And the end of the world
But for me
The comet brings no fear
No, I gaze joyfully

And this bright star
Having traced its parabola
With inexpressible speed
Through immeasurable space
Seems suddenly
To have stopped
Like an arrow piercing the earth
Stopped for me

It seems to me
That this comet
Feels me
Feels my softened and uplifted soul
And my newly melted heart
Now blossoming
Into a new life

END

*This vast
Firmament
Open to my eyes
Wet with tears*



OPPOSITE: Dave Malloy, Kazino, 2013.