Course Title: Exploring Russian Music: Your Key to Unlocking Russian History and Culture

Instructor: Dr. Gil Rappaport
Gil Rappaport, Ph.D. (UCLA, 1979), is Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas at Austin. He retired in 2014 from the Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies after a teaching career of 35 years. While his primary research specialization was Slavic linguistics, he has taught numerous advanced undergraduate courses surveying Russian (and Polish) culture in their historical development, and has taught courses in Russian music at the university level four times. He is an amateur pianist and lover of music of (almost!) all kinds. This is his fourth offering for OLLI-on-campus and he has loved working with the participants who bring a variety of interests and experiences to the discussion table.

Course Times: Tuesdays 1:00-3:00 (October 15-November 5, 2019)

Course Location: Ruffatto Hall, Room 304

Course Description:
We will explore the thousand-year saga of Russian history and culture through its music. As perhaps the most accessible of the arts, music has a unique capacity to communicate both emotions and ideas. But we will also investigate how music can reflect, and even change, the social context in which it arises, sometimes promoting an official agenda, sometimes protesting authoritarian political structures. This unusual perspective will be our key to understanding Russia's historical struggle to establish its own unique identity. Many themes of Russia's past that we will highlight are resurfacing today as cultural tools in Putin's neo-nationalist campaign to assert the power and control of the Russian state. Course objectives:

- Learn about Russian history and culture
- Listen to excerpts of some truly great music, along with pointers as to how to pursue special interests further on your own. This includes pearls of the Western classical tradition AND rougher cut Russian folk, popular, rock, even punk music.
- Imbibe a little 'music appreciation', sometimes called 'what to listen for in music'. This includes the structure of music and its expressive resources, but our focus is always to apply this knowledge to specific pieces in an accessible way and for a reason.
- Share your impressions, knowledge, and perspectives with the class, with an emphasis on keeping observations on-topic and concisely expressed.
- Have fun!!

Session #1: Sources.
1. The Byzantine legacy: The Russian church and its music
2. Russian folk music: The real McCoy(-sky) and its appropriation

Session #2: Nationalism.
3. The father of Russian art music: Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857), an underappreciated pioneer
4. 'The Mighty Five' (1860's and 1870's) and the ideology of Russian nationalism

Session #3: Internationalism.
5. Tchaikovsky (1840-1893): Professional composer and classic tortured romantic genius
6. Stravinsky (1882-1971) and Ballets Russes (1909-1929): Packaging the old in avant-garde form

Session #4: The Soviet period: Pro and con.
7. The new Soviet music (1917-1991): When the State calls the shots (sometimes literally!).
8. Popular music and rock-and-roll in the Soviet period: Genres of escape and protest