Plyve Kacha

A Ukrainian folk lament

Adapted and arranged for

Choir or Organ;

abbreviated version by

Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra & Jet Schouten

A Collaborative Investigative Composition

Collaborative
Investigative
Composing

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When more than one hundred unarmed Ukrainian protestors were killed by snipers in Maidan (Independence) Square on February 18 and 20, 2014, "Plyve Kacha" was used in the mass funeral on February 21, 2014, and has since become a requiem for Ukrainians. The protesters disagreed with President Yanukovych's decision not to sign an Association Agreement that could have led to Ukraine joining the European Union. Instead, Yanukovych sought a loan from Russia. After the Maidan Square massacre, Yanukovych fled to Russia. When Ukraine was destabilized due to civil unrest, Vladimir Putin annexed Crimea to Russia, and the conflict in Donbass arose.

"Plyve Kacha" is a mournful Ukrainian folk song originating (in various versions) in the western regions of Trans-Carpathia or Lemkivshchyna (in the Carpathian Mountains). The title translates to "the duckling swims." The song lyrics, however, refer to a conversation between a mother and her son, who is going off to war. BBC's Irena Taranyuk translated two lines:

> "My dear mother, what will happen to me if I die in a foreign land?"
> "Well, my dearest, you will be buried by other people."

Dutch journalist Jet Schouten and I met at the University of Michigan, where she received a Knight-Wallace fellowship in journalism 2019–2020. When I gave a storytelling on the carillon demonstration for the fellows, Jet and Venezuelan journalist Marielba Núñez approached me about taking carillon lessons and collaborating in journalistic storytelling on the carillon. Thus, Collaborative Investigative Composing (CIC) was born.

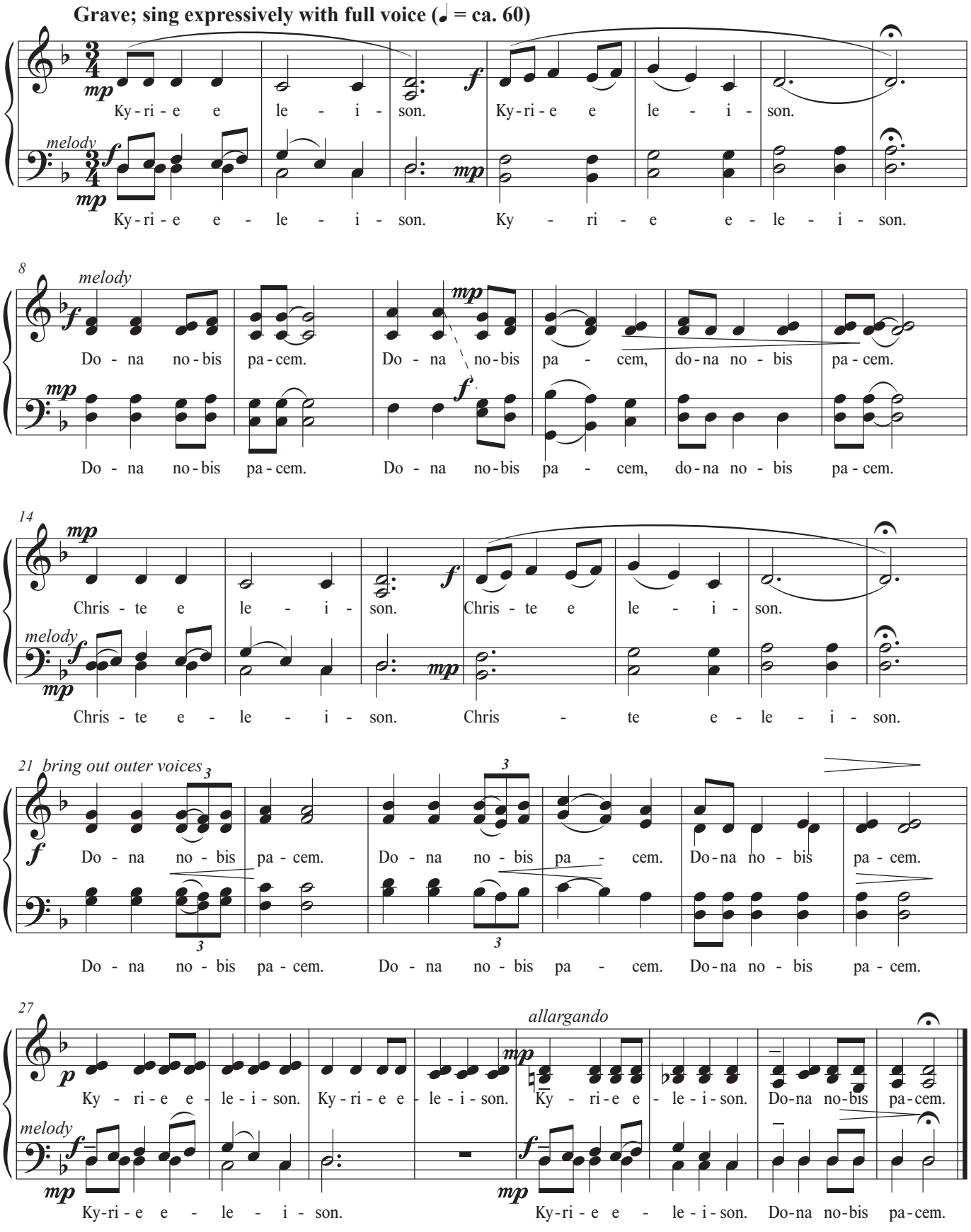
Before our academic year concluded, however, the pandemic struck. On March 19, 2020, we received word that campus would close the next day. Jet asked me to meet in the tower one last time. She wanted us to create a CIC in response to the pandemic. She suggested that this melancholic Ukrainian folk tune offered the affect for such a grave world crisis. We wrote "Healing Bells," and featured our arrangement of "Plyve Kacha" in that composition. In response to the unwarranted 2022 invasion of Ukraine, we offer an expanded arrangement solely of "Plyve Kacha." See https://pamelaruiterfeenstra.com/compositions for all four versions: carillon; choir or organ; choir or organ abbreviated; violin, cello, and organ, and for "Healing Bells."

Note that choirs are recommended to sing "Plyve Kacha" unaccompanied, as is typical in Ukraine. This arrangement is also suitable for use as an organ solo. In this adaptation, the original text is replaced by the lament, "Kyrie eleison."

For information on "Plyve Kacha," see https://www.pri.org/node/65044/popout and listen to the wonderful six-voice *a cappella* ensemble Pikkardiyska Tertsiya sing the folk tune: https://youtu.be/-KNHAXbH_nY, and see more about the ensemble here: https://www.ukraine.com/blog/pikkardiyska-tertsiya-the-power-of-the-human-voice/.

The Ukrainian folk song "Plyve Kacha" was widely used in another crisis in 2014, after more than 100 protesters were killed by snipers in Kiev's Maidan (Independence Square). See Andrea Crossan's report for *The World,* April 16, 2014, "An old Ukrainian folk song takes on new meaning in the current crisis:" https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-04-16/old-ukrainian-folk-song-takes-new-meaning-current-crisis.

See also Nataliya Bezborodova, "Nebesna Sotnia: Formation of a New Narrative from Protest Lore to Institutionalized Commemorative Practice." *Ethnologies,* Vol. 40, no. 1, 2018. https://www.academia.edu/48392208/Nebesna_Sotnia

Plyve Kacha for Choir (brief)

Ukrainian Lament
arr. Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra