

Elizaveta Mnatsakanova

Long life is not given to very many Russian poets, nor is a creative life lived entirely on the poet's own terms. But that was the fate of Elizaveta Mnatsakanova (May 31, 1922–September 10, 2019), who died in Vienna in 2019 at the age of 97. Born in Baku, she moved to Moscow to study at the Philology Faculty of Moscow State University and then took two degrees from the Moscow Conservatory. In Moscow, she made her living as a musicologist, and began to write poetry. Publication of that poetry would largely wait until her emigration, and then would become extensive and vast. Her literary legacy has a unity and force that extends across decades of work in poetic genres long and short, and in the prose of her eloquent essays and translations.

Mnatsakanov left the Soviet Union in 1975, for Vienna. For her, it was a city of music, art, and architecture—in short, the site of a treasured European cultural inheritance she had seen devalued in the USSR. She settled gratefully in a city where she and her son could make a new life for themselves, and she moved easily between German and Russian. She taught music, including to children who found her name difficult to pronounce: the seeming pseudonym, Elisabeth Netzkowa, which appears in many of her books, was simply the name they could more easily say. In Vienna, too, her poetic art began to flourish, albeit largely in books that were barely distributed and, initially, known only to a select audience. She was included in the *Blue Lagoon Anthology* (1983); the first extended essay on her work that appeared in 1987, by Gerald J. Janeczek.

Mnatsakanova understood that her work belonged to an avant-garde, and she chose the term “visual poetry” to describe it. But she disdained the designation of her work as “experimental,” which seemed to hint at something merely essayed. She was not sending up trial balloons, she might have said; for her, every poem and every essay or translation soared along its own distinctive trajectory, a bold missive sent forth into the world. In Vienna, she controlled every step of production for her books, which included *Beim Tode zugast* (1986), *Das Buch Sabeth* (1988), *Metamorphosen* (1988), *Vorlesungen zur russischen Literatur* (1999), as well as a volume of Russian translations of Austrian lyric poetry (1994). After the fall of the USSR, her work began to appear in Russia, for the first time there in book form with *Vita breve* (Perm', 1994). She provided the material and was deeply involved in each stage of production for *Arcadia* (Moscow, 2004, reprinted 2006), and *Novaia Arkadiia* (Moscow, 2018), books made possible by the expert editorial assistance and guidance of poets and critics who admired her work, including Vladimir Aristov, Ilia Kukulín, and Aleksandr Skidan.

Her books looked like no one else's work, sometime involving calligraphy as a design element (in borders on the pages of *Metamorphosen*, and on nearly all the book covers) and also in richly colored album *Das Hohelied* (Mnatsakanova created this album out of the culminating section of her book *Das Buch Sabeth*). She was an artist in these books, and she saw the world with an artist's eye. She created evocative pastels that she sent as postcards to friends from her summer sojourns in her beloved Alps; some drawings were worked into series of lake and mountain views, using shades of blue so varied as to suggest the entire spectrum of color possibilities. The initial “E” as signature, as border design, and as emblematic ornament can be found within many of these cards and drawings, and in her books.

Mnatsakanova's work is probably best appreciated in these books, where one can revel in her varied layouts and arrangements of texts on the page. Some material

is also now available online, including the last long poem she worked on, *Elmoli*: <https://syg.ma/@samokhotkin/fraghmienty-poemy-ielizaviety-mnatsakanovoi-intierviu-s-avtorom>. She recorded many of her works, so that one can also hear her completely inimitable way of reading, and she delighted in collaborating with Wolfgang Musil, who created the musical interludes and contexts in which her poems can be heard on CD. Her love for music never ceased, and she would play the piano for guests in her Vienna apartment and speak passionately about the composers she loved, including Bach, Mozart, Shostakovich, and Richard Strauss.

That feeling for music is as fundamental in her work as the elements of her “visual poetry.” Sound orchestration, which can be heard eloquently in Mnatsakanova’s performances of her work, is transformed on the page into repeating chains of words, so that the eye moves across a line or down a column to register both repetitions and subtle, delicate transformations of single letters or phonemes. Musical genres give shape and structure to several compositions, most famously her requiem, “Osen’ v lazarete nevinnykh sester.” First published in 1977 with an illustration by Mikhail Shemiakin, the requiem reappeared multiple times, including in *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* with accompanying commentary and scholarly discussion (2003).

When the long-awaited, major Moscow edition of her work, *Novaia Arkadiia*, appeared in 2018, Mnatsakanova’s health was failing, and she was unable to participate in the celebration to mark this publication. But she had long known that her work was now reaching many readers, and increasingly becoming the subject of scholarly study.

Mnatsakanova taught at the University of Vienna for many years, and she thrived on the chance to share with students her knowledge of the Russian literary tradition. That knowledge enlivened her essays on figures as different as Velimir Khlebnikov, Fedor Dostoevskii, Marina Tsvetaeva, and Andrei Belyi, and it informed her poetry deeply. She was dubious about the entire notion of literary influence, thinking all great art original in its own way. Her work can and should be understood as a brilliant, one-of-a-kind extension of the verbal innovations by some of those she most admired, Khlebnikov and Belyi among them.

Mnatsakanova received the Andrei Belyi Prize in 2004, the same year that a symposium and exhibit of her work opened at Harvard University. Shemiakin, who was responsible for her first success in print in Paris in the 1970s, also organized a major exhibit in her honor in St. Petersburg in 2006. Her art work is held in Vienna’s Albertina Museum, and her literary archive is in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. She is survived by her son, Alexander Witte.

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Bruno Nettl

Bruno Nettl, born in Prague in 1930, was one of the founders of the modern field of Ethnomusicology and was a leading figure as a researcher, a builder of institutions, and as one of the great mentors of our time during his lengthy career at the University of Illinois. When he died on January 15, 2020 he had received all the recognition to which one might aspire, including several honorary doctorates, multiple guest professorships, two festschriften, and the respect and genuine adoration of his peers. If anyone can be said to have lived a great life in our profession, it was Bruno Nettl.

One wonders what Bruno would have made of this moment in which we find ourselves. He was such a *thoughtful* person—that rarest of beings, a soft-spoken force of

nature—it is sure that he would have risen to the occasion to meet the twin and related challenges of public health and social justice. For all of us who called him friend, mentor, teacher, colleague, his passing is an enormous loss. But he also leaves a yawning gap in at least three fields. Bruno's influence as a scholar and practitioner on the field of Ethnomusicology is incalculable. His research and fieldwork were formative and essential, whether he was dealing with the music of the Blackfoot Indians, performance practice in Persian music or wrestling with the nature of his field in more general and pedagogical texts. In all his investigations he was simultaneously deeply critical and indelibly supportive of other thinkers, and served to shape many of the attitudes that distinguished the field. At least partially as a result of Bruno's influence, Ethnomusicology has always been among the least pretentious fields in the humanities and social sciences, because after all, if one of the founders and leaders of the field is more interested in what is being studied than how he appears studying it, such a thing filters down to younger scholars.

The death of Bruno Nettl is also a great loss for the field of Musicology, a field in which Bruno was an Honorary Member. No member of either Ethnomusicology or Musicology has done more over the years to bridge the gaps between these fields, to find common ground and forge new initiatives. Perhaps this is because while Bruno never eschewed theory, he was led more by curiosity than any single ideological framework, thus a natural bridge-builder. He was also deeply confident and at the same time genuinely modest, and these qualities inform all his investigations.

But this memorial essay appears in this journal because Bruno Nettl's death also leaves a gap in the somewhat smaller but still vital field of Slavic Musical studies. Even though his work was more centered on broad questions of the discipline and other geographical areas, he wrote several important papers on specifically Slavic topics, including "Paul Nettl and the Musicological Study of Culture Contact," and a significant article titled "Ethnicity and Musical Identity in the Czech Lands," in *Music and German National Identity*, ed. Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 269–287). This is a brilliant demonstration of Bruno's combination of originality, experience and capacity for nuanced thought. Here he considers the interactions between Czech, German and Jewish communities in the Czech Lands especially around Prague, and he does this through lenses simultaneously scholarly and personal. Bruno's father, Paul Nettl (1889–1972) was a famous musicologist who worked on Mozart, but also on various aspects of Czech-German-Jewish musical culture, and by going back and forth between these worlds Bruno is able to tease important aspects of the culture which had escaped notice.

His broad viewpoint was critical to the development of our field. I remember well that more than thirty years ago, before the revolutions in East Central Europe, a group of scholars got together at Washington University in St Louis and decided to create a society to study "our" music. Some wanted to call this "The Czech Music Society," and others preferred "The Czech and Slovak Music Society," but Bruno insisted that it should be known as "The Czechoslovak Music Society," that is, music of a *place*, not of a race or group. I imagine he felt strongly about it because while Czechoslovakia did contain the names of two ethnic groups, it also contained its symbolically resonant "o" which in some more cosmopolitan fantasy could stand for Poles, Magyars, Germans, Roma, Jews, Ukrainians, Ruthenians and others. It was this kind of inclusive view that was representative of Bruno's thinking.

Bruno continued to think about the music of the region, even as Czechoslovakia receded into historical memory, teaching courses on Czech subjects while engaging in what he called "refurbishing my kitchen Czech and going back to my roots of sorts." He lamented that there was not more reading material on the subject in English and in a letter from March 1998 proposed the kind of book he would like to see: it would

be “geographically based around Bohemia and Moravia”; it would “deal with the idea of ‘Czechness,’ but not be limited by it”; it would include, “on as equal terms as possible, art, folk, popular, and vernacular musics;” it would “give a lot of attention to issues such as cultural and political interaction among Czechs, Germans, Jews, and other groups, and things like cultural appropriation, stereotyping, representation—possibly on a comparative basis”; and it would go even further, looting “at the ways Czech or Bohemian/Moravian musical culture has reached into the world, including everything from the Bohemian diaspora of composers beginning in the 17th century to Dvorak’s influence in America, to Czech-North American folk and popular music (is there also a Czech-Australian tradition?), to the diffusion of the polka.” So, there was Bruno Nettl, in a casual letter, always decorously using “would” instead of “should,” providing a template for the development of our field which, if we have not always followed it exactly, nonetheless has stood as a kind of shining example.

I would like to close with a passage from the second edition of Bruno’s *The Study of Ethnomusicology: 31 Issues and Concepts* (University of Illinois Press, 2005) both because it reveals the full Bruno, but also because it captures an approach and attitude about our work that seems to have gotten lost.

The first edition tries frequently to justify what we do, perhaps with a bit of a chip on the shoulder; I hope I’ve thrown out the chip, as we are now far better established. One thing I haven’t changed is what I hope continues to be seen as a lighthearted tone, in my chapter and subdivision titles, in occasional anecdotes, little parables, jests, sarcasms, provided for making a point, or a change of pace, or comic relief. I hope they also transmit my feeling that research in ethnomusicology, often difficult and even frustrating, has usually also been a lot of fun, for myself and my colleagues. I beg forgiveness, as before, for these moments of levity, reminding the reader that the study and teaching of ethnomusicology is what I have been most serious about in fifty years of academic work.

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Mark Louis von Hagen

As soon as the news spread about Mark von Hagen’s death on September 15, 2019, the slew of tributes and comments on social media mapped out the enormous impact he made on the field. Many of us considered Mark a friend and mentor, but few realized just how generous he was in his support of younger scholars from North America, Ukraine, Russia, and beyond. He liked the notion of transnational history, which he applied in his work on eastern Europe; his role as a mentor, organizer, and communicator was also transnational. Mark connected people and ideas in his trademark unassuming way. Still, like the intellectuals of the old days, he never lost his sense of a mission and the understanding of a historian’s craft being tied to social justice.

Those who met Mark for the first time often remarked on his irresistible charm, which made one think of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia in the Russian Empire or, perhaps, the refined intellectuals conversing in Viennese coffee houses. With his usual self-deprecating irony, Mark always brought up as an explanation his Viennese grandmother, but there was little formality in the way he interacted with people. Instead, his aura was the result of conscious openness to foreign cultures and the many years of hard work that he spent studying them. Mark’s German ancestors came

to the US in the mid-nineteenth century. By the time he was born, little remained of his roots apart from the prefix “von” and some command of German, which enabled his father to serve as a US counter-intelligence officer in Europe following World War II. He got married while there, and Mark’s mother (and his Viennese grandmother) made his family environment more “European.” But growing up on various US military bases proved just as important a formative experience.

A heritage speaker of German, Mark also picked up some Russian and Polish from a classmate and, after receiving a Bachelor of Foreign Service degree from Georgetown (1976), he went to graduate school, first in Slavic Studies at Indiana (1978), and later in History at Stanford (1980). Mark received his PhD from Stanford in 1985 for a thesis that later became his monograph, *Soldiers in the Proletarian Dictatorship: The Red Army and the Soviet Socialist State* (1990). Between 1985 and 2007, he taught at Columbia University advancing through the ranks from entry-level Assistant Professor to Boris Bakhmeteff Professor of Russian and East European Studies. Mark’s talent as an administrator and organizer of international academic cooperation also became apparent there. At Columbia’s Harriman Institute, he served first as Associate Director (1989–92) then as Director (1995–2001).

Mark’s position at Columbia placed him at the center of American and international academic life at the moment when the Soviet reforms and Soviet collapse brought public attention to his field. By switching to the study of Russia and the Soviet Union as empires, Mark became one of the pioneers in the then new and exciting field of research. Between 1997 and 2007, he co-edited three influential collected volumes on this topic, which helped shape the western and post-Soviet versions of the “new imperial history” of Russia. Mark’s bold conceptual article in the *American Historical Review* on Eurasia as an “anti-paradigm” for understanding the post-Soviet space (2004) also grew out of his quest to undo the traditional narratives of the imperial past and its legacies.

Beginning in the early 1990s, Mark also remade himself into a specialist on Ukraine. Encouraged along the way by his friends and collaborators Alexander Motyl and Frank Sysyn, among others, he was an avid reader of Ukrainian history and learned the language to the point of being able to lecture in Ukrainian. At Columbia, Mark helped develop Ukraine-related courses, research programs, and lecture series. He also brought to Ukrainian Studies the spirit of conceptual renewal, which became crucial upon the opening of academic contacts with Ukraine. In 1994 and 1995 he co-organized a series of important conferences reexamining Ukrainian-Russian relations, which resulted in two co-edited publications. It was during one of these forums that I first met Mark on my very first visit to North America. Like his other projects at the time, the conference series represented a meeting of several worlds: western academia—still largely Russocentric—North American Ukrainian Studies breaking into the mainstream, Ukrainian academics learning the new conceptual approaches, and their Russian counterparts seeking ways to determine how to treat their imperial past. Many academic careers and publications can be traced to those discussions in New York.

Mark’s list of publications on Ukrainian history opened with a bang with his 1995 forum piece “Does Ukraine Have a History?” in the *Slavic Review*. This widely-read, provocative intervention called for new ways of writing Ukrainian history and allotting more importance to it in western academia. Both these processes indeed unfolded during subsequent decades. Meanwhile, Mark began studying the Ukrainian context of World War I and the Revolution, a project that would produce a small but important book, *War in a European Borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914–1918* (2007) and many influential articles in English, German, Ukrainian, and Russian. In 2003, Mark also provided consultations to *The*

New York Times on Walter Duranty's deliberate denial of the Holodomor (Ukrainian famine of 1932–33), although the newspaper did not follow his advice to revoke Duranty's Pulitzer Prize.

As a gifted administrator and irreplaceable organizer, in the last two decades of his life Mark spent a considerable amount of time dealing with these tasks. He served on a number of commissions and committees (perhaps, too many), and also chaired the Department of History at Columbia (2006–7). After his move to Arizona State University, he served as the chair of the Department of History there (2007–9) and director of the School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies (2009–11). In Arizona, he also directed the Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies and, in a return to his military roots, founded the Office for Veteran and Military Academic Engagement. He also served as president of the International Association for Ukrainian Studies (2002–5) and dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Ukrainian Free University in Munich. Elected head of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in 2008, he presided over its politically-important renaming as the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

Mark's death leaves a large void in the profession. His colleagues in Ukrainian Studies are working to complete the project that occupied Mark during the last decade: the publication of the English translation of Pavlo Khrystiuk's four-volume *Notes and Materials on the Ukrainian Revolution (1921–22)*, including Mark's very substantial introduction. A Ukrainian edition of Mark's most important articles is also being planned.

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