In this final installment of my consideration of Feodor Chaliapin's collected recordings, I will be focusing primarily on the excerpts from live performances in London in the years 1926, '27, and '28. This means that except for the studio recordings considered in relation to those events, I will be passing over many remarkable sides. These are for the most part remakes of songs and arias he had already recorded, in many cases more than once. I'm not going to generalize about them, except to say that though Chaliapin's interpretations of most of these pieces did undergo some change, his voice aged very little in quality and technical reach till his final years, which means that the presence of the electrical recording process alone makes them desirable in pure listening-pleasure terms. Some of my old favorites, like the Death Scene from Dargomyzhsky's *Rusalka* or the magical mystery tour of the Rubinstein "Persian Song No. 9," will, sadly, not receive discussion. But in the case of this prodigy of singingacting, I think the recordings that catch him doing that in the only place it can really happen, the theatre, must take pride of place.

The first of these occasions, the 1926 Covent Garden *Mefistofele*, received some attention in Part Two. The second yields the grouping of three monologues from what we would now call a "semi-staged" performance of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Mozart and Salieri,* a chamber opera setting of one of three mini-dramas by Pushkin, each of which treats of one of the original sins. (The other two, *The Stone Guest* and *The Covetous Knight*, were set operatically by Dargomyzhsky and Rachmaninov, respectively.) The performance took place in the Royal Albert Hall on October 11, 1927, with the LSO under Lawrence Collingwood. This is an ingenious little piece, a witty commentary on envy predicated on the long-debunked legend of Salieri as Mozart's murderer by poison. But at least for a non-Russian-speaking audience (and a connoisseur audience, at that), it justifies itself only in the presence of an extraordinary "actor who sings." It's set quite directly on the Pushkin text as Rimsky imagined it being declaimed by a great actor, and in fact he wrote out the entire vocal line before filling in any accompaniment, which for Rimsky is quite spare. So it will not satisfy lyrical cravings. Chaliapin "created" the role of Salieri (Mamontov's Private Opera, 1898), with the reputedly remarkable character tenor and director Vasily Shkafer (frequently Chaliapin's Shuisky) as Mozart. In these monologues, Chaliapin is obviously at the peak of what we might call his emotional/elocutionary/realism mode. But I would advise anyone approaching this material for the first time to 1) have at hand a complete libretto and/or a copy of Pushkin's playlet, and 2) to familiarize him- or herself with the work via a complete recording (there have been several, but you won't go wrong with the venerable Bolshoi version under Samuel Samosud, with two great artists, Mark Reizen and Ivan Kozlovsky, as the eponymous composers). Otherwise, these excerpts of what is essentially accompanied recitative, with nothing of the role of Mozart, the episode of the old fiddler, the offstage choral fragment from Mozart's Requiem, etc., will have difficulty standing on their own, and the sudden flood of emotional pulsation in the orchestral peroration at the end (we pick up slight hints in sound of Chaliapin's pantomime) will seem almost arbitrary.

Next in the succession of live London events is the *Faust* of June 22, 1928. It circulated on a Pearl CD that also included the other famous Covent Garden live recording from the 1920s, the *Otello* starring Giovanni Zenatello. That is long out of print, and to the best of my recollection, I'd heard none of this *Faust* till the present release. The roughly 42 minutes of the performance that have been preserved are intriguing on several counts, not all of them having to do with Chaliapin. Some readers may recall my remarks on the first scene as heard in the 1937 Met performance (see "MIA*: Faust*," 01/04/19), regarding Richard Crooks' satisfying finishing off of

phrases and episodes within the scene, in collaboration with the Met orchestra under Wilfrid Pelletier. Here the tenor is Joseph Hislop, the conductor Eugene Goossens, and this impression of attention to achieving each expressive task before moving on to the next is even stronger—indeed, I'd be tempted to a detailed comparison of these two live versions of the scene, with their urgent message on how far we've come from an operatic aesthetic of dramatic realization to one of just moving along while sounding pretty if possible, were it not too digressive from the immediate subject.

I won't do that, but I will point to an example or two, in the hope of inducing some close listening. At the very opening of the scene, Hislop and Goossens seem to understand together what has always seemed to me to be obvious in the setting of the lines, but don't ever hear realized, which is that they set up a subtle drag toward their downbeat destinations to capture the feeling of end-of-the-line weariness. It's there from the start, on the descending phrases after "*Rien!*" ("*En vain j'interroge/en mon ardente veille*"), but becomes really important on the next ascending ones ("*La nature/et le Créa*-teur" and "*Pas une voix ne glisse à mon or*-eille") before evening out numbly for "*un mot con-so-la-teur.*"(("In vain I search/in my ardent eve/for Nature/and the Creator"; "No voice whispers in my ear/a consoling word.")) The effect lies in holding back slightly, then accelerating just a tick on the upbeats ("*Cre-a-, mon or-*") before landing on the destination downbeats ("*-teur,*" *-eille*") with a suggestion of *sforzando*. Hislop and Goossens get it, and a monologue of mortal despair is underway. Later, Hislop registers lovely points at "*Le ciel palît*" or at the contrast of "*Rêve d'amour/où de combat*," which Goossens takes care to support. Throughout, their shared sense of rubato and of what needs underlining—to my ear unexaggerated but quite beyond anything we'll hear at present—keeps us engaged and in suspense as we approach the entrance of the sulphurous bad guy. A similarity between Crooks and Hislop: the habitual use of portamento on downward intervals, sometimes but not always to the benefit of the music. And a difference: whereas Crooks sings open vowels just above the *passaggio* in a wide position he will soon pay a price for, Hislop keeps the voice gathered. Both instruments are of fine quality and appropriate calibre for the role.

"*Me-e-e-e voi---ci*." Picture big, fat coronas over each syllable, and an aural impression of a large, genial, but rather overbearing fellow stretching them out as he walks toward us, and you'll have some notion of Chaliapin's arrival as Méphistophélès. And as you proceed through these excerpts, you'll quickly realize that you're in for a free-for-all, Mephisto as a collection of Improvisations, Improvements, Conveniences, and Variations on Themes by Gounod. Some of these, covering a range from the naturalistically conversational to the high-flown rhetorical, are original and marvelous; others sound merely self-indulgent, or as if born from an awareness that the writing will not support the natural temperamental inclinations of the singer. The writing's fulfillment most often lies in quite another direction, but the singer's response is to push ever further in his own. Chaliapin had of course sung this part in Russian early on, but whereas he had his cosmic imaginings, literary inspirations, "sculptural" physicality, "Dantesque" Italian, and Sergei Rachmaninov as coach to help him prepare for Boito's version of this devil, he evidently found no one to aid him in adapting his outsize gifts to this musical and linguistic idiom. (Wasn't someone like Henri Busser around? Or: Chaliapin Meets Reynaldo Hahn?)

My colleague Matthew Gurewitsch has sent along an amusing transcription of Chaliapin's rewrite of the Garden Scene Invocation, as heard here. It includes the substitution of "*Allons!*"

for "*C'est bien*" (destroying the rhyme with "*entretiens*") and, at the close, a cramming together of "*Marguerite*" (making it into a four-syllable grouping of 16th notes on the G), then a quick breath before singing something that sounds like "*Ô rage!*" (or "*orage*", as if summoning a storm?—neither makes the slightest sense) on the (very prolonged) C that usually bears the "*ri*" of our heroine's name. Matthew wonders if this weirdness could possibly be in some old-timey performance tradition? No, it's just F. C. wanting to wipe us out with the Satanic orotundity of his "*a*" on that C. Which, to be sure, he does, and I mustn't let these observations pass without noting that all the shenanigans, good and bad, are rendered with a salivating relish and with one of the great voices to ever undertake the role. Still: the proliferation of distended note values, altered rhythmic patterns, rewritten words, and sloughed-off French is beyond any accounting method I know of, and in some instances has taken me aback. While it's always been clear that Chaliapin was not entirely comfortable with the French language and rules of lyrical rhetoric (e.g., even his late recording of Massenet's *Élégie,* while breathtaking, is also still in Russian), his mature studio recordings of the major *Faust* solos and Church Scene (with the excellent Florence Austral), of Ibert's *Don Quichotte* songs, and of the Death Scene from Massenet's *Don Quichotte,* for all their own interpretive freedoms and linguistic oddities, show an expressive use of them, and never the outright disrespect they sometimes come in for here. And it's a bit odd: Chaliapin spent plenty of his late-life time among the French (the major Russian ex-pat community was in Paris; Chaliapin was buried there); he created the Massenet Quixote at Monte Carlo to tremendous acclaim; and he was as revered in France as anywhere else in the West. At points in this performance, I wondered if genuine memory difficulties might not have been involved.

Besides the entire opening scene, the Invocation, the "*Le veau d'or*" and the "*Vous qui faites l'endormie,*" the surviving passages of this *Faust* comprise nearly five minutes of the Kermesse (from Méphistophélès' "*Nous nous retrouverons, mes amis*" into the waltz, but stopping short just at the edge of Faust's first lines to Marguerite), the "*Salut, demeure*," and Siébel's "*Faites-lui mes aveux*." One thing that emerges is that Goossens sounds like a great operatic conductor, and the Covent Garden band of 1928 like a real opera orchestra. It's not only that Goossens takes Chaliapin's most extreme Improvements in full "Right, that's how it goes" stride, or swings into the waltz with an irresistible yet natural-sounding pulse, but that he seems to have sustained throughout the kind of dramatic bonding with his soloists that he and Hislop establish at the outset. The tenor aria is eloquently phrased, each section settled and its still-point moment observed before a new beat picks up (and Hislop gets off a vibrant high C, even if he does resort to the gimmick of launching it by means of rendering "*pré-SEN-ce*" as "*pré-HEN-ce*").

Equally interesting to me in this same respect is Siébel's song. Even when well sung and perkily acted (and for some reason perkiness always substitutes for the nervous anxiety that Siébel has to be feeling—*allegretto agitato*, says the marking), this scene seldom registers as more than an incidental song with its little pitter-patter of applause before the act really begins. It's a set of couplets that carry the action of the song, interrupted by passages of recitative that constitute its obstacle—similar in structure to Marguerite's *Roi de Thulé* ballad, though very different in mood. Several tempo changes are marked, but except for a "*rit.*" over the concluding "*un doux baiser*," no easements within them. And a number of dynamic markings are present, including gradual crescendos for the build-ups in each verse—but no dynamic instructions to go with them. But as rendered, the crescendos are also quite urgent accellerandos, the following easings of loudness

also ritardandos with the intervals down from the arcs of phrases portamentoed; the recitative sections are timed to the acting necessities. (Example: the little stopped moment after the mournful "*toucher une fleur*," filled by the staccato woodwind figure—slowed, isolated, while Siébel searches for a solution—then, like a snap of the fingers, the inspiration to revive the faded flower by dipping a hand in holy water, and a very quick "*Si je trempais,*" etc.)((I have never paid more than incidental attention to Goossens, and have certainly not thought of him as an opera conductor. For all who may share this failing, this performance may be some corrective. And in fact Goossens played a leading role, along with Rouben Mamoulian and Vladimir Rosing, in the American Opera Theatre, an early effort to incorporate working methods of Stanislavski and Vakhtangov into American operatic practice, based at the Eastman School in Rochester, N.Y. It seems more than likely that Goossens' exposure to Chaliapin (he accompanied several of his studio recordings, too) exercised influence there. For an informed recounting of that enterprise, as well as much else of interest, see Joseph Horowitz's "*On My Way*"/*The Untold Story of Rouben Mamoulian, George Gershwin, and "Porgy and Bess*" (W. W. Norton, NY, 2013).))

Of course the Siébel here (Jane Laugier, a soprano, though not as light a one as, say, Liliane Berton) had neither the equipment nor the inclination to take her music on out into Rewrite Land with Chaliapin—nor, from her place in the pecking order, would she have had permission to do so. Yet Goossens worked with her to create a scene, not just a song, and the orchestra, accustomed to that difference, went right along. A casual impression might be that the song is disjointed and many "liberties" are taken. But the result is that the singer is clear about what's supposed to happen, what must be accomplished, and the orchestra knows how to move, how to sound, to enable that. Trace elements of these liberties are indicated in many performances of this song; here, they are forcefully and purposefully delineated.

We must keep the question of to what degree performers are granted power over their own materials separate from that of how we react to what they do with that power. Disapproval of a performer's choices or taste does not negate the principle of ownership, nor does the latter necessarily conflict with the desirability of integrated production. Chaliapin often found himself (as he would today, under much more tightly controlled situations) in surroundings that partook of no such integration. So he did what he knew how to do, and extended it as far as possible. In the case of *Faust*, the fit was an uneasy one. But on his native ground, whereon but for political calamity he would have spent much more of his life, that was not so.

And so to Boris. We can, to be sure, think of instances of other singers who have left so strong an imprint on a role that we cannot dissociate the one from the other. The two other mega-influencers cited by Michael Scott in the Marston booklet afford us such instances: Caruso's Canio, or Callas as Norma or Lucia. So, as I have suggested (see the posts of 9/29/17 and 10/13/17) do the Marschallin and Sieglinde of Lotte Lehmann. Yet the melding of Chaliapin with Mussorgky's guilty Tsar remains something beyond these. As I outlined in Part One (q.v.), Chaliapin first came to the role while with the Mamontov Private Opera in the late 1890s, having developed an affinity for Mussorgsky's music during his period of study with Usatov in Tiflis. The opera, first given (1874) in its "original revised" version, had found respect and some adherents, but had not been particularly successful. The Mamontov production was the first staged presentation in Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestration, and this was undoubtedly a factor in its appeal; Chaliapin himself maintained that the opera would not have found a place in the

repertory without it. But it was his own embodiment of the great tragic figure that is the title role that was now decisive, as it was to be at the Imperial Theatres; in Paris when Diaghilev first brought *Boris* to the West; and everywhere Chaliapin subsequently sang it, including the Met, where it won him the recognition he had not been granted earlier, and Covent Garden, in performances like the one we are about to consider.

Since Chaliapin truly did develop his interpretations as "an actor who sings," and articulated his way of doing that, his thoughts—on this role above all—merit some attention. They are found in all his autobiographical writings, but are summarized well, and given some perspective, in Borovsky's book.((Among that volume's virtues, a principal one is that it is written by someone who really seems to understand acting process as it was evolving, especially in Russia, in the years of Chaliapin's youth. For further reading on that subject, and on its connections with opera and Chaliapin himself, you might start with the Stanislavski and Rumyantsev volumes referenced below.)) As any actor of craft does, Chaliapin adapted his way of working to the nature of the character he was undertaking. Thus, his approach to Boris is entirely different from his approach to the demons of Boito, Gounod, or Rubinstein—characters who exist on the plane of myth and legend, however much they partake of human longing. He distinguishes first between characters that are the purely fictional creations of their authors and those (like Boris) that are drawn from historical figures. He then differentiates the historical figures as "objectively" described according to historical scholarship from those (again like Boris) that have been interpreted by a dramatist who has departed from history and, finally, those so interpreted from those (once more like Boris, or any operatic character) who have been further re-interpreted by a composer (the music "contains all," he insisted). In each case, Chaliapin points out, at each level of interpretation the departures tell the performer at least as much about the essentials of his character as the factors held in common. Pushkin's Boris is not the same as history's (which is itself not settled and clear), and the Boris of Mussorgsky is not the same as Pushkin's. We could even say that the Boris of Rimsky's instrumentation is not the same as that of Mussorgsky's own—the differences in vocal range (though significant in only a few instances) and in the relation of the bass voice to the colors of the orchestration give us a slightly different tone, a difference in inflectional choices.

At times, Chaliapin was given to reducing his process to an essence. It's simple, he would explain. Just use your imagination to put yourself in the character's place. This is more or less the equivalent of Stanislavski's "as if"—and we might recall that Chaliapin spent many evenings at the Moscow Art Theatre, and in the company of Stanislavski and his actors. But in the case of Boris, imagining oneself in his place is impossible without evocative specifics of his personal circumstances, of his awareness of his role in the fate of his country and the emotional impact of that awareness, and of the fearful toll that sinful guilt extracts from him. So before "imagination" can work effectively, it must be informed by history (history as living presence, beyond the facts), by Pushkin's great epic drama, and then by Mussorgsky's much more personal view and by the motives and atmospheres of his music. Chaliapin went eagerly through these layers of research for the sake not of a scholarly truth, but of a subjective one he could immerse himself in and enact. He loved his long sessions in the company of the historian Klyuchevsky, who would not merely inform Chaliapin about the characters and events of Tsar Boris' time, but carry himself away in enacting them—Chaliapin always wished that Klyuchevsky could have acted and sung Shuisky with him.)

Chaliapin's instinct that in Mussorgsky's writing he had found something new for the path of Russian opera and for the realization of his own artistic self was correct. He had come across the role that, more than any other, called for the advent of the "artist-psychologist." Both in its verbal text and its musical setting, it demands not only the usual operatic kind of heightened expression that must be "motivated," but a continuous progression of inner emotional life that must be maintained tenaciously from start to finish. Chaliapin saw the entire first section of Boris' opening Coronation Scene solo ("*Skorbit dusha*"—"My soul is heavy") as a prayer sung entirely to himself, almost as in a trance from which he snaps to for the proclamation of festivities. This striking and by no means obvious idea (as opposed to that of these prayerful lines being the public utterance of a politician pleading virtuous humility with his subjects) is not terribly clear to us on Chaliapin's recordings of the scene, and was probably accomplished as much by physical attitude as by the singing. He was after all an opera singer who had to establish the voice on first appearance. However conveyed, it sets for both performer and audience the quality of interiority that pervades the whole role.

And I cannot think of another major operatic character for whom this interiority, this sense of private torture, is quite so crucial. Otello has a single great monologue and a couple of *fra sè* passages in ensemble that express it, but otherwise acts it out in confrontations. The *Walküre* Wotan has a long, wrenching solo of similar emotional import that is often called his "monologue," but in fact is not—it is confessed to his daughter, as is his Farewell, albeit she's asleep at the time. Both those characters are shown in triumph at the outset, and both have decisive opportunities for action, however badly they turn out. Boris, though first shown in an ostensibly triumphant moment, is already weighed down. He sings of his agony only to himself, and has no effective action open to him. The burden of office is heavy enough; the weight of sinful guilt is intolerable.((We must keep in mind the powerful admixture of Orthodox belief in Boris' psychology. Ian Grey (see bibliographical note below), who absolves the historical Boris of the boy Dmitri's death and presents a picture of the Tsar that is positive in many respects, tells us that at the rumor-fed, famine-plagued, rebellious time of the False Dmitri's rise, "Apparently Boris himself began to wonder if the Tsarevich had really died at Uglich," and later that he "apparently believed in the possibility that by witchcraft or through the intervention of God, Dmitri might have been resurrected." For the stage Boris, who *is* guilty of ordering Dmitri's murder, this must seem a certainty. Chaliapin, though not a committed believer himself, surely understood the emotional grip of belief, and the communicant's terror of the wages of mortal sin. Recall that his own childhood refuge was in the cathedral choir, and contemplate his deeply felt recordings of extracts from the Orthodox liturgy.))

Having already recorded Pimen's Act 1 narrative and Varlaam's song, Chaliapin first approached the part of Boris on records in 1911. But those two sides (of the Death Scene) stand as his only samples of the role till after WW1. He did not record the great Act 2 monologue till 1923, the Coronation Scene till 1925 (with the advent of the electric process), or, amazingly, the Clock Scene before 1931. So for nearly all his life, Boris was actually less prominent in his discography than his devils or some of his folk and art songs. He made up for lost time, though, with multiple electric-process sides recorded between 1925 and 1931, at several locations (the Hayes studio, Small Queen's Hall, and Kingsway Hall) and with several conductors (Albert Coates, Eugene Goossens, Lawrence Collingwood, and Max Steinmann). The Covent Garden performances notwithstanding (and many of those sides did not circulate till much later), these studio

recordings have advantages of their own. With the microphone now enabling fuller orchestral and choral participation, the Coronation Scene is feasible, and the effect of the Death Scene automatically advanced in important respects over the acoustical versions, though the 1923 (late acoustical) takes of both scenes are magnificently sung. Of the two Coronation Scenes, the 1925, under Coates, is better than the 1926 under Goossens. The latter is in a mellower acoustic and wider perspective that some may like but I find less alive, and for once Chaliapin's top, which rings out in '25, sounds relatively raw and dry. The 1927 take of the Death Scene's last part ("*Zvon! Prognegal'by zvon!*"), under Collingwood, has a startling sonority as heard here, the funeral bell registering a visceral impact, the chorus of ample size and in beautiful balance, Chaliapin in tremendous form—certainly the best studio version of this.

Finally, we have the 1931 takes of the Monologue and Clock Scene (Kingsway Hall, the LSO, Steinmann). There are two takes of each excerpt, all well played and in excellent mono sound, of which the first was withheld and the second released in both cases. Those were the right decisions. In both scenes, Chaliapin's voice is marginally juicier, his interpretive armament a little more on hair trigger, than in the unreleased takes, and in the Monologue he avoids the high G-flat in the earlier take, then tackles it to great effect (as emotional consummation, not just a high note) on the second. As with the *Faust*, *Rusalka*, and *Don Quichotte* excerpts from this same time period, these are the recordings that had wide circulation on RCA Victor for twenty years here in the U.S., and through which I first became enthralled with both the artist and the music. I still own their now-greyed 78s. They've never sounded this good.

The Covent Garden live performance took place on July 4, 1928, thus, twelve days after the *Faust* performance discussed above. As was still happening up through the 1930s in Europe and America when a prominent guest artist of foreign nationality came a-visiting, the guest sings in his own language and everyone else in some other. This commonly meant that the home company sang in its vernacular, but in London as in New York, it meant a Russian Boris in an Italian-language performance, and with a predominantly Italian cast. This cast was not without interest (Irene Minghini-Cattaneo as Marina, Dino Borgioli as Dmitri, Luigi Manfrini as Pimen, a young Salvatore Baccaloni as Varlaam, and a younger-yet Margarita Carosio as Feodor), but on these surviving sides (more were recorded, but have been lost) we hear of them either nothing or only a snippet, except for the Shuisky of Angelo Bada. There's an Italian conductor, too, Vincenzo Bellezza. So much for integration at this basic level, and in the last scene we hear Chaliapin from offstage echoing Bada's "*Via, via!*" (not "*Chur! Chur!*") before entering and switching to Russian. Once he takes over, though, none of this matters much.

After a well-sung Coronation Scene, the Act 2 sequence captured for us starts after the Clapping Game, with the entrance of Boris. (Reports of this moment emphasize how changed, in appearance and bearing, Chaliapin's Tsar was from the man of the Coronation Scene, conveying in an instant the lifetime's-worth of heavy care that has eaten into him in the passage of a few years.) There is at the outset a regrettable cut—in the performance, I gather, not the recording, and unnoted in the booklet—of nearly all of Feodor's recitation of Russian geography. With Boris' reply and admonition to his son to study in preparation for his reign, an extraordinary grip takes hold on us and, palpably, on the theatre audience. There are long pauses, taken in a tempo distinctly slower than the marked *andante,* and as with the Siébel song though with far deeper import, we sense the time being taken for an action to be completed, an affect to sink in, before

the music may move on. There's a hold while Feodor exits and Boris follows him with his eyes or goes with him to the door, then the grave, slowly evolving intro to the monologue, "I have attained the highest power." Just two phrases in, after the despairing outburst "And yet, no joy comes to my tormented soul," the orchestra waits, and waits some more, before its murmuring entrance (the muttering inside Boris) for "In vain the fortune tellers promise me," etc.

We don't know how Chaliapin staged himself for these moments. I imagine him starting the monologue standing by the door where Feodor has left, then at "And yet," etc., crossing and sinking into his chair at the table. But it could be the reverse, with Boris starting at his desk and flinging himself out into the room at "And yet." Or it could be neither. It doesn't matter. The orchestra must wait not just for the physical action and transition of tempo, but for the actor's inner change from one mood and line of thought to the next—a change the conductor must pick up before cueing the new beat. It is not a question of following or not following the score, but of inferring from the score what the progression of thought and feeling must be, as they develop in the being of this particular artist. I timed the duration of the monologue proper at 6'45" in this performance, as contrasted with 5'04" in the fine 1931 studio version referred to above, which heard on its own does not sound rushed. That's an astonishing variation, even for a live v. 78-rpm side comparison. Yet so far from growing impatient with the live performance, we are simply led through it with a greater sense of suspense and completion.

From the monologue we cut to the Clock Scene. We could almost say that Chaliapin invented this scene as we have come to know it. He sings what's there at the beginning and the end; between, he sings, speaks, and beats Schoenberg to the punch with *Sprechstimme à la Russe*, sometimes to the words Mussorgsky set, sometimes to Pushkin's words Mussorgsky didn't set, and occasionally to his own words.((In her book on Mamontov (see the mini-bibliography at the end of Part One), Olga Hadley lays out a transcription of Chaliapin's changing modes of vocal expression, his departures from the composer's notation, and his word substitutions in this scene. See pp. 167-170, in a section aptly titled "The Boundaries of Interpretation: Feodor Chaliapin.")) In one sense, it's indefensible; in another, it's indispensable. Take either position, but meanwhile see if you can find another version, from any of the great bassos who have recorded this scene, that equals this one's power.

There follows three-and-a-half minutes at the opening of the Polish Scene, then four minutes or so of Kromy (in its intended position at the top of Act 4, not at the end of the opera), and finally almost all of the final scene, the only important omission being Pimen's narrative. In the Farewell, there is again a marked expansion of the time frame relative to the studio recordings, and the wouldn't-believe-it-if-I-hadn't-heard-it confirmation that an audience is held rapt by what's happening onstage, and that those incredibly soft, lingering *pianissimi,* always tensile, always conveying the awareness of things of great import held below them, actually sounding through the stilled air of a great opera house. It is the indelible mark at once of a genius of imagination, of a physicality of unsurpassed strength and suppleness, of a mastery of vocal technique, and of what the modern operatic sensibility was supposed to be about.

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