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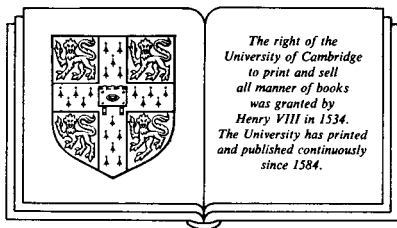
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# *Petrushka*

## The Russian Carnival Puppet Theatre

CATRIONA KELLY

Christ Church, Oxford



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*To A.K., A.K. and A.K.,  
K.K. and M.K.  
with love*

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## A note on transliteration

The system used is British Standard 2979: 1958 without diacritics, as adopted by *Oxford Slavonic Papers*. It has the benefit of simplicity and familiarity, not requiring exceptions to be made for such well-known names as Yalta. Variant transliterations have of course been used in the titles of books or names of authors which differ on the title page of the original from this scheme (e.g. Iurii Lotman).

Unless otherwise stated all translations are my own.

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## Glossary

*balagan* Derived from the Persian *balahana*, balcony; perhaps cognate with English ‘barbican’. It was originally used for warehouses or market sheds; from the early nineteenth century the word was transferred to the architecturally similar wooden constructions used as temporary theatres at fairs, and then (pejoratively) to the shows performed in them. Expressions like *balaganstvo* (*balagan-ery*) also had a contemptuous flavour.

*chastushka* Comic four-line rhyming verse, rather like a limerick.

*Gaer* Perhaps derived from the German *Geiger* (fiddler). ‘The Russian Harlequin’, as he called himself; a Hanswurst-like clown of ready wit and gross appetites, normally a servant who aids (or frustrates) his master’s lustful intentions. Later generically (also in the feminine form, *Gaerka*) for a street clown.

*gulyan'e* (plural *gulyan'ya*), alternatively *narodnoe gulyan'e* A funfair, carnival or celebration; see the Introduction for detailed explanation.

*intermediya* (plural *intermedii*) A brief comic dramatic spectacle used as leavening before or between tragedies; cf. ‘farce’; later performed individually in the ‘democratic’ (cheap and accessible to the populace) theatres and in the servants’ theatres.

*lubok* A word used originally for a woodcut; later applied to any sort of print, including lithographs. They were sold at fairs and by peddlars wandering from village to village. *Lubochnaya kniga*, or *lubok book* (chapbook), was a term applied to cheap mass-circulation books.

*raek* Diminutive of *rai*, ‘paradise’. Can mean *paradis* in the French sense, English ‘the gods’: the balcony in a theatre, but its standard fairground use was for a mobile peepshow (allegedly because the earliest displayed religious pictures of the Fall). Hence *raeshnyi stikh*, rhyming doggerel used by the operators of these shows and also by other fairground artistes (clowns and puppeteers).

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*school plays* Liturgical dramas performed by seminarians from the 1730s onwards, originally in Latin and later in Russian. Modelled on the Latin texts used by the Jesuits in Poland and the Ukraine for dissemination of the faith during the Counter-Reformation. (See also Karlinsky, *Russian Drama*, pp. 7–11.)

*skomorokh* Etymology debated. The minstrel-buffoon entertainer of medieval Russia, later applied to any comic entertainer, including clowns at the fairground. (One of the Moscow popular theatres in the late nineteenth century was called the *Skomorokh* – see Doroshevich, *Sakhalin*, p. 130). The subject of many proverbs: ‘Everyone can dance, but not like a *skomorokh*’ (Dal’, *Slovar’ velikorusskogo yazyka*, iv, p. 203)

*vertep* (also called *betleika*, *szópka*) Ukrainian, Belorussian and Polish miniature Christmas crib and hence a form of theatre in which Christmas crib figures are manipulated by rods in an open-fronted box (see also p. 54, illustration 6).

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## Abbreviations

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FT: *Fol'klornyi teatr*, ed. A. F. Nekrylova and A. I. Savushkina, Moscow 1988 [actually 1989].

Grigorovich: Grigorovich, D. V., 'Peterburgskie sharmanshchiki', *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 12 tt*, St Petersburg 1896, 1, pp. 5–29.

Mitcuff: Mitcuff, Elena (trans.), 'Petrushka', in Paul MacPharlin, *A Repertory of Marionette Plays*, New York 1929, pp. 291–300.

NP 1891: Anon., *Noveishii Petrushka, ili zabavnyi kloun*, pub. A. A. Ikonnikova, St Petersburg 1891.

P 1907: Anon., *Petrushka*, pub. A. D. Stupin, Moscow 1907.

P 1908: Anon., *Veselyi teatr Petrushki*, pub. I. D. Sytin, Moscow 1908.

P 1910: Anon., *Petrushka, narodnyi kukol'nyi geroi*, pub. E. Konovalov, Moscow 1910.

P 1915: Anon., *Petrushka, ulichnyi payats*, pub. Sytin, Moscow 1915.

RV: *Russkie vedomosti*, newspaper published Moscow 1863–1918.

Tarasov: Tarasov, G., *Petrushka v shkole i v pionerotryade*, Leningrad 1930.

TP: Eremin, Igor' and Tsekhnovitser, Orest, *Teatr Petrushki*, Moscow and Leningrad 1927.

VLB: Putintsev, A. M. (ed.), 'Van'ka, sovremennaya narodnaya kukol'naya komed'', *Voronezhskaya literaturnaya beseda*, 1, 1925, 5–15.