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Serbian singing society St Nicholas, St Nicholas Serbian Orthodox church, Omaha, Nebraska

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SERBIAN SINGING SOCIETY ST. NICHOLAS,
ST. NICHOLAS SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, OMAHA, NEBRASKA

A Thesis Equivalent Project

Presented to the
Department of Music

and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Music
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by
Carolyne Jordan

April 1994

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TREATISE ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Music, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Committee

Name	Department
David Low	Music
Bruce M. Hawer	History

William Peter Bello

Chairman

April 29, 1994

Date

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this treatise is to provide an annotated list of choral literature from the Serbian Singing Society St. Nicholas, Omaha, NE. These materials are selected from the Singing Society's concert appearances and choral rehearsals. This project will fulfill several needs of the Serbian Singing Society St. Nicholas in Omaha, as well as of other members of the national Serbian Singing Federation such as the Serbian Singing Society St. George, Kansas City, KS, and the Serbian Singing Society Sloboda, South Chicago, IL.

A primary need is to provide the necessary information for the choirs, their music committees, and directors to make an equitable choice of literature for preparation and presentation in concert each year. This music must be appropriate for choir memberships and current capabilities. A second need is to increase the repertoire during the choir year which will provide musical and vocal growth to the members. These two needs will help fulfill the main goal of the Serbian Singing Society Federation, which is to preserve the Serbian Orthodox faith and heritage through musical performance.

A further purpose of this project is to provide suitable repertoire for Sunday School children of the Serbian Orthodox Church for those churches who wish to form a junior choir to begin learning the Serbian Orthodox musical heritage. This

will help support the goal of participation in local concerts and national festivals for young people in the churches.

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Introduction

The Serbian Singing Society St. Nicholas, Omaha, as a member of the Serbian Singing Society of America and Canada, has a strong need for a current annotated list of Serbian choral literature available for their concert and festival appearances. It has been noted by members of both the choir and the congregation that the choir tends to program a relatively small number of familiar pieces. This repertory has been sung for the existence of the organization over the past 61 years. One goal of the current direction of the choir is to learn new choral literature and bring it to the concert series. Part of that goal has been reached. New compositions have been introduced to the rehearsal repertoire, but only a few new pieces have been programmed for concert appearances.

The choice of programming is not entirely the prerogative of the director. The by-laws of the choir give the choir and its committee the task of choosing the programs. Consequently, one problem of singing new repertory seems to lie in not having a list of the repertory available to the choir and its committee members. A second concern to the same people is the possible or perceived complexity of new literature, and the availability of appropriate vocal resources needed to perform these works. This information must be available to the committee if it is to make an informed and equitable choice.

One of the primary purposes of this treatise is to provide a resource for Serbian Singing Societies, their committees, and their directors, in such diverse locations as Omaha, NE, South Chicago, IL, Kansas City, KS, Butte, MT, and other locations. The result will include a selected list of available materials, annotations and performance notes for these compositions, and translations of some of the texts, where available. Rebecca West provides an interesting account of the varied Serbian geographic locations many of these songs depict.

A second purpose of this project is to help meet the needs of the Sunday School children. In Serbian Orthodox churches, there is a drive to encourage children to begin learning the Serbian Orthodox musical heritage by performing repertoire suitable for their young voices. One vehicle for realizing this goal is modeled by the formation of a junior choir under the auspices of the Serbian Singing Society St. Nicholas, Omaha, NE.

SERBIAN SINGING SOCIETY ST. NICHOLAS, ST. NICHOLAS SERBIAN
ORTHODOX CHURCH, OMAHA, NEBRASKA

The Serbian Singing Society St. Nicholas in Omaha has a history which begins before the summer of 1931 when the official choir was organized. Between that date and the founding of St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church over 75 years ago, most of the Serbian singing was done by the worshippers who were joined by Serbian School children in singing responses to the Divine Liturgy.

The choral literature currently performed for the concert season are songs which are native to the Serbian culture and have been written or arranged by various Serbian and Serbian-American composers. These songs are based on the tradition of oral epic poetry of which Homer is the most talented representative. During the 1930s, Lord and Perry, based on their research, found that the Yugoslav oral epic was accessible, alive and distinguished. This tradition is continued in the work of the composer Bela Bartok (Bartok & Lord, 1951).

The idea of a separate choir was initiated by the visit of His Grace, Bishop Mardarije. During that visit, a banquet was held in his honor and music was furnished by the SOKO Tamburitza Orchestra. "SOKO" means falcon and is a historic emblem to the Serbians. Bishop Mardarije encouraged the director of the orchestra, Professor Frank Buckingham, to organize a choir to sing the liturgical responses. In

response to the Bishop's visit, men and women of the church met with the members of the SOKO Tamburitza Orchestra. Thereafter the SOKO Choir was formed. The first task of this choir was to sing the responses for Divine Liturgy.

The same year as the SOKO Choir was formed at St. Nicholas, the Serbian Singing Federation of America and Canada was founded. The St. Nicholas SOKO Choir wanted to join the Federation, but apparently did not wish to comply with the international requirement that every choir be named either for a Serbian composer or for the name of the church in which the choir was based as stipulated in the by-laws of the Serbian Singing Society Federation.

Finally in October, 1953, the choir joined the Federation and changed its name to St. Nicholas in honor of their church. The choir Slava is held on December 19, the day of St. Nicholas, the patron saint. Slava means celebration and in this case pertains to the feast day of St. Nicholas.

Other Serbian choirs in the midwest have had a role in the history of the society in Omaha. The South Chicago, Illinois, Serbian Singing Society SLOBODA is the KUMОВИ, or dear sponsor, to the Singing Society of St. Nicholas. The Illinois choir members were the guests of St. Nicholas for the 30th anniversary of the choir in 1961 and again for the choir's 60th anniversary in October, 1991. The Serbian Singing Society St. Nicholas has hosted many of the choirs of

the Federation as guest choirs for its own concert season. The Omaha group itself has travelled to many cities to be the guest choir of other Federation members in reciprocal relationships. Some of these cities include Joliet, Illinois; Chicago, Illinois; Duluth, Michigan; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Los Angeles, California; Chislm, Minnesota; Cleveland, Ohio; Butte, Montana; and Gary, Indiana.

A very special relationship exists between the St. Nicholas choir of Omaha and the Serbian Singing Society St. George, St. George Serbian Orthodox Church in Kansas City, Kansas. The St. Nicholas and St. George Choirs offer support and friendship to each other during each choir's concert season. They appear as a guest choir on each other's concert programs and attend each other's important parish events throughout the year. At the dedication of the St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church's new church building in September, 1990, Serbian Singing Society St. George Choir sang the responses to Divine Liturgy during the dedication weekend. The honor was bestowed on the St. George Choir due to the long time friendship and personal bonds present between the priests and the parishioners in each congregation over the past 40 years.

The current membership of the Serbian Society in Omaha consists of 30 active members. The soprano section has eight singers, the alto section has eight singers, the tenor section has five singers, and the basses complete the choir

with seven members for concert. The choir has an additional category of members that are designated as "social members" only. They do not appear in the concert series or festival performances, but may participate in the Sunday morning choir and in the singing of responses for the Divine Liturgy. Because membership in the organization is voluntary and an avocation, not all choir members are able to make the regular rehearsals each week due to their employment or family commitments. Nevertheless, most attend at least a few rehearsals before concerts and support the choir with other activities including fund-raising services, hospitality, and personal financial contributions.

The need for a junior choir has arisen at St. Nicholas, since the traditional ensemble consists of adults only. Consequently, the parish children are learning some of the Serbian folk songs and are beginning to do traditional *kolos*, or dances. *Kolo* lessons have been offered for both the children and adults. Each class has been well-attended. In the past, the youngest choir member in the Serbian Singing Society St. Nicholas had been 12-years-old. Due to the interest of the young singers, there is definitely a need for a structured junior choir which goes beyond the Sunday School singing. This fact is evidenced by the children's participation in the church talent shows as singers and dancers. They have also appeared in their own special

presentations and they now join the St. Nicholas Serbian Singing Society for the finale to several programs.

While the children are primarily learning traditional non-sacred music, they are beginning to sing a few of the anthems included in Divine Liturgy. During the Lenten season of 1991 they prepared an Easter Hymn and sang it for the Easter service. The Christmas program this year also included the Christmas Hymn "*Rozdestvo Tvoje Hriste,*" and the children also sang the traditional Christmas carols "Joy to the World," "Away in a Manger," and "Silent Night." This increased interest by the children in the Serbian dances and songs has led to a commitment by the Sunday School teachers to include the children in the concert program for 1994. The official Junior Choir will be registered with the Serbian Singing Federation soon after the concert.

Carolyn Jordan took a survey of choir members last year to determine the choir's commitment to the goals of the Serbian Singing Society St. Nicholas and to the professional musical goals of the two directors. Answers to these questions are listed below and reflect the goals of both the Serbian Singing Society St. Nicholas and the Serbian Singing Federation. Some new ideas were expressed and have begun to be implemented. A summary of the important responses includes:

1. Most members want to improve both individually and as a choir, and are willing to give their commitment to that improvement.

Some of the members wish they could improve their individual voices. This area is an important one since the choir rehearsal is not a practical time to work individually on vocal technique and sound production. Proper rehearsal techniques do help in vocal improvement, but there is simply not enough time during the traditional choir rehearsal for the unique individual attention necessary.

2. A choir workshop was recommended.

At present, this activity may occur sometime in the future. This will certainly be a way to enhance the current choir experience for both the adult and junior members of the Singing Society. It will encourage new adult members to participate and will be a successful recruiting tool for the younger singers as well.

3. Concert appearances at churches in the Omaha area which are not Serbian were advised.

During the 1993 Christmas season, the Serbian Singing Society St. Nicholas was invited to appear at Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church for a concert of Christmas music. The program consisted of the special choral literature which is sung for Divine Liturgy during Advent Sundays and on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. A second invitation was accepted for an appearance in April 10, 1994,

at St. Mark's Baptist Church at a multi-cultural music festival. This program presented by St. Nicholas included representatives of the special music sung for Divine Liturgy during the Easter season. Orthodox Easter in 1994 was on May 1, 1994.

Conclusion

The following catalog provides information to assist the members of Serbian Singing Societies in continuing the work of the past while they maintain their Orthodox faith and Serbian heritage. This catalog facilitates work in many other directions. One direction would be the complete translation of all the Serbian texts in the music listed here. The newer and younger choir members are especially in need of understanding the texts, since Serbian is not their language of nurture, and many speak no Serbian at all. The members of the choir who many years ago lived in Serbia have, along with the local parish priest, Father Dosenovich, done much of the translation for the choir. This is much appreciated. However, the need for continued study and understanding of the texts is essential. John Kolsti's study of the Serbian oral epic tradition is an excellent source for translations of many Serbian texts.

Another need is to record on audio and/or video tape the current repertoire of the choir. During a special concert, many choir members bring their small cassette recorders and try to record the performance. The acoustics of the hall are not always the best and there are the crowd noises to overcome. An up-to-date professional recording would be important to all current choir members and would provide an audio/visual reference for new members and new directors.

These recordings should be made available to other choirs in addition to St. Nicholas.

The idea of a choir workshop for the Omaha choir is something to consider for the future--perhaps including the Serbian Singing Society St. George. The author's survey of the present choir members indicated some of the members would like to have more knowledge of the music fundamentals in addition to the proper use of their vocal instruments. Their desires fit perfectly into the goals originally set forth for the choir. Rehearsals would be more satisfying to each singer, and the complexity of the literature could increase.

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- West, Rebecca. Black Lamb & Grey Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia. New York: The Viking Press, 1941.

Appendix I

CATALOG OF SERBIAN CHORAL LITERATURE

Secular

1. Title: AMIDJA (Uncle)
 Composer: Dimitri J. Golenovich (1948)
 Print Source: South Chicago, IL: Serbian Singing
 Parts: SATB
 Length: 6 verses, 3:30
 Comments: Suitable for 16 singers or more, some words
2. Title: SELE MOJE UBAVO
 Composer: Ljubomir M. Bosnjakovic (1962)
 Print Source: Detroit, Serbian Singing Federation,
 Parts: SATB
 Length: 7 verses, 4:00
 Comments: Suitable for 20 singers or more, translation
3. Title: PRVI SPLET
 Composer: Ljubomir M. Bosnjakovi
 Print Source: Fresno, CA Serbian Singing Federation,
 Parts: SATB
 Length: 11 verses, 4:00
 Comments: Baritone solo, suitable for 16 plus singers.
4. Title: BOSANSKI SPLET (Sarejevo)
 Composer: Ljubomir M. Bosnjakovic
 Print Source: Detroit, Serbian Singing Federation,
 Parts: SATB
 Length: 7 verses, 4:00
 Comments: 25 singers, antiphonal parts, some words
5. Title: OJ BANIJO!
 Composer: Ljubomir M. Bosnjakovic
 Print Source: Aliquippa, PA, 1857. SSF
 Parts: SATB
 Length: 9 verses, 5:00
 Comments: 16 singers, Alto solo.
6. Title: PRISTEVACKE MOME
 Composer: Bogoljub Vojnovic
 Print Source: Los Angeles, SSF 1962
 Parts: SATB
 Length: 5 verses, 2:00
 Comments: 12 singers, some words translated.

7. Title: STARE PESME IZ SKOPLJA I KUMANOVA
Composer: Pera Z. Ilic
Print Source: SSF, 1962
Parts: SATB
Length: 5 verses, 1:30
Comments: From South Serbia
8. Title: BANACANSKI SPLET
Composer: Ljubomir M. Bosnjakovic
Print Source: South Chicago, SSF, 1962
Parts: SATB, Soprano solo
Length: 11 verses, 6:00
Comments: 25 singers, Alto solo
9. Title: TRECO VIJENAC
Composer: Aleksa Santic
Print Source: Detroit, SSF, 1963
Parts: SATB
Length: 5 verses, 2:00
Comments: 16 singers
10. Title: VOJVODJANKE
Composer: Ljubomir M. Bosnjakovic
Print Source: Akron, Ohio--no date available
Parts: SATB, 2 Soprano soli, 1 tenor solor
Length: 7 verses, 4:00
Comments: 20 singers
11. Title: NA KOLENA
Composer: P. Kranjcevic
Print Source: Akron, Ohio, SSF, no date
Parts: SATB
Length: 3 verses, 1:00
Comments: 16 singers
12. Title: VESELA JE SRBADIJA
Composer: Slobodan Zelich
Print Source: Lackawanna, NY, SSF, 1971
Parts: SATB
Length: 5 verses, 2:30
Comments: 20 singers
13. Title: PESME IZ SRBIJE - vi splet
Composer: Ljubomir M. Bosnjakovich
Print Source: Detroit, SSF, 1977
Parts: SATB, Tenor solo, 2 men, 2 women soli
Length: 13 verses, 6:00
Comments: 24 singers

14. Title: PROLETNJA ZORA
Composer: Marinkovica Godina
Print Source: Serbian Singing Society, 1970
Parts: SATB, Tenor solo
Length: 4 verses, 3:00
Comments: Suitable for 16 voices minimum.
15. Title: CETVRTI SASTAV - PESME IZ MAKEDONIJE
Composer: Nikola Resanovic
Print Source: SSF,
Parts: SATB, Tenor or Baritone Solo, Mezzo Solo
Length: 13 verses, 8:00
Comments: 20 singers
16. Title: STARE SRPSKI LIRSKE NARODNE PESME, VII Splet
Composer: Ljubomir M. Bosnjakovich
Print Source: SSF, Detroit
Parts: SATB, Tenor Solo, Soprano Duet
Length: 19 short verses, 4:00 Comments: 16 singers
17. Title: XI KOLO SRPSKIH
Composer: Josef Marinkovic, 1968
Print Source: SSF, Kansas City
Parts: SATB, Tenor Solo, Bass Solo
Length: 13 verses, 5:00
Comments: Suitable for 16 singers plus soloists
18. Title: SRPSKE VARIJACIJE
Composer: M. P. Markovina
Print Source: SSF, Detroit
Parts: SATB
Length: 9 verses, 5:00
Comments: 24 singers
19. Title: KAZI LENO
Composer: Adam N. Popovich
Print Source: SSF, South Chicago
Parts: SSAATTBB
Length: 15 verses, 7:00
Comments: Suitable for 32 singers
20. Title: IZ STARIH DANA
Composer: Ljubomir M. Bosnjakovich, 1982
Print Source: SSF, Detroit
Parts: SSATTB
Length: 7 verses, 4:00
Comments: 28 singers, minimum

21. Title: BACKO KOLO
Composer: Bozo Yokainovich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 7 verses, 3:30
Comments: 16 singers. Can kolo at the end
22. Title: DALMATINKE
Composer: Ljubomir M. Bosnjakovich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 9 verses, 3:00
Comments: 20 singers
23. Title: DO TRI MI PUSKI
Composer: Vladimir Djordjevich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SSA
Length: 5 verses, 2:00
Comments: 9 women minimum
24. Title: OGRA ORO
Composer: Milenko Zivkovic
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 4 verses. 2:00
Comments: 16 voices
25. Title: GORA I JUNAK
Composer: Stevan Gajdovich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 7 verses, 4:00
Comments: 24 voices
26. Title: HAJ SLAVNO JE SRBIN SITI
Composer: Miloje Milojevich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 9 verses, 5:00
Comments: 30 voices
27. Title: MOLITVA
Composer: Vladimir DoBjordjavich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 7 verses, 4:00
Comments: 16 singers

28. Title: PRIMORSKI NAPJEVI
Composer: Stevan St. Mokranje
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB, Soprano Solo, Alto Solo
Length: 9 verses, 5:00
Comments: 24 singers
30. Title: VJENAC
Composer: Joseph Church
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB, Tenor Solo
Length: 5 verses, 3:00
Comments: 20 singers, orchestral accompaniment available
31. Title: OJ, MORAVO
Composer: Miroslav Leseticki
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB, Soprano Solo, Alto Solo, Baritone Solo
Length: 7 verses, 4:00
Comments: 30 singers
32. Title: ZA CAST I SLAVU SRBIJE
Composer: Slobodan Zelich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB, Tenor Solo
Length: 9 verses, 5:00
Comments: 30 singers
33. Title: MOJ RODNI KRAJ
Composer: Ljubomir M. Bosnjakovich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 5 verses, 2:00
Comments: 16 singers
34. Title: SRPSKI VJENAC
Composer: Slobodan Zelich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 7 verses, 3:00
Comments: 24 singers

35. Title: SRPSKI ZVUCI
Composer: Isidor Bajic
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 5 verses, 2:00
Comments: 16 singers
36. Title: KOLO IZ ALEKSANDROVCA
Composer: Dj. Karakajic and Sonja and Slobodan Zelich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 5 verses, 2:00
Comments: 16 singers
37. Title: PIMO VINO
Composer: V. Shantich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 7 verses, 3:00
Comments: 16 singers
38. Title: III RUKOVET
Composer: Stevan Mokranjac
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 11 verses, 4:00
Comments: 24 singers
39. Title: STO CUTIS, SRBINE TUZNI
Composer: Davorin Jenko
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 9 verses, 3:00
Comments: 20 singers
40. Title: STIHIRI SRPSKIM SVETITELJIMA
Composer: Beogradski Madrigalisti
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 5 verses, 2:00
Comments: 24 singers
41. Title: KOSOVAKI BOZURI
Composer: Slobodan Zelich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 7 verses, 3:00
Comments: 20 singers

42. Title: KOSOVSKA ELEGIJA
Composer: Isidor Bajaich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SATB
Length: 3 verses, 1:00
Comments: 20 singers

Appendix II

CATALOG OF SERBIAN CHORAL LITERATURE FOR JUNIOR CHOIR

43. Title: MALI PUTNIK
Composer: Martha Kukich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SA
Length:
Comments: Junior Choir
44. Title: DOMOVINI
Composer: Mita Topalovich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SA
Length: 5 verses, 1:30
Comments: Junior Choir
45. Title: EJ KOVACU
Composer: Josef Marinkovic
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SA
Length: 5 verses, 2:00
Comments: Junior Choir
46. Title: STRASIJLIVAC
Composer: V. Zopacski
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SA
Length: 5 verses, 1:30
Comments: Junior Choir
47. Title: MI SMO DECA VESELA
Composer: Vladimir R. Bjordsjavich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SSA
Length: 7 verses, 2:00
Comments: Junior Choir
48. Title: JUTRKNJI KADOVI
Composer: Mita Topalovich
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SSA
Length: 5 verses, 2:00
Comments: Junior Choir

49. Title: VIVAR
Composer: J. Ca
Print Source: SSF
Parts: SA
Length: 3 verses, 1:00
Comments: Junior Choir

Appendix III

English Translations

JESEN
Autumn

Like a proud empress enchanting, with a sheaf of golden
grain,
On the field Autumn stands. From her charming head
A wreath of leafy vines magically descends
Down to the sweet-smelling grass.

In one hand she holds high a cluster of grapes sprinkled with
down.
And sweetly smiles at it. Of tame and mild nature,
She now prepares quiet evenings and days,
And offers a rich harvest.

How alluring it all is! In the old fireplace quietly crackles
the reddish flame. While fog covers the plains And fills the
air with dew, the ancient past comes alive With tales of
bygone times.

And late into the dark night the talk murmurs on softly,
Until drowsiness overcomes all. And then a
passionate whisper
Rustles through the silent home--but
that too fades quickly.
And sleep descends slowly.

DALMATINSKI SHAJKAS
Dalmatia

From the first days of my youth, my heart felt that I will
yearn for the wide sea. But I can hardly leave my home.

Therefore, I row my canoe at the familiar sights--I am
acquainted for so long a time. Let the others sail wide seas--
-Let them acquire gold and pearls, I do not care about these.

O my Beautiful Dalmatia, I can never forget you. The sea is
threatening us with many horrors. We do not know whether
we'll live to see the dawn of the next day. The waves are
terribly threatening us. The waves are terribly threatening
us. Therefore, I sail on the familiar sights I am acquainted
for so long.

Let's go mariner--I'll go with you! Dalmatia! I can never
leave you--I am dying for you.

Translation: Vasa D. Mihailovich

OJ SRBIJO

O Srbija, mother dear,
May you always be happy
Your children love you
and pray to God to you.

Land of our forefathers,
Heroes and saints,
Martyrs of the holy cross,
Fighters for freedom.

Grave next to grave--holy cemetery,
There is where the Servian slaves rest.
And everywhere are altars,
Foundations of the Serbian czars.

On Kosovo-Gracanica,
On the mountainside--Studenica,
Alongside Morava--Ravanica,
In Krusevac--Lazarica.

And continually battles,
before and after Vidovdan.
You are splattered with blood
And washed with tears.

There, Kosovo stands solemn,
Counting 500 years of slavery,
A monument of glory and heroism,
And of dissension and betrayal.

No, fear not, dear Mother,
God will bestow you with goodness,
So that you will be the most happy of all,
And the most glorious of all.

Translation: Popadija Zorine Sokolovic