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Introduction

Megan Swift and Serhy Yekelchuk

Specialist in Russian literature and film, talented jazz musician, beloved teacher, community pillar, respected colleague, bon vivant— Nicholas V. Galichenko is, in the true sense of the Russian phrase, a “wide soul” (*shirokaia dusha*). The present collection of essays reflects the multi-dimensionality of the man it is intended to honour in various ways. Firstly, it covers the broad range of interests to be found at the University of Victoria’s Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, where Nick retired from a successful 37-year career in 2008. These interests extend over several centuries and large portions of Europe and Russia, from Stalinist culture to Austrian feminism, St. Petersburg monumental sculpture to vampire imagery. Secondly, this Festschrift reflects the wide network of colleagues and students with whom Nick associated. Contributors to this collection include former UVic colleagues like Andrew Donskov, who has gone on to a distinguished career at the University of Ottawa, current colleagues Julia Rochtchina, Megan Swift and Serhy Yekelchuk, all of whom began their careers under Nick’s tutelage, and a selection of students (Amy Safarik and Regan Treewater) who have gone on to pursue academic careers in Russian literature after being inspired by Nick’s courses on nineteenth and twentieth-century literature. Other contributors include Peter Gölz, Helga Thorson, Peter Liddell, Angelika Arend and Želimir B. Juričić.

The title of this collection, which refers to the 1983 film *We’re From Jazz* (*My iz dzhaza*), expresses themes from Nick’s life both inside and outside of the university—his

talent as a jazz musician, and his love of Russian and Soviet cinema. Like jazz music itself, this collection of essays is eclectic and broad-based, with something that will appeal to readers of diverse scholarly interests. It is fitting that the film's sequel, *We're from Jazz 2*, will arrive at the same moment that Nick is enjoying a new chapter in his life, and just as this Festschrift in his honour is published.

Nicholas Galichenko was born in Shanghai, China, but grew up in Vancouver, Canada. His parents, Vladimir and Lidia, ensured that both Nick and his sister, Tania, honoured the Russian philological tradition by learning fluent Russian and receiving an excellent education. Russian poetry and prose were respected and loved in the Galichenko family, and in fact Vladimir Galichenko emigrated from China with the library of the largest Russian bookstore in Shanghai. In the family tradition, Nick has carried Russian literature with him throughout his life as well. Nick studied at the University of British Columbia and at McGill University (where he completed a dissertation on the work of Mikhail Bulgakov) and then accepted a faculty position at the University of Victoria in 1971. Russian Studies, part of the university since the days of Victoria College, existed first as part of a Modern Languages department, then Slavonic and Oriental Studies, then independently, and most recently as part of Germanic and Slavic Studies. Throughout all these name changes, Nick maintained an unchanging commitment to students and to Russian language and literature.

When Nick joined the department in 1971, his teaching load consisted of four full-year courses, the equivalent of eight courses under the current system. Yet he rose to the challenge, completing his Ph.D. dissertation in 1976 and publishing a series of articles on Bulgakov's early prose and plays. By the early 1980s, the teaching load decreased slightly, but the very existence of the Russian program came under threat because of low enrolments at the time when the University was considering cuts. In order to boost student numbers, Nick developed a new, high-enrolment course on the Soviet cinema, Russian 304. No fewer than 123 students took it the first time it was offered in the spring of 1981; this number rose to 146 the following year. The introduction of this course, now divided into two and complemented by other popular offerings on Russian cinema, determined the profile of our program for decades to come. In making this change, Nick was guided by his lifelong love of Russian film, as well as his past experience of dubbing Russian documentaries for a New York film distributor. But as it happens so often in academia, the new course also inspired its creator to branch into a new field of scholarship. Thus began Nick's next major research project, which in 1991 resulted in the publication of his pioneering book, *Glasnost: Soviet Cinema Responds* (University of Texas Press).

The Russian program that exists at UVic today, including British Columbia's only fully fledged Russian language program, a wide range of courses in Russian literature, culture and cinema, and an active travel abroad program, has very much been shaped by Nick. In 2005 the Department paid tribute to Nick's many contributions by naming a prestigious travel abroad scholarship in his honour. This scholarship originated from a fundraising drive in the late 1980s to establish an earlier student exchange program with the Soviet republic of Georgia. Nick, who at the time was researching Georgian cinema, was the heart and soul of the campaign. Now named after him, the travel-abroad scholarship supports UVic students, who travel to the former Soviet Union to study Russian. In addition to this award, Nick's retirement in 2008 was marked by the inauguration of the Vladimir and Lidia Galichenko Scholarship established in honour of Nick's parents. This time, Megan Swift coordinated the fundraising campaign to which a number of Nick's colleagues, students, friends, and relatives contributed. By far the largest contributions, however, came from Nick and his partner Ellen Pollard, and from his sister and brother-in-law, Tania and Bill Little. The two families continue making very generous annual gifts to the Galichenko Endowment, which will support student scholarships as well as the Galichenko memorial lectures in Russian Studies. The Galichenko family legacy has thus become a part of our Russian program in perpetuity.

Alongside his academic career, Nick found time to nurture another love: music. True to his generous nature, Nick devoted himself not only to his own pursuit of music, but also made possible the enjoyment of countless others in the community. He purchased an entire suite of balalaikas at Expo '67 in Montreal and then donated them all to the Victoria Balalaika Orchestra so that generations of students could learn to play this beautiful instrument. At the same time, a talented jazz musician in his own right, Nick became a familiar face at jazz venues on the east and west coast, playing with many groups over the years. In retirement, Nick's talents as a jazz keyboardist have become even more in demand.

Although his booming voice is now rarely heard in UVic's corridors, Nick remains a notable presence in the lives of his younger colleagues and students. A great mentor, generous friend, and formidable host, his and Ellen's home on Belmont Avenue is an unofficial center of Russian community life in Victoria. We all wish Nick many years of happy and fulfilling life in retirement.