

The Tone 4 Bolhar melody

The Tone 4 Bolhar (Bulgarian) melody is used at the funeral service, and in singing the hymns of the solemn Vesper procession called the litija.

Here is the fourth of the Hymns of Saint John Damascene, commemorating the faithful departed. It is sung at Vespers on Friday evenings in Tone 4, and at the funeral service.



Where is world - ly at - tach - ment? Where is the al - lure
of tem - por - al things? Where is sil - ver, where is gold?
Where is the mul - ti - tude of serv - ants and of cares? All is
ash - es, all is dust, all is shad - - - ow.
Let us cry out to the death - less King: Lord, make
those you have tak - en from us worth - y of your e - ter - nal boun - ties,
and grant them rest in your age - - - less bliss.

The form of the melody

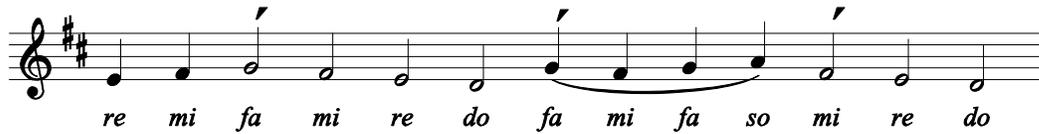
This melody consists of two phrases, A and B, sung in alternation, and a (long) final phrase.

The A melody is stately and sung in half notes, similar to the first phrase of the Tone 8 troparion melody: quite flowing. The slurs mark the phrasing, and may be broken up in a particular setting.



ti do re mi re mi fa so fa mi re

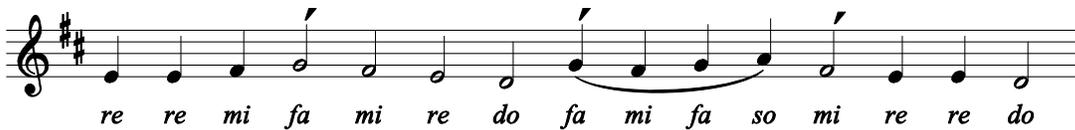
The B phrase is also flowing, and comes to rest on *do*:



When the A phrase repeats, it begins on *do* (rather than *ti*). The first note may be repeated in order to put the accent in the right place. Notice the two notes before the last accent; the notes here may be either half notes or quarter notes, depending on the “sound” of the words being sung.



When the B phrase is repeated, the initial note may be repeated, and the middle quarter note of the final cadence may be split into two quarter notes, depending on the words being sung.



If text is very short and begins on an accented syllable, the initial quarter notes (*re mi*) may be omitted. See “all is shadow” in the hymn of Saint John Damascene above.

The final phrase brings the entire melody to a solid conclusion:



As with the B phrase, some of the initial notes may be omitted – a good reason to sing hymns like this through in advance!

The final phrase of the Tone 4 Bolhar melody is sometimes split into two parts with a quarter-bar just after *re – do*, depending on the sense of the text; remember to keep the music flowing all the way to the end.

Another example

Here is one of the hymns of the litija service at Great Compline on the eve of Theophany:



The One who clothes him-self with light as with a robe deigned, for our
sakes, to be-come as we are. To-day he is clothed in the
streams of the Jor-dan e-ven though he has no need to be pu-ri-fied.
He re-fash-ions us through the cleans-ing he re-ceives. What a mar-vel-ous
won-der! He cre-ates a-new with-out fire
and re-fash-ions with-out tear-ing a-part; he grants sal-va-tion to
those en-light-ened in him, Christ our God, the Sav-ior of our souls.

In this setting, you can see the use of a reciting tone in half notes to extend the phrase in order to fit a longer piece of the liturgical text.