

VICTORY OVER THE SUN AT YOUR SCHOOL

TWO FUTURIST STRONGMEN *rip the curtain.*

THE FIRST

All's well that begins well!

THE SECOND

And ends?

THE FIRST

There will be no end! We astound the universe!



The One and Only Victory



Victory over the Sun—the outrageous, hilarious, groundbreaking Futurist opera first staged in St. Petersburg, Russia in December 1913—has amazed audiences all around the world for over a century. Its iconoclastic libretto shatters conventions of theater, literature, art, and music. Widely considered the world's first performance piece, *Victory over the Sun* (VOTS) remains as

avant-garde today as in its first performance.

With playscript by poet Aleksei Kruchenykh, sets and costumes by the renowned Suprematist artist Kasimir Malevich, and music by Mikhail Matiushin, the antic experimentalism of VOTS is especially engaging to young minds. As they watch it in performance, or perform it themselves, new possibilities in creativity are discovered, engendering a spirit of inquiry and adventure that translates to all their academic pursuits.



About the Translation



My original English-language translation was commissioned for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's celebrated 1980 reconstruction of the first Futurist opera. Like the original 1913 production, tickets for this event were at a premium as American audiences heralded VOTS. Since then, my translation has been used for productions at Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Hirshhorn Museum of the Smithsonian, the Museum of Natural History of New York, the Garage Museum of Moscow, Boston University, and internationally at scores of theaters, museums, and colleges.

Please see the *New York Times* articles “THEATER: ‘VICTORY

OVER THE SUN”

<http://www.nytimes.com/1981/01/27/arts/theater-victory-over-the-sun.html>

and

“RUSSIA'S CUBO-FUTURISTS CREATED A STARTLING ‘OPERA’”

<http://www.nytimes.com/1983/11/20/arts/russia-s-cubo-futurists-created-a-startling-opera.html>

as well as coverage in *Russia Beyond the Headlines*:

“THE ENDURING APPEAL OF THE RUSSIAN AVANT-GARDE”

http://rbth.com/literature/2015/01/21/the_enduring_appeal_of_russias_avant-garde_43039.html

A READER: HOW EXTRAORDINARY LIFE WITHOUT THE PAST IS!

About Me

I am the Brooklyn-born daughter of Russian-speaking Ukrainian nationals, survivors of persecution by Stalin and Hitler both. VOTS was my first major translation. As an undergrad at Barnard College, blessed with the brilliant Slavic resources of my alma mater as well as those of Columbia University, I simultaneously developed my translation and literary voices. I embraced the adventurous spirit of the Futurists and VOT's visionary poet Aleksei Kruchenykh. Like them, I sought to push my translation beyond boundaries to capture the message in the neologisms and skewed semantics and syntax. This experience was to inform all my future translations.



Indeed, my translation life has included some joyous projects, including the landmark anthology *Twenty-first Century Russian Poetry*, which I edited. The anthology was featured in *Russia Beyond the Headlines*:

“FIFTY RUSSIAN POETS UNVEILED IN ONLINE ANTHOLOGY”

(https://www.rbth.com/literature/2013/07/23/fifty_russian_poets_unveiled_in_online_anthology_28317.html)

as well as on Voice of Russia: “RUSSIAN BOOKWORLD”:

https://sputniknews.com/voiceofrussia/radio_broadcast/28742746/239869305/

and *Harriet* (the Poetry Foundation blog): “A NEW ANTHOLOGY OF 21ST CENTURY RUSSIAN POETRY”: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2013/07/a-new-anthology-of-21st-century-russian-poetry>



This ebullient collection includes ultracontemporary poetry from Russian and Russian-speaking Ukrainian poets, as well as émigré poetry from the diaspora.

I also have been a translator on the Russian Bible for the Eugene A. Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship of the American Bible Society, especially on its translation and evolution. A major work was the translation of an annotated bibliography of Russian Bible translations from the old Russian and Soviet empires and Baltic States spanning four centuries.

As a poetry translator, I have rendered selected poems by Pushkin, Brodsky, and some Silver Age poets. Regarding the latter, in 2011, I received honorable mention in the noted Compass Award competition for Russian poetry translation for an acrostic poem by Nikolai Gumiliev. With an interest in Slavic women poets, I moderated a panel at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference (AWP) entitled “Daughters of Baba Yaga: The Eastern European Woman Poet in America.”

Of course, my engagement with VOTS remains ongoing. Among recent scholarly and performative events, I presented a now-popular paper at AWP entitled “Everything Has Become Masculine: Hypermasculinity and War in *Victory over the Sun*.” And I recently lectured on VOTS at Queens College/CUNY. As you can see from the photo below, I also had a blast as a consultant to and actor in a full high-tech VOTS reconstruction at Boston College.



THE TALKER: *What? . . . Those who still put their hope in cannon fire will be boiled into porridge today!*

Victory and Your Students

An encounter with VOTS is a delightful, multidimensional learning experience. Russian students, drama students, art students, music students, poetry students, students of Futurism and the avant-garde, students of Russian history, and students of early 20th century literature may all be inspired by this unique multimedia piece.



Below are three options for a VOTS experience at your school, which can be tailored to the needs of your students.

Option 1: Film, Lecture, Q&A

This option includes:

- a showing of a film of the *Victory over the Sun* reconstruction by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (45 minutes);
- a lecture on the Russian Futurists and a reading and discussion of *The Slap in the Face of the Public Taste* manifesto;
- background on Russian history of that time;
- a review of the artistic and thematic threads in VOTS, followed by Q&A.



Time: About 75 to 90 minutes.

Option 2. Informal Student Staging

Includes Option 1. Students and faculty can mount an informal *Victory over the Sun* performance, in class or on stage. Students can cold-read (or sing) the roles, choose music for the production, create costumes and choreography, and project images as digital “sets.” And students staging this piece need not worry about chaos and gaffes and improvisations— the original production was replete with those!

I provide all background and advisement included in Option 1. I serve as a consultant to the performance and participate in a panel after the performance(s).

Time: Prep time can range from a few hours to a few days.

Option 3. VOTS Reconstruction



Includes Options 1 and 2.

Students mount a formal production. They rehearse roles, perform music, create costumes and sets based on the original production, or bring their own avant-garde art to the stage. The level of investment is up to the students and faculty. The performance may be opened to the community.

I serve as consultant and participate in a panel after the performance(s), providing all elements of Options 1 and 2.

Time: Rehearsal time can range from a few days to a few weeks.

Have a victorious educational experience! *With questions, or for more information, please contact:*

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www.larissashmailo.com/victory

Larissa Shmailo Wikipedia page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Larissa_Shmailo

Main website: www.larissashmailo.com.

THE FUTURIST STRONGMEN:

all's well that

begins well

and has no end

the world will perish but there's no end

to us!