

SERGE JAROFF and  
**THE DON COSSACKS**



**ON THE ATTACK!**

columbia masterworks  set m-542

# DON COSSACKS ON THE ATTACK

DON COSSACK CHORUS  
SERGE JAROFF, Conductor  
COLUMBIA MASTERWORKS

Set M-542

The history of the Don Cossacks is, indeed, an exciting one. From time immemorial their ancestors fought alternately for and against Russia. They were fearless, freedom-loving men whose feats of bravery and horsemanship were almost legendary.

During the Soviet Revolution, the Cossacks fought in General Wrangel's White Army in the Crimea. With the defeat of Wrangel and the downfall of the Czarist regime, these fierce fighters were exiled from their native land and sent to the prison camp of Tchelengir, near Constantinople, better known as the "Camp of Death." Here, amidst hunger, cold and disease, these brave warriors tried to drown their troubles in song.

Among this group of giants—some Cossacks have been known to reach the height of seven feet—was a diminutive lieutenant of a machine gun corps who, before the war, had enjoyed some prominence as a choir director. This man was Serge Jaroff. Recognizing in the beautiful, but untrained, voices of his fellow-prisoners an opportunity to form them into a chorus, he laid his plan before them, and was accepted with enthusiasm.

Several months later, the chorus, still intact, was transferred to Sofia upon the consent of the Bulgarian government to accept them in its quota of Russian refugees. Their fame spread rapidly, and they were soon comprising the choir of the Russian Embassy Church in Sofia. An alert concert manager, who heard them sing there, arranged a concert for them that included both sacred and secular songs. Their success was immediate, and it was not long before they were touring triumphantly the continents of Europe, North America and Australia.

\* \* \*

The singing of the Don Cossacks is unique. From this amazing aggregation of thirty-six voices emerge the

deepest bass tones and the highest, purest falsetto passages. Their leader, Serge Jaroff, has welded them into a unit amazing for its unanimity of vocal purpose and so well controlled that one moment they are singing with an almost savage power and the next have faded away into a practically inaudible pianissimo.

\* \* \*

The music contained in this album is a recorded miscellany of Russian songs, many of which are on the lips of the brave peoples of Fighting Russia today. The Columbia catalog is rich in recordings by the Don Cossacks. Consult it for a list of the records by this great musical organization. Notes and translations of the songs follow:



*Don Cossack Chorus*

## DON COSSACKS ON THE ATTACK

*(Folksong—arr. Shvedoff)*

Hark! Alarm! The enemy is close!  
The enemy is crafty! The enemy is cruel!  
He moves forward!  
He burns our villages and fields!  
Haste you! Arise, Don Cossacks!  
To horse!—all—old and young—  
Grandfathers and grandsons—haste!

*(First Folk Song)*

It is not an eagle  
Flying high under the clouds.  
It is the Don Cossacks' standard  
Waving proudly over their heads.  
A Cossack fears not danger;  
From childhood he is brave and fearless.  
There is nothing on earth can stop him  
As Russia knows from long ago.

*(Second Folk Song)*

Why so gloomy, Don River?  
Why are your waters so dark?  
Cossack blood runs fast in our veins;  
We know how to conquer our enemies  
At full speed!  
No mercy for those without honor—  
Who for their crimes may expect only revenge;  
Who like beasts torture children;  
Who kill the defenseless.  
That brood of vipers, sons of Satan—  
Death is their only reward.  
The Cossacks depart with shining swords.  
The earth trembles with their tread  
And the dust clouds rise on the road.  
Our hearts are full of pain and anxiety  
What will become of them?  
O Lord, help them  
To return with victory!  
Save our country  
And our beloved Don!

\* \* \*

## THREE COSSACK SONGS

*(arr. Jaroff)*

I

Oh, Kuban, our mother-country, our dear and native land;  
And you, dear Kuban River, flowing broadly between the rich banks!  
We sing of you with a heart full of memories,  
We sing of our free villages, of our father's home.

II

Snow, why do you lie on the warm earth?  
Cossacks, why are you so sad?  
Ah! you are captive,  
But you must forget your grief for a while  
And accept the new Asiatic way.

III

Solo:  
We praise Platoff, our hero, who overcame the foe.  
Choir:  
Pride of the Don Cossacks has overcome the foe.  
Pride of the Don Cossacks has overcome the foe.

*Continued on back cover*

# YOUR COLUMBIA RECORDS DESERVE COLUMBIA NEEDLES

Solo:  
Seek him and find him in the ranks of Russia's army.

Choir:  
We know where Platoff is; we know where one can find him.

Solo:  
We know whence the Don flows and how it is adorned.

Choir:  
'Tis adorned with Russian glory as the Don itself can prove.

Solo:  
Give the Don your faith and honor as your father did of yore.

Choir:  
We shall do our utmost that glory may be ours.

\* \* \*

ON THE BLACK HORSE  
(Ural-Cossack Partisan's Song)  
(Zaharoff—arr. Jaroff)

The young Cossack leaped on the big black horse  
Which neighed and stamped impatient feet.  
At the gate the youth stretched forth his hand  
And grasped his father's in farewell.  
"Goodbye, my son," the old man said.  
"I fain would ride on at your side  
But my blood is cool and my sword is dull.  
Grieve not for us for we will live  
And harvest the crop without you."  
With a tug of the rein and a wave of his cap  
The lad was through the gate and away.  
Off toward the battle din he rode;  
The horse as fleet as an arrow in flight,  
The dust rising up in a cloud behind  
The horseman gallops into the fray.

\* \* \*

TWO SOLDIER SONGS  
(arr. Shvedoff)

I

Oh, my Caucasian mountains!  
A swift stream flows under you  
And above this stream the cypress grow.

II

Along the broad street  
A young soldier walks;  
He walks and sings:

(1st Refrain)

The nightingale is a free bird,  
But the canary sings sadly in his cage.  
One, two! Be still, my sorrow.  
Oh, Parasha, love me, love me  
A brave, young soldier.

(2nd Refrain)

If you would love me,  
I would feel like a Tzar;  
Or better still—like a General.

\* \* \*

SAILOR'S SONG  
(Folksong—arr. Shvedoff)

"Sailor, you're a handsome gob  
And you're twenty years of age.  
Love me with your entire heart  
And we'll forever happy be."  
We sail all over the seven seas.  
We're here today; there tomorrow.  
To Turkey I will sail away  
And marry a girl, an Ottoman.  
I'll become a Mussulman  
And Russia will never see me again.  
We sail all over the seven seas.  
We're here today; there tomorrow.

\* \* \*

IN THE VILLAGE  
(Folksong—arr. Shvedoff)

This song tells of the astonishment of the peasants  
who behold the wonders of electricity in their village for  
the first time in their lives.

\* \* \*

LEZGINKA

(Caucasian Song—arr. Shvedoff)

Sunset . . . The mountain peaks of the Caucasus are  
glimmering in fairy light. On a green meadow at the base  
of the mountain the villagers assemble for evening  
prayer. They kneel, and one hears a melancholy, monotonous  
Oriental melody lifting over the murmur of praying.  
The sun vanishes behind the mountains—camp fires  
flare up here and there. The rhythm of the melancholy  
prayer accelerates the movements, and the humming  
accompaniment of the crowd becomes swifter. Several  
Caucasians step forth and start the "Lezginka," a dagger  
dance, deliberate at the start, wildly whirling by  
and by.

\* \* \*

THE RECRUIT'S LAST DAY  
(Folksong—arr. Jaroff)

This sad song, also known as "Farewell to Civilian  
Life," describes a recruit's last moments before leaving  
his family. In the middle the song is interrupted by the  
"chastushki" — light-hearted nonsense — then the  
plaintive melody of the beginning recurs. The intent of  
these two shifting moods is to indicate a Russian pen-  
chant for talking of trivial things while fate hangs in the  
balance.

\* \* \*

SONG OF THE PLAINS  
(Knipper—arr. Jaroff)

Along the plain, the wide, wide plain  
The Russian army heroes ride.  
The maidens are weeping and wrapped in gloom.  
Their beaux will be long on their way.  
Let the work proceed in village and town.  
Here, sweet lassies, look down the road;  
It winds cheerfully far away.  
We go to fight the terrible foe.  
Our steeds are fleet, our weapons keen.  
Your sentinels stand to guard you well.  
Come, lassies, wipe your saddening tears.  
Sing out our fighting song: "Wide Plains!"


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**DON COSSACKS ON THE ATTACK**  
-Folksong-Arr. Shvedoff-  
**DON COSSACK CHORUS**  
SERGE JAROFF, Conductor  
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(XCO 33122)



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**THREE COSSACK SONGS**  
1. Kuban River 2. Snowflakes  
3. Platoff's Song -Arr. Jaroff-  
**DON COSSACK CHORUS**  
SERGE JAROFF, Conductor  
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M 542-3

**ON THE BLACK HORSE**  
(Partisan's Song)  
-Zaharoff-Arr. Jaroff-  
**DON COSSACK CHORUS**  
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**TWO SOLDIERS' SONGS**  
1. Caucasian Mountains  
2. Along The Street  
-Soldiers' Song-Arr. Shvedoff-  
**DON COSSACK CHORUS**  
SERGE JAROFF, Conductor  
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M 542-5

1. SAILOR'S SONG  
2. IN THE VILLAGE  
-Folksongs-Arr. Shvedoff-  
**DON COSSACK CHORUS**  
SERGE JAROFF, Conductor  
7401-M  
(XCO 33131)



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M 542-6

**LEZGINKA**  
-Caucasian Song-Arr. Shvedoff-  
**DON COSSACK CHORUS**  
SERGE JAROFF, Conductor  
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**THE RECRUIT'S LAST DAY**  
-Folksong-Arr. Jaroff-  
**DON COSSACK CHORUS**  
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M 542-8

**SONG OF THE PLAINS**  
-Knipper-Arr. Jaroff-  
**DON COSSACK CHORUS**  
SERGE JAROFF, Conductor  
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