

Musical influences  
and inspirations from  
the master: music  
and meaning in  
bulgako...



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“ Music is a language that doesn’t speak in particular words. It speaks in emotions, and if it’s in the bones, it’s in the bones” — Keith Richards From the beginning of time music has been a staple for mankind. Suzanne Boothby in her article “ Does Music Affect Your Mood?” says that “ from the drumbeats of our ancient ancestors to today’s unlimited streaming services, music is an integral part of the human experience” (Boothby). Music can be used as therapy, to invoke memories, and to even release dopamine which results in an elevated mood. Mikhail Bulgakov’s masterpiece novel *The Master and Margarita* is filled to the brim with music. In the novel, one cannot go more than ten pages at any given time without some sort of reference to music. Unlike many other novels, *The Master and Margarita* essentially has its own soundtrack. When tracing and investigating the musical references, one begins to develop a deeper understanding of the work, which I presume to be aligned with Bulgakov’s authorial intent. Though I was unable to come across any hard evidence throughout my research, I hypothesize that Bulgakov was a musical connoisseur. Bulgakov attended operas frequently, enjoyed jazz music at the American Embassy parties, and even had “ a picture of the bass Lev Mikhailovitsk Sibiryakov on his desk” (Vanhellemont) from Gounod’s opera *Faust*. The first part of my paper will focus on what and who in terms of music influenced Bulgakov in *The Master and Margarita*. Out of the multitude of musical references within the novel I have decided to mainly focus on these references: Giuseppe Verdi’s opera *Aida*, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s opera *Yevgeny Onegin*, Vincent Youmans’s song “ Hallelujah!”, Dimitri Timofeevich Lensky’s vaudeville “ Lev Gurych Sinichkin”, and Dmitri Pavlovich Davydov’s “ Slavnoye Morye”. When analyzing these references, I am going to explore what impact these

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references have in relation to how music moves the action of the plot, and also how the music chosen comments on the society or social structure of Soviet Russia in Bulgakov's time. The second part of my paper will focus on musicians who have been influenced by Bulgakov and his masterpiece *The Master and Margarita*. The musicians and songs I have chosen to analyze are Patti Smith's "Banga", Franz Ferdinand's "Love and Destroy", and the Rolling Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil". Through my research, I have found that not only do these songs reference the novel, but when analyzed for meaning they shed light on alternative aspects or theories pertaining to the overall meaning.

The first musical allusion of note is from Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Aida*. *Aida* premiered December 24, 1861 at the Khedivial Opera House in Cairo. Verdi's *Aida* is set in ancient Egypt and plays out through four acts (Green).

Bulgakov loved Verdi's opera "very much and quoted it often"

(Vanhellemont). Throughout the novel, the exclamation "gods, gods!"

appears ten times. The first words that Pontius Pilate speaks in the novel are

"Gods, gods, why do you punish me?" (Bulgakov 17). This expression of "

gods, gods" is derived from the libretto of *Aida* in the last stanza of Act I

Scene I: Oh gods, have pity on my suffering! There is no hope for my sorrow.

Fatal love, terrible love, Break my heart, make me die! Oh gods, have pity on

my suffering! (Vanhellemont) There are several parallels that can be made

between the libretto of Act I Scene I of *Aida* and *The Master and Margarita*.

First, there is the obvious parallel between the libretto and Pilate's character

arc. In the novel, Pilate's character becomes equated with suffering. Pilate's

suffering derives from his guilt of sentencing Yeshua to death. Even though

Pilate was intrigued by Yeshua he still had to put him to death essentially because of politics or diplomacy. Herein arises the question of free will within the novel. In the libretto for Aida it is implied that free will is nonexistent and one's fate is determined solely by the gods. Throughout The Master and Margarita the question of free will posed by Aida continuously resurfaces. For example, this unique portrayal of free will within the novel can be seen in Woland's "death sentence" for the Variety Theater's bartender Andrey Fokich Sokov. Herein, Woland relays the bad news that Sokov will die of liver cancer in nine months, but he is not acting as a puppeteer pulling the strings of Sokov's life. If I had to infer, I would assume that it was Sokov's own poor choices throughout his life that landed him the liver cancer, and not Woland. This type of free will plays out with Pilate as well. It was ultimately Pilate's own choice to sentence Yeshua to death. One could argue that Woland was present in form of the swallow, and also in form of Pilate's headaches. But, at the end of the day, Pilate's choice was his own, and it was a cowardly choice because he was just being a sheep and doing what he was told. There is also a repetition of "gods, gods" (Bulgakov 383) at the beginning of chapter eighteen "Forgiveness and Eternal Refuge" in which Pilate's ultimate fate is discussed. In this chapter, the unholy brood come across Pilate and Banga in hell. Pilate and Banga are tormented with insomnia at the sight of the full moon. About this Woland says, "If it is true that cowardice is the greatest sin, the dog is not guilty of it. The only thing the brave dog feared was storm. But, then, those who love must share the fate of those they love" (386). In this quote, Woland is implying that it was Pilate's cowardice that landed him in hell and not the gods. "Cowardice is the greatest sin" and by being a sheep for his government and not thinking for himself Pilate displayed

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cowardice. It turns out though that Pilate is not the only one guilty of cowardice. At the end of the novel Margarita is forced to share her fate with the master in hell because “those who love must share the fate of those they love” (386). Similar to Pilate, the master displayed cowardice by giving up, checking out mentally, and not fighting the system. Even though it was Margarita’s choice to save the master and she displayed great bravery in her rescue, she is still condemned to spend eternity in hell because of his great sin of cowardice. The second important musical reference that surfaces in *The Master and Margarita* is to Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s opera *Yevgeny Onegin*. This reference occurs in chapter four when Ivan is running through Moscow chasing after Woland and the gang. While he is running all the “ windows were open. In each window there was a lamp under an orange shade, and from all windows, all doors, all gateways, roofs and attics, cellars and courtyards, came the hoarse blasts of the polonaise from the opera *Yevgeny Onegin*” (57). The reference then continues over to the following page: “ he was inexpressibly tormented for some reason by the ubiquitous orchestra accompanying a heavy basso who sang of his love for Tatyana” (58). In this quote Bulgakov describes the “ first scene of the third act of this opera, in which Onegin meets the prince Gremin. Gremin was married to Tatyana, which whom Onegin had flirted himself” (Vanhellemont). Tchaikovsky’s opera is based on the Alexander Pushkin novel of the same name. Pushkin’s novel and the opera are a staple of classical Russian culture, and act as a symbol of old ways or nostalgia within the novel. The polonaise for *Yevgeny Onegin* acts as the perfect action-packed, thrilling, and brilliant soundtrack to accompany Ivan. To have this classic Russian polonaise playing while Ivan is frantically running is ironic. Ivan, Berlioz, and <https://assignbuster.com/musical-influences-and-inspirations-from-the-master-music-and-meaning-in-bulgakovs-masterpiece-and-beyond/>

their fellow writers openly mock and reject the culture that Yevgeny Onegin represents. In a more symbolic reading of the scene, Ivan is not only running because of Woland and the crew, but he is also fleeing from the classic Russian culture. Yet, the polonaise attempts to appeal to Ivan's humanity or sympathy with the reference to the "basso who sang of his love for Tatyana" (Bulgakov 58). Bulgakov's inclusion of this line is intriguing. It implies that the opera is attempting to appeal to Ivan and call him to reconcile with his roots or the classical roots. Additionally, it is of great importance that the polonaise is coming from "all windows, all doors, all gateways, roofs and attics, cellars and courtyards" (57). The borderline excessive listing of platforms of sound reinforces the standardization of Soviet society at the time. Not only do all of the citizens have the same program, that is playing the same song, but also all of the people appear to be listening to their radios at the same time. Though this scene is comical and light, it retains a serious undertone when taking into consideration censorship and the Soviet experiment. Next, I will be discussing American composer Vincent Youmans's song "Hallelujah!". Throughout the novel, "Hallelujah!" is alluded to on three separate occasions. For this section, I will first list all of the references and their context within the novel, and then I will analyze the effect of the song as a whole on the commentary of the novel. The first allusion surfaces in chapter five "The Affair at Griboyedov's". While the MASSOLIT writers are dancing a man's voice "no longer sang but howled, 'Hallelujah!' The clashing of the golden cymbals occasionally covered even the clatter of the dishes which the dishwashers were sending down the chute into the kitchen. In short, hell" (66). "Hallelujah!" begins playing directly before the writers of MASSOLIT learn the fate of their leader Berlioz. The second reference of this <https://assignbuster.com/musical-influences-and-inspirations-from-the-master-music-and-meaning-in-bulgakovs-masterpiece-and-beyond/>

tune surfaces after doctor Kuzmin's run-in with Sokov in chapter 18, "The Luckless Visitors". After arriving at home Kuzmin heard the phonograph playing "Hallelujah!" and a sparrow flew in and "limped on its left foot, obviously clowning and dragging it, moving in syncopation—in short, it was dancing a fox trot to the music of the phonograph like a drunk in a bar" (231). The third reference arises in chapter 23 at "Satan's Great Ball". In this chapter, there is a two-page sequence (pages 278-279) where there is a duel between the deceased Johann Strauss conducting a classical polonaise and a jazz band belting out "Hallelujah!". In order to understand why "Hallelujah!" is referenced thrice, one must first analyze the lyrics: "Satan lies a waitin' and creatin' skies of grey (skies of grey), but hallelujah, hallelujah helps to shoo the clouds away" (Vanhellemont). The word hallelujah is in the traditional sense a praise to God, but in the context of the novel, it is used ironically as a call or beckoning for Woland/Satan. The first reference comes literally a page before the MASSOLIT writers learn of Berlioz's death, which Woland meddled in and predicted. The second reference is after Woland meddled in Sokov's life and told him he would die of liver cancer, and directly before the leech incident and the appearance of the odd Hella/Azazello/Behemoth/Woland creature's arrival. And the third reference is only pages before Woland's arrival at his own ball. Jazz essentially transforms into a symbol of the devil or the devil's work within the context of the novel. It is interesting to consider the mere inclusion of jazz due to the fact that the majority of other music references are grounded in the classical or traditional. Bulgakov was first introduced to jazz through American embassy parties thrown at the Spaso House, the American embassy in Moscow. According to Anna Sorokina in her article "6 Secrets of <https://assignbuster.com/musical-influences-and-inspirations-from-the-master-music-and-meaning-in-bulgakovs-masterpiece-and-beyond/>

U. S. Ambassador Residence in Moscow that Sound Like Myths”, Bulgakov was “ hugely influenced by the 1935 Spring Festival” (Sorokina). The Spring Festival that Bulgakov attended was held on “ April 24, 1935 at Spaso House [and] is legendary for being one of the most lavish parties ever held by the U. S. mission abroad... according to his wife, after the party he radically rewrote the chapter entitled ‘ The Spring Ball of the Full Moon’ (‘ Satan’s ball’)” (Sorokina). Jazz was something new and foreign to Soviet Society, so it is interesting that Bulgakov used it in association with the devil. I would go as far to argue that jazz, like Bulgakov, resisted the traditions of classical conventions, and this frightened people. It is also important to note that shortly after “ Hallelujah!” is played all three times, people are taken away to the mental hospital. First is Ivan, then doctor Kuzmin, and then more obscurely the Master (after he died) visiting Ivan. Knowing that these people are carted away after hearing “ Hallelujah!” forces me to think of jazz in a societal context. Unlike the predominant classical music of the time, jazz does not play by any rules. It is unpredictable, subversive, and ultimately threatening to classical music—just like an enlightened mind is to society. The succeeding, and possibly most strange musical allusion I will be discussing is the inclusion and inversion of Dimitri Timofeevich Lensky’s “ Lev Gurych Sinichkin, or a Provincial Debutante” in chapter 12 of *The Master and Margarita*. Chapter 12 titled “ Black Magic and Its Full Exposé” details the disorder that Woland and the gang cause through an extravagant magic show. In this magic show money falls from the ceiling, Bengalsky is beheaded and then re-headed, and women are awarded the finest clothing. While greed consumes and corrupts the citizens, Behemoth forces the conductor to play a march. In the Mirra Ginsburg translation of the text, the <https://assignbuster.com/musical-influences-and-inspirations-from-the-master-music-and-meaning-in-bulgakovs-masterpiece-and-beyond/>



band strikes up a “ half-absurd, half-blind, recklessly merry” tune with the lyrics: His very excellent excellency Loved domestic chicks. He always had under his wing Four, or five, or six. (Bulgakov 146) These lyrics are undeniably absurd, but they also vary per translation of the novel. The other translation of Bulgakov’s version of this tune comes from Pevear/Volokhonsky and goes like: His Excellency reached the stage Of liking barnyard fowl. He took under his patronage Three young girls and an owl!! (Vanhellemont) Now, the original words for the Dmitri Timofeevich Lensky song, translation by Kevin Moss are: His Excellency calls her his own and even patronage renders to her. (Vanhellemont) These versions paint three very different pictures. Clearly, Bulgakov’s version, despite translation, is meant to jest and even make a mockery of the original song. Still though, it initially seems odd for Bulgakov to place a piece of this nature directly at the conclusion of Woland’s magic show. Through my research and contemplation, I have come up with two intermingling theories for the placement and usage of “ His Excellency”. First, the chaos and nonsense of the song’s lyrics mirror the chaos in Moscow caused by Woland. At the time when *The Master and Margarita* was being written, Russia was a Communist country. Communism advocated for the elimination of private property. When Woland and gang began throwing around money, garments, etc. everyone attending the show should not have gone wild because the Communist society in theory provides everything that citizens need. But, mass chaos erupted and the sheer greed of humanity prevailed. The absurdity of this song essentially acts as a parallel to the absurdity of Communist society. Intermingling with the absurdity of the lyrics, it is necessary to note that “ His Excellency” is a march. According to <https://assignbuster.com/musical-influences-and-inspirations-from-the-master-music-and-meaning-in-bulgakovs-masterpiece-and-beyond/>

Encyclopedia Britannica a march in musical form has an “ even meter (in 2/4 or 4/4/) with strongly accented first beats to facilitate military marching” (Britannica). Yet, in this scene within the novel no one is marching—there is no order, only chaos. Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica also note that in the “ 20th century, Sergey Prokofiev and Igor Stravinsky evoked the march for satirical purposes as well” (Britannica). With this information from the Encyclopedia Britannica, I would argue that Bulgakov used “ His Excellency” to satirize the standardization or conformity of Communist Russia. Bulgakov saw people for the individuals that they were, and called attention to the absurdity of the Soviet experiment. To continue along the lines of Bulgakov’s critique of Communist society, an intriguing inclusion of “ Slavnoye Morye” or in English “ Glorious Sea, Sacred Baikal” occurs. “ Glorious Sea, Sacred Baikal” is a song that was “ thought up by prisoners from the Nerchinsk prison camp in Siberia around 1850. It was based on the poem ‘ Dumy beglesta na Bakalye’ or ‘ The Soul of the Fugitives in the Baikal’, which was written in 1848 by Dmitri Pavlovich Davydov” (Vanhellemont). In chapter 17, titled “ A Troubled Day”, Vasily Stepanovich ventures to the Commission on Spectacles and Light Entertainment to report the events that occurred at Woland’s black magic show. However, Vasily is greeted by a man-less suit and a cursed staff. Said staff in a sort of mass hypnosis start singing together a “ well-known exile song about the Baikal Lake in Siberia” (Vanhellemont). Between pages 205-208 the employees are unwillingly bursting into song: But suddenly they somehow automatically began the second verse. They were led by Kosarchuk, who may not have had a perfect ear, but had a rather pleasant high tenor. They finished it. The conductor was still absent! They dispersed to their places, but before they had time to sit down, they

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burst into song once more, against their own will. They tried to stop—impossible. They would be silent for three minutes, and again burst into song. Silence—song! They realized they were in trouble. (Bulgakov 208) The employees of the Commission on Spectacles and Light Entertainment only became desperately cursed after their leader Prokhor Petrovich proclaimed out of annoyance “the devil take me!” (204). Instead of only punishing Petrovich for using the devil’s name in vain, Woland punishes everyone. This punishment appears to be a well-defined comment on the structure of Soviet society. Though Stalin is in control up top doing whatever he wants, it is the common man that is being punished. An entire people are being condemned for the actions and decisions of one man. This train of thought once again conjures the concept of free will. It could be argued that no one in Soviet society, especially at a government job such as the fictitious Commission on Spectacles and Light Entertainment, or even MASSOLIT have any autonomy or free will. And, if one exercised their autonomy or free will and Stalin decided he did not like it, the end result is exile or death. The punishment for the employees of Commission on Spectacles and Light Entertainment could also be in part for their cowardice. It was Bulgakov’s belief that cowardice is the pitfall of man, and in his eyes, there is nothing more cowardly than giving in to the establishment and working for the man. These people are not only imprisoned to Woland, but they are also in a more practical sense imprisoned to their jobs and status within Soviet society. This sense of imprisonment is also ironic due to the fact that “Glorious Sea, Sacred Baikal” is a song that became popular from a prison camp. In addition, it must also be noted that the fate of the employees of Commission on

Spectacles and Light Entertainment results in a stay at Professor Stravinsky’s  
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hospital. Now, not only are their minds in a state of imprisonment, but also their physical bodies, which results in a complete level of hopelessness. There are no winners at this time in Soviet society. After taking the time to discuss what I deem to be integral music references in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, I am now going to switch gears a bit and explore three songs that were inspired by Bulgakov's masterpiece. In this section I will be investigating Patti Smith's "Banga", Franz Ferdinand's "Love and Destroy", and the Rolling Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil". What I have found through my research is that these songs not only reference *The Master and Margarita*, but they also provide a unique lens in which the novel can be analyzed. In 2012, legendary American rock singer Patti Smith released her album titled *Banga*. From her early days on, Smith has admitted to being inspired by Russian novels and novelists. The title song of the album, "Banga" is thoroughly inspired by Bulgakov's creature-inclusive plot lines in *Heart of a Dog*, *The Fatal Eggs*, and *The Master and Margarita*. Smith's insightful lyrics allow one to initiate a guided dive into the loyalty showcased throughout *The Master and Margarita*. The lyric "you can leave him twice, but he won't leave you" (Patti Smith) is a clear reference to Pontius Pilate's faithful mutt *Banga*. But, I would argue that Smith's lyric could also apply to *Margarita*, especially because even though the master had left her, she did everything in her power—even selling her soul, to get him back. Hearing this lyric, I am reminded of what Woland says of Pilate and his pup: "When the moon is full, he is tormented, as you see, with insomnia. And it torments not only him, but also his faithful guardian, the dog. If it is true that cowardice is the greatest sin, the dog is not guilty of it. The only thing the brave dog feared was storm. But, then, those who love must share the fate of those

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they love.” (Bulgakov 385-386) This quote demonstrates a parallel between Banga and Margarita as they are both condemned to follow those they love into the depths of hell. Both Banga and Margarita did not abandon those they love, which is ultimately a great act of courage. Margarita literally went to hell and back to save the master, and Banga essentially did the same. With both Margarita and Banga there is a sense of courage within their blind loyalty. But, on the other hand their loved ones, Pilate and the master each exhibit great cowardice. The master exhibits cowardice by burning his manuscripts, giving himself up to the system, and secretly checking himself into a mental hospital so as to not rock the boat. Pilate exhibited cowardice by sentencing an innocent man to death because his government job forced him to do so. Yet, the irony is both the courageous and the cowardly all find themselves ultimately in hell. So, I wonder if both Bulgakov and Smith are warning one to be careful of whom they love, and to what degree they love—or possibly implying something like “do not love a coward who gives into the system because they will just drag you down to hell too”. In 2004, Scottish rock band Franz Ferdinand released their song “Love and Destroy” on the B-side of their album Michael. “Love and Destroy” has an upbeat rock tempo with an incredibly catchy chorus. The lyrics of the song focus on aspects of Margarita’s experience on Walpurgis night. In the article “Reading the music: What Mick Jagger and Mikhail Bulgakov have in common” Alex Kapranos, the front-man of Franz Ferdinand explains what The Master and Margarita means to him: “Unlike many novels that explore the conflict between Jesus and Pontius Pilate and quickly become theological essays, Bulgakov introduces the Jesus-Pilate conflict and supporting events within a story set in the modern day Russia, complete with witches, sorcery, <https://assignbuster.com/musical-influences-and-inspirations-from-the-master-music-and-meaning-in-bulgakovs-masterpiece-and-beyond/>

a Satan's ball and accurate portraits of somewhat complex, contradictory and sometimes despicable Russian characters bred under absurd communist notions of utopian society" (RBTH). Though Kapranos's take on the novel as a whole is interesting, the lyrics to "Love and Destroy" seem to focus more on Margarita and a notion of freedom from the oppressive, standardized Soviet society. The lyrics that stood out most for me from the song are in verse one and verse three. Verse one goes like: "I'm so free I could lacerate/ Rip the robes right off of my chest/ I fly high above the Muscovites' sky/ I'm going to rip, rip, I'll never rest" (Franz Ferdinand). What caught my attention with these lyrics was the violent word choice, the "lacerate" and the repetition of "rip". This choice of words forces me to think of the pressures and constraints placed upon citizens of communist Russia. Herein, Margarita is violently attempting to rip herself away from said constraints, and it appears the only way to do that is by separating herself from Moscow by flying in the sky. The third verse goes like: "I'm so free as I meet you/ Welcoming back, the Queen of the ball/ It's dark beneath the Muscovites' sky/ But you give, you give me it all" (Franz Ferdinand). This verse allows me to believe that in Bulgakov's satirized version of society, the only way to truly be free from the oppressive government is to literally become a witch and fly around naked. I realize that this is an exaggeration, but it provides an insight into how bad things really were, how constrictive and domineering Communist Russia really was. Analyzing *The Master and Margarita* through the lens of "Love and Destroy" makes me question if in Bulgakov's mind Woland is the real savior and not Yeshua. In the context of the novel, Woland grants freedom to many. He frees Natasha by forever transforming her into a witch, he ultimately provides salvation for Pilot near the end of the novel, <https://assignbuster.com/musical-influences-and-inspirations-from-the-master-music-and-meaning-in-bulgakovs-masterpiece-and-beyond/>

and Woland also frees both the master and Margarita by giving them all they ever wanted. Yeshua, in the context of the novel, literally does not do anything. He dies and then disappears (more or less) from the storyline.

Multiple roles appear to be inverted within the novel. For example, Margarita is not the stereotypical damsel in distress waiting for her prince charming, but rather she is the one who saves the master. By inverting these roles, Bulgakov fosters a sense of discomfort and distrust which ultimately can be reflected onto the society of the time. On December 6, 1968, uber-famous rock band The Rolling Stones released one of their greatest songs of all-time “ Sympathy for the Devil”. “ Sympathy for the Devil” was written by front-man Mick Jagger after his then girlfriend Marianne Faithfull provided him with a copy of Bulgakov’s *The Master and Margarita*. There are many clear parallels to the novel in lyrics, especially in verse one and verse two. Verse one says: “ Please allow me to introduce myself/ I’m a man of wealth and taste/ I’ve been around for a long, long year/ Stole many a man’s soul and faith/ And I was ‘ round when Jesus Christ/ Had his moment of doubt and pain/ Made damn sure that Pilate/ Washed his hands and sealed his fate” (The Rolling Stones). The first two lines are a direct equivalent to Woland’s initial meeting with Berlioz and Ivan. In addition, the devil in “ Sympathy for the Devil” shares the same feeling about Pontius Pilate’s fate. The lines in verse two are less closely paired with the novel: “ I stuck around St. Petersburg/ When I saw it was a time for a change/ Killed the Czar and his ministers/ Anastasia screamed in vain/ I rode a tank, held a general’s rank/ When the Blitzkrieg raged and the bodies stank” (The Rolling Stones).

Though the lyrics here are not directly tied to any of the characters or plot like the lines in verse one, they are still “ famous events from Russian history <https://assignbuster.com/musical-influences-and-inspirations-from-the-master-music-and-meaning-in-bulgakovs-masterpiece-and-beyond/>

which are explicitly or indirectly commented on by Bulgakov in the novel” (Vanhellemont). What is arguably most interesting about “ Sympathy for the Devil” is that it is written in first person narrative from the devil’s perspective. Yet, even though it is written from the devil’s perspective, the devil is not actively committing atrocities. But rather, the devil is just there on standby—to watch as fate takes its course. It seems that “ Sympathy for the Devil” is implying that mankind incites its own downfall, not God or the devil. The atmosphere and “ construction of the song fit also perfectly with the book. The band worked with rather unusual instruments... after a long process of (re)working it became a samba, which Jagger called ‘ hypnotic’ and Richards called ‘ insane’” (Vanhellemont). Almost in a trance itself, humanity is in a strong cycle of committing atrocities against one another. It happened in Bulgakov’s time, before Bulgakov’s time, and will continue to happen after Bulgakov’s time. In the novel, there are some events that are clearly perpetuated by Woland—such as Varenuvka becoming a vampire, or Nikolai turning into a pig. But, at the novel’s close all previous issues perpetuated by Woland (that want to be resolved) are resolved. Woland does not condemn Berlioz or Sokov to death, but rather he just predicts it and watches as the inevitable occurs.

Ultimately, the numerous musical references that Bulgakov makes throughout *The Master and Margarita* allow readers to establish a better picture of Bulgakov’s intent for the novel. The music acts as a perfect soundtrack to accompany the action of the plot. In addition, the musical references specifically speak to the standardization of Soviet Russia and other terrible societal structures of the time. It is my hope that as time



progresses, artists and musicians will continue to be inspired by Bulgakov's masterpiece and continue to produce illuminating songs, such as Patti Smith's "Banga", Franz Ferdinand's "Love and Destroy", and The Rolling Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil"—which all contribute additional rich material in which one can analyze of the text.

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