

CHAPTER ONE A BRIEF CHILDHOOD

The wild applause at the Marinsky Theatre of St Petersburg called the resident baritone repeatedly back onto stage to take yet another bow. Pavlov came out in front of the closed curtain again and again until finally the safety curtain was lowered. He was without doubt the darling of the public. The animated audience left the auditorium and pushed its way down the narrow corridors and through the doors until they reached the exit, where they were embraced by the warm evening air.

Pavlov went backstage to his dressing room to remove his stage make-up. As he left by the stage door, his admirers swarmed around him asking for autographs, which he delivered with his usual charm. He climbed into a waiting carriage, which took him to his regular haunt. There he met his colleagues to discuss the day's event well into the night. Finally, the balmy summer air enticed him to return home on foot.

After six years at the theatre as a contract baritone, the Artistic Director had approached him and offered him a further six-year contract. After twelve years of working solely for that opera house, he decided to broaden his field and concentrate on touring and undertook many guest appearances at home and abroad. It was on one of these tours that he met his future companion, Barbara, who was to enrich his life so greatly. Barbara was older than Pavlov, born in 1855 in Warsaw. Pavlov Spoliansky was born in 1861 in Radomiszel in Russia. Barbara came from an artistic background and their meeting was a joyful and productive