

# Lobachevsky

Tom Lehrer

For many years now, Mr. Danny Kaye, who has been my particular idol since childhood, has been doing a routine about the great Russian director Stanislavsky and the secret of success in the profession. and I thought it would be interesting to steal... to adapt this idea to the field of mathematics. I always like to make explicit the fact that before I went off not too long ago to fight the trenches, I was a mathematician by profession. I don't like people to get the idea that I have to do this for a living. I mean, it isn't as though I had to do this, you know, I could be making \$3,000 a year just teaching.

Be that as it may, some of you may have had occasion to run into mathematicians and to wonder therefore how they got that way, and here, in partial explanation perhaps, is the story of the great Russian mathematician Nikolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky.

Who made me the genius I am today,  
The mathematician that others all quote,  
Who's the professor that made me that way?  
The greatest that ever got chalk on his coat.

One man deserves the credit,  
One man deserves the blame,  
And Nikolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky is his name.  
Hi!  
Nikolai Ivanovich Lobach-

I am never forget the day I first meet the great Lobachevsky.  
In one word he told me secret of success in mathematics:  
Plagiarize!

Plagiarize,  
Let no one else's work evade your eyes,  
Remember why the good lord made your eyes,  
So don't shade your eyes,  
But plagiarize, plagiarize, plagiarize -  
Only be sure always to call it please 'research'.

And ever since I meet this man  
My life is not the same,  
And Nikolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky is his name.  
Hi!  
Nikolai Ivanovich Lobach-

I am never forget the day I am given first original paper  
To write. it was on analytic and algebraic topology of  
Locally euclidean parameterization of infinitely differentiable  
Riemannian manifold.  
Bozhe moi!  
This I know from nothing.  
But I think of great Lobachevsky and get idea - ahah!

I have a friend in Minsk,  
Who has a friend in Pinsk,  
Whose friend in Omsk  
Has friend in Tomsk  
With friend in Akmolinsk.

His friend in alexandrovsk  
Has friend in petropavlovsk,  
Whose friend somehow  
Is solving now  
The problem in dnepropetrovsk.

And when his work is done -  
Ha ha! - begins the fun.  
From dnepropetrovsk  
To petropavlovsk,  
By way of iliysk,  
And novorossiysk,  
To alexandrovsk to akmolinsk  
To tomsk to omsk  
To pinsk to minsk  
To me the news will run,  
Yes, to me the news will run!

And then I write  
By morning, night,  
And afternoon,  
And pretty soon  
My name in dnepropetrovsk is cursed,  
When he finds out I publish first!

And who made me a big success  
And brought me wealth and fame?  
Nicolai ivanovich lobachevsky is his name.  
Hi!  
Nicolai ivanovich lobach -

I am never forget the day my first book is published.  
Every chapter I stole from somewhere else.  
Index I copy from old vladivostok telephone directory.  
This book was sensational!  
Pravda - well, pravda - pravda said: (russian double-talk)  
It stinks.  
But izvestia! izvestia said: (russian double-talk)  
It stinks.  
Metro-goldwyn-moskva buys movie rights for six million rubles,  
Changing title to 'the eternal triangle',  
With briggitte bardot playing part of hypotenuse.

And who deserves the credit?  
And who deserves the blame?  
Nicolai ivanovich lobachevsky is his name.  
Hi!