

## SOVIET COMPOSERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET MUSIC.

By *Stanley D. Krebs*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1970. 364 pp. \$11.50.

Professor Krebs accomplishes most of what he set out to do in his first-rate study of Soviet music. If it has shortcomings, they must be understood in relation to the pioneer nature of his work. When he began research around 1958, most information about Soviet music in the West came either from tourists and journalists or from political apologists of both the left and the right. Krebs—a Russian-area specialist, linguist, composer, and professional musician—was the first Western scholar of broad interdisciplinary competence to devote himself fully to a critical study of Soviet music. Working virtually alone at the beginning, he had to rely principally on his innate healthy skepticism and keen perception in cutting through the myth and misconception endemic to so much writing on the subject. Trips to the USSR facilitated access to documentary materials unavailable elsewhere and provided occasion for interviews with Soviet musicians and music historians. As a *stazhër* at the Moscow Conservatory (during a lengthy sojourn in 1959–60) he participated in Soviet musical life from the inside, something no other American musician-scholar had ever been permitted to do. The present book grew out of such experiences and pioneer efforts as these.

Krebs completed the manuscript of the book in 1963, and it was accepted as a Ph.D. thesis at the University of Washington. Its published form, under consideration here, is essentially the thesis, somewhat more polished and expanded in certain parts (compare the two chapters on Sergei Prokofiev). I am happy to be able to quote in good conscience from the dust jacket, "This is a scholarly and highly readable distillation of factual information and well-reasoned conclusions."

Part 1 reviews Soviet cultural ideology in music, identifying its sources and tracing its development through the changing tensions generated whenever politics impinged on creative autonomy. Krebs is especially fine here. His insight into cause and consequence clearly defines the methodology devised by the party to control creativity in music.

A critical examination of the lives and works of some two dozen major Soviet composers occupies the bulk of the book. No other study in English compares with it for completeness. Krebs's discussion and analysis of the music reveals a thorough musicianship. He possesses a truly extraordinary ability to convey the essentials of a composer's style in one or two succinct analytical comments coupled with short, carefully chosen musical examples. The open-minded reader will find it difficult to resist Krebs's persuasive argument in assessing individual achievements, as well as his judgment of the overall accomplishments of Soviet music.

The principal disappointment I feel in the book derives from the delay between its completion and publication. The importance of Krebs's contribution would have been far more evident had the book appeared five years ago. Ideas that may seem almost old hat now were really struggles for him the comparatively short time ago he started his research.

Despite his skill and care in contending with the vast quantity of factual material, the finished text is marred by some errors and inconsistencies. A detailed list has no place in a short review. But to indulge my own special interest, I shall correct the few minor mistakes in the chapter on Sergei Prokofiev. *The Love for Three Oranges* was commissioned by the Chicago Opera Association (not the Chicago Lyric Opera, which is a different company, p. 145). Prokofiev's wife's father was Juan Codina, thus the Russianized form of her name should contain the

patronymic "Ivanovna" (not "Nikolaevna," p. 146). Mrs. Prokofiev was born in Madrid (not in Russia, p. 146, n. 1). Prokofiev and his wife separated in August 1941, at the time of the evacuation from Moscow of senior musicians, actors, and others active in the arts (not in 1939, pp. 156–57). Though Myra Mendelson accompanied Prokofiev during the period of the evacuation, she was not his wife (p. 157).

Any musician or Slavic specialist interested in Soviet music will find Krebs's work an indispensable reference. Though other books on the subject will surely appear, this one has secured a place on the shelf for years to come by virtue of its excellence and its precedence.

MALCOLM H. BROWN  
Indiana University

STRAVINSKY. By Robert Siohan. Translated by Eric Walter White. New York: Grossman Publishers, 1970. 180 pp. \$7.95, cloth. \$3.95, paper.

With his translation of Robert Siohan's French work of 1959, Eric Walter White has added another title in English to the voluminous bibliography on the late Igor Stravinsky, perhaps the most important figure in music during the first half of the twentieth century. The treatment of Stravinsky, however, is addressed neither to the scholar nor to the musician. It therefore lacks documentation and contains no technical analyses of the major scores. Siohan's center of gravity is the "Stravinsky world," from which he approaches the composer's career within a milieu of music, art, and dance.

The author, in his attempt to find a key to "the enigma of Stravinsky," offers his own interpretation of the stylistic streams which flow through Stravinsky's middle works. Trends between *Oedipus Rex* (1927) and the beginning of Stravinsky's preoccupation with serial techniques (about 1952) Siohan reduces to three principal avenues of development, which he designates as baroque, hieratic, and classical tendencies. The significance of Stravinsky and other twentieth-century figures in the arts Siohan views as "their ability to solve a given problem . . . linked with the intense appetite for discovery."

When the original French edition was published in 1959, Stravinsky was still composing. Although the author's discussion of Stravinsky's works ends with *Threni* (1958), a chronology in the appendixes carries forward Stravinsky's activity through 1969 and coordinates the composer's biography and compositions with musical landmarks by his contemporaries. Numerous errors of fact in the chronology of the French edition have been corrected in the translation, but this portion of the book, still not completely accurate or unequivocal, must be used with some care. Questionable priorities are established for entries—for example, why record the year of Grieg's death and not that of Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky's own teacher? In citing the year for individual works by Stravinsky the chronology is not entirely uniform in indicating whether the year marks the beginning or completion of the work. In the translated edition the bibliography has been modified and expanded, but the annotated discography in the original French publication has been omitted entirely. An index of names and works would have been most useful.

The first fifty or sixty pages treat Stravinsky's early career as a composer for Diaghilev's Russian ballet. Unfortunately these opening sections, of particular interest to readers of the *Slavic Review*, are loosely organized and marred by the