



ideas of *sensibilité*. Melancholy is certainly an apposite word to describe a certain mood prevalent in much of Boccherini's music, and Le Guin traces its etymology from Cheyne's *The English Malady* (1733) via 'Other Melancholies', and from Descartes to the Marquis de Sade. Could melancholic obsession, prevalent in Boccherini's music, be cured or worsened, Le Guin asks, by indulgence: 'As the Encyclopédie emphasized so urgently, the central difficulty, the problem around which melancholic obsession and desire both circle, is whether indulgence dissipates or intensifies the condition. Does the caress quiet or awaken pleasure? For all the quaintness of the above account of masturbation, the question is no idle one, for desire, like obsessive thought, can renew itself endlessly, and as such marks the place at which autonomous selfhood spins off into the abyss of solipsism' (194). Accusations of solipsism could more reasonably be levelled at the music of Paganini, another virtuoso who arguably took music to the abyss, through his search for a spiralling technical autonomy, or at John Cage, whose obsession could be seen as silencing the object of desire, in order to possess it. Boccherini survives the abyss by leading us to the precipice of virtuosity in order to show us, via a bipolarity of emotion, that melancholy is good for us.

As an experimental corpus to this chapter, the whole Allegro of Boccherini's string quartet Op. 9 No. 1 (G171) is carefully dissected. CD examples flow by, giving a glimpse of the rapid thought processes of a performer/explorer at work. Interwoven with literary and artistic references, packed with well researched information and illustrations not to be found elsewhere, Le Guin impresses by her writing style – in itself, a marvel. I wondered who could have been her model and was surprised, yet inspired, to discover that her formative influence on her prose was her mother, Ursula K. Le Guin, a doyenne of the science fiction world. Titles in *Boccherini's Body* such as 'Hypochondria as an Aspect of Musical Hermeneutics' have a rather childlike appeal – Harry Potteresque in their strong allure into a secret world, rich in terminology. A must-have for all Boccherini aficionados, the book is also linked to a website: <<http://epub.library.ucla.edu/leguin/boccherini/>>. Updated information and source material for scholars, researchers and blossoming Boccherini buffs can be found there.

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MARINA RITZAREV

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIAN MUSIC

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In 1801 the young singer Praskovia Kovaleva-Zhemchukova married her long-term lover, Count Nikolai Sheremetev. She was a popular star in theatrical productions on his estate, trained by the best teachers and musicians available to the Russian aristocracy in the last years of Catherine the Great's rule. Her high-profile career attests to her musical talent, and her portrait on the front cover of Marina Ritzarev's book reveals that she was also a beauty. But what makes her story unique is that Praskovia was actually the Count's serf. She was chosen by him to be his mistress from the age of thirteen, educated to the highest standards he could afford, and was one of the most valued performers in one of the wealthiest and most prestigious cultural institutions in Russia, the Sheremetev theatre. Their marriage was secret; but even so the Count had to enlist the collaboration of court archivists in the pretence that Praskovia's origins were Polish gentry. Her story is just one amid the numerous fascinating nuggets of biographical detail provided by Marina Ritzarev in this long-awaited study of eighteenth-century Russian music.

The phenomenal success of Sheremetev's theatre was certainly not unique in Russia at that time. Other wealthy aristocrats owned orchestras, choirs, theatre troupes and horn bands that performed on their private



estates in the late eighteenth century. But the vast majority of musicians and actors were serfs: literally owned, bought and sold by the purveyors of culture who constituted less than five per cent of the population of Russia until the emancipation of the serfs in 1861. Despite his enormous wealth and success, Count Sheremetev was one of the less liberal landowners, as can be seen from his treatment of the serf-composer Stepan Degatyrev. A talented composer trained on his estate, Degatyrev was paid a pitiful allowance for his services, under a contract that banned him from earning any money elsewhere, even by selling his compositions. The jealous Count even had Degatyrev spied upon, and his frequent disobedience was punished by further cuts to his living allowance. Despite pleading for emancipation in order to be freelance, it was never granted in his lifetime.

Yet a paradox of this blatantly exploitative social system was that thousands of serfs received an enviable education, with many becoming distinguished performers. Moreover, it was partly responsible for the belated blossoming of musical culture in a nation that had seen instrumental music banned and its practitioners exiled to Siberia as late as the mid-seventeenth century. Until Peter the Great imported German musical culture to the Petersburg Court in 1720 in the form of both singers and instrumentalists, a cappella sacred music was the only permitted form of public music-making in Russia. The trio of 'Orthodoxy, nationality, autocracy' coined in the nineteenth century under the repressive Nicholas I had extremely deep historical roots; and as later history tragically proved, neither the emancipation of the serfs nor the Russian Revolution itself succeeded in freeing Russian music entirely from its shackles.

Ritzarev's book is the only major English-language scholarly study of eighteenth-century Russian music that draws upon a wealth of both Russian and Western scholarship and archival resources. The only earlier book-length study in English was Alfred Swan's *Russian Music and its Sources in Chant and Folk Song* (London: John Baker, 1973), one that scarcely scratches the surface of what Ritzarev has uncovered. And this is hardly surprising: as Ritzarev herself explains, the very nature of eighteenth-century Russian music could be defined by those qualities that made it anathema to almost all sections of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian (or Soviet) musical culture. Composers and advocates of the Russian National School and Tchaikovsky alike found the elegant baroque and classical 'para-liturgical' style of their Russian predecessors unacceptably Western, while the Church rejected their sacred music on the related grounds that it was insufficiently respectful of Orthodox liturgy. For a long time the choral concerto had functioned as one of the main sources of Russian public concert culture, as exemplified by its ready absorption of baroque and classical instrumental and operatic idioms. Post-revolutionary Russia was an even more hostile environment for sacred music, whether Russian or Western; thus the legacy of Russia's major eighteenth-century composers, Maxim Berezovsky and Dmitri Bortniansky, remained almost entirely neglected until the years of Khrushchev's 'Thaw' (1956 onwards).

To bring together a dazzling wealth of original archival research with a steadfast determination to challenge cherished myths and assumptions is a truly awesome task. In addition, for the vast majority of non-Russian scholars, this is close to virgin territory. Even Russian musicology only began to focus seriously on this repertory during the 1960s and 1970s; and there will be very few Western scholars who have kept up to date with their work. It is hardly surprising, then, that this pioneering book demands extremely careful reading before the threads connecting one goldmine of new information to the next can be properly perceived. The book's densely factual nature is at times overwhelming; but after centuries of relative ignorance and neglect of its materials, this is something to celebrate rather than to bemoan.

As Ritzarev makes clear, the history of Russian music has been shaped by politics in a way that, though not unique, is starker than anywhere else in Europe. The severity of the hiatus in Russian cultural life caused by the long Time of Troubles cannot be underestimated. Its legacy was ultimately a court (and church) musical culture necessarily dominated by Western musicians until the mid-eighteenth century. Undoubtedly, the Westernized musical language of this period has meant that scholars wishing to find 'real' Russian predecessors for the nineteenth-century 'national style' have either been dismayed by the number of Italian and German court musicians (who have, for similar reasons, been equally overlooked by their own national histories) or, on investigating the works of their Russian contemporaries, have found little or nothing to link



their music with anything that is identifiably 'Russian'. Attempts by Ritzarev and others to link melodic traits of Berezovsky's and Bortniansky's choral style with Russian folksong are not always convincing, though connections between the Russian *protyazhnaya* song (lyrical folksong characterized by free rhythms and modal fluctuation) and Berezovsky's choir concertos are well argued (99–100).

Ritzarev counters this prejudice by drawing a vivid portrait of musical life at the height of Imperial Russia. Foreign musicians and composers were attracted to the patronage of the Russian court, just as Russian musicians sought experience abroad. In this highly fruitful period of cultural exchange J. S. Bach and Mozart made inquiries about the possibility of working in St Petersburg, while Russian aristocrats, diplomats (most famously Count Razumovsky in Vienna) and musicians mixed with the cream of European musical society, including Haydn and Mozart. It is one of the tragedies of Russian history that such openness was so harshly rejected in the Soviet period. But perhaps even more insidious has been the prejudice in both Western and Soviet scholarship against anything too 'Western' in Russian music, which meant that the very concept of 'Russianness' was founded less on real evidence than on an entirely artificial segregation of 'national' and 'foreign' styles. As Ritzarev points out, even such apparently quintessentially 'Russian' icons of architecture as the Kremlin were designed by Italian architects; it is time that has enshrined them in the Russian national consciousness, not their origins. The fact that she does not shy away from detailing the socio-political trends that have defined such assumptions and their musical consequences is one of the most rewarding aspects of this book.

If Ritzarev's volume can begin the process of integrating eighteenth-century Russian music into international scholarship, the results could be truly spectacular. As Ritzarev herself observes, the 1917 Revolution saw catastrophic archival dispersion across Europe, to the point where concerted European effort is required to carry out basic factual and manuscript research. Early Russian music studies currently remains an extremely obscure topic outside Russia itself; but scholars might well be tempted by the sheer wealth of potential original research. As things currently stand, Russian scholars are waiting for the rest of the musicological world to join them in discovering more about a musical legacy that is crying out for greater attention. If such attention actually materializes, Ritzarev must take a large part of the credit.

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MOZART

The Master Musicians

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In a celebratory two hundred and fiftieth anniversary year, it is timely that the venerable, but outdated, *Master Musicians* volume on Mozart by Eric Blom should be superseded by a new life and works, taking account of the varied scholarship that has appeared in the intervening half-century or more. Not that the field is empty: in addition to *The Cambridge Companion to Mozart*, edited by Simon P. Keefe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and *The Cambridge Mozart Encyclopedia*, edited by Cliff Eisen and Simon P. Keefe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) we should mark the appearance of the late Stanley Sadie's *Mozart: The Early Years, 1756–1781* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) and Julian Rushton's own *Mozart: An Extraordinary Life* (London: ABRSM Publishing, 2005). Each is excellent in its own way, scanning the field from different perspectives and for different audiences. Each book attempts a degree of synthesis of the vast field of Mozart research, not only marking out some of that ground, but also