

Some Thoughts on the History and Historiography of Russian Music

A preliminary version of this chapter was read as a paper in a symposium organized by Malcolm H. Brown on “Fifty Years of American Research in Slavic Music,” given at the fiftieth national meeting of the American Musicological Society, on 27 October 1984. The other participants in the symposium and their topics were Barbara Krader (Slavic Ethnic Musics), Miloš Velimirović (Slavic Church Music), Malcolm H. Brown (Russian Music—What Has Been Done), Laurel Fay (The Special Case of Soviet Music—Problems of Methodology), and Michael Beckerman (Czech Music Research). Margarita Mazo served as respondent.

My assigned topic for this symposium was “What Is to Be Done,” but being no Chernishevsky, still less a Lenin, I took it on with reluctance. I know only too well the fate of research prospectuses. All the ones I’ve seen, whatever the field, have within only a few years taken on an aspect that can be most charitably described as quaint, and the ones that have attempted to dictate or legislate the activity of future generations of scholars cannot be so charitably described. It is not as though we were trying to find a long-sought medical cure or a solution to the arms race. We are not crusaders, nor have we an overriding common goal that demands the subordination of our individual predilections to a team effort. We are simply curious to know and understand the music that interests us as well as we possibly can, and eager to stimulate the same interest in others. I, for one, am content to sit back and await the discoveries and interpretations of my colleagues, the direction of whose research I am in no position to predict. I love surprises.

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Nevertheless, it seems fair to predict that the main contribution of American scholars to the study of Russian music will be interpretive and critical rather than philological or factual. This for two reasons: one simple and obvious, the other very complex.

The simple factor is practical. We will never have the freedom of access needed to do fundamental source research on a grand scale. Those of us who are passionately drawn to problems of textual criticism or “creative process” will do better to concentrate on Ives or Beethoven than on Chaikovsky or Musorgsky—and I say this in full recognition of the accomplishments of scholars like John Wiley and Robert Oldani, Americans who have done excellent work on precisely these two Russians.¹ I have even done a little textual work on Musorgsky myself.² But I think it significant that the Musorgsky sources I investigated are located in Paris and the Chaikovsky sources Wiley took as his starting point are in Cambridge, Massachusetts. We Americans will never gain freedom of access to the mother lode, the archives of Moscow and Leningrad. We had best leave them to the Soviets, who, as we all know from our personal experience, are determined that if major discoveries are to be made there, then *they* will make them. And I think, in all fairness, we should let them, for it is in the area of empirical source research that Russian scholars are under the fewest constraints, and I think we can all agree that by and large their publications in this field—I am thinking, of course, of Findeyzen, Lamm, Dianin, Orlova, and Gozenpud, among many others³—have been impressive and (given the realities of Soviet life) reliable enough. Needless to say, we will never be able to document Balakirev’s anti-Semitism or Glinka’s monarchism from Soviet published sources, but it would be unrealistic to expect that any of us will be shown to the relevant documents in the archives, either.

This brings me to my complex factor, on which I will spend the rest of my time. There is no area of music historiography that is in greater need of fundamental revision than that of Russian music, and here the corrective can only come from the West. I am not just talking about sensational but trivial matters like the circumstances surrounding Chaikovsky’s death.⁴ Nor am I talking about such matters of recent controversy as Shostakovich’s purported memoirs, which, however tempting as a source of scurrilous information and opinion, are at present a source no one among us would touch, in any professional capacity, with the proverbial barge pole, thanks to the work of one of my colleagues on the aforementioned panel.⁵ What I am talking about is our general understanding and interpretation of the whole phenomenon of Russia’s emergence as a producer of art music, and our cultural evaluation of the music she has produced. Here we must confront not only the extremely mendacious and tendentious historiography that emanates from the USSR, which many Western scholars have relied upon far too uncritically, but also a great many unexamined assumptions that can cloud our

own consciousness and have prevented our view of Russian music and musical life from fully outgrowing its infancy.

In 1939 Stravinsky asked, at the beginning of his lecture on “The Avatars of Russian Music,” “Why do we always hear Russian music spoken of in terms of its Russianness rather than simply in terms of music?”⁶ The question remains relevant four-and-a-half decades later, though of course Stravinsky’s use of the word “simply” is questionable. It is precisely because it’s easy that we talk about Russian music in terms of its Russianness; and as we all know, nothing is harder than to talk about music “in terms of music.” I’m not at all sure we even want to do that, if the result is going to be the kind of blinkered, ahistorical and jargon-ridden discourse that often passes for “theory” or “analysis”—but that, of course, is another story.⁷

Still, the habit of speaking of Russian music above all in terms of its Russianness has ingrained many prejudices and lazy habits of thought. It is often taken for granted that everything that happened in Russian music has a direct relationship, positive or negative, to the national question, which question is often very reductively construed in terms of “sources in folk song and church chant,” as Alfred Swan put it.⁸ This in turn can and often does become a normative criterion: an overtly quotational national character is taken as a mark of value or authenticity, and its absence, conversely, as a mark of valuelessness.⁹ The result is our silly tendency to use the word “Russian” in comparative or superlative forms: this is a “very Russian” tune, and so-and-so is the “most Russian” composer. Not only musicians do this, of course. One nonmusician who did it delightfully was John Updike, who, returning from a State Department tour of the Soviet Union, exclaimed enthusiastically to an interviewer, “Russia is so Russian!”¹⁰ But what Updike said with tongue in cheek is maintained with deadly solemnity by so many musicians about, let us say, Glinka. It is on his use of folklore that his status as founding father of Russian music is usually said to depend. And when that status gets challenged in a simplistically revisionist spirit, as it does from time to time, it is usually by noting the frequency with which earlier Russian composers, all the way from Verstovsky back to Sokolovsky and Pashkevich, quoted folk songs in *their* operas. A dissertation by a well-known student of Russian music, entitled “The Influence of Folk-Song on Russian Opera Up to and Including the Time of Glinka,” is devoted to providing Glinka with an indigenous patrimony, turning the father, as it were, into a son.¹¹ But this view distorts the picture both of the earlier music and of Glinka. What makes Glinka a founding father has mainly to do not with his being the “formulator of the Russian musical language,” whatever that may mean, but rather with the fact that he was the first Russian composer to achieve world stature.¹² In short, with Glinka, Russian music did not depart from Europe but quite the opposite—it joined Europe. In the context of the usual historiographical platitudes, this statement may have a ring of paradox, but it is

exactly what Yury Keldish, for example, had in mind when he wrote that Glinka, not Verstovsky and not Pashkevich, formed “the boundary between the past and the future of Russian music.”¹³ With the advent of a Russian composer whom his compatriots could regard as being “on a level (yes! on a level!) with Mozart, with Beethoven, or with anyone one chooses,” Russian musicians were, so to speak, enfranchised.¹⁴ They no longer had to feel that theirs was an altogether insignificant, marginal, or callow culture, although at the same time no Russian “classical” musician has ever been wholly without an inferiority complex vis-à-vis the venerable musical traditions of Western Europe—and this was as true of Russian composers of worldwide prestige like Chaikovsky, or even Stravinsky, as it was of more strictly regional talents. It was a veritable neurosis that often found its outlet either in belligerence toward Europe or revulsion at Russia, and sometimes both at once.

Now this difference in perspective on Glinka—the Western view that regards him as the first authentically national Russian composer versus the native view that sees him as the first universal genius of music to have come from Russia—is a critical one. For if Glinka is valued only for his native traits—certainly not the traits he valued most highly in himself!—then a Chaikovsky will always seem an ambiguous and somewhat suspect figure, to say nothing of a Scriabin. Just look at the way these two are treated in any general music history textbook in the West. Chaikovsky, one of the most conspicuous of all composers of any country in the actual concert life of the last hundred years, is given a total of twenty-two scattered lines in the text by which most American music history students in college today are still educated, and he is introduced everywhere with an apology. In the chapter on nineteenth-century instrumental music, Chaikovsky is brought in, together with Dvořák, at the very end, thus: “They have a place in this chapter because, although their music is in some respects an outgrowth of nationalist ideas, their symphonies are essentially in the line of the German Romantic tradition.” And in the chapter on “Nationalism, Old and New,” Chaikovsky is sneaked in once more as a thoroughly peripheral figure: “Tchaikovsky’s two most popular operas . . . seem to have been modeled after Meyerbeer, Verdi, and Bizet, though national subjects and a few traces of national musical idioms occur in both of these and, much more conspicuously, in some of his less familiar works for the theater.”¹⁵

Poor Chaikovsky! He is implicitly denigrated for not being as “national” as his “kuchkist” rivals but all the same is ghettoized along with them in the inevitable chapter on nationalism. Confined as he is to the ghetto, Chaikovsky is rarely compared with such counterparts as Brahms or Bizet, except to note his ostensible derivations from them; he is compared only with fellow denizens of the ghetto, next to whom he is seen as “assimilated” and therefore inauthentic. The comparison is thus doubly invidious. And ironic, too, for during his lifetime Chaikovsky was accepted as a European master, honored with

degrees from British universities, and invited to open New York's Carnegie Hall. My object here is not to vindicate Chaikovsky against naive and irrelevant charges—though it is certainly interesting to note that in Nina Bachinskaya's survey of Russian folk song in the work of Russian composers, Chaikovsky comes in second (after the longer-lived Rimsky-Korsakov) in the sheer number of such appropriations.¹⁶ And the Russians, obviously, have never had any trouble accepting Chaikovsky as a national treasure. My object is only to show how conventional historiographical attitudes and categories have made this most eminent of Russian composers a curiously difficult morsel for Western music historians to swallow, obsessed as they (we) are with the idea of the "mainstream."¹⁷

This is a problem of long standing. Carl Dahlhaus, whose taste for illuminating paradox is well known, has observed, in the challenging discussion of nationalism and music in his "studies in the music of the later nineteenth century," that "the national substance of Russian . . . music was a condition of its international worth, not an invalidation."¹⁸ He was speaking from an idealist (today we might be inclined to call it an essentialist) point of view and went on to say that "it would surely be inappropriate to say 'coloring' instead of 'substance,' and 'commercial success' instead of 'worth.'" But these distinctions do not stand up in the face of actual reception history. On the contrary, we often find that it was precisely the surface color that attracted international audiences, sometimes to Russian chagrin. Diaghilev, for example, recognizing that the music of his beloved Chaikovsky was box-office poison in Paris despite what he perceived to be its profound national substance, suppressed his desire to present *The Nutcracker* and *The Sleeping Beauty* in his first ballet season (1909) in favor of ephemeral, highly colored "salades russes" (as Walter Nouvel sneeringly called them) drawn from scores by Glinka, Arensky, Taneyev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Musorgsky, Glazunov, and Cherepnin, plus a couple of little snippets from Chaikovsky's great Mariinsky ballets.¹⁹ The featured Chaikovsky work, the finale of the divertissement entitled *Le Festin*, was the last movement of Chaikovsky's Second Symphony, a set of variations à la Kamarinskaya on a "Little Russian" dance tune, perhaps Chaikovsky's most "kuchkist"-sounding score, and therefore unrepresentative. Like so many others after him, Diaghilev sneaked Chaikovsky in with apologies, fearful that his lack of national "coloring" would threaten the "commercial success" of the Paris venture.

But what shall we call the "national substance," then? Can it be defined in any but mystical, preternatural terms? Dahlhaus most likely meant the presence of traits that define a "national school." But need these be quotational or coloristic at all? And do they necessarily derive from lower-class traditions? Any connoisseur of nineteenth-century musical styles would certainly recognize the musical idiom of Stravinsky's early Symphony in E-flat (1905–07) as emphatically "Russian," despite its near-total lack of any resonance from

chant or folk song, for it is saturated with reminiscences of the styles of Rimsky-Korsakov, Glazunov, and Chaikovsky. The sophisticated personal styles of these men—for example, Chaikovsky's technique of orchestration, or Rimsky's very characteristic devices of chromatic harmony and modulation—as manifested both in their own works and in those of their disciples and epigones, are what largely determine our sense of a Russian "school" in the late nineteenth century. And our sense of this school style can in fact be pushed back retrospectively as far as Glinka.²⁰ To recognize as Russian only an oral or vernacular tradition and its conscious (usually superficial) assimilations in "high art" is narrow-minded, often absurd. We can see this easily enough in the case of the fatuous Moscow critic who complained of Alexander Serov's opera *Judith*, which is set in ancient Judea and peopled by Hebrews and Assyrians, that its music was not Russian enough.²¹ But before we scoff at him we should check to see what our own house is made of. Are we not still liable to mistake national subject matter for national style; to call, for example, that mock-kuchkist finale to Chaikovsky's Second his "most fully Russian" work?²² Or to think we have made a critical point about Scriabin merely by noting the lack of folkloric influence on his style?²³ By Scriabin's time, Russian music had been quite thoroughly "denationalized," though its "school" spirit had, if anything, increased.²⁴ And in any event, listing the things a given phenomenon is not will never tell us, after all, what it is.

Now just as it is assumed that Russian music is, or ought to be, *ipso facto* "colored Russian," it is further assumed that nationalism (or national character, or the striving for a native idiom, or call it what you will) was something unique, or at least especially endemic, to Russia—and if not to Russia, then to Eastern Europe, and if not to Eastern Europe, then to "peripheral centers" generally. It is one of the assumptions, in fact, that keeps these centers peripheral in our minds. But is it true? Was there any greater nationalist in nineteenth-century music than Wagner ("that German Slavophile," as Stasov called him)?²⁵ Not unless it was Verdi. Indeed, we could add the names of any number of leading "mainstream" composers to the list of nationalists: Weber, Schumann, Brahms, Bruckner, Berlioz, practically anyone you like, from Beethoven to Debussy. It was precisely because nationalism was universally held to be a positive value in nineteenth-century Europe—because nationalism, to put it ironically, was international—that Dahlhaus could maintain that the "national substance" of Russian (or Czech, or Spanish, or Norwegian) music was "a condition of its international worth." Nineteenth-century Russian nationalism, in fact, and not just the musical variety, was itself a foreign import. And the precise way in which Glinka's use of folklore differed from that of earlier Russian composers—namely, that it came from the mouths of main characters, not just decorative peasant choristers and coryphées, and that it provided a medium for tragic action, not just comedy—was precisely the way in which the typical Romantic opera

differed from the operas of the eighteenth century, and reflected above all a change in viewpoint on the nature of folklore—one that emanated not from Russia but from Western Europe (i.e., from Rousseau and Herder)—that folklore represented “the nation” and not just “the peasantry.” That the latter idea died hard even in Russia is reflected in the oft-quoted but little-understood comment overheard and repeated at the première of *A Life for the Tsar*—that it was “de la musique des cochers.”²⁶ And it is further reflected if we compare *A Life for the Tsar* with an opera that was written more than forty years later—*Yevgeniy Onegin*, where the folkloristic element is presented exactly as it might have been in a court opera of the eighteenth century. Especially telling is the third scene, where a group of berry-picking peasant choristers provide a decorative frame for Yevgeniy’s rejection of Tatyana, one of the turning points in the drama that concerns the “real people” of the opera.

But of course the music Yevgeniy and Tatyana sing is just as “Russian” as the music sung by the peasants. It is modeled on the domestic music of the early nineteenth-century landowning class, the *pomeshchiki*, as Stravinsky understood so well when he fashioned his own *Mavra* on the same Russian model—and experienced the very fiasco with the Parisian public that Diaghilev had expertly avoided a dozen years earlier.²⁷ What the Parisian public never understood—what the Western public will never understand unless *we* tell them—is that Russia is large. It contains multitudes: multitudes of social classes and occupations, and multitudes of indigenous musical styles. It is no wonder that Russians like Glinka, Dargomizhsky, and Chaikovsky, plus Stravinsky and Diaghilev, all of whom came from the *pomeshchik* class and loved its petty-aristocratic values, should also have loved and honored its musical artifacts and considered them representative of the best there was in Russia.

To appreciate the Russianness of a Chaikovsky or a Stravinsky, then, means being able to make finer discriminations among authentically Russian musical idioms. One of Dahlhaus’s most interesting speculations involves a different kind of discrimination. “Serious consideration should be given,” he writes, “to the possibility that the different manifestations of musical nationalism were affected by the types of political nationalism and the different stages in political evolution reached in each country: by the difference between those states where the transition from monarchy to democracy was successful (Great Britain, France) and unsuccessful (Russia), or between states formed by the unification of separate provinces (Germany, Italy) and those formed by the secession of new nation-states from an old empire (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Finland).” He goes on to admit that “it is uncertain whether there are any correlations, and, if so, whether they are at all significant; as yet hardly any attention has been paid to the possibility of their existence, since musical nationalism has been approached

almost exclusively from the point of view of writing national histories of music.”²⁸ His particular breakdown of nationalisms may be questioned, along with the casually “Hegelian” assumption that all polities advance along a uniform trajectory, but the thought remains a stimulating one. And here, in the domain of “comparative nationalism,” is where Western scholars may have something unique to add to the historiography of Russian music, since in Russia the historiography of Russian music is irrevocably insular and itself nationalistic, devoted exclusively to the writing of “national history,” hyperbolically emphasizing only “what is nationally unique or distinctive,” as Dahlhaus puts it. Russian musicologists specialize either in *russskaya muzika* or in *zarubezhnaya muzika*—“foreign music.” I know of no Russian scholar of music history with a dual specialty, still less one who specializes in setting Russian music within a world context—as Gerald Abraham has done so comprehensively and gracefully²⁹—in any, that is, but a patently chauvinistic way. I don’t think a study like Abraham’s could be published in Russia.

But that is not the only way in which Russian musicography distorts Russian musical history. When one thinks of the musical nationalism of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Norway, and so on, one is thinking of progressive politics, of national liberation, of national heroes standing up to imperialism and tyranny. For better or worse, such is the popular view of Chopin, Smetana, Sibelius, Grieg. These men had no Russian counterpart, for the political situation in Russia was just the opposite. Russia was a powerful and independent nation, and after the Napoleonic Wars an increasingly xenophobic and—especially after the Balkan Wars—imperialistic one. Chopin’s homeland, and Sibelius’s, were, after all, vassal states to Russia, and the rebellion memorialized in Chopin’s “nationalistic” *Revolutionary Étude* was an uprising against Russia.

So the nature of Russian nationalism differed from Polish or Czech or Finnish nationalism, and that nature was often a far from pretty one. In Russia, nationalism was largely co-opted, just as it is today in the Soviet Union, by the state. I am thinking particularly of the doctrine of Official Nationality promulgated in the reign of the first Nikolai by his minister of education, Count Sergey Uvarov. The articles of faith this state ideology proclaimed sacrosanct comprised a sort of trinity: Orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality (*pravoslaviye, samoderzhaviye, narodnost’*). Just compare that with *Liberté, égalité, fraternité!* Its main proponents included the historian Mikhail Pogodin, the poets Vasilii Zhukovsky and Nestor Kukolnik, as well as Nikolai Gogol (who needs no introduction) and . . . Mikhail Glinka, whose opera *A Life for the Tsar* was a complete and perfect embodiment of it. The opera’s moral lessons were precisely those embodied in the poetry of the composer’s cousin Fyodor Glinka, a hack who was capable of such effusions as the following, which he put in the mouth of a young widow who has to explain to her children the death of their soldier father:

He went hither, to the bright abode of the Heavenly Tsar
Because here he had been faithful to the earthly Tsar.³⁰

To put it in terms of the textbook of Russian history used in schools throughout Russia in the reign of Nikolai I, the character of the Russian people consists of “profound and quiet piety, boundless devotion to the throne, obedience to the authorities, remarkable patience, a lucid and solid intelligence, a kind and hospitable soul, a gay temper, courage amidst the greatest dangers, finally, national pride which had produced the conviction that there was no country in the world better than Russia, no ruler mightier than the Orthodox Tsar.”³¹ As much could be said of Ivan Susanin (and indeed *is* said of him in the choral apotheosis at the end of Glinka’s opera). No wonder *A Life for the Tsar* became a national institution, the obligatory opener to every season at the imperial theaters of Moscow and St. Petersburg, which were the legal property of the tsar, supported and administered by the Ministry of the Imperial Household. Nor is it any wonder that the original libretto, by Baron G. V. Rozen, the secretary to the heir apparent (the future Alexander II) had to be changed for Soviet consumption.³² For it is a concoction that was not just abhorrent to Soviet Communists. It was abhorrent to nineteenth-century bourgeois liberals, too, like Vladimir Stasov.³³ I dare say it would be abhorrent to you and me. This, then, was the beginning of the Russian national school in music. It was born in the context of a state ideology in which *narodnost’*—nationality—was understood in patriotic and dynastic terms linked with the defense of serfdom. It was in connection with Official Nationality that Nikolai ordered that Russian replace French as the official language at court functions, and a great program of Russification—the spreading of Russian language and customs in the non-Russian areas of the empire—got under way. The mystical identification of the Russian language with the “spirit and character of the people,” an idea borrowed from the English and German Romantics, for whom it served quite different ends, became a dominant theme among the Official Nationalists. “Language is the invisible image of the entire people, its physiognomy,” wrote Stepan Shevryov, Glinka’s contemporary and Russia’s leading literary scholar of the period.³⁴ Much the same could be said of musical vernaculars. Glinka’s epoch-making accomplishment, the raising of Russian popular music “to the level of tragedy,” as Prince Vladimir Odoyevsky put it at the time of the première, was carried out in the name of political reaction.³⁵

Official Nationality should not be confused, however, with Slavophilism. Both Slavophiles and Westernizers were opponents of the state ideology, and the tendency to view the various political camps of Russian music in terms of this classic dualism of Russian intellectual history, tempting though it may be in its simplicity, is one of the most reductive and distorting errors commonly committed by modern scholars who write about Russian music

in the nineteenth century.³⁶ For one thing, the terms are most properly applied to Glinka's period, not to that of Chaikovsky and the Five. More important, however, the terms are quite beside the point when comparing composers or critics of art music, for merely engaging in such activities made one a "Westernizer," however great one's commitment to cultivating a "*style russe*." The question of Slavophile versus Westernizer is in essence a question of attitudes toward institutions, and once one is writing, say, for the symphony orchestra, one's basic acceptance of and commitment to the musical Europeanization of Russia has been made. To find real musical Slavophiles in nineteenth-century Russia one would have to look to the ranks of musical folklorists and ethnographers, who had only a very limited impact on the forms and practices of Russian art music before the twentieth century. (I am thinking here not of such composer collectors as Balakirev or Villebois but of scholar collectors such as Melgunov, Palchikov, and Linyova.)³⁷ Even here, of course, we find ironies, as we do everywhere. A figure much honored in the Soviet Union was the balalaika virtuoso Vasily Andreyev (1861–1918), after whom various folk instrumental ensembles were named. Andreyev did much for the spread of the balalaika in his time, and he also did much to raise the level of playing on it to a "professional" level. But was this not already an ambiguous aim? And all the more ambiguous do Andreyev's activities look when we note the way he standardized the construction of the modern balaika, creating a so-called concert instrument in six sizes, out of which he formed an orchestra for which he composed waltzes and even arranged the *Peer Gynt* suite, along with selections from *Carmen*.³⁸ The spurious folklorism pioneered by Andreyev was pursued with a vengeance in the U.S.S.R., with its "orchestras of folk instruments," for which Soviet composers (notably Sergey Vasilenko and Nikolai Peyko) wrote symphonies and concertos.

Nonetheless there was one issue that did occasion a genuine Slavophile/Westernizer split among Russian musicians in the nineteenth century because it was preeminently an issue of institutions. That was the founding by Anton Rubinstein of Russia's first conservatory of music in 1862. Yet even here the split was not so much over the question of nationalism as over that of the professionalization of Russian musical life under the aegis of a baptized Jew who was using the conservatory as a way of advancing his own social standing and that of his fellow professionals through an officially recognized course of training at the end of which one received a bureaucratic title ("Free Artist," the same degree granted by the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts), equivalent to a midrange civil-service rank. This entitled the bearer to various privileges both pecuniary and social, the latter including the right to live in big cities, the right to a respectful second-person-plural form of address from social superiors, and the like.³⁹

The conservatory movement had originated in the French Revolution and been carried thence to Germany. The St. Petersburg Conservatory was by no

means the last to be founded in Europe. It was only twenty years younger than the Leipzig Conservatory, and it was ten years older than the conservatory in Weimar, Liszt's city. Opposition to conservatories, by no means confined to Russia, came largely from those who objected to their leveling institutional character. In Russia the most hysterical opponent of this spreading plague was Stasov, whom I described a little earlier as a bourgeois liberal. He, too, was large and contained multitudes. He published an article in the St. Petersburg newspaper *Severnaya pchela* (Northern bee)—one of Russia's most reactionary sheets, and a stronghold of Official Nationality—in which he sounded off like a particularly shrill and bilious Slavophile: "The time has come to stop transplanting foreign institutions to our country and to give some thought to what would really be beneficial and suitable to *our* soil and *our* national character. The experience of Europe shows that while the lower schools which confine themselves to teaching the rudiments of music are useful, the higher schools, academies and conservatories are harmful. Is this experience to be lost on us? Must we stubbornly ape what is done in other places only in order that later we may have the pleasure of boasting about the vast number of teachers and classes we have, the meaningless distribution of awards and prizes, mounting piles of worthless compositions and crowds of mediocre musicians?"⁴⁰ This was a fairly obscurantist position, needless to say. It came, however, from the side that in conventional historiography is labeled "progressive" and from the writer whose views were turned to dogma in the Soviet Union, the very one who, through disciples like Michel Calvocoressi and Rosa Newmarch, set the tone for Western historians of Russian music as well.

You see, then, what I mean when I say that revision is overdue. For a start, we need to insist on the fundamental point that the line dividing the camps in nineteenth-century Russian music had virtually nothing to do with nationalism. What divided Stasov from Rubinstein, and Musorgsky from Chaikovsky, had to do, rather, with professional education and professional routine. Rejection of the West *per se* was part of no one's program. This is made especially clear by César Cui, in a memoir he wrote in 1909 on the very early days of the "mighty kuchka":

We formed a close-knit circle of young composers. And since there was nowhere to study (the Conservatory didn't exist) our *self-education* began. It consisted of playing through everything that had been written by all the greatest composers, and all works were subjected to criticism and analysis in all their technical and creative aspects. We were young and our judgments were harsh. We were very disrespectful in our attitude toward Mozart and Mendelssohn; to the latter we opposed Schumann, who was then ignored by everyone. We were very enthusiastic about Liszt and Berlioz. We worshipped Chopin and Glinka. We carried on heated debates (in the course of which we would down as many as four or five glasses of tea with jam), we discussed musical form, program music, vocal music and especially operatic form.⁴¹

What is being described here is not a group of musical nationalists or patriots but a “*Davidsbund*,” to use Schumann’s word—a cabal of idealistic progressives opposing authority, on the one hand, and philistinism, on the other. Except for Glinka, all the objects of their veneration were located to the west of Russia—and why not? Glinka was at this point the only Russian to venerate, precisely because he alone was on a level with the Europeans. Nor was Cui describing an early attitude that grew into the kuchka’s reputed chauvinistic nationalism as the group matured. When Rosa Newmarch first met Balakirev in 1901 (Stasov introduced them), he sat down at the piano to play her a kind of *profession de foi* in tones. What did he choose to play? Beethoven’s *Appassionata*, Chopin’s B-minor Sonata, and Schumann’s G-minor.⁴² To those who know Balakirev’s music well it is clear that the role of these models in the formation of Balakirev’s musical technique and style was at least as fundamental as anything national or native. Among the kuchkists only Musorgsky occasionally sounds a bit xenophobic in his letters, with their raillery against “Germanizing,” “Teutonic cud-chewing,” “German transitions,” and the like.⁴³ He does come on at times like a national liberator out to free his country from an imperialistic yoke. But it was really academic *Formenlehre* at which he railed, and this was associated in his mind with German music mainly because of the Germanic staff at Rubinstein’s conservatory.

It was the conservatory, from which they felt alienated and excluded, that the kuchkists hated, not “the West.” The feeling on the part of these autodidacts and mavericks—that the professional establishment (which also included the Italian Opera that had been set up in St. Petersburg in 1843) was inimical to their interests and therefore to be opposed—is something they had in common, after all, with the original *Davidsbündler* and with their somewhat later American counterparts. And the frustrations they felt in confronting what they perceived as antinational prejudice on the part of the professional establishment and its wealthy or aristocratic backers were similar to those experienced by many American composers and conductors in the early twentieth century. Like them, the Russians of the late nineteenth century tended to fight a discriminatory status quo by appealing to patriotism—and to baser sentiments as well. For while both sides of the conservatory controversy could claim to be motivated by patriotism and national pride, only one side was racist—and this, too, is unfortunately a large part of what motivated musical nationalism in Russia, and not only in Russia, and continues to motivate it to the present day. Surely the Black Hundreds boasted no greater anti-Semite than Balakirev, the one member of the Mighty Five who might with a certain justice be termed a Slavophile, at least in the later, less active phases of his career.⁴⁴ Balakirev, in fact, actually founded a folk-school of sorts, such as Stasov had described in opposition to the conservatory—the so-called Free Music School, where only “rudiments” were taught, the whole faculty was ethnically Russian, and no Jew could apply for instruction.⁴⁵

So Russian musical nationalism, “Official” or otherwise, had its dark side. Later in the nineteenth century the patronage of Russian national art passed from the court to jingoistic merchant patrons like Pavel Tretyakov in painting, Savva Mamontov in theater, and, in music, Mitrofan Belyayev, under whose aegis the national and the professional were finally wedded in a rigidly sectarian guild of composers headed by Rimsky-Korsakov, Lyadov, and Glazunov.⁴⁶ One of the more curious texts in the history of Russian music is Glazunov’s memoir of his first meeting with Chaikovsky.⁴⁷ The scion of the supposedly progressive and national traditions of Russian music recalled his introduction to the most celebrated member of the first class to graduate from Rubinstein’s conservatory as one of the great liberating experiences of his life.

These, then, are a few of the ironies and paradoxes that need to be sorted out in revising the history of Russian music. And that revision, for obvious reasons, will have to take place in the West (one hopes, for nationalistic reasons of one’s own, that it will take place in the United States), and not in Russia. One also looks forward to ever increasing sophistication in the analysis of Russian music, both as a way of accounting for its Russianness—no simple matter of folkishness after all, as we have seen—and as a way of viewing it, as Stravinsky would say, “simply as music,” in a larger European context. In particular, one looks forward to the development of analytical techniques that do not condemn non-German music by their very premises. Thanks to the pioneering work of Gordon McQuere and the other contributors to his survey of *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music*, the theoretical premises underlying a great deal of Russian music that has been influential on twentieth-century music outside of Russia—Scriabin and Stravinsky, above all—have begun to be elucidated for musicians outside of Russia.⁴⁸ But just as we would not want to limit our understanding of the cultural history of Russian music to what we may find in Keldish or Asafyev, illuminating as their work might occasionally be, we need not limit our theoretical and analytical understanding of it to applications of or derivations from the work of Yavorsky or Dernova. We need to set Asafyev and Yavorsky in their own cultural context, just as we need to set the Soviet period into a similar historical perspective. We need a musical counterpart to Vera Dunham’s enlightening book on Stalinist fiction, which documents and explains the weird resurgence of bourgeois values at their most philistine—what in Russian is called *meshchanstvo*—that took place in Soviet arts policy in the 1930s, and which formed the underpinning of what is known as Socialist Realism.⁴⁹ And we need a musical counterpart to Camilla Gray’s classic survey of the Russian artistic avant-garde in the decades immediately preceding and following the Revolution.⁵⁰ Nither of these books, again obviously, is going to be written in Russia.

As American scholars, trained in a skeptical and “problems-oriented” tradition of humanistic research, and ever more proficient in the once so

arcane Russian language, begin to tackle these and the thousand other questions and projects I have not begun to foresee, I look forward to a much lessened, or at the very least, a much more critical, reliance on the Soviet secondary literature. I feel confident that we are past the days when a Soviet musicologist had merely to say so for American students of Musorgsky to accept the latter uncritically as a musical *narodnik* (radical populist),⁵¹ or when historians of Soviet music would transcribe their data directly from the pages of *Sovetskaya muzika* or the information bulletins of the Union of Soviet Composers.⁵² The presence of a number of distinguished émigré scholars in our midst should certainly stimulate activity in our field, which in any case is a growing one. It is thankfully no longer front-page news when a graduate student in an American music department knows Russian and contemplates a specialty in Russian music. I am optimistic enough to think that perhaps the best answer to the question “What is to be done” may simply be “Let things continue; they’re going well.”

POSTSCRIPT, 2008

With unwitting but devastating symbolism, the program committee for the 1984 AMS meeting in Philadelphia assigned the session at which this chapter was read to a room in the Franklin Plaza Hotel called Provincial East. That was the location of Russian music studies within the world of American musicology, all right, obsessed as American musicology then was (and as I complained, when revising the talk for print, in note 17) with maintaining distinctions between what was central and what was peripheral. (The unnamed “specialist in early English music” in that note, by the way, was Margaret Bent, then teaching at Princeton.) The big change in that situation reflects not only the enhanced prestige of Russian music within the musical academy but also the vastly lessened burden of invidious distinctions.

These were both healthy adjustments, more wished for at the time than foreseen—although there were omens, including the awarding of the AMS’s Alfred Einstein prize (granted to publications by junior scholars), four years earlier, to an article on Serov’s *Judith* that had originated as the second chapter of my doctoral dissertation. After the granting ceremony, David Rosen, the chair of the committee that had voted the prize, asked me with a twinkle whether I had thought it possible that an article on Russian music might win it. I confessed I had not seen myself as a contender, and he said he thought as much from my flustered reaction when my name was called.

But the biggest change was neither foreseen nor even wished for in 1984, as this whole chapter, beginning with its third paragraph, shows. After mocking the very idea of prediction I nevertheless ignored my own warning and ventured one. And of course history has made a mockery of it. The prospect that only a little more than seven years later the Soviet period would come

to an end was simply unthinkable in 1984. (We even joked somewhat cruelly at the time that Andrey Amalrik, the regrettably short-lived dissident who had written a pamphlet called “Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?” in 1969, was lucky not to have lived to see his predictions foiled.)

Now foreign scholars do indeed have the freedom of access to Russian archives needed to do fundamental research on a grand scale—and none grander than Simon Morrison, who will finally write the definitive account of Prokofieff’s Soviet years that previous biographers had to forswear (though there were always fools ready to rush in). And Russian scholars, whom we then pitied and patronized and consigned to a life of dusty drudgery, have been busily revising and reinterpreting their musical past, illuminating the dark corners, enriching their account with real (as opposed to “vulgar”) sociology, and happily breaking down the disciplinary wall between the insularly “national” and the *zarubezhnoye* or “foreign” that had impeded holistic or ecumenical viewpoints. There is a heady sense of starting afresh, radically symbolized by volume 10b (2004) of the *History of Russian Music*, a series begun in 1983 that was to have consisted of ten volumes in all.

That tenth volume, issued in 1997, and edited by the original series editor, the venerable Yury Keldish (1907–95), still reflected the Soviet plan, which Lyudmila Korabelnikova, the coeditor of volume 10b, characterized as “consisting almost exclusively of individual essays on the works of various composers,” with a catch-all chapter for minor figures. That is to say, it was to have continued and completed the project in the Caesaristic mode of romantic historiography, particularly pronounced in Soviet historiography by virtue of the obligatory casting of major artistic personalities as progressive figures opposed to the reactionary political and cultural environment of pre-Revolutionary Russia. Volume 10b, by contrast, reflecting the post-Soviet intellectual climate, undertook a remedial task: “To describe the multifaceted phenomena of musical culture from a holistic cultural-anthropological perspective—first and foremost from the standpoint of institutions and their functioning.”⁵³

Judging by the results—a volume of 1070 pages devoted to the period 1890–1917, organized around activities rather than texts (theater, concert life, church singing, musicology and music theory, journalism and criticism, music education, music publishing, domestic and applied music, and early phonograph technology)—and comparing it with recent Western conspectuses, I would say that the Russians have significantly outstripped the West in producing a musical historiography that at last transcends the “poietic fallacy” about which I complained in the introduction to this book, adherence to which continues to impede due attention to mediation and reception as sites of historical agency and change.⁵⁴ The post-Soviet volume 10b has no real counterpart as yet in European or American music historiography; the sooner one appears, the better.

The egregious passage on nationalism from the 1973 edition of Grout's *History of Western Music* quoted in note 15 has undergone revision since 1984—three revisions, in fact—and this, too, provides a bellwether of salutary change. In the fifth edition, revised by Claude Palisca, the passage was rewritten as follows:

Nationalism in nineteenth-century music was marked by an emphasis on literary and linguistic traditions, an interest in folklore, a large dose of patriotism, and a craving for independence and identity. A sense of pride in a language and its literature formed part of the national consciousness that led to German and Italian unification. Up to a point, Wagner and Verdi chose subject matter that reflected their patriotic feelings, but neither one was narrowly national in this respect. Verdi, as we saw, became a symbol for national unity, but that was owing to the character of his operas. Neither of these composers cultivated a style that was ethnically German or Italian. Brahms arranged German folksongs and wrote folk-like melodies. Haydn, Schubert, Schumann, Strauss, and Mahler all made conscious use of folk idioms, if not always those of their native countries. The Polish elements in Chopin and the Hungarian-gypsy traits in Liszt and Brahms were for the most part exotic accessories to cosmopolitan styles. Nationalism was not really an issue in the music of any of these composers.⁵⁵

Up to the last sentence the moderation of the rhetoric, the increased subtlety of argument, and the greater inclusivity of viewpoint are encouraging. But that last sentence! Nationalism “not really an issue” for Wagner! At the very least, one must insist that issues do not come to us ready-made. Defining (or deflecting) them is the work of the historian. We have to acknowledge our complicity in their construction and assume responsibility for our emphasis. Here a wise comment of Leon Plantinga's is worth recalling: “It is more pleasing to observe the celebration of Czech cultural identity in the works of Smetana and Dvořák [or, I'll add, of Russian identity in Glinka's *Kamarinskaya*], surely, than to contemplate a similar impulse in the German Richard Wagner [not to mention Brahms with his *Triumphlied*] after the War of 1870.”⁵⁶

Palisca's second go at the passage, in the sixth edition, was a significant step. For one thing, it was expanded to the point where it can no longer be quoted as a concise paragraph. For a second, even more noteworthy thing, specificity, well-grounded in historical conditions and events, to a large extent replaced generalities and platitudes. A representative sense of the difference can be gained from the first two paragraphs:

Napoleon's campaigns (1796–1809) at first encouraged national movements and the search for independence from tyrants and monarchs. But the French administration was soon resented and it too became the target of liberation movements. In German-speaking territories, hundreds of tiny states were eliminated, reducing the number to around forty and thereby making the idea of

unification easier though still impractical. In Italy Napoleon drove the Austrians out of the north. Although people commonly spoke of Italy or of the Italians, an Italian nation did not actually exist. Most of what is now Italy was ruled by Spanish kings, the papacy, the Habsburg Empire, and France until unification in 1870.

Bohemia (the present-day Czech and Slovak Republics), Poland, and Hungary remained under Habsburg rule and were continually in political and religious turmoil. Chopin and Liszt felt the tug of Polish and Hungarian patriotic feelings, respectively, one writing mazurkas and polonaises, the other Hungarian rhapsodies, in addition to their largely cosmopolitan oeuvre. Wagner, whether he was in Germany, Switzerland, or France, championed things German in his writings. A sense of pride in a language and its literature formed part of the national consciousness that ultimately led to German and Italian unification.⁵⁷

The only flaw to be noted thus far is the peculiar forgetfulness, already noted in the body of chapter 1, about Russia's imperial role. The power against which Chopin railed in his *Revolutionary Étude*, after all, was Russia, not the Habsburg Empire. This is already a symptom of the lingering habit of the musicological mind that puts Russia together with Poland and Bohemia as a Slavic (hence peripheral) country, rather than with France and Austria as an imperial one—or rather, the need to pigeonhole Russia as one thing or the other, rather than see it from a dual (let alone a multiple) perspective.

The ensuing paragraphs dealt with the changing idea of Germanness in music (from the eighteenth-century eclectic model to the nineteenth-century national one), the matter of Verdi's and Wagner's personal styles in relation to their national identities (including the shrewd observation that "if we attach German or Italian traits to the musical styles of Wagner and Verdi, it is partly because their music defines these national styles"), and the interest in folklore both as exoticism (in Haydn and Dvořák in America) and as nationalism (Smetana and Dvořák at home). The increased refinement and complexity of the argument was at once a credit to the author and a compliment to the reader.

But just as in the 1996 edition, the ending, where Russia came into the picture, marks a regression:

Such a search for an independent, native voice was keenest in England, France, the United States, Russia, and the countries of Eastern Europe, where the dominance of German music was felt as a threat to homegrown musical creativity. In addition, composers from these countries wanted to be recognized as equals to those in the Austro-German orbit. By employing native folksongs and dances or imitating their musical character, composers could develop a style that had ethnic identity. Although individual composers in these countries differed in their enthusiasm for a nationalist agenda or the exploitation of their

traditional music, it is convenient to deal with both nationalists and non-nationalists in this section.⁵⁸

Thud. “This section” was the old ghetto, still standing as before, and ghettoization continued to work its inherently invidious influence—doubly so in the case of the “non-nationalists” (Chaikovsky, to be sure), and for all the reasons already stated within chapter 1. That trace of the older Germanocentrism, or German universalism (all national specificity being defined against a German norm), was still the conventional musicological wisdom at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and it sadly erased much of the improvement that marked the paragraphs leading up to it.

But stop the presses. Even as this postscript was being drafted, Norton issued the seventh edition of the venerable textbook, thoroughly revised by J. Peter Burkholder, a scholar almost twice as much younger than Palisca as Palisca had been younger than Grout, and one, moreover, who had made his early reputation with a pair of articles that provided historical grounding for two of the major default modes—historicism and modernism—of late twentieth-century musicology and demonstrated their interrelationship, amounting to codependency.⁵⁹ This was major consciousness-raising stuff; Norton’s choice of Burkholder as the reviser of its flagship textbook was inspired; and I am happy to say that Burkholder’s treatment of nationalism represents a remarkable advance. At last the subject is treated with a degree of nuance that is worthy of its ambivalences and seeming paradoxes.

“Nationalism,” Burkholder states, “could be used to support the status quo or to challenge it,” and he proceeds to demonstrate:

In both Germany and Italy, cultural nationalism—teaching a national language in the schools rather than local dialects, creating national newspapers and journals, and cultivating a national identity through the arts—was crucial in forging a new nation. By contrast, in Austria-Hungary, cultural nationalism worked against political unity, for the empire encompassed ethnic Germans, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, Serbs, Croats, Slovenians, and Italians, and those promoting independence for their people could buttress their case by speaking their own language, emphasizing their distinctive traditions, and creating nationalist art and music.⁶⁰

Burkholder even allows a bit of nuance into his treatment of Russia, by revising a sentence quoted above from the sixth edition so that it now reads: “The search for an independent native voice was especially keen in Russia and eastern Europe, where the dominance of Austro-German instrumental music and Italian opera was felt as a threat to homegrown musical creativity.”⁶¹ Including Italian opera alongside Austro-German instrumental music is not only a step away from the Germanocentrism that continued to hobble the sixth edition; it also broaches the all-essential role of institutions (though

I wish Burkholder had made the point more explicitly), since it was through an actual crown-supported St. Petersburg theater, where operas by Russians were expressly barred by law from being produced, that the Italian opera maintained its hegemony in Russia.

Best of all, Chaikovsky is introduced as an opera composer alongside Verdi, Wagner and Glinka, and the invidious distinction between nationalist and non-nationalist Russians is significantly mitigated. The ambivalence of Glinka's reputation is acknowledged: "Glinka is valued in the West for the Russian flavor of [his] operas, which satisfied Western tastes for both the national and the exotic. But he was more important to his countrymen as the first to claim a place for Russia in the international musical world" (p. 701). And Chaikovsky is described as seeking "to reconcile the nationalist and internationalist tendencies in Russian music, drawing models from Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and other Western composers as well as from Russian folk and popular music" (p. 702). This is no more pat or schematic than the textbook format demands, and for the first time in such a context the Russianness of Russian music is taken not as a requirement for authenticity but as a phenomenon to be defined and explained within a specific historical and cultural context.

So I can end this postscript, as I ended the original talk embodied in chapter 1, on an exultant note. If things were going well then, they are surely going much better now. Not only have Russian-music scholars at home and abroad broken through to new levels of methodological sophistication and interpretive synthesis. Their (that is, our) achievements have also begun to trickle down into general musicological, thence popular, consciousness. A heartening early earnest of that process was the inclusion in "Grout," beginning with the fifth edition, of the extract from the 1909 memoir by César Cui quoted in chapter 1 itself. The conventional musicological wisdom is less inclined now to divide composers active since the eighteenth century into Germans, Frenchmen, Italians and "nationalists." Solid collections of essays on German musical nationalism have begun to appear,⁶² as have surveys of the whole European field without invidious distinctions as to center and periphery.⁶³ An early attempt at a monographic conspectus is my own article on nationalism in the revised *New Grove Dictionary* (2001; the 1980 edition did not have an article on the subject). "Comparative nationalism" thrives in musicology at last, and the ghetto walls are crumbling. We are "Provincial East" no more.

NOTES

1. See R. John Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets* (London: Oxford University Press, 1984). Oldani's dissertation, *New Perspectives on Mussorgsky's "Boris Godunov"* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1978), contains a chapter on "Stemmata," which has

been published as "Editions of *Boris Godunov*," in *Musorgsky: In Memoriam 1881–1981*, ed. Malcolm H. Brown (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982), 179–214.

2. "‘Little Star’: An Étude in the Folk Style," in *Musorgsky: In Memoriam*, 57–84; rpt. in R. Taruskin, *Musorgsky: Eight Essays and an Epilogue* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 38–70.

3. Nikolai Findeyzen's monumental survey of pre-nineteenth-century Russian musical literature, *Ocherki po istorii muziki v Rossii*, 2 vols. (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928–29), has never been surpassed. A revision and updating, by Miloš Velimirović and Claudia Jensen, of a half-century-old translation by S. W. Pring, commissioned by the American Council of Learned Societies but never published, was finally issued by Indiana University Press in 2008 with the title *History of Music in Russia from Antiquity to 1800*. Pavel Lamm's epoch-making critical editions of works by Musorgsky, Borodin, and others are well known. Sergey Dianin, son of one of Borodin's closest friends, published a complete edition of the composer's letters (*Pis'ma A. P. Borodina*, 4 vols. [Moscow: Gosizdat, 1928–80]) and a biography that has been translated into English (*Borodin*, trans. Robert Lord [London: Oxford University Press, 1963]). Alexandra Orlova has compiled documentary chronicles à la Deutsch for a number of nineteenth-century Russians. Her best-known work of this kind, *Trudi i dni M. P. Musorgskogo* (Moscow: Muzgiz, 1963), has been translated into English by Roy Guenther (*Musorgsky's Works and Days* [Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983]). Abram Gozenpud was the foremost Soviet historian of the Russian operatic stage. In seven volumes issued between 1959 and 1975 he chronicled the musical theater in Russia from its beginnings to the Soviet period. His ballet-historian counterpart, Vera Krasovskaya, has some half dozen similar volumes of fundamental empirical research to her credit.

4. The story of Chaikovsky's forced suicide on account of a homosexual liaison with a boy from the highest aristocracy was published by Alexandra Orlova almost immediately upon her emigration to the West ("Tchaikovsky: The Last Chapter," *Music and Letters* 62 [1981]: 125–45) and was given, even before its publication in full, a huge play in the popular press. Its evidentiary support is extremely flimsy, however, and its uncritical acceptance by David Brown in his article on the composer for the 1980 edition of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, where the matter was set forth as if established beyond doubt, was one of that distinguished publication's most serious lapses.

5. *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich as Related to and Edited by Solomon Volkov*, trans. Antonina W. Bouis (New York: Harper and Row, 1979); for its early vetting, see Laurel E. Fay, "Shostakovich versus Volkov: Whose *Testimony*?" *The Russian Review* 39 (1980): 484–93. This extremely important critique went unreprinted in the musicological literature until the appearance of Malcolm H. Brown's *Shostakovich Casebook* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), with the result that innocent musicologists continued (and not-so-innocent ones continue) to rely on Volkov's book.

6. Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, trans. Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), 95.

7. It is well told by Joseph Kerman in his vociferous squib "How We Got Into Analysis and How To Get Out," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 311–22; rpt. in *On Criticizing Music*, ed. Kingsley Price (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 38–54, under the title "The State of Academic Music Criticism," and under its original title in

Kerman, *Write All These Down: Essays on Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 12–32.

8. I.e., in the subtitle to his posthumous history, *Russian Music* (New York: Norton, 1973). This chaotic mélange, in which rare insights rub shoulders with bald misstatements of fact, surely represents the state of its author's notes at the time of his death, not the book he meant to give us. Its publication was a dubious service to the memory of a great scholar.

9. Gerald Abraham, for example, dismisses the work of the foreign musicians who furnished musical entertainments to the eighteenth-century Russian court by noting that "they neither influenced nor, except in a few doubtful cases, were they influenced by, church music or folk-music," with the result that "it can hardly be said that they contributed much or directly to the music of the Russian people" (*The Tradition of Western Music* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974], 49–50). But this is more or less like Dante's consigning the Greek philosophers to the higher reaches of Hell. Besides, who are "the Russian people"? Does this category include only peasants? Then Musorgsky never contributed to their music either.

10. Jane Howard, "Can a Nice Novelist Finish First?" *Life* 61, no. 19 (4 November 1966): 81.

11. The author of this 1961 Oxford dissertation has also published his findings, and propagated his viewpoint on Glinka's patrimony, in a number of articles. See Gerald Seaman, "Russian Folk-Song in the Eighteenth Century," *Music & Letters* 40 (1959): 253–60; "The National Element in Early Russian Opera, 1779–1800," *Music & Letters* 42 (1961): 252–62; "Folk-Song in Russian Opera of the 18th Century," *Slavonic and East European Review* 12, no. 96 (December 1962): 144–57. A good corrective to this viewpoint (which is that of most Soviet writers as well) is given in Simon Karlinsky, "Russian Comic Opera in the Age of Catherine the Great," *19th-Century Music* 7 (1984): 318–25. The sources of the genre and its treatment of various social types (which accounts for its citations of various indigenous musical styles) is there persuasively traced to the French theater.

12. Gerald Seaman, *History of Russian Music*, vol. 1 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 155.

13. *Istoriya russkoy muziki*, vol. 1 (Moscow and Leningrad: Muzgiz, 1948), 369.

14. *The Diaries of Tchaikovsky*, trans. Wladimir Lakond (New York: Norton, 1945), 250 (entry of 27 June 1888).

15. Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music*, rev. ed. (New York: Norton, 1973), 593, 635. It may be thought a dubious or unseemly tactic to criticize in the present connection a book that makes no pretense to a specialized viewpoint on Russian music. But it is precisely in textbooks that care must be taken not to foster invidious prejudices or double standards. With respect to nationalism in music, Grout posits a double standard in the baldest terms (pages 633–34): "The results of the early nineteenth-century German folk song revival were so thoroughly absorbed into the fabric of German music as to become an integral part of its style, which in that period was the nearest thing to an international European musical style. Thus, although Brahms, for instance, made arrangements of German folk songs and wrote melodies that resemble folk songs, and although Debussy called him the most Germanic of composers, we still do not think of him as any more a 'nationalist' composer than Haydn, Schubert, Strauss or Mahler, all of whom likewise more or less consciously

made use of folk idioms." He goes on to "exonerate" the national qualities of French and Italian music, and even the Polish elements in Chopin ("for the most part only exotic accessories to a style fundamentally cosmopolitan"). It would be tedious to sort out the logical fallacies here; suffice it to say that in my opinion to indoctrinate students to regard "what we think" as any sort of final truth, rather than train them even in the early phases of study to regard "what we think" as an object inviting scrutiny and challenge, is poor pedagogy, at the very least.

16. Nina Bachinskaya, *Narodniye pesni v tvorchestve russkikh kompozitorov* (Moscow: Muzgiz, 1962).

17. It seems fair to say that nowhere is the distinction between mainstream and periphery drawn with greater rigor than in the United States, a situation that may reflect our own national insecurities as well as the continuing influence of Central European immigrants on the development of the discipline of musicology here. (Grout, for example, seems to have inherited his double standards from Alfred Einstein, who in *Music in the Romantic Era* [New York: Norton, 1947] distinguishes in his chapter organization between "Universalism Within the National"—Germany, Italy, France, and Chopin, the honorary citizen-of-the world—and the ghetto chapter, where Chaikovsky comes in for the usual double-barreled rejection.) These prejudices apply in the domains of music history and music analysis alike. Nor are they confined to nineteenth-century studies: witness the division of Reese's *Music in the Renaissance* (New York: Norton, 1954) into two halves, the first devoted to "The Development of the Central Musical Language," and the second to the peripheries. While it is true that what became the musical lingua franca of the Renaissance developed first in France and the Low Countries, to organize the book as Reese has done means to discuss such contemporaries as Févin and Senfl some four hundred pages apart. It is inevitable that Senfl will seem less important than Févin in such a context, though his actual achievement was arguably the greater. Discussing the Reese book one day, a specialist in early English music who was educated in England but teaching in America remarked to me that only here did she learn that her field was peripheral. To the probable objection that "central" and "peripheral" are by now only value-free labels of convenience, I would reply that it is only because of them that "Western" music historians are unlikely, personal preference aside, to recognize in Chaikovsky a composer comparable in stature to Brahms. Readers who react to this point with incredulity or indignation (as Einstein surely would have done) may have isolated within themselves a reason why our discipline clings so tenaciously to invidious and outmoded distinctions.

18. *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, trans. Mary Whittall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 84.

19. For evidence of Diaghilev's early intentions to stage these ballets, see the press interviews collected by I. S. Zilbershtein and V. A. Samkov in *Sergey Dyagilev i russkoye iskusstvo*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Izobratitel'noye iskusstvo, 1982), 209–10; on *salades russes*, see Sergei Grigoriev, *The Diaghilev Ballet 1909–1929*, trans. Vera Bowen (London: Constable, 1953), 8; a *salade russe*, of course, is a French dish.

20. For a very neat delineation of some of these school traits, see Gerald Abraham, "The Elements of Russian Music," *Music & Letters* 9 (1928): 51–58.

21. "A Russian opera by a Russian composer contained not a Russian note" (*Sovremennaya letopis'*, 1865, no. 35), quoted in Nikolai Findeyzen, *Aleksandr Nikolayevich Serov: Ego zhizn' i muzikal'naya deyatel'nost'*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Jurgenson, 1904), 104.

22. David Brown, s.v. "Tchaikovsky," *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001), 43:611.

23. Grout, *A History of Western Music*, 640. A few recent publications on Scriabin have finally begun to show that he has a definite place within Russian traditions, which means that finally other Russian traditions than the folkloric are gaining recognition by Western musicologists. See Martin Cooper, "Aleksandr Skryabin and the Russian Renaissance," *Studi musicali* 1 (1972): 327–56; Malcolm H. Brown, "Scriabin and Russian 'Mystic' Symbolism," *19th-Century Music* 3 (1979): 42–51.

24. The term "denationalization" was coined in 1910 by the critic Vyacheslav Karatigin in his obituary for Balakirev (*Apollon*, 1910, no. 10 [September], 54).

25. V. V. Stasov, *Sobranniye sochineniya*, vol. 3 (St. Petersburg, 1894), 275.

26. Coachmen were not chosen for this sally at random. Their singing (to encourage their horses and frighten wolves) was proverbial and had been often represented on the Russian musical stage in the past, beginning with Yevstigney Fomin's singspiel *Yamshchiki na podstave* (The post drivers, 1788). In fact, though an expression of social snobbery and not a musical critique, the remark unwittingly hit the mark: the tune Susanin sings at his first entrance in act 1 was one Glinka had taken down from the singing of a coach driver in the town of Luga (see Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka, *Memoirs*, trans. Richard B. Mudge [Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963], 100). The singing of the Russian coachmen was often noted by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European travelers to Russia, including Berlioz and Mme. de Staël.

27. Cf. Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 82–83. Still, even Stravinsky muddles things a bit when he says that pomeshchiks' music is the "contrary of folk music," something that is a little hard to imagine.

28. *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, 89–90.

29. In *The Concise Oxford History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979).

30. Quoted in Nicholas Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825–1855* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), 122.

31. Quoted in Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia*, 125.

32. To appreciate how completely monarchist was the idea of nationality embodied in Glinka's opera, consider the quatrain on which the choral finale reaches its culmination:

Slav'sya, slav'sya nash Russkiy Tsar'!
Gospodom danniy nam Tsar' Gosudar'!
Da budet bessmertn tvoj Tsarskiy rod!
Da im blagodenstvuyet Russkiy narod!

[Glory, glory to you, our Russian Tsar! / Our Sovereign, given us by God! / May your royal line be immortal! / May the Russian people prosper through it!]

33. He wrote to Balakirev on 21 March 1861: "Perhaps no one has ever done a greater *dishonor* to our people than Glinka, who by means of his great music displayed as a Russian hero *for all time* that base groveller Susanin, with his canine loyalty, his hen-like stupidity ["owl-like" in the original Russian] . . . the apotheosis of the Russian brute of the Muscovite strain and of the Muscovite era. . . . But there will come a time when . . . Russia will cling ardently to Glinka but will recoil from this work, at

the time of whose creation his friends and advisers, good-for-nothings of Nicholas I's time, insinuated their base poison into his talent" (*M. A. Balakirev i V. V. Stasov: Perepiska*, ed. A. S. Lyapunova, vol. 1 [Moscow: Muzika, 1970], 130).

34. Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia*, 133.

35. V. F. Odoevsky, *Muzikal'no-literaturnoye nasledie* (Moscow: Muzgiz, 1956), 119.

36. The inappropriateness of these terms to any discussion of music is already apparent in the self-created paradox to which writers who use them love to call attention. Thus, for example, Richard Anthony Leonard: "All this [i.e., the rivalry of the various Moscow and St. Petersburg musical factions] was another phase of the familiar issue which has so often split Russian intellectuals—Slavophiles versus admirers of Western culture. But here there was an important difference. Slavophiles were usually looked upon as the conservatives, . . . while the Westerners were considered cosmopolitan liberals. But in the music life of the eighteen-sixties the opposite was true. The nationalists were the progressives, and the cosmopolitan Westerners were the conservatives" (*A History of Russian Music* [New York: Macmillan, 1956], 73). Confronted with Chaikovsky's residence in Moscow and the kuchka's location in St. Petersburg, Leonard is forced to compound the paradox to the point of absurdity: "Even the cities became switched around, adding to the complication. Petersburg, itself a newly-manufactured imitation of the West, became the centre of nationalism in music; while the old conservative ultra-Russian Moscow became the seat of a cosmopolitan eclecticism." There have lately been some welcome correctives. Robert Ridenour has published a full-length study of St. Petersburg musical politics in the nineteenth century, which concludes with the salutary reflection that that ferment is best viewed as a whole, and that its signal accomplishment was that it "expanded the scope and resources of musical life in the Russian capital, forced the public and the government to take Russian music seriously, and made music a respectable, legally recognized profession." The author pointedly remarks that "this, . . . rather than any supposed reflection of the conflict between Slavophiles and Westernizers, is the most significant part of the story of the musical rivalries of the 1860s for a general understanding of nineteenth-century Russian history" (*Nationalism, Modernism and Personal Rivalry in 19th-Century Russian Music* [Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981], 234–35).

37. These were the collectors who, beginning in the late 1870s, tried to make accurate transcriptions of Russian polyphonic folksinging. Their work was received with hostility by all conservatory musicians, whose ranks by then included Rimsky-Korsakov. Linyova's work, the most accurate because she was the first Russian folklorist to use the phonograph as field equipment, had a direct influence on Stravinsky.

38. Maria Tenisheva, *Vpechatleniya moyey zhizni* (Paris: Russkoye Istorikogeo-nealoegicheskoye Obshchestvo vo Frantsii, 1933), 294.

39. For some details on the social standing of musicians before and after the establishment of the conservatory, see Ridenour, *Nationalism, Modernism and Personal Rivalry*, chapter 2.

40. Vladimir Stasov, *Selected Essays on Music*, trans. Florence Jonas (New York: Praeger, 1968), 83.

41. "Pervyye kompozitorskiye shagi Ts. A. Kyui," in Cui, *Izbrannyye stat'i* (Leningrad: Muzgiz, 1952), 544.

42. Rosa Newmarch, *The Russian Opera* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., [1914]), 200.

43. See, for example, his letter to Rimsky-Korsakov of 15 August 1868, in Jay Leyda and Sergei Bertensson, *The Musorgsky Reader* (New York: Norton, 1947), 119–21.

44. Rubinstein spelled out his patriotic motives and his Peter-the-Great-like program for the musical salvation of his homeland in an article on Russian composers that he published in the Vienna *Blätter für Theater, Musik und Kunst* in 1855.

45. Anti-Semitism remained a feature of Soviet musical nationalism to the end, as exemplified by what was known in the 1970s as the *novaya fol'kloristicheskaya volna* (new folkloristic wave), a government-sanctioned avant-gardism of sorts that draws conspicuously on folk themes in a manner reminiscent, say, of Stravinsky's *Les Noces*. This was offered as a Russian "answer" to the assimilation of Western avant-garde techniques, notably serial ones, which were tainted by the Jewishness of Schoenberg. I am grateful to Prof. Vladimir Frumkin of Oberlin College for bringing this manifestation to my attention. For a reminder that American musical nationalism also had a politically conservative and anti-Semitic phase, see Daniel Gregory Mason, *Tune In, America: A Study of Our Coming Musical Independence* (New York: Knopf, 1931), which contains a fairly heated jeremiad (pp. 158–62) on "the insidiousness of the Jewish menace to our artistic integrity."

46. See Montagu Montagu-Nathan, "Belaiev—Maecenas of Russian Music," *Musical Quarterly* 4 (1918): 450–65.

47. The article, entitled *Moyo znakomstvo s Chaikovskim* (My acquaintance with Chaikovsky), was written in 1923 for inclusion in a book of Chaikovsky memorabilia edited by Asafyev. It may be found in *Vospominaniya o P. I. Chaikovskom*, ed. V. V. Protopopov (Moscow: Muzgiz, 1962), 46–51.

48. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983. The contents include "Russian Music Theory: A Conspectus" (Ellen D. Carpenter), "Sources of Russian Chant Theory" (Nicholas Schidlovsky), "The Theories of Boleslav Yavorsky" (Gordon D. McQuere), "Varvara Dernova's System of Analysis of the Music of Skryabin" (Roy J. Guenther), "Boris Asafyev and *Musical Form as a Process*" (McQuere), and a final chapter by Carpenter on several theorists associated with the Moscow Conservatory. Also of considerable interest is Jay Reise's "Late Skriabin: Some Principles Behind the Style," *19th-Century Music* 6 (1983): 220–31.

49. *In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

50. *The Russian Experiment in Art: 1863–1922* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970). A good start has been made by Detlef Gojowy in *Neue sowjetische Musik der 20er Jahre* (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1980).

51. I have in mind particularly Richard Hoops, "Musorgsky and the Populist Age" (in *Musorgsky: In Memoriam*, 271–306), which derives a crucial argument wholly from an unsupported and factitious case made by Mikhail Pekelis in the introductory article to *M. P. Musorgsky: Literaturnoye nasledie*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Muzika, 1972), 5–24, esp. 26–30.

52. See Laurel E. Fay's review of Boris Schwarz's *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia* (enlarged edition) in *Slavic Review* 43 (1984): 359.

53. *Istoriya russkoy muziki*, vol. 10b (Moscow, 2004), 5.

54. E.g., the *Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), or vol. 4 of my own *Oxford History of Western Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): for further discussion see R. Taruskin, "Speed Bumps" (review-essay on two recent Cambridge histories), *19th-Century Music* 29 (2005–2006), 183–205.

55. Donald J. Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 5th ed. (New York: Norton, 1996), 665–66.

56. Leon Plantinga, "Dvořák and the Meaning of Nationalism," in *Rethinking Dvořák: Views from Five Countries*, ed. David R. Beveridge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 118.

57. Donald J. Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 6th ed. (New York: Norton, 2001), 644–45.

58. *Ibid.*, 646.

59. "Museum Pieces: The Historicist Mainstream in Music of the Last Hundred Years," *Journal of Musicology* 2 (1983): 115–34; "Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music," *19th-Century Music* 8 (1984–85): 75–83.

60. J. Peter Burkholder, Donald J. Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 7th ed. (New York: Norton, 2005), 681.

61. *Ibid.*, 682.

62. E.g., *Music and German National Identity*, ed. Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

63. E.g., *Musical Constructions of Nationalism*, ed. Harry White and Michael Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001). The chapters in this collection broach nationalism in Hungary, Britain, Poland, France, Russia, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Ireland, Scotland, and Germany—in that order.