

modern Russian theatre' (p. 171). Similarly, a detached audience member at the Teatr 'Sovremennik' in the 1970s, or at Efremov's touring MKhAT productions in 1980s London, might consider the director's designation as Stanislavskii's heir (pp. 179–91 *passim*) to be a case of wishful thinking.

The whole amounts to a well-intentioned attempt at introducing important Russian theatre work to a new student readership and, despite its flaws, can be commended for a less conventional and more inclusive sense of both gender and genre.

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Hardiman, Louise and Kozicharow, Nicola (eds). *Modernism and the Spiritual in Russian Art: New Perspectives*. OpenBook Publishers, Cambridge, 2017. 310 pp. Illustrations. Notes. Select bibliography. Index. £24.95 (paperback).

FROM the very outset of this volume, Louise Hardiman and Nicola Kozicharow claim that their goal as its editors was to 'energise debate [...] on the diverse ways in which themes of religion and spirituality were central to the work of artists and critics during the rise of Russian modernism' (p. 10). Over the course of the eleven essays which comprise the text, this objective is definitively met. The book begins with an effectively written introduction by Hardiman and Kozicharow which provides a historical summary of religion in Russian art, a discussion of changing attitudes towards icons and an understated justification for the book's focus on the period from the 1880s through the 1960s. Also threaded through this introduction are subtle but important new claims about the nature of Russian modernism and, as the authors assert, the ways in which 'notions of the spiritual [...] helped shape modernism in Russian art and underpinned some of its most radical experiments' (p. 13).

The individual case studies that comprise the main body of the volume begin with Maria Taroutina's investigation of the frescoes that Mikhail Vrubel painted in the Church of St Cyril in Kyiv in 1884. These important works show how: 'Vrubel was able to anticipate many of the formal and conceptual innovations of the future' (p. 67) by embracing the artistic traditions of the past. Effectively argued and beautifully researched, Taroutina's contribution adroitly weaves the voice of Vrubel with others from his time to create a multilayered argument that is as conceptually rigorous as it is convincing. Louise Hardiman then probes the debates surrounding the 'Church of the Spirit' commissioned by Maria Tenisheva, the founder of the Talashkino colony, before turning to the theosophical beliefs of Aleksandra Pogosskaia, a leading purveyor of Russian peasant art mostly in the West. In the third essay of the volume, Myroslava Mudrak creates a sophisticated new understanding

of how a group of Symbolist-style paintings produced by Kazimir Malevich between 1907–08 (sometimes referred to as the ‘Yellow Series’) should be understood as an integral part of Malevich’s progression to Suprematism. Mudrak intertwines succinct readings of individual paintings with effective comparisons to the works of Paul Gauguin and Émile Bernard to create a persuasive sense of how the spiritual traditions of Orthodoxy lie at the heart of Malevich’s utopian trajectory.

This is followed by Oleg Tarasov’s essay, which begins by exploring the epistemological differences between icons and avant-garde images before moving into the ‘specific features of Russian image veneration’ (p. 120). While Tarasov makes several fascinating points, his essay contains some odd contradictions which distract from the potential impact of his discussion of Malevich in the context of the conceptual space between icons and modern art. Tarasov’s work is counterbalanced, however, by Nina Gurianova’s assessment of how hand-painted Old-Believers’ religious *lubki* and manuscript books influenced painters like Natalia Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov at the beginning of the twentieth century. Gurianova also points out the broad interest members of the avant-garde had in various ‘archaic and traditional cultures’ (p. 144) beyond just the Old Believers. She calls this ‘pluralist expansiveness’ (p. 144) and provides brief, but significant comparisons to the primitivist interests of Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse, as well as to the differences between Russian and Italian Futurism. Sebastian Borkhardt then delivers an in-depth examination of the German interpretations of Vasilii Kandinskii’s paintings in terms of ideas then circulating regarding the German soul and Russian mysticism — both of which were opposed to ‘Western rationality’ (p. 153). Such distinctions were also reinforced in Kandinskii’s own writings, where the mysticism of the Slavic East was counterposed with the figurative and Romantic West.

This is followed by Wendy Salmond’s sensitive and vastly informative essay on Nikodim Kondakov and Ellis Minns’s *The Russian Icon* (finally published after over a decade of work in 1927) and its consignment to oblivion in the wake of what was perceived to be the volume’s ‘fundamentally flawed understanding of the icon’ (p. 166). In what is arguably the most well-organized and readable of all the anthology’s essays, Salmond does much to restore Kondakov’s legacy by highlighting the ways in which his methodology should be understood as ‘strikingly, refreshingly contemporary’ (p. 190). Following this case study, Natalia Murray’s contribution explores Nikolai Punin’s writings on Russian icons from the 1910s, and provides an absorbing assessment of where Punin’s passion for the spiritual qualities of these objects intersected with his devotion to the contemporary practice of the Futurists and Constructivists. Punin would go on to be appointed the Head of the Visual Arts Department of the Petrograd People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment (Narkompros), but he

ultimately fell out of favour when it became increasingly dangerous to mention Russian icons or the avant-garde in the 1920s and '30s. Murray's essay does much to recover the impact his work had on the development of the Russian avant-garde and serves as an excellent 'reminder of the cruelty and injustice of the Communist system' (p. 228).

In the volume's final essay, Jennifer Brewin analyses the works of the Soviet Georgian painter Ucha Japaridze in terms of how he incorporated elements of Byzantine stylization and spiritual content connected with the Symbolist tradition into paintings that only *seem* to abide by the canonical tenets of Socialist Realism. By far the longest essay in the volume, the work sometimes suffers from trying to address too many themes at once. The section on images of women in Japaridze's works and in Georgian culture, for example, could easily have been a gripping stand-alone article but was somewhat lost within the larger piece. This essay also felt slightly out of sync with the larger scope of the volume in that it referenced artworks which pushed well beyond the immediate aftermath of the revolution and the titular theme of 'Russian Art'. Its inclusion makes one contemplate the volume's overall periodization and its concentrated focus on the first decades of the twentieth century, to the detriment in particular of earlier periods. In the introduction to the volume, Hardiman and Kozicharow acknowledge this lacuna and briefly mention how major painters from the 1830s–70s (such as Aleksandr Ivanov, Vasilii Perov, Nikolai Ge and Ivan Kramskoi) foreshadowed other spiritually-oriented artists who came later. In the end, an essay on this earlier period would only have shown with greater force 'the diversity of approaches among modern artists to the notion of spirituality' (p. 31). This variety is the true strength of the volume as a whole; it is the range of artists, historians and collectors under discussion which truly show how vital the intersection between art and spirituality was under the condition of modernity.

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Schmelz, Peter J. *Alfred Schnittke's Concerto Grosso No. 1*. Oxford Keynotes. Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2019. xiii + 162 pp. Illustrations. Music examples. Tables. Appendix. Additional sources for reading and listening. Notes. Index. £10.99 (paperback).

THE latest book in the Oxford Keynotes series offers a thoughtful and detailed analysis of one of Schnittke's best-known works and the piece that helped to make his compositions known in the West. The chapters follow the six parts of the Concerto Grosso No. 1: 'Preludio', 'Toccata', 'Recitativo', 'Cadenza',