PHILIP ROSS BULLOCK, *ROSA NEWMARCH AND RUSSIAN MUSIC IN LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY ENGLAND*, RMA Monographs, 18 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), ISBN 978-0-7546-6662-2, ix + 197pp, £55.

Rosa Newmarch is best remembered today, through her extensive literary output, as one of the earlier and most active enthusiasts, in the late Victorian and Edwardian United Kingdom, for Russian music. Becoming active at a point when the music of the Russian composers who flourished from the 1860s onwards was just starting to receive regular exposure in British concert halls, Newmarch did much to encourage concert promoters to produce, and audiences to consume and enjoy, this unfamiliar music—often in the face of rather sniffy attitudes within the academic music establishment. Such was the extent of her activity that, for many decades, her writings remained one of the few sources of information on Russian music published in English and her influence was felt within British and American musicology until comparatively recently (as Bullock's Appendix of Newmarch's writings shows, she wrote a substantial number of biographical articles for the editions of *Grove* edited by Fuller Maitland and Colles, including those on all of the leading nineteenth-century Russian composers; many of these articles, including those on Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, were reproduced in Blom's 1954 edition and thus survived as a primary reference source until the appearance of *The New Grove* in 1981).

In some respects Newmarch was simply in the right place at the right time. Interest in all things Russian had been growing in the United Kingdom (rather than the somewhat parochial England of Bullock's title) at the end of the nineteenth century, while few people in Britain had any knowledge of the Russian language and therefore had no direct access to source materials and scholarship; Newmarch, already fluent in French, set out, in her late thirties, to learn Russian, which gave her a level of access to both literature and people pretty much unparalleled at the time.[1] Her determination—which led her, in the 1890s, to contact Vladimir Stasov, the most famous and opinionated Russian musical ideologue of the time—further facilitated her success and she soon became *the* person to whom the Edwardian musical world turned for commentary on Russian composers and their works. Bullock extensively contextualizes the situation in which Newmarch was working, successfully examining how Russian culture was received—often via French mediation—in Britain at this time, and showing the role which Newmarch played.

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[1] Bullock demonstrates that Newmarch's knowledge of Russian was far from flawless, yet the extent of her influence is shown by Anthony Holden's use of her 1906 translation of Modeste Tchaikovsky's *The Life and Letters of Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky* for English versions of some of the composer's correspondence in his book *Tchaikovsky: A Biography* (London: Bantam Press, 1995).

Bullock offers a persuasive account of Newmarch's advocacy of Russian music in Britain before the First World War, noting that, while she was certainly indebted to Stasov in the most essential respects, she was not afraid of expressing her own views or of challenging what she (rightly) perceived as the heavily Germanic aesthetics of the British academic establishment, represented primarily by Stanford and Parry, the latter of whom, in particular, viewed Russians and Slavic peoples in general as being only a little above primitive savagery. By examining Newmarch's extensive knowledge of the repertory, personal contacts in Russia, and prolific literary output, Bullock demonstrates the extent of Newmarch's influence on British musical thought in this period. It is clear, for example, that the romanticized view of Russia, promoted by Stasov, as a country in which every peasant had a song on their lips which the best Russian composers then incorporated into their music to create an intrinsically national style, was perpetuated by Newmarch in her writings; this she contrasted with the derivative and 'academic' music produced by many British composers, which would, she believed, prevent the creation of a valid folksong-based school of art music at home. Elgar, who, Newmarch argued, composed symphonies in an (implicitly) programmatic style that could be linked to both Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, was a notable exception and of all the more value as a result. The compositions of the next generation of Russian composers, who moved away from the Stasovian folksong ethos, were less successful in Newmarch's view; it was this change which led her to become more interested in the music of Czech composers and Sibelius, which Bullock also discusses.

Newmarch's enthusiasm for Russian culture led her, in the Edwardian period and subsequently, to comment on matters beyond her original sphere of investigation: comparisons between Russian and British society in general became of great significance for her, with British social, political and ethical values being often in her view inferior; Newmarch focused particularly on what she viewed as a Russian middle class far more cultured and enquiring than Britain's insular and blinkered equivalent. In turn this reinforced Newmarch's advocacy of Russian composers whom she perceived as thoughtful, liberal and cultured, although, on occasion, this was sometimes based on partial knowledge; as Bullock argues, given what is now known about Mussorgsky's political attitudes towards the end of his life, some of Newmarch's writing is distinctly fantastic. In essence, Newmarch viewed the political developments that followed the 1905 Revolution (i.e. the move towards a multi-party democracy presided over by a constitutional monarch) as the correct path for Russia to follow, and she was staunch in her advocacy of composers, such as Rimsky-Korsakov, who supported these developments. As Bullock shows, in the inter-war environment of the establishment of the Soviet state and of political unrest and revisionism throughout Europe,

Newmarch's upper-middle-class Victorian liberalism soon became eclipsed by events, a process she found difficult to deal with.

As this discussion demonstrates, the title of Bullock's book is somewhat misleading since he does not restrict his work to an examination of Newmarch's work on Russian music but also considers her interest in Russian social and political events, and, furthermore, her admiration of Sibelius and Czech composers, as well as her role in promoting women as musicians in British society. Bullock devotes a substantial chapter to this last issue; in a similar manner to the situation in post-Revolutionary Russia, Newmarch found the more radical feminist attitudes of post-1918 British society off-putting. This broader consideration is very welcome, not least because one gains a more rounded sense of Newmarch's perspectives, although one wonders if a revision to the book's title might be appropriate.

Bullock's account of Newmarch's life and writings offers a readable and wide-ranging survey of her activities and the social context which informed her attitudes and values. This is complemented by an extensive Bibliography and Appendix of her published work. As Bullock points out, Newmarch was not extensively educated in musical theory (although, given the educational possibilities available to women at the time, opportunities were not extensive) and so, by modern musicological standards, her commentary often appears to be naïve and superficial; indeed, when dealing with works by later Russian composers she blatantly avoided any analytical observations, not least, one suspects, because she did not know how to approach music written in the emerging atonal, polytonal, and post-tonal modes. In fairness, however, Newmarch could have had virtually no concept of musicology as it is now understood and surely did not foresee the longevity of her writings. Furthermore, she clearly believed that her work—much of it published in the form of programme notes or within the emerging corpus of 'music appreciation' literature which became so popular in the early twentieth century—should be accessible and comprehensible to those without a knowledge of musical theory. It was never her intention to become an academic writer.

If one has a regret about Bullock's book—while acknowledging that, in the RMA Monograph series, there is relatively little space, and also that other scholars have recently commented on this issue—it is that he does not consider Newmarch's legacy and influence on subsequent generations. That this one person should have wielded—unwittingly—so much influence on the perception of Russian music among Anglophone musicians is quite remarkable. Only in the last thirty years in this field of scholarship has much of the underlying philosophy of Newmarch's era been debunked, most obviously in some of the work of Richard Taruskin, scourge of so many British musicologists. A consideration of this legacy would have allowed the reader to con-

textualize Newmarch further and would have been a useful addition, especially given both the impact of her writings over so many years, and the space Bullock devotes to showing how her gender and social background were so essential to the formation of her classic late Victorian liberalism which coloured her intellectual approach. As it is, the book comes to a halt rather suddenly: the final chapter, 'After Russia', looks at Newmarch's increasing interest in Czechoslovakia in the inter-war years, before summarizing the book's entire mission in a mere two paragraphs.

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