

Soviet attempts to democratize the Olympics, is also discussed in chapter two, where Parks shows how Soviet sports leaders took the IOC to task for its “discriminatory attitude” (51) against women.

The importance of winning the Olympic Games for Moscow was high on the agenda at an early stage, and actively pursued for the 1976 Games. The bureaucratic wrangling behind this first failed bid is covered well in Chapter 3, as is the successful 1980 bid. Of particular interest is the monumental effort invested in securing the 1980 Games, which included expected assurances of the necessary infrastructure but also a lot of behind-the-scenes diplomatic efforts between the Soviet Sports Committee, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and the international federation representatives. This sets the scene for two engaging chapters that deal with the Moscow Olympiad.

The Moscow Olympic Organizing Committee (Orgcom) was concerned with the huge challenges ahead of it, and as Parks lists these, its concern seemed more than justified. Yet, as this chapter convincingly shows, hosting the Games also represented a huge opportunity, and this was not just related to international status or prestige. The immense organizational effort necessitated a new approach that dispensed with much of the bureaucracy that could slow down decision-making within the Soviet system.

Parks ably analyzes how the Orgcom tackled the myriad problems that confronted it. She acknowledges, however, that the hallmarks of the Brezhnev period, including increased spending on the military, drew funding away from sports and other sectors. This undermined the Soviet commitment to peace, which was dealt a severe blow after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, a move that showed how much had changed in international relations since the Soviet Union initially won the Moscow Olympic bid. As Parks argues, cultural diplomacy could only go so far, and the effort to stage the Moscow Olympics illustrated the best and worst of late socialism.

Archival research in Moscow, the United States, and Switzerland underpins this rich assessment of Soviet Olympic history. While neither the athletes nor the public reception of the Olympic Games are widely analyzed, this focused study of the middle layer of the Soviet system will find keen readers amongst those interested in Olympic history, international relations, and the late socialist period.

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***Alexander Serov and the Birth of the Russian Modern.*** By Paul du Quenoy. Bethesda, MD: Academica Press, 2016. xi, 380 pp. Bibliography. \$74.95, hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.62

A research topic may come from unexpected places and sources, as happened with Paul du Quenoy. His encounter with the grandson of Valentin Serov, a legendary Russian realist painter whose father Aleksandr Serov was a critic and composer, resulted in this 380-page biography of Aleksandr Serov. Divided into five chapters, with an introduction and bibliography, the volume traces Serov’s life in the context of the mid-nineteenth century Russian music scene between Mikhail Glinka and Aleksandr Dragomyzhskii on the one hand, and the Mighty Five on the other, and between Slavophilism and Westernization. Quenoy draws on a wide range of sources and discourses, such as Russian love-disdain towards Italian opera, the surge of Wagnerism that swept over Russia in later decades, the involvement of major literary figures in fostering Russian opera, and in the imperial politics dominating every facet of culture including musical theater.

It is unclear what Quenoy identifies as “Russian modern.” The title of the “Introduction: The Most Famous Composer You Have Never Heard of,” is likewise provoking yet questionable. Serov was a leading critic in Russian musical history, but his musical works, whether justly or not—public tastes and memories are capricious things—never achieved significant traction on the performing stage. Like many of his generation from noble families, young Serov had two choices—the military or administrative service to the Russian crown. With his passion for music, and the incongruity of inspiration with his job, he found an outlet in composing and writing about music. His first operatic project based on Nikolai Gogol’s *May Night* was never completed. He counterbalanced his lack of confidence as a composer with his scathing criticism. He dismissed the first opera by young Anton Rubinstein, and in letters to Vladimir Stasov derided *Esmeralda* by Dargomyzhskii. Contradicting himself, he disparaged Italian opera, but together with Stasov included Italian bel canto numbers in a concert the two organized.

Serov-the-critic was sharp, uncompromising, and innovative. He wrote “Music and Virtuosi” as a debate between a singer, a violinist, and a conductor. His original thinking permeated his musical analysis and reviews of concerts and operatic productions. Educated in the Russian-Soviet musical tradition, I have viewed Serov as equal only to critic Vladimir Stasov. Both Stasov and Serov, at times friends and at other times rivals, paved the way for the ideological and musicological foundation of Russian and Soviet thinking about music. Serov’s original thinking continuously informs today’s writing on Russian music, mine included.

The longest chapter is dedicated to the three operas Serov created in the last eight years of his life: *Judith* (1863), *Rogneda* (1865), and *The Power of the Fiend* (1871). An admirer of famously anti-Semitic Richard Wagner, Serov turned in his first opera to Judith, the heroic Jewess of ancient Hebrew lore. Had this opera been written in the first decade of the twentieth century, it could easily be aligned with the operatic Salome and Delilah or with the literary Sulamif by Russian writer Aleksandr Kuprin. Could Serov have anticipated this type of femme fatale that would come to fashion in the next decades? “Throwing himself” into this opera, Serov, according to Quenoy, was inspired by the drama *Guiditta* and by Claude Vernet’s painting years earlier. Eroticism, vengeance, and murder tied with the concept of the folk/nation also links Judith with multiple *rusalkas* remarkably successful on the Russian operatic stage in the first half of the nineteenth century—Ferdinand Kauer’s *Das Donauweibchen*, Stepan Davydov’s *Dneprovskaiia Rusalka*, Aleksei Lvov’s *Undine*, Aleksandr Aliabiev’s *Rusalka*, and Dargomyzhskii’s *Rusalka*.

Serov’s second opera, *Rogneda*, featured a tsarina of old Russia on the cusp between paganism and Orthodoxy, drawing on Varangian/northern European lore and following the success of Alexei Verstovskii’s *Askold’s Grave*. Serov’s third opera, *The Power of the Fiend*, based on Aleksandr Ostrovskii’s “folk drama,” moves to the domain of Moscow merchants. The plot, combining sex, alcohol, betrayal, and murder, befits Russian critical realism. But while Ostrovskii’s play has a forgiving ending—the young husband, infatuated with another woman and planning to kill his wife, comes to his senses—Serov’s finale ends with murder. His Shrovetide scene precedes Nikolai Rimskii-Korsakov’s in *Snowmaid* and Stravinsky’s in *Petrushka*. Serov’s three operas follow the same five-act format and treat female heroines much in the nineteenth-century fashion—Judith survives and achieves her goal through intrepid cunning, tsarina Rogneda, spared at the end of the opera, is locked in a monastery, and the female lead in *Fiend* is knifed.

Quenoy offers his readers a detailed discussion of Serov’s correspondence with his collaborators. Investigating articles, letters, diaries, and literary works, Quenoy threads a dense network of literati swayed by ideologies, alliances, loyalties, and

disloyalties. The book sheds light on Serov's contemporaries, Lev Tolstoi and Ivan Turgenev, as well as less known or unknown writers and composers. What I miss in this book and especially in the long chapter on Serov's operas is actual conversation about music. The author, who seems to be arguing for the significance of Serov's musical contributions, does not discuss operatic structures, musical and dramaturgical choices, or the music itself in detail. The book is written in clear and enjoyable prose; unfortunately it is published in very small font, which makes it difficult to read. I would certainly recommend this book to anyone interested in nineteenth-century Russia, especially if the volume could be accessed electronically.

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***The Burning Bush: Writings on Jews and Judaism.*** By Vladimir Solovyov. Ed. and trans. Gregory Yuri Glazov. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016. xvi, 628 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$65.00, hard bound.  
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The scope of Gregory Glazov's impressive volume not only extends the principal goal of his book, the translation of Vladimir Solov'ev's writings on Jews and Judaism, but speaks to the author's perceptive reading of the entire oeuvre of the great Russian religious philosopher, publicist, and poet.

Translation of primary texts occupies Part III of the book and includes among nineteen entries such seminal works as "Jewry and the Christian Question" (1884), "The Israel of the New Covenant" (1885), and "The Talmud and Recent Polemical Literature" (1886). It also contains Solov'ev's open letters to Russian and European newspapers and his correspondence with Faivel Meir Getz, Baron David Gintzburg, Konstantin Arseniev, Nikolai Grot, and Lev Tolstoi. The penultimate chapter of this part presents six of Vladimir Solov'ev's poems inspired by Old Testament themes and imagery.

In the words of Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The translator's task of re-creation differs only in degree, not in kind, from the general hermeneutical task that any text presents" (*Truth and Method*, New York, 2004, 389). Gregory Glazov, as a professor of Biblical Studies, obviously possesses hermeneutical expertise and, in his role of translator, is highly attentive to questions of meaning and interpretation.

In the introduction to the book, Glazov dedicates a special section to the exploration of the key terms used by Solov'ev and the difficulties in translating them into English. For example, he describes his scrupulous approach to the lexical choice for the rendition of one of the most essential terms in Solov'ev's philosophy, *bogochelovechestvo*. Meanwhile, giving the reasons behind his decision to translate it with a compound noun *Godmanhood*, Glazov produces a brief but compelling essay, which illuminates the philosophical and theological sophistication of Solov'ev's thinking.

Despite the overall high quality of Glazov's translation, there are a few blemishes here and there. For example, the words *ves'ma trudna* are translated as "relatively difficult," while Solov'ev's phrase does not imply such ambiguity and describes a task formulated by him as *very difficult* (277).

In Part II, "Commentary and Portrait of Solov'ev's encounters with Jews and Judaism," Glazov provides not only an excellent overview of the subject but offers a deep analysis of its intrinsic connection with Solov'ev's other ideas of cardinal importance. As he puts it, Solov'ev's "interests in Judaism were never marginal, never just a phase or a series of phases, but foundational and organically integral to his Christian thought and life" (118).