



gratuitous self-promotion and score-settling. Attentive proofreading should have caught various lapses: for instance, 4', *recte* 8', heading a table column on 105; the reversal of 1711 and 1719 in the text on page 123 describing a pivot pin apparent in Figure 3.18 but absent in 3.19; a reference at 270 to leather guides for the escapement jacks in a Portuguese piano which are not present in the instrument and therefore not to be seen in the photo at 271; the conflation of J. C. and C. P. E. Bach at 346; and the mirror-reversal of the instrument in Figure 3.5, also occurring on the cover. Representative of the inadequate internal referencing are the blithe calls in chapter 5 to 'see Chapter 3', which is 133 pages long. The layout is haphazard, with diagrams and tables sometimes twenty pages or more removed from the relevant text. The discussion of an upright piano by Domenico del Mela is interrupted by a diagram and tables concerning instruments by Cristofori and Ferrini. An annoying feature, common in this publisher's books, are the overly wide outer margins, necessitating a narrow gutter down into which curve the text and illustrations. This book is neither elegant nor user-friendly.

Despite its shortcomings, *Bartolomeo Cristofori and the Invention of the Piano* will provide the diligent specialist reader with a worthwhile summary of Stewart Pollens's lifetime of research. The compilation of original documents, transcribed and well translated, along with the data and illustrations gathered from the instruments of Cristofori and his followers, constitute a solid basis for further investigation.

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EDITIONS

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CARLO CANOBBIO (1741–1822), VASILIJ PASHKEVICH (1742–1797) AND GIUSEPPE SARTI (1729–1802), ED. BELLA BROVER-LUBOVSKY
NACHAL'NOE UPRAVLENIE OLEGA (THE EARLY REIGN OF OLEG)
 Recent Researches in Music of the Classical Era, volume 109
 Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2018
 pp. xxviii + 453, ISBN 978 0 895 79864 0

The play *Nachal'noye upravleniye Olega* (The Early Reign of Oleg, 1790; unlike the edition, this review uses the *New Grove* transliteration system), by Catherine the Great, is an outstanding monument to Russian music and cultural history. It premiered at the St Petersburg Hermitage Theatre on 22 October 1790, and more performances followed in 1791. In the Introduction to this volume ('Performance History', xv–xvi), editor Bella Brover-Lubovsky highlights the stunning success of the play, which became the first Russian stage work to be published in full score (St Petersburg: Tipografiya Gornago uchilishcha, 1791). Brover-Lubovsky puts the play in the context of the 'exceptional importance' assigned by the empress to 'dramatic performances, both spoken and musical, that extolled her reign and policies in allegorical terms' (xi). However, the appreciation granted to the work by such coeval writers as Gavril Derzhavin and the French diplomat Valentin Eszterházy is connected with the peculiarly elevated position of the author, and with the function of the play as a manifesto of the tsarina's politics. There were no known performances after the end of Catherine's reign (1796). The score was published again in 1893 by the publisher Pyotr Ivanovich Yurgenson, in Moscow, as part of a series that included other works by the tsarina (for instance, *Fedul and His Children* in 1895). With the exception of this publication, *Oleg* fell into obscurity during the nineteenth century owing to its close connection with Catherine's rule, and it was almost completely neglected until the end of the Soviet period.

Recently, *Oleg* has received attention by scholars who are investigating the musical life of eighteenth-century Russia on new grounds. Brover-Lubovsky has recently also written an essay on this work: "The "Greek



Project” of Catherine the Great and Giuseppe Sarti’ (*The Journal of Musicological Research* 32/1 (2013), 28–61). Scholars have also tackled *Oleg* from the perspective of Catherine’s literary output, or in the context of eighteenth-century Russian music more generally. I have contributed to the study of this opera in two essays, ‘Catherine II’s *The Early Reign of Oleg*: Sarti, Canobbio and Pashkevich Working Towards an Ideal’, *Muzikologija/Musicology* 20 (2016), 15–28, and ‘*Gli inizi del governo di Oleg* di Caterina II: Sarti, Canobbio e Paškevič al servizio di un’idea’, *Studi musicali* 7/1 (2016), 39–66.

The play celebrates the ancient times of the Russian Empire by staging early events in the rule of Prince Igor’ and his uncle Oleg – who acted as his tutor – between the end of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth centuries. The plot includes events following the death of the mythic Russian ruler Rurik: the foundation of Moscow by Oleg (Act 1), his expedition to Kiev (Act 2), the wedding between Igor’ and Princess Prekrasa (Act 3), and Oleg’s campaign and victory against Constantinople (Act 4). Finally, Act 5, which proclaims Oleg’s superiority, shows the celebrations organized by Emperor Leo VI the Wise, with dances and the staging of three scenes from Euripides’s *Alcestis* (Act 3 Scenes 1, 2 and 3).

The presentation of the events relies on ancient Slavic chronicles, notably the *Povest’ vremennikh let* (Primary Chronicle), Vasily Tatishchev’s *Istoriya rossiyskaya* (History of Russia) and Catherine’s *Zapiski kasatel’no rossiyskoy istorii* (Notes concerning Russian History). In an anonymous Preface (*Pred’uvvedomleniye*) to the 1791 score (at 3–4 in the present volume), the author emphasized the historical validity of the story in an effort to bolster the legitimacy of Catherine’s message to the contemporary audience. In this sense, it is impossible not to agree with Brover-Lubovsky that ‘by depicting the Russian Empire as prosperous and victorious under the leadership of a wise ruler, *Oleg* extolled Catherine’s own governance, praising her as a worthy successor to one of the greatest early sovereigns of Rus’ (xiii). The plot of the play conveyed an even more direct message: in constructing a (false) cultural relationship between ancient Greece and Russia, it offered a theoretical underpinning to Catherine’s ‘Greek project’, the planned conquest of Constantinople and restoration of the Byzantine Empire, over which Catherine’s grandson Constantine was to rule.

The music served this cause on an emotional and intellectual level. Catherine engaged three composers active in Russia in the years during which the text was written (1786–1790) to ensure the play was performed with great pomp. Their collaboration produced a pasticcio, in which verses (edited with the help of Aleksandr Khrapovitsky and Luka Sichkarev) were sung, while prose texts were declaimed without music (the complete literary Text and Translation are provided in the volume at xix–xxviii). Due to the hybrid nature of the play, Brover-Lubovsky rejects ‘opera’ as a designation (xi), a term which I, however, maintain could be accepted in this context, where genre definition does not always follow Western European distinctions: Catherine’s co-author Khrapovitsky defined *Oleg* an opera in connection with its dramaturgical structure.

Carlo Canobbio furnished the opening sinfonia, a march and four entr’actes, while Vasily Pashkevich contributed three women’s choruses in the bridal party scene of Act 3. In order to provide the necessary *couleur locale*, both composers cited Russian folk tunes, which they drew from the collection published in 1790 by Nikolay L’vov and Johann Pratsch, and which are presented in this volume in Appendix 2 (‘Russian Folk Songs Quoted in the Score (after [Nikolaj L’vov and Ivan Prach], *A Collection of Folk Russian Songs with Their Tunes*’, 365–371). Catherine had initially commissioned the music for the choruses of Act 5 from Domenico Cimarosa, the court composer. The Italian maestro produced a choral piece, which failed to meet the empress’s tastes and needs. With the mediation of Grigory Potyomkin, the commission passed on to Giuseppe Sarti, who after serving at the court from 1784 to 1787 was accompanying Catherine’s former lover in an effort to colonize culturally the territories acquired by the Russian Empire in the Russo-Turkish war of 1787–1792. Cimarosa subsequently converted the music composed for *Oleg* into another piece (*Coro dei guerrieri*), the score of which is included in this volume in Appendix 3 (‘Cimarosa’s Rejected Chorus’, 373–453, with critical notes at 453).

Sarti composed four choruses on texts by Lomonosov. However, the scholarly literature has more extensively addressed Sarti’s setting of the scenes from *Alcestis*, which – according to the composer – is based on ancient Greek modes. In an explanatory note entitled ‘Eclaircissement sur la musique composée pour *Oleg*’ (Appendix 1, 359–364), Sarti justified this choice as a desire to recreate the atmosphere of the



tragedy staged as a play within the play. The 1791 edition included the Russian translation of this text (entitled *Ob'yasneniye* (Explanation); at 4–8 in the present volume), which was signed by Nikolay L'vov. This differs from the French original by the addition of learned bibliographic references, probably ascribable to the translator, who was also the author of the engravings that decorated the first edition (for instance, Plate 2 in this volume). L'vov was an expert in ancient Greek culture, and in the Introduction to his *Sobraniye russkikh pesen* (Collection of Russian Folk Songs) he suggested that Russian popular music derived from ancient Greek music. In establishing a philological link between the Russian Empire and its (assumed) Greek ancestor, Catherine's mission to make Russia the heir to Byzantine tradition could be legitimized. By blending Russian and Greek elements, the music that resulted from this collaboration epitomized this consciously erected affinity, perfectly fitting Catherine's political plans.

The importance of this work for Russian culture fully justifies the publication of this critical edition. In practical terms, the score is well laid out and easy to read, and it is rigorous on a philological level. As declared in the 'Editorial Methods' section (353–354), Brover-Lubovsky aimed to create a usable document that follows modern practice in the handling of accidentals and other notational aspects, and which corrects numerous errors and inconsistencies in the source (354). If shortcomings must be reported, I will say that I would have wished for the literary text to be equally legible, and its editing more consistent with the editorial approach to the music. The choice of the GOST system of transliteration is not the best for enabling easy reading (from the perspective of an Italian native), and the system is so complex as to sometimes create some inconsistencies in the editor's own writing (for instance, 'Xrapovitskij' versus 'Xrapoviczkij' at xv; 'V universitetskoi tipographij' versus 'V universitetskoj tipografii' at xvi). While this is a minor factor in a work for which editing and proofreading must have been challenging, more jarring is, perhaps, Brover-Lubovsky's decision to retain the archaic spellings in the literary texts: these could have been modernized even while preserving the sounds produced by the original singers (for instance, 'e' vs 'b'), as it is currently usual in critical editions of coeval authors (for instance, Nikolay M. Karamzin, *Istoriya gosudarstva rossiyskogo* (History of the Russian State), ed. Vitaly Afiani, Viktor Zhivov and Vladimir Kozlov (Moscow: Nauka, 1989)). Finally, it is a bit distressing to see some contributions excluded from the bibliographical references (for instance, Domenico Cimarosa, *Coro dei guerrieri*, ed. Carmine Colangeli and Francesco Quattrocchi (Bologna: Bongiovanni 2009)), although this is surely to be ascribed to these works' limited availability.

Nevertheless, Brover-Lubovsky and A-R Editions are to be congratulated for this very welcome addition to the series Recent Researches in the Music of the Classical Era. The work's publication may help to remedy its long-standing absence from the stage. But more to the point, this new edition of a crucial witness to Russian culture provides improved access to Russian primary sources of this period, documents whose dissemination still lags far behind that of Western European sources.

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JOHN SHEELES (1695–1765), ED. MICHAEL TALBOT
SUITE OF LESSONS FOR THE HARPSICHORD OR SPINET, BOOK 1 (1724)
SUITE OF LESSONS FOR THE HARPSICHORD OR SPINET, BOOK 2 (c1730)
 Launton, UK: Edition HH, 2018
 pp. xiv + 36 / xvi + 40, ISBN 978 1 910 35068 6 / 978 1 910 35969 3

John Sheeles, generally little known, is a composer about whom there has been some buzz in early-keyboard circles lately. Biographical research by Andrew Pink and Michael Talbot has recently been published in the