

(“ancestor” or “warrior,” 30); and that archaeologists worked at the new construction sites of the Five-Year Plans, seeking to save artifacts from destruction (247). Painter Nikolai Roerich, trained in archaeology, valued this discipline’s “capacity to free us from our ingrained habits of perception” (97), a perspective seeming to anticipate Viktor Shklovskii’s *ostranenie*—making the stone (woman) stony.

Kunichika foregrounds the notion of multiple temporalities; he shows how artists used the *babas* and kurgans “as archaic counterpoints to contemporary events,” testifying to the persistence of the past (191). The early Soviets had a conflicted attitude toward archeological artifacts, seeing “the obdurate persistence of the past everywhere in the landscape” (287). Kunichika brings to light the irony within technological efforts to erase the past that in fact revealed the physical traces that past. Conservation efforts displaced stone *babas* from the steppe to urban locales where they served as fuel for countless imaginations. Kunichika’s stimulating study likewise will inspire further research. For example, I was struck by recurring references to ancient objects with the power to see in the literary and archaeological texts cited by Kunichika. The concept of “thing power” in Jane Bennett’s *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* can serve as one way to decipher this motif of inanimate vision.

“*Our Native Antiquity*” makes a valuable contribution to the emergent field of interdisciplinary scholarship scrutinizing the object world, in particular the role of artifacts in literary texts (as in the work of Bill Brown), in the Slavic field and beyond. Even such media spectacles as Vladimir Putin’s 2011 scuba dive to “recover” ancient amphorae take on new meaning in light of Kunichika’s book, which makes clear that establishing Russia’s links with antiquity has long had implications for the nation’s sense of self-worth. The past is a renewable resource.

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The Organic School of the Russian Avant-Garde: Nature’s Creative Principles.

By Isabel Wünsche. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015. 226 pp. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. \$104.95, hard bound.

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This is a very useful book that isolates an important thread in Russian avant-garde art, literature, and philosophy, reaching from pre-war Russian Futurism through war and revolution to the early 1930s, carrying with it a group of celebrated figures attracted to organic structures and holistic values. Isabel Wünsche, Professor of Art and Art History at Jacobs University in Bremen, consolidates the importance of figures that brought ideas forward but still await full recognition. Mikhail Matiushin, composer, painter, tutor, and theorist, is central to this, along with his wife, the poet and painter Elena Guro. Even if these are known to specialist art historians, scholars needed a clear and coherent account of their sources, ideas, concepts, and contacts. Their immediate circle in St Petersburg/Petrograd in the period from 1913 to 1917 included the painter Kazimir Malevich, who collaborated with Matiushin and the futurist poet Aleksei Kruchenykh to produce the Futurist opera *Victory over the Sun* in 1913. This, according to Malevich, initiated his development of Suprematism, with its new perspectives on time and space. Everything, it implied, extended backwards and forwards through time and space, even language. Kruchenykh’s operatic characters included a Time Traveller restlessly flitting between centuries. Malevich formed a sense of dynamic continuity in all things. His launch of Suprematism at *O,10 The Last*

Futurist Exhibition of Painting in Petrograd in December 1915 presented for the first time his *Black Square*, hung like an icon in the corner. Around it was unleashed his vastly diverse display of Suprematist paintings of geometric shapes against a white background suggestive of new perspectives of infinite space. This seemed mystical and obscure to many with a lingering debt to the Russian Symbolist movement.

Malevich and Tatlin both benefitted from these contacts with Matiushin and the Union of Youth. Tatlin remained associated with new art in Petrograd in the early revolutionary years. There he exhibited in the former Academy his great model *Monument to the Third International*, as if to outface Peter the Great's invented capital city on the Gulf of Finland. Revolving halls within the Tower followed the apparent movements of the sun, moon, and stars, embedding the narrative of human history in the context of endless time. The brilliant critic Nikolai Punin also worked closely with this group promoting new visions of society to shake off the imagery of imperial culture. Punin opened up the Hermitage to everyone. It was Punin, among others, who assembled the vast exhibition *Artists of the Russian Federation through XV years* at the Russian Museum in 1932, perhaps the last exhibition to include substantial displays of the Avant-garde before Stalin's radical reorganization of Soviet culture disbanded all independent groups that year.

Wünsche details their philosophical ideas and precedents in French and German thought. But she notes also the importance of mystical thinkers such as Petr Ouspensky, whom she examines as "holistic." This touches upon her central concern for the human observer as an integral part of nature and not a detached observer. This holistic vision is evident in the art and writings of both Malevich and Vasilii Kandinskii as they develop the sense of an unfolding universe full of energy with every point burgeoning with new developments. Here the creative artist must reveal this growth and not record the appearance of objects. Darwinian evolutionary theory had its importance in this thinking, but in the holistic vision the work of creative individuals was equally part of evolution.

Wünsche's extraordinary achievement in this book is to bring these figures together within a narrative that remains active and influential throughout those first revolutionary decades. Wünsche has an extensive knowledge of events in German and Russian art during this period. She is also aware of the Polish painter and tutor Jan Ciąglinski (Tsioglinsky), who was active in Russia and for whom French Impressionism exemplifies the inclusion of the observer into the world observed. Other contributors included the painter Pavel Filonov, whose works reveal a ceaseless flowering of images within images, figures woven into a complex whole in which the individual may not be distinguishable. Vladimir Markov's theory of *faktura* is featured, and extraordinary clear light is cast upon the painter Olga Rozanova.

Wünsche, with her analytical ideas, might reasonably be set into this group herself. Certainly, she has produced an impressive, scholarly and immaculately annotated book that, like her subject, promises to branch out in every direction in our age when multicultural research, multidisciplinary approaches, and holistic thinking are encouraged. Her final chapter is devoted to the Russian painter Vladimir Sterligov (1904–73), who had studied under Malevich at the State Institute of Artistic Culture (GINKhUK) in Leningrad before it closed in December 1926. For its brief existence this institution was the last embodiment of Matiushin's work, theory, and experience. Here Punin, Malevich, and Matiushin ensured that the debate continued. Malevich exhibited his architectural prototypes (*arkhitektoniki*) here in that year extending Suprematism into an architecture of flight. Tatlin directed the attached Museum of Pictorial Culture. Sterligov studied also under Malevich's follower Lev Yudin. He was arrested in 1934, released in 1938, fought in the War, and returned to Leningrad in 1945. Wünsche details this late follower of Malevich's return to his

studies, carrying forward into the post-Stalin years art that revived the creativity envisaged by Matiushin.

There is a more to learn about this extraordinary tendency in twentieth century Russian art. Wünsche has opened up a whole new avenue of enquiry. This is a book to provide inspiration to many scholars of Russian culture. It is grounded in close analysis of works of art and theory. It deals with holistic theories with discipline providing precise and extensive notes. These are as valuable as the main text in this rich and scarcely explored territory. In brief, this is an essential book for any scholarly library concerning twentieth or twenty-first century Russian culture, with relevance for art history, literary history, theatre, teaching, philosophy, and the practice of art.

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Classics for the Masses: Shaping Soviet Musical Identity under Lenin and Stalin.

By Pauline Fairclough. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. x, 283 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Figures. Tables. \$45.00, hard bound.
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Throughout the disruptions and abrupt shifts of Soviet culture during the 1920s and 1930s, a small group of venerable musical institutions—Leningrad’s Mariinskii Theater, Moscow’s Bol’shoi, and the Leningrad and Moscow Philharmonics—remained sites of striking continuity. From the eve of the revolution until the eve of World War II, the repertoires of these institutions remained remarkably stable. Concertgoers enjoyed a steady diet of nineteenth-century European classics, peppered after 1917 with both works of European modernism and recent Soviet compositions. Even as nationalism and xenophobia increasingly colored public discourse and state politics during the late 1930s, programming changed only in terms of balance. Russian and Soviet offerings went up, but not that much: western European classics remained staples. In *Classics for the Masses*, Pauline Fairclough asks why concert life in Soviet Russia’s top cities remained so “thoroughly international in scope” (109) for so long. This line of questioning leads Fairclough to consider “how the first socialist regime in world history shaped its own cultural identity in musical terms: what it accepted, rejected and experimented with; and what the consequences of those decisions were” (8).

As in most places during the early twentieth century, the nineteenth-century European classics remained undeniable audience favorites. That popularity is only half of the story in Fairclough’s analysis, however. She argues that the Soviets rendered these works ideologically acceptable by “rebranding” their composers, a transformation that allowed them to weather the storms of the Cultural Revolution. A central example was the sacred (and very German) music of J.S. Bach, which enjoyed wide popularity during the mid 1930s. It was tuneful and therefore attractive stuff, to be sure. Yet new, Marxist readings of Bach’s biography also sanctioned these works ideologically by insisting that their sacred topics were a mere consequence of their composer’s historical condition. In the wake of the notorious 1936 attack on Dmitrii Shostakovich in *Pravda*, bureaucrats even offered Bach’s works (and other western classics) as models for supposedly misguided contemporary Soviet composers. Fairclough maintains that with Bach and a handful of other composers, we find a remarkable alignment of personal taste and bureaucratic positioning. For instance, as Soviet audiences applauded the grand choruses of Giuseppe Verdi’s 1874 *Requiem*, ideologues could also praise the work