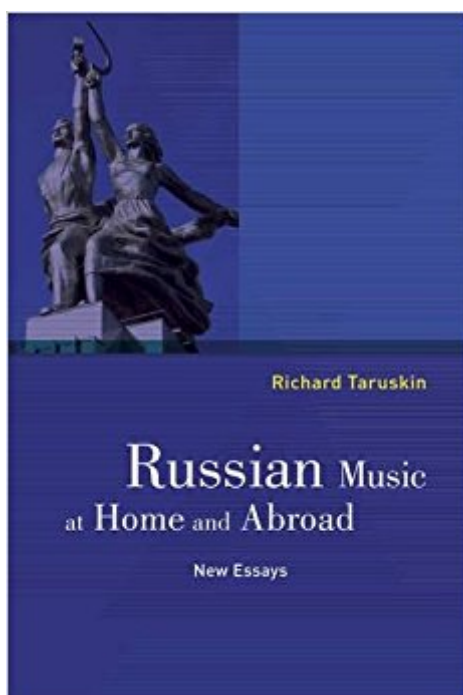


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# Russian Music At Home And Abroad: New Essays



## Synopsis

This new collection views Russian music through the Greek triad of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful • to investigate how the idea of "nation" embeds itself in the public discourse about music and other arts with results at times invigorating, at times corrupting. In our divided, post-Cold War, and now post-9/11 world, Russian music, formerly a quiet corner on the margins of musicology, has become a site of noisy contention. Richard Taruskin assesses the political and cultural stakes that attach to it in the era of Pussy Riot and renewed international tensions, before turning to individual cases from the nineteenth century to the present. Much of the volume is devoted to the resolutely cosmopolitan but inveterately Russian Igor Stravinsky, one of the major forces in the music of the twentieth century and subject of particular interest to composers and music theorists all over the world. Taruskin here revisits him for the first time since the 1990s, when everything changed for Russia and its cultural products. Other essays are devoted to the cultural and social policies of the Soviet Union and their effect on the music produced there as those policies swung away from Communist internationalism to traditional Russian nationalism; to the musicians of the Russian postrevolutionary diaspora; and to the tension between the compelling artistic quality of works such as Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* or Prokofiev's *Zdravitsa* and the antihumanistic or totalitarian messages they convey. *Russian Music at Home and Abroad* addresses these concerns in a personal and critical way, characteristically demonstrating Taruskin's authority and ability to bring living history out of the shadows.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In surveying the continent of Russian music, Richard Taruskin has breathtakingly altered its scholarly appearance, displaying its arc in space as if through a telescope and its textures as if through a microscope. His new book casts a resolute and penetrating eye on contemporary Russia and the processes now underway there, which are shaping a new awareness of music within the cultural traditions that are at the heart of Russian spiritual life.

—Liudmila Koynatskaya, Saint Petersburg Conservatory

Taruskin's book does not read like a book by "the other" on "our" music, although his view from the outside often radically alters our perspective. Nor is it just a matter of the author's sincere sympathy, which shows through even the most ironic passages, but rather that Taruskin is waging an all-out fight for an approach to Russian music that no longer defines it primarily in terms of "alterity" or "exceptionalism," but seeks to consider it, both from within and from without, as part of a single Western cultural sphere.

—Olga Manulkina, Saint Petersburg Conservatory

In the preface to his new book, Professor Taruskin promises the reader a responsibly academic rather than a loose journalistic performance. And yet the author, having long since made a home for himself amid the vast expanse of Russian music, is innately incapable of speaking or writing about it as a dispassionate observer. This "wonderful world," as he calls it, is his own. Taruskin treats octatonicism and other specialized matters with the same intensity as he does the vicissitudes of Chaikovsky's private life. His eye is keen and ardently engaged, and the reader is constantly reminded of the Russian criticism of the nineteenth century, and especially of Vladimir Vasil'yevich Stasov, the godfather of the Mighty Kuchka, a fiery tribune, a polemical journalist, and an academic scholar all in one.

—Svetlana Savenko, Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory

Professor Taruskin regards the phenomenon of Russian music the way Joseph Brodsky regarded Pushkin, as "a sort of lens into which has gone the past and out of which has come the future." Armed with penetrating words, having set his historical sights with care and X-rayed the major players of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the author offers us a fresh look at our national art and the behavior of the key figures in the history of Russian music.

—Lidia Ader, Senior Researcher, Saint Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music

Richard Taruskin is the Class of 1955 Professor of Music emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley, where he taught from 1987 to 2014, after twenty-six years at Columbia University (man and boy). He is the author of *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, *On Russian Music*, *Defining Russia Musically*, and the six-volume *Oxford History of Western Music*.

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