

particularly strong entries for the exhibits from Hillwood Museum by members of its curatorial staff: Scott Ruby, Liana Paredes (director of collections and chief curator), and Kristen Regina (head of research collections and archivist). There are stunning offerings from private collections, too, often described at length by Kirin. Curiously, though, only the first forty-two catalogue entries include any description at all; the remainder are given at best their title, medium, location, and inscription, if any, and the final fourteen are given their title alone. Granted, the potpourri vase that figures among these latter entries is discussed extensively elsewhere. But a paucity of information in the final pages makes one wonder whether the compilers of this undeniably elegant book simply ran out of time.

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***High Society Dinners: Dining in Tsarist Russia.*** By Yuri Lotman and Jelena Pogosjan. Trans. Marian Schwartz, ed. Darra Goldstein. Devon: Prospect Books, 2014. 444 pp. Index. Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. Tables. £30.00, hard bound.

In 1996, Pushkinskii fond published *Velikosvetskie obedy: Panorama stolichnoi zhizni*, by Iurii M. Lotman and Jelena A. Pogosjan. At the time, very little serious culinary history was available in Russian, but the authors wanted to change that. They argued that food should not be seen as a trivial pursuit but as an important component of Russian culture. At the same time that Lotman and Pogosjan were working on their manuscript, a few Russian scholars in the United States had come to the same conclusion about the need to understand Russian food as a way of explicating the wider culture. *High Society Dinners: Dining in Imperial Russia* brings together the original Russian-language scholarship, in Marian Schwartz's excellent translation, with Darra Goldstein's scholarly commentary, which makes this book a new and important contribution to Russian cultural history.

The original idea for the book came when Lotman received access to a series of menus prepared for the Durnovo family from fall 1857 to late spring 1858. To explain the menus' value as a cultural artifact, Lotman and Pogosjan divided the book into two parts. In the first section, the authors provide a brief culinary history and a family sketch of the Volkonskii and Durnovo families, whose heir, Petr Pavlovich Durnovo, was the young bachelor host of the dinners. Using both literary and historical sources, Lotman and Pogosjan proceed to lay out Russian culinary practice in the first half of the nineteenth century. The second half of the book presents the menus and guest lists for each dinner along with commentary on some of the dishes. Arguing that meals are more than a list of dishes, the authors also include letters from Petr Pavlovich to his parents, excerpts from his father's diary, and news summaries from the Russian periodical press to suggest what conversations may have occurred at the dinner table.

While Lotman and Pogosjan's approach is rather unusual, it works on several levels. The menus reveal the cosmopolitan nature of high society suppers. Combinations of Russian, French, Italian, English, and German dishes were served at each meal, revealing the sophisticated palate of the host and presumably his guests. The juxtaposition of the menus with the letters and diaries paints a picture of the social world of Petersburg high society. A network of relatives, friends, and acquaintances attended these dinners, suggesting how important these connections were to a family as highly placed as the Durnovos. Perhaps more surprising is the picture that emerges of Petr Pavlovich. As governor general of Moscow in 1905, he helped restore order to

a city in revolt, but in 1857, he appears as a son devoted to his parents and immediate family circle. At the same time, the letters reveal his worries about his job advancement, marriage prospects, and health. To improve all of these, Petr Pavlovich spent a great deal of energy maintaining an elegant table and home to ensure his and his family's social and professional success. Finally, the excerpts from the Russian periodical press show the kind of cosmopolitan world in which Petersburg high society lived. Lotman and Pogosjan include domestic and international news stories that range from the serious to the silly.

What makes this book even better than the original Russian is the scholarly commentary. Goldstein has spent much of her professional life unearthing Russian culinary history. She reminds us that the authors could not possibly have fully understood the repertoire of dishes served to the Durnovos, as they would not have had access to the foreign cookbooks or even the ingredients used in many of the dishes. As a result, she expands, and sometimes corrects, their assertions to reflect Russian culinary history as it is now understood, based on her own prodigious research as well as the work of other culinary historians. Many of her commentaries are fascinating small essays that help open up the text to a greater appreciation of Russian food culture.

*High Society Dining* deserves a wide audience. Food studies scholars and Russianists will find much new information and many new insights. While the original work provided an innovative approach to writing about food and the history of Russian high society, this English translation expands our understanding of that culinary tradition and the people who consumed it.

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***Tchaikovsky's "Pathétique" and Russian Culture.*** By Marina Ritzarev. Burlington: Ashgate, 2014. xiv, 169 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Musical Examples. \$104.95, hard bound.

This monograph offers a thoughtful and complex argument, replete with numerous insights into Petr Tchaikovskii's work and the cultural environment in which he lived. In these respects, it is a welcome contribution to Tchaikovskii studies. The book's main thesis involves questions of both religious psychology and hermeneutics. According to Marina Ritzarev's study, the Gospel's portrayal of Christ's Passion constitutes the much-discussed "secret program" of the Sixth Symphony. To Ritzarev's credit, she continues to emphasize throughout the narrative the hypothetical and subjective character of her interpretations, drawing on both the available biographical evidence as well as close readings of the actual music.

One problem lies, however, in the author's views on Tchaikovskii's religiosity, especially in the comparison she makes with that of Fedor Dostoevskii. The latter perfectly fits Paul Tillich's classic discussion of religious doubt as the dynamic component of religious faith that ultimately fortifies the believer's relationship with God. In Dostoevskii's own words, the "terrible torments" of doubt only contributed to the growth of his belief: "It gets stronger in my soul as far as I find arguments opposite to it" (27). This is certainly not the case with Tchaikovskii, who oscillated all his life between unbelief and religious feelings that were sufficiently vague and never orthodox in terms of Christian doctrine. This owed to their combination of philosophical deism (belief in the rationalist "God of the philosophers"), like in Baruch Spinoza, whom the composer admired, with the aesthetics of the Russian Orthodox Church