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Review

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Fathers', and not, as given here, '... with my mother & also my cousin Elizabeth, a niece of my father's sister'. And for 'finish'd his house' 12 lines further on, read 'furnish'd his House'. Such tiny blips are of no consequence to the general reader, of course, but to the scholar they are unsettling, and are the more to be regretted in that the journals as published are not likely ever to be edited again. I am sorry if, by carping thus, I appear somewhat churlish and insensitive to the problems involved in bringing this mammoth task to fruition. Far from it, in fact. This volume is, in every sense of the word, a monumental achievement for which anyone interested in English social life and/or music during the second half of the eighteenth century must be profoundly grateful. We are very glad to have it, occasional warts and all.

H. Diack Johnstone  
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Judit Frigyesi, *Béla Bartók and Turn-of-the-Century Budapest*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1998. x + 356 pp. ISBN 0 520 20740 8.

THROUGHOUT the twentieth century, Hungary grappled with the problems of unity. Within its borders at the turn of the century were 'at least eight major and several minor ethnicities including Hungarians, Slovaks, Romanians, various German groups . . . , Serbians, Croats, Slovenians, Bulgarians, Armenians, Ruthenians, Jews, and Gypsies' (p. 54). Many felt suppressed. Those hoping to throw off the guise of unity provided by the dual monarchy with its 'half-feudal' economic and social system were faced with the costs of disintegration. They feared that 'the Hungarian nation would dissolve into the surrounding German and Slav cultures' (p. 67). These fears were realized in 1920, when two thirds of Hungarian territory was given to Czechoslovakia, Romania and the surrounding nations with the Treaty of Trianon, and later, when Hungary became part of the Soviet Bloc. Today people may be more aware of the challenges of multi-ethnic societies and the value of coexistence, but Hungarian intellectuals have many misperceptions to dispel about their past, not the least of which is why their culture should not be perceived as weak.

In *Béla Bartók and Turn-of-the-Century Budapest*, Judit Frigyesi counters the commonly held assumption that Bartók was an isolated genius. She points out that he was an integral part of an intellectual milieu of writers and artists known as the 'second reform generation' or 'radicals'. These Hungarians aggressively asserted national identity while simultaneously trying to embrace 'a "truly European" society and culture' (p. 30) – somewhat like intellectuals in countries currently struggling with the question of whether or not to join the European Union. This meant facing the tensions of social reality. These included both the seemingly unbridgeable 'gap between the semifeudal countryside and the capitalist city' and the lack of a 'coherent high culture or something truly Hungarian' in the culture of Budapest with its 'overwhelmingly Jewish and German intelligentsia and its petty bourgeoisie and growing mass culture' (p. 49). Frigyesi boils the problem down to 'the issue of coherence'. At the same time as these artists were committed to expressing the contradictions of existence, they were driven to reassert the importance of coherence, at least in their art. 'All prominent members of this generation were preoccupied with this question', she explains: 'Is it still possible . . . to create coherent artwork in a world that is no longer whole?' (p. 6).

In today's world, such a question might lead to exploration of the relevance

or validity of such a concept. Indeed, Frigyesi admits, 'for the postmodern generation . . . the heroism of genius that sees unity in the diversity of reality does not strike our generation as either necessary or possible' (p. 195). But at the turn of the century in Hungary, she argues, the situation was very different and the belief in form as a way to create coherence was 'doubtless the strongest motive for the creation of modern art' (p. 195). As the book's major theme, it becomes synonymous with truth in art, organicism or that which results from 'a natural and uncontrolled growth from within the mind' (p. 27), artistic integrity and the search for a moral essence. In sympathy with her subjects' hopes, she concludes, almost defiantly:

Whatever we may think of this ideal today, it was the only morally acceptable position in face of the negative tendencies embedded in nationalism, social conservatism, and racism. It was an ideal that, for all its intellectual elitism, proclaimed the dignity and the moral potential of the individual. (p. 195)

For those not bothered by such idealism or wanting to understand it more deeply, *Béla Bartók and Turn-of-the-Century Budapest* is a compelling story. Frigyesi examines how these Hungarians shared with Western Europeans a belief in 'the active will of the individual' as a compelling alternative to dwelling on, or ignoring completely, the 'hopelessness' associated with social disintegration (p. 75). Even as they came to grips with the loneliness of the soul and the need for Nietzschean distance (forcing one to leave 'everyday reality in order to get a true view' of it (p. 154)), these 'artists and intellectuals placed the ideal of a meaningful life above all other goals'. This meant 'a continuous effort to penetrate the mysteries of existence, to achieve transparency by living intensely, by deepening feelings' (p. 295). The book aims to show why such ideals arose within the intellectual milieu of protest that included Bartók, Zoltán Kodály and the writers Endre Ady, Béla Balázs and György Lukács, and how their ideology influenced the aesthetics and creative output of Bartók in particular.

Frigyesi focuses on the period 1899–1911. She believes that during this time Bartók and his contemporaries addressed the main philosophical problems of their lives: 'the meaning of art, the connection of art to life, the meaning of inspiration, the relation between technique and artistic essence, the Hungarianness of modern art' (p. 9). After this period, she explains Bartók's subsequent detachment from intellectual life and retreat from the capital by noting that he had 'resolved' these issues. Arguing for 'one consistent personality' (p. 13) in Bartók throughout his life, she suggests that the 'conclusions Bartók and his contemporaries arrived at during these years' were decisive for their entire careers. To support this, she points out that the composer's later writings 'are always in accordance with these earlier views, and the early discussions appear to deal directly with those issues that constitute the conceptual basis of the mature forms'. She further posits that 'the ideas of the turn of the century are sometimes more transparent in pieces composed after 1926' and that in the 1930s 'Bartók felt the need to emphasize even more clearly the moral ideals of his youth' (p. 9). While the framework of this book does not permit more than the assertion of such claims, methodologically it is interesting to consider them, for they suggest that an ideology formed during one period can continue to influence the creation of art for years thereafter.

*Béla Bartók and Turn-of-the-Century Budapest* has two parts. The first, on history and aesthetics, focuses on the social, political and cultural context of Hungarian modernism, including its relationship to both Romanticism and Viennese modernism. This includes a study of differences between the Austrian and Hungarian middle classes and the contrasting function of art in these societies, the family background of the important radicals (some of whom came from rural roots) and the diverse constituency of the radicals.

Their 'constantly changing alliances and ideologies' make it difficult to imagine how these artists could project a 'coherent ideology' (pp. 73–4).

Among the most interesting discussions concerns the nature of the 'folk', which in other European cultures commonly refers to rural people, often peasants. Frigyesi notes that ironically 'the myth that only nobles were real Hungarians' continued well after the abolition of feudalism in 1848 and that, because of this, Hungarian nationalism was associated with the 'gentry'. Nobility in Hungary, however, did not mean just the country's élites. It included the 'middle and petty nobles' who 'came to be considered the "folk"', the 'people of the nation', the '*populus*'. After losing much of their economic privilege, many of them worked in government or county administrations. This group 'passed for the best guardians of national identity'. Anyone representing other interests – 'industrialism, urbanism, and in general bourgeois values and modern ideologies' – was attacked as 'anti-Hungarian' (pp. 51–4). What is not clear in this fascinating exposé is how the dances such as the *verbunkos* and the songs known as the *magyar nóta*, 'composed mainly by amateurs for the urban middle class', came to represent the nation's music. Professional gypsy musicians popularized them throughout the country, and 'gypsies had established themselves centuries earlier as the musicians of the Hungarian repertoire' (p. 57). Why the gentry's '*populus*' would turn to gypsies as bearers of their 'national music', however, remains an open question.

Bartók's work on peasant music was crucial in helping his contemporaries reconsider what was meant by 'Hungarian'. Since he found that it did not form part of any generally known national music as represented by gypsy music and the urban *magyar nóta*, the peasant music he heard challenged the idea of a 'unified national musical style'. Its existence also undermined 'the notion that national character inhabited a single class and gave that class its ultimate measure of value' (p. 79). However, when one considers Bartók's claims that peasant music represented 'the oldest layer of Hungarian music', possibly originating 'before the Hungarians conquered the land' (p. 79) – in other words, 'archaic speech that is about to disappear' (p. 152) – it is difficult not to sense an attempt to substitute one mythology for another. In her empathy for the composer, Frigyesi focuses neither on who these peasants really were – they are nameless and referred to only as a class of people – nor on Bartók's problems as a naive outsider. Nor does she give full credit to what Bartók might have learned from Kodály, himself from the peasant class, and the access he might have provided. Furthermore, Elliott Antokoletz has pointed out that the *magyar nóta* was not exclusively urban, since gypsy bands were invited to peasant gatherings in small villages as well. Consequently, the gypsies often imitated or borrowed folk tunes from the villages, but their rendition differed radically from that of the peasants, thereby tending to obscure the identity of the rural sources of their tunes. Frigyesi does not emphasize these connections, nor does she explore or compare the performance contexts of the gypsies and peasants to any significant degree. Her focus is on how Bartók could 'feel really alive' among the peasants and why in this 'time out of life' he experienced 'happiness'. Instead of questioning how much he could understand of 'communal life' by remaining detached and 'silent about his thoughts and feelings', she suggests that this distance 'freed him from the burden of communication' and helped him to feel 'one with all – with nature and society' (p. 153). With such statements and assertions like 'only among them could he become really himself', the author weaves her own quasi-mythological tale that some could read as just another colonizer seeking in Otherness an escape from the problems of his own society. In Bartók's case, this may have included escape from the alienation and suicidal nihilism of the radicals themselves.

According to Frigyesi, this generation, anxious over national identity before

World War I, looked to Romanticism as much as to Bartók's discovery of an independent peasant music to help them reconceive Hungarian art. Crucial for them was the German Romantic idea that 'the literati of society are responsible for the rest of humanity' and that 'art had the power to reveal the truth . . . of human existence' (p. 67). Hungarian radicals sought 'to integrate their moral and political convictions into their aesthetics and expected the public to recognize and respond to such a message embedded in art' (p. 70). They agreed with Coleridge in his *Theory of Life* that 'value lies in discovering "unity in multitude" . . . and the task of the poetic imagination is to balance or reconcile opposite or discordant qualities' (p. 29).<sup>1</sup> Indeed the organicist theory they adopted as an 'antidote to the sentimentality of late romanticism' (p. 30) did not preclude internal contradictions and multiple styles. They believed that 'it is the totality of the multiple and complementary forms of expressions' that demonstrates 'the universal potential of art' (p. 93). Bartók's idea of 'polarizing themes and motives' and sections with 'multiple and contrasting functions' reflects this idea (pp. 165–6). These artists also concurred with Herder that 'the soul or center was the source of coherence, inexplicable and beyond anything shown through analysis of the structure' (p. 29). Frigyesi defines the coherence they sought through art as the attempt to capture 'all of reality, not only the depth of the soul and the abstract harmony of all-encompassing reality, but also all the common aspects of everyday life' (p. 95; however, she notes, for Lukács, 'finding the center of all things demands the annihilation of everyday life' (p. 115). 'Ultimately,' she writes, 'the [art]work is only about the soul [all the potentialities of the soul] and is responsible to the soul alone' (p. 165).

These ideas led to a search for origins in creativity and art. Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human*, well known in Hungary at the time, provided inspiration. In her study of the marginal notes that Bartók made in his own copies of this volume and others, Frigyesi makes a good case for Nietzsche's influence on the composer and his friends. She explains that their desire to understand more about the 'phenomena of life' – what Nietzsche considered the source of any 'true creation' – motivated Lukács to organize theatre, Ady to write journalism, Balázs to join the Communist party, and Bartók and Kodály to travel in the countryside (pp. 96, 98, 148). They understood that the elements of everyday life could be 'symbols of a deeper reality' and sought in the 'otherness' of different lives access to a fuller range of experiences as well as insight into their own lives and practices (p. 162). Frigyesi explains Bartók's ethnomusicological project as a 'search for phenomena, that is, a search for those basic forces that governed the inner life of the musical organicism' (p. 104). In studying peasant music, he hoped to learn 'the most fundamental elements' of music itself, those untouched by the 'corruption of mass culture' (p. 107).

Closely linked with this idea of phenomena was their belief that phenomena revealed an 'unchanging and permanently valid reality that transcended the subjective ego of the artist'. For Hungarian radicals, folk art represented a certain ideology making possible 'the individual's primordial oneness with society' and 'a feeling of wholeness without conflict'. Because Bartók found in folk music an expression of nature, he was convinced that it was composed 'collectively and spontaneously'. In this, it seemed inherently superior to art music and offered him inspiration in his search to 'resolve the contradiction between individual expression and communal art' (pp. 97–9).

Throughout this discussion, Frigyesi argues that we should not 'equate the

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Hints towards the Formation of a More Comprehensive Theory of Life*, ed. Seth B. Watson (London, 1848), as quoted in *Biographia literaria*, ed. George Watson (London, 1965), i, 174; ii, 12.



culture of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy with that of Vienna' (p. 1). Hungarian artists' notions of originality in art were clearly different from those of their Viennese contemporaries, and the same rhetoric concerning coherence, organicism, and truthfulness of the soul and modernism in Vienna could have quite different meanings in Budapest. The opening of Tamás Kóbór's 1901 novel *Budapest* with 'a working-class girl dressed up as an elegant middle-class woman' (p. 43) suggests a gap between appearance and reality reminiscent of Wittgenstein's Vienna. But, unlike their Viennese contemporaries, Frigyesi points out, Hungarian artists chose not to ignore such contradictions by retreating to the 'garden', 'the ideal and imaginary territory where morality and an order of life could develop free from social obligations and conventions' (p. 40). For Hungarian modernists, the aesthetics, message and social function of art were 'radically different'. They shared with Viennese modernists the idea of an organic form characterized by the 'inner necessity' of its parts, the elevation of nature as a model, and the notion that artworks 'achieve coherence' (p. 29). Like Schoenberg, Bartók too 'condemned the empty display of folk characteristics at the expense of artistic integrity' (p. 23). But, for the Viennese, nature and artistic originality implied 'the return to the individual's own self' whereas for Bartók they meant return to the 'phenomena' present in folk music (p. 106). Bartók may have projected Viennese organicist paradigms on the style of peasant music 'as if style were an artwork' (p. 107), but he also challenged Schoenberg's dismissal of folk music as 'basically incompatible' with modern art, Frigyesi explains, by reinterpreting the idea of 'stylistic unity'. Instead of a product of what Webern called the 'utmost relatedness between all component parts' (p. 25) or 'a web of inner motivic repetitions and references' (p. 37), Bartók based his notion of unity and coherence on character or spirit. This allowed him to incorporate multiple styles, even to 'collapse them into one melody' (p. 126). While in some ways the Hungarian concept of humanity seems just as abstract as the Viennese one, Bartók's incorporation of folk elements from a range of ethnic styles reflects the Hungarian radicals' belief in ethnicity as 'the historical prerequisite of individuality' (p. 94).

The Hungarian radicals also differed from the Viennese modernists in their attitude toward style in art. Whereas the Viennese 'tended to strip art from its conventions to fit their demand for the honesty of expression', 'eliminated the notion of style as a common language or tradition' and thereby 'cut themselves off from art that had meaning in a broader social context' (pp. 93, 42), Hungarian artists, by contrast, refused to 'renounce notions of genre and style'. They did not want to give up 'the possibility of communal art' (pp. 39, 42). It is not altogether clear why these Hungarians saw 'the communality of art' and its 'communicative power' as integral to their notions of 'coherence and transcendence' (p. 95). But, even as Viennese and Hungarian artists both rebelled against the superficial aspects of bourgeois life and ultimately accepted isolation as 'the only possible context for artistic expression' (p. 42), the politicized nature of Hungarian art, Frigyesi posits, paradoxically made their expression of 'existential loneliness ... a uniting, almost political force' (p. 203).

The second half of the book examines the aesthetic ideas of Bartók, Ady and Lukács, Bartók's search to create a stylistic synthesis of folk and modern elements, and the literary and musical context for his major work from this period, *Bluebeard's Castle* (1911). Using the radicals' diaries, letters and pencil markings in the margins of books they owned, and examining the theory and practice of these three artists, Frigyesi concludes that they shared many of the same preoccupations. These included 'the problem of how to live and feel life and how to then grasp the essence of the great feeling of life in art' (p. 158); 'the idea of creating art from an intense encounter with social segments and

lifestyles sharply different from their own' (p. 193); the goal of grasping the 'totality of life' in art, a totality 'made transparent not through a linear process but by the coexistence of elements in their simple and pure being' (p. 163); and the belief in love as the 'central experience . . . the metaphor for life and on a broader level for cosmic reality' (p. 177). Their 'fundamental trust that life somehow holds all ideas that can be felt or dreamt, and also the opposite of all these ideas' is almost postmodern (p. 182); however, their belief that opposites can 'become part of one and the same great feeling' is quintessentially modernist (p. 149). In an interesting tangent, Frigyesi links radicals' belief in the 'capacity of language to grasp what is most essential in life' and in transcendence as 'the token of truthfulness' with the mysticism of East European Jewish philosophy (p. 187).

Frigyesi argues that Bartók was the only artist among the radicals to integrate folk material successfully 'into a coherent, modern, and personal style' (p. 104). To show this, instead of carefully examining the folksongs he published beginning in 1902 and the presence of folk materials in his works from this period, she devotes her first extended musical analysis to a mature work, Bartók's First Piano Concerto (1926). Her purpose is to demonstrate how folk music served as the 'seed from which the new style grew in a coherent manner' (p. 108). Using numerous musical examples, she shows how the composer forged a modern tonal language from the 'tonal potentialities' inherent in folk melodies, built rhythmic patterns from compressed folk rhythms, and used *ostinati* constructed from distorted folk models as the 'cohesive, centrifugal force that balances the destructive, centripetal energy of the overflowing passion' (p. 138). At the end of this discussion, she attributes five characteristics to Bartók's mature pieces and argues that these began to develop around 1907, a crucial turning-point in Bartók's style.

Bartók's field trip to Transylvania in 1907 instigated a crisis, Frigyesi argues, stemming not so much from his discovery of pentatonicism in peasant music as from his realization of the need for distance 'from his previous simplistic vision of reality' (p. 150). He also felt 'he was fulfilling a mission (preserving the remnants of an old culture)' (p. 152). To examine these feelings, Frigyesi looks at his letters to prominent women in his life – his mother and sister, Stefi Geyer with whom he was in love, Emma Gruber, an older Jewish friend, and Marta Ziegler, whom he married in 1909. Frigyesi sees these women as another kind of Other that would help him 'come to terms with his own self' (p. 198). They provided the context for understanding womanliness or the feminine, love and loneliness. Frigyesi notes that the radicals 'valued the feminine orientation toward life' (p. 219) and indeed, like the Romantics, considered the feminine synonymous with life itself. That Bartók's unrequited love for Stefi Geyer coincided with his musical crisis in 1907 may have contributed to his re-evaluation of life, spirit and the soul.

Frigyesi sees in *Bluebeard's Castle* the reflection of Bartók's disappointment in love and the culmination of changes in his ideology that began in 1907. It is a play about the 'yearning within the soul' for intimacy and the 'transformation of feelings' within it (pp. 222, 226). 'Underlying the entire design of the play is the realization that the self does not know its secrets and that these can be revealed only if the soul is opened – by the Other' (p. 227). If in the play Bluebeard can never become one with Judith – the Other that is woman – in the music Bartók succeeds in merging his own voice with that of peasant music – the Other of Hungarian national music. He does not accomplish this by employing distinct folk melodies or rhythms, thereby maintaining their separateness from his own personal language. Instead he 'absorbs' this music to such an extent that, as in later works like the First Piano Concerto, what appears as distorted folk music 'probably came to him more or less completely in a moment of inspiration' (p. 128). Frigyesi may be exaggerating what it took

to produce such hybrids, but her point is to argue that in this work, and many others, the Bartókian and folk-derived elements 'became one and the same thing' (p. 235).

To describe the stylistic synthesis Bartók achieved in *Bluebeard's Castle*, Frigyesi devotes over 60 pages. This includes a closer look at Bartók's field-work methods in which he tried to separate the personal or improvisatory variations of peasant music from the 'general idea' represented, its 'essence'. In *Bluebeard's Castle*, she explains, Bartók called for 'an effortless speech-centred singing' resembling the 'hardened rubato' characteristic of peasant singing (pp. 237–8). In his orchestral material he used elements of the Hungarian pastorelle and emphasized lyricism over narrative, both clear breaks with the Romantic tradition in which they played more peripheral roles. From her perspective, the 'gentleness' represented by pastorelle music is what unites Judith and Bluebeard and what is preserved after the struggle that destroys their happiness (p. 276). Character, then, is what helps the work to cohere.

In apparent contradiction with her earlier articulation of differences between Bartók's and Webern's notions of coherence, Frigyesi admits that coherence in this work also comes from the 'intricate web of motivic connections'. Most melodic-rhythmic elements derive from a small number of thematic types. Unlike Webern's method, however, 'Bartók's underlying idea here was to establish a framework in which all things are potentially alien to one another even though all derive from the same source' (p. 281). In other words, 'everything is variation and, potentially, the polar opposite of everything else' (p. 292). That 'coherence manifested itself not in consistency and continuity but in polar oppositions', she concludes, 'became the foundation of Bartók's conceptualization of modern style' (p. 293). Such analysis is convincing as far as it goes. It would also have been useful to look at other elements of this music perhaps just as responsible for aural coherence, such as its pitch language, or at least to cite the work of scholars who have demonstrated other kinds of coherence in Bartók's music.

In many ways, the book itself has a 'Bartókian form'. Its 'sections have multiple and contrasting functions'; its introduction presents 'all the thematic ideas in a concentrated manner'; its conclusion superimposes 'the functions of apotheosis and recapitulation' (p. 166); and its form is circular. In her 'Afterword', the author points out that 'all its chapters tell somewhat the same story' and indeed she does return often to the same themes. Her aim is to 'provide a coherent picture of a milieu' and to connect 'the different facets of life within the same environment' (p. 16). The writing is clear and eloquent; however, the structure is characterized by discontinuities rather than a linear narrative and this makes reading it somewhat arduous. The frequent shift of perspective within chapters and from one chapter to the next often involves leaving behind tantalizing references that are never mentioned again, such as those to certain Schoenberg pieces at the end of Chapter 1 and to Bartók's *Cantata profana* at the end of Chapter 4.

The overwhelming focus on Bartókian coherence in this volume has some disadvantages as well. Only passing reference is made to early works such as *Kossuth* (1903) and the *Bagatelles*. Probably because so much scholarship exists on the subject, there is no discussion of the folk music Bartók actually collected, and none of the folk settings he published during those early years. More important, some other major influences on Bartók during this period are absent. These include Strauss, whose *Also sprach Zarathustra* was performed in Budapest in 1902; this work may have introduced Bartók to Nietzsche, and Bartók published an article about Strauss in 1905. Frigyesi also neglects Reger, whose music Bartók was studying the same year as his musical turning-point, 1907. Schoenberg and Webern may today represent Viennese modernism, and since Bartók travelled to Vienna in 1905 he may have encountered them



or their music; but, according to László Somfai, the first Schoenberg work Bartók heard was his First Quartet, and that was in 1908.<sup>2</sup> Comparison of the Hungarian modernists with the Viennese seems a construction more relevant today than it would have been back then.

Also missing is any discussion relating Hungarian modernism to that of the rest of Western Europe. One of the most important sources of new ideas for Bartók was Debussy. Bartók spent some time in Paris in 1905, and Kodály brought back Debussy's scores from Paris in 1907. It would be interesting to know whether the pentatonicism in Debussy's music influenced how Bartók heard it in peasant music, and whether its presence in Debussy's music was part of its appeal. Did Bartók understand pentatonicism as something old (and/or exotic) that could be used to function as something new? Somfai has argued that finding old modal scales, fourths and pentatonicism in Debussy's music may have increased Bartók's confidence as to the legitimacy of using folk elements in a modern style.<sup>3</sup> Many today believe that Bartók first encountered Maeterlinck through Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and that this opera inspired the musical recitation of *Bluebeard's Castle*.

To the extent that symbolist detachment and idealist optimism inform its overall perspective, the focus and tone of this book may disturb some readers. The Hungarian radicals believed in art's 'potential to change the public consciousness' (p. 70); but their faith in the 'transcendental potential of art' (p. 35) can be seen as an escape into aesthetic theory. Lukács's goal was lofty: 'The essence of form is to defeat oppositions, to conquer opposing forces, to create coherence from every centrifugal force, from all that has been deeply and eternally alien to each other before and outside of this form' (pp. 163, 195); so too was Ady's 'ultimate message' – 'a will to life that conquers everything, in spite of everything' (p. 192). Even if Lukács and other radicals were vehemently opposed to the Austro-Hungarian empire, in the real world this discourse sounds colonialist.

Today, we need to rethink the problems of historically dominated peoples. If Frigyesi can admit that the radicals themselves 'could see the deep problems of the capitalist phase in the experience of the more developed European countries' (p. 49), then why does she not raise questions about their call for 'a full acceptance of the capitalist economy' as intertwined with the project of modern art and individual rights (p. 74)? This may have sounded like progress, especially to the assimilated Jews, Germans and industrial aristocrats in Budapest who were 'prominent' participants in the radicals' milieu (p. 73). They had something to gain from opposing the Hungarian nationalists in power. Certainly it was crucial at the time to argue for a 'larger conception of Hungarianness' (p. 82). And, as Frigyesi points out, Bartók benefited from 'this circle of intellectuals, . . . the only milieu in Hungary that accepted' him (p. 88). Indeed, 'Jewish salons' were his 'first supportive audience' (p. 81). But now we recognize that capitalism, even as it opens up space for more players, can lead to the substitution of one kind of oppression for another.

A densely argued, deeply philosophical and well-researched story told with passion and commitment, *Bela Bartók and Turn-of-the-Century Budapest* makes it clear that Hungarian culture should not be perceived as peripheral to that of Western Europe. Hungarian intellectuals were preoccupied with many of the same issues as their Western contemporaries. Frigyesi shows how Bartók and his music played a central role in helping them to reconceive a new national identity. With sensitivity to the complexities involved in any interdisciplinary

<sup>2</sup> Vera Lampert and László Somfai, 'Bartók, Béla', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, 1980), ii, 197–225 (p. 207).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

work, she also makes an important contribution to our understanding of how an ideology, formed within a community of shared concerns, can inform a range of musical choices, possibly over the span of an entire lifetime.

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Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian: From Cabaret to Concert Hall*. Oxford Monographs on Music. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999. viii + 596 pp. ISBN 0 19 816458 0.

THE great and unforeseen development of Satie studies over the last two decades has been remarkably productive. Ornella Volta and Robert Orledge in particular deserve credit for indefatigable detective work on sources which is, in both cases, reflected in numerous publications – albums, exhibition catalogues, illustrated volumes, editions of collected writings, correspondence, essays and monographs. Steven Moore Whiting, too, has long been a leading Satie specialist, alongside not only Volta and Orledge, but also Alan M. Gillmour, Patrick Gowers, Nancy Perloff, Roger Shattuck, Grete Wehmeyer, Nigel Wilkins and, more recently, for instance, Courtney S. Adams. Whiting has been recognized, ever since his 1984 thesis,<sup>1</sup> as an authority on Satie's work, especially, as is shown by several important essays,<sup>2</sup> its cultural and sociological context. He has also recently published an edition of long-lost Satie cabaret songs reconstructed after examining the composer's sketchbooks in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and the Houghton Library, Harvard.<sup>3</sup> The present volume, a persuasive synthesis of musical analysis, cultural history, literary criticism and biography with a depiction both of milieu and of Paris more generally, is a product of 20 years of intensive investigation.

At the outset it must be said that Whiting has succeeded in presenting, within a panorama rich in detail and full of cross-references, the golden age of Montmartre cabaret, with Satie in its midst making his particular contribution to the rise and fall of this contradictory artistic movement. Whiting concentrates on turn-of-the-century bohemia in his portrayal of this oddball up from Honfleur, in a clear attempt to offer another dimension to the major earlier studies by Volta, with their emphasis on dance,<sup>4</sup> and by Orledge, who was concerned with compositional methods and techniques.<sup>5</sup> For pages on end Whiting's presentation is sparkling, gripping and, despite all its complexities, readable and accessible. In it we can share the joke when Satie's puns and verbal tricks are accounted for and explained. It is pleasing to note that there is no trace of hagiography here; Whiting escapes the dangers he refers to early on (see p. 4). His explanations of amusing facts never spoil our enjoyment of the musical works in question or of the texts on which they are based, and fortunately there is little to suggest an excessively monofocal concentration on the Montmartre period in the discussion of later works. It is in

<sup>1</sup> Steven Moore Whiting, 'Erik Satie and Parisian Musical Entertainment, 1888 to 1909' (M.Mus. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1984).

<sup>2</sup> Steven Moore Whiting, 'Erik Satie and Vincent Hyspa: Notes on a Collaboration', *Music and Letters*, 77 (1996), 64–91; 'Musical Parody and two *oeuvres posthumes* of Erik Satie', *Revue de musicologie*, 81 (1995), 215–34; 'Music on Montmartre', *The Spirit of Montmartre: Cabarets, Humor and the Avant-Garde, 1875–1905*, ed. Phillip Dennis Cate and Mary Shaw (New Brunswick, NJ, 1996), 158–97.

<sup>3</sup> Erik Satie, *Neuf chansons de cabaret et de caf'conc'*, ed. Steven Moore Whiting (Paris, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Ornella Volta, *Satie et la danse* (Paris, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> Robert Orledge, *Satie the Composer* (Cambridge, 1990).