Kostjukovec, L. F. *Kantovaja kul'tura v Belorussii*, 'Vyšejšaja škola', Minsk, 1975. 96 pages. Musical illustrations.

Before the commencement of the Holy Liturgy, during the priest's communion, in and about the church on a pilgrimage or patronal feast-day, it has been a long-standing custom for Byelorussians to join together in the singing of paraliturgical hymns or *kanty*. Frequently composed in a popular metre, and sung to melodies drawn or adapted from folk-music, they have unquestionably become an integral part of Byelorussian folklore. The ethnographical collections of Sejn, Ramanaŭ, Nikifaraŭski and others, have published many examples of *kanty*, whereas historians of Byelorussian literature such as Karskij and Harecki have shown the significant part played by this art-form in the cultural and spiritual life of the nation. Many fine melodies and moving lyrics have become an integral part of the Byelorussian national heritage. It is a matter for regret that so little attention was paid before the Revolution to the history of Byelorussian liturgical and paraliturgical music, — generally considered by Russian and Polish authorities to be corrupt or degraded forms of their own national art; because of this, Byelorussian *kanty* have remained relatively unknown. Nevertheless, historians of East Slavic Church music such as A. Preobraženskij and N. Findeisen, have acknowledged the important part played by Byelorussian musicians in the introduction and adoptions of Western art-forms in Russia, and have described the manner in which much folk material passed into regular liturgical usage (see A. Preobraženskij, *Kul'tovaja muzyka v Rossii*, Leningrad, 1924, pp. 57 ff). The present study by Kostjukovec, though contributing little that is fundamentally new to our knowledge of this relatively unexplored field, at least breaks a fifty year gap in scientific musical research, and marks what may well be a new beginning.

In addition to the main section, which deals with the content and style of Byelorussian *kanty* and *psalmy* (pp. 36-95), the author describes the general background against which the genre grew up — verse forms (pp. 3-9), the cultural milieu (pp. 9-11), the Reformation (pp. 11-15) the lay con-

fraternities (pp. 15-24), the influence of Byelorussia on Russian art (pp. 24-33) and the musical culture of Byelorussia in the 16th and 17th centuries. Most of these aspects have been adequately investigated elsewhere and at greater length by other authors, though it is useful to be reminded of the relevant facts. The sections on the Reformation and on the confraternities in Byelorussia, are sketchy and cast no fresh light on the evolution of the *kant*, being merely reiterations of official historiography.

For a musicologist, presumably having access to the rich collections of the Kiev Academy of Sciences and the Historical Museum in Moscow, the chapter on 16th and 17th century musical culture in Byelorussia is incomprehensibly sparse. Not a word is said of the early *Irmologia*, some of which, like the *Supraśl* collection of 1601, show clearly the influence of folk-music in some of the local chants (eg. *Mirski napieŭ*). Certainly a study of the origins of *kanty* in the Polish collections of Zaremba and Kawieczynski, would have provided the student with a clearer conspectus, than a wearying rehearsal of 19th century pastiches such as:

Dobra-b nam było
Śčasna-b nam było,
Kali-b Ruś usja ...
Zaadno było. (p. 41)

The main part of the work, dealing with the texts and melodies of the *kant stricto sensu*, is of greater value. Popular carols, crib-play chants, and seasonal hymns are studies in their original versions and comparisons are drawn with Ukrainian forms. The author has also provided a number of three-part harmonisations from contemporary manuscripts. As an introduction to the *kant*, Kostjukovec's work is of considerable importance. If it contains nothing particularly original, it collates and summarises much unco-ordinated material, and provides some recent bibliographical references. It will prove a useful handbook for those wishing to embark upon a more serious study of the subject.

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