

## Rebecca Mitchell, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Russian History  
Middlebury College  
[rmitchell@middlebury.edu](mailto:rmitchell@middlebury.edu)

Department of History  
Axinn Center at Starr Library 239  
Middlebury, VT 05753

### Research Interests

Russian empire, Soviet Union, Caucasus (especially Georgia), global intellectual/cultural history, music and global power structures, nationalism/imperialism, fin-de-siècle culture (emphasis Russian Silver Age), émigré communities, ethnicity and empire, religion and society.

### Employment History

Associate Professor, Department of History, Middlebury College: July 2021-present  
Assistant Professor, Department of History, Middlebury College: January 2016-present  
Affiliated Scholar, Department of History, Middlebury College: August 2015-December 2015  
Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of History, Oberlin College: August 2013- June 2015  
Postdoctoral Fellow, Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies, Miami University: August 2011- July 2013

### Education

Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC): May 2011 (Russian History)  
M.A., Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada: October 2004 (European and Russian Area Studies)  
St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia: Russian Language Studies (in conjunction with M.A. Degree): May-August 2002; September 2003-July 2004  
M.Mus., Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University (SMU), Dallas, Texas: May 2001 (Piano Performance)  
A.R.C.T., Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto: January 1999 (Piano Performance)  
B.Mus., University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada: May 1998 (with Great Distinction) (Piano Performance)

### Monographs

*Sergei Rachmaninoff* (Critical Lives Series) (Reaktion Press, 2022)  
*Nietzsche's Orphans: Music, Metaphysics and the Twilight of the Russian Empire* (Yale University Press, 2015). Winner of 2016 W. Bruce Lincoln Book Prize (biannual, Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, "for an author's first published monograph or scholarly synthesis that is of exceptional merit and lasting significance for the understanding of Russia's past")

### Peer-Reviewed Articles and Book Chapters

"Russian Musical Interpretations of Nietzsche," in *Nietzsche and Music: Philosophical Thoughts and Musical Experiments*, ed. Aysegül Durakoglu, Michael Steinmann and Yunus Tuncel (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022), 408-430.  
"Rachmaninoff and Moscow Musical Life," in *Rachmaninoff and His World*, ed. Philip Bullock (University of Chicago Press, 2022), 26-55.  
"Scriabin and the Russian Silver Age," in *Demystifying Scriabin*, ed. Kenneth Fokert-Smyth and Vasilis Kallis (Boydell & Brewer, 2022), 26-45.  
"Musical Metaphysics' in Late Imperial Russia," in *The Oxford Handbook of Russian Religious Thought*, ed. Randall Poole, Caryl Emerson, George Pattison (Oxford University Press, 2020): 379-395.

- “V poiskakh orfeia: muzyka i irratsionalizm v predrevoliutsionnoi Rossii (1905-1917),” [“In Search of Orpheus: Music and Irrationality in late imperial Russia, 1905-1917,”] in *Irratsional’noe v russkoi kul’ture* [*The Irrational in Russian Culture*], ed. Julia Mannherz, (Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2020): 160-192.
- “In Search of Russia: Sergei Rakhmaninov and the Politics of Musical Memory after 1917,” in *Slavonic and East European Review* 97:1 (January 2019): 136-168
- “Leonid Sabaneev’s *Apocalypse* and Musical Metaphysics after 1917,” in *Transcending the Borders of Countries, Languages and Disciplines in Russian Émigré Culture*, ed. Christoph Flamm, Roland Marti and Ada Raev (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), 231-246
- Guest Editor, “Music, Power and Resistance in Russia and the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Musicology* Special Issue, 33:03 (2016).
- “Introduction: Music and Power,” *Journal of Musicology* 33:03 (2016): 271-276.
- “Music and Russian Identity in War and Revolution, 1914-1922,” in *The Cultural History of Russia in the Great War and Revolution, 1914-1922*, ed. Murray Frame, Boris Kolonitskii, Steven Marks and Melissa Stockdale (Slavica Publishers, 2014), 221-243.
- “How Russian was Wagner? Russian Campaigns to Defend or Destroy the German Composer during the Great War (1914-1917),” in *Wagner in Russia, Poland and the Czech Lands – Musical, Literary, and Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Anastasia Belina-Johnson and Stephen Muir (Ashgate, 2013), 51-71.

### **Articles Currently in Progress**

- “Ivan Wyschnegradsky’s ‘Third Testament’: Music and the Russian Idea in Interwar Paris,” (invited submission for “Eurasians Abroad” Workshop and submission to journal *Kritika*, May 2022)\*\*
- “Baptized Tatars in Orthodox Russia: Conversion, Identity, and Music” (invited for submission to *Ab imperio*)
- “The Death of the Messiah: Music, Metaphysics and the Fate of Imperial Russia”
- “Old Believer Chant Meets Modernity”

### **Current Book Projects**

- Deconstructing the “Russian Idea”: Émigré Visions from Lenin to Putin
- Discordant Empire: Music, Belief and Identity in Imperial Russia

### **Book Reviews**

- Marian Razumovskaya, *Heinrich Neuhaus: A Life Beyond Music*. *Slavic Review* 79:1 (2020), 63-65.
- Anastasia Kostetskaya, *Russian Symbolism in Search of Transcendental Liquescence: Iconizing Emotion by Blending Time, Media, and the Senses*. Forthcoming in *Russian Review*.
- Simon Nicholls and Michael Pushkin, *The Notebooks of Alexander Scriabin*. In *Slavonic and East European Review* 97:4 (2019), 781-782.
- Marina Kostalevsky, ed., *The Tchaikovsky Papers*. In *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 54 (2020): 301-303.
- Kevin Bartig, *Sergei Prokofiev’s Alexander Nevsky*. *Russian Review* 78:2 (2019), 331.
- Robert Service, *The Last of the Tsars: Nicholas II and the Russian Revolution* in *History: Reviews of New Books* 46:3 (2018): 78-79.
- Hugo Drochon, *Nietzsche’s Great Politics*. In *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, February 2018. DOI: 10.1080/21567689.2018.1436910
- Pamela A. Jordan, *Stalin’s Singing Spy: The Life and Exile of Nadezhda Plevitskaya* in *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 59:1-2 (2017): 184-185.
- Kiril Tomoff, *Virtuosi Abroad: Soviet Music and Imperial Competition during the Early Cold War, 1945-1958: The American Historical Review* 121:5 (2016): 1782-1783.
- Anne Swartz, *Piano Makers in Russia in the Nineteenth Century* in *Russian Review* 74:3 (2015), 507-508.
- Kenneth Smith, *Skryabin, Philosophy and the Music of Desire*. *Russian Review* 73:2 (2014), 300-301.

Marina Frolova-Walker and Jonathan Walker, *Music and Soviet Power, 1917-1932 in Revolutionary Russia* 27:1 (2014): 79-81.

Sergii Plokhly, *The Cossack Myth: History and Nationhood in the Age of Empires*. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 48:3 (2014): 517.

Wayne Dowler, *Russia in 1913* in *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (XLVII, autumn): 444-446.

Edith Clowes, *Russia on the Edge: Imagined Geographies and Post-Soviet Identity*, in *Anthropology of East Europe Review* (vol. 29, no.2): 262-263.

Lynn Sargeant, *Harmony and Discord: Music and the Transformation of Russian Cultural Life*, in *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 54: 3-4 (2012): 554-555.

Olga Haldey, *Mamontov's Private Opera: The Search for Modernism in Russian Theater*, on H-Russia List, H-Net Reviews (Nov. 2011).

Kiril Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939-1953*, in *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 49: 3-4 (2007): 415-416.

Amy Nelson, *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia*, in *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 47: 3-4 (2005): 472.

### **Selected Academic Honours/Awards**

**Kathryn Wasserman Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation Grant (Middlebury College), 2022-23.**

**American Research Institute of the South Caucasus (ARISC) Junior Research Fellowship. Summer 2021.**

**Middlebury College International Travel Grant. 2019-20. (Cancelled due to COVID-19)**

**Paul Sacher Stiftung Fellowship. 2019-20. (2-month fellowship, second month postponed due to COVID-19)**

**W. Bruce Lincoln Book Prize. 2016.**

Jewish Music Forum Travel Grant. December 2015.

H.H. Powers Research Grant, Oberlin College. Summer 2014

Postdoctoral Fellow, Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies, Miami University. 2011-13

Department of History Widener Teaching Fellowship, UIUC. Spring 2011

Department of History Dissertation Writing Fellowship, UIUC. Fall 2010

List of University of Illinois Teachers Ranked as Excellent. Fall 2009, Spring 2010, Spring 2011

Conference Travel Grant, UIUC. March 2010

Graduate College Dissertation Travel Grant, UIUC. Spring 2009

Departmental Fellowship, UIUC. 2008-09

SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) Fellowship. 2005-08

Frederick S. Rodkey Memorial Prize for Russian History, UIUC. 2007

Pre-dissertation Summer Travel Grant, UIUC. May 2006

Dean of Graduate Studies Scholarship, Carleton University. 2003-04

OGS (Ontario Graduate Scholarship). 2003-04

Dean of Graduate Studies Entrance Scholarship, Carleton University. 2002-03

Carleton University Fellowship. 2002-03

Jed Mace Scholarship, SMU. 1999-2000, 2000-01

Meadows School of the Arts Artistic Merit Scholarship, SMU. 1999-2000, 2000-01

### **Invited Talks and Public Lectures**

“Rachmaninoff and His World”. Bard College Rachmaninoff Festival, August 2022.

“The Soviet Century: Artistic Propaganda in Service of the State”. Middlebury College Fridays at the Museum Series. Middlebury College, November 2017.

- “The Death of the Messiah: Aleksandr Scriabin and the Fate of Russia.” Oxford University (Oxford, UK), October 2017.
- “Russian Music in the Twilight of Empire,” Oxford Lieder Festival, Oxford University (Oxford, UK), October 2017.
- “Music in Revolutionary Russia: Lecture-Recital with Prof. Matthew Bengtson (University of Michigan).” Clifford Symposium, Middlebury College, September 2017.
- “The Death of the Messiah: Music and Russian Identity in War and Revolution.” University of Vermont (Burlington, VT), April 2017.
- “Distant Mirrors: Music in the Interwar Period, 1918-1939”. Preconcert talk (Middlebury, VT and Stowe, VT), February 2016.
- “Nietzsche's Orphans: Musical Metaphysics in the Age of Russian Nationalism (1905-1917)”  
Invited talk at the Aleksandr Brückner Institute (Halle, Germany), October 2015.
- “Aleksandr Scriabin: Aesthetic Utopia at the Twilight of the Russian Empire.” Lecture-recital with Matthew Bengtson, piano (Urbana, IL), Apr. 2015.
- “Shostakovich and Stalin.” Cleveland Symphony Orchestra (Cleveland, OH), Oct. 2013.
- “Patriotism, Nationalism and the Fate of Music in Russia’s Great War.” Ohio State University (Columbus, OH), Dec. 2011.
- “Russian Music and its Discontents.” Ohio State University (Newark, OH), Dec. 2011.
- “Shostakovich’s String Quartets: Between the Personal and the Political.” Pre-concert talk, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts (Urbana-Champaign), Dec. 2010.
- “Music and Salvation in Late Imperial Russia: A.N. Scriabin as Messiah.” Aleksanteri Institute (Helsinki, Finland), May 2009.
- “Filosofskie osnovaniia muzyki A. N. Skriabina”. Karl-Franzens-Universitet (Graz, Austria), Dec. 2007.

### **Conference Papers**

- “Ivan Wyschnegradsky’s ‘Third Testament’: Music and the Russian Idea in Interwar Paris,” (invited submission for “Eurasians Abroad” Workshop and submission to journal *Kritika*, May 2022)
- “Negotiating Orthodox Sound in the Caucasus: Chant Revival and Georgian National Identity”  
Accepted for 2021 AHA (Seattle, WA) and 2020 ASEEEES (Washington, DC). Withdrawn due to COVID-19.
- “The Sound of the Sacred: Old Believers in the Modern Age,” Accepted for 2020 ICCEES Conference (Montreal). Postponed until 2021 due to COVID-19.
- “Old Believer Chant Meets Modernity”. Presented at ASEEEES (San Francisco, CA), Nov. 2019.
- “Baptized Tatars” in Orthodox Russia: Conversion, Identity, and Song.” Presented at *Asia in the Russian Imagination* Conference. University of Utah (Salt Lake City, UT), March 2018; ASEEEES (Boston, MA), Dec. 2018
- “Finding ‘True’ Russian Orthodox Chant: Stepan Smolenskii and the Imperial Basis of a National Tradition.” Presented at ASEEEES (Chicago, IL), Nov. 2017.
- “‘Musical Metaphysics’ in Late Imperial Russia.” Presented at Symposium for the Oxford Handbook of Russian Religious Philosophy (Glasgow, U.K.), July 2017.
- “The Death of Russia’s Musical Messiah: Interpreting Aleksandr Scriabin During the Great War.”  
Presented at ASEEEES (Washington, D.C.), Nov. 2016.
- “‘Shostakovich and the Jews?’: Music, Memory and Soviet Jewish Identity after World War II”.  
Presented at the Jewish Studies Association (Boston), December 2015.
- “Leonid Sabaneev’s *Apocalypse* and Musical Metaphysics after 1917”. Presented at the conference “Russian Émigré Culture: Transcending the Borders of Countries, Languages, and Disciplines” (Saarbrücken, Germany), November 2015.
- “Embracing Melancholy: Rachmaninoff, ‘Russianness’ and the Politics of Musical Identity after 1917”.  
Presented at the Royal Music Association Conference (Birmingham, UK), Sept. 2015.
- “*Russkii* or *rossiiskii*? Defining Russian Music in the Age of Empire”  
Presented at “Music and Empire in East-Central Europe” Conference (Durham, UK), Oct. 2014.

- “Music and the Jewish Voice: Dmitrii Shostakovich as Post-Holocaust Memory Space”  
Presented at ASEEEES (Boston, MA), Nov. 2013.
- “National and Imperial? Music and the Politics of Identity in Late Imperial Russia, 1905-1917”  
Presented at “Music and Power in Russia, Eastern European and Eurasian History: Historical Problems and Perspectives” (Miami University of Ohio), March 2013
- “Performing Identity: Orthodoxy, Nationality and Liturgical Music in late Imperial Kiev.” ASEEEES (New Orleans, LA), Nov. 2012
- “Patriots Without a Nation: The Medtner Brothers in Moscow and the Tragedy of German Identity.”  
German Studies Association conference (Milwaukee, WI), Oct. 2012.
- “Musical Orthodoxy and Musical Heresy in late Imperial Russia.” Canadian Historical Association/Canadian Association of Slavists (Waterloo, Ontario), May 2012.
- “The Unwilling Orpheus: Sergei Rachmaninoff and the Russian *narod*.” ASEEEES (Washington, D.C.), Nov. 2011.
- “The Prophets of Orpheus: Writing about Music in the late Russian Empire, 1905-1917.” Russian and East European Music Conference (Oxford, UK), Oct. 2011.
- “Between Russia and Prussia: The Musical Metaphysics of the late Tsarist Empire, 1905-1917.”  
Conference: “Russian and Soviet Music: Rediscovery and Reappraisal” (Durham, UK), July 2011.
- “In Search of Orpheus: Music and Irrationality in late Imperial Russia, 1905-1915.” Workshop: “The Irrational in Russian History,” German Historical Institute (Moscow, Russia), April 2011.
- “Music After Babi Yar: Dmitrii Shostakovich and the Jewish Voice.” *Shostakovich Symposium: The Quartets in Context* (Urbana-Champaign), Feb. 2011.
- “Musical ‘Germanness’ and ‘Russianness’ in the Context of the Great War.” ASEEEES (Los Angeles, CA), Nov. 2010.
- “Orpheus’ Mission: Music and Nation in late Imperial Russia.” Midwest Russian History Workshop (Madison, WI), April 2010.
- “Musical ‘Germanness’ in late Imperial Russia: The Case of Nikolai Medtner.” BASEES conference (Cambridge, UK), March 2010.
- “Between Russia and Germany: The Medtner Brothers’ Search for a Musical Identity.” AAASS (Boston, MA), Nov. 2009.
- “Music and ‘Progress’ in late Imperial Russia: The Case of A.N. Scriabin.” AAASS (Philadelphia, PA), Nov. 2008.
- “Accursed Genius: Serfdom, Nationalism and Romantic Sentiment in Nineteenth Century Russia.”  
Dalhousie University (Halifax, Canada), March 2007.

### **Courses Taught**

Middlebury College. 2016-present

First Year Seminar 1432 (“Marx and Marxism”)

History 247 (“Tsars, Tsarinas and Terrorists: Imperial Russian History”)

History 248 (“The Soviet Experiment”)

History 307 (“Music, Power and Resistance in World History”), formerly HIST 116

History 313 (“Revolutionary Russia”)

History 316 (“Stalinism”)

History 336 (“Contested Kyiv”)

History 432 (“Russia’s Imperial Borderlands”)

History 600

History 700 (Senior Thesis workshop)

Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. 2021

NPTG 8537A (“US-Soviet Nuclear Security in Historical Context”)

Oberlin College. 2013-2015

First Year Interdisciplinary Seminar 056 (“Music and the Search for Unity in Russian History”)

History 107 (“Russian History I”)  
History 108 (“Russian History II”)  
History 203 (“Europe’s Crisis of Modernity, 1871-1914”)  
History 269 (“Music, Power and Resistance in European History”)  
History 275 (“The Enlightenment and its Discontents, 1750-1870”)  
History 338 (“Communism: Idea and Practice”)  
History 480 (“Russia’s Imperial Borderlands”)  
Miami University. 2011-13.  
History 400 (“Communism in Idea and Practice”)  
History 374 (“Imperial Russia”)  
History 375 (“The Soviet Union and Beyond”)  
History 330/Music 330 (“Music, Power and Resistance in World History”)  
Music 188 (“Music of Russia”)  
Instructor, UIUC. Spring 2011  
History 498 (“Music, Power and Resistance in World History”)

### **Administrative and Service Experience**

Curriculum Committee, Middlebury College (2021-2023)  
External member, Russian Department Search, Middlebury College (2021)  
External member, Russian Department Search, Middlebury College (2019-2020)  
Middlebury College Academic Judicial Board (2018-2019)  
Clifford Symposium Organizing Committee (2017): The Soviet Century: One Hundred Years of Russian Revolution  
Middlebury College Community Council (2017-2018)  
Middlebury College Russia School Abroad Faculty Advisory Committee (2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020)  
Middlebury College Admissions Advisory Committee (2016-2017)  
Organizer, International Conference “Music and Power in Russia, Eastern Europe and Eurasia: Historical Problems and Perspectives” (Miami University, February 28-March 2, 2013)  
Coordinator, Havighurst Center Faculty Seminar (Miami University, 2011-2012)  
Co-founder and vice-president, Russian, East European and Eurasian Music Study Group (subgroup of ASEES): 2010-2019

### **Professional Service**

PhD External Reader, Jari Parkkinen, University of Jyväskylä, Dept. of History (2021-2022)  
PhD External Reader, David Salkowski, Princeton University, Dept. of Music (2019-2021)  
External Reviewer, Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowships (IDRF): 2019-2020  
Chair, 2018 W. Bruce Lincoln Book Prize Committee (*Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies*)  
Editorial Board, Routledge *Russian and East European Music Series*  
Manuscript reviewer, *Canadian Slavonic Papers*; *Journal of Musicology*; *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*; *Kritika*; *Slavic Review*; organizer of conference panels

### **Other Professional Experience**

“Sergei Rachmaninoff”. Course offered at ESI College (for seniors). Middlebury, VT. 2021.  
“Russian Revolution”. Course offered at ESI College (for seniors). Middlebury, VT. 2018.  
Founder and Director, Russian and Eurasian Music Ensemble, UIUC. 2009-11  
Teaching and Research Assistant, UIUC. 2004-05; 2009-10  
Editorial Assistant, *Slavic Review*, UIUC. 2005-06  
Editor, European and Russian Studies Newsletter, Carleton University. 2002-03

### **Departmental Service (Middlebury College)**

#### **Senior Student Theses Advised**

Noah Fine, “The Influence of Western Culture on Soviet Citizens, 1946-1991” (Fall 2020-Winter 2021).

Rebecca Simon, “Soviet Jewish Identity after the Holocaust” (Fall 2018-Winter 2019)

Awarded the Mildred Virginia Osher History Prize, Middlebury College.

Taylor Gardner, “The Kennedys: A Family Tragedy” (Winter/Spring 2018)

Toni Cross, “A Tale of Two Ethnic Groups: The Legacies of Colonialism, Communism, Imperialism and Nationalism in the Construction of Moroccan Amazigh and Russian Volga Tatar Identities” (IGS Major, Winter/Spring 2018).

Awarded the Berthe O. Normano Prize, Middlebury College.

Michelle Kim, “From Human Guinea Pigs to Civil Society: The Development of Civil Society and Patriotism through the Anti-Nuclear Testing Movement of the 1970s-1990s” (Fall 2016-Winter 2017)

Fiona Maloney-McCrystle, “The Soviet Union and the Comintern: Disentangling Ideas of Intervention in the Spanish Civil War” (Fall 2016-Winter 2017)

#### **Language Training**

Russian: Fluent

German: Good (B2 Goethe Institute Examination)

French: Reading knowledge/basic spoken

Ancient Greek: Basic reading knowledge

Old Church Slavonic: Basic reading knowledge

Georgian: Reading knowledge/basic spoken

Ukrainian: Reading knowledge/basic spoken

#### **Professional Affiliations**

Member, American Historical Association (AHA): 2010-present

Member, American Research Institute for the South Caucasus (ARISC): 2020-present

Member, Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES): Lifetime member (joined 2008)

Member, Canadian Association of Slavists (CAS): Lifetime member (joined 2005)

#### **Citizenship**

**Canadian**

**US Permanent Resident**