

The illustrations for *Tchaikovsky Discovers America* are oil paintings, whose textures are evident on the printed page, done in the style of artwork of the late-nineteenth century (specified on the flyleaf). Their historical accuracy constitutes an essential element in the narrative, evoking their own sense of nostalgia for the adult of today. The example of the last illustration, mentioned above, shows the way in which they are integrated into the narration, adding to the story some elements left out of the text. In addition they are beautiful in themselves, presenting wonderful images of trains, drawing rooms, concert halls, and natural settings.

The emphasis on the train as the symbol for all that seemed splendid about America to Tchaikovsky is grounded in his actual amazement at the luxury afforded by American hotels and the straightforward, courteous and genuinely friendly service afforded him. Equally amazing to him was the unaffected modesty of Andrew Carnegie, whose Music Hall Tchaikovsky had been invited to inaugurate (the description of the concert itself is historically accurate) and the way that material interests did not prevent Americans of this type from taking an active interest in the arts. With hindsight, too, the choice of the train has a special resonance because the real-life Russian counterpart of the girl's father, Savva Mamontov (1841-1918), was also an extremely important patron of the arts. In 1904 his railway fortune, source of support for such Russian genius as Diaghilev and Chaliapin, was confiscated by the Czarist government on trumped-up charges, and the former philanthropist reduced to poverty. This may have happened long after the death of Tchaikovsky but it illustrates the reality of the theme of America-the-prosperous contrasting with Russia, where the roof is always falling in.

The more one reads this book and checks its presentation of an important composer and his music, the more one admires the way in which the facts and feelings about both have been shaped for the minds of the young.

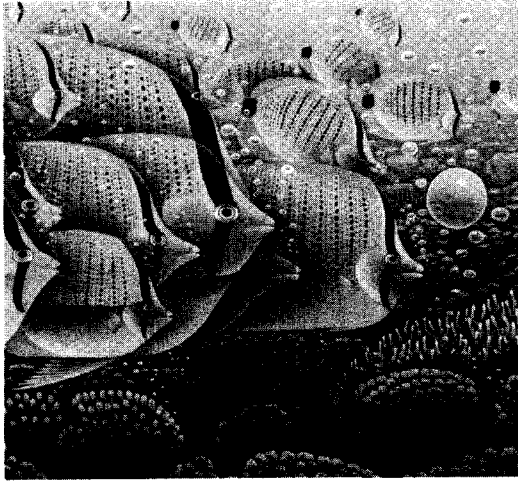
Mary Woodside is a professor of Music History at the University of Guelph. Her main research area is Russian music of the nineteenth century.

OCEAN, OCEAN, BURNING BRIGHT

Aska's Sea Creatures. Poems by David Day. Illus. Warabé Aska. Doubleday, 1994. 32 pp., \$18.95 cloth. ISBN 0-385-32107-4.

Warabé Aska has produced another brilliant picture book, *Aska's Sea Creatures*. Poetry is provided by David Day, and very good poetry it is. It is not Day's fault that the visuals here overwhelm the text. One cannot help but feel that these little poems deserve a chance to shine in their own right. Here they provide a very quiet oboe accompaniment to a virtual army chorus of powerfully aggressive voices.

From the blinding flash of the opening endpaper to the end of the book, readers are led through one of the brightest colour experiences to be found anywhere. This world is on and under the waves of the sea, and over it all burns the sun, hot red and fiery yellow. Filtered through the waves it casts luminescence and shadows such as we earthbound creatures can scarcely imagine. This sun shines on the sea creatures who love it and play with it. At times it is bounced



on a sea lion's nose, chased by a humpback whale, tossed about by dolphins, swallowed by the great white shark. Its shape is captured in the forms of puffer fish, seaweed bladders, a pregnant seahorse's belly, and in pearly bubbles. At book's end, it is flipped away by the caudal fin of a whale. Reds, yellows, blues and greens occupy 75% of each double page. Animals of the sea are accurately depicted anatomically and behaviorally. Viewers are invited into this world, and are apt to become quite absorbed in under-sea exploration, in identifying shapes half hidden from view.

David Day's poems would stand on their own, but might be best served in a presentation like the "small poems" of Valerie Worth, accompanied by modest visual statements. Here, though, it is their duty to serve the art of Warabé Aska. This is asking too much of them.

Allan Sheldon teaches English and Children's Literature at Medicine Hat College in Alberta.

MONTRÉAL, MES AMOURS

Montréal d'est en ouest, textes de Marie-Josée Cardinal, illustrations de Doris Barrette, éd. les 400 coups, Laval, Québec, 1995.

Les librairies Renaud-Bray ont décerné d'emblée à *Montréal d'est en ouest* leur distinction "coup de coeur" au rayon pour enfants. Il faut dire que le livre de Marie-Josée Cardinal et de Doris Barrette est remarquable: les informations qu'on y trouve sont nombreuses, bien organisées et racontées pour les tout jeunes; et surtout la présentation visuelle est étonnante: car si le texte, pédagogiquement habile, tâchant de faire participer le petit à l'histoire, de lui faire revivre par des mises en situations pleines d'atmosphère certains événements marquants, reste tout de même assez traditionnel, les images, elles, introduisent un désordre magique qui