

nevertheless affirmed. This stance, in turn, would seem to place the poet quite distant from the more purely aesthetic and linguistic projects of other “historical unbelievers,” such as Jastrun, Andrzejewski, and Parnicki.

Yet the sensitivity of Garstka’s readings for the most part belies the starkness of the initial historiosophical opposition and his analytically precocious, nuanced interpretations of various oeuvres should become critical touchstones in international Polish Studies for each of the writers in question. For the book is perhaps best read above all as a rich collection of essays on literary stances in the middle years of communist Poland. Although its title refers to the People’s Republic of Poland in general, and Garstka nowhere discusses the question of periodization, all of the primary texts he analyzes were written and published in the period 1950–78. Moreover, within this period, a pattern is discernible: the majority of texts in which history unfolds according to a master narrative come during the Stalinist years, while nearly all of the historically “unbelieving” texts come after the Thaw, yet before the beginning of the pre-Solidarity ferment in 1976. By highlighting the predilection of writers for relativizing and anti-foundational modes of thought in the period 1956–1970s, the book helps throw into relief the unique discursive universe of these years, so often misunderstood by the later democratic opposition and by post-Solidarity literary and cultural criticism, for which “living in truth” once again become axiomatic.

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***Audible States: Socialist Politics and Popular Music in Albania.*** By Nicholas Tochka. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. xiv, 263 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Figures. Tables. \$99.00, hard cover, \$35.00, paper. doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.238

Nicholas Tochka’s ingeniously-titled study of Albanian popular music confirms communism as ontologically authoritarian while challenging the notion of a musically-subjugated citizenry. The innovative study examines mechanisms of state control over artistic choices by engaging with the real lives and music making of individual artists. Along with a historiography of Albania’s popular music (including the pre-communist 1912–45 period), *Audible States* offers an ethnographically-rich and theoretically-coherent analysis of the state’s cultural politics, its governance of prime music institutions, and the roles of leading musicians and supervising bureaucrats in creating modern Albanian music. Particularly noteworthy is the literary quality of Tochka’s narrative: ethnography and theoretical insights are interspersed with story-like vignettes, often enlivened by interview excerpts from the author’s extensive contacts in the field and from archival sources in Tirana collected in late 2000s.

Chapter 1, “Administering Music,” covers Albanian folk music’s modernization post-1945 through the early 1960s, through folk song arrangements and art music adaptations. The Soviet planned economy model provided the blueprint for Albania’s effort to develop its own cultural economy; an effort, the author notes, understood “not as imposition but a common sense solution” (23) to the problem of the population’s backwardness. Tochka explicates the key concept of cultural economy in terms of “accumulation and redistribution” (35) of source materials. Within this highly centralized system of folk song collection and management existed bureaucratic protocols for, literally, harvesting folklore at its village sources (“*bruto* folklore” in the local parlance, 35), transferring it to professional composers in Tirana to be arranged and published, and redistributing the product back into the periphery. The net gain

was modernized music, distinctively Albanian, in the form of song books and other prescriptive repertoires. Importantly, this method of gleaned source material for new works across the folk, classical, and concert music repertoires extended to festival music.

Chapter 2, “Debating Song,” introduces the Festival of Song, a singular cultural-musical event founded in 1962 and still running. The Festival provides a narrative and analytical focal point for Tochka to dissect and examine intersections of state and popular music through pivotal moments of socialist Albania. Thus, chapters 2–4 address the break with the Soviets and adoption of the Chinese idea of cultural revolution (1965–69); the repressive anti-foreign measures directed by Enver Hoxha after the “liberal turn” of the 1972 Festival, which featured western pop-rock, and the subsequent artists’ purges; and Hoxha’s death in 1985 leading to Albania’s own period of *tranzicion* (1988–92), which aimed at musical pluralism and the “liberation’ of Albanian song from its socialist period and its integration with European styles” (149). The last chapter, “Promoting Albania,” addresses preoccupations with Albanian’s European image, the influx of private capital and recording technology, and the “elites’ mixed endorsements of a postsocialist program” (13).

The first Festival (1962), marked the birth of Albanian “light music” (*muzikë e lehtë*), and the Festival has remained the key and only national platform for the presentation, and transformation, of popular music, including, since 2004, the song selection for Albania’s participation in the Eurovision Song Contest. Absent an introductory definition, the reader will have to absorb a good deal of the text to learn what specific styles/sub-genres constitute the field of Albanian popular music. Early on, it was *estrada*, a curious mix of popular theater and music along with a few neighboring influences, notably the Italian *canzona* music; this was followed in later years by Yugoslav and western pop/rock. The definition of “economy” raises similar definitional issues. Even understood generically as “management of resources,” the Albanian music economy, as explicated here, lacks the exchange value to be truly considered an economic product. With the only recording studio and music broadcast in the country run by Radio-Television in Tirana, a commercial music market was non-existent. The author persuasively demonstrates that it is the state’s over-investment in, and masterful management of, “light music” as symbolic capital that allowed the command economy to stand for a market economy. This absence of even a rudimentary form of a music market speaks to Albania’s exceptionalism even within the context of comparable communist systems.

There is much more to be valued in Tochka’s study, including his sympathetic but critical appraisals of collaborators’ revisionist takes on socialism and its orderly culture. This book is a major contribution to Europeanist ethnomusicology, and an excellent read for any scholar interested in the political economy of music or in cultural histories of the Cold War.

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***Beau Monde on Empire’s Edge: State and Stage in Soviet Ukraine.*** By Mayhill C. Fowler. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017. xvi, 282 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. \$75.00, hard bound.  
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The early history of Soviet theater and stage is often told from a Russocentric viewpoint, with Moscow and Mikhail Bulgakov figuring prominently in the narrative.