

Making New Music in Cold War Poland: The Warsaw Autumn Festival, 1956–1968.

By Lisa Jakelski. California Studies in 20th-Century Music Series, no. 19. Oakland: University of California Press, 2016. xv, 272 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. \$65.00, hard bound.
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Lisa Jakelski's *Making New Music in Cold War Poland* is an outstanding book. It offers an original and innovative view of the history of the Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music, founded in 1956. At the same time, with its vivid group of protagonists the book's dramaturgy is worthy of an adventure novel. Above all, it is a story about people. People whose commitment, skills, position in the network of social relations, and personal experiences determined the concept of the festival and its reception on both sides of the Cold War division of Europe.

The book is composed of six chronologically-arranged chapters. However, in each of them Jakelski explores different aspects of social interactions in the framework of the Warsaw Autumn in the long 1960s and looks for an answer to her "leit-motif" question: what impact did they have on the variability of values, ideas and practices associated with the concept of new music?

In the first chapter the author describes the origins of the festival, which coincided with the post-Stalin thaw. The Warsaw Autumn project is discussed in the context of international relations (east-west confrontation) and as an attempt to find "an institutional solution to an isolation problem" (20). In the second chapter, Jakelski focuses on the "discourse of the Warsaw Autumn as an empty frame" (36) and on the consequences of looking for a festival formula that would guarantee a balance between stylistic priorities, a need to ensure international visibility, and limitations stemming from Poland's geopolitical situation. The third chapter is devoted to the festival audiences, to their "listening practices and concert-hall behaviors" (62), which influenced the negotiating of the contemporary music category and confirmed the vital social role of the festival. In the fourth chapter the author examines the question of mobility around the Warsaw Autumn, of the flow of ideas, people, and works as well as money and prestige, which determined the festival practice of contemporary music, both on the level of official "international" exchanges and informal contacts, referred to as "transnational" (89). The fifth chapter offers a closer look at the determinants of programming choices, which depended on the geopolitical origin of artists and works. The last chapter of the book is devoted to the challenge the Warsaw Autumn organizers had to face in 1968 after the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. Jakelski shows that the elements of key importance to the existence of the festival (state patronage and the confrontational potential) became an impediment to mobility at the time. She thus confirms the unstable status of the concept of new music as emerging in the process of continuous negotiations in changing conditions.

Jakelski's book contains many threads hitherto missing from or insufficiently explored in the published literature. For example, the question of diplomatic skills of the Warsaw Autumn organizers, who pursued their objectives in a strategic game with the authorities. From very persuasive examples of how works and composers were categorized we learn that, on the one hand, east-west divisions were blurred, as were differences in styles and techniques, and on the other, the duration of musical works (in minutes) was manipulated in a way to avoid accusations of excess of avant-garde music and lack of proportions between the repertoire from socialist countries and that from the west.

What is also novel in Jakelski's book is a reconstruction of the search for new music in the "people's democracies," a process that led to performances of unofficial Soviet music at the festival, and an emphasis placed on the role of the Warsaw festival

as a “catalyst for transformations within the Eastern Bloc” (137). Stressing the practical negotiation of the idea of new music in the Warsaw Autumn milieu, Jakelski brings to light the “progressive” repertoire from eastern Europe, all too often pushed to the peripheries of the history of twentieth-century music. In this, her narrative is not devoid of analytical aspects, which make the repertoire in question more “tangible.”

Jakelski’s study draws on extensive archival research, revealing “treasures” the potential of which has so far gone unnoticed even by Polish twentieth-century music scholars. The author impresses with her interpretative insight—her thorough and nuanced understanding of the phenomena she describes as if she herself had been an eyewitness to the events of the past. All this makes Jakelski’s book mandatory reading not only for those interested in Europe’s Cold War musical life, but also for all those who are not indifferent to socio-cultural turmoil of the twentieth century that still resonates today.

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Into the Spotlight: New Writing from Slovakia. Ed. and Trans. Magdalena Mullek and Julia Sherwood. Bloomington: Three String Books, 2017. xiii, 185 pp. Illustrations. Photographs. \$24.95, paper.
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The 2010s have seen an exponential rise in the number of works of Slovak literature translated into English. In Czechoslovakia, Slovak literature had been internationally eclipsed by Czech literature and the expectations it aroused, most regrettably from the 1960s, when the variety of themes, perspectives, and styles that Magdalena Mullek celebrates in her introduction to this anthology was born. In a May 2015 Literature Across Frontiers report on the quantity of translated literature published in the British Isles between 1990 and 2012, Alexandra Büchler and Gloria Trentacosti consider Slovak literature one of the most seriously under-represented, a perception also reflected by the Three Per Cent database at the University of Rochester. Mullek and her co-editor, Julia Sherwood, have been leading figures in its emergence; Mullek also contributed translations to the conceptually very different 2015 *Dedalus Book of Slovak Literature*, edited by Peter Karpinský, while Sherwood’s translations of novels (with Peter Sherwood) have helped transform the availability of contemporary Slovak fiction to English-speaking readers. At the time of writing (January 2018), one cannot yet speak of a breakthrough work or author, but the scene is being set.

Into the Spotlight contains nineteen mostly very short stories or extracts by sixteen living Slovak authors, taken with one exception from the twenty-first century, and designed to whet the reader’s appetite. Though it resembles a “taster menu” for a target audience of time-poor publishers, the clever choice of texts and skill of the translators make the whole volume a genuine twenty-first-century reading experience, fast and marked by repeated bursts of intensity, disorientation, sustained anxiety, and fleeting joy. The criteria for selection allow the editors to showcase writers whose roots lie in every decade from the 1960s to the 2010s, but the shifts of style are smooth, reflecting the continuities of the period and careful ordering to emphasize the affinities.

All the pieces instantly embed the reader in a particular character’s perspective, and frequently fluctuate between thought, experience, and the processing of that experience. Most constitute variations on twenty-first-century loneliness, in which external homogeneity (middle-aged male or female, adolescent, mother, or father)