

return to power in Afghanistan, which will likewise demand a different kind of critical reckoning.

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**Wild Music: Sound and Sovereignty in Ukraine.** By Maria Sonevytsky. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2019. xxiv, 249 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Figures. Map. \$27.95, paper.  
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Set in an embattled Ukraine between the Orange and Maidan Revolutions (2004–14), *Wild Music* is a theoretically virtuosic ethnomusicological ethnography that asks how “sovereign imaginaries,” analytical abstractions connoting citizens’ aspirations toward the lifestyles promised by particular means of governance, are articulated and made audible through musical expression—here of the “master trope” that author Maria Sonevytsky calls “Wildness” (6, 10, 18, 184n2). For Sonevytsky, Wildness is both a discursive frame of geopolitical liminality and creative resource illuminating how contemporary Ukrainian multimedia productions conceptualize and convey alternative instantiations of statehood and belonging by incorporating multivalent sonic and other sensory-laden markers associated with Ukraine’s “wilds.” This lowercase wildness is situated in sociocultural stereotypes associated with the country’s peripheries: minority and Indigenous groups, namely western Ukrainian Hutsul highlanders and Crimean Tatars; and village rurality, especially the central and northern Ukrainian vocal styles dubbed *avtentyka* (authenticity) by scholars and urban revivalists. “Wild music,” then, strategically employs essentialist features from these sources in musical performance “to make political claims” (2). In doing so, it draws upon (uppercase) Wildness for its discursive power, in effect “wilding” the sonic field—and the Ukrainian nation—in an auto-exoticist, performative act of perspectival reframing (16–18, 165).

The book’s analytical stance descends from at least four diverse sources, each carrying its own implications. These are Johann Gottfried Herder’s 1769 travelogue reference to the civilizational and cultural potential of Ukraine’s “little wild peoples” (epigraph, vi); J. Jack Halberstam’s 2014 exposition of wildness as a colonialist tool (1); the “Wild Fields,” a toponym referring to Ukrainian lands settled by Cossacks, Ottoman Turks, and Crimean Tatars at different points in the country’s history (4); and most importantly, Ukrainian pop star Ruslana Lyzhychko’s award-winning 2004 Eurovision song “Wild Dances.” Structured as a collection of interrelated case studies, the volume’s five chapters focus on musical artists whose productions comprise hybridic multimedia experiments in *etno-muzyka*, a “capacious post-Soviet Ukrainian genre” that “emplaces local sonic markers” in “global popular music styles” (7). The genre’s “‘wild’ sounds,” Sonevytsky explains, “index an internal Ukrainian *etnos*,” “forg[ing] solidarities through [a] shared recognition” that, in a twist on Michael Herzfeld’s “cultural intimacy,” she theorizes as “ethnic intimacy” (7, 33). Such solidarities may produce new “listening and sounding publics” constituted through a mutual engagement with certain emblematic sounds, creating, within state boundaries, modalities of sonic belonging that Sonevytsky terms “acoustic citizenship” (7, 170–76). Elaborated upon in the Conclusion, for me acoustic citizenship is the book’s bedrock. It is also a concept whose applicability, I would argue, extends beyond the state to diasporic populations.

Sonevytsky’s source materials include not just her own longtime fieldwork and performance experiences, but music videos and recordings, song lyrics, media

broadcasts, live music events, and social media. Chapter 1 revisits Ruslana's excursions in the Carpathians, where she sought inspiration for the "Hutsulian Project" that resulted in her "wild music" releases: "Wild Dances," but also the albums *Wild Dances* (2006) and *Wild Energy* (2008). Sonevytsky follows Ruslana's career, tracing her rise to fame as an international ethno-pop star and subsequent reinvention as an acclaimed political activist dedicated to combating environmental issues and the trafficking and sexual enslavement of women. Simultaneously, Sonevytsky maps concomitant shifts in Ruslana's play with Hutsul motifs, from token exoticism to an agentive strategy for social change in which the Wild becomes metonymic of an inclusive national and European Ukrainian sovereign imaginary (33). She also shows how Ruslana inscribes these shifts on her own body through gendered and sexualized self-representations that draw upon mythological and post-Soviet archetypes of female power.

Chapter 2 similarly adopts a feminist approach rooted in Ukrainian gender scholarship. Its focus is the Dakh Daughters, a Kyiv-based, female septet of multi-instrumentalists and actresses who perform eclectic musical theater. The ensemble's 2013 performance on the Maidan resulted in a video production, "Hannusya," which recasts the distinctive vocalization and biography of an elderly Hutsul woman; she in turn personifies the power and heroic perdurance of exemplary female prototypes, if not the country itself. Sonevytsky unpacks the video's content and contentious reception on social media, illustrating how its interpretations map onto opposing views of the revolution and Ukraine's future.

Scholars pursuing the politics and performativity of the voice will find the third chapter particularly compelling. Here Sonevytsky brings her professional training as a Ukrainian-American scholar-performer of rural avtentyka songs to bear on debates concerning the suitability of avtentyka contestants competing in the televised pop music tourney "Ukrainian Voice." Where, she asks, do the forceful, "ungovernable timbres" and intricate embellishments of avtentyka singers, heard in this context as "embodying real rural Wildness," fit in the show's "voice of the nation" (87)? Sonevytsky's analysis is multifaceted and insightful, provoking many questions for future research. How does Russian musical folklorist Dmitri Pokrovsky's 1991 *The Wild Field* (RealWorld CD 2-91736), a revivalist album of Cossack and other songs from the Russian-Ukrainian border, figure in the origins of the avtentyka movement? What does it signify for W/wildness, and current east European vocal practices generally, that one lauded female avtentyka contestant opted to audition with a "traditional Serbian song" (109)? Or that the gifted male contestant who preceded her, while rejected as impracticably avtentyka in presentation, was embraced by the public, made numerous subsequent television appearances, and landed a concert at a Kyiv theater?

The closing case studies shift the narrative from the Carpathians toward Crimea and international arenas. Chapter 4 considers how Simferopol's Radio Meydan and the "Eastern music" (the station's gloss for Tatar and other musics manifesting Middle Eastern styling) it broadcast mobilized and sparked resistance to new Crimean Tatar "discourses of citizenly belonging" and cultural sovereignty prior to the peninsula's annexation (116). In particular, Sonevytsky addresses the album *Deportacia* (2004) by hip-hop DJ Bebek (Rolan Salimov), which chronicles the trauma of Iosif Stalin's 1944 forced displacement of the Tatar population. A brief look at Jamala's (Susana Jamaladinova) 2016 victorious Eurovision song "1944," widely interpreted as resonating with Russia's current occupation of Crimea, ends the chapter, positioning Crimean Tatar sovereignty within larger debates concerning Indigenous rights and cultural genocide.

Chapter 5 counterposes two songs by DakhaBrakha, an eclectic world music quartet whose signature "ethno-chaos" remakes etno-muzyka as political strategy.

Sonevytsky shows how “Carpathian Rap” and “Salgir Boyu” (a Crimean Tatar wedding song and lament) embed “soundmarks of sovereignty” (her term, after R. Murray Schafer) in a musical bricolage through which DakhaBrakha sonifies their resistance to Russian aggression and underscores the sovereign potential of a cosmopolitan, postcolonial Ukrainian state. Regarding one such iconic soundmark, I cannot help wondering what it means, in a fractured, revolutionary Ukraine that the Hutsul *trembita* (a wooden alphorn once played exclusively by men) is conventionally sounded for the dead?

*Wild Music* is a dense and challenging read, nearly every sentence couched in a profusion of ideas that constantly complicate and transmute the Wild-wild dialogism across multiple interpretive frames and contexts. At times the trope’s redundancy risks evacuating it of its persuasive potential. I also found it difficult not to conflate W/wildness; although Sonevytsky overtly rejects “any a priori wildness” or primeval associations that even Ukrainians might discern in “wild” sounds (5), to my mind the interdependent Wild-wild dialectic often pivots precisely on the tacit assumptions of primordial pastorality lurking behind it. As documented by Sonevytsky herself in Chapter 1, Hutsuls’ ambivalent reactions to the controversial appropriation of their unique musical and other cultural practices seem instructive here. For whom, why, and in what circumstances W/wildness holds theoretical purchase is slippery, illuminating, and sometimes vexingly paradoxical.

These remarks aside, *Wild Music* is essential reading for any scholar of acoustemology and sound studies, the postsocialist sensorium, post-Soviet Eurasia, and how post-Soviet ontologies are articulated in expressive media. The innovative analytical constructs that Sonevytsky introduces are among the book’s major contributions, facilitating our ability to parse the junctures between sound, state, and belonging everywhere. The chapters I assigned for my graduate Eurasian music seminar prompted lively discussion, especially when coupled with relevant music videos and recordings. Sonevytsky is quick to note that Wildness is not acknowledged as a positive or pertinent trope by all or perhaps even most Ukrainians; however, the fact that, as the book was in press, Ukraine’s premier female rapper, Alyona Alyona (Alyona Savranenko) released an animated, futuristic, video-game-like collage entitled “Dyki tantsi” (Wild dances; *B xati MA* [MA in the house], Hitwonder, 2019) speaks to the ongoing salience of Sonevytsky’s analysis, as Ukrainian artists continue to reenvision and carve out their lifeworlds with a sonic palette knife. Notably, Savranenko, who has also recently collaborated with Jamala, was one of eight awardees at the 2021 Music Moves Europe talent competition—the first Ukrainian ever to participate—further underscoring the powerful conjuncture of sound and statehood in a protean Europe.

Sonevytsky stresses the volitional nature of acoustic citizenship. Indeed, all such affiliations of inclusivity are volitional at the affective level. No one can be forced to feel a sense of belonging. But the notion of acoustic citizenship allows us to consider how the sensory and more specifically, aural imagination facilitates the embodiment of such sentiments. Here sovereignty emerges as an aspirational trans-border construct that sutures subjectivity to subjunctivity and whose audibility extends as far as (mediated) sound circulates—a phenomenon to which scholars must attune their ears.

Music moves politics and their publics. Sonevytsky shows us how Ukraine’s musicians are nudging their compatriots toward a range of “audible futures” (164).

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