or contextualization. The same goes for the Timeline of Events that follows, which is an important list to have but does not speak to the reader on its own. The book also would have benefited from a wider contextualization of the gallery, in terms of both the Polish art scene and the wider context of contemporary art.

That said, this is the first substantial publication to bring to light the complexity and density of the history of Galeria Wschodnia and will no doubt serve as a valuable springboard for future research on this important place in the history of contemporary art.

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The Palace Complex. A Stalinist Skyscraper, Capitalist Warsaw, and a City Transfixed. By Michal Murawski. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019. xix, 338 pp. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Maps. $90.00, hard bound; $39.00, paper.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2020.116

The author of this remarkable work left Warsaw at six years old (in 1990) and has frequently revisited his birthplace. His book, the outcome of a Cambridge PhD, magnificently illustrated, often with the author's own photographs, traces the controversial history of its central building.

Origins of the Palace lay in Iosif Stalin's declaration of April 1945 that his country would contribute to the cost of rebuilding post-war Warsaw, which had been widely destroyed after the 1944 Uprising. The promise was revived during Foreign Minister Viacheslav Molotov's visit in 1951. Despite Polish suggestions of an underground railway (not begun until 1982), a much-needed housing estate or a university campus, the donors decided that "Stalin's gift" would be a monumental Palace complex, standing in the center of the city, dominating the skyline and thus asserting the permanence of Soviet generosity.

The "gift" could be variously attributed: as an apology for the 1940 massacre of newly-enlisted Polish soldiers, or to amnesia for this and subsequent Soviet crimes. It could also indicate a Marxian-derived move towards a non-monetary and hence non-exploitative economy. However, since Poland itself supplied the building materials, architectural expertise and four thousand laborers in its construction, the recipients largely paid for their own gift. Stalin's association with "his" Palace was soon minimized. It only opened in 1955, two years after his death, and months before his political demise in Nikita Khrushchev's "secret speech" at the Twentieth Soviet Party Congress. Thereafter, its dedication by his name engraved on the stone portico, was tactfully covered, though still visible, under electric lighting.

Public debate initially concerned the imbalance between the Palace's vast dimensions and the comparative modesty of Warsaw itself. This was not purely negative: as Leopold Tyrmand noted in his *Diary 1954*, the Stalinist mania for big scale and monumentality had penetrated popular imagination (83–84). But public discussion also favored incorporation of "progressive and humanistic traditions of Warsaw architecture" into its construction. There was also concern that housing, shops, and entertainment arcades should be in its vicinity to prevent a dead and deserted area at nighttime and weekends.

During the more relaxed climate following the Polish "October" of 1956, the future of the "communist fossil" continued to exercise popular debate. One outcome was the use of its giant Congress Hall beyond central Communist Party meetings to

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2020.116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

become a platform for popular cultural occasions. It held an annual Jazz Jamboree festival from 1965, including concerts by Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk. The Rolling Stones played there in 1967—their only concert in pre-1989 eastern Europe—and Mick Jagger ate a bunch of flowers on stage. The author is interested in the "palatial impact" on wider cultural performances. As the playwright Dorota Sajewska, an anthropologist of theater explains "My job in theatre is to do context," and asks what is the point of inventing a new context when one (the Palace) is already there? (120).

Cultural facilities included a Kinoteka multiplex cinema, a Studio Theatre Gallery and Museum of Modern Art. Scholarship was also included. The Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) occupied the premises from the ninth to twelfth stories and were later joined by Collegium Civitas, a private university for social and political science. The wider public also made use of its spectacular location. The author witnessed the aftermath of a Warsaw wedding in which the guests were led, unbeknown to them, in a "May-Day inspired Parade" to the Palace where they enjoyed champagne on the thirtieth-floor viewing-terrace before returning inside to a feast of roast pork and vodka until four in the morning.

Still unresolved is how best to utilize its enormous surroundings. While the building itself represents mono-centricity, the huge Palace Square contains space for multifarious activities. The author explores the choice between "public-spirited or privatizing." Should commercial premises be permitted on public land? Or is it a more appropriate space for public transport, including central railways and bus stations? In summer 2009, a major riot broke out between private traders and riot police attempting to dislodge them from their sheltered barricades. Far from being a distant relic, the "Stalin Palace" retains its prominence in post-communist Poland. The debate about continues to this day.

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Ukrainian Epic and Historical Song: Folklore in Context. By Natalie Kononenko. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019. xvi, 330 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $85.00, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2020.117

In her innovative volume Natalie Kononenko examines the beginnings and development into prominence of Ukrainian-sung epic poems known as *dumy* (dumas), which originated in the fourteenth century and came to prominence during the *kozak* (Cossack) era in the seventeenth century. The performers, known as *lirnyky* or *kobzari*, derived their designation from the instrument used to accompany them, the multi-stringed *lira* or *kobzar* (later known as *bandura*). The author examines the early influence of ballads and laments on the oral composition and singing of these songs, which were about the daily lives of ordinary folk and their special achievements. In addition, they celebrated kozak military exploits, rebellion against tyranny, and daily kozak life. Initially performed by sighted bards, by the nineteenth century dumas were being sung by blind mendicants. The twentieth century saw the minstrels organized into guilds, modeled after Ukraine's trade guilds. To avoid being labeled mendicants instead of minstrels providing a service, they performed in towns and villages beyond their own.

The first of six chapters chronicle the dumas' historical fortunes and provide useful comparisons with this genre in other countries. Subsequent chapters feature

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2020.116 Published online by Cambridge University Press