

## **The Pop Industry from Stagnation to Perestroika: How Music Professionals Embraced Economic Reform that Broke East European Cultural Networks**

“Branding a group of thirty-year old performers ‘young’ is a luxury that we can only afford at home and in neighbouring countries,” emphasised the director of a Polish popular music show staged in Moscow in June 1987. Held to celebrate Soviet-Polish friendship, the event resembled numerous international cultural exchanges that the ruling parties and ministries of culture in the socialist camp had coordinated since the late 1940s.<sup>i</sup> During Mikhail Gorbachev’s *glasnost* and *perestroika*, transnational political networks still gave the Soviet bloc a strong degree of cultural distinctiveness: so long as political leaders called the shots in the socialist camp’s cultural life, Eastern European audiences listened to music that was difficult to market in countries where audience demand and 1980s fashions ruled the day. But Polish artists visiting Moscow in 1987 were uneasy about the future of international cultural exchanges, suggesting that the Soviet market for Polish culture was the relic of a bygone era.<sup>ii</sup> The director cited above represented a vocal group of music professionals who implemented Soviet-bloc cultural policies on the ground, but also questioned the priorities of their political masters. Over the previous decade, these professionals had grown to believe that Soviet-bloc institutions had to reinvent themselves in order to survive. By the 1980s, they began to sever the ties that bound Eastern Europe together.

This article examines the history of the Soviet bloc pop industry, focusing in particular on international Polish-Soviet concert tours between the 1970s and the late 1980s.<sup>iii</sup> International concerts were a consistent element of the cultural landscape in the Soviet bloc. Some coincided with major anniversaries or political events; others targetted very specific audiences, such as Polish workers in the USSR; and the majority were simply a source of income for state-owned impresario agencies. Polish musicians toured the USSR for months on end, performing in large concert halls in Moscow, but also in small houses of culture in far-flung corners of the

country. Soviet pop tours of Poland were generally shorter, encompassing large festivals as well as performances in small, poorly equipped venues.

The pop music industry offers a unique prism for understanding the politics of reform in the Soviet bloc. The history of pop provides insights into the evolution of Soviet and East European identity politics beyond the elite cultural circles. Cheap to stage and produce, pop provided a means to shape the “views and tastes” of what one Polish official defined as a very wide and as yet unrefined audience.<sup>iv</sup> A focus on pop further exposes the vicissitudes of Soviet bloc cultural diplomacy at a time when the USSR’s relations with its satellite states were shaken to the core. Partly because language barriers did not mean as much in music as in other spheres of popular culture, pop regularly crossed borders in the socialist camp, but its reach and meanings changed significantly after the rise of the Solidarity trade union and Gorbachev’s ascension to power. Finally, the history of pop exposes crucial links between economic and cultural reform. Pop concerts brought substantial profits for state-owned impresario agencies, helping to fund more ambitious forms of cultural production. Because pop was a major commercial enterprise, culture industry employees faced dilemmas that made them particularly attuned to the need for reform. The rise of television, international radio broadcasting, and a global entertainment industry raised questions as to whether East European culture could really hold its own in a cosmopolitan environment. Just as Soviet television employees faced a major identity crisis, questioning their role as a “cultural vanguard” charged with educating the public and seeking instead to cater to viewers’ desires,<sup>v</sup> music professionals sought new ways to sell tickets.<sup>vi</sup> In sum, my history of pop examines how the sometimes contradictory pressures of identity politics, cultural diplomacy, profit, and globalization shaped Eastern Europe’s reform politics.

International concerts were initiated by a network of communist party leaders, ministry of culture officials, and so-called “friendship society” activists who insisted that music must

spread across borders within the socialist camp. These ideological stalwarts saw popular culture as key to defining what made Eastern European countries different from their capitalist neighbours after 1968. Television series, for example, demarcated socialist countries of Eastern Europe as a space in which work and personal life differed from the West.<sup>vii</sup> With notable exceptions, national television stations created distinct sets of cultural references that only made sense within particular countries of the Soviet bloc.<sup>viii</sup> In contrast, pop had a more distinct international dimension. Activists concerned with building strong ties across borders believed that international concerts had the potential to demonstrate that the Soviet bloc as a whole, and not just its individual states, formed a unique cultural space. In this sense, pop was an “Eastern European” identity building project supposed to lend legitimacy to Cold War boundaries.

Soviet-Polish cultural networks also included state-owned impresario agencies that dealt with the nitty-gritty organisational matters: Pagart in Poland and Goskontsert in the USSR.<sup>ix</sup> Working within tight budgets approved by the Ministry of Culture and the Arts in Warsaw and the Ministry of Culture in Moscow, Pagart and Goskontsert fulfilled government orders for popular and classical music concerts. Yet government subsidies were not enough to cover the costs of such events. To make a profit or at least to cover their losses, Pagart and Goskontsert also held commercially viable concerts on their own initiative. Organising international tours, they claimed a large chunk of the money which Polish and Soviet performers received from private agencies in the West and state-owned impresarios in other countries of the socialist camp. Profits on live music were substantial, but state-owned impresarios transferred most of them to central government budgets.<sup>x</sup> Although they did not speak in one voice, impresario agency employees and contracted artists can be conceived as “music professionals”. For them, pop was not only an ideological project. It was first and foremost a job, a source of income and professional pride.

My history of the music industry exposes important sources of support for market reform among mobile mid-level bureaucrats and performers. The ideological and professional understandings of pop clashed during the Brezhnev era, as slogans about international socialist friendship rang hollow to music professionals who found their work undermined by major infrastructural problems. Their frustrations were typical of state-owned enterprises outside the heavily-subsidised military-industrial complex, the bloated industrial ministries, and agriculture. Professionals in non-priority sectors of the economy such as the service industry enjoyed limited autonomy from the state, as a growing share of the profits stayed within the enterprise and “employees were awarded regular premiums from special funds.” At the same time, through the 1970s, the state retained far-reaching powers to direct enterprise activities that put managers between a rock and a hard place: transferring the burden of capital investment onto individual enterprises, the state also remained the only source of investment over which professionals in charge of those enterprises had “virtually no control.”<sup>xi</sup>

To be sure, the origins of economic restructuring that gave managers more power to decide how to make and spend money lay among institutions far more powerful than the transnational pop impresarios. Reform-minded Party leaders in the USSR and Eastern Europe who came to power in the 1980s played the lead role.<sup>xii</sup> Yet while pop music professionals did not call the shots during *perestroika*, their enthusiastic embrace of reform stood in contrast to mid-level bureaucrats’ resistance which had frustrated Kosygin’s attempts to devolve more decision-making powers to the enterprise level in the 1960s,<sup>xiii</sup> as well as to the cautiousness of Party reformers and the hostility of managers in strategic industries of the Soviet bloc who effectively resisted market reform during the 1980s.<sup>xiv</sup> While East European officials involved in the import of Soviet oil and gas had little interest in reform, believing that trade arrangements benefitted the Soviet satellites at the expense of the USSR itself,<sup>xv</sup> pop music professionals in Poland jumped at the opportunity to gain more control over their enterprise and to intensify

work outside the socialist camp as soon as Wojciech Jaruzelski launched economic reforms in the first half of the 1980s.<sup>xvi</sup> In the context of ambiguous legal changes that did not clearly delineate the revamped role of the enterprise in 1987,<sup>xvii</sup> Soviet pop professionals were likewise eager to decide what music to sell, how much to charge for their services, and how to allocate profits. As other professionals involved in foreign trade, they sought to increase exports across the Iron Curtain and to retain control over a greater share of hard-currency profits, ultimately creating their “own profit based companies from within the state economic bureaucracy”.<sup>xviii</sup> Whereas “free trade” had long been part of Soviet economic thinking,<sup>xix</sup> Polish and then Soviet pop professionals fought against their respective ministries of culture to establish “free enterprises.”<sup>xx</sup>

Pop industry employees appropriated the economic and institutional reforms launched by Party leaders to help bring about a cultural reorientation of the Soviet bloc. Mainstream culture of the USSR and its satellite states is often studied as if it was controlled by the highest echelons of the Communist Party driven by the imperative to create a distinctly “socialist civilization,”<sup>xxi</sup> with little agency ascribed to the professionals responsible for implementing cultural policy. Bradford Martin thus shows the continuing power of the KGB to suppress Goskontsert initiatives in the USSR, portraying Brezhnev-era musical life as a function of ideological tensions “between promoting socialist consumption to build a society that outstripped capitalism . . . and recourse to more traditional Soviet strategies of secrecy and distrust to preserve social order and stability.”<sup>xxii</sup> In contrast, my history of pop reveals the agendas of officials and performers beyond the elite circles whose work was clearly distinct from those forms of cultural expression which, in the Party’s view, embodied “socialist” values and represented the “socialist world” on the international arena.<sup>xxiii</sup> Already skeptical about the East European identity building mission of music in the 1970s, Brezhnev-era pop professionals in both Poland and the USSR resembled Kristin Roth-Ey’s Soviet

television employees who mimicked Western cultural forms but still promoted Party-sponsored visions of socialist culture (*kul'turnost*), even at the cost of “[boring] their audiences to tears”.<sup>xxiv</sup> With the expanding limits of enterprise autonomy during the 1980s, they undermined networks that marked the socialist world as a cultural space distinct from the capitalist West.

Pop was of course one among many cultural phenomena that reflected loosening ideological controls in the Soviet bloc, but its impact on the decline of “socialist” identities was significant. Pop professionals sold millions of tickets and records every year, promoted their music on radio and television, and launched the careers of performers whose popularity spanned the socialist and capitalist eras.<sup>xxv</sup> Unlike underground rock musicians and guitar ballad singers whose music was distributed through the semi-legal means of “magnitizdat”,<sup>xxvi</sup> in contrast to the peddlers and fans of Western music who engaged in smuggling, illegal trade, and even dissent,<sup>xxvii</sup> and distinct from Alexei Yurchak’s young Leningraders who created and consumed music within localised networks of friends and acquaintances, pop professionals did not see the structures of Brezhnev-era socialism as an unmovable foundation on which to carve out social and cultural spaces “outside” official culture.<sup>xxviii</sup> They rather shifted the limits of the “mainstream” against which the much better-studied subcultural groups defined their own identities.

Historians of *perestroika* have focused on Mikhail Gorbachev’s struggles against anti-reformist lobby groups which ultimately ensured that major Soviet industries remained dominated by “insiders”, with the government in post-Soviet Russia retaining the power to regulate strategic sectors of the economy “through direct distribution and not the market.”<sup>xxix</sup> But *perestroika* was not just a search for “socialism with a human face” driven by the increasingly isolated Gorbachev. Neither was it simply the culmination of popular protests which rocked Poland during the 1980s.<sup>xxx</sup> This article highlights the excitement associated with

the period of economic transition by offering a glimpse into the mindsets of ambitious professionals outside the heavily subsidized sectors of the economy, and especially those who managed the socialist camp's interface with the outside world. These professionals grew disillusioned with promises to improve the quality of life within the existing economic and institutional structures of state socialism and saw market reform as the most promising path to raise wages, to work in comfortable conditions, and to deliver better quality products.<sup>xxx</sup> Mobile mid-level bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, and performers helped shape public culture of the Soviet bloc by refocusing Eastern European institutions away from "need" and towards "demand."<sup>xxxii</sup> Artists on tour did not "need" to stay in good quality hotels and audiences did not "need" to listen to fashionable music in heated venues with decent acoustics. But by the late socialist period professionals in the pop industry wanted more than just what they needed.

### **Music Ideologues**

Communist Party officials and activists of friendship societies on both sides of the Soviet-Polish border used popular music to create the image of Eastern Europe as a distinct cultural entity.

Apparatchiks at the culture department of the Party Central Committee in Warsaw singled out pop as a particularly important means of promoting a "socialist lifestyle" in the 1970s.<sup>xxxiii</sup> This term was shorthand for the propaganda notion that life behind the Iron Curtain, though poorer than in the capitalist West, was also more secure and personally fulfilling.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Official emphasis on socialist lifestyle dictated that Soviet bloc entertainment had to be easily accessible to blue-collar workers. As Polish bands toured the USSR and gave dozens of ticketed concerts from Lviv to Vladivostok, Pagart and Goskontsert made pop "socialist" by obliging singers to stage several free daytime performances at large factories. From the performers' point of view, this made for a hectic schedule. Anna German, a Polish

singer of Soviet origin who enjoyed great popularity in the USSR, hardly led a glamorous lifestyle during a concert tour of Ukraine in 1979. Having arrived on a bus from a concert in the provincial town of Zhytomyr, she gave two evening shows and one lunchtime performance at a Kyiv factory in the space of twenty-four hours, before setting off to Kharkiv on an overnight train.<sup>xxxv</sup> Pop music professionals, including the biggest celebrities, were state employees and their work reflected the political and ideological priorities of the ruling parties.

Apart from the outward manifestations of class loyalties, Party officials expected pop to promote what they deemed to be high culture among audiences otherwise interested in entertainment. Soviet pop concerts in Poland were planned to coincide with theatre and classical music festivals.<sup>xxxvi</sup> When the Polish singer Marek Grechuta toured provincial Soviet towns in 1976, for example, presenters who introduced him spoke at length about the Polish Theatre Festival in Moscow.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Relegating Grechuta to the role of attracting audiences to the theatre, state and Party leaders were rather dismissive of the singer's own poetic repertoire. The Polish Ministry of Culture was keen to preserve clear cultural hierarchies, as the minister Witaszyński argued that it was unbecoming of young performers like Grechuta to sing their own lyrics set to their own music.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Soviet bloc officials in charge of music presented themselves as a cultural "vanguard" with a responsibility to propagate high-brow culture and they remained suspicious of young talent.

In line with the broader emphasis on the educational role of entertainment, pop concerts carried a clear message about the USSR's political domination in Eastern Europe. The idea was that Soviet relationship with Eastern Europe was based on friendship.<sup>xxxix</sup> The presenters whom Goskontsert sent to accompany each Polish artist touring the USSR not only summarised song lyrics for audiences who did not speak Polish, but also highlighted examples of Polish-Soviet economic and political cooperation. They also suggested that



Soviet and Polish citizens resembled each other, introducing Polish performers in such a way as to create an idealised image of mature, socialist society. Polish friends on tour in the USSR were thus celebrated as teachers of Russian language, seamstresses on maternity leave and, of course, blue-collar workers. All performers supposedly came from modest families, but cultivated their talents in extra-curricular clubs.<sup>xl</sup> This image of “developed socialism” emphasised equality of opportunity and welfare as key characteristics of Soviet-style regimes.

Pop’s mission to solidify the cultural unity of the Soviet bloc was most clearly manifested in the annual Soviet song competition organised by the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society in Poland. Held from 1961, the competition attracted Polish amateurs who performed popular Soviet songs with the hope of launching a professional music career. In preparation for the competition, the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society in Warsaw published twenty thousand books with Soviet songs that were then sent to the society’s regional branches, schools, and local houses of culture throughout Poland. Regional cultural activists subsequently organised multi-level competitions for amateur performers that culminated in a televised final concert in the town of Zielona Góra. The competition and the final concert became increasingly popular with over 100,000 participants each year across the 1970s.<sup>xli</sup> The Polish-Soviet Friendship Society used the competition to attract members: early rounds held in factories or small villages were thus combined with elections to the society’s leadership.<sup>xlii</sup> Across the border, the Soviet-Polish Friendship Society and Goskontsert invited the finalists to tour the USSR.<sup>xliii</sup>

## I. Music Professionals

Impressario agencies which organised international concert tours undermined the guiding role of communist parties in Eastern Europe’s cultural life insofar as they ensured that audiences dictated taste and style. During Marek Grechuta’s tour of the USSR in autumn

1976, Soviet youth were reportedly disappointed to hear lyrical songs set to string instruments and the piano. They passed notes to the stage demanding rock-and-roll repertoire and covers of Western hits instead.<sup>xliv</sup> These requests did not fall on deaf ears as Polish and Soviet Ukrainian stage directors eliminated Grechuta's songs from a concert that marked the opening of Polish Literature Days in Kyiv in 1977. Pagart suggested that future events of this nature should focus instead on more "showy" national folk dances and feature television stars such as Pola Raksa - known in Poland and the USSR for her good looks and a role in *Four Tank Drivers and a Dog*, a very popular television series about Polish-Soviet camaraderie during World War Two.<sup>xlv</sup> Music professionals developed practical ways to respond to audience demand. They challenged traditional cultural hierarchies by creating opportunities for the audience to judge performers.<sup>xlvi</sup>

Audience demand mattered partly because, for the impresario agencies, pop music had to turn a profit. Although Soviet officials seemed reluctant to admit this openly in the 1970s, staging pop concerts was key to the financial stability of Goskontsert – following Party directives to focus more on classical music and less on entertainment, the agency found it more difficult to balance the books.<sup>xlvii</sup> To sell "socialist friendship" to an increasingly demanding audience, impresario agencies fostered the rise of a celebrity culture. The Polish Party leadership was clearly aware that it was only through charging high prices for pop concerts by particularly famous performers that state-owned impresario agencies stayed afloat.<sup>xlviii</sup> Apparatchiks at the Central Committee in Warsaw even claimed that, at the height of their popularity in the 1970s, the popular band Czerwone Gitary generated a higher turnover than a large industrial plant.<sup>xlix</sup> Though Pagart derived a major share of its profits from exporting musicians to clubs and restaurants in the capitalist West, sending popular performers such as Breakout or Jerzy Połomski to the USSR likewise brought profits in Eastern Europe's international currency, the transferable rouble.<sup>1</sup> Pagart made still more

money by importing Soviet stars to tour Poland.<sup>li</sup> They therefore displayed a clear preference for big names, competing to book major Soviet stars such as Alla Pugacheva,<sup>lii</sup> while refusing to even meet lesser known Soviet singers on tour in Poland.<sup>liii</sup>

The commercial side of Soviet bloc pop music was most palpable in the socialist camp's response to Eurovision. The annual international song festival in the Polish seaside resort of Sopot was founded by Władysław Szpilman, a leading figure in the Polish pop music industry and the protagonist of Roman Polański's *The Pianist* (2002). Sopot was an expensive affair. In the mid-1970s, the Polish Ministry of Culture and Arts did not fund it at all, which put a major strain on the budget of Pagart and the Sopot tourist board that organised the festival and sold broadcasting rights to radio and television.<sup>liv</sup> Soviet and East European record labels and impresario agencies sent performers to Sopot in the hope of selling records and promoting performers in other people's democracies and, largely unsuccessfully, beyond Eastern Europe and the USSR. To attract television and radio audiences throughout the Soviet bloc to broadcasts from Sopot, Pagart invited not only East European celebrities, but also Boney M and other expensive performers from beyond the Iron Curtain.<sup>lv</sup>

Attempts to respond to audience demand soon fuelled anxieties about Westernisation and the loss of a distinct Eastern European cultural identity. Party leaders in Warsaw were frustrated that radio professionals ignored their directives and, particularly in programmes geared towards the youth, played Western pop and rock instead of Polish, Soviet, and East European *estrada*.<sup>lvi</sup> Concerns about the popularity of Western music, framed sometimes in very ethnocentric and even racial terms, were shared by Polish composers and lyricists who stood to lose their royalties. The radio "favours ... artists performing in the Negro style," bemoaned one report signed by several prominent pop music composers in July 1977.<sup>lvii</sup> Some composers further complained that Western record labels offered free copies of their

music to Polish radio DJs and thereby undermined the Polish music industry.<sup>lviii</sup> The composers' response to these pressures was to adapt Polish music in line with Western trends (as they claimed, they thus ended up composing melodies best suited for the English language, which made it difficult to write meaningful Polish lyrics).<sup>lix</sup> The limited influence of the Polish Party on mainstream popular culture was clear as officials at the Central Committee employed tired slogans about the need for entertainment to “reflect the romanticism of the contemporary” (newspeak for “portray life in socialist Eastern Europe in positive terms”), but also complained that pop composers simply mimicked Western music.<sup>lx</sup> On the Soviet side, audience demand also frustrated attempts to create a pan-socialist popular culture. For young people in particular, Western music was less easily accessible but also more attractive than East European *estrada*.<sup>lxi</sup> It also seems that Soviet audiences preferred Soviet pop songs over Eastern European repertoire.<sup>lxii</sup>

## **II. The 1970s: a latent conflict**

Although the term “stagnation” was not used during the late Brezhnev era, cultural confrontations in the socialist camp pushed many music professionals to paint a rather depressing picture of the late 1970s in the late 1970s. The ambition to create attractive forms of entertainment was a constant source of frustration as impresario agency employees found that Soviet bloc institutions were not up to the task. In their portrayals, everyday life during the late Brezhnev era appears difficult, plagued by incompetence, alcoholism, and malice. In diagnosing the problems of Soviet-bloc pop industry during the 1970s, music professionals echoed the narratives of late Soviet popular culture which turned “indifference” (*ravnodushiie*) into a central public concern.<sup>lxiii</sup> In particular, they blamed provincial bureaucrats' indifference for the sorry state of musical instruments and concert halls. In this sense, music professionals largely operated within the limits of a distinct Eastern European culture during the 1970s.

Pop musicians in the Soviet bloc staged many performances in provincial towns. Contemporary reports reveal that many found such work difficult. Polish performers in the USSR complained that they were accommodated in shabby, shared hotel rooms, even though their tickets sold out at expensive prices, suggesting that Goskontsert and the philharmonics pocketed too much for themselves.<sup>lxiv</sup> More alarming for the music professionals was the state of the provincial venues that hosted performers on tour. The lack of proper equipment made for bad music. In Brest, for example, concerts at the electromechanical factory were held to the accompaniment of an old piano brought in at the last moment from the local school.<sup>lxv</sup>

Infrastructural problems fuelled criticism of Soviet bureaucrats in small towns, villages, as well as in the non-Russian parts of the USSR. In internal reports intended for Polish consumption only, the Soviet Union of the 1970s appeared grotesque. Polish bands' instruments were regularly damaged in transit across the USSR and, as one report emphasised, provincial and rural houses of culture could not generate electrical current strong enough to allow for the use of modern sound equipment.<sup>lxvi</sup> Central Asia and Azerbaijan were especially difficult to work in, Pagart claimed.<sup>lxvii</sup> Pagart employees were frustrated by the apparent complacency and disrespect for rules among Soviet bureaucrats. A 1976 report despaired that one Polish band visiting Naberezhnye Chelny in Tatarstan performed in a house of culture with no backstage, changing rooms, or heating. A Pagart official who accompanied the group emphasised that much better venues were available in the area, but staff at the Kazan philharmonic did not care to arrange the tour properly.<sup>lxviii</sup>

On the Soviet side, some Goskontsert officials focused on Polish performers' ego as the source of all problems. While a Pagart report celebrated the success of young Polish singers in the USSR in September 1977 (the "only unpleasant part of the trip" was when one of the artists slashed his wrists in Murmansk),<sup>lxix</sup> the group's Russian interpreter took a distinctly

more negative view of their tour. The group's most successful performer, Grażyna Łobaszewska, falsely accused a hotel cleaner of stealing a bag of bananas. Meanwhile, the group's guitarist "abused the interpreter's time," demanding "countless free medical consultations" for his "chronic hemorrhoids."<sup>lxx</sup> In other cases, echoing Polish reports, Moscow-based Goskontsert staff blamed poor quality concerts on bureaucrats and music professionals in the provinces. *Blat* (or the importance of personal connections) was a source of embarrassment for a Goskontsert guide on tour with the Polish group Budka Suflera. She informed her superiors that the band were only provided with decent accommodation in Kazan because one musician happened to know the number one Soviet celebrity, Alla Pugacheva, who "caused a scene" at the local philharmonic.<sup>lxxi</sup>

In discussing problems plaguing the Soviet-bloc music industry, Pagart and Goskontsert reports hinted at wider problems of transport, infrastructure, management, and shortages (the bag of bananas was clearly a prized possession). Yet they placed much more explicit emphasis on personality. In this vein, a Goskontsert guide and interpreter N.Ia. Gebgart who accompanied the Polish group Skaldowie on a three-month tour of the USSR, accused some concert venue directors of plain malice. She thus emphasised that, although a local Georgian band kindly lent Skaldowie powerful amplifiers to perform at the large Sports Palace in Tbilisi, the venue director did not allow the Polish band to use this equipment and even cut one of their concerts short.<sup>lxxii</sup> To be sure, reports focusing on personality provided shaky grounds for diagnosing the problems plaguing pop. In fact, Gebgart's character assessments stood in stark contrast to the opinions of a Polish guide who accompanied Skaldowie on the same tour. Stefan Szatkowski stressed that Tbilisi Sports Palace staff were in fact friendly and stopped the concert in question because Skaldowie were drunk. As a testament to the importance of personal relations in the Soviet-bloc music industry, Szatkowski's report blamed Gebgart herself for tensions on tour. Skaldowie got on very well with Gebgart who

joined their late night parties and, after unwelcome advances from a group of men encountered in a hotel, moved into one room with two band members and a female colleague from Goskontsert. As Szatkowski put it, “sending two young women to accompany young men [on tour] for a prolonged period of time has predictable consequences... This makes [my] job ... much more complicated.”<sup>lxxiii</sup>

Given their focus on personality, it should come as no surprise that music professionals sought to treat the ailing Soviet-Polish cultural exchanges in distinctly personal ways. For Gebgart, empathy was the key to improving international concert tours. “I described the tour ... in so much detail,” she addressed her superiors in Moscow, “to help you understand what it is like to give concerts in different towns everyday.”<sup>lxxiv</sup> Despairing that Skaldowie’s drunken antics could sabotage Pagart’s future exports to the USSR, Szatkowski similarly offered solutions that focused on personality. Skaldowie were to be banned from foreign tours in the following years and, because drinking reached its peak when the band performed for Polish builders on Soviet construction sites, artists whose itineraries contained such concerts were to be screened for any “alcoholic tendencies.”<sup>lxxv</sup>

Only infrequently, and mostly in Poland, were infrastructural problems plaguing the international music industry raised openly. Shortages featured prominently in music professionals’ reports to party central committees, as well as in internal communist party reports drawing on information obtained from music professionals. Senior apparatchiks in Warsaw stressed that the promotion of Polish performers in the USSR was frustrated by insufficient numbers of LPs and cassette tapes.<sup>lxxvi</sup> More daringly, state-owned impressario agencies sometimes complained about excessive government control. Shortages of hard currency necessary to purchase products outside the Soviet bloc were particularly burning. Pagart leaders found they needed to plea for relatively small amounts from the Ministry of Culture and the Arts even as they brought in substantial US dollar profits. In March 1980, for

example, Pagart stressed they would need 18,500 US dollars over the next two years to pay for high quality printing paper for advertising purposes (this was in a year when Pagart's reported US dollar profits amounted to just under 1,300,000). Pagart was keen to retain control over a larger share of its own hard currency profits at the expense of contributions to the Polish state budget, arguing that this would facilitate the import of music and the promotion of Polish performers abroad.<sup>lxxvii</sup>

Complaints about systemic tensions between Polish and Soviet cultural institutions can rarely be gleaned. Pagart officials implied that they were not treated as equal partners in the USSR, reminding the Central Committee in Warsaw that the official exchange rate of the Soviet rouble to the Polish zloty was unfavourable for the Poles. The response was to work around the system, as Polish artists unable to exchange their roubles at a decent rate sought legal ways to purchase "attractive Soviet goods" to sell in Poland (this likely meant gold, vodka, and furs).<sup>lxxviii</sup> Polish performers in the USSR got paid less than Soviet artists in Poland.<sup>lxxix</sup> In some cases, Pagart even covered part of the salaries of Polish performers touring the USSR.<sup>lxxx</sup> Such divisive financial issues were not successfully resolved, as it seems that Soviet and Polish organisations shied away from open confrontation. When Pagart rejected Goskontsert's proposals to raise salaries for Polish classical musicians touring the USSR at the expense of pop performers, further discussion was postponed indefinitely.<sup>lxxxii</sup> In 1976, Pagart officials complained that Soviet-Polish cultural exchanges were based on "haggling."<sup>lxxxii</sup>

### **III. The early 1980s: an open conflict**

Following the rise of the Solidarity trade union and the introduction of martial law in Poland, international concert tours between Poland and the USSR were severely cut down in 1981 and almost came to a halt in the following year. This pushed music professionals to



look beyond established practices and thus gave an important impetus for change in Soviet-bloc cultural exchanges.

The need to sell their products and services had long been a concern for enterprise managers in the Soviet bloc.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> In the context of regulated prices and monopolies, attempts to control production quality and labour efficiency through sales indicators were largely counterproductive,<sup>lxxxiv</sup> but commercial considerations became more central for state-owned enterprise managers in Poland from 1981. After Solidarity highlighted the depths of the socio-economic crisis in Poland, the Jaruzelski government embarked on significant reform. Imports and public spending were supposed to be cut, and managers were to focus on profitable exports. Inspired by the 1968 Hungarian “New Economic Mechanism,” the government freed many prices from state control to encourage state-owned enterprises to become more responsive to domestic market needs.<sup>lxxxv</sup>

Pagart was quick to restructure its work to suit the new economic conditions.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Imports were cut: the number of pop performers visiting Poland from the socialist camp fell from 477 in 1980 to 206 in 1981, and from the West from fifty-three in 1980 to thirty in 1981 (though Western imports included Tina Turner whom Pagart employees were particularly proud to have booked).<sup>lxxxvii</sup> The Poles’ empty pockets played an important role in this process, but falling imports were also partly due to socialist leaders’ reluctance to expose their citizens to the Polish political turmoil.<sup>lxxxviii</sup> Pagart further reoriented the export of culture away from the Soviet bloc and towards the West, especially in 1981 and 1982. Cutting exports to the people’s democracies, Pagart registered a 63 percent fall in transferable rouble profits from 1980 to 1981. At the same time, as the agency exported more Polish performers to play for the diaspora in North America, as well as on long-term contracts at restaurants, cruise ships, and in other purely commercial contexts in the West, export turnover rose by 64 percent in

1982, and by a more modest seventeen percent in 1983. As a result, Pagart increased its US dollar profit in 1981 and 1982.<sup>lxxxix</sup>

The new economic rules introduced by Jaruzelski's government transformed the relationship between Pagart, regionally-based impresario agencies, and the Ministry of Culture and the Arts. Pagart needed to sell the pop acts they imported to regionally-based impresario agencies which subsequently organised individual concerts across Poland. After Jaruzelski's reforms these entities were reluctant to book singers from the socialist camp for fear of making a loss. They preferred instead to focus on large Polish and Western rock concerts that guaranteed a profit.<sup>xc</sup> Like the domestic impresario agencies, Pagart also started to behave as an independent economic actor concerned with profit. In 1981, the agency sold fewer unprofitable concerts at home,<sup>xcii</sup> but continued to make a loss on events that the government ordered to accompany important political events (it was up to Pagart to accommodate these losses in their annual budget). This changed in 1983, when Pagart began to charge the government to ensure a "modest profit" on the events it organised on behalf of the Ministry of Culture and the Arts.<sup>xciii</sup> Tours and concerts ordered by the government were not a reliable source of profit in subsequent years, suggesting that the ministry retained significant power to dictate financial terms to Pagart.<sup>xciii</sup> Yet intensified economic pressures on culture put Party apparatchiks concerned with "East European" identity building on the defensive. Unlike Pagart, Central Committee officials in charge of theatre and entertainment were uneasy about outward profit orientation and lobbied for the state to begin subsidising pop during the early 1980s to make sure that music continued to educate as well as to entertain.<sup>xciv</sup>

Tensions between the commercial and the ideological visions of pop music were also palpable in the USSR. The parameters of discussion here were different because from 1979, "[a]fter a decade of relatively lively economic debates and experimentation, specialists were

discouraged in their attempts to put forward new ideas” and proponents of substantial economic reform were persecuted in the late 1970s. During the early 1980s, Andropov and Chernenko stressed the need for state-owned enterprises to balance their books, but placed more emphasis on work ethic as the key to fixing Soviet institutions.<sup>xcv</sup> In these circumstances, Soviet Party and government critics of commercialism in culture spoke in more confident tones than their Polish colleagues. In 1984, the Ministry of Culture complained that “the leadership of impresario agencies and cultural-educational institutions is still often guided by commercial considerations in organising pop music performances.”<sup>xcvi</sup> Similarly, the head of the Soviet Composers' Union Tikhon Khrennikov raised alarm at the CPSU Central Committee as he pointed out that impresario agencies ignored their mission to promote classical music in the race to meet centrally assigned financial targets. “Impresario agencies offer the best concert venues to [pop] groups, the majority of which are poor in the professional and artistic sense.”<sup>xcvii</sup> Such sweeping and uncompromising condemnation of commercialism in Soviet reports suggests that profit, while clearly crucial for state-owned impresario agencies, had not yet become broadly accepted as a legitimate concern of music professionals in the USSR.

Instead, discipline was the catchword of Soviet reform during the early 1980s. Ukrainian and Estonian Ministry of Culture officials, as well as Goskontsert employees, faced stern warnings and dismissals after failing to ensure the participation of Soviet musicians in Czechoslovak popular music festivals in 1983.<sup>xcviii</sup> Pressures to improve work ethic were also present in early 1980s Poland.<sup>xcix</sup> What made the Soviet discipline campaign different from the Polish was a strong current of cultural conservatism. While Polish impresarios adjusted to popular demand, Soviet leaders staged a (largely inefficient) crackdown on forms of musical expression which had captivated the youth from the late 1970s.<sup>c</sup> Concerned about the influence of East European as well as Soviet Estonian music, for example, Lviv Party leaders

called on the Central Committee in Moscow to more carefully select pop musicians allowed to perform in western Ukraine.<sup>ci</sup> Their views were underpinned by rising doubts as to whether the “socialist world” (and even the USSR itself) represented a coherent cultural space.<sup>cii</sup>

Advocates of tightening discipline in cultural institutions, and those who sought to increase profits on the import and export of music, had one thing in common: both groups called for devolving more decision-making powers to the level of impresario agencies. The fiercest critics of the commercial orientation in culture called for institutional reform. “The system of organising concerts that developed decades ago... needs substantial revisions,” wrote Khrennikov to the CPSU Central Committee. Impresario agencies were “governed by an enormous number of rules that ... kill bottom-up initiatives and stunt the development of musical life.”<sup>ciii</sup> Polish critics of commercial culture likewise hoped that freeing music professionals from excessive top-down control would allow for greater creativity. Jerzy Bisiak reasoned that impresario agencies would take more financial risks and invest in the development of both infrastructure and ambitious pop music if managers retained control over profits and financial surpluses (instead of paying everything into the state budget), and if impresario agencies were freed from rigid work plans and financial targets.<sup>civ</sup>

The search to raise profit margins for state-owned enterprises in Poland was also linked with managerial reform. At the government level, Jaruzelski’s team stressed that the day-to-day running of the economy was to be resolved within and between enterprises, with only long-term planning and control of the capital left to the centre.<sup>cv</sup> At the enterprise level, Pagart managers saw government interference as a threat to their economic mission, stressing for example that new limits on foreign travel imposed by the Ministry of Culture undermined the export of Polish pop to the Middle East that had been growing prior to 1983.<sup>cvi</sup> Despite bringing in US dollar profits, Pagart was still short of hard currency as they had to surrender most of it to the central state budget.<sup>cvi</sup> Well into the late 1980s, the fees that Pagart paid to

Polish singers and musicians were still limited by the law.<sup>cxviii</sup> At the same time, Pagart directors prided themselves on their expertise which they contrasted with the incompetence of their more ideologically-oriented partners who did not seem to appreciate the importance of maintaining cordial relations with commercially successful artists. Pagart regretted delegating the management of Alla Pugacheva's 1983 tour of Poland to the Soviet-Polish Friendship Society: Pugacheva's performances were a sure source of profit that could then fund the Zielona Góra festival, but the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society threatened future cooperation with the singer by placing her musicians in bug-infested hotels.<sup>cxix</sup>

The autonomy of Pagart management was limited not only by the Polish state, but also by its rank-and-file employees. Whereas the Hungarian devolution of economic decision-making in the 1960s empowered the managerial class, massive strikes and the government's fear of independent trade unions in Poland meant that the growing independence of enterprises translated into higher wages for workers.<sup>cx</sup> Pagart was not of course a massive factory or an important pressure group. Nonetheless, the average pay at Pagart rose by over 30 percent from 1980 to 1981.<sup>cx</sup> Managers also faced pressure from musicians who complained that agency fees on foreign contracts were too high.<sup>cxii</sup> These trends continued into the late 1980s – in 1987, for example, wages at Pagart rose by 50 percent. In theory, the organisation's increased profits should not have been eaten up by wage and bonus increases because salary budgets were just as much a percentage of profit as various infrastructural investment funds.<sup>cxiii</sup> As the Polish government went above enterprise managers' heads and raised salaries for political reasons,<sup>cxiv</sup> however, managers had limited opportunities to develop new musical programmes or infrastructure because of the relative size of wage and bonus funds.<sup>cxv</sup>

#### **IV. The mid-1980s: East European networks loosened**

Reform was very limited on both sides of the Polish-Soviet border in the mid-1980s. Yet Polish music professionals operated in a new environment in which the need to increase profits and contacts across the Iron Curtain undermined exchanges with the USSR. Although Goskontsert did not undergo similar reforms, its employees were not keen to restore loss-making cultural contacts with the USSR's largest but also most troublesome satellite. In this way, Pagart and (to a lesser extent) Goskontsert weakened cultural networks that bound the Soviet bloc together.

Polish-Soviet concert tours began to recover in 1983. Pop still played an important role in events that celebrated “unbreakable friendship” between the USSR and its satellite states, such as the 1984 Polish Culture Days organised in the USSR to mark forty years of state socialism in Poland.<sup>cxvi</sup> Commercial tours arranged between Pagart and Goskontsert resumed, too.<sup>cxvii</sup>

In their search for increased profit margins, however, Pagart found cultural cooperation within the bloc less important than contacts with the capitalist West. According to the agency, Zhanna Bichevskaja's and Edyta Piecha's 1984 tours of Poland were “attractive”, but the label of “cultural events of the season” was reserved for Elton John, Ray Charles, and Charles Aznavour.<sup>cxviii</sup> The heavy Western orientation of Polish cultural policy in the mid-1980s was evident at the Sopot international song festival, revived in 1984 after a three year hiatus. Sopot featured performers from around the socialist camp, including the Soviet Estonian Anne Veski who won an award in Sopot in 1984 and returned as a “star” in the following year. But it was Western singers certain to attract audiences who quite literally took the centre stage—for the first three days of the four-day festival in 1985, Shirley Bassey's scenography provided the background for all performers. Audience preferences were especially important as the soaring costs of Sopot were to be covered by raising ticket prices (the most expensive tickets were originally supposed to cost 1000 zloty, but this was raised to

1800 zloty for the parts of the festival featuring Western stars). Despite shortcomings in advertising, Pagart considered the festival a success because Western impresario agencies showed some interest in importing Polish performers.<sup>cxix</sup>

As profit margins preoccupied Polish officials in charge of the import and export of music, the Party and the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society had little influence over artists and bureaucrats who were hostile or, in the best case scenario, indifferent towards the idea of strengthening cultural ties between Poland and the USSR. One Central Committee report chastised the organisers of a special concert celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the liberation of Warsaw during the Second World War: with socialist camp delegations in the audience, the concert finale betrayed “completely unjustified cosmopolitanism and fascination with Western commercial culture” as Maryla Rodowicz covered the song “Susanna” by the Dutch group VOF de Kunst.<sup>cxx</sup> Musicians’ indifference to the heavily politicised festival in Zielona Góra became a favourite focus of criticism for music ideologues. In 1984, the Party’s Central Committee, activists of the official youth movement ZSMP, and enthusiastic members of the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society despaired that amateur musicians, particularly among university students, showed little interest in the festival. They blamed schools and cultural institutions which had a “negative” or “indifferent” attitude to Soviet music. Meanwhile, festival organisers maintained, music professionals treated work in Zielona Góra as a chore or perhaps a source of political embarrassment. Journalists wrote superficial reviews of the festival, presenters on stage could not pronounce the Russian names of songs and performers, and popular bands that had earlier toured the USSR (such as Budka Suflera) outright refused to participate. Facing a boycott of Zielona Góra by many leading performers, the organisers reluctantly invited the pop-rock bands Bajm and Wanda i Banda to play at the festival. The bands’ electric guitar sound differed from the more lyrical Soviet pop repertoire, making the festival “stylistically

incoherent” and thus highlighting differences between the USSR and its allies.<sup>cxxi</sup> Because of the transnational dimension of the festival, Zielona Góra was not only a Polish problem – Soviet Party apparatchiks likewise complained that they had too little influence over the “ideological and artistic” side of the event.<sup>cxxii</sup>

Conflicting visions of popular music found their advocates in Poland’s public sphere. The more liberal press offered a forum to those who saw music primarily as a professional, and not an ideological, pursuit. In 1985, the weekly *Polityka* published an interview with Maryla Rodowicz, whom they dubbed the ‘Madonna of the Comecon’ on account of her popularity in the USSR and other people’s democracies.<sup>cxxiii</sup> Asked whether she thought it appropriate to prepare a new repertoire in light of the political turmoil of the previous few years, like the more rebellious rock bands whose music supposedly reflected widespread “bitterness” among society, Rodowicz hinted that she too sympathised with the anti-regime opposition. But she also emphatically claimed: “I am a singer, not a safety valve for social moods!... I have always been and I will remain a commercial singer. This is a conscious choice, but the important caveat is that I want to do [my job] professionally... I do not want to force a poor quality product on people when it is already forced on them everywhere.” At the same time, Rodowicz complained that shortages of equipment and money in East European entertainment industry stunted the development of new talent and ideas.<sup>cxxiv</sup> In other cases, newspapers chastised Polish performers for their lack of commitment to friendship with the USSR. One article asked rhetorically whether Zielona Góra lay too far out of the way for Polish performers when the USSR was able to send Alla Pugacheva herself to headline the 1983 final concert.<sup>cxxv</sup>

In contrast to their Polish colleagues, Soviet Party leaders and music professionals did not openly reflect on the depth or the causes of cultural tensions in the socialist camp. Pugacheva’s short speech at the end of the 1983 televised concert in Zielona Góra echoed



narratives of Czechoslovak normalisation, where popular culture turned citizens' attention away from politics and towards the challenges of finding happiness among family, friends, and colleagues: "I hope we can soon leave all our problems behind in song... And I wish us all peace and calm, so that we can focus on singing and enjoying life."<sup>cxvii</sup> The Soviet press downplayed long-term consequences of the Polish political crisis. Acknowledging in 1984 that the number of participants in the Zielona Góra song competition had fallen at the height of the Solidarity crisis, the newspaper *Komsomol'skaia pravda* repeated familiar propaganda statements about Polish audiences' "love for Soviet songs" and dismissed the apparent cultural problems as a temporary setback caused by a group of Solidarity saboteurs and American imperialists.<sup>cxviii</sup> Even in reports aimed at a narrow circle of readers, Soviet officials found it difficult to meaningfully analyse the USSR's cultural relations with Poland. To explain why Polish tours of the USSR were severely cut back in 1982, Goskontsert employees resorted to the laboured statement that "artistic exchanges develop[ed] in light of the complicated prevailing situation."<sup>cxviii</sup>

Yet pretending that long-established forms of cultural cooperation actually worked became increasingly difficult even for the Soviet side. Most troubling were direct political challenges to Soviet performers on tour in Poland. Following a 1985 concert in Szczecin, none other than the regional Party secretary in charge of propaganda "embarrassed" the Soviet Estonian singer Anne Veski, her Goskontsert guides, and the Soviet vice-consul who accompanied the group. He asked them to study an illegal opposition pamphlet and enquired whether Veski had encountered any hostility from Szczecin's "very active" underground.<sup>cxix</sup>

While politics cast a shadow over Soviet-Polish cultural cooperation, however, it was economics that loomed larger. Aware that political upheavals sparked the near-boycott of Polish artists and performers in the USSR in 1981, the Central Committee in Warsaw identified deeper roots of the crisis in their Soviet colleagues' need to cut spending.<sup>cxx</sup> They

likewise concluded that the reason why Soviet-bloc artists were reluctant to perform in each other's countries was not only a certain lack of prestige associated with touring the second world, but also the inflexible system of royalties.<sup>cxxxii</sup>

#### V. The late 1980s: Eastern European cultural networks dismantled

Gorbachev's economic policies were quick to bring Goskontsert in line with their more profit-oriented Polish partners. From 1986, Goskontsert leadership boldly defended the commercial orientation for which they had been attacked earlier in the decade. As Pagart and Goskontsert management faced rising competition in the music industry, they organised international concerts within the socialist camp, but also questioned whether large state-owned agencies that made up Eastern Europe's cultural networks were able to respond to the needs and tastes of Soviet-bloc audiences.

The term *khozrashchet*, “roughly analogous to enterprise accounting in Western business parlance,”<sup>cxxxiii</sup> marked the limits of reform in the Soviet state sector between 1986 and 1990. The idea that state enterprise managers, having fulfilled centrally assigned plans, could then trade in products and services to boost their budgets built on Kosygin's abortive reforms of the 1960s. Given that state monopolies were only gradually challenged by new laws on cooperatives and individual labour activity, *khozrashchet* certainly did not mean the introduction of a free market. Nevertheless, it sparked resistance among branch economic ministries and central organs such as Gosnab which stood to lose their power vis-a-vis individual enterprises.<sup>cxxxiii</sup> For their part, Goskontsert leadership was quick to embrace the new language of *khozrashchet* to justify a commercial orientation. “The ever rising number of unprofitable international concert tours ... is not within Goskontsert's financial means at this stage and they harm *khozrashchet*,” stated the organisation's report for 1986. The pressures of

reform meant that Goskontsert had to compromise between their mission to educate through classical music and to make money through pop.<sup>cxxxiv</sup>

Goskontsert management saw *khozraschet* as a way to address deep-rooted issues which music professionals were attuned to more than Communist Party or Ministry of Culture officials. Infrastructural problems and material shortages, already evident in 1970s reports, were now openly discussed in the context of new investments that Goskontsert would make after establishing control over its own budget.<sup>cxxxv</sup> Moreover, just as their colleagues at Pagart, Goskontsert directors saw their newly acquired powers as a way to motivate employees through higher wages and bonuses. They therefore opted for a form of *khozrashchet* that tied bonuses to profits; the plan was to reward employees for creative and economic success.<sup>cxxxvi</sup> In the late 1980s, Goskontsert and Pagart further began to look towards redundancies as a means of raising wages within their respective enterprises.<sup>cxxxvii</sup>

The search for profits fuelled conflicts between Goskontsert leadership and the Soviet Ministry of Culture which still retained a great degree of financial control. Before 1989, Goskontsert paid a large proportion of its coveted hard currency profits into a special “centralised hard currency fund” at the Ministry of Culture.<sup>cxxxviii</sup> This system deprived Goskontsert of the money needed to cover cultural exchanges and thus made the agency dependent on ministry funding.<sup>cxxxix</sup> The June 1987 “Law on State Enterprise” promised state-owned enterprises more control over their finances, but did not deprive ministries of the power to impose targets.<sup>cxl</sup> When implemented at Goskontsert in January 1989, the law freed the management from budgetary contributions to the Ministry of Culture. In addition, Goskontsert now kept control over all unused Soviet rouble subsidies that it received from the ministry.<sup>cxli</sup> Nevertheless, the Ministry of Culture retained significant power to direct Goskontsert's work. As price liberalisation was delayed for fear of social unrest,<sup>cxlii</sup> the agency gained the right to negotiate prices for the export and import of music, but could still

only adjust concert ticket prices within state-imposed brackets.<sup>cxliii</sup> Goskontsert was obliged to assist in the USSR's foreign policy initiatives on the ministry's orders. Such events were paid for by the Ministry of Culture, but Goskontsert's management was in a losing position as it was the ministry that decided on both the number of such events and the size of the subsidies. The ministry was in fact reluctant to approve financial reports submitted by Goskontsert and rarely reimbursed the agency on time.<sup>cxliv</sup> In other words, Gorbachev's reforms pushed Goskontsert to search for increased profit margins, but also left it at the mercy of a ministry that cared little about the agency's finances.

These half-measures had a detrimental effect on Soviet-Polish cultural cooperation. The commercially-oriented Pagart and Goskontsert had limited interest in each other. True, commercial pop tours within the socialist camp continued even as state-owned impresarios focused on Western imports such as the British UB-40 or the Italian Al Bano and Romina Power.<sup>cxlv</sup> Pagart even attracted the wrath of the Polish Party Central Committee as it treated Soviet imports like any other form of commercial activity.<sup>cxlvi</sup> Unlike large symphonic orchestras or theatre groups, exports and imports of pop music within the socialist camp had the potential to boost Goskontsert's budget – from January 1989, profits made on intrabloc exchanges stayed within Goskontsert so long as they involved groups of artists under twenty people.<sup>cxlvii</sup> The problem was that the Ministry of Culture pocketed all hard currency profits on events that it ordered and subsidised. Consequently, with no limits on the number of such events, Goskontsert had too little hard currency to invest in profitable imports and exports of its own.<sup>cxlviii</sup> This made cooperation between Pagart and Goskontsert difficult. Hoping to purchase Western recording licences in 1989, Goskontsert turned to Pagart as an intermediary, but it was only able to offer payment in kind. Given that Pagart was itself short of hard currency, the Poles rejected the proposal.<sup>cxlix</sup>

Goskontsert's commercial orientation further helped to reorient its ideological activities away from the socialist camp. Performers who had earlier played a prominent role in Soviet cultural diplomacy in Eastern Europe were now primed for cultural exchanges across the Iron Curtain. Already in the early 1980s, Goskontsert had to deny requests to send Alla Pugacheva to accompany some Soviet foreign policy initiatives: the singer was arguably the most successful Soviet pop export and her annual schedule filled up very quickly.<sup>cl</sup> In the second half of the decade, Goskontsert planned Pugacheva's foreign tours so as to intensify exchanges with Western Europe. This was partly because such concerts helped to promote a positive image of Gorbachev's policy initiatives at a time when the USSR sought a rapprochement with the West. Pugacheva's September 1987 performance in Duisburg thus helped celebrate the West German communist party's newspaper, *Unsere Zeit*, as well as to popularise Mikhail Gorbachev's nuclear disarmament initiatives. Equally important, however, Goskontsert saw Pugacheva's participation in such highly politicized events as a prelude to purely commercial activities in Switzerland and the FRG. The plan was to cooperate with the West German concert agency Lippmann and Rau to organize a "normal commercial" tour for Pugacheva in the aftermath of her performance in Duisburg (Goskontsert's German partners had mentioned the possibility of a "modest commercial" success), partly to offset the costs of the concert in Duisburg, but also to open new markets for the singer through mass advertising campaigns on West German national television and radio. Goskontsert employees also hoped that cooperation with Lippmann and Rau would allow them to import American performers such as Stevie Wonder and Carlos Santana. They would visit the USSR while touring West Germany and Poland, thus significantly reducing transport costs.<sup>cli</sup>

Music professionals feared that the pop performances within the socialist bloc which they organised on government orders were out of touch with audience demand. The first Polish song festival held in the Soviet town of Vitebsk in 1988 exemplified the shortcomings of politicised

cultural exchanges coordinated by Party and government officials. As a mirror image of Zielona Góra, the festival was in many ways a product of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. It comprised multi-level competitions for amateurs performing Polish pop repertoire in different parts of the USSR, and a televised final concert with the participation of Polish and Soviet celebrities. In other words, while Zielona Góra had long been used to spread Soviet culture in Poland, Vitebsk now undermined imperial cultural hierarchies by attempting to spread Polish culture in the USSR.<sup>clii</sup> But precisely because the festival was conceived as a Soviet response to Zielona Góra,<sup>cliii</sup> it resembled Party-driven initiatives of the Brezhnev days that were widely out of line with the late 1980s emphasis on profits. In contrast to commercial festivals held in the same year,<sup>cliv</sup> advertising was conspicuously absent from the centre stage.<sup>clv</sup> The Polish press was quick to comment on politicians' indifference to profit at Vitebsk. "Once again, it turned out that we do not know how to sell our product," wrote Piotr Sarzyński in *Polityka*. The journalist believed that there was strong potential to sell Russian-language publications on Polish music in the USSR and even challenged the "official Polish delegation – the navigators of our cultural policy" on this topic during a press conference, only to hear that "there was no need" to invest in promotional material. The audience had a clear preference for Soviet celebrities and young Polish pop-rock bands, but the festival programme showed that the organisers were mentally stuck in the 1970s, as a result of which many songs met with a cool reception among the Soviet public. The *Polityka* article epitomised the fears of music professionals uncertain about the future of Polish-Soviet cultural cooperation at a time when Party control over culture in the USSR slowly crumbled: "Is this really a good indicator of our popularity here, ... is the political-cultural decision to stage this festival in line with the real cultural needs of Russian people?"<sup>clvi</sup>

On the Soviet side of the border, Soviet music professionals registered listeners' opinions which also fuelled doubts about their role as mediators of audience taste. Between 1985 and

1987, the Soviet radio received thousands of letters which variously welcomed or bemoaned changes in the USSR's pop repertoire, reflecting the widespread perception that Soviet-bloc culture was in flux. Calling for more airtime to be devoted to Western pop such as Italian disco, as well as good-quality Soviet rock music, some young letter writers cited the example of the Polish music industry to argue that Soviet broadcasters should better reflect the changing tastes of the younger generation. As one writer from Minsk put it, the hosts of music shows for young people could perhaps "risk following the Polish example" and allow listeners to phone in. Another letter from Moscow suggested that Soviet music professionals could copy Polish programs that targeted particular generations, instead of producing shows that aimed to find a middle ground to please the whole spectrum of the audience.<sup>clvii</sup>

Anxieties about Party and government interference in music fed into broader debates about state ownership in culture. Subjected to Party and government controls, state-owned impresario agencies found it difficult to compete against non-state actors. The problem was not new in Poland. Pagart had earlier competed for artists' time against privately and cooperatively owned record labels that emerged in the late 1970s and got a further boost in 1985 (though they did not import or export live music).<sup>clviii</sup> The so-called "second stage of economic reform" turned non-state actors into more powerful competition for Pagart between 1987 and 1989. With restrictions on private activities and foreign capital investment relaxed, and with the tax system favouring private entrepreneurs over the state sector, newly founded, mostly small-scale private companies grew from strength to strength.<sup>clix</sup> Polish performers keen to play abroad escaped Pagart for other agencies that arranged concerts for smaller fees and ignored the wage controls that still limited what Pagart paid its artists.<sup>clix</sup> The Ministry of Culture in Warsaw was painfully aware of these dynamics, but their government colleagues in charge of economic reform were unmoved by requests to limit private activities, and hinted that the new impresario agencies would help to reorient Polish cultural exports away from

the traditional markets of the Soviet bloc. Competition between state and private impresario agencies will help to diversify Poland's foreign cultural relations, claimed the Minister for Foreign Economic Cooperation Dominik Jastrzębski in response to Ministry of Culture complaints in December 1988.<sup>clxi</sup>

Although a robust private sector did not emerge across Poland's eastern border,<sup>clxii</sup> competition in the music industry also played an important role in the USSR from 1988, when Soviet citizens gained the right to set up cooperatives.<sup>clxiii</sup> Goskontsert saw cooperatives as a force with which they had to reckon: the management now feared that artists would simply take their services and agency fees elsewhere so long as they were forced to file paperwork in several different offices to travel abroad through Goskontsert. The proposed solution was to train a new cadre of managers who would take care of a particular artist's business from start to finish.<sup>clxiv</sup> Attempts to streamline bureaucratic procedures were too little, too late. Like private actors in Poland, Soviet cooperatives and other organisations that gained the right to organise concerts posed a major threat to the state sector because they were not subject to wage controls. By April 1989, they seriously undermined the work of state-owned impresario agencies, leading the RSFSR Ministry of Culture to conclude that such major players as Moskontsert and Lenkontsert could not fulfil their five-year plans because other organisations tempted commercially successful pop acts away with higher wages.<sup>clxv</sup>

The new cultural networks that began to emerge in parallel and in competition with the state sector were not "Eastern European" both because they undermined Cold War hierarchies, and because they exposed conflicts within the Soviet bloc. In 1987, for example, Goskontsert dealt with a private Hungarian impresario representing the West German band Modern Talking. Goskontsert was weary of the man who clearly had the reputation of a womaniser, with one internal memo specifying that under no circumstances should he be



allocated a female interpreter during a visit to Moscow, but they were also keen to book the popular group. For his part, the Hungarian impresario treated the Soviet state-owned agency in a condescending manner, sending telegrams reminding Goskontsert that he and his clients were successful professionals who would not put up with the Soviet bureaucracy. Ultimately, although Modern Talking gave concerts in Poland and Yugoslavia, their 1987 visit to the USSR was not to be as Goskontsert was too slow in responding to the Hungarian businessman.<sup>clxvi</sup> Reflecting broader structural changes in Soviet-bloc politics, the incident highlighted the collapse of distinct Eastern European cultural networks in which Goskontsert represented the dominant power. The Hungarian impresario clearly emphasised that he represented the interests of a commercial West German band, and not a government of the USSR's ally.

At the same time, international concerts arranged outside the old state-owned impresario agencies exposed deep political and cultural rifts in Eastern Europe. When the Polish rock band Woo-Woo performed in Vilnius in 1988 as part of a rock festival organised by a newly formed organisation 'Centras' (uniting local Komsomol activists and employees of a music club), Marek Gajewski's *Polityka* article celebrated how diverse Soviet and East European culture had become over the previous two years, but also pointed to deep divisions that diversity entailed. Soviet Lithuania was worlds apart from Soviet Ukraine, where Woo-Woo performed a few days before: as young people danced by the stage in Vilnius, in Kyiv they still sat quietly surrounded by hordes of militia. Political tensions were palpable in Lithuania, too, as performers and the public called for national independence and spoke of recent government crackdowns on rock music. In Gajewski's article, political divisions and cultural freedoms went hand-in-hand with commercial success: the festival's non-state organisers covered all the costs (100,000 roubles) on ticket sales, a feat that seemed out of reach for most major festival organisers in Poland.<sup>clxvii</sup>

By 1989, networks devoted to creating cultural unity in Eastern Europe were no more. Party and government control over music crumbled as Pagart and Goskonsert management escaped into the non-state sector. Between 1987 and 1989, during the “first stage of political capitalism” in Poland, state assets were leased to private entrepreneurs and failing state enterprises were turned into joint stock companies. This allowed state enterprise managers to acquire private control over public assets. Taking advantage of nomenklatura connections, they bought stocks in public companies at deflated prices, acquired lucrative import licences, sold political protection and local expertise to foreign investors, cashed in on the sales of state-owned real estate, and used state capital as the basis for the functioning of their own spin-off companies.<sup>clxviii</sup> Soviet state sector managers likewise took advantage of the fact that cooperatives, free from price controls, could be attached to state enterprises. They used state infrastructure for non-state economic activity, stripped public assets by paying “friendly” cooperatives inflated prices for real or fictitious services to their enterprises, and shared in the profits that cooperatives made on buying cheap produce at state prices and selling it on the free market.<sup>clxix</sup> These developments effectively amounted to stealing public property and, unsurprisingly, it is difficult to trace how far these processes affected Pagart and Goskontsert. It is particularly hard to identify the individuals who pushed for and benefitted from the privatization of the socialist camp’s impressario agencies.

What is clear is that Party apparatchiks in Warsaw believed that state-owned impressario agencies full-heartedly embraced the non-state sector. The managers sold their concerts to a wide range of organisers who, while inflating ticket prices, failed to arrange appropriate conditions for “prestigious performances by foreign guests.”<sup>clxx</sup> “The hapless slogan about self-financing in culture coined in the early 1980s,” claimed one 1987 report, “means that popular entertainment, something that could really finance itself, is in the hands of various social movements, cultural institutions, youth organisations, and trade unions that see it as a

fix-it-all remedy for their own broken budgets.” Profitable concerts, the report emphasised, were organised by individuals who have long left state enterprises and institutions.<sup>clxxi</sup> Meanwhile, in 1988, Goskontsert stressed that it was of utmost importance to delegate concert organisation to newly formed cooperatives and thus to escape state-imposed norms on cultural imports from the socialist camp.<sup>clxxii</sup> In October 1990, Goskontsert employees applied to rent the agency's assets as a cooperative in their own right.<sup>clxxiii</sup>

## **VI. Conclusion:**

Particularly in the former USSR, but also in its satellite states, the last years of Brezhnev’s rule are often associated with harmony, stability, and relative prosperity. In contrast, perestroika is remembered as a prelude to the 1990s, a time of unsuccessful and unnecessary reforms that brought about a time of economic hardship. This article challenges these periodisations as it reconstructs the late 1970s and the early 1980s as a period of unease caused by the belief that Soviet and Eastern European institutions were not working, widespread among mid-level bureaucrats and entrepreneurs who managed Soviet-bloc imports and exports outside the strategic and heavily-subsidised industries. It further identifies strong roots of enthusiasm for market reform during the 1980s. Pointing to socio-political unrest in Poland as the spark behind changes in Eastern European cultural politics, it nevertheless shifts emphasis away from dissidents and protest towards professionals in state-owned enterprises and economic reform as the key to understanding why Eastern Europeans lost faith in a common future.

What made Soviet-bloc attempts to create a distinct “Eastern European” culture unique was also what made cultural institutions in the socialist camp inefficient and stifling. In Poland and the USSR, the state enjoyed a monopoly on the import and export of live music. The lack of competition in the concert industry confined audiences to cold auditoriums with

substandard sound equipment. Quite apart from Pagart's and Goskontsert's respective monopolies, Eastern European music was plagued by powerful party leaders, friendship society activists, and ministry of culture bureaucrats whose influence was slow to wane over the 1980s.

Music professionals found that ideological activists limited their initiative and creativity. Subject to government-imposed targets, budgets, and price controls, impresario agency employees and performers aspired to make professional entertainment. During the 1970s, they expressed alarm at the inefficiencies of Soviet-bloc institutions which made this task difficult. Yet they could not do much beyond calling for more empathy for the viewers and the performers, particularly in the USSR where economic and infrastructural problems were still swept under the carpet when Gorbachev came to power. Popular culture narratives of a happy life under socialism were therefore far removed from the actual experience of producing culture.

My focus on Soviet-Polish concert tours reveals how discord within the socialist camp, less palpable in the USSR's relations with other satellite states, subsequently shaped cultural relations in the 1980s. Many other forms of transnational contacts within the socialist camp and across the Iron Curtain did not suffer setbacks akin to the Soviet-Polish cultural exchanges in the sphere of pop, and they still reflected the belief that state socialism provided meaningful pathways to change well into the late 1980s.<sup>clxxiv</sup> Moreover, the shifts in pop professionals' approaches to business and culture did not occur simultaneously in the USSR and Poland. During the early 1980s, outside the context of Soviet-Polish interactions, bureaucrats who managed the USSR's external interface were stuck in their ways. For instance, professionals who oversaw Western tourism in the USSR faced infrastructural problems which frustrated their "mission to gain hard currency," but they "entered the 1980s in a state of seeming stability." As strong distinctions between East and West "remained

intact” in the minds of Soviet elites and the wider population, Alex Hazanov argues, Intourist’s “responses to the global age” were still structured by “a deep autarchic, xenophobic institutional substratum”.<sup>clxxv</sup> The world of Soviet pop was not quite as immune to reformist ideas: even some of the harshest critics of “commercial orientation in culture” suggested that impresario agencies should be subject to fewer top-down controls, and Pagart employees hinted that their Soviet counterparts sought to limit unprofitable exchanges within the socialist camp. Still, Party and Ministry of Culture ideologues retained the power to direct Goskontsert activities through the mid-1980s, protecting Soviet culture from “harmful” foreign influences.

At the same time, however, the popular culture image of the socialist camp as a space distinct from the capitalist West was seriously undermined after the rise of Solidarity. As economic and institutional reform freed Polish pop impresarios from ideological oversight, the ties that underpinned “Eastern European” mental geographies in Polish and Soviet popular culture began to crumble several years before the onset of *perestroika* in the USSR. To be sure, conflicts and confrontations had long rocked the Soviet bloc, but they had mostly inspired a search for change within the imagined socialist space. Memories of the Prague Spring were still fresh during the 1980s, for example, helping to mould Mikhail Gorbachev’s attempts to build “democratised and humanised socialism.”<sup>clxxvi</sup> Equally important, tourist travel between the USSR and Eastern Europe reflected anxieties about the future of socialism, but also attempts to spread Soviet ideas and practices in the people’s democracies.<sup>clxxvii</sup> In contrast, Polish-Soviet relations during the early 1980s marked a decline of the search for “mutual understanding” in the socialist camp.<sup>clxxviii</sup> With the onset of Gorbachev’s reforms, Polish and Soviet pop impresarios showed little interest in fixing mutual cultural relations which had begun to unravel earlier in the decade as they prioritized commercial over ideological considerations in their work. Whereas the success of Chinese

market reforms during the 1980s provided a “trump card” for those Soviet officials who sought to restructure central planning without undermining Communist Party hold over society and culture,<sup>clxxix</sup> the breakdown in Polish-Soviet relations sparked by the Solidarity crisis provided a setting in which Polish and then Soviet professionals translated economic reform into a new type of international cultural relations over which the Party had little control.

Although this article is a story of demise, it is also a tale of new beginnings. As Alexei Yurchak has shown, many urban young people in the USSR developed diverse beliefs and lifestyles without ever questioning the character or longevity of the dominant social, political, and cultural practices of late socialism.<sup>clxxx</sup> Among the increasingly well-educated professionals, however, ambitions to mimick Western lifestyles as well as cultural confrontations within the socialist bloc fuelled the belief that things did not have to stay as they were. Free enterprise offered a way to escape the political and institutional constraints that music professionals faced in the socialist bloc. Mid-level bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, and performers gradually gained the power to decide what cultural services to sell at home and abroad, as well as to control how profits they made on the import and export of culture were distributed. They also pursued closer cultural ties across the Iron Curtain which brought higher profits, opened opportunities to invest in new equipment and to cooperate with popular artists, and (in their assessment) appealed to the mass audience.<sup>clxxxi</sup> With less success, the professionals also tried to retain within their enterprises the hard-currency reserves in US dollars which they accumulated through exports to the capitalist West, as well as to weaken government-imposed price controls which they saw as an obstacle to professional success.

It is beyond the scope of this article to explore how far the market fulfilled the hopes of music professionals during the 1990s, though the advent of capitalism no doubt had its winners and losers in the music industry. Already during the late 1980s, some pop professionals in the

Soviet bloc began to look at the market as a mixed blessing. In Poland, “private presses [created] opportunities for bands that otherwise would not have had the opportunity to record,” but also “brought a new sort of restriction in the form of complicated contracts designed to extract profit from musicians.” Similarly, Soviet artists welcomed Western private investors and the newly formed cooperatives as an alternative to state-owned enterprises which, in their view, created very limited opportunities to record and perform, but also found that the capitalist music industry limited the “small spaces of freedom” which the socialist system with its inefficient oversight had offered.<sup>clxxxii</sup>

What is clear is that infrastructural and economic reform was linked intimately with a cultural reorientation of the Soviet bloc. For music professionals, the need to cater to popular tastes left little room for networks created to promulgate a very rigidly defined culture of Eastern Europe. As profits became a central concern through the 19580s, Pagart and subsequently Goskontsert employees jumped at the opportunity to reorient pop music away from Eastern European cultural networks and towards exchanges across the Iron Curtain.

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<sup>i</sup> Patryk Babiracki, *Soviet Soft Power in Poland: Culture and the Making of Stalin's New Empire* (Chapel Hill, 2015).

<sup>ii</sup> Archiwum Akt Nowych, Warsaw (hereafter, AAN), z.1354 (Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party), s.LVI (Department of Culture), t.978, “Koncert estradowy na Dni Warszawy.”

<sup>iii</sup> The term ‘pop’ was not used in the Soviet bloc –popular music was referred to as ‘estrada’. The term is often translated as ‘variety’ and it encompasses such diverse forms of entertainment as mass concerts and puppet shows. Given the increasingly common ambition to mimic Western pop in estrada which I discuss in this article, and in order to avoid confusing popular music with other forms of entertainment which Soviet officials classified as ‘estrada’, I have chosen to write about ‘pop music’. Like its Western equivalent, East European pop was primarily a means of entertainment. Ministries of culture and impressario agencies distinguished popular music from symphonic music, the opera, and even the operetta aimed at more sophisticated listeners. Pop was distinct from folk songs, as well as the march-like “mass songs,” such as “Moscow Nights,” performed by large choirs in the mid-twentieth century, but sung “in the streets” for decades to come. Pop differed from jazz – popular and controversial in earlier decades, jazz evolved into a form of high art by the 1970s. Yet I do not mean to imply that East European pop was homogenous or that it was not influenced by other genres. To borrow Marina Frolova-Walker’s terminology developed with reference to Soviet musical life during the much more repressive Stalinist era, the pop of late socialism had its mainstream, its margins, and its boundaries. Mainstream pop represented an attempt to reconcile different generations and to obscure cultural conflict. It was mostly soft and melodic, and it included Beatles-inspired rock-and-roll. The margins of pop music shifted during the late Soviet era. Certain types of rock entered professional stages in 1980 only to face new restrictions in 1983, before finally being incorporated by the Soviet pop industry during *glasnost*. Other forms of musical expression hovered even further out on the boundaries of legality: punk rock was targeted for particularly harsh repression in the USSR during the early 1980s. Marina Frolova-Walker, *Stalin's Music Prize: Soviet Culture and Politics* (New Haven, 2016), 185-87; Polly McMichael, ‘Prehistories and Afterlives: The Packaging and Re-packaging of

Soviet Rock', *Popular Music and Society* 32:3 (2009), 331-350; Valentyn Solodovnyk, 'Estrada', in *Narysy ukrains'koi populiarnoi kul'tury*, ed. Oleksander Hrytsenko (Kyiv, 1998), 141; S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the USSR* (New York, 1983).

<sup>iv</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.691, "Problemy rozrywki."

<sup>v</sup> Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire That Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca, 2011).

<sup>vi</sup> Already in the 1960s, the emphasis on profits for state-owned enterprises put pressure on Soviet opinion makers to respond to audience demand. For example, "Kosygin's reforms, which created quasi-market conditions with the Soviet press, forced journalists to seek out the services of sociologists to provide much-needed information on audiences. However, many wondered whether this research, by creating a demand for more 'reader-friendly' material, would compromise the didactic principles upon which Soviet newspapers had traditionally rested." Simon Huxtable, "In Search of the Soviet Reader: The Kosygin Reforms, Sociology, and the Changing Concepts of Soviet Society, 1964-70," *Cahiers du monde russe* 54:3-4 (2013): 623-42.

<sup>vii</sup> Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and His TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring* (Ithaca, 2010), 187.

<sup>viii</sup> Stephen Lovell, "In Search of an Ending: *Seventeen Moments* and the Seventies," in *The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World*, ed. Anne Gorsuch and Diane Koenker (Bloomington, 2013).

<sup>ix</sup> Goskontsert's and Pagart's permanent employees included accountants, stage managers, tour guides, interpreters, as well as officials in charge of obtaining passports and work visas for musicians. The agencies also concluded temporary contracts with musicians they sent on tour. The permanent staff knew full well that agency profit margins were tied closely to their career prospects and bonuses. They thus had to balance between the need to keep performers' royalties low, and the ambition to sign on popular acts they could market at high prices.

<sup>x</sup> Raymond Patton, 'The Communist Culture Industry: The Music Business in 1980s Poland,' *Journal of Contemporary History* 47 (2012): 427-49, 433-34.

<sup>xi</sup> Andriy Zayarnyuk, *The Lviv Train Station as a Soviet Enterprise, 1944-1980*, The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies, ed. William Chase et al, volume 2501 (Pittsburgh, 2017).

<sup>xii</sup> *Perestroika* built on Soviet leaders' long-held ambitions to integrate the USSR more firmly into Western-dominated global economic networks, undermined by excessive central control over foreign trade. It also reflected Party leaders' drive to improve production quality and labour efficiency. "Andropov and his young protégés who had made their careers in the regional party apparat", including Mikhail Gorbachev, aligned with critical voices in Soviet academic circles in an attempt to "crush the inertia they encountered at the center". Oscar Sanchez-Sibony, *Red Globalization: Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev* (New York, 2014), 119, 247-8; Yakov Feygin, "Reforming the Cold War State: Economic Thought, Internationalization, and the Politics of Soviet Reform," PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2017, 328.

<sup>xiii</sup> Alex Hazanov, "Porous Empire: Foreign Visitors and the Post-Stalin Soviet State," PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2016, 65-66.

<sup>xiv</sup> Before 1990, Soviet and East European Party reformers sought to boost foreign trade and investment, as well as to create new incentives to improve enterprise performance. Yet they stepped carefully for fear of crossing vested interests and sparking social unrest, shying away from any substantial monetary or fiscal reform. Chris Miller, *The Struggle to Save the Soviet Economy: Mikhail Gorbachev and the Collapse of the USSR* (Chapel Hill, 2016), 55-73.

<sup>xv</sup> Randall Stone, *Satellites and Commissars: Strategy and Conflict in the Politics of Soviet-Bloc Trade* (Princeton, 1995), 17-22.

<sup>xvi</sup> They represented the ambitions of those East European professionals for whom cheap energy imports from the USSR were not worth the cost of maintaining an economic system which prioritised military spending, made for poor quality consumer goods, and severely limited Soviet-bloc exports across the Iron Curtain. On restrictions imposed on entrepreneurs in Soviet satellites, see Janusz Kaliński and Łukasz Dwilewicz, "The Transferable Rouble and 'Socialist Integration': What Kind of Relationship?" in *Disintegration and Integration in East-Central Europe*, ed. Wilfried Loth and Nicolae Paun (Baden-Baden, 2014), 169-85; Dina Spechler and Martin Spechler, "A Reassessment of the Burden of Eastern Europe on the USSR," *Europe-Asia Studies* 61:9 (2009): 1650.

<sup>xvii</sup> Feygin, "Reforming the Cold War State," 381; Miller, *The Struggle*, 46.

<sup>xviii</sup> Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, 1996), 33.

<sup>xix</sup> The idea to delegate the supervision of Soviet trade in products and services to apolitical professionals, and to judge their performance by sales indicators and profits, was not new. The Soviet economy went through a cycle of crises between the October revolution and the late 1940s. When crises subsided, and the burden of maintaining Soviet economic growth was directed away from the peasants and spread more evenly among rural and urban population, "free trade" was seen as a way of overcoming bureaucratic inefficiencies. Managers in the retail sector were encouraged to focus on profits and empowered to take more decisions regarding the day-to-



day running of the economy. During such times, material incentives played an important role in driving economic growth, as even ordinary salesclerks had their fixed wages replaced with piece rates. The “normalization” of the Soviet economy in the late 1940s led to a more permanent delegation of the supervision of trade to apolitical authorities. This sometimes undermined the political goal of using trade to create a model socialist consumer. Julie Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade: Trade Policy, Retail Prices, and Consumption, 1917-1953* (Princeton, 2004), 181, 215-18, 234-35, 316-25. After the mid-1950s, as East European socialist countries diverged from the Soviet model, Hungary led the way in devolving decision making powers to the managerial class in the 1960s. Beth Greene, ‘Selling Market Socialism: Hungary in the 1960s’, *Slavic Review* 73 (2014): 108-132. The very notion of “professionalism” became prominent in Soviet postwar popular culture. Soviet opinion makers created a positive image of “socialist entrepreneurs,” professionals distinct from ideological stalwarts and politicians. “Pidpriiemets,” in *Narysy ukrains’koi populiarnoi kul’tury*, 511-520.

<sup>xx</sup> On the difference between “free trade” and “free enterprise”, see Elena Osokina, *Our Daily Bread: Socialist Distribution and the Art of Survival in Stalin’s Russia, 1927-1941* (London, 2001), 145.

<sup>xxi</sup> On the notion of “socialist civilization” in the interwar period, see Stephen Kotkin, “Modern Times: The Soviet Union and the Interwar Conjunction,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 2:1 (2001), 111-64.

<sup>xxii</sup> Bradford Martin, “Musical Cultural Exchanges in the Age of Détente: Cultural Fixation, Trust, and the Permeability of Culture.,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 51 (2016): 364-84. Similarly, in Kirill Tomoff’s work, postwar Soviet musical culture emerges as the product of an alliance between the Communist Party and the most prominent classical composers who sought to delimit (and prove the superiority of) “socialism” in the context of the Cold War. Kirill Tomoff, *Virtuosi Abroad: Soviet Music and Imperial Competition during the Early Cold War, 1945-58* (Ithaca, 2015).

<sup>xxiii</sup> The music professionals I write about were not the cultural elites that consisted of writers or composers. To be sure, composers (and lyricists) can also be considered “music professionals.” Yet as Kirill Tomoff shows for the Stalin era, performers and composers in the USSR did not share a common professional organisation and their concerns did not always coincide. Though most made a modest income, very popular composers earned large amounts of money on royalties. Meanwhile, the people responsible for organising, performing, and selling music did not enjoy access to the perks and privileges associated with membership in creative unions. Performers were not part of the Soviet-bloc cultural elite either: they recorded albums and played concerts for fixed and modest fees, unaffected by sales, which forced them (along with their impresario agency guides and interpreters) on exhausting tours. Composers and lyricists were not employed by Goskontsert, Pagart, or any other impresario agency. They were thus one step removed from the sales of music and they fall outside the scope of this study. Kirill Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939-1953* (Ithaca, 2006). On the attitude of composers towards *perestroika*, see Christopher Rice, ‘Soviet Music in the Era of Perestroika’, in *Culture and the Media in the USSR Today*, ed. Julian Graffy and Geoffrey A. Hosking (Houndmills, 1989), 92-93, 101; On performers’ royalties in Poland, see Patton, “The Communist Culture Industry.” On the system of royalties in the USSR (and ways to circumvent it), see Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveishei Istorii, Moscow (hereafter, RGANI), f.5, op.69, d.610, ll. 2-8.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time*, 23-24, 165, 174, 271, 278.

<sup>xxv</sup> In 1975, for example, Pagart boasted about millions of pop concert tickets sold in the USSR. In 1976, Goskontsert held 5324 events (including 3515 pop music concerts) in the USSR and 4509 concerts abroad. Pop concerts brought in substantial income for state-owned impresarios. In 1979, live performances alone brought in 39 million zloty (US\$3.7 m at 2010 values, of \$323bn GNP) in Poland. In the next decade, Goskontsert pulled in 11,503,000 transferable roubles in 1986, 14,402,000 transferable roubles in 1987, and a projected 17,791,000 transferable roubles in 1988 (these sums included subsidies and payments from the Ministry of Culture). AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1238, “Analiza Ekonomiczna Działalności Pagart;” Patton, “The Communist Culture Industry,” 433-4; Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Literatury i Iskusstva, Moscow (hereafter, RGALI), f.3162, op.3, d.89, l.72. David MacFadyen has documented the popularity of Soviet pop singers such as Alla Pugacheva or Sofia Rotaru who worked for state-owned impresarios in the 1970s and the 1980s, and continued to perform in capitalist conditions after 1991. These performers were less controversial than the emerging rock singers, and listening to their music was perhaps a source of embarrassment among rebellious youth and intelligentsia circles which have attracted much scholarly attention, but inhabitants of the Soviet bloc would have been hard pressed not to know mainstream pop. David MacFadyen, *Red Stars: Personality and the Soviet Popular Song, 1955-1991* (Montreal, 2001). On rock enthusiasts’ negative view of mainstream pop, see William Risch, *The Ukrainian West: Culture and the Fate of Empire in Soviet Lviv* (Cambridge, Mass., 2011), 231-2.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Gene Sosin, “Magnitizdat: Uncensored Songs of Dissent,” in Rudolf Tokes (ed.), *Dissent in the USSR: Politics, Ideology, and People* (Baltimore, 1975), 277; Polly McMichael, ““After All, You’re a Rock and Roll

Star (at Least, That's What They Say)': Roksi and the Creation of the Soviet Rock Musician." *Slavonic and East European Review* 83 (2005): 664-684.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Sergei Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity and Ideology in Soviet Dniepropetrovsk, 1960-1985* (Washington, D.C., 2010).

<sup>xxviii</sup> Alexei Yurchak *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, 2006)

<sup>xxix</sup> Feygin, "Reforming the Cold War State," 387-88.

<sup>xxx</sup> The culture of the Polish workers' strikes in the early 1980s was distinct from the culture of "market reform" that I identify among music professionals. Solidarity's "left wing" included those "who appeal[ed] to democratic socialist slogans of self-government, worker self-management, participatory democracy, and broad social justice." Its "right wing" focused more heavily on issues of national independence and religious freedom. In contrast to the demands for economic freedom that I examine, Solidarity had "a strongly majoritarian, not liberal tenor..." J. Kubik, "Who Done It? Workers, Intellectuals or Someone Else? Controversy over Solidarity's Origins and Social Composition," *Theory and Society* 23:3 (1994): 441-66.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Pop professionals' ambitions were modest by the standards of Western showbusiness, shaped no doubt by Party leaders' promises to boost consumption and improve the quality of everyday life during the 1970s. But it is striking that, by the 1980s, pop professionals had lost faith in state socialist institutions' ability to deliver on these promises. As Gyorgy Peteri puts it, "the rebellious project of socialism" "lost the race for modernity as it failed to assert its systemic exceptionalism by way of offering viable alternatives for everyday life". "The Occident Within – or the Drive for Exceptionalism and Modernity." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9:4 (2008): 937.

<sup>xxxii</sup> The economy was unresponsive to popular tastes and desires as trade in products and services was guided by considerations of "need" rather than "demand." This created dissatisfaction among young people in particular. Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade*, 333.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.XI, t.464, ss. 73-74.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Christine Evans, "The 'Soviet Way of Life' as a way of feeling: Emotion and Influence on Soviet Central Television in the Brezhnev Era," *Cahiers du monde russe* 56:2-3 (2015): 544.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vyshchykh Orhaniv Vlady ta Upravlinnia Ukrainy, Kyiv (hereafter, TsDAVO), f.5116, op.19, s.887, ark.13.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.XI, t.465, ss. 251-52.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1238, "Marek Grechuta."

<sup>xxxviii</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1239, "Dni Literaturny Polskiej."

<sup>xxxix</sup> Rachel Applebaum, "The Friendship Project: Socialist Internationalism in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and the 1960s," *Slavic Review* 74 (2015): 484-507.

<sup>xl</sup> RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.2469, ll. 19-30.

<sup>xli</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.XI, t.464, s.108; z.1354, s.LVI, t.1851, "XVIII Konkurs Piosenki Radzieckiej."

<sup>xlii</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.XI, t.464, s.108.

<sup>xliiii</sup> RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.893, ll. 17-18.

<sup>xliiv</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1238, "Marek Grechuta."

<sup>xliiv</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1239, "Dni Literaturny Polskiej."

<sup>xliiv</sup> RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.412, ll. 1-19.

<sup>xliiv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xliiv</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.657, "Program działalności kulturalno-rozrywkowej."

<sup>xlix</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1750, "Główne kierunki zmian."

<sup>l</sup> AAN, z.1354, s. LVI, t.1238, "Wyniki finansowe PAGARTu."

<sup>li</sup> Ibid.

<sup>lii</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1851, "XVIII Konkurs Piosenki Radzieckiej;" RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.1685, ll. 13-14.

<sup>liii</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1239, "Płomienie'."

<sup>liv</sup> In the mid-1970s, Pagart managed to obtain 2,500,000 złoty from selling Sopot to radio and television, but considered this amount too modest to import truly attractive Western stars. They lobbied the Ministry of Culture to allocate hard currency reserves for the festival. AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.657, "Artystyczne imprezy międzynarodowe."

<sup>lv</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1396, "Narada Polskiego Radia."

<sup>lvi</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.702, "Problemy rozrywki."

<sup>lvii</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1239, "Orenburski festiwal."

<sup>lviii</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1396, "Narada Polskiego Radia."

<sup>lix</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1239, "Orenburski festiwal."

<sup>lx</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.702, "Problemy rozrywki."

<sup>lxi</sup> Zhuk, *Rock and Roll*.

<sup>lxii</sup> AAN, z.1354, s.LV, t.1239, "Happy End".

- lxiii Evans, “‘The Soviet Way of Life’.”
- lxiv RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.892, ll.27-30.
- lxv RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.893, ll. 17-18.
- lxvi AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1239, “Skaldowie.”
- lxvii AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.706, “Polsko-radziecka współpraca kulturalna.”
- lxviii AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1238, “Marek Grechuta.”
- lxix AAN, z.1354 s.LVI, t.1396, “‘Młode talenty’.”
- lxx RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.893, ll.34-36.
- lxxi RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.1773, ll.1-2.
- lxxii RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.892, ll. 27-30.
- lxxiii AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1239, “Skaldowie.”
- lxxiv RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.892, ll.27-30.
- lxxv AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1239, “Skaldowie.”
- lxxvi AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1851, “XIV Festiwal w Zielonej Górze.” During the 1970s, the Soviet officials were also attuned to popular complaints about the shortages of modern musical equipment such as stereo players. Natalya Chernyshova, *Soviet Consumer Culture in the Brezhnev Era* (London, 2013), 189.
- lxxvii AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.851, “Usprawnienie działalności Pagart;” AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1241, “Projekt zmian w Pagart.”
- lxxviii AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.706, “Polsko-radziecka współpraca kulturalna.”
- lxxix AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1238, “Umowa PAGARTu z Goskoncertem.”
- lxxx AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1238, “Laureaci festiwalu.”
- lxxxi AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1238, “Rozmowy z dyrekcją Goskoncertu.”
- lxxxii AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1238, “Wjazd do Leningradu i Moskwy.”
- lxxxiii As the economy shifted from a focus on several key areas in the heavy industry to more diverse production, Polish and Soviet governments experimented with different criteria to measure not only output quantity, but also labour efficiency and quality of production and services. From 1965, Soviet managers were supposed to be accountable for the amount sold to other producers or individual consumers, and not simply for output (though this was not often implemented in practice). In Poland, financial indicators became more important means of control after 1971. Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR, 1917-1991* (London, 1992), 382-92; Kazimierz Poznański, *Poland's Protracted Transition: Institutional Change and Economic Growth, 1970-1994* (Cambridge, England, 1996), xxxvi-xxxvii.
- lxxxiv For example, the Soviet ‘Normative Net Output’ introduced in 1979 was designed to measure “not total output, but the normative profit based on prices set for the given enterprises, wages, and social insurance costs.” Managers retained some forty percent of this socialist equivalent of profit, some of which could be used for bonuses. Instead of encouraging managers to improve quality and reduce the costs of production, the Normative Net Output pushed them to focus disproportionately on the production of expensive goods, leading to major shortages of cheap produce with lower “profit” margins. Philip Hanson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy* (London, 2003), 146-47; A.Ia. Shubin, *Ot zastoia k reformam. SSSR v 1917-1985* (Moscow, 2001), 120-21.
- lxxxv Poznański, *Poland's Protracted Transition*, 85.
- lxxxvi More broadly, the music industry was supposed to become “self-financing” and “self-governing.” Patton, ‘The Communist Culture Industry’, 433-34.
- lxxxvii Archiwum Miasta Stołecznego Warszawy, Warsaw (hereafter, AMSW), z.3140, t.10, ss.1-33.
- lxxxviii AMSW, z.3140, t.12, ss.1-42.
- lxxxix Profits increased to a total of 1,381,500 USD in 1981 (a 6.5 percent rise on the previous year in USD, or a 23.3 percent increase in conversion to the Polish złoty) and over 1,700,000 USD in 1982, before a fall to 1,661,800 USD in 1983 when exports within the bloc (and transferable rouble profits) picked up again. AMSW, z.3140, t.10, ss.1-33; AMSW, z.3140, t.11, ss.1-37; AMSW, z.3140, t.12, ss.1-42.
- xc AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1119, “Raport Włodzimierza Sandeckiego.”
- xcii AMSW, z.3140, t.10, ss. 1-33.
- xciii AMSW, z.3140, t.12, ss.1-42.
- xciv AMSW, z.3140, t.17, ss.2-33.
- xcv AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.691, “Problemy rozrywki.”
- xcvi Shubin, *Ot zastoia k reformam*, 291-92, 416-17.
- xcvii RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.2227, ll. 37-40.
- xcviii RGANI, f.5, op.90, d.207, ll. 3-5.
- xcix RGANI, f.5, op.89, d.154, ll. 75-78.
- cx AMSW, z.3140, t.59, ss.1-54; AAN, z.2424, s.1, t.264, ss.1-89.
- c Zhuk, *Rock and Roll*, 272.
- ci RGANI, f.5, op.88, d.204, ll. 43-44.

- cii On differences between Estonia and Ukraine, see William Risch, "A Soviet West: Nationhood, Regionalism, and Empire in the Annexed Western Borderlands," *Nationalities Papers* 43 (2015): 63-81.
- ciii RGANI, f.5, op.90, d.207, ll. 3-5.
- civ AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.691, "Problemy rozrywki."
- cv Poznański, *Poland's Protracted Transition*, 87-88.
- cvi AAN, z.2424, s.1, t.264, ss.1-89.
- cvi In 1984, the 50,000 dollars that Pagart contributed to the organisation of the Sopot festival was considered a very large sum by the management. AMSW, z.3140, t.6, ss. 17-18.
- cvi AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1750, "O problemach estrad."
- cix AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1119, "Raport Włodzimierza Sandeckiego."
- cx Poznański, *Poland's Protracted Transition*, xxvii-xviii.
- cxii AMSW, z.3140, t.10, ss. 1-33.
- cxii AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1245, "Wysokości prowizji."
- cxiii AMSW, z.3140, t.1, ss. 208-210.
- cxiv Poznański, *Poland's Protracted Transition*, 84.
- cxv AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.691, "Problemy rozrywki."
- cxvi AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1860, "Dni Kultury Polskiej."
- cxvii AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1860, "Propozycje do protokołu z Goskoncertem."
- cxviii AMSW, z.3140, t.6, ss. 17-18.
- cxix AMSW, z.3140, t.1, ss.108-110.
- cxix AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1745, "Koncert z okazji 40-lecia."
- cxix AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1736, "XX Festiwal w Zielonej Górze."
- cxix AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1123, "Pobyć delegacji Ministerstwa Kultury ZSRR."
- cxixiii Rodowicz sold hundreds of thousands of albums in Poland and remained one of the most popular performers on radio, television, and stage. During the first half of the 1980s, she also enjoyed considerable popularity in the USSR. In 1983, she staged 50 sold-out concerts in the Soviet Union, as well as recorded a televised concert. In 1984, the Soviet record label "Melodiia" released Rodowicz's LP with Polish and Russian-language songs. According to the singer's official website, nearly 10 million copies of the album were released. AAN, z.LVI, s.1354, s.LVI, t.1118, "Współpraca kulturalna między PRL i ZSRR," "Maryla Rodowicz – Biografia", <http://www.marylarodowicz.pl/pl> (last accessed 9 January 2018).
- cxixiv Urszula Bielous, "Maddona RWPG," *Polityka*, 9 February 1985.
- cxixv AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1849, "Amatorsko – to nie znaczy źle."
- cxixvi For a discussion of "private citizenship," see Bren, *The Greengrocer and His TV*, 149. "Alla Pugacheva at Zielona Góra 1983," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWf2z49LgX4>, 1:13:47-1:14:17 (last accessed 22 February 2017).
- cxixvii M. Antipov, "Sem' not prazdnika," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 24 April 1984.
- cxixviii RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.1801, ll. 4-19.
- cxixix AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.800, "Dni Kultury Radzieckiej."
- cxixx AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.751, "Współpraca kulturalna z krajami socjalistycznymi."
- cxixxi AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.967, "Współpracy kulturalna z krajami socjalistycznymi."
- cxixxii Feygin, "Reforming the Cold War State," 5.
- cxixxiii Shubin, *Ot zastoia k reformam*, 617.
- cxixxiv RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.72, ll.1-16.
- cxixxv RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.72, ll.1-16; RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.89, ll. 68-71, 75; RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.95, ll. 69-72.
- cxixxvi RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.89, ll. 68-71; RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.124, ll. 3-11.
- cxixxvii AMSW, z.3140, t.1, ss.276-78; RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.95, ll.21-25.
- cxixxviii RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.89, l.75.
- cxixxix After paying Soviet performers, Goskontsert gave up 40 percent of the remaining sum to the Ministry of Culture. The agency registered a modest profit of 173,000 transferable roubles in 1986 and more significant losses of 1,136,000 transferable roubles and projected losses of 927,000 transferable roubles in the following two years. RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.89, l.72.
- cxli The law stipulated that enterprises would set their own production plans, albeit within the confines of centrally imposed objectives. The deductions that enterprises made to central and local budgets would be fixed in percentages of net income for five years in advance, with the remaining profits divided between wage and bonus, social development, research, and production development funds within the enterprise. Hanson, *The Rise and Fall*, 196-97.
- cxli RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.124, ll. 97-100; The agency had previously only been able to retain less than a quarter of unused subsidies. RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.95, ll. 69-72.

- cxlii Nove, *Economic History of the USSR*, 406.
- cxliii RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.89, ll. 68-71; RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.124, ll. 3-11.
- cxliv RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.124, ll. 97-100; RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.220, ll.12-13.
- cxlv RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.72, ll.1-16.
- cxlvi AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.814, "Usprawnienie działalności Pagart."
- cxlvii RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.124, ll.97-100.
- cxlviii When the ministry transferred hard currency back to Goskontsert, it was only to fund the activities it ordered. RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.220, ll.12-13.
- cxlix AMSW, z.3140, t.1, ss.276-78.
- cl RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.1651, l.59
- cli RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.3184, ll. 2-23.
- clii AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1852, "Festiwal w Sumach;" AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1749, "Koncertu Galowy."
- cliii AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1750, "Festiwal w Witebsku."
- cliv "Dwa głupki i Kim Wilde," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaaqjN7YfD0> (last accessed 6 March 2017).
- clv "Vitebsk Song Contest," [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=витебск+1988](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=витебск+1988) (last accessed 6 March 2017).
- clvi Piotr Sarzyński, "Trampolina do kariery," *Polityka*, 6 August 1988.
- clvii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Moscow (hereafter, GARF), f.6903, op.42, d.75, ll. 1-71; f.6903, op.42, d.92, ll. 1-12, 38-59. On television professionals becoming more responsive to audience demand in the sphere of popular music, and the effect this had on undermining the vision of a single Soviet culture for all generations, see Christine Evans, 'Song of the Year and Soviet Mass Culture in the 1970s', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12 (2011): 615-45.
- clviii These were often joint ventures with Polish emigres that had been developing since 1978 and got a further boost in 1985. Piotr Strzałkowski, 'Polityczne i społeczne uwarunkowania przedsiębiorczości ekonomicznej', in *Zmierzch socjalizmu państwowego: Szkice z socjologii ekonomicznej*, ed. Witold Morawski (Warsaw, 1994), 344-45; Poznański, *Poland's Protracted Transition*, 102. Obligated by the government to "promote classical music" (a loss-making activity), state-owned cultural institutions lost out to enterprises that could focus exclusively on pop. AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.669, "Przedsiębiorstwa kultury." Still, the extent of competition was limited before 1987 as the Ministry of Culture blocked attempts to organise concerts through performers' cooperatives: "It is obvious that every artist would jump at the opportunity to work at a cooperative where, apart from concert fees, they would also pocket part of the profit; and we might be talking about relatively large profits here." AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1746, "Notatka Ministerstwa Kultury."
- clix In 1990, the private sector accounted for 30% of Poland's GDP, as opposed to under 2% in Czechoslovakia. Antoni Kamiński i Piotr Strzałkowski, 'Strategie zmian instytucjonalnych w gospodarkach krajów Europy Wschodniej', in *Zmierzch socjalizmu państwowego*, 311. The Polish government looked favourably upon private entrepreneurs in the sphere of entertainment where it lacked the contacts and expertise to develop new technologies - it welcomed the growth of a private VHS tape market, and tolerated the widespread piracy that came with it, largely in order to boost the sales of VHS players in state-owned hard currency stores. Strzałkowski, "Polityczne i społeczne uwarunkowania," 347.
- clx AMSW, z.3140, t.1, ss.276-278; AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.1750, "O problemach estrad."
- clxi AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, t.980, "Dominik Jastrzębski to Aleksander Krawczuk."
- clxii A large shadow economy and subsistence farming existed in the USSR, but the emergence of a private sector only came with Soviet political disintegration along national lines starting in 1990. Anders Aslund, *How Russia Became a Market Economy* (Washington, D.C., 1995), 38-39.
- clxiii Nove, *Economic History of the USSR*, 402-3.
- clxiv RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.95, ll. 78-83.
- clxv GARF, f.A501, op.3, d.1299, ll. 152-154.
- clxvi RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.3319, ll.22-50; RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.3320, ll. 4, 8, 16-18, 28, 62, 64; RGALI, f.3162, op.2, d.3321, ll. 4, 16, 51-52.
- clxvii Marek Gajewski, "Czym jest rok?", *Polityka*, 16 July 1988.
- clxviii Poznański, *Poland's Protracted Transition*, 216; Jadwiga Staniszkis, 'Dylematy okresu przejściowego. Przypadek Polski', in *Zmierzch socjalizmu państwowego*, 271-72.
- clxix Hanson, *The Rise and Fall*, 208.
- clxx AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, d.814, "Usprawnienie działalności Pagart."
- clxxi AAN, z.1354, s.LVI, d.1750, "Zmiany w estradzie."
- clxxii RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.95, ll. 78-83.
- clxxiii RGALI, f.3162, op.3, d.216, l.25.
- clxxiv For some inhabitants of the socialist camp, "[b]uilding socialism" across borders introduced new forms of social and cultural mobility in the Soviet bloc. Ana Antic, Johanna Conterio, and Dora Vargha, "Conclusion:

Beyond Liberal Internationalism,” *Contemporary European History* 25:2 (2016): 365-71. Exploring international activities of Committee of the Bulgarian Women’s Movement (CBWM), for example, Kristen Ghodsee demonstrates that “socialist women” from the “small, but loyal” satellite of the USSR mobilised their close institutional and personal ties to the Communist Party to pursue women’s rights on the international arena, hand-in-hand with their Soviet counterparts. “[A]lbeit certainly constrained by their dependence on the Communist Party,” Ghodsee argues, the CBWM derived domestic prestige from its international activities, “constantly challenging state policies with regard to women and families.” For some Soviet bloc activists, Ghodsee suggests, the path to “self-actualisation” led through strengthening state socialist institutions. Ghodsee claims that “legacies of the Cold War make it difficult for scholars... to argue that there were any positive aspects of the socialist era,” but it is condescending to claim that East European scholars draw a contrast between state-sponsored social initiatives and attempts to pursue social and cultural rights outside politically-controlled institutions in order “to have their work published in Western journals.” As this article shows, there were significant groups in Eastern Europe for whom the ability to produce culture without ideological oversight represented an important ambition. Kristin Ghodsee, “Pressuring the Politburo: The Committee of the Bulgarian Women’s Movement and State Socialist Feminism,” *Slavic Review* 73:3 (2014): 538-62; Kristin Ghodsee, “Rethinking State Socialist Women’s Organizations: The Committee of the Bulgarian Women’s Movement and the United Nations Decade for Women,” *Journal of Women’s History* 24:4 (2012): 49-73.

<sup>clxxv</sup> The conservatism of Intourist officials may partly have resulted from the fact that, unlike pop professionals, they could always receive subsidies from the state whenever they fell short. Hazanov, “Porous Empire,” 21-22, 30-31, 37, 39, 91.

<sup>clxxvi</sup> Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe, “The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion Through Soviet and East European Lens,” in *Eastern Europe in 1968: Responses to the Prague Spring and Warsaw Pact Invasion*, ed. McDermott and Stibbe (London, 2018), 1-22.

<sup>clxxvii</sup> Anne Gorsuch, *All This is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin* (Oxford, 2011), 79-105.

<sup>clxxviii</sup> Rachel Applebaum in ‘A Test of Friendship: Soviet-Czechoslovak Tourism and the Prague Spring’, in *The Socialist Sixties*, 213-32.

<sup>clxxix</sup> Miller, *The Struggle*, 83, 100.

<sup>clxxx</sup> Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 282.

<sup>clxxx</sup> I do not see among music professionals what Christine Evans describes as “a ‘passionate’ relationship to Soviet reality and its political and ideological underpinnings” in the world of television. “The ‘Soviet Way of Life’, 543-70, 561. In the film industry, cultural officials and artists were likewise interested in cultivating bilateral agreements with the West which provided access to advanced filmmaking equipment and techniques, hard currency, and international stars. Marsha Siefert, “East European Cold War Culture(s): Alterities, Commonalities, and Film Industries”, in *Cold War Cultures: Perspectives on Eastern and Western European Societies*, ed. Annette Vowinckel et al (New York, 2012), 38.

<sup>clxxxii</sup> Patton, ‘The Communist Culture Industry’, 448. In 1991, for example, the Ukrainian musician Andryi Mykolaichuk cancelled his tour of the Canadian Ukrainian diaspora, explaining publicly that Western impresarios imposed an impossibly hectic schedule on their contracted artists. “Interview with Taras Petrynenko,” *Molod’ Ukrainy*, 14 September 1989; “Ukrains’ke, otzhe – suchasne,” *Vechirnyi Kyiv*, 19 September 1989; “Koly e shcho skazaty – skazhy,” *Molod’ Ukrainy*, 25 April 1991.