

Article

A German DJ, Postmodern Dreams, and the Ambivalent Politics of East–West Exchange at the First Exhibition of Approximate Art in Riga, April 1987

Kevin C. Karnes 

Emory College of Arts and Sciences, Emory University, Atlanta, GA 30322, USA; kkarnes@emory.edu

Abstract: Organized as part of the annual Art Days festival in the capital of the Latvian SSR, the First Exhibition of Approximate Art comprised a cacophonous and provocative mashup of music, dance, performance art, and design. At the center of the event was a demonstration of mixing and scratching records by Maximilian Lenz, also known as Westbam, one of the leading DJs in West Berlin. Mining archival sources in Berlin and Riga, this article reconstructs the complicated path by which the DJ came to perform at the event. It reveals a surprising network of relations and alliances operating in tandem behind the scenes, featuring a Riga artist dedicated to enacting a vision of postmodern performance in his city, an ambitiously networking émigré Latvian living in exile in West Germany, and a pair of Soviet offices under direct control of the KGB, charged with managing cultural exchanges with the West in hopes of currying sympathies for Soviet culture and policy. Complementing and extending research on the “gaps” and “holes” in the Soviet system that sometimes allowed for the staging of otherwise unacceptable works of art, the story of the First Exhibition of Approximate Art reveals how personal connections and interpersonal networks within even the most highly monitored parts of the system itself—the state security apparatus—could open doors for artistic projects unanticipated and even undesired by the bureaucratic state.

Keywords: Berlin; Cold War; DJ culture; Germany; KGB; Latvia; Hardijs Lediņš; performance art; postmodernism; USSR; Westbam



Citation: Karnes, Kevin C. 2024. A German DJ, Postmodern Dreams, and the Ambivalent Politics of East–West Exchange at the First Exhibition of Approximate Art in Riga, April 1987. *Arts* 13: 88. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts13030088>

Academic Editor: Dennis Ioffe

Received: 26 January 2024

Revised: 25 April 2024

Accepted: 11 May 2024

Published: 14 May 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

In April 1987, the Artists’ Union of the Latvian SSR hosted a remarkable performance in Riga as part of its “Art Days” festival, an annual ten-day gathering that drew thousands of attendees from around the republic and across the empire. Held in the city’s House of Knowledge and called the “First Exhibition of Approximate Art”, the performance in question was freely improvisatory and exuberantly cacophonous, featuring a children’s choir, a dancer in drag, and a DJ brought in from West Berlin, where he had made his name spinning records at Germany’s largest and most famous gay discotheque. It was a signal work of performance art of Latvian perestroika. Its news and effects would resonate broadly, paving the way for a series of increasingly intensive collaborations between Latvian artists and their Western counterparts through 1991 and beyond.

Drawing on previously unexamined archival materials in Riga and Berlin, this article reconstructs the origins of the First Exhibition of Approximate Art. In particular, it reveals the unexpected yet crucial roles played in its genesis by a pair of offices run by the Latvian KGB, which were charged with controlling and monitoring travel and exchanges of ideas between Soviet artists and artists from the West. Recently, historians of music have begun to highlight ways in which overlooked or unmonitored “gaps” and “holes” in the Soviet bureaucracy provided fertile spaces for clever or well-connected artists to organize boundary-pushing projects in the 1970s and 1980s (Karnes 2021; Zhuk 2010; Cherednichenko 2002). Other scholars have begun to document the work of these

artistically engaged KGB-directed offices in Latvia specifically (Astahovska 2019; Eglāja-Kristšone 2016; Zake 2010). The present article complements and extends this scholarship into the realm of performance art, considering a case where Soviet artists and their Western colleagues were able to leverage personal relationships with KGB officials to produce a highly provocative, highly visible work of art whose details considerably exceeded Soviet cultural norms.

After setting the scene by recounting highlights from the performance, this article will locate its conception among an ambitious group of Latvian artists invested in staging creative explorations of what they regarded as postmodern juxtapositions of so-called high and low art, and of artforms residing across and between clearly defined media. One of those artists was Hardijs Lediņš (1955–2004), a figure who also knew better than most in his community just how the levers of Soviet officialdom could be pulled in order to secure support for some radically experimental works. Then, the article will consider archival materials illuminating the mazelike bureaucratic path these artists trod in order to pull off the Exhibition of Approximate Art, as they amassed assistance from the Artists' Union, a prolifically networking émigré Latvian living in exile in West Germany, and offices of the local KGB. In its final section, the essay looks ahead to consider ways in which the event opened doors for other Latvian artists to forge new collaborations with colleagues in the West, just as the age of a divided Europe was drawing to a close.

2. The Scene in Riga

A DJ stands behind a potted palm, his right hand moving in small, quick motions, scratching a record on a turntable while his left hand works the control on a mixer. He has a drum track playing on a second disc, and his quick mixing back and forth between that record and his scratching on the first creates a powerful, pulsating rhythm.¹ Underneath his performance, a quartet of saxophonists—one dressed in a convict's jumpsuit, another sporting a ponytail, a black beard, and sunglasses—plays a cacophonous mass of layered, droning pitches (Figure 1). The cameraman documenting the event pans right, turning toward the audience. A few smile and chat, but most stand still, watching and listening intently, taking everything in. Panning left, the camera follows a couple dancing in front of the crowd: a pair of men, one dressed in drag. All the while, the DJ is scratching, but he lets his second turntable advance to a point where we can finally tell what he has been playing all along: "Being Boiled", a track from 1979 by the Sheffield band the Human League. Beneath the saxophones' din we hear the League's Philip Okey sing, "Once more with the voice of Buddha/he'll say carry on your slaughter/who cares for the little children/you may slice with no conviction". After this, this noisy mashup of a performance continues rolling along, piling seemingly incongruous sounds and actions atop one another while the crowd studies every movement and beat. Some attendees join in the performance, dancing and even voicing into a mic, including the artists Sergei Bugaev (also known as Afrika) and Timur Novikov, both of whom were visiting from Leningrad.² About forty minutes after it began, the performance closes with loud, decelerating bursts of scratching and a final squawk from one of the saxes. The crowd applauds, and someone hands the bearded saxophonist a flower.



Figure 1. The First Exhibition of Approximate Art: Westbam (*right*) mixing and scratching. Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art.

This performance, part of the multiday event billed as the First Exhibition of Approximate Art, took place on 14 April 1987 as part of Riga’s citywide Art Days festival, which had, well before glasnost and perestroika, become a repast of experimental artistic work amidst the daily diet of Socialist Realism presented by the republic’s official institutions (Baranovska 2004). Yet even for Art Days, the performance was extraordinary—not least for its showcasing of drag performance, however fleetingly, but also for the presence of the DJ himself. The previous month, Maximilian Lenz, also known as Westbam, had competed as West Germany’s first-ever representative to the DMC World DJ Championships at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Shortly before that, he had organized West Berlin’s first-ever House music party, having recently left his post at the club where he had honed his craft as a DJ: Metropol, which one British regular called “the largest gay disco in Europe” (Reeder 2015, p. 134). Westbam traveled to Riga specifically for the purpose of participating in the performance. As a guest of a shadowy Soviet office called the Society of Latvians and Foreigners for Friendship and Cultural Ties, widely known as the “Friendship Society”, his invitation was managed by Hardijs Lediņš, whose vision for the First Exhibition of Approximate Art coalesced largely around the DJ’s visit. The bureaucratic road to realizing this vision was far from direct, however. Retracing it through the archives sheds new light upon the complexities, ambivalence, and productive ambiguities of relations between individual artists, the Artists’ Union, and the KGB.

3. Postmodernism and Possibility

Lediņš’s earliest experiments in music date from his time as an architecture student at the Riga Polytechnic Institute, when he and friends Juris Boiko (1954–2002) and Imants Žodžiks (b. 1955) began recording improvisational performances on magnetic tape, sharing copies on what they called their “Seque Records” series.³ In 1975, he began to DJ at a wildly

popular discotheque run by the Polytechnic's Student Club, playing records—mostly from the West—and lecturing to his audience about what they were hearing. Under the auspices of his discotheque, he co-organized student-run festivals of contemporary music in 1976 and 1977, which featured the public premieres of such deeply un-Soviet works as Arvo Pärt's *Missa Syllabica* (1977), a choral setting of the Ordinary of the Latin Mass, and Vladimir Martynov's *Passionslieder* (1977), which sets a Lutheran chorale text. Upon graduation, Lediņš, Boiko, and Žodžiks formed a band of their own, called the Workshop for the Restoration of Unfelt Feelings, known by the Latvian acronym NSRD. Soon, NSRD's work expanded into various forms of performance art. For his day job, Lediņš worked as an architectural theorist for a government office, studying construction technologies and their applications in the social sphere.

Alongside his remarkable imagination, social facility, and tendency toward incessant if not always highly disciplined work, Lediņš possessed a rare ability to undertake projects that would—indeed, that sometimes *did*—get others into trouble with Soviet officialdom. A case in point was his discotheque-concert of openly sacred vocal music by Pärt and Martynov. He seems to have owed this ability, at least in part, to his status as a child of Soviet elites. His mother, Rute Lediņa, worked as host of a radio program called *Amber Coast* (*Dzintarkrasts*), which broadcast Soviet propaganda to Latvian émigrés overseas. It was a project of an organization called the Latvian Committee for Cultural Relations with Compatriots Abroad. Under direct control of the KGB, this co-called Culture Committee served the dual aims of currying sympathies for Soviet culture and policy among émigré Latvians, and sowing ideological divisions within émigré communities (Eglāja-Kristšone 2016; Zake 2010).⁴ Rute Lediņa worked simultaneously for a kindred KGB-directed organization housed in an adjoining office: the “Friendship Society”, the very organization behind Westbam's 1987 visit, which aimed for much the same within broader, non-émigré groups in the West. Officially, these organizations employed only a handful of individuals, but they were augmented by artists and academics who volunteered their efforts in exchange for opportunities for foreign travel or contacts with Western counterparts.⁵ While never acknowledged explicitly in the archival record, colleagues and relatives of Lediņš and Boiko note that Rute Lediņa's work for these offices seems to have provided her son with a degree of protection from scrutiny from officials, and even from disciplinary action when his artistic plans sometimes went awry.⁶

Working in a state construction office after graduation, Lediņš dove into a problem of vital concern for an ambitious group of young architects and designers from across the Soviet Baltic republics: the “uniformity and standardization of mass housing developments” that had sprung up in suburbs since the 1950s, and the deleterious social and psychological effects they seemed to have upon residents (Traumane 2023, p. 42). Seeking to understand more fully how the built environment shapes the life of a city, Lediņš immersed himself in the latest architectural theory from the West, searching for ways to effect what one of his colleagues called the “humanization” of his field (Jānis Borgs, in Traumane 2023, p. 45). He read articles on postmodernism by Aldo Rossi and John Hejduk, and a German translation of Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (1979).⁷ The writer who captured his imagination most powerfully was the American architect Charles Jencks, author of *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (1977) and the 1986 booklet *What Is Post-Modernism?*, which Lediņš would later publish in Latvian translation (Lediņš and Boiko 1989).

Central to his emergent thinking was Jencks's diagnosis of the failings of postwar architectural modernism: its fetishizing of rationalism and obsession with abstraction, and the inhospitable structures and ideologies—principally Brutalism, for Jencks—to which those things gave rise. “Modern architecture had failed to remain credible”, Jencks argued, “partly because it didn't communicate effectively with its ultimate users” (Jencks 1986, p. 14). Jencks's analysis resonated with Lediņš's thinking about what he considered a crisis in postwar Soviet architecture. Like Jencks, he saw postmodernism as an antidote. “Postmodernism”, Lediņš wrote, “arises as a reaction to the anti-humanist abstraction of modernism. Postmodernism strives to invest art with as many dimensions as there

are in life" (Lediņš 1987, p. 44; Astahovska and Žeikare 2016, p. 401). It did this, he reasoned, by way of what Jencks called postmodernism's "double coding", its simultaneous "continuation of Modernism and its transcendence" (Jencks 1986, p. 7).

In Jencks's formulation of this "double coding", postmodernism was modernism juxtaposed and put into play with its polar opposite, in whatever stylistic or conceptual direction one might look. It envisioned the future as it looked to the past, mixing historical forms and images with those of the present and those never seen before. It juxtaposed figurative visual languages with abstraction. It blended together the revolutionary and the regressive, the profound and the banal. In doing so, it produced structures that were unique, inspiring, and playful, attending to both "historical memory and local context" (Jencks 1977, p. 6; cf. Lediņš 1983, 1985). Another theorist Lediņš followed, Ihab Hassan, whose work would be published in Latvian by Juris Boiko, described postmodernism in complementary fashion. It represents "a different concept of tradition", Hassan suggested, "one in which continuity and discontinuity, high and low culture, mingle not to imitate but to expand the past in the present" (Hassan 1986, p. 506; cf. Lediņš and Boiko 1989, p. 4).

4. Émigré Latvians in West Germany, and the Idea of Approximate Art

Lediņš and Boiko's fascination with the "double coding" or inherent dualities of postmodernism took concrete form in their response to a pair of conversations they had with a West German writer named Micky Remann, whom they met in Riga in February 1987. An eclectic media theorist from Frankfurt am Main, Remann was introduced to the pair by a Latvian-born journalist named Indulis Bilzens, a fixture in the alternative, left-leaning West German media at the time. Born in Riga in 1940, Bilzens had fled to Germany with his family ahead of the Soviet annexation of Latvia in 1944 (his name is spelled Bilzēns, with the macron, in Latvian). As a young man, he had fallen in with a community of young, leftist Latvian émigrés, notably the Fluxus-affiliated Aachen gallerist Valdis Āboliņš (1939–84), who would soon relocate to West Berlin to become director of the Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst in that city.

The émigré circle to which Bilzens and Āboliņš both belonged—the so-called New Left of West Germany's Latvian community—was united by its members' commitment to constructive dialogue with artists and intellectuals living in Soviet Latvia (Astahovska 2019, pp. 75–81; Puciriuss 2016, pp. 27–30). It was a commitment that put them at odds with more mainstream émigré organizations, which were wary and generally avoidant of anything hinting at collaboration with the Soviet regime or its representatives. Given the mission of the Soviet Latvian Culture Committee to sow divisions within émigré communities, it is unsurprising that that organization enthusiastically supported, both logistically and financially, the work of Āboliņš and Bilzens's New Left circle (Eglāja-Kristsonsone 2016). The Committee co-sponsored conferences of émigré Latvian youth in Belgium, Finland, and other Western locales, and they brokered visits by potentially sympathetic Latvian émigrés to Riga. Bilzens recalls being fully cognizant of the KGB's role in his work as an unofficial cultural ambassador in these years. For him, the situation was ambivalent, with the benefits of engagement with his Soviet counterparts outweighing any qualms. He recalled himself asking at the time, "If Washington, London, and Paris were already talking to Moscow, why couldn't émigré Latvians do the same?" in (Puciriuss 2016, p. 29).⁸

Bilzens first visited Soviet Latvia as a guest of the Culture Committee in 1978. His engagements ceased the following year with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. But through a connection he forged with a figure named Dainis Piņķis, then a relatively low-level Culture Committee attaché posted to the Soviet embassy in East Berlin, he resumed his travels to Riga in the mid-1980s and soon became something of a regular in corners of that city's artistic scene (Puciriuss 2016, p. 31). In July 1986, Bilzens met and first collaborated with Lediņš, Boiko, and their NSRD colleagues as a participant in the group's improvisational video performance *Transwelt/Transzeit* (Astahovska and Žeikare 2016, p. 62). He traveled to the Latvian capital in May and again in October 1987, accompanying a delegation from West Berlin's Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, which was then

collaborating with the Latvian Artists' Union on a Riga exhibition of works by its recently departed director Valdis Āboliņš, who died in 1984.⁹ Bilzens visited in February of that same year to take part in the production of another NSRD video work, *Iceberg Longings/Volcano Dreams (Aisberga ilgās/Vulkāna sapņi)*. Remann, who sometimes roomed with Bilzens in Frankfurt, came along on that February trip as an invited guest of the Friendship Society. While there, Remann sat with Boiko and Lediņš for conversations on a topic of abiding concern for all three: perception.

The Lediņš archive at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art in Riga preserves five typescript pages in English, summarizing two discussions between Boiko, Lediņš, and Remann, labeled simply "The first" and "THE SECOND."¹⁰ The first opens as if in answer to questions Lediņš had pondered as an architectural theorist. "The brain is a receptacle of blurriness", their notes on the conversation read. "Consciousness is capable of accommodating an infinite number of things blurry and approximate, but the mind always strives to fix these infinite approximations to a limited number of points, which we pass off as reality". Rather than clarifying things, their conversation held, this reflexive elision or resolution of complexity functions like a "prison" in the mind of the perceiving subject. It prevents a person from "acces[s]ing the freedom of the obscure" and blinds them to the "infinite approximations" that constitute the world's essence. To break the walls of this prison and experience the world in its infinite complexity, they concluded, was precisely the proper role of the artist and the rightful project of art. "The artist reaches it", they wrote of this ideal state of perception, by constructing in their work a thing they called the "laboratory of the approximate".

Just how an artist can accomplish this—just what the laboratory of the approximate might comprise—was the subject of their second conversation. Rather than "offer[ing] us keys" to understanding the world yet without actually "show[ing] us the doors they're meant for", "approximate art [. . .] reminds us that these doors are never locked, and you can pass through any one of them". It does this by striving to occupy or inhabit two distinct states simultaneously, or by playing in the indeterminate boundaries between them—in other words, via gestures not far removed from what Jencks, and Lediņš after him, called postmodernism's "double coding". From the conversation with Remann: "The approximate reveals itself as a border between two positions. Between any two positions". These may include "the centre and the periphery", or (more cryptically) "the heart and the coat". The project of their envisioned "laboratory of the approximate", they concluded, consists in "destroy[ing]" such borders "by ignoring them".

The First Exhibition of Approximate Art was Boiko and Lediņš's attempt to construct such a "laboratory of the approximate": droning saxophone improvisations juxtaposed with gender-queering dancing, costumed musicians, potted palms, British synth pop, and Westbam's mixing and scratching (Figure 2). And while Lediņš and Boiko never made this point directly, Westbam's performance was itself a fitting sonic embodiment of their ideal—one thing always blurring into the next, impressions layered upon impressions, no fixed center, all boundaries unclear.



Figure 2. The First Exhibition of Approximate Art: Juris Boiko (left, in lab coat) and Hardijs Lediņš (right, with glasses and cap). Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art.

5. A West German DJ Visits the USSR

When he boarded his train for Riga in April 1987, Westbam had no particular interest in Latvia—or, for that matter, in the Soviet bloc. Others in his circle did, however. Dimitri Hegemann, who has owned a string of Berlin clubs since 1988, began his career documenting the East German punk scene for West German readers while performing in a West Berlin band called Leningrad Sandwich, whose image fetishized the Soviet East. (His given name was not Dimitri but Dietmar-Maria; [Leningrad 1982](#); [Pehlemann 2023](#), pp. 93–97). One of Hegemann’s band’s songs, “Moscow TV”, would lend its name in Germanized form (Moskwa TV) to yet another West German band, a new wave outfit led by Andreas Tomalla (also known as Talla 2XLC), whose music Westbam sampled in his own first-ever recording, made in 1985 ([Westbam 1995](#), pp. 1–2; [1997](#), p. 116). In his memoirs, Westbam recalled his trip to Riga as a string of exotic details: the border crossing, where the wheels on his coach had to be swapped to accommodate the wider rail gauge used in the USSR; an extreme drinking culture, where a pair of hosts drank so much vodka while showing him the city that they were stumbling within 150 yards of opening their shared bottle; and how everywhere he went, people were listening to the song “Wonderful Life” by the English artist Black. “Our visit to the Soviet Union is still remembered there, even today”, he wrote in 2015 ([Westbam 2015](#), pp. 113–16). In fact, its impact on his own work and career was also profound.

A native of Münster, Maximilian Lenz, not yet called Westbam, first performed in West Berlin in 1981, as singer in a pickup band at an alternative, mostly amateur event called the Festival of Brilliant Dilletantes. The group of friends behind the festival, led by Wolfgang Müller, an important figure on the city’s artistic scene, included Hegemann and William Röttger, Lenz’s childhood mentor from Münster who had recently relocated to the city ([Westbam 2015](#), pp. 37–38; [Müller 2020](#), pp. 221, 324). The following year, Lenz

returned to West Berlin and quickly, unexpectedly, found his calling—not in singing or playing in a band, but in DJ'ing. His “school”, as he called it, was Metropol, a club whose DJs performed in a way completely new to Germany, adjusting the speed of their turntables to seamlessly blend one track into the next in the manner of New York's leading disco DJs (Westbam 1997, p. 47).

Living with Röttger, Lenz practiced his DJ technique for hours on end, further branching into the techniques of quick-looping and scratching developed by the American Hip-Hop artists Grandmaster Flash and Grand Wizard Theodore. In 1984, he landed a regular DJ post at Metropol, where he took the stage name Westbam, short for Westfalia Bambaataa, in homage to another Bronx Hip-Hop pioneer, Afrika Bambaataa (Westbam 1997, pp. 49–51; 2015, pp. 67–70). Among Röttger's many acquaintances was none other than Indulis Bilzens, who one day visited the flat he shared with Westbam and videotaped the DJ performing what he had taken to calling his “record art”—his mixing, cutting, and scratching. On a subsequent trip to Riga, probably in 1986, Bilzens showed the tape to a Latvian DJ named Roberts Gobziņš, who, in turn, shared it with Lediņš (Gillen 1988, pp. 45–46). “Because glasnost and perestroika were the new magic words in the Soviet Union”, Westbam recalled, “it wasn't long before we received an invitation from the Soviet Latvian Culture Committee. [...] Our visit was one of many small tests of how far the new freedom would extend” (Westbam 2015, p. 114). Lediņš, whose mother worked for both the Culture Committee and the Friendship Society, was instrumental in making it happen.

On 16 March 1987, the governing committee of the Latvian Artists' Union met in Riga to review the events they had planned for their annual Art Days festival, to be held the following month. Protocols from the meeting indicate that they considered a new proposal for a late addition to the festival program that day, which requested that “a space in the Planetarium be cleared and made available, for six days, for the so-called exhibition of approximate art, an international video program with the participation of West German masters invited by the Friendship Society and received by Hardijs Lediņš.”¹¹ Lediņš, it should be noted, was not a member of the Artists' Union. The following week, on 23 March, just three days before a scheduled press conference on the upcoming Art Days events, the Union's leadership reconvened to consider more thoroughly just what this “exhibition of approximate art” would entail. They reviewed an outline of events prepared by Lediņš, which indicated a “record art demonstration” by Westbam and an “international performance by artists from Riga and West Berlin.”¹² Protocols from that meeting note that Bilzens would travel with Westbam as a guest of the Culture Committee. They also noted that “we can review a videocassette, at the Committee's office, showing what this art is like”—an arrangement seeming to indicate that Westbam's visit was solidly backed by the KGB-directed organization, if not urged by the Culture Committee upon the Artists' Union directly. At the end of the meeting, it was decided that the Union's leadership would watch the video at the offices of the Culture Committee on 30 March.

Documents attesting to the internal workings of the Culture Committee, like many files of the Latvian KGB, remain closed to most researchers. The surviving archive of the Friendship Society is sparse and includes nothing relating to the Exhibition of Approximate Art, and I have been unable to locate any materials detailing conversations between these organizations about the event.¹³ However, a pair of Bilzens's other visits to the Latvian SSR in that same year—in May and September–October 1987, both of which, likewise, accompanying West German guests—are well documented in the archives of the Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst in Berlin. Together, they attest to a network of relationships and negotiations of a sort that likely operated behind the scenes to enable Westbam's visit as well. Both of Bilzens's trips in question concerned preparations for the exhibition of work by Valdis Āboliņš at the Latvian State Art Museum in October 1987, and for a follow-up exhibition in West Berlin planned for summer 1988.

Formally, both of these projects were collaborations between the Latvian Artists' Union and the Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, widely known for its history of engagement with art and artists from the Soviet bloc (Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst 2017).

However, as was the case with the Exhibition of Approximate Art in April of that year, the Culture Committee loomed in the background of all conversations surrounding them. In her copy of notes from an Artists' Union meeting she attended with her Latvian and German colleagues in October 1987, the Neue Gesellschaft curator Barbara Straka indicated that she had already forwarded a copy of those notes to the Culture Committee to keep them apprised of the planning.¹⁴

In both cases, the crucial connection seems to have been with the figure of Dainis Piņķis, the Culture Committee attaché in East Berlin whom Bilzens had befriended in the early 1980s, who had since returned to Riga to become the organization's deputy director. In a Neue Gesellschaft document listing their principal Latvian contacts for the Āboliņš exhibition, Piņķis's role was described as expansive, overseeing nearly every non-artistic facet of the project: "arranging visas, travel, hotel, itinerary for the working group."¹⁵ In a letter received by the Neue Gesellschaft on 21 May 1987, Piņķis authorized a visit to Riga by Straka and her colleagues that seems to have been requested at the last minute, since the approved date of their arrival was the following day, 22 May. "It is impossible for me to write a long letter in German", Piņķis's missive began, "thus [I am responding] briefly and to the point."¹⁶ In August, apparently having honed his language skills and typing on a Culture Committee letterhead, Piņķis invited fifteen representatives of the Neue Gesellschaft, including Bilzens, to attend the opening of the Āboliņš exhibition in October, plus two to arrive in September in order to help with staging and other logistical arrangements.¹⁷

In the end, the Latvian Artists' Union acceded to the wishes of the Culture Committee and consented to staging the Exhibition of Approximate Art as part of the Art Days festival. However, the unusual way in which the exhibition had made its way onto the program at the final hour was reflected in the published festival handbook. In spite of the fact that the event was staged over a full week in such a high-profile venue as the city's House of Knowledge, it is not mentioned anywhere in the booklet distributed to festival attendees.¹⁸ Nevertheless, in the assessment of the painter Maija Tabaka, a leading figure in the Artists' Union who regularly worked with both the Culture Committee and the Friendship Society, the Exhibition of Approximate Art was the singular event that aroused "the most lively interest among [festival] attendees" (Tabaka et al. 1987, p. 11).¹⁹ For many, Westbam's performance was the greatest sensation, and he filled his remaining time in Riga with further appearances all around town. He gave a seminar on "record art" to a group of Latvian DJs. He played a concert with the Russian rock idol Viktor Tsoi and Sergei Kuryokhin's band Pop-Mekhanika, visiting from Leningrad.²⁰ And with the Latvian DJ Roberts Gobziņš—who had taken to calling himself Eastbam, adapting the record-based techniques of mixing and scratching to a pair of reel-to-reel tape decks—he played a pair of discos at the city's Polygraphic Club. Their performances together, which featured Gobziņš rapping in Latvian, Westbam described as "so successful" that "I'll take the recording home and play it at my [own] discotheque" (in Līcītis 1987, p. 17).

6. Conclusions: The Ambivalent Politics of Exchange

I and others have written about so-called gaps and holes in the Soviet system, those unmonitored yet highly fertile spaces that revealed themselves when everyone in the sprawling Soviet bureaucracy thought that somebody *else* was keeping an eye on things, assuring that nothing untoward would occur. As a student, Lediņš was a master at finding and exploiting such opportunities for some truly radical artistic projects (Karnes 2021; cf. Muzyczuk 2016; Yurchak 2006). The stories revealed in documents surrounding the Exhibition of Approximate Art and the Valdis Āboliņš exhibitions reveal another feature of the Soviet system that could be leveraged and exploited to produce artistic work incongruous with Soviet cultural norms: the critical importance of personal relationships and interpersonal networks for defining priorities *within* even the most highly monitored parts of the bureaucracy itself. Indeed, this applied even to the formidable state security apparatus.

It is extremely unlikely—and there is no evidence to suggest—that the Culture Committee sought to advance, even indirectly, the budding international career of a Latvian DJ

and rapper like Roberts Gobziņš. And it would be absurd to suggest that they wished to showcase dancers performing in drag at the Exhibition of Approximate Art. However, on both counts, this is effectively what they did. In her landmark study of the Culture Committee's work with Latvian and émigré writers, the historian Eva Eglāja-Kristsone points to the profound ambivalence of some of the organization's efforts. While the committee's endeavors to foster exchange across Cold War borders were animated by a desire to curry Western sympathy and enthusiasm for Soviet culture and open rifts within émigré communities, the results of such work were often unforeseen and unintended, for the simple reason that exchanges of ideas, and the influence that follows, worked in both directions. "Although [these exchanges] occurred under conditions dictated by the policies of the Soviet KGB", she writes, "émigré culture came to influence cultural processes in Latvia in turn. This result ran contrary to the goals of Soviet ideology" (Eglāja-Kristsone 2016, p. 58).

The roles played by the Culture Committee and the Friendship Society in staging the Exhibition of Approximate Art constitute a case in point. They also help us understand just how complex, and ultimately arbitrary, these organizations' engagements could be, and how far afield their work could drift from their official mission as a result. In the case of the Exhibition of Approximate Art, as with many of the activities surrounding it, the critical link seems to have been the personal connection forged between a single Culture Committee official—Dainis Piņķis—and a creative, ambitiously networking émigré Latvian, Indulis Bilzens. Across a span of years and over a series of posts he held within the organization, Piņķis repeatedly went out of his way to support whatever projects Bilzens wished to pursue. He organized group travel, granted visas for foreign visitors at the very last minute, and appears to have worked behind the scenes to pressure the Latvian Artists' Union to accept a weeklong event devised by a non-union artist onto the program for the Union's highest-profile annual project. The only things all these activities had in common were Bilzens's participation and Piņķis's support. By 1987, Piņķis surely understood that Bilzens was apt to advocate for artists and projects on the distant fringes of Latvian cultural life. Yet that does not seem to have diminished his support for his friend from Germany, or his willingness to use his position within state security to advance Bilzens's work. Their personal relationship was decisive. Artists leveraged it to their advantage.

7. Afterword: Resonance

When he returned to West Berlin following his appearance at the Exhibition of Approximate Art, Westbam did more than play the tape of his Polygraphic Club collaboration with Gobziņš in German clubs. He released commercially a segment of their Riga performance on the B-side of his first 12-inch single, *Do It in the Mix*, calling it "Do It in the East, recorded live in Poly-Disco Riga, CCCP [*sic*]." ²¹ In September 1988, as restrictions on East–West travel continued to ease, Bilzens arranged for Gobziņš to visit Westbam in Berlin, where the two DJs performed together at the Transmission II new-music festival held at Tempodrom, a major concert venue in the city (Beck 1988; Druba 1988). While in town, Gobziņš visited Westbam's studio, where he recorded a track with Westbam's producer Klaus Jankuhn. The resulting track was released as "Go East Bam" on Westbam's 1989 record *The Cabinet*. ²² Another Gobziņš/Jankuhn record followed: "Aka Aka", released as a 12-inch single under Eastbam's name on Westbam's Low Spirit Recordings label. ²³ The disc featured prominently in Low Spirit's German print advertising in 1990, though it remained unavailable in the Soviet Union (Sametis 1993, p. 6) (Figure 3).

**LOW SPIRIT
RECORDINGS**

12" SERIES:

DICK: EXZESS
EFA 042 75-02 MS

**X-BASS:
LOS TOROS
DIABOLICOS**
EFA 042 76-02 MS

**BEAT IN TIME:
TIME**
EFA 040 01-02 MS

**KING BEE feat.
PRHYME:
PARTY PEOPLE
IN THE HOUSE**
EFA 040 02-02 MS

**WESTBAM:
SAXOPHONE
ALARM CLOCK**
EFA 040 03-02 MS

**EASTBAM:
AKA AKA**
EFA 040 04-02 MS

**VOX MYSTICA:
CALLAS**
EFA 040 05-02 MS

**coming soon:
L.U.P.O.:
HELL OR HEAVEN**
EFA 040 07-02 MS

BERLIN(WEST)

distributed by EFA
+DISCOBOX

LOW SPIRIT
marketed by
Vielklang
FAX: 49-30-262 8715

Figure 3. Low Spirit Recordings advertisement in *Up—futurezine*, March 1990, inside front cover.

Westbam's career was likewise shaped by his exchanges with Soviet colleagues inaugurated with the Exhibition of Approximate Art. As Bilzens recalls, when the DJ returned from Riga, he was inundated with invitations to discuss his trip on the radio. "Everyone was saying: 'Oh Westbam, you were in Russia?'" in (Puciriuss 2016, p. 31). Soon enough, Westbam returned to the Latvian capital. He visited in spring 1988 to perform at a follow-up to the Exhibition of Approximate Art, called "Mole in a Hole" (*Kurmis alā*) (Bankovskis and Lediņš 1988).²⁴ He returned again in June 1989 to adjudicate the First International Tape Jockey World Championships, organized by Gobziņš and another young Latvian inspired to adapt the DJ's art to a pair of reel-to-reel tape decks, Uģis Polis (Tiekas žokeji 1989; Polis and Gobziņš 1989).²⁵ In 1988, Westbam made his first trip to Leningrad, where he reunited with Sergei Kuryokhin and Pop-Mekhanika for a concert that he went on to release as the record *Live at Leningrad* on his Low Spirit label.²⁶ A photograph portrait from that year captures his fascination, commitments, and emerging public image: Westbam in a *ushanka*, the fur hat worn by men in winter all across the Soviet Union (Figure 4).



Westbam 1988

Figure 4. Portrait of Westbam, 1988. *Berlin Technology 1989–1997*, part 1, *Clubland & Leute*, ed. Nico Mesterharm, Joel Amaretto, and Wolfgang Brückner (Mesterharm et al. 1997), p. 36, Berlin.

As the latter country's unraveling was palpably reaching a point of no return around 1990, Westbam became a regular in Leningrad, renamed St. Petersburg in 1991, performing in some of the many clubs that fed the city's exploding nightlife (Westbam 1997, pp. 93–94; cf. Azelitskii et al. 2008). By then, Gobziņš, performing as Eastbam, was playing there as well (Yurchak 1999, p. 93). Meanwhile, Uģis Polis and other Latvian DJs whose art was shaped by encounters with Westbam in Riga began fanning out across the continent, appearing in clubs in Berlin, Amsterdam, and London. An international movement of club, techno, and rave culture was coalescing, uniting artists across rapidly eroding Cold War borders. It had been fueled in part by the ambivalent politics of cultural exchange pursued by the Soviet Union itself.

Funding: This research was funded by Emory College of Arts and Sciences, Emory University.

Data Availability Statement: The original data presented in this study are openly available in the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, Riga; the Latvian National Archives, Riga; and the Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, Berlin.

Acknowledgments: I wish to thank the staff of the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art and Latvian State Archives in Riga and the Archiv der Jugendkulturen and the Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst in Berlin for their help with primary source materials, and Māra Traumane for her helpful comments on an early version of this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- 1 The account in this paragraph is from video documentation of the event, available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2lcmSYOgPk&t=3739s> (accessed on 23 April 2024). The first forty minutes of the video documents the performance I describe. My narration of events begins at 13:35.
- 2 Bugaev and Novikov can be seen in video documentation of the event; see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2lcmSYOgPk&t=3739s> at 23:23 (accessed on 23 April 2024).
- 3 Historical and biographical information in this paragraph is drawn from (Avramecs 2006; Mazvērsīte and Traumane 2012; Astahovska and Žeikare 2016; Karnes 2021).
- 4 For a publicly directed, official account of the committee's activities from the turn of the 1980s, see (Bērsona et al. 1981).
- 5 On the work of the Friendship Society, see the "historical note" (*Vēsturiskā izziņa*) appended to the organization's files at the Latvian National Archives (Latvijas Valsts arhīvs, Riga; hereafter LVA), fonds 338. Lediņa's work for the organization is noted in "Latvijas PSR Augstākās Padomes Prezidijā", *Rīgas Balss*, 6 January 1986, p. 1. On the relationship between the Friendship Society, the Culture Committee, and other "cover" organizations for the Latvian KGB, see (Kalniņa 2016).
- 6 (Avramecs and Gailītis 2020; Karnes 2021, pp. 37–38, 103–4); Mārtiņš (Martin) Boiko, interview with the author, in English and Latvian, Riga, 29 November 2019.
- 7 Lediņš's photocopies and notes on these and other readings are preserved at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art (Latvijas Laikmetīgas mākslas centrs, Riga; hereafter LLMC), Hardijs Lediņš Collection, box labeled Arhitektūra/Kserokopijas/Rokraksti (Uztvere), and binder labeled Manuskripti (Sekundārie).
- 8 Āboliņš saw things similarly. In a letter of 1978, he wrote: "I consider the Cult-Com a very OK establishment. [...] Fine, I find the whole Com-thing a bit obscure as well, but the whole business nevertheless seems useful for creative cultural liaisons" in (Astahovska 2019, p. 77).
- 9 This project and travel are documented in materials held at the archive of the Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, Berlin (hereafter nGbK), binder labeled Valdis Āboliņš; and at the archive of the Latvian National Museum of Art (Latvijas Nacionālais mākslas muzejs, Riga), IZ.2.-186.
- 10 LLMC, Hardijs Lediņš Collection, binder labeled Manuskripti; published in (Astahovska and Žeikare 2016, pp. 222–25). All quotations in this paragraph and the one that follows are from this source.
- 11 LPSR Mākslinieku Savienības valdes sēdes protokols 1987. gada 16. martā. LVA, fonds 230, apraksts 1, lieta 708.
- 12 LPSR Mākslinieku Savienības valdes sēdes protokols 1987. gada 23 martā. LVA, fonds 230, apraksts 1, lieta 708.
- 13 The extant files of the Friendship Society (*Draudzības biedrība*) are preserved at LVA, fonds 338.
- 14 Straka, "Protokoll einer Sitzung im lettischen Künstlerverband, Riga, 5.10.87". nGbK, binder labeled Valdis Āboliņš.
- 15 Manuscript document labeled "Ausstellung Abolins/Riga". nGbK, binder labeled Valdis Āboliņš.
- 16 Piņķis, letter to Straka, received 21 May 1987. nGbK, binder labeled Valdis Āboliņš.
- 17 Piņķis, letter to nGbK, received 25 August 1987. nGbK, binder labeled Valdis Āboliņš.
- 18 A copy is preserved at LLMC, Hardijs Lediņš Collection, binder labeled Hardijs Lediņš.
- 19 On Tabaka's work on the fine arts section of the Culture Committee, see (Bērsona et al. 1981), pp. 21–22. On her co-leadership of the art section of the Friendship Society, see Sekciju saraksts (1980-tie g.), LVA, fonds 338, apraksts 9, lieta 1.
- 20 Selections from the concert were released as the LP *Popularnāja Mehanika Featuring: Westbam, Live at Riga* (What's So Funny About. SF 57, 1987).
- 21 Westbam, *Do It in the Mix* (Metropol 04288-70, 1987).
- 22 Westbam, *The Cabinet* (Low Spirit Recordings 841 518-1, 1989).
- 23 Eastbam, *Aka Aka* (Low Spirit Recordings EFA 040 04-02, 1990).
- 24 Archival footage of the event is available online; see "[NSRD Akcija] Kurmis alā (1988)", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wCrjfGrjcE> (accessed on 23 April 2024).

- ²⁵ West German news footage from the event is available online; see “Ein Gipfeltreffen in Riga, aspekte/ZDF 1989”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uh3AdyVsQt4&t=57s> (accessed on 23 April 2024).
- ²⁶ Westbam and Popular Mekanik, *Live at Leningrad* (Low Spirit Recordings EFA 04256-02, 1988).

References

- Astahovska, Ieva. 2019. Between Avant-Garde and Realism, Art and Politics. In *Valdis Āboliņš. Avangards, meilārts, jaunais kreisums un kultūras sakari aukstā kara laikā/Valdis Āboliņš. The avant-garde, mailart, the New Left and cultural relations during the Cold War*. Edited by Ieva Astahovska. Riga: Latvijas Laikmetīgas mākslas centrs, pp. 62–81.
- Astahovska, Ieva, and Māra Žeikare, eds. 2016. *Nebijušu sajūtu restaurēšanas darbnīca/Workshop for the Restoration of Unfelt Feelings*. Riga: Laivijas Laikmetīgas Mākslas Centrs.
- Avramecs, Boriss. 2006. Neoficiālie laikmetīgās mūzikas festivāli 1976. un 1977. gados Rīgā. In *Robežu pārkāpšana. Mākslu sintēze un paralēles. 80 gadi*. Edited by Ieva Astahovska. Riga: Laikmetīgas mākslas centrs, pp. 20–31.
- Avramecs, Boriss, and Viestarts Gailītis. 2020. Between Communist Party Bosses and Individual Courage. In *Unearthing the Music: Sound and Creative Experimentation in Non-democratic Europe*. July 15. Available online: http://database.unearthingthemusic.eu/Between_Communist_Party_Bosses_and_Individual_Courage (accessed on 23 April 2024).
- Azelitskii, Oleg, Kirill Ivanov, and Il'ia Stogov. 2008. *Reiv*. St. Petersburg: Amfora.
- Bankovskis, Pēteris, and Hardijs Lediņš. 1988. Kurmjā cirkulācija haosā. *Literatūra un Māksla*, April 1, pp. 8–9.
- Baranovska, Inese, ed. 2004. *Daba. Vide. Cilvēks. 1984–2004/Nature. Environment. Man. 1984–2004*. Riga: Latvijas Mākslinieku savienība.
- Beck, Gregory. 1988. Ostbār meets Westbār. *Zitty* 20: 46.
- Bērsona, M., E. Freimanis, D. Gedzjuma, G. Janaiša, J. Kalniņa, J. Krieviņa, Ž. Legzdīna, I. Prēdeļa, and B. Tiknusa. 1981. *Latvijas komiteja kultūras sakariem ar tautiešiem ārzemēs*. Riga: Avots.
- Cherednichenko, Tat'iana. 2002. *Muzykal'nyi zapas. 70-e. Problemy. Portrety. Sluchai*. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie.
- Druba, Bernard. 1988. Live aus Leningrad. *Tip* 20: 208–10.
- Eglāja-Kristone, Eva. 2016. *Dzelzsgriežņi. Latvijas un Rietumu trimdas rakstnieku kontakti*. Riga: Latvijas Universitātes Literatūras, folkloras un mākslas institūts.
- Gillen, Eckhart. 1988. Ungefähre Kunst in Riga. *Niemandland: Zeitschrift zwischen den Kulturen* 2: 45–46.
- Hassan, Ihab. 1986. Pluralism in Postmodern Perspective. *Critical Inquiry* 12: 503–20. [CrossRef]
- Jencks, Charles. 1977. *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, rev. ed. New York: Rizzoli.
- Jencks, Charles. 1986. *What Is Post-Modernism?* London: Academy Editions. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Kalniņa, Ieva, ed. 2016. *Lielais brālis tevi vēro: VDK un tās piesegstruktūras*. Riga: LPSR Valsts drošības komitejas zinātniskās izpētes komisija, Latvijas Universitāte.
- Karnes, Kevin C. 2021. *Sounds Beyond: Arvo Pärt and the 1970s Soviet Underground*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lediņš, Hardijs. 1983. Nedaudz par mūziku, bet vairāk par māju, kurā tā skan. *Liesma* 5: 18–19.
- Lediņš, Hardijs. 1985. Jaunais vilnis ārpus mūzikas. *Liesma* 8: 16–17.
- Lediņš, Hardijs. 1987. Avangards nav avangards. *Avots* 5: 43–44.
- Lediņš, Hardijs, and Juris Boiko. 1989. *Ko tas nozīmē: Postmodernisms?* Riga: Aptuvenās mākslas aģentūra.
- Leningrad, Dimitri [Dimitri Hegemann]. 1982. Die Punker von Prenzlauer Berg. *Tip* 15: 18–19.
- Līcītis, Egils. 1987. Vestbems Rīgā. *Liesma* 7: 17.
- Mazvērsīte, Daiga, and Māra Traumane. 2012. Avant-Garde Trends in Latvian Music, 1970s–1990s. In *Sound Exchange: Experimentelle Musikkulturen in Mitteleuropa/Experimental Music Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe*. Edited by Carsten Seiffarth, Carsten Stabenow and Golo Föllmer. Saarbrücken: PFAU. Available online: http://www.soundexchange.eu/#latvia_en?id=43 (accessed on 23 April 2024).
- Mesterharm, Nico, Joel Amaretto, and Wolfgang Brückner, eds. 1997. *Berlin Technology 1989–1997, Part 1. Clubland & Leute*. Berlin: A-Verbal Verlagsgesellschaft.
- Müller, Wolfgang. 2020. *Subkultur Westberlin 1979–1989. Freizeit*. Hamburg: Philo Fine Arts.
- Muzyczuk, Daniel. 2016. Odcienie niezależności/Hues of Independence. In *Notatki z podziemia. Sztuka i muzyka alternatywna w Europie wschodniej 1968–1994/Notes from the Underground: Art. And Alternative Music in Eastern Europe 1968–1994*. Edited by David Crowley and Daniel Muzyczuk. Łódź: Muzeum Sztuki, London: Koenig Books, pp. 74–115.
- Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, ed. 2017. *RealismusStudio. Kuratorische Praktiken und künstlerisches Handeln/Curatorial Practice and Artistic Agency*. Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst.
- Pehlemann, Alexander. 2023. Kein Ende mit “Ende”: Zur Geschichte von “DDR von Unten”. In den Worten von Dimitri Hegemann und Karl-Ulrich Waltherbach, sowie des MfS. In *Magnetizdat DDR. Magnetbanduntergrund Ost 1979–1990*. Edited by Alexander Pehlemann, Ronald Galenza and Robert Miessner. Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, pp. 93–106.
- Polis, Ūģis, and Roberts Gobziņš. 1989. Pasaules diskžokeji—Rīgā. *Rīgas Balss*, May 29, p. 4.
- Puciriuss, Heinrihs. 2016. Kultūras ledlauzis, latvieši un techno. *Veto Magazine* 37: 24–33.
- Reeder, Mark. 2015. *B Book: Lust & Sound in West-Berlin, 1979–1989*. Hamburg: Edel Books.
- Sametis, Raitis. 1993. Rokmūzika darbībā: Jūnijs, 1993. *Literatūra un Māksla*, July 30, p. 6.
- Tabaka, Maija, Džemma Skulme, Juris Petraškevičs, Valts Kleins, Juris Dimiteers, Gunārs Mierīgs, Augusts Sukuts, and Ziedonis Skuška. 1987. Pārdomas pēc Mākslas dienām-87. *Literatūra un Māksla*, May 15, pp. 10–11.

- Tiekas žokeji. 1989, *Padomju Jaunatne*, May 27, p. 2.
- Traumane, Māra. 2023. Spaces of Criticism and Imagination: Exhibitions, Publications and Exchanges of Latvian and Estonian Architects and Artists in 1978–1979. *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/Studies on Art and Architecture* 32: 41–74.
- Westbam [Maximilian Lenz]. 1995. Eine kurze (Vor-) Geschichte der ravenden Gesellschaft, '84-'91. Liner notes to the CD *The Age of the DJ Mixer: 10 Years of Low Spirit*. *Low Spirit Recordings* catalogue number 529 127–2.
- Westbam [Maximilian Lenz]. 1997. *Mix, Cuts & Scratches mit Rainald Goetz*. Berlin: Merve Verlag.
- Westbam [Maximilian Lenz]. 2015. *Die Macht der Nacht*. Berlin: Ullstein.
- Yurchak, Alexei. 1999. Gagarin and the Rave Kids: Transforming Power, Identity, and Aesthetics in Post-Soviet Nightlife. In *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society since Gorbachev*. Edited by Adele Marie Barker. Durham and London: Duke University Press, pp. 76–109.
- Yurchak, Alexei. 2006. *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton and London: Princeton University Press.
- Zake, Ieva. 2010. Soviet Campaigns against “Capitalist Ideological Subversives” during the Cold War. *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12: 91–114. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Zhuk, Sergei I. 2010. *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dniepropetrovsk, 1960–1985*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Disclaimer/Publisher’s Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.