

# Announcements

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## Ukrainian Minstrels: Why the Blind Should Sing

by Natalie Kononenko

Among the many intriguing characteristics of the Ukrainian folk tradition is the fact that Ukrainian epics were sung by a special type of minstrel — the blind mendicant. These minstrels were organized into professional guilds that set standards for training and performance and provided the singers with protection and support throughout their careers. The separateness of Ukrainian culture became political salient, and epic singers became the target of repression during the Stalin era (in 1939 there was a massacre of Ukrainian minstrels). For this reason, and due also to the secrecy that always surrounded the guilds' rites of membership and their association with mendicancy, Ukrainian minstrelsy has been little studied. Natalie Kononenko's work is thus a revelation of a distinctive folk tradition and a little-known social order. It will be of interest to anyone with an interest in folklore, Ukrainian culture, or rural social history. M. E. Sharpe Inc. Winter 1997, 320 pages.

## Taking Pinquins to the Movies: Russian Ethnic Humor

by Emil Draitser

Wayne State University Press. May, 1998.

"The Oral Epic: Ethnic Traditions and Performance."

September 9-14, 1997 in Kyiv, Ukraine.