Hargis, and lived to age 99, dying months before the 1965 Voting Rights Act was signed. The people that Nathans met in 1978 were raised within this community, and they honored its leaders and traditions.

In Part IV, “Heir Land,” Nathans examines the lives of those people who shared oral testimony that he placed alongside archival research. Louie Rainey supplied stories stretching all the way back to Paul Cameron’s arrival, but Alice Hargress embodied the vision of African American land ownership at the heart of A Mind to Stay. Nathans introduced Alice Hargress in the prologue as the first person he interviewed in Alabama, and the Hargis/Hargress family is a unifying strand running through the book because Paul Hargis arrived in Alabama with his owner Paul Cameron in 1844. Alice Hargress was the only person in Greensboro, Alabama’s 1978 phonebook that Nathans was able to directly link to the 114 enslaved people brought to Alabama because only her ancestor Paul Hargis was listed with a last name. On their first phone call, she made it clear to Nathans that she already knew the story of Cameron forcing enslaved families from North Carolina to Alabama and would help him understand its significance.

In meetings across three decades, Alice Hargress helped the historian see that she was one link in a chain of families fighting to hold onto land through upheavals like Redemption, the Great Depression, and migration North. She explained they were guardians of “heir land” with a duty to maintain it for future generations, both for those in Alabama and for those who went North but might return. Hargress said of those who left, “They will always have somewhere to stay” (212). During her final 2013 visit with Nathans, 99-year-old Hargress told a group of young people learning about her 1960s activism, “I’m moving on. It’s your turn now,” demonstrating that the struggle is not over and the next generation must take up the work (243). Sydney Nathans delivers equally important messages throughout this beautifully written history. His deep, thoughtful research reveals the achievements of African American families who created a rural homeland in Alabama that persists after over a century. He demonstrates that land ownership was critical to their ability to secure a lasting freedom, and that their vision of “heir land” encompasses both enslaved ancestors and future generations. It took a historian with the wide-ranging skills and decades of experience that Nathans possesses to write a history that delivers deep insights into multiple periods of African American history while also providing readers with a compelling narrative.

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Joe Trapido’s Breaking Rocks: Music, Ideology and Economic Collapse from Paris to Kinshasa undertakes a multi-sited study of musical patronage systems in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and their relationship with its economic collapse. As capitalist
industries in the DRC began to falter during the 1970s, alternative economic networks emerged to replace them. Among the most central were those related to popular music patronage, which sustained celebrated musicians while maintaining the dominance of ruling classes. Trapido argues that in Kinshasa, popular music continues to be “an ideological element within wider political and economic forces” (13). Utilizing a broad range of ethnographic and archival materials, he delves deep into the social and political lives of musicians, politicians, and the urban poor in Kinshasa and the Congolese Diaspora. Throughout the book, Trapido argues that music patronage systems continue to uphold class distinctions despite the economic failure of elite classes.

Trapido employs Marxist theory as a central framework for uncovering the mechanisms of this alternative financial system, arguing that Marxism is relevant to the study of noncapitalist economies as well. Concomitantly, the book compares current economic ideologies in Kinshasa with precolonial ones to shed light on their sedimentation within social processes in the DRC today. In this work, Trapido integrates several theoretical frameworks from the social sciences to validate and enrich his arguments. He situates his research in dialogue with larger debates surrounding the construction of class and gender in contemporary Africa, the effects of out-migration on the continent, and the volatility of African economies.

Breaking Rocks spans the course of five decades from the 1970s to the early 2010s, depicting the lives of various personages in Congolese society and supplementing them with revealing anecdotes about current and past events. The first two chapters trace the historical evolution of the patronage system and argue for the importance of bars and concert venues to the development of this form of exchange. Successful musicians in Kinshasa take part in local ensembles termed *orchestres*, whose managers or *présidents* manage the financial, social, and musical aspects of the group. *Présidents* play a pivotal role in the politics of the DRC because on the one hand, they take advantage of the precariousness of politicians, who rely on dedications in songs and liner notes to uphold their popularity among locals, while on the other, they themselves are dependent upon local celebrities for financial support. Trapido links *présidents* to the development of the “big man” figure, with its roots in the economic decline of that period. These chapters depict the rise of the *présidents* in the 1970s, and their emergence as leading social figures within that historical moment.

In chapters 3 and 4, Trapido examines the market surrounding current popular musical production. He focuses on dedications in songs—a Congolese phenomenon that can cost patrons thousands of dollars—often delivered by ensembles in public displays during concerts in Kinshasa and abroad. Trapido also interrogates the interrelated processes of studio recording and patronage pursuit, bringing extensive ethnographic examples from studios in Paris and Kinshasa. He shows recording studios to be important sites of negotiation between patrons and *présidents*. However, the dependency on patronage is often undermined by *orchestre* members themselves. In many instances, pirate recordings of albums are made by *présidents* to substitute their need for patron subsidies. The fragility and complexity of pirate industries are illustrated by the author in his engagement with the broader African music market, as he reveals the larger stakes of the fan-based economy of popular music.
Throughout the book, Trapido argues that the popular music industry in Kinshasa is closely linked to international travel; a necessary step for an orchestre’s success is performing and recording music in Europe. Paris especially is viewed as a necessary pilgrimage site for emerging ensembles. However, the costs of travel and lodging as well as the necessary visas are difficult to come by. In order to cover these costs, many ensemble members engage in illegal activities. In this way, the music industry is implicated in broader international crime networks, which are today integral to the DRC’s economic survival.

Fashion is also entangled in this economic system, as designer clothing has evolved into a form of currency, bestowed by satisfied patrons on musicians. In recognizing the centrality of the patronage system, Trapido engages not only with issues of economy and class but also asks questions about the importance of gender. He shows how famous female figures have come to shape the industry as bar-owners and lovers to celebrities, and highlights their role in the construction of the industry. Romantic relationships between celebrities and politicians have informed the latter’s economic decisions, political agendas, and choices of patronage. Furthermore, many female celebrities have become the source of musical material for artists, as many lyrics surround encounters (real or imagined) with such women.

Chapter 5 of Breaking Rocks illustrates the role of présidents d’orchestres as “gatekeepers” in the patronage system. Présidents play a powerful part in monitoring the development of younger musicians on the one hand, and managing successful musicians on the other. The dependency of emerging musicians on présidents means that they are often forced into illegal activities such as the drug market or prostitution when abroad, in order to pay off debts to their managers. In some cases they are given fake passports, placing them at the mercy of the présidents if they wish to return home. In other cases, their identities are stolen in the illegal traffic of immigrants. The illicit markets that are at the heart of the patronage system implicate the présidents and reveal some of the darker sides of this globalized network. While chapter 5 focuses on the présidents, chapter 6 shifts the discussion to the patrons themselves, describing the rise of a class of mikilistes or “worldly” celebrities that developed out of this system. Trapido contrasts them with earlier political leaders such as Mobutu, but also shows that they were in part a continuation of those regimes. Within this context Trapido argues for the relevance of the “potlatch” system as a comparative economic mechanism for distribution of wealth. However, his argument is not clearly laid out or substantiated with examples from other “potlatch” systems, leaving the reader to wonder at the author’s intentions in this comparison.

Chapter 7 brings us into the heart of the music itself, with numerous examples from lyrics of popular songs. The chapter captures the various ways in which metaphor and romantic images mask the troubling reality of life in Kinshasa. The language of love and longing used in the majority of these songs often alludes to the greater pains of poverty, unemployment, immigration, and hunger in the city. Interestingly, gender roles are often reversed in these songs, as male singers adopt the “voice” of a female lover. This fact raises interesting questions as to the intended audiences and the importance of gender to the genre. Even so, the chapter does not address the musical content or
provide analyses of the structure of songs, leaving readers to imagine what they might sound like in reality.

The final chapter of *Breaking Rocks* discusses the phenomenon of “charismatic fetishism”, an important local form of leader-worship that undergirds much of the patronage system. Returning to Marxist theory, Trapido asks, “How are authority figures able to attract a retinue and portray themselves as ‘good givers’ when, in reality, their power is derived from onerous forms of exploitation?” (194). As an alternative to Marx’s “commodity fetishism,” Trapido suggests that “charismatic fetishism” is at the root of local forms of economic inequality. He ties trending ideologies to beliefs in the mystical potency of leaders and their ability to wield power over others. In the final section of this chapter, Trapido grapples with theories that seek to explain economic “failure” in Africa through the lack of the “principle of frugality” (226). He contests this view and argues that larger issues prevail, ones related to the instability of local industries and the flight of capital from the continent. Unfortunately, his discussion here is too brief to address the arguments thoroughly, and he does not do justice to the complexity of these debates.

Ultimately, *Breaking Rocks* takes as its center an intriguing financial system that has become integral to the survival of the DRC over the past five decades. It brings together musical creativity, class dependency, and global economies through depictions of local and international markets. Through extensive examples, anecdotes, and historical research, Trapido conveys the complexity of life in Kinshasa and its strong reliance on the music patronage system. At times however, his theoretical arguments come at the cost of more extensive explanations of crucial social processes and clearer descriptions of events and people. Furthermore, the intertwining of history in the present alongside the wealth of data might leave some readers confused as to the chronology of events, even as this information provides a deep encounter with life in the DRC. Finally, a clearer explanation of terminology at the outset would also serve to facilitate the reading and ensure accessibility across audiences. Given its wealth of data, *Breaking Rocks* will likely remain an instructive work for many, including researchers of contemporary Africa, those interested in popular music industries, and economic theorists.

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**Bina Brody**

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*Lissa: A Story about Medical Promise, Friendship, and Revolution* is the first book in a series that presents ethnographic research in graphic novel form. An anthropological study of medicine, friendship, and the 2011 Egyptian uprising, this graphic novel expands the ways anthropologists can write and present ethnographic research. The book is divided into three parts: “Cairo,” “Five Years Later,” and “Revolution.” Individually, each section presents a range of themes that are juxtaposed through Layla and Anna’s unlikely friendship. As