

UDC 398.8(477)"18/19"

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Ethnomusicological research and the search for national identity in Kyiv musical environment in the second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries

Abstract. The article is dedicated to the issues that arise during the search for national identity in Kyiv in the second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries and the meaning behind the recent interest in traditional music. It describes various expressions of interest in ethnomusicological research in Kyiv and their connection with national movements. The article draws attention to the influence of folk song reproductions and arrangements on listeners and how their meaning varies in concert productions and publishing.

Keywords: national identity, Kyiv musical environment, second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries, ethnomusicology.

Introduction. The second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries were a challenging yet crucial period in the history of Ukraine. Kyiv was part of the territory conquered by the Russian Empire, and the existence of a distinct Ukrainian people was being questioned. Due to this existential challenge, the issue of national self-discovery and the assertion of national identity became an issue of survival. The current trials Ukrainians face also make them feel in dire need of exploring their identity through the lens of history, customs, and family background. They discover lost family stories; revive customs eradicated in the soviet times – and sing Christmas carols at subway stations during bombardments. This return to traditions is a way to restore historical justice and tell the world your story. It is the key to self-discovery and a source of support. It is no wonder that so many experts are now turning to folklore: world historians, art historians, ethnomusicologists, and mental health specialists, too. Popular artists who represent Ukrainian culture on a global scale draw from tradition as well. A music band «Go_A», for instance, based their Eurovision song "Shum" on the traditional spring folk song «Vesnianka».

Summary of the main issues. The notion of identity is exceptionally complex despite its prevalence in research in various fields, including history, psychology, sociology, philosophy, politology, pedagogy, and more. Humanity has tried to answer this existential question in multiple ways for centuries.

Despite researchers disagreeing on the issues of genesis, nature, and types of national identity, it is still undeniably meaningful. On the one hand, ensuring the community's resilience to external challenges is essential. On the other hand, it's integral to individual self-discovery. Anthony D. Smith, a well-known researcher of the nation and nationalism phenomena, claims, "*The origins of what we have termed national identity are as complex as its nature*" (Smith, 1991: 19).

Developing an identity is a profound process that goes through a series of stages and transformations throughout a person's life. Studying and understanding traditional culture play an essential role in these processes.

Ukrainian historian Ihor Hyrych analyzes in his paper "Ukrainian intellectuals and political distinctiveness (middle of 19th – beginning 20th of centuries)" how the stages of the Ukrainian national movement manifested (Hyrych, 2014).

The first stage of the national movement is the publication of Ivan Kotliarevskyi's "Eneida" (the first book written in the vernacular), which is when the initial steps to collect ethnographic materials also began and ethnographical anthologies appeared (Hyrych, 2014: 82).

The second stage begins with the founding of the Archeological commission in 1853, the first Ukrainian Hromady in St. Petersburg and Kyiv, and the work of the khlopomany (Ukrainian peasant enthusiasts) in Kyiv in 1859 and at the beginning of the 1860s, such as V. Antonovych, T. Rylskyi, and K. Mykhalchuk, who were the students of the St. Volodymyr University.

The researcher claims that the turning point of the second period is the academic work of the South-Western department of the Russian geographical society and its ethnographic studies edited by P. Chubynskyi. This is also when the first official repressions against the Ukrainian movement started (Hyrych, 2014: 83).

At the end of the 19th and the early 20th centuries, national movements became more political and focused on the issues of state-building and national self-determination. At the same time, ethnomusicological studies persist and collect more data.

Let us look at the most distinctive display of ethnomusicological studies in the Kyiv musical environment in the second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries and their significance to the search for national identity.

Amateur interest and collection of folk songs. Lidiia Kornii – a musicologist and a historian of Ukrainian musical culture – draws attention to the existence of an amateur method of folk song collection and publication in the second half of the 19th century among activists whose goal was to create their music (Korniy, 2001: 139).

Collecting folklore was quite popular among St. Volodymyr University students, whose community shaped and united many nationally aware Ukrainians. Ukrainian musicologist, composer, and folklorist Filaret Kolessa pointed out that Mykola Lysenko's fascination with collecting folk songs developed during his student years. "At the time, music theory and his extraordinary talent came in handy as he became an ethnographer and a musician in his early university years. Returning from their vacations, Ukrainian students brought multitudes of various ethnographic materials and folk songs, which he documented and sang along with his companions. Many kobzars came to Kyiv at the time. They introduced Lysenko to the historical Ukrainian song called 'duma.' In summertime, he would go to the countryside to document various ritual and household songs from first-hand accounts. He would bring great piles of such materials to Kyiv from his summer vacations, not even discriminating between what should and shouldn't be noted down" (Kolessa, 1947: 4).

St. Volodymyr University became a place for like-minded people to gather. In 1861, Mykola Lysenko met Pavlo Chubynskyi and visited him in Boryspil to write down folk melodies, which, according to Filaret Kolessa, "later appeared in Chubynskyi's 'Trudy' (Vol. III and IV)" (Kolessa, 1947: 4).

Collecting folk songs became popular among many amateurs and was so widespread among Kyiv intellectuals that it even found its way onto the pages of contemporary fiction. In Ivan Nechui-Levytskyi's story "Clouds", we see a romantic intellectual collecting oral folk melody. The main characters of the story belong to different generations of Kyivians: one of the 1830s and the other of the 1860s – the older character, St. Volodymyr University lecturer Vasyl Dashkovych, documented folk songs in his home village. The younger generation has a more radical stance but shares an interest in folk songs. A student named Pavlo Radiuk wore folk clothing, wrote down folk songs, and "put them to music, for he could play the violin hanging on the wall over the desk. He was cognizant of national music and the enlightenment of the common folk, for there were some books for the common folk and their schools on the desk" (Nechuy-Levytsky, 2016: 141).

Evidence-based ethnographic approach. The interest in the scientific study of the nature, sociology, and psychology of music increased in the second half of the 19th century. At the same time, Ukrainian ethnomusicology is being established, although the term appeared later. The Kyiv academic art community plays a significant role in organizing these processes.

The folk music chapter (Mykhailo Khai) of the six-volume History of Ukrainian music aptly points out: "It was the threat of lessening or complete loss of folklore as the defining ingredient in the style of any national culture that reinforced the survival instinct inside the very tradition and triggered a defensive reaction in the nationally-aware educated elite" (History of Ukrainian music, v. 2, 2009: 51).

St. Volodymyr University became the center of research and unity for Ukrainians. Despite the government planning to use it (as well as educational institutions as a whole) as a tool of russification of the region, as Ihor Hyrych said, it turned into "a forge for the new Ukrainian intelligentsia which developed the idea to rebuild Ukraine anew as early as the XX century" (Hyrych, 2013: 61).

Myroslava Vovk, a researcher, analyzes historical and pedagogical works, the studies on the history of folkloristics, and archival materials, and shows how Ukrainian folkloristics gained its academic and educational status specifically in the classical universities throughout the second half of the 19th – beginning of the 21st centuries (Vovk, 2014).

Mykola Lysenko is ascribed a distinct role in developing musical folkloristics. "He was at the pinnacle of collecting and publishing activity among folklorist musicians in the 19th century. For none of his predecessors nor his contemporaries ever managed to publish such a variety of folk songs of different genres, especially historical ones, which portray historic events of the past" (Korniy, 2001: 139-140)

The rapid technological progress of the second half of the 19th century contributed to the enhancement of existing musical instruments and the spread of new ways to record and broadcast music (phonograph, gramophone, record player). In the middle of the 19th century, most collectors could only write down the lyrics or remember the melody by ear, which was not the most effective way to reproduce all the nuances of traditional performance. Some of the first people to use the phonograph were Lesia Ukrainka and Klyment Kvitka. An expedition after the dumas of Dnieper, Ukraine (dumas of the historical region of the valley of the river Dnieper) was organized on their initiative in 1908 to preserve the traditional repertoire of kobzars and lirnyks. Iryna Dovhaliuk analyzed its arrangement, progress, and results (Dovgalyuk, 2009).

Not merely a study of traditions, but also their application in daily life. When it comes to studies of national identities one must consider the importance of customs to the researchers. After all, many saw it not just as valuable scientific material but also, on top of that, as a living tradition. Kyiv intellectuals researched traditional music and song, but they also adopted and preserved them for their own community.

A prime example of this is Christmas celebrations and carolling. Olha Kosach reminisced about one such event during the 1894 – 1895 holidays: “On the first day of the celebrations the lot of us went caroling around our friends. We caused such a racket on the streets that Tymchenko [Yevhen Konstantynovych] nearly fainted in horror, fearful the police would take “us” for disturbing the peace and quiet. It was slippery and “we launched” each other, most of all Cherniakhivskyi [Oleksandr Hryhorovych], but Olha defeated him because she slid across Volodymyrska street from Blahovishchenska til Zhylianska, only slightly pushing him in the back. He said he would never forgive her for this. Our carols filled a whole sack with all kinds of stuff. Ostap Lysenko begged us to visit “one more place” to fill our sack to the brim” (Kosach-Kryvyniuk, 1970: 292-293).

Lesia Ukrainka was concerned about publishing not just for a small inner circle of academics, but for the public as well. She wrote in her letter to Ivan Franko: “I have one more request for You. I have been thinking about publishing a small collection of folk dance songs (see how I brightened up?) for the people. It should contain mostly Volyn songs, the melodies of which Mr. Kvitka wrote down on my request, but I would like to also ask for Your permission to use those 5 dance songs that Mr. Kvitka wrote down from You once in Burkut” (Kosach-Kryvyniuk, 1970: 737-738).

Interestingly enough, fragments of the recorded songs would appear in letters as quotes (or became “memes” if we were to use modern vocabulary here). For example, Lesia Ukrainka wrote this in her letter to Mykhailo Kryvyniuk: “Farewell, dear friend! ‘I ask to remember me kindly’ [lyrics of a Kolodiazhne song]. And tell Your fortune that I ‘wish You nothing’” (Kosach-Kryvyniuk, 1970: 393).

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Arrangements of traditional music. Lidiia Kornii highlights this era when composers started consciously wanting to create distinctive national art, although the music of earlier historical periods also had national features. This national distinctness came from references to folklore, the history of the people and their heroes, and themes and characters connected to one’s homeland” (Korniy, 2001: 12).

Folk song arrangements had been created before. Still, their growing popularity in the second half of the 19th century was influenced particularly by the spread of folklore collection and the awareness of the sheer artistic value of folk songs. Researchers point out the leading role of choral arrangements in this period, both in original (by professionals and amateurs alike) and derivative work (History of Ukrainian music, v. 2, 2009: 51).

Mykola Lysenko used a scientific and ethnographic approach when recording folk songs. His compositional skills adapted them for domestic or stage performances, which played an essential role in these processes (Korniy, 2001: 140).

Meanwhile, the choir led by Mykola Lysenko made a great emotional impression on the listeners. “They brought Ukraine her songs, and these songs were welcomed with fascination, like a thirsty unwatered field welcomes and absorbs the life-giving grace of heavenly water...” – Vsevolod Chahovets, a famous journalist, drama critic, and musicologist (Chagovets, 1968: 533).

The arrival of the touring choir was always a grand occasion. “Groups of young people walked the streets in Ukrainian attire – ladies in plakhtas and adorned with ribbons, gentlemen in embroidered shirts and large blue ‘unspeakable trousers’ – and everyone was occupied with the coming concert” (Chagovets, 1968: 537).

The audience was delighted beyond belief: “...if human power weren’t limited by the laws of all kinds of energy, the choir would have to keep singing till morning and still they would hear the insatiable and engrossed: Encore!..Encore!” (Chagovets, 1968: 540).

Conclusions. Based on the given examples, it can be concluded that the study of traditional music was very significant at different stages of the national movement in Kyiv in the second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries. Research into conventional culture facilitated the discovery and identification of national identity. The interest towards ethnomusicology could manifest in different ways: amateur passion, professional studies, or creative arrangements based on collected material. Significant quantities of traditional music were accumulated and studied during the second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries, and Kyiv artists and researchers played a crucial role in consolidating these processes.

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