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Preconditions, Establishment, and Development of the Folk Music Revival in Ukraine (Late 1970s – Early 1990s)

Tautas mūzikas atdzimšanas priekšnosacījumi, iedibināšana un attīstība Ukrainā (20. gs. 70. gadu beigas – 90. gadu sākums)

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Summary The aim of the article is to explore the historical preconditions, socio-cultural context, and internal and external factors that contributed to the emergence and development of the folk music revival in Ukraine from the late 1970s to 1991 – a period that coincides with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the establishment of an independent Ukraine. The introductory section outlines the methodological approaches and reviews the relevant state-of-the-art literature. It also provides the social context in which the Ukrainian folk music revival emerged and developed in the outlined period. The main section traces and describes the history of the founding and early activities of the first ensembles representing the Ukrainian revival movement. The historical, political, and social contexts of the phenomenon are also addressed. The final subsection summarizes the features, results, and achievements of the first period in the history of the Ukrainian folk music revival movement. The results of the study regarding the background of the emergence of the ensembles, their interaction, areas and methods of activity, and music repertoire are presented. The final subsection also offers a brief conclusion of the significance and impact of these early ensembles on the directions and characteristics of the Ukrainian folk music revival in the subsequent decades up to the present.

Kopsavilkums Raksta mērķis ir analizēt vēsturiskos priekšnosacījumus, sociālo un kultūras kontekstu, kā arī faktorus, kas veicināja tautas mūzikas atdzimšanas kustības rašanos un attīstību Ukrainā no 20. gs. 70. gadu beigām līdz 1991. gadam – periodu, kas sakrīt ar Padomju Savienības sabrukumu un neatkarīgas Ukrainas nodibināšanu. Ievaddaļā ir izklāstītas metodoloģiskās pieejas un sniegts jaunākās literatūras pārskats. Raksta galvenajā daļā aprakstīta pirmo Ukrainas tautas mūzikas atdzimšanas kustības ansambļu dibināšanas vēsture un agrīnā darbība, koncentrējoties uz to izcelsmes vidi. Tiek aplūkots arī šīs kustības vēsturiskais, politiskais un sociālais konteksts. Īpaša uzmanība tiek veltīta nozīmīgākajiem ansambļiem, piemēram, *Drevo* (Kijiva), *Slobozhany* (Harkiva), *Horyna, Džerelo* (Rivne) un *Rodovid* (Ļviva) darbībai. Nobeigumā apkopotas Ukrainas tautas mūzikas atdzimšanas kustības vēstures pirmā perioda iezīmes, rezultāti un sasniegumi. Pētījuma rezultāti atklāj ansambļu rašanās vēsturi, mijiedarbību, darbības jomas, kā arī mūzikas repertuāra izvēli. Sniegts arī īss secinājums par agrīno ansambļu nozīmi un ietekmi turpmākajās desmitgadēs līdz pat mūsdienām.

Introduction

The history of the Ukrainian folk music revival has been ongoing for more than four decades. During this time, it has significantly evolved, expressed not only in the context of performing arts but also through various syncretic and interactive forms, becoming one of the most important components of contemporary Ukrainian musical culture. Moreover, the process of reviving traditional culture has gained particular importance today, as it serves as a form of national identity and a crucial component in Ukraine's liberation war against Russian aggression.

The phenomenon of folklorism began to be actively discussed in the European scholarly environment when Hans Moser raised the issue in his article *Vom Folklorismus in unserer Zeit* (Moser 1962), which he expanded two years later into *Der Folklorismus als Forschungsproblem der Volkskunde* (Moser 2007 [1964]). In post-war Europe, which was ideologically divided into Western and Eastern blocs, attitudes toward manifestations of folklorism and their interpretation varied. In Western Europe, folklorism was primarily perceived as the result of a combination of individual needs and commercial processes[1]. Meanwhile, Soviet definitions of folklorism considered it as a natural and desirable process of cultural development, encompassing the adaptation, reproduction, and transformation of folklore under the umbrella of official Soviet cultural programs. Soviet research and theoretical discussions on folklore were guided by government decrees, Marxist ideology, and the associated belief in the evolution of society and culture – namely, that the worldview, habits, and traditions of an entire society could be forcibly changed through education and the imposition of alternative values (Poljak Istenič 2011: 52–54; Šmidchens 1999: 57–60). These discussions were later extensively described by ethnologist Regina Bendix (1988, 1997: 176–187).

The heightened scholarly interest in the nature and manifestations of folklorism and revivalism during the 1960s was not coincidental. This period marked the peak of the post-war folk music revival movement in the United States, which, in turn, inspired a wave of followers in various countries, including across Europe.[2] By the late 1960s, the revivalist movement had also taken hold in Western Europe, where it assumed diverse forms and expressions within a broad aesthetic

1 For example, folklorism was defined as the nostalgic use of folk traditions marketed within the culture industry (Šmidchens 1999: 52).

2 It was during the 1960s that the term '*folk music revival*' itself emerged (Velichkina 2024: 108).

paradigm. Around this time, the folk music revival movement began to emerge within the former Soviet Union, particularly in Russia (Olson 2004: 68–105), where it was initiated and nurtured by folklore scholars known as "singing folklorists," as well as in the Baltic States (Boiko 2001: 114). The movement also found resonance in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and other countries of the so-called socialist bloc (Slobin 1996: 5–7).

Since the folk music revival movement in the countries of the Eastern Bloc in most cases unfolded in opposition to official policy and served as a form of protest against musical genres and practices established and approved by the authorities. Scholarly research into this field began only later – after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the collapse of socialist regimes in Europe. Until the early 1990s, "the former East bloc was a nearly blank spot on the map of English-reading ethnomusicology. For reasons of both Eastern and Western politics, few outside scholars specialized in the music cultures of the Soviet Union and its circle of subordinated states" (Slobin 1996: 1). However, starting in the 1990s, following the fall of the Iron Curtain, comparative studies of folk music revival movements in former socialist countries began to emerge within a broader European context. Conferences were convened, bringing together ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, folklorists, and practitioners; their focus often included comparative analyses of revival movements across European nations, the role of politics and ideology, the development of folk music practices in both urban and rural settings, and other related topics.[3] Edited volumes were published (Slobin 1996; Bithell, Hill 2014; Buckland, Stavelová 2018), and scholars from various countries devoted their research to this phenomenon. Monographs (e.g., Olson 2004), journal articles, and other academic contributions also began to appear.

Over several decades of studying the folk music revival movement in former socialist countries within the European context, a complex set of methodological approaches has been developed to examine this phenomenon from multiple perspectives. The trajectory of folk revival movements across European countries may diverge, shaped by distinct sociocultural conditions; consequently, the frameworks for classifying and analyzing manifestations of musical folklorism also vary accordingly (Buckland, Stavelová 2018: 8–11). Most studies focus on the national specificities of revival processes in their historical and practical dimensions, while others explore and generalize the internal motivational and organizational mechanisms of

3 ICTM World Conferences and Study Group meetings; national symposia and conferences organized by academies of sciences and ethnomusicology institutes (notably in Hungary, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and Austria); and annual meetings of the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology (ESEM).

revival movements (Baumann 1996; Livingston 1999, 2014), as well as terminological and conceptual issues (Ronström 1996, 2014; Buckland, Stavelová 2018: 9–10). Scholars have also attempted to define and justify various directions and typologies. For instance, Max Peter Baumann (1996: 80–82) distinguishes between two basic and often contested models of folk music revival: purism and syncretism. Ulrich Morgenstern (2017: 266–278), drawing on examples from instrumental music, identifies and describes four types of European revivalism: the first includes ensembles modeled after Andreev's so-called 'folk' orchestra;[4] the second type encompasses the practices of academic folk choirs and orchestras in the Soviet Union and its satellite states; the third refers to revivalism in European countries, such as Germany and Norway, which follow the trajectory of the American movement; and the fourth corresponds to the youth folk movement characteristic of Central and Eastern Europe.

Morgenstern's approach, although it does not differentiate between the spheres of composition and performance, shares certain parallels with the classification proposed by leading Ukrainian ethnomusicologist Bohdan Lukaniuk, whose methodological framework is rooted primarily in the historical context of the former Soviet Union. He generally categorizes musical folklorism according to its field of application – whether in compositional or performance practice – and further by its professional or amateur orientation. Within performance practice, he identifies two types: arranged and reconstructive [or revival – L. L.][5] (Lukaniuk 2022: 34).

Arranged folklorism, according to Lukaniuk, is characterized by various forms of adaptation, arrangement, and the use of non-traditional musical instruments – all aimed at shaping folk compositions to meet specific audience expectations.[6]

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4 This orchestra was founded in St. Petersburg in 1887 by virtuoso balalaika player Vasilii Andreev, who simply replaced the instruments of a classical small symphony orchestra with supposedly national Russian ones. As part of this transformation, he commissioned the creation of previously non-existent families of balalaikas and domras (soprano–alto–tenor–bass). The repertoire of this orchestra consisted of arrangements of folk songs and adapted pieces by Russian and foreign composers (Lukaniuk 2022: 38). A short history of the Agrenev-Slavianskii chorus is traced by Laura Olson (2004: 28–31).

5 In the Ukrainian folkloristic community, the term 'reconstructive' or 'ethnographic performance' dominated for a long time; only in recent years has the term 'revivalism', which aligns with the European usage, been increasingly adopted (Skazhenyk 2024: 175, 182; Velichkina 2024).

6 In my view, alongside arranged folklorism, it is also important to identify a direction that adopts and adapts folklore within various strands of contemporary popular music – such as rock, disco, jazz, and others. This approach might be provisionally termed 'stylistic interpretation'.

This approach can be traced back to the Agrenev-Slavianskii Chorus[7] and Andreev's so-called 'folk' orchestra. It gained particular momentum during the Soviet period, evolving through numerous amateur and professional ensembles, choirs, and orchestras, all actively supported by the authorities. This form of art was widely praised by Soviet musicologists who aligned with the regime and predicted that traditional folk music would be replaced by a new Soviet cultural expression.

The revivalist approach, by contrast, emerged among scholarly folklorists who opposed Soviet ideology but were profoundly concerned with the suppression and decline of authentic[8] folk music. Their work was driven by a genuine commitment to the preservation and revitalization of traditional culture (Lukaniuk 2022: 38–39).

This study focuses on the background and initial stage of the Ukrainian folk music revival movement, which focused on performing traditional peasant repertoire, primarily vocal.[9] It is important to clarify that, unlike the broader concept of 'musical folklorism' – which encompasses various forms of adoption and recontextualization of folk music – this article defines 'revival' as a specific approach aligned with the domain of purism as conceptualized by Baumann, the fourth type of revivalism outlined by Morgenstern, and the reconstructive performance practice[10] identified by Lukaniuk – a direction that originated in, and continues to evolve predominantly within, the countries of Eastern Europe.[11]

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7 A short history of the Agrenev-Slavianskii Chorus is traced by Laura Olson (2004: 28–31).

8 The term 'authentic music' is used here to define music of oral tradition that exists within the community of its bearers. In other contexts, the word 'authentic' may also refer to qualities that indicate belonging to the socio-cultural environment in which this music exists (such as style, clothing, etc.). Discussions about this term in the context of Ukrainian culture are thoroughly analyzed by Sonevytsky (2019: 85–113).

9 Simultaneously, a revival of *kobzar* and *lirnyk* (hurdy-gurdy player) music emerged in Ukraine, representing a distinct form of oral professional musical practice that merits dedicated study.

10 Another synonym used to designate this approach is the term 'authenticity' *(avtentyka);* however, interpretations of this term vary (cf. Boiko 2001: 114–115; Sonevytsky, Ivakhiv 2016: 136–137; 140–143; Sonevytsky 2019: 88–113).

11 There exists a certain discrepancy in the interpretation of this terminology, particularly when compared with the modern definition proposed by Buckland and Stavělová, who, following other scholars, view 'folklorism' and 'revivalism' as concepts that carry narrower and broader meanings, respectively. However, they also note that "there is enormous variation in associations of the term, and indeed, there may be different labels for similar practices even within Europe itself" (Buckland, Stavělová 2018: 8).

To clarify this situation, it is important to note that in the practice of Eastern European countries, there long existed no direct equivalent of the term 'revival'. All manifestations of folklore's

Even though the history of Ukrainian folk music revival movement spans over four decades, this topic remains under-researched, underscoring its relevance and scientific novelty. General information about Ukrainian performers who revive traditional music is mostly found online – primarily on the revival movement ensembles' websites, social media, press publications, interviews, and some music websites. An informative reference about revival movement ensembles' activity and a brief history of well-known ensembles, mainly authored by Olena Shevchuk, can be found in the *Ukrainian Music Encyclopedia* (2006–2023). Some milestones in the formation of folk music revival ensembles in specific regions were described by Halyna Kuryshko (2009) and Vira Osadcha (2009, 2014). A few paragraphs of the thesis of Yulia Karchova are devoted to the *Drevo* ensemble's activity and an analysis of some performed songs (Karchova 2016: 155–162); and a short report on *Drevo's* anniversary was published in the 14th issue of *Problems of Ethnomusicology* (Pelina 2019). The direction of folkloristic activity and folk music revival concerning Ukrainian-Polish contacts is partially covered in the article by Olena Shevchuk (2018a) and Iryna Klymenko (2023). Brief information on the origins of the Ukrainian folk music revival and its founder, Yevhen Yefremov, within the context of the contemporary Ukrainian culture, is presented in the research of Maria Sonevytsky (Sonevytsky & Ivakhiv 2016: 140–141; Sonevytsky 2019: 93–100). A brief overview of the Ukrainian folk

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secondary existence in alternative functional contexts – such as the intentional use or quotation of folklore by professional artists, composers, or writers, as well as its recontextualization in other, including staged, forms – were categorized under the umbrella of 'folklorism'.

From this perspective, it is worth recalling the considerable work of Izalij Zemtsovskii (1984), which provides a theoretical overview of these processes and classifies 'folklorism' according to five primary spheres of its manifestation. These include, first and foremost, "folklore in all forms of professional artistic creation," followed by "folklore in science and education; folklore on stage; folklore in festivals and celebrations (including newly created rites); and folklore in mass media (including vinyl records and advertising)" (Zemtsovskii 1984: 7). This classification, then, encompasses traits characteristic of both the 'folklore movement' as defined by Stavělová (and others) and 'revival' in its broader context.

The term 'revival' itself is undoubtedly close in meaning to 'reconstruction', a term that has long been used in Eastern European countries. In its narrower sense, 'folk music reconstruction' referred to a movement that emerged in the Soviet Union in the 1960s (to which this study is dedicated). This gives rise to a terminological inconsistency. In European scholarship, the term 'folklorism' is typically used to describe the folklore movement that "encompassed festivals, performances and competitions of staged forms of folk music and dance" (Buckland, Stavělová 2018: 8). In contrast, in the Eastern European (particularly Ukrainian) context, 'folklorism' has a much broader meaning, encompassing the work of composers, performing arts, and various reinterpretations of folklore within contemporary music, among other forms (Sadovenko 2016: 71–73). At the same time, 'revival', which in contemporary European discourse is interpreted more broadly, has in recent years come to be used in Ukraine as a synonym for the more specific term 'reconstruction of traditional music' – even though a standardized Ukrainian version of this concept has not yet been established (Skazhenyk 2024: 182).

music revival throughout its history, including during the Soviet period, was presented by the author of this article in one of Ukraine's leading ethnomusicological yearbooks, *Problems of Ethnomusicology* (Lukashenko 2023), which is perhaps the only comprehensive study on the history of folk music revival in Ukraine today. The history of *Drevo* – the pioneering ensemble of the modern Ukrainian folk music revival – and its contemporary followers is explored in an article by Marharyta Skazhenyk (2024).

To sum up, most available resources on the researched topic, especially those found online, have a popular, journalistic character. The limited number of scholarly sources tends to be brief and reference-based, while more extensive studies are focused on narrowly defined thematic issues.

All of these sources were utilized in the present study; however, they did not cover all the necessary information. Therefore, to obtain comprehensive data, in-depth personal interviews were additionally conducted with the leaders of various ensembles (interview, Yefremov 2020; interview, Rodovid 2021; interview, Lukianets 2023).

Socio-Cultural Context

The 1970s in the Soviet Union were referred to as a period of stability, although it was later defined as an era of stagnation. During this time, the authorities' awareness of the impossibility of achieving communist goals grew inversely proportional to the rate of economic development. The general disillusionment was shared even by official propaganda, which introduced the substitute term 'developed socialism' as a supposed transitional stage between socialism and communism. The earlier Khrushchev era, with its slight loosening of the grip of communist ideology, was in the past, while Brezhnev's policies and those of his circle came to be known as "neo-Stalinist" (Plokhy 2021: 396–397).

During Brezhnev's era of ideological doctrine, significant attention was paid to cultural matters. New traditions aligned with communist beliefs were publicly showcased at mass festivals and on stages. The traditional Christmas cycle of holidays was replaced by New Year's celebrations, with carol singing stripped of Christian symbols; Easter was replaced by May Day festivities, accompanied by concerts and outings into nature; harvest festivals became purely collective farm celebrations, honoring combine harvester operators and the collective farm chairman as the host; and a new version of Ivana Kupala was incorporated into the annual Soviet holidays calendar as an agricultural celebration (Helbig 2014: 115–116), whereas church weddings were replaced by newly invented ceremonies in the registry office, etc.[12]

12 This can be traced, for example, in numerous reports on new Soviet rituals published in the journal *Narodna tvorchist ta etnohrafiia* (*Folk Art and Ethnography*) during the 1960s–1970s.

Regarding the organization of daily leisure, everything was also coordinated by the authorities: almost every village, enterprise, labor collective, educational institution, district or village cultural center, trade union, had to have amateur collectives:[13] vocal and instrumental ensembles, choirs, orchestras of folk instruments, wind orchestras, dance ensembles. Everyone had to sing, dance, play, and glorify Soviet reality at a high ideological level (Pavlenko 2013: 16). The repertoire of every ensemble, regardless of musical orientation, was required to include songs about Lenin and the Party – "a song about electricity, a tractor; and after that, you could have your love songs, calendar songs, or whatever" (Levin 1996: 20). Alongside these thematic prescriptions, certain stylistic conventions were also firmly established: "Every artistic field, folk music revivalism included, had its stylistic norms and internal boundaries that distinguished the canonically official from the aggressively unofficial…" (Levin 1996: 21). Actively supported and encouraged by the authorities, this kind of musical activity – including the folk music direction – was "organized into a pedagogical and entertaining show, performed by and for 'the people', but always ultimately controlled from the top" (Olson 2004: 74).

By this time, the field of arranged professional folk music performance had developed significantly. This refers to professional vocal and instrumental ensembles, choirs, orchestras, and dance ensembles, functioning mainly at regional philharmonics or holding republican status, directly financed by the Ukrainian SSR Ministry of Culture. This support enabled them to refine their performance skills, expand their repertoire, and engage professional choreographers and composers. At the same time, it led to a process of academization: folk dance and song acquired staged forms, often losing regional characteristics and authenticity, while a standardized "canon" of stage folk art was being shaped.

However, under this superficial display of the culture of the happy Soviet population, folk rural traditions and music were still functioning in villages. These traditions were closely tied to the Christian Church, so both traditional and church cultures were, in effect, underground. Conducting traditional rituals associated with religious holidays, such as caroling or acting *haivky* at Easter, was prohibited and persecuted by the authorities (Hanushevska 2024). Many other traditional celebrations were likewise banned or suppressed.[14]

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13 In the Soviet Union, amateur artistic collectives (*самодеятельные художественные коллективы*) were organized groups of non-professional performers formed in schools, factories, farms, military units, cultural centers, and educational institutions, tasked with producing ideologically acceptable and culturally uplifting performances.

14 As I remember from my school childhood, teachers were forced to raid churches during ceremonies to drive pupils out; work actions were organized almost always on all major

The publication of ethnological scientific research and collections of music was subject to strict censorship to avoid revealing elements of Christian culture or, even worse, nationalist ideas. In general, after the Second World War, Ukrainian folkloristic research was limited and concentrated in specific state institutions, the main scientific center being the Institute of Art Studies, Folklore, and Ethnography (now Ethnology) named after Maksym Rylsky in Kyiv (Skrypnyk 2006).

At the same time, individual creative initiatives in the collection, study, and revival of authentic folklore were actively suppressed or even persecuted as manifestations of nationalism. This was part of a broader Soviet policy aimed at Russification and the suppression of national identities, making the 1970s a challenging period for the preservation and revival of Ukrainian folk music.

Fieldwork and Folk Music Research However, at the end of the 1970s, thanks to scientific and technical progress, portable tape recorders appeared and, most importantly, became available for public purchase and use. This significantly intensified the fieldwork and, crucially, revitalized this research direction in many official academic and educational centers. It also enabled enthusiasts to organize expeditions and record folk music through their own initiative and funding. This primarily replenished existing collections with a large number of new folklore recordings, which elevated research, folkloristic, and pedagogical activities to a new qualitative level. Fundamental research by Volodymyr Hoshovskyi, Sofiia Hrytsa, Oleksandr Pravdiuk, and Mykola Hordiichuk was published at this time. The folklore TV competition *Soniachni Klarnety* and the radio competition *Zoloti Kliuchi* were initiated based on an idea by Sofiia Hrytsa[15] (Ivanytskyi 1997: 92–96; Karchova 2016: 37–38; Ivanenko 1980: 28).

Since 1962, field collection and folk music research have intensified at Ukraine's leading music higher education institution – the Kyiv Conservatory.[16] The initiator and chief driver behind these positive changes was Volodymyr Matviienko,[17] who

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Christian holidays; public consumption of ritual food (such as painted eggs or Easter bread) was strictly forbidden, etc.

15 The idea of popularizing authentic music through the media arose thanks to the active fieldwork and the establishment of contacts between collectors and the best traditional performers.

16 Today it is the Kyiv National Academy of Music.

17 Volodymyr Matviienko (06.01.1935, Kyiv – 06.03.1996, Kyiv) – folklorist, musicologist, and educator. He graduated from the Kyiv Conservatory (1957) and completed postgraduate studies

headed the Cabinet of Folk Music (1962) and taught a course in musical folklore for Conservatory students. It was he who initiated the inclusion of the discipline *Musical and Ethnographic Practice* into the curricula of musicologists and composers, and in 1971, he launched annual student folklore expeditions to various regions of Ukraine (Dovhalyuk, Dobryanska 2021: 7).

According to the recollections of participants in these expeditions, traditional village music became an unexpected revelation for many of them. At the time, musical and folklore subjects in the secondary and higher education systems were mostly illustrated with audio examples performed by professional folk choirs or even played on the piano.[18] Thus, during these expeditions, most students heard the traditional music for the first time, which turned out to be an entirely unfamiliar musical experience for them. As Yevhen Yefremov, a student of Volodymyr Matviienko and founder of the ensemble *Drevo*, recalls:

> It was some completely different music, which was simply unknown to us, and later I had this thought: why, why do we study Beethoven, Bach, Tchaikovsky, Schumann, and anyone else, but we are simply cut off from the music of our people who live and sing all this? [..] We are professional musicians who studied music at school, at college, at the Conservatory, and it turns out that this kind of music is strange to us, and we do not understand anything (interview, Yefremov 2020).

Nascency of the Idea The powerful new impressions gained during folklore expeditions under Volodymyr Matviienko's guidance were the main driving force that inspired his students not only to study traditional music analytically – its nature and inner logic – but also to engage with it practically, performing it in the same way folk performers did. According to Yefremov, after the first expeditions, he began to try singing on his own, and later, during subsequent expeditions, he sang publicly and received positive feedback from colleagues who noted that he

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there (1960). In 1961–1962, he worked as a junior research fellow at the Institute of Art Studies, Folklore, and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR (Kyiv); from 1962 to 1984, he headed the Cabinet of Folk Art and taught at the Kyiv Conservatory. He recorded several thousand samples of folk music. Matviienko's transcriptions of folk songs were included in a number of scholarly collections published by the Institute. He was the author of articles in academic journals and encyclopedias, as well as the editor of folk song collections (Shevchuk 2018b).

18 As mentioned earlier, during those years, Ukrainian authentic music was almost unknown, with knowledge of it spreading mainly through the publication of book collections, while audio publications were very few. Therefore, teachers had no choice but to demonstrate arranged performances or play folk melodies on the piano. As a result, students who were expected to become future music theorists and practitioners often had not even heard the live sound of folk music.

sang very similarly to the original performers. After some time, his colleague, folklorist Valentyna Ponomarenko, conveyed the interest of several female students who wished to learn to sing from Yefremov.

Thus, in September 1979, a group of female students, led by Yefremov, began gathering and experimenting with singing folk songs. These were senior students Valentyna Ponomarenko, Polina Aron, Tetiana Tonkal, and the youngest, Olena Shevchuk. Later, new participants, such as Serhii Kaushan, Serhii Tseplaiev, and Oleksandr Vasiliev, joined the ensemble (interview, Yefremov 2020).

In Russia at that time, there were already several folk revival movement ensembles. The first, formed in the 1960s, was the Moscow ensemble under the leadership of Vjacheslav Shchurov (Shevchuk 2006: 69). Later came others: an ensemble led by Dmitrij Pokrovsky (1973), the folklore ensemble of the Leningrad Conservatory under the direction of Anatolij Mehnecov (1976), and the Experimental Folklore Ensemble led by Igor Matsiyevsky. By the late 1970s, mainly due to active touring, Pokrovsky's ensemble had become perhaps the most popular.

The Pokrovsky ensemble performed several times in Kyiv, with concerts generating great excitement: concert halls were crowded, and the performances were actively discussed in artistic circles. In October 1979, this ensemble gave another concert in Kyiv, after which members of Yefremov's newly formed ensemble met with signers from Pokrovsky's ensemble to discuss current issues related to sound production techniques, breathing, and articulation. Yefremov recalls: "I realized that much of what he was talking about, I had already felt during the expeditions and had begun to apply. That is, it was in the same direction" (interview, Yefremov 2020).

Thus, the factors that influenced the emergence of the revival movement in Ukraine included the intensification of fieldwork, which led to an expansion of folk music recordings and, consequently, the development of new scholarly studies. Other contributing factors were the increased presence of folk music in mass media and the incorporation of folklore-related disciplines into the educational process, among others. The direct causes included the strong impressions gained during expeditions and the emergence of revival movement ensembles in neighboring Russia.

Drevo. The Beginning of the Ukrainian Folk Music Revival's History

The first attempts were successful: Yefremov had loved singing since childhood, possessed an exceptional voice timbre and was already a young researcher and postgraduate student of Ihor Matsiyevsky. By unanimous agreement among his companions, he therefore became the leader of the new ensemble.

The young singers approached the performance of traditional repertoire with great responsibility: they carefully analyzed recordings, searched for appropriate timbres, and worked on refining dialectal phonetics. The repertoire was selected to represent two contrasting vocal traditions: the archaic heterophonic style of Kyiv Polissia, documented by Yefremov, and the rich subvoice polyphony of the Poltava region, with particular emphasis on sources from the well-known village of Kriachkivka, extensively studied by Valentyna Ponomarenko.

The focus on rural regional repertoire, at the time, did not attract much attention from authorities monitoring "manifestations of nationalism" (Sonevytsky, Ivakhiv 2016: 141). The ensemble's approach to repertoire selection was also supported by Yefremov's scientific advisor, Igor Matsiyevsky (Drevo 2020).

Subsequently, Valentyna Ponomarenko received an invitation from Eduard Alekseev, head of the Soviet Folklore Commission of the Union of Composers, to perform at the annual reporting session of the organization. After some hesitation, since it was to be their debut performance, the young singers eventually accepted the invitation.

Thus, in early December 1979, the first performance of Yefremov's ensemble took place at the House of Composers' Art in the village of Repino near Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), in front of the participants of the reporting session of the Folklore Commission of the Union of Composers of the USSR[19] (Lukashenko 2023: 78). Among the audience were mainly folklore researchers, including leaders and members of two Russian revival ensembles – Anatolij Mekhnetsov and Igor Matsiyevsky.

Despite the artistic rivalry between these ensembles, the performance of Yefremov's ensemble received positive feedback and cooperation proposals from both (interview, Yefremov 2020). Thus, this significant debut marked the beginning of the history of the Ukrainian folk music revival movement (see Figure 1).

According to Yefremov, there were few invitations at first, but despite this, the singers regularly gathered and sang simply for their own enjoyment. Public performances were occasional: they received invitations from journalists (such as the editorial office of the magazine *Kyiv*) to talk about their fieldwork and performance experience, usually followed by a short concert. Invitations also came from unions of artists, writers, and other groups within the artistic intelligentsia. Occasionally, they were invited to official events held in Ukraine and even abroad. For example, it was quite exceptional that in 1981, the Yefremov ensemble was invited on its first foreign trip – to Belgium – as part of an all-Union delegation (interview, Yefremov 2020).

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19 These annual sessions were organized to enable folklorists from each of the then-republics to report on their fieldwork and scholarly research.

Figure 1. Performance of the Yevhen Yefremov ensemble at the Kyiv Philharmonic (leader Yevhen Yefremov in the center). Late 1980s. Photo from the private collection of Iryna Klymenko.

Through practical experimentation, the ensemble developed its own methods for mastering the folk music repertoire. Central to this was the aspiration to internalize the musical style of a specific song tradition and the desire to reproduce the authentic style as precisely as possible. This approach required immersion in the musical tradition through repeated listening to the source recordings. Vocal timbre, original performing techniques, untempered tuning, style of voice leading, extraordinary freedom of variation, and elements of improvisation – all these nuances were diligently sought and recreated by the performers.

Nine years after its founding (in 1988), the Yefremov ensemble chose the name *Drevo* (Tree), by which it is known today (Skazhenyk 2024: 178–179). Thus, more than 45 years ago, thanks to Yefremov's initiative, the first revival ensemble was established in Ukraine, launching a folk music revival movement that has continued to develop along an upward trajectory ever since.

Horyna. The Pioneer of Revivalism in the Higher Educational Institutions

Simultaneously with the foundation of the Yefremov ensemble as an independent project, the folk music revival movement also began to emerge within higher educational institutions of culture.

As noted earlier, the 1970s were marked by a significant rise in the activities of amateur groups, including folk music ensembles at various organizations and enterprises, as well as the regular holding of district, regional, and republican reviews of

folk art, along with various competitions and festivals. These events were intended to stimulate the artistic and performance level of folk choirs and ensembles.

In this context, the issue of training qualified leaders became increasingly relevant, as the higher music institutions at that time only trained choral conductors for academic choirs – professionals who lacked both the practical skills to lead a folk choir and the necessary knowledge of folk music traditions (Pavlenko 2013: 16).

Thus, in this wave of folklorism, the Department of Folk Choral Singing was established in 1972 at the Kyiv State Institute of Culture[20] (KSIC). This occurred at the initiative of a public activist, folklorist, and professor Andrii Humeniuk, who by that time was already the author of several authoritative folklore studies. In 1979, based on KSIC's branch in Rivne, the Rivne State Institute of Culture (RSIC) was opened and soon reorganized into a separate institution[21] (Kuryshko 2009: 106).

That same year, a student folklore ensemble, *Barvy Polissia,* was created at the Department of Folk Choral Singing. It became the first folklore ensemble at a higher educational institution in Ukraine oriented toward performing folk music in its original form. This initiative came from the head of the department, Vasyl Pavliuk, who led the ensemble for the next 20 years. Pavliuk was also one of the first collectors whose recordings served as the repertoire source for the newly established ensemble[22] (Chemeryk 2024).

A year later, the ensemble was renamed *Horyna,*[23] and under this name, it continues to function to this day. The source material for its repertoire was continually replenished with new fieldwork recordings made in the Rivne Polissia region (Horyna 2017). Remarkably, the founding of this ensemble – and the corresponding need for new source material – prompted both teachers and students to begin the practice of regular folklore expeditions (see Figure 2; Rybak 2017: 106–107).

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20 Today, it is known as the Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts.

21 Today, it is known as the Rivne State Humanities University.

22 In the first years of activity, alongside folk songs performed in the revival style, the ensemble also included choral arrangements – mainly psalms, canticles, religious carols, etc. – arranged by Vasyl Pavliuk. This suggests that Pavliuk did not make a strong distinction between arranged and revival approaches to performing folk music.

23 This word originates from ancient vernacular dialects; in the Rivne region of Polissia, it referred to the red thread traditionally used to embroider ritual fabrics and clothing.

Figure 2. Members of the *Horyna* ensemble, led by director Vasyl Pavliuk (in the center), selecting an expedition route. Early 1980s. Photo from the private collection of Vasyl Pavliuk.

Despite being established as a training ensemble[24] with the primary goal of improving students' performance skills, some singers have remained in the ensemble for many years. As the repertoire expanded, requiring a more differentiated approach to performance, various performing groups formed: male and female groups, mixed ensembles, trios, duets, solos, and an instrumental group. Thus, the ensemble aimed to authentically represent the Polissia tradition by adhering to gender and age norms in both ritual and non-ritual repertoires (Horyna 2017).

24 Training ensembles differed from independent ones in that they were primarily composed of students or younger participants with limited professional experience, and their involvement was mainly intended for educational or developmental purposes. These ensembles were usually homogeneous in age; the participants changed regularly, and sometimes completely, due to the academic cycle and graduation. They were subordinate to one or several leaders, who were personally responsible for choosing the repertoire, organizing rehearsals, performances, costumes, and so on. However, the emergence and activities of independent revival ensembles and those affiliated with educational or other institutions were closely connected. Participants in the former were often teachers and leaders of the student ensembles, while talented students frequently joined independent ensembles even during their studies.

The repertoire includes traditional genres of Western and Central Polissia – such as *koliadky*, *shchedrivky* (Christmas and New Year ritual songs), *vesnianky* (spring ritual songs), Triitsia songs, Kust songs (summer ritual songs), wedding songs, games and dances, and more. The ensemble also strives to recreate characteristic features of Polissia singing – such as an open, powerful sound; a distinctive heterophonic manner; ornamentation; modal and melismatic traits; among others.

Immediately after its foundation, *Horyna* began participating in numerous concerts, competitions, and festivals. During the period discussed in this article, these included the aforementioned TV competition *Soniachni Klarnety*, the radio competition *Zoloti Kliuchi*, and other events.[25]

Dzherelo. Folk Music from Sources

In 1986, another revival ensemble, *Dzherelo* (Source), was formed at the RSIC on the initiative of Raisa Tsapun, a graduate of the Choral Singing Department, and Ivan Sinelnikov, who was beginning his vocal career at the Department. He can rightly be called a co-organizer, as the ensemble originated from their duet. The first performance of the *Dzherelo* ensemble took place at an Institute concert at the end of 1986.

The newly formed ensemble focused on researching and performing the traditional folk song and dance repertoire of Central Polissia and Volhynia (Marchuk 2017). The initial repertoire was compiled from students' fieldwork materials organized by Raisa Tsapun in the villages of Sarny district, Rivne Region. Among the ensemble's first performances was the wedding ritual *Unbraiding a Braid*, recorded in the village of Lyukhcha. During the expedition, the members also became acquainted with the village ensemble *Troyan*, whose performance of ancient songs and unique dances left a strong impression (Stoliarchuk 2023).

While learning authentic songs, the young performers carefully sought to reproduce what they had encountered during expeditions: the heterophonic and polyphonic singing styles, local dialects, and the practice of wearing traditional clothing on stage – each reflecting another facet of the region's cultural heritage. At that time, such an approach was new: appearing on stage in authentic peasant clothing

25 The ensemble participated in the 20th Serbian Festival (Belgrade-Knjaževac, 1981, Serbia), was a winner of the Republican Review of Student Art (1981), took part in the All-Union Creative Workshop of Folklore Art (Moscow, 1987, Russia), was a laureate of the Inter-University Folk Song Performers Competition (1988), the First Republican Festival *Chervona Ruta* (Chernivtsi, 1989, Ukraine), the All-Ukrainian Youth Creative Report (Kyiv, 1991), and received a diploma at the International Oratorio and Cantata Festival *Wratislavia Cantans* (Wrocław, 1991, Poland), along with numerous regional performances (Horyna 2017).

Figure 3. Presentation of stage costumes created for the ensemble *Dzherelo*. Chief designer Marta Tokar. Rivne, Regional Music and Drama Theater. May 1989. Photo by Oleh Horopakha. From the private collection of Raisa Tsapun.

and singing in the local dialect was unheard of (see Figure 3). These practices were not encouraged, as despite political changes in the 1980s, the cultural and ideological doctrines developed in the previous period remained dominant. According to Raisa Tsapun's recollections, debates raged in the corridors of the RSIC over whether a phenomenon such as a folklore ensemble was even necessary, given the existence of the folk choir (Savsunenko 2019: 24). Nevertheless, performing in an authentic manner – despite official resistance – was gaining momentum. The newly created ensemble *Dzherelo* actively joined this movement and became well known by the late 1980s (Marchuk 2017).

During the first five years of its activity, *Dzherelo* participated in numerous events, including the Interuniversity Festival of Student Art *We and Songs-87* (Mykolaiv 1987); it won the Grand Prix at the First All-Ukrainian Literary and Folklore Festival *Lesyna Pisnia* (Lutsk, 1988), and was a laureate of the Republican radio contest *New Names* (Kyiv, 1989) as well as the television contest *Sunny Clarinets* of the Rivne Region (Kyiv, 1989). The ensemble also took part in various other festivals and concerts both in Ukraine and abroad (Tsapun). Like the *Horyna* ensemble, *Dzherelo* received numerous awards and performed widely at national and international events.

In 1983, the initiative of the RSIC was taken up by the Ethnocultural Center of the Rivne City Palace of Children and Youth, where the youth ensemble *Vesnianka* was founded by the head of the Center Viktor Kovalchuk. The ensemble organically complemented the Center's fieldwork, research, and publishing activities with the

reconstruction and performance of Polissia's authentic singing traditions and the playing of traditional musical instruments. Its repertoire consisted of ritual and everyday songs, dances, and instrumental music from Rivne Polissia. Later, the ensemble was led by Iryna Slyvchuk (Vesnianka 2017), who also became the leader of the children's ensemble *Vesnianochka*, founded four years later in 1987. *Vesnianochka* also performed Polissia repertoire, adapted for children's performance. Both ensembles – like other ensembles from Rivne – continue to operate successfully today (Lukashenko 2023: 84).

To conclude, the Rivne State Institute of Culture became the first center where student revival ensembles emerged, and to this day, the city of Rivne remains one of the leading hubs for ethnographic ensembles affiliated with educational and extracurricular art institutions.

Slobozhany. The Folk Music Revival in Eastern Ukraine

In Kharkiv, the first student experimental ensemble *Dzherelo Slobozhanshchyny* was founded in 1983 through the initiative of Larysa Novikova at the Kharkiv Kotlyarevsky Institute of Arts.[26] Novikova, a 1977 graduate, began working as a folklorist at the institute's educational folklore laboratory in 1978 and actively conducted fieldwork. After compiling a substantial archive of recordings, she organized a student ensemble to reproduce and popularize this material (Shcherbinin 2021). The ensemble first performed in 1987 at the Kharkiv lecture hall during a concert dedicated to the 110th anniversary of Ukrainian composer and musician Hnat Hotkevych. In 1988, the ensemble changed its name to *Krokoveie Kolo* and continued its activities for about ten more years (Lukashenko 2023: 85).

That same year, in 1983, the ensemble *Slobozhany*[27] was formed at the Kharkiv Maksym Gorkyi State University through the initiative of Vira Osadcha.[28] The

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26 Today, the Kharkiv Kotlyarevsky Institute of Arts is known as the Kharkiv National Kotlyarevsky University of Arts.

27 The ensemble's original name, *Slobozhany*, referred to the local inhabitants of the Slobozhanshchyna region. As the current leader of the ensemble, Halyna Lukianets, recalls: "It was a very original name because practically no one knew the word *Slobozhany*. And at every performance, we had to explain what Sloboda Ukraine was, and why we called *Slobozhany*." In 1992, the ensemble changed its name to *Muravskyi Shliakh* (interview, Lukianets 2023).

28 Kharkiv Maksym Gorkyi State University, where *Slobozhany* was originally founded, is now known as the Karazin National University.

Figure 4. Debut performance of the yet-unnamed ensemble (later known as *Slobozhany*) at the Kharkiv State Institute of Arts. 1983. Photo from the private collection of Halyna Lukianets.

ensemble began as an amateur song club, where bards, amateur singers, and music enthusiasts gathered. Vira Osadcha, an accomplished bard and a member of the club, already held a degree in ethnomusicology and collaborated with the Center for Folk Art, actively conducting fieldwork. Without a doubt, she was familiar with the performance practices of Russian revival ensembles and the Kyiv-based ensemble led by Yefremov. With a substantial collection of fieldwork recordings and exposure to existing revivalist experiences, Osadcha proposed to her colleagues the idea of reconstructing the songs from her *Slobozhanshchyna* collection. The experiment proved successful, and the first concert of the newly formed revival ensemble *Slobozhany* took place in 1983 at the Kharkiv State Institute of Arts, marking the ensemble's official founding (see Figure 4).[29] Initially, the ensemble performed Ukrainian and Russian traditional songs, aiming to reflect the bilingual character of the *Slobozhanshchyna* tradition (interview, Lukianets 2023).

29 In addition to Vira Osadcha, the ensemble's first participants included Andrii Fedorov, Andrii Ruzhynsky, Leonid Kotukhin, and others.

In 1988, the ensemble was joined by its current leader, Halyna Lukianets. According to her recollections, the ensemble experienced a crisis at that time, caused by both internal dynamics and the choice of repertoire. Gradually, most participants came to the conclusion that they should focus exclusively on performing Ukrainian material. They observed significant differences between Ukrainian and Russian songs in terms of phonetics, articulation, sound formation, and other vocal nuances. As Lukianets explained, when they attempted to sing both Russian and Ukrainian songs, "the throat simply couldn't handle it" (interview, Lukianets 2023).

During this period – the late 1980s – certain social changes were taking place, related to Gorbachev's reformist policies, which brought patriotic sentiments to the surface. In response to these shifts, *Slobozhany* sought to popularize the Ukrainian song tradition through public concerts, festivals, and television appearances. By the ensemble's first anniversary concert in 1988, held at the Kharkiv Teacher's House, they had already fully transitioned to a Ukrainian repertoire, although Russian songs were still occasionally sung during rehearsals or backstage (interview, Lukianets 2023).

In 1988, the ensemble participated in a large joint concert in Kyiv, where they first met and became acquainted with the Yefremov ensemble, *Drevo*. From that point on, a close friendship developed, and whenever *Slobozhany* performed in Kyiv, they almost always attended *Drevo's* rehearsals. According to Halyna Lukianets, Yevhen Yefremov, as the more experienced performer, generously offered valuable advice and demonstrated many techniques in practice: "It was a wonderful period when we absorbed their experience." Yefremov eagerly shared his knowledge with the Kharkiv singers, revealing stylistic nuances and performance secrets – particularly in areas such as melismatics, variability, and improvisation – which he also studied in his scholarly work (interview, Lukianets 2023).

In the late 1980s, the ensemble was joined by a new generation of young participants, mostly students from the Kharkiv Conservatory, who eagerly took part in expeditionary fieldwork. According to Halyna Lukianets, they conducted three or four expeditions per year, through which the ensemble's repertoire was regularly enriched with new songs – most of them recorded by Lukianets herself (interview, Lukianets 2023).

At the time, in order to reproduce folk songs as accurately as possible, the ensemble first created detailed musical transcriptions that captured even the smallest nuances, including melismatics. Songs were then performed based on these notations. However, *Slobozhany* eventually realized that this method dispersed their attention and disrupted the natural flow and sound of the music. By the early 1990s, they abandoned this practice in favor of learning by ear – focusing exclusively on auditory assimilation, just as it occurs in traditional folk environments.

Although the *Slobozhany* ensemble was actively engaged in research and concert activities from the very beginning, their performances initially attracted only a small audience in Kharkiv. According to one of the participants, their work was often perceived in the industrial, predominantly Russian-speaking city as a form of exotic underground music. Most listeners – including even the performers' own family members – were skeptical. Some simply could not believe that local traditional songs could sound polyphonic, harmonically complex, with elaborate melodic lines and layered counter-voices. This reaction is understandable, given that most Soviet citizens were raised on staged and arranged versions of folk music and were largely unfamiliar with authentic rural musical traditions. As a result, the ensemble frequently encountered difficulties (Muravskyi Shliakh 2017). The situation improved significantly after Ukraine gained independence and a Ukrainian cultural center was established in Kharkiv, which began organizing and hosting various cultural events.

Successors of *Drevo* In the late 1980s, new ensembles – mainly initiated by the first participants of *Drevo* – began to emerge. After graduating from the Kyiv Conservatory and returning to her hometown of Kirovohrad (now Kropyvnytskyi), Nina Kerimova began researching the region's traditional music. To popularize the collected material, she founded the local ethnographic ensemble *Hilka* (Tereshchenko 2021: 26). She was later joined by the ethnomusicologist couple Oleksandr and Natalia Tereshchenko, who also conducted active fieldwork in the Kirovohrad Region, particularly in the area between the Dnipro and Synyikha rivers. As a result, *Hilka's* repertoire came to include almost all musical genres recorded in the region: ritual and non-ritual songs, roundelays, and dances.[30]

At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, revival movement ensembles also began to emerge in Kyiv, most of which were likewise initiated by former *Drevo* singers. One of the first was Hanna Koropnichenko, who founded the ensemble *Otava* in 1989. Initially affiliated with a local music school, the ensemble soon grew, incorporating students from the Kyiv State Institute of Culture (KSIC) and other institutions. The ensemble's repertoire was based on the folk music traditions of the Central Dnipro River basin, particularly the Kyiv Region – an area that Koropnichenko had researched extensively (Skachenko et al. 2013: 38–39). In the same year, 1989, Olena Shevchuk, a teacher at KSIC, also founded a student revival movement ensemble, which

30 Later, Nina Kerimova left Ukraine, and leadership of the ensemble was taken by the Tereshchenko family, who continued to develop *Hilka* by recruiting students from the Kirovohrad Musical College.

continued in various formations until 1995.[31] Its repertoire was based primarily on materials collected during students' fieldwork practice in the Kyiv Region (Skachenko et al. 2013: 39–42).

In 1991, the now widely known student revival ensemble *Kralytsia* was founded at the Department of Folklore of the KSIC. It was initiated by Ivan Synelnikov – one of the founders of *Dzherelo* – who had moved to Kyiv in the early 1990s to live and work. Like other ensembles of the revival movement, *Kralytsia* performed folk music recorded by students during their fieldwork practice. However, the composition of the ensemble has remained fluid: each year, new students enroll, and work must begin almost from scratch – conducting expeditions, listening to recordings, analyzing material, and mastering the performance style (Skachenko et al. 2013: 42–46; Lukashenko 2023: 84).

Rodovid. Performance of Western Ukrainian Folk Music

Another center of reconstructive folk performance emerged in the late 1980s in Lviv. The movement originated among the participants of the amateur song and dance ensemble *Vesnianka*, affiliated with the Lviv Bus Plant, and led by RSIC graduate Yurii Kondratenko in 1987. In 1989, ten members of *Vesnianka* were invited by Kyiv ethnomusicologist Mykhailo Khai to perform Christmas rituals at the Ukrainian-Canadian enterprise *Kobza*.[32] The employees of *Kobza*, impressed by the ensemble's singing, saw great potential in their work and proposed a collaboration with Kondratenko to collect and preserve traditional music from the Galician Region (interview, Rodovid 2021).

Accepting the offer, Yurii Kondratenko began working as a folk music collector. After recording local repertoire, he invited the most talented *Vesnianka* participants to reproduce it. This led to the formation of the *Rodovid* (Lineage) ensemble, which initially consisted of five singers. When two members later left, the ensemble continued with three core participants – an arrangement that has remained unchanged for over 30 years: Lesia Redko, a geologist; Ivanna Shevchuk, a zootechnician; and Oksana Ostashevska, a metal processing technologist.

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31 Since 1993, the ensemble has been led by Ivan Synelnikov.

32 *Kobza* was the first Ukrainian-Canadian joint venture specializing in musical activities, operating from 1989 to 1992. It included departments dedicated to Ukrainian academic music, church music, musical folklore, and mass musical culture, as well as the first non-state recording studio in Ukraine. *Kobza* also organized folklore expeditions, music festivals, and concerts, and actively supported a range of creative projects (Kalenichenko 2008: 442).

The uniqueness of the *Rodovid* lies in the professional backgrounds of its members. It stands out as one of the most accomplished ensembles in Ukrainian reconstructive performance, despite the fact that approximately 90 percent of similar groups are composed of professional folklorists, ethnomusicologists, instrumentalists, or individuals with formal musical training. In contrast, none of *Rodovid's* core members had a musical education – except for the leader, Yurii Kondratenko, a graduate of the Department of Folk Choral Singing at RSIC. Paradoxically, this lack of academic training proved to be an advantage: the singers' perception and reception of traditional music were not shaped – or constrained – by the auditory experiences and stylistic norms of academic music. Unlike performers with classical training, the *Rodovid* members approached folk material without preconditioned habits.

Another advantage of the group was that two of its three participants – Ivanna Shevchuk and Oksana Ostashevska – were born in villages of the Boiko ethnographic region at a time when traditional music was still in active use, making them true hereditary carriers of the Boiko authentic repertoire. Lesia Redko is a second-generation Lviv resident. Her family was resettled from Nadsiania during the notorious Operation *Vistula*, and her mother, a traditional singer, was the first critic and judge of the Nadsiania songs performed by *Rodovid* (Lukashenko 2023: 78).

Even though none of the singers had formal musical education, they approached the revival of traditional singing from various regions of Western Ukraine as true reconstructors, under the strict guidance of Yurii Kondratenko. They visited villages to learn the repertoire directly from traditional singers, made audio recordings, and then carefully listened to and analyzed the material, experimenting with its reproduction. An essential factor in the ensemble's successful formation was regular trips to villages and master classes with tradition bearers. Particular attention was paid to the accurate reproduction of dialects. According to the participants, Kondratenko, listening attentively from the side, would identify phonetic inaccuracies and make them repeat the same words dozens of times until he was satisfied with the result (interview, Rodovid 2021).

The expedition recordings made by Yurii Kondratenko formed the initial repertoire of the ensemble, later supplemented by material recorded by Volodymyr Hoshovskyi, Yevstakhii Diudiuk, and songs from the family villages of the participants. These included songs from various ethnographic areas of the Lviv Region: Nadsiania, Opillia, and Boiko. Although these neighboring regions are predominantly characterized by monophonic ritual singing and, in non-ritual music, by relatively simple polyphony – typically featuring third-based harmonization in the second voice, occasionally expanding into triadic structure – each is distinguished by a characteristic local dialect and a specific set of musical genres and types.

Figure 5. Performance of the ensemble *Rodovid*, most likely at the International Folklore Festival *Skamba skamba kankliai*. Vilnius, 1992. Photo from the private collection of Oksana Ostashevska.

Immediately after its formation, *Rodovid* commenced an intensive concert activity. The ensemble's debut took place on January 14, 1991, in Kyiv at the Christmas concert *Oi dai, Bozhe* (Oh, give, the Lord), held at the Ivan Franko Academic Theater. They shared the stage with other prominent folk ensembles of the time, including *Drevo*, *Dzherelo* from Rivne, *Hilka* from Kirovohrad, and others. During this early period, while participating in concerts and festivals, *Rodovid* members actively engaged with other revival movement performers, exchanging knowledge and experience about methods of working with traditional material (see Figure 5). This exchange offered both practical skills and a sense of validation for their chosen approaches.

When asked what motivated their work and who inspired them most, they unequivocally cited the example of other ensembles – especially *Drevo* and its leader, Yevhen Yefremov: "We just saw that everyone is preserving their own, promoting it among students, and no one is doing it here [i.e. in Lviv – L. L.]. And it's a bit offensive because we also want to preserve [traditional music] so that it remains" (interview, Rodovid 2021).

Rodovid became the first folk music revival ensemble dedicated to Western Ukrainian music and continues to perform today with its original, unchanged lineup. In 2025, the ensemble celebrated its remarkable 35th anniversary.

Conclusion

From the late 1970s to the early 1990s, the birth and formation stage of the Ukrainian folk music revival movement took place, during which the first ensembles emerged in various cities across Ukraine, laying the foundation for the movement's further development.

The Ukrainian folk music revival movement was part of a broader European revivalist trend, yet it possessed specific features characteristic of Eastern Europe – particularly in countries under the pressure of the Soviet regime. For the scholars and folklorists who initiated it, the movement was primarily aimed at reviving and popularizing traditional rural music, which at the time still survived in villages almost clandestinely, in defiance of the prevailing authorities. It also served as a form of protest against the artificial musical culture of Soviet society, where artistic expression was expected to glorify the regime's idols, the existing order, and the supposedly ideal life in the Soviet Union.

The preconditions for the emergence of this phenomenon were primarily the intensification of folk music collection and research, significantly facilitated by the advent of portable tape recorders. As a result, fundamental works by Volodymyr Hoshovskyi, Sofia Hrytsa, Oleksandr Pravdiuk, Mykola Hordiichuk, and other scholars appeared during this period. The introduction of a new subject, *Musical and Ethnographic Practice*, into the curricula of art universities initiated systematic student fieldwork. At the same time, folk music began to be popularized on radio and television, and folklore contests, festivals, and other events were held. The opening of departments of folk choral singing at the Kyiv (1972) and later Rivne (1978) Institutes of Culture was also of great importance, as they began to focus not only on the arranged approach but also on the revival of authentic folk music.

The first ensembles emerged in different ways and environments. Some were independent initiatives, mainly among students and young scholars from art universities (such as *Drevo*, *Slobozhany*, *Dzherelo*, *Slobozhanshchyny* and others); others were educational youth and children's ensembles based at art institutions (like *Horyna*, *Dzherelo*, and others); and some arose within amateur collectives at enterprises (such as *Rodovid*). During this period, ensembles were initiated and established across Ukraine: in the capital (Kyiv), in the central regions (Rivne, Kropyvnytskyi), in the east (Kharkiv), and in the west (Lviv).

Despite geographical distances and differences in institutional affiliation, all the ensembles maintained ongoing connections – meeting at joint concerts, festivals, and other artistic events, and visiting one another during rehearsals, among other interactions. Communication also took place through pedagogical and scholarly networks. About ten years after the founding of the first ensemble, *Drevo*, its members began to establish their ensembles, indicating a sense of continuity and the

emergence of a distinct performing generation (a connection that has continued throughout the nearly 45-year history of the Ukrainian folk music revival movement). Analyzing their shared trajectory, it must be said that the ideologist of this movement was Yevhen Yefremov – the founder of *Drevo* – an ethnomusicologist, collector, researcher, and gifted performer of traditional music, who served as a consultant and mentor to many pioneering ensembles (Ivanytskyi 2006: 654).

All revival ensembles were actively involved in fieldwork in their ethnographic regions and in creating their own audio archives. This applied not only to ethnomusicologists and folklorists, for whom folklore research was a profession, or to students completing field practice assignments. For example, the participants of the *Rodovid* ensemble – who were not involved in academic research professionally – regularly met with village performers to learn their singing traditions and, in some cases, even engaged in scholarly study of musical traditions. During this period, the folk music of many regions of Ukraine was studied, reconstructed, and performed by revival ensembles. These included Poltava and Kyiv Polissia (*Drevo*), Rivne Polissia and Central Volhynia (*Horyna*, *Dzherelo*), Slobozhanshchyna (*Slobozhany*), and Galicia (*Rodovid*).

Various approaches were employed in the process of recreating traditional music: ethnomusicologists often began with detailed transcriptions and meticulously learned all stylistic nuances from notation (*Drevo*, *Slobozhany*); non-musicians absorbed the sound by ear, often directly from authentic performers (*Rodovid*); while student groups learned the repertoire under the guidance of a teacher. However, over time, all ensembles gradually concluded that oral tradition music should be adopted naturally through oral transmission. Thus, there was a certain evolution in the approach to learning the traditional repertoire.

The repertoire was diverse. While there was a clear tendency to reproduce the most presentable musical pieces – such as polyphonic songs with expansive melodies, often of a non-ritual character – all ensembles also included ritual music. This repertoire featured some of the oldest monophonic and heterophonic examples of musical folklore, along with instrumental and vocal-instrumental pieces, as well as dances. As a rule, the repertoire of each ensemble comprehensively reflected the tradition of its chosen region.

Ensemble lineups frequently changed – particularly in student ensembles. For example, *Drevo* underwent eight different configurations during the study period, and other ensembles experienced similar transformations. An exception is the *Rodovid* ensemble, whose lineup has remained unchanged throughout its entire history.

For most members of the revival ensembles, the primary motivation for their activity was a love of folk music; secondarily, it was the awareness of the need to

revive and popularize a tradition that had been driven underground during the Soviet era and had begun to decline in the 1970s and 1980s with the passing of its active bearers.

Numerous new ensembles emerged in subsequent years as successors to the pioneers of the folk music revival movement in Ukraine, and many of them continue to thrive today. Over the course of its history, the revival movement has gained wide popularity, securing its place on major concert stages and at festivals, as well as on radio and television, alongside other branches of musical culture. It has also become integrated into the academic sphere – accompanying scholarly events with live performances and enriching the study of traditional music through practical engagement.

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