

## FOLK CHORAL (SONG) ART DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN ALL OF MODERN UKRAINE

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### Abstract

*The purpose of the article* is to investigate the specifics of folk choral (song) art in the modern Ukrainian space. This purpose involves identifying the features of the functioning of the ensembles working in this field and the identification of artistic events that contribute to their promotion and development. *Methods.* The scientific provisions of the article are based on the methods (empirical and theoretical one, analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, and art history analysis), which allowed identifying the main strategies for the development of folk choral art. The analysis is carried on the principle that is used to distinguish the most prominent Ukrainian choirs and identify the main activities that contribute to their development. *Results.* The diversity of modern folk choirs is represented by various types of ensembles, including educational and creative, professional and amateur ones. A leading role in the formation of the creative image of the ensemble is played by its artistic director and choirmaster. They determine the type of repertoire, the specifics of its interpretation, etc. Now the choral song art of Ukraine is developing towards the formation of an individual musical sound, which is realised by turning to song folklore belonging to different regions. A powerful source for the development of folk choral art is participation in festivals and competitions, which allows accumulating creative efforts of the members of the ensembles. It serves as a space for the experience exchange and communication with the audience. The functioning of associations such as the Mykola Leontovych Ukrainian Choral Society, which is a part of the National All-Ukrainian Music Union, provides a powerful basis for forming the national cultural policy on the development of folk choral art. *The article's scientific novelty* consists of researching the main strategies for developing folk choral (song) art in the contemporary Ukrainian space. The main types of Ukrainian folk choirs are identified, and the ways of formation of their individual creative credos, which manifest themselves in the choice of regional folk song material, are outlined.

*Keywords:* folklore; song; folk choir; creativity; activity; art; choirmaster

### For citations

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## INTRODUCTION

The ensembles associated with the folk song repertoire play a significant part in contemporary choral art forms. In the vast array of choirs reinterpreting folklore material creatively, it is appropriate to single out those that use folk songs and apply corresponding authentic manner of performance. The number of such groups is considerably fewer, and not all of them are characterised by a high professional level of performance. An urgent task is to highlight the specifics of the development of folk choral art in the modern space of Ukraine.

## ANALYSIS OF THE LATEST RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

The specifics of folk choral art as an integral phenomenon have not been considered in the studies of national authors. Some issues concerning the work of folk choirs in the Ukrainian artistic space have been explored in the studies of A. Ladnyi (2018), N. Tsiupa (2016). Eleonora Skrypchyńska's influence on the development of national choral art was analysed by A. Martyniuk (2021). Stanislav Pavlyuchenko's ped-

agogical work is presented thoroughly in V. Tkachenko's publication (Tkachenko, 2017). The subject of research by O. Ivanova (2021) covers the significance of competitive and festival communication. The essence of the concept of "choral Cappella" and its dynamics are presented in A. Nikitiuk's study (2018). The work and systematic activities of the Mykola Leontovych Ukrainian Choral Society are shown on the website of the creative association (<https://choircommunity.com.ua/>).

**The purpose of the article** is to investigate the specifics of folk choral (song) art in the modern Ukrainian space. This purpose involves identifying the features of the functioning of the ensembles working in this field and the identification of artistic events that contribute to their promotion and development.

**Methods.** The scientific provisions of the article are based on the methods (empirical and theoretical one, analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, and art history analysis), which allowed identifying the main strategies for the development of folk choral art. The analysis is carried on the principle that is used to distinguish the most prominent Ukrainian choirs and identify the main activities that contribute to their development.

## RESULTS

Folk choirs became widespread in the cultural space of Ukraine in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first folk choir was formed in 1917 by the famous composer Kyrylo Stetsenko. The formation of these choirs was the result of the synthesis of different cultures. According to A. Nikitiuk (2018), it is appropriate to talk about a combination of "European, Russian, Soviet and Ukrainian cultures" (p. 27). A notable occurrence in the cultural and artistic life of Ukraine was the founding of the folk choir by Hryhoriy Veryovka in 1943. This choir became a role model for many other choirs, as it established a high professional level of performance implemented by H. Veryovka and E. Skrypchynska's activities.

As the Ukrainian folk choir conductor, Eleonora Skrypchynska laid the foundations for the principles that later became a model for many ensembles. It is a subtle work on the artistic image, an attempt to reveal the folklore sources as the real treasures of the Ukrainian people.

Under her leadership, the ensemble captivated the listener with the perfection of its ensemble performance and the insight of its singing repeatedly. In the rehearsal process, she opened musical images, artistic intention and spirituality of folk songs for the choristers. (Martyniuk, 2021, p. 122)

Namely, the graduates of Veryovka and Skrypchynska organised many folk choirs in various Ukrainian cities. Among the pupils of E. Skrypchynska's one can mention such leading choirmasters as M. Krechko, S. Pavlyuchenko, V. Mischenko, V. Surzha, etc. Researchers note that such indicators as the structure of the ensemble, which contains choral, orchestral and choreographic parts, have often been inherited. There is also a commonality in using "national dress and the choice of performance repertoire related to folk art" (Tsiupa, 2016, p. 251).

The range of existing ensembles can be divided according to several criteria, based on the number of singers, the type of performance composition (vocal or vocal-instrumental), belonging to the professional, amateur or educational and creative field of music-making. A number of folk choirs have been introduced at higher art educational establishments since the 60s. Among them, using the chronological principle, the following ones can be distinguished: the Gaudeamus folk choir of Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University founded in 1965; Ukrainian Folk Choir named after Stanislav Pavlyuchenko of the Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts since 1972 (although this name was given to the choir much later); the Ukrainian folk choir Zhayvir of Kharkiv National Agrarian University named after V. V. Dokuchaiev, founded from among teachers, students, staff in September 1982; Mykola Arkas Student Folk Choir (the leaders are Honoured Worker of Ukraine Culture, Professor Omelian Shpachynskyi, Anton Ladnyi), opened at the Mykolaiv branch of KNUCA.

Some ensembles were founded as professional — Cherkasy State Academic Honoured Ukrainian Folk Choir (founded in 1957 at the Cherkasy Regional Philharmonic), Polissya Academic Song and Dance Ensemble Lyonok named after Ivan Slyota (1957), Volyn State Academic Folk Choir (has been working at the Volyn Philharmonic House since 1978) or amateur ones such as Ukrainian Folk Choir Kalyna (founded in Poltava in 1979), Zoryanytsia Folk Choir (the leader is Honoured Worker of Ukraine Culture Victoria Maksymchuk) of the Mykolaiv House of Culture Youth. In addition to the division by type, ensembles can be divided by cast. The reason determining the number of performers, according to A. Ladnyi (2018), is "the conditions of the establishment and the organisational component" (p. 218). The performance composition of folk choirs can include one or two instruments that support singers and help create a folk flavour. Some of them have a large composition, in which instrumental and choreographic groups are much more represented. The choir's existence has often been transformed by an increase in the number of members.

Leading choral conductors and soloists, Anatoly Avdievsky, Anatoly Pashkevych, Raisa Kirichenko, Valentin Pivovarov, Vasily Bokach worked with the *Cherkasy State Academic Honoured Ukrainian Folk Choir*. For example, Anatoly Pashkevych, People's Artist of Ukraine, composer and choirmaster, was the choir conductor from 1963 to 1978 and later worked with other groups.

In 1978, he became one of the organisers of the *Volyn folk choir*. From 1989 to 1993, the choir was headed by choreographer Anatoly Yosypovych. During this period, attention to the choreographic component of the choir increases. Currently, the principal conductor and artistic director is Oleksandr Stadnyk, Honoured Artist of Ukraine.

The modern composition of the Volyn choir includes 80 members. It is a professional ensemble engaged in active concert activities. In terms of type, it is a large ensemble with not only a strong choral group (38 members) but also an orchestra (14 members) and choreographic (22 dancers) group. In its repertoire, Volyn folk material prevails. And there is a constant update and creation of new concert programmes.

Until the end of the 1990s, the *Poltava Ukrainian Folk Choir Kalyna* had only a choir group and an orchestra, but later, a choreography group was added as well. The orchestra consists of violins, cellos, flutes, bandura, kobza, cymbals and sopilkas. The artistic director of the choir H. Levchenko pays attention to the expansion of the repertoire, which includes not only arrangements of Ukrainian folk songs of the Poltava region but also many works by Ukrainian composers.

An important role in the formation of the creative face of the ensemble is played by its artistic director, who determines both the repertoire and the creative credo of the performers. In Soviet times, the same musicians often took part in the work of various musical ensembles, such as Anatoly Avdievsky. This pattern had both positive and negative consequences. Owing to this practice, there was an exchange of experience, the dissemination of certain basic principles that characterised the activities of most musical ensembles. At the same time, a kind of unification of folk choral art was carried out. It was often the same repertoire that was being performed. However, after Ukraine gained its independence, the process of the formation of the individual and unique role of each ensemble began. One of the ways to do this was to diversify the composition of folk choirs. The second stage was creating an individualised specific sound, as the choral conductors began to strive to turn to that folklore material that is typical of a particular region. An important role was played by organising and implementing folklore expeditions, which resulted in the search for authentic song samples. The ethnic orig-

inality of the folklore material manifested itself in the intonation, rhythmic nature, the features of voice leading and performing manner. Thus, folk choral song art transformation happened, which undoubtedly enriched Ukraine's cultural space. For example, S. Pavlyuchenko, director of the folk choir of KNUCA (until 2010), was trying to reveal the folklore and ethnographic sound of the choir, so he paid attention to the development of a sound that would not change the character of the original source. It also concerned the type of the selected song material and the nature of its arrangement, which would be related to folklore even on a dramaturgic level: "the works were selected meticulously, insight into the changeable and fragile essence of folk song, the understanding of the idea of authors' works were significant in their acceptance for the repertoire" (Tkachenko, 2017, p. 120).

The development of folk choral singing art needs to organise activities that ensure the concert and the competitive function of the ensembles. Festivals and competitions play this role in different regions of Ukraine. They facilitate the exchange of experience between the various folk choirs, achieving a new level of performance. During festivals, the representatives of different spheres communicate:

The richness of external forms of festival communication includes communication between members of the organising committee, the media, fundraising, communication with authorities, with a potential target audience, interaction between the performers and the audience, society and organisers, sponsors and the target audience. (Ivanova, 2021, p. 140)

Owing to interaction, the development of art ensembles is intensified, the growth of creative activity is actualised, connections with the audience through the sensory and symbolic sphere are established. Also, using multilevel communication, the understanding of folk choral art's specifics and its further development is deepened. The interest in the national folklore tradition and the revival of folk-art genres are being awakened. By introducing such initiatives, the interest in other national culture and art components is stimulated. For the development of folk choral song art, it is necessary to develop amateur creativity of people, support the work of professional and educational and creative ensembles, implement state protectionism policy towards singing traditions and encourage the younger generation to study them.

Among the competitive and festival formations, it's possible to mention those focused on choral art in general and folk choral art in particular. They are Mykola Leontovych Pan-Ukrainian Choral Competition, All-Ukrainian Festival-Competi-

tion of Folk Choirs named after Porfiry Demutsky, All-Ukrainian Open Festival-Competition of Choral Art named after Mykhailo Krechko, the Choir Competition named after Kyrylo Stetsenko, the All-Ukrainian Festival of Folk Songs Serpnevyy Zaspiv in the city of Chornomorsk, Odesa oblast, Open Festival-Competition of Riflemen Songs Krasne Pole, which is held in Khust, Zakarpatska Oblast and many others. The majority of choral festivals have various nominations that allow both large ensembles and those singing in different vocal manners to participate: choirs with academic singing style, vocal ensembles with academic singing style, choirs with folk singing style, vocal ensembles with a folk singing style, etc.

Cooperation between the choral art representatives is carried out through the functioning of various associations. In particular, the Mykola Leontovych Ukrainian Choral Society, which is a part of the National All-Ukrainian Music Union, plays an important role. It is namely their members who organise festivals, competitions and other projects, which become an important basis for the further development of folk choral art.

## CONCLUSIONS

The diversity of modern folk choirs is represented by various types of ensembles, including educational and creative, professional and amateur ones. A leading role in the formation of the creative face of the ensemble is played by its artistic director and choirmaster. They determine the type of repertoire, the specifics of its interpretation, etc. Now the choral song art of Ukraine is developing towards the formation of an individual musical sound, which is realised by turning to song folklore belonging to different regions. A powerful source for the development of folk choral art is participation in festivals and competitions, which allows accumulating creative efforts of the members of the ensembles. It serves as a space for the experience exchange and communication with the audience.

The functioning of associations such as the Mykola Leontovych Ukrainian Choral Society, which is a part of the National All-Ukrainian Music Union, provides a powerful basis for forming the national cultural policy on the development of folk choral art.

The scientific novelty of the article consists in the research of the main strategies for the development of folk choral (song) art in the contemporary Ukrainian space. The main types of Ukrainian folk choirs are identified, and the ways of formation of their individual creative credos, which manifest

themselves in the choice of regional folk song material, are outlined.

Prospects for further research can be connected to studying the specifics of the national choral festival movement, which would make it possible to determine strategies for promoting Ukrainian art.

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## СТРАТЕГІЇ РОЗВИТКУ НАРОДНОГО ХОРОВОГО (ПІСЕННОГО) МИСТЕЦТВА В СУЧАСНОМУ ПРОСТОРІ УКРАЇНИ

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### Анотація

*Мета статті* — дослідити специфіку народного хорового (пісенного) мистецтва в сучасному просторі України. Вказана мета передбачає окреслення особливостей функціонування колективів цього напрямку та визначення мистецьких подій для їхньої популяризації й розвитку. *Методологія дослідження*. Наукові положення статті аргументовані на рівні методів (емпірико-теоретичний, аналіз і синтез, індукція та дедукція, мистецтвознавчий аналіз), які узагальнюють основні стратегії розвитку народного хорового мистецтва. Аналіз здійснюється за принципом розрізнення провідних українських хорових колективів і визначення основних заходів їхнього розвитку. *Результати*. Палітра сучасних народних хорів представлена колективами різних типів — навчально-творчі, професійні, аматорські. Провідну роль у формуванні творчого обличчя колективів відіграє художній керівник і хормейстер, який визначає тип репертуару і специфіку його інтерпретації. Хорове пісенне мистецтво України наразі розвивається у напрямку формування індивідуального музичного звучання, що реалізується завдяки зверненню до пісенного фольклору різних регіонів. Потужним джерелом у розвитку народного хорового мистецтва є участь у фестивалях та конкурсах, які сприяють акумуляції творчих зусиль учасників колективів, виступають простором для обміну досвідом і комунікації зі слухацькою аудиторією. Функціонування таких об'єднань як Всеукраїнське хорове товариство імені М. Леонтовича, що є асоціацією Національної всеукраїнської музичної спілки, формує потужне підґрунтя національної культурної політики у питанні розвитку народного хорового мистецтва. *Наукова новизна* статті полягає у дослідженні основних стратегій розвитку народного хорового (пісенного) мистецтва в сучасному просторі України. Крім того, у визначенні основних типів українських народних хорових колективів, окресленні шляхів формування їхнього індивідуального творчого кредо.

*Ключові слова*: фольклор; пісня; народний хор; творчість; діяльність; мистецтво; хормейстер

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