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The Establishment of New Rituality in Ukrainian Amateur and Professional Music under Soviet Totalitarian Rule

Iryna Sikorska

Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology, Maksym Rylsky Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology at the National Academy of Science, Ukraine

E-mail: sikorska1959@gmail.com

Oksana Letychevska

Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology, Maksym Rylsky Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology at the National Academy of Science, Ukraine

E-mail: letychevska@gmail.com

Inna Lisniak

Estonian Folklore Archives, Estonian Literary Museum; department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology, Maksym Rylsky Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology at the National Academy of Science, Ukraine

E-mail: i.lisnyak78@gmail.com

Abstract: The article explores the developments in Ukrainian musical culture during the 1930s within the framework of the emergence of the 'new rituality' imposed by Soviet totalitarian rule. It focuses on the transformation of folklore practices into ideologically controlled forms of artistic expression. The study highlights how both amateur stage practices and professional music were integrated into the system of Soviet new rituality.

In response to political and social demands, pseudo-folklore works were produced: traditional melodies were provided with 'ideologically correct' texts, and characteristic rhythmic, intonational, and modal features of folk genres were stylised and simplified to meet the requirements of Socialist Realism. Mass events and large-scale musical gatherings replaced traditional ritual practices and served as instruments of ideological mobilisation. Their repertoire invariably included songs about the October Revolution, the Communist Party, Lenin, Stalin, and the 'friendship of peoples'. Particular attention is paid to the phenomenon of the music Olympiads, which functioned as ritualised spectacles combining professional and amateur performance, symbolic glorification of Soviet leaders, and the demonstration of unity around the Party. In this way, the new Soviet rituality subordinated musical creativity to the state's ideological imperatives and turned both professional composition and amateur performance into instruments of political indoctrination.

Keywords: new rituality, mass song, music Olympiads, pseudo-folklore, amateur stage practices, professional music, Soviet totalitarian rule

Introduction

Ritual practices have always been a fundamental part of human life, illustrating a close bond with nature. The entire history of humankind is, in some way or another, connected to ritual as a system of symbolic ceremonial actions, defined by tradition or custom and intended to achieve a specific goal. Rituals are classified by their types, notably magical, religious, secular, and everyday, as well as by their content, functions, and communal nature. Collective ritual practices play a crucial role in society, functioning as a form of social control and "the construction of a limited and limiting power relationship", according to Catherine Bell (1992).

History often witnesses repeated attempts to establish a new rituality during periods of social upheaval, promoted by the pro-government elite as "new rites and holidays for the people" (Sadomskaya 1990). Instances include the practices of the French Revolution and the rise of Soviet power in the 1920s, when new rituals replaced traditional and religious celebrations and introduced a new cycle of ideologically driven calendar holidays. The development of the Soviet system of holidays since 1917 has been extensively analysed by Tetyana Haievska (2013).

From a broader perspective, the phenomenon of new rituality can be examined through the concept of 'political religion', proposed by Emilio Gentile (2006). According to Gentile, totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century established sacralised political practices where ideology took on the qualities of faith, and collective acts of participation were turned into quasi-'liturgies' or 'state liturgies'. Previously, Oleksandr Riznyk and Oleksandr Hrytsenko (1998) drew parallels between traditional religious rites and the ritualised structure of Soviet mass festivities.

In the Ukrainian context of the 1930s, both amateur and professional music served as an important channel for this sacralisation: choral festivals and musical Olympiads functioned as public rituals of ideological mobilisation, while professional compositions reinforced the 'canon' of soviet political mythology. In this way, the creation of new rituality in soviet musical culture can be seen as part of the broader phenomenon of political religion.

In response to political demands, a significant number of pseudo-folkloric songs (Miller 1990) have emerged, either through the combination of traditional melodies with 'ideologically correct' texts or by employing rhythmic, intonational, and modal features of various folk music genres in creating pseudo-folkloric samples. These mechanisms are somewhat similar to how ancient materials are used to develop rituals for entirely new purposes, as described by Mare Kõiva (2017).

These new songs aimed to replace the traditional folklore of rural areas with what was known as 'soviet folklore', which served to regulate and control Ukrainian culture ideologically (Ovcharenko 2023: 270). The historical and political conditions leading to the emergence of the genre of 'soviet folklore' are analysed in Roman Kirchiv's (2010) key work *The 20th Century in Ukrainian Folklore*. The fifth chapter of this monograph, titled "'Soviet Folklore': Reality or Fiction?", considers the pseudo-folklore of the Soviet era as a form of opposition to traditional folk art.

Recent studies emphasise the crucial role of Soviet policy in shaping and influencing folklore, which was transformed into a tool of cultural policy – "socialist in form, national in content" (Kencis, Bronner, Seljamaa 2024). Soviet cultural ideology produced 'new folklore' as a substitute for traditional practices in Ukraine and other western border regions. As William Noll (2023) emphasises, in the 1930s, the Soviet authorities deliberately created and sustained the phenomenon of a parallel culture, offering ideologically controlled

practices in place of genuine folk traditions. This perspective allows for a clear tracing of the mechanisms through which the new ritual was institutionalised and cultural unification achieved.

The primary method of assimilating, reproducing, and spreading 'new folklore' became organised mass creativity known as *samodiyalnist* (amateur artistic activity). The Soviet authorities saw musical amateurism as a tool for shaping the 'new socialist person', in which the collective takes precedence over the individual (Lisniak et al. 2022). Participants in choral ensembles performed a standardised repertoire, mainly new specifically Soviet mass songs that reflected the ideological directives of the time, while the structure of the performances was subordinated to the principle of demonstrating the unity of the masses. Thus, in the 1930s, amateur music demonstrated loyalty to the Soviet system and served as an instrument of state cultural policy. At the same time, mass concerts and musical Olympiads were transformed into ritualised practices and used as means of ideological mobilisation (Lisniak 2023).

This view facilitates a comparison between Soviet practices in Ukraine and the models of European, especially Baltic, singing festivals, while also emphasising a crucial difference. Whereas in Latvia and Estonia such festivals reinforced national identity (Kuutma 1996), in Ukraine, they served as a tool for its erosion and subordination to totalitarian ideology. Factual material for the article was drawn from folklore collections published during the Soviet period (*Ukrainian Soviet Folk Songs*, *Ukrainian Folk Lyric Songs*), as well as from musicological studies (notably Valerian Dovzhenko's *Essays…*, 1957) and musical periodical collections of the 1930s (*Music for the Masses*). A new, more objective perspective on the musical events of the 1930s became possible only after Ukraine gained independence, first reflected in the works of Valentyna Kuzyk (1992) and subsequently developed in articles for the 5th Volume of the *Ukrainian Music Encyclopedia* (2018) and a chapter in a collective monograph (2021). The issues addressed in this article gain particular relevance in the context of the Russia–Ukraine war. The methods of creating and disseminating pseudo-folklore, which serve as tools for promoting totalitarian ideology, remain relevant today, especially in the context of the active development of social media and internet technologies.

In preparing this article, the following methods were used: the principle of historicism – to study specific stages in the history of Ukrainian music; the method of systemic analysis – for organising and examining the collected fac-

tual material on the subject; the comparative method – to identify intonation similarities between Ukrainian folk and Soviet popular songs; the biographical method – for analysing particular stages in the lives and creative activities of individual figures associated with music; interviews – conversations with musicians, ethnomusicologists, and musicologists conducted during 1990–2025 – for gathering recollections and clarifying details; source studies – for examining concert posters, programmes, as well as book catalogues and indices.

This article examines mass musical events and mass songs as essential ritual practices in Ukrainian society after the Soviet government's rise to ideological dominance and the consolidation of the totalitarian regime in the 1930s, which supplanted traditional religious and folk rituals.

1. Historical Context of Ukrainian Musical Culture of the 1930s

This section examines the conditions under which Ukrainian musical culture developed under the consolidation of Soviet power, the gradual establishment of a totalitarian state system, and the rise of the personality cult.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Bolsheviks achieved their final victory over most territories of the former Russian Empire. This victory, which involved the forcible enslavement of various lands and peoples, allowed them to begin building a new totalitarian state, the Union of Soviet Republics. As a result of the Ukrainian struggle for liberation between 1917 and the 1920s being defeated, the country once again reverted to the colonial status it had under the Russian Empire, but at that time on ostensibly 'voluntary' terms as one of the union republics. The external Ukrainisation and ideological pluralism of the 1920s gave way to a strict hierarchy of power embodied in democratic centralism and the dominance of the ideology of Marxism–Leninism. An example of this is Joseph Stalin's response to a cautious reminder from members of the Ukrainian government about the promised sovereignty and equality of the republics. "You have played government and republic long enough; it seems that it is time to end the game" (Parkhomenko 1992: 11). Thus began the decade of the Great Terror, which in Ukraine was initiated and steered through the orchestrated Union for the Liberation of Ukraine case of 1930, a period that, as Bilokin' (2017) observes, resulted in millions of victims. While the peasantry was subdued through the

man-made Holodomor of 1932–1933, the intelligentsia was broken by mass repressions based on fabricated facts charges.[1] The guideline (directive) and starting point of the new period was the Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) On the Reorganisation of Literary and Artistic Organisations (April 23, 1932). In accordance with this decree, and following the example of the all-Union associations – namely, the Union of Soviet Writers and the Union of Soviet Composers – the Union of Soviet Writers of Ukraine (May, 1932) and the Union of Soviet Musicians of Ukraine (November, 1932) were established. At every level, the authorities systematically enforced the slogan, proclaimed in the early years of the October coup: Whoever is not with us, is against us. In practice, this left artists with no ideological choice whatsoever. Consequently, there could be no talk of the declared freedom of creativity, nor even of formal neutrality. Artists – including composers and performers – were forced to consistently demonstrate their loyalty and dedication to communist ideals.

The authorities, in turn, established mandatory conditions, effectively issuing state commissions for propaganda works, where: "…music had to glorify the achievements of the Soviet people and the Party, their political and moral unity, and, consequently, the 'happy' reality of the time" (Parkhomenko 1992: 17). Therefore, the compositions produced had to celebrate the greatness of the 'world's first socialist country'. These works were considered 'correct' in content and suitable for public performance.

At the same time, alongside the ideologically correct artistic exercises – metaphorically referred to within the creative milieu as 'ritual dances' – works of genuine aesthetic and artistic value would occasionally emerge, most of them rooted in folk traditions. Such works testified to the artists' loyalty to the authorities and served as a form of indulgence, sometimes even saving lives (as will be written later).[2]

Therefore, in Ukrainian music of the 1930s under Soviet rule, music, poetry, and other artistic fields, a new ritual developed: the creation and dissemination of compositions and mass performances that honoured the prevailing ideology. This ideology acted as a modernised religion, replacing traditional beliefs that were deemed taboo under Soviet rule. Such works served as demonstrations of personal loyalty to the authorities, evidence of political reliability, and ultimately a claim to the right to exist.

Stalin's Great Break established the so-called creative method of Socialist Realism. According to Myroslav Popovych (1999: 647), this was, rather, a certain philosophy within which works of literature and art were to exist. The main objectives were the glorification of the Communist Party and its 'wise leaders', Lenin and Stalin, the celebration of socialist labour, and the depiction of happy life and friendship among the peoples of the Soviet Union. Similar to the new Soviet literature, the emergence of a new Soviet folklore was proclaimed, intended to occupy a higher ideological level compared to the traditional folklore.

2. The Emergence of Novel Ritual Practices and the Genesis of Soviet Musical Folklore in Ukraine

This section examines three factors: the rise of new Soviet rituality, considering current research; the evolution of insurgent folklore and its transformation under social influences, the mechanism through which traditional folklore was replaced by Ukrainian Soviet folklore as a shift from oral collective creativity to mass artistic products; and the effect of Soviet intervention on Ukraine's traditional folk heritage.

During the Soviet period in Ukraine, musical folklore remained a crucial part of the cultural landscape. Its influence on society was recognised even by the official ideology, which described folklore, means, collective creativity, as "an effective weapon for the social reconstruction of life" (Berezovskyi 1968: 17). Under conditions where the Communist Party aimed to dominate every aspect of human activity, oral collective creativity, like works of professional art, was assessed for the 'correctness' of its ideological stance, in line with the mechanisms described in the previous section. This could lead to official bans and the subsequent removal of certain works from musical circulation, including entire folk genres, as happened with songs of a spiritual nature. Practices of reinterpretation and ideological editing of texts were also employed in particular genres, notably *dumy*[3] and *koliadky* (carols).

The ideological regulation of folklore was merely one aspect of the broader cultural transformation, which also affected the entire system of traditional ritual.

2.1. The rise of Soviet ritual practices

Bolshevik ideology disrupted the traditional annual cycle of ritual folklore and religious festivals. It was replaced by a new ritual calendar, with the main holidays being May Day and the anniversary of the October Revolution (November 7, New Calendar). As early as 1919, these dates were celebrated in Ukraine by young workers, accompanied by staged performances such as *Liberation of Labour*, *The Internationale*, and the *Arsenal Uprising* in Luhansk and Kyiv (Lysenko 1982: 6). After the Bolshevik government was established in Ukraine, such ritual celebrations became permanent, helping to reinforce the prescribed order of social life. The new Soviet ceremonial culture expanded to include regular Party congresses at various levels, the commemoration of anniversaries linked with leaders Lenin and Stalin, newly created Soviet organisations (such as the Komsomol), and selected cultural figures deemed ideologically sound, all typically accompanied by mass gatherings and concerts (Riznyk & Hrytsenko 1998).

A mandatory musical feature of party events was the performance of revolutionary songs, which gained the status of sacred (in the sense of the latest sacral). These songs increasingly fulfilled functions that had traditionally been associated with ritual or ceremonial singing in communities, thereby replacing customary forms of musical expression with ideologically framed alternatives. Alongside international socialist anthems, such as "The Internationale", "La Marseillaise", "Warszawianka", there were anonymous songs, often reworked or textually revised versions of well-known folk or composed melodies such as "Вы жертвою пали" (You Have Fallen Victim), "Замучен тяжелой неволей" (Tortured by Heavy Captivity), "Перше травня" (The First of May), and others. These songs were performed in both Russian and Ukrainian versions, the latter thanks to poetic translations made, in particular, by poets Mykola Voronyi and Oleksandr Oles'.

2.2. The Transformation of Folklore Under the Influence of Social Order

Revolutionary songs of Ukrainian origin may be regarded as rebel songs, gained popularity during World War I and the efforts to establish a Ukrainian state

from 1917 to 1921. In some cases, newly folklorised texts were set to the melodies of renowned traditional folk songs such as "То не вітер, то не буйний" (It Is not Wind, It Is not Violent), "Ой, з-під гірки все туман" (Oh, It Is All Fog from under the Hill), and others.

A considerable number of the melodies from Ukrainian rebellion songs were appropriated by the Bolsheviks and, with textual alterations, adapted to the new ideology. For example, the song "Ми робітники" (We Are Workers) was reworked from "Ми гайдамаки" (We Are Haydamaks[4]), "Бідак і багач" (The Poor Man and the Rich Man) from the folk song "Ой наступала й та чорна хмара" (Oh, That Black Cloud Was Coming).

Other examples include the tragic Ukrainian riflemen's song[5] "Розпрощався стрілець зі своєюріднею" (The Rifleman Bade Farewell to His Family), which became the Russian "Там, вдали, за рекой" (Far Away across the River) about Red Army soldiers, and the historical song "Ой, Морозе, Морозенку" (Oh, Moroze, Morozenku) about a heroic Ukrainian Cossack, sung with the text Ой, Приймаче-Приймаченку (Oh, Pryimache, Pryimachenku) about the Civil War hero Vitalii Prymakov.

A striking example of the creation of new folkloric songs in response to social demand is the use of the old humorous Ukrainian song "Ой що ж то за шум учинився" or "Комарик" (Oh, What a Fuss You Made or Moquito) (Dovzhenko 1957: 26) about Mosquito and how he married Fly, known in many variants, especially in the arrangement by Mykola Lysenko for choir and piano (1897 V 6: 17). Below are its popular variants with modified text, produced in the early 20th century (see Figure 1). An insurgent version, which, with high probability, dates back to the early twentieth century, including the lines "Mosquito joined the rebels/ to bite the Muscovite ragamuffins", was later popular among members of the Ukrainian Rebellion Army in the 1940s (Kobylianskyi 2013).

In 1918, a Red Army couplet-style song was composed to the same melody. Yuhym Prydvorov, known as Demyan Bedny from Yelysavethrad (now Kropyvnytskyi, Ukraine) wrote the lyrics "Как родная меня мать провожала" (When My Own Mother Saw Me Off). This song was recorded on a gramophone record in Moscow in 1919, at the order of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army, and was widely distributed among its soldiers. Consequently, a folk-inspired mass song was deliberately used as a propaganda tool by the Bolshevik authorities (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. Humorous Ukrainian song "Mosquito". Performed by Petro Leschenko and Orchestra Hönigsberg-Albahari, 1937. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFnX_wg9BME

Figure 2. Soviet song "When My Own Mother Saw Me Off". https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smHAuArbQq8

The creation of new Soviet folklore often involved the simple replication of a folk melody, with a verbal text replaced by one that was more ideologically relevant. Sometimes, only the protagonist changed: the Cossack[6] became a

Komsomol member, and the Sich rifleman became a Red Army soldier. This can be observed in the 'modernisation' of the lyrical song "Ой у полі жито" (Oh, There's Rye in the Field).

Whereas the traditional text speaks of a slain Cossack, the Soviet version "Ой в городі жито" (Oh, There's Rye in the Garden) recounts the death of a Komsomol member. This adaptation was published, for example, in the collection *Ukrainian Folk Songs*. (Hordiychuk et al. 1958: 391) (see Table 1)

Traditional Folk Song Oh, there's Rye in the Field	Soviet Folk Song Oh, there's Rye in the Garden
Ой, у полі жито *Копитами збито* *Під білою березою* ***Козаченька** вбито*	*Ой, у полі жито* *Копитами збито* *Під білою березою* ***Комсомольця** вбито*
Oh, there's rye in the field *Knocked down by hooves* *Under the white birch* *The **Cossack** was killed*	*Oh, there's rye in the garden* *Knocked down by hooves* *Under the white birch* *The **Komsomol member** was killed*

Table 1. Comparison of the text of the traditional folk song "Oh, There's Rye in the Field" and the Soviet folk song "Oh, There's Rye in the Garden". The text of the traditional song is taken from the collection *Folk Melodies: Recorded and Arranged by Klyment Kvitka from the Voice of Lesya Ukrainka* (Kvitka 1917).

2.3. The Emergence of Soviet-Era Folklore in Ukraine and Its Academic Legitimisation

A subsequent stage in the formation of Soviet musical folklore was the creation of entirely new examples to meet the authorities' social demands. Noll (2023) describes this as pseudo-folklore because, unlike the songs of the independence struggle and social conflict, which were products of collective creativity, Soviet folklore was shaped under ideological pressure from above. Oral collective creativity was supplanted by organised mass popular or artistic creativity (Bezuhla 2004) of professional and amateur composers, performed by amateur folk ensembles. This will be examined in greater detail in Section 3 of this article.

The thematic range of Soviet folklore included songs about Lenin and Stalin (including Lenin Dear Lenin, The Country Is Shrouded in Mourning, Stalin Our Dear Leader), the glorification of socialist construction (Get Up, Time is Moving Forward, About the Canal Work, Hey the River Rapids Don't Break Anymore), and the celebration of collective-farm labour (As in Our Village, We Have Collective Farms in the Village, It's Good to Live on a Commune, Oh a Tractor in the Field). The textual basis of this pseudo-folklore frequently consisted of so-called folk poetry, actively promoted through Party newspapers such as *The Communist*, *News of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee*, *Soviet Village*, and the journal *Country House*. Many melodies were close to folk idioms, employing motion in thirds and plagal cadences. A notable feature is the recurrent comparison of Stalin to a falcon or mountain eagle, evidently inspired by the song "Із-за гір та з-за високих" (also known as the Song about Stalin, 1935) by composer Levko Revutsky and poet Maksym Rylsky, discussed in more detail in Section 4. For example, in a song included in the collection *Ukrainian Folk Songs* (Hordiychuk et al. 1958: 361), there are the following lines: "It is not an eagle, it is not a blue one/ circling above the Kremlin/ It is our Stalin with the people/ making the law."

According to Party ideologues, folklorists were to play a crucial role in shaping Soviet folklore, which celebrated class struggle and the 'happy' life of workers after victory. It is recognised that a clear signal to this effect was given in Maksim Gorky's address to the First Congress of Soviet Writers (1934). From the mid- 1930s, an intense campaign to collect and record Soviet folklore was launched to demonstrate the correct ideological orientation of mass artistic creativity and to popularise it. The Academy of Sciences of the USSR became the centre of this Soviet folklore scholarship, with several institutes engaged in the field. In Kyiv, the Academy of Sciences at the Ukrainian SSR Institute of Folklore was founded in 1936. In the same year, the collection *Ukrainian Post- October Folk Songs* was published, compiled by the ethnographer and musician Anton Lykhodii along with composers Levko Revutsky (1889–1977) and Viktor Kosenko (1896–1938). Ukrainian Soviet songs about Lenin, Stalin and the struggle against the interventionists were included in Russian translation in the major anthology *Творчество народов СССР* (*Creativity of the Peoples of the USSR*), edited by Maksim Gorky and Lev Mekhlis, head of the Red Army Political Directorate, published in Moscow in 1937.

After the Second World War, during which the Institute of Folklore was reorganised as The Institute of Art Studies, Folklore and Ethnography at the Ukrainian SSR Academy of Sciences, the pseudo-folklore Soviet songs of the 1930s continued to be published unchanged in subsequent folklore collections, serving as consistent indicators of ideological correctness. This persistence also indirectly testifies to their artificial origin.

In 1951, state publishing house *Mystetstvo* issued a collection of *Ukrainian Folk Songs,* prepared by the staff of the Institute, which included a section of Soviet-themed songs. In 1955, *Ukrainian Soviet Folk Songs* was published as a separate volume, including new works inspired by the events of the Second World War. These celebrated the heroism of the Soviet people in resisting the fascist invaders and the post-war reunification of Ukrainian lands with the help of the fraternal Russian people. As can be seen, the newly created 'folklore' continued to fulfil the ideological tasks of the Soviet authorities as an instrument of their propaganda apparatus. The academic edition *Ukrainian Folk Dumy and Historical Songs* (1955), edited by Rylsky and historian Kost' Huslysty, demonstrated the violent intrusion of Soviet ideology into the traditional genres of Ukrainian folklore. The preface to the volume referred to the Party's role in exposing bourgeois-nationalist elements within the Academy of Sciences who, "led by the fiercest enemy of the Ukrainian people, the bourgeois nationalist Mykhailo Hrushevsky[7], had sought to sabotage Soviet culture" (Pavliy 1955: xix). The collection included pseudo-folkloric *dumy* such as "Про Леніна і Сталіна" (About Lenin and Stalin), "Про Леніна і Сталіна та про трьох братів" (About Lenin and Stalin and the Three Brothers), and "Хто ж той сокіл, товариш" (Who is That Falcon, Comrade?). Nevertheless, the publication holds significant artistic and scholarly value, as it includes extensive work by collectors of Ukrainian folklore, including *dumy* published earlier by Filaret Kolessa in Lviv.

Prominent Ukrainian scholars and folklorists, including Mykola Hrinchenko (1988–1942) and later Mykola Hordiichuk (1919–1995), Zoia Vasylenko (1918–2009), and Oleksandr Pravdiuk (1926–1984), contributed to the organisation of the corpus of Soviet folklore. Evidently, work on this subject served as a form of indulgence, enabling them to pursue their profession under Soviet rule. Alongside the fulfilment of this social commission, specialists at the Institute of Art Studies, Folklore and Ethnography continued to collect and research examples of the genuine folk tradition, thereby preserving them for future generations during the era of repression and the genocide of the

Ukrainian people, including both the bearers of the folklore tradition and the researchers themselves.

3. Mass Musical Events as Ritual Practices of Soviet Society

This section examines mass musical events in Ukraine during the 1930s as a distinctive form of ritual practices of the Soviet person. Mass musical events profoundly transformed traditional practices and became an integral part of society at that time playing a pivotal role in transmitting ideology and producing a unified collective identity. To disseminate new creations among the broader public, large-scale music festivals were organised. They combined elements of theatrical spectacle, political demonstration, and amateur artistic performance. Ritual components of Soviet 'ceremonial culture' included large-scale festive marches of thousands of participants, the performance of works with heroic-revolutionary and laudatory themes, as well as symbolic visualisation such as portraits of Lenin, Stalin, and other party leaders, which were indispensable attributes of mass gatherings. The primary function of such events was to mobilise both urban and rural populations, legitimise the Bolshevik regime, and create a new collective identity. Under the guise of aesthetic education – although this was also partially true – a person was being born who had no right to private life, since "…everything private must be sacrificed to the abstract faceless collective" (Aheyeva 2012). In this sense, the mechanisms behind Soviet mass festivities correspond to what Gentile defines as the totalitarian "sacralisation of politics", which led to the formation of a system that was "intolerant, invasive, and fundamentalist, seeking to permeate every aspect of individual and collective life" (Gentile 2006: 15).

Within this system, developed in the form of amateur musical performance, the growth of the amateur movement required the establishment of appropriate infrastructure in cities and villages: networks of clubs and cultural centres where rehearsals were held, and groups were organised. Although such measures might be interpreted as constructive steps toward expanding musical participation, they also served specific ideological objectives and did not arise as a naturally evolving component of musical life. In contrast, in many European countries the formation of amateur musical culture tended to develop more organically: it was

shaped by local civic initiatives, education institutions, voluntary associations, and community-based traditions, rather than by centrally imposed directives. As a concrete example, one may refer to *Bojan* and *Kobzar*, well-developed networks of choral societies in the western part of Ukraine, i.e. Galicia, which from 1772 to 1918 was the part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Amateur ensembles, choirs and orchestras became tools of cultural policy, as they provided ideological education for the human resources needed for socialist construction. The mobilisation of the broad masses was achieved through the organisation of large-scale festivities, designed both to unite and to discipline society. A special role in this process was played by the so-called musical Olympiads. Music periodicals from the late 1920s and 1930s provide valuable insights into these large-scale, ritualised musical events:

> Musical Olympiads, created in the turbulent period of construction, correspond most fully to the spirit of the proletariat, to the era of grandiose social and economic achievements and gigantic building projects. They embody the collective creativity of the musical activists of the working people and inspire the masses of listeners and performers with enthusiasm and vigour for further struggle and construction (Nytsai 1929a: 6).

The journal *Музика масам* (Music for the Masses, 1929, № 10–11, 12) provided detailed instructions for the organisation of musical Olympiads, including several preparatory stages: a historical overview of Soviet musical initiatives, principles of organisation, and the programme of performances. The article emphasised that this new format replaced the less successful *Всеукраїнські музичні дні* (All-Ukrainian Music Days), initiated in the 1920s by the Всеукраїнським товариством імені Миколи Леонтовича (Mykola Leontovych All-Ukrainian Society). However, the role of this society, as a centre of Ukrainian musical culture, was deliberately undermined by representatives of the Soviet authorities. Regarding this development, Kuzyk (2024: 259) observed that "the authorities decided to end the flirtation with the 'national policy of Ukrainisation' and to impose Bolshevik order on the artistic sphere of Ukraine".

The scale of growth was evident: whereas at the 1924 Kyiv Olympiad about 800 workers sang simultaneously, the subsequent Olympiad in Kharkiv attracted more than 1,200 participants from musical amateur groups. A model for Ukrainian Soviet propagandists was the open-air festivals held in Leningrad (now St Petersburg, Russian Federation), involving up to 5,000 performers and

tens of thousands of spectators. These examples reveal the Soviet organisers' aspiration to elevate art initiatives to the status of grandiose ritualised spectacles.

The aims of the musical Olympiads were defined as "the collective creativity of the working people, which inspires the masses with enthusiasm for struggle and construction" (Nytsai 1929a). Organisationally, they were structured according to the model of sporting competitions: the top ensembles, performers, composers, and musical directors were to be chosen; participants were divided by territorial sections or artistic categories; and winners were awarded monetary prizes (Lisniak et al. 2022). This structure introduced an element of competition, yet the primary goal remained the demonstration of unity and discipline.

Preparation for the musical Olympiads was carried out in advance under strict state control, with repertoires and scenarios approved by the authorities. Through such approved lists, the authorities sought to combat "hostile, nationalist elements" (Dan'shev 134: 47). The choice of venue was also important: "naturally acoustically advantageous spaces" were recommended, or else special tribunes and terraces were to be constructed. Festive spaces were decorated with slogans, flags, and symbolic elements. The solemn procession of columns was accompanied by sound; during the march, singing of "The Internationale" and Shevchenko's "Zapovit" (Testament)[8] was obligatory. After the official part, so-called folk festivities took place, combining disciplined ritual with freer musical practices, obviously within the limits of the permitted repertoire (Nytsai 1929a).

The Art Decades of the 1930s, a series of celebratory events held in Moscow bringing together artists from all the 'brotherly' republics, can be interpreted as a manifestation of the ritualised glorification of the Leader, serving as a symbolic demonstration of unity around the centre of Soviet power. One of the largest-scale cultural events of the Soviet period, aimed at officially presenting the achievements of Ukrainian culture at the heart of the USSR, was the Decade of Ukrainian Art and Literature in Moscow, which took place between the 11th and 21st March 1936 (Nevyzhyn 2011). The event encompassed a wide range of artistic forms, including theatrical performances, concerts, art exhibitions, and literary evenings. On the one hand, the Decade showcased the 'flourishing Ukrainian culture' within the socialist in content, national in form ideological formula; on the other hand, it became a powerful instrument of ideological unification and centralisation, as Ukrainian art was presented exclusively within the permitted canon of socialist realism[9].

It can be assumed that Soviet ideologues partly borrowed the format of large-scale choral festivals from the European countries. For example the Baltic countries, where in the 19th century a tradition of holding large song festivals arose with the aim of promoting national unity and preserving cultural identity. (Kuutma 1996) In the Soviet context, however – and especially in Ukraine – this model was radically reinterpreted. These events became instruments of mobilisation and of the ideological legitimisation of the Bolshevik regime.

Thus, mass musical events in Ukraine during the 1930s can be regarded as a specific form of Soviet ritual practice. They combined elements of spectacle, symbolic representation, and collective participation, while simultaneously serving as a means of ideological instruction for the masses. The central musical unit – the core repertoire of amateur ensembles – was the Soviet mass song, a new genre tasked with glorifying the new order. During this period, it reached its greatest extent.

4. Mass Songs as an Essential Attribute of the New Rituality

This section addresses Ukrainian Soviet mass songs with their role as the most effective instrument in the formation and maintenance of the new Soviet rituality, considered from the standpoint of contemporary historical and musicological scholarship.

As noted above, the authorities established state commissions (often supported by generous material incentives) for the creation of musical works. The vast majority of these commissions concerned song genres that were expected to provide the "authentic embodiment of ideas, themes, and images arising from the life of our country during the years of victorious socialist construction" (Baranovskaya et al. 1977). This idea was reflected in the preface to the Ukrainian collection *Mass Song*: "Song must become part of new forms of everyday life, be heard at revolutionary celebrations and gatherings, during leisure and entertainment, and convey a new worldview" (Kuzyk 1992: 161). At the same time, every sphere of life was designated by the Bolsheviks as a 'front', while avenues of development were rhetorically described as battles, assaults, and so forth – for example, the cultural front, the front of socialist construction, the battle for the harvest, the battle to fulfil the plan, and others.

Thus, the natural lyricism and melodiousness of the Ukrainian song were replaced by a poster-like quality, a *staccato* rhythm, and corresponding melodically declamatory motifs. It is clear that while most of these highly popular 'masterpieces' of the time interest us today only as froth (Parkhomenko 1992: 17), there were also works of genuine artistic value.

In response to the 'proposal' – in fact, order – to create a new repertoire of songs, there emerged a flood of panegyric and hymn-like 'products'. Radio broadcasts and concert programs became saturated with songs about a happy life and gratitude to the Party and the Leader of the peoples. On the airwaves and concert stages "hyperbolisation and exalted pathos prevailed" (Parkhomenko 1992: 17). Even the 'catchy' titles of the works can serve as evidence of this: Vasyl Verkhovynets's "Грими, грими, могутня пісне!" (Thunder, Thunder, Mighty Song!), Pylyp Kozytskyi's "А маса йде до Мавзолею" (And the Masses Go to the Mausoleum), and Vasyl Smekalin's "Вперед, за щастя людності!" (Forward, for the Happiness of the People!), among others. Songs in the form of hymns and spirited marches also appeared, calling for struggle, such as Levko Revutsky's and Pavlo Hrabovskyi's "Уперед, хто не хоче конати!" (Forward, Those Who Do Not Wish to Perish!), and Vasyl Verkhovynets's and Vasyl Chumak's "Більше надії, брати!" (More Hope, Brothers!).

The 'new collective farm life' was also celebrated, for example, Verykivsky's and Ivan Honcharenko's "Бойова колгоспівська" (The Collective Farm Fight Song), Koliada's and Ivan Velychko's "За кращий врожай" (For a Better Harvest), Kozytskyi's and Mykola Kozhushnyi's "Передкомунська" (Pre-communal). Joyful Soviet youth (the Komsomol) was likewise glorified, as in Kozytskyi's and Kozhushnyi's "Наша спілка молода" (Our Young Union). A vast number of songs were dedicated to the Red Army, with numerous thematic collections published, such as "Червона армія" (The Red Army) and "Червоний спів" (The Red Song). In essence, these were agitational works, in which certain composers – among them Valentyn Borysov and Fedir Popadych – specialised with considerable success. Mykola Hrinchenko even referred to the highly prolific Kostiantyn Bohuslavsky as a master of the modern musical *agitka*[10] who "marched in the first ranks" (Hrinchenko 1940: 162). For example, Bohuslavsky's and Ivan Shevchenko's "Дванадцять косарів" (Twelve Mowers) was perhaps the most widely disseminated song of the time (Kuzyk 1992: 163).

In addition, similar processes of creating ideologically oriented mass songs occurred across all Soviet republics. For instance, in Belarus, these were on a

considerably smaller scale, since at the time of the establishment of the Society of Dramatic Writers and Composers, which was founded in 1934, its music section had only fourteen members. The most active author of such songs was the head of the section, composer Isaak Lyuban (1906–1975), whose works included "Песня о дукорских партизанах" (Song about the Dukor Partisans, lyrics by Petrus Broŭka, 1931), "Украсим наши хаты" (Let Us Adorn Our Houses, lyrics by Janka Kupala, 1937), etc. (Gorkii, Mekhlis, *et.al.*1937).

4.1 The Song about Stalin as a Mirror of General Processes in the Musical Culture of the 1930s

With the consolidation of the personality cult surrounding the 'Leader of all peoples', a substantial collection of songs dedicated to him emerged, and Ukrainian composers and poets were by no means behind their counterparts from other Soviet republics in contributing to it.

One of the most emblematic and highly dramatic examples was "Пісня про Сталіна" (Song about Stalin), also known by its more familiar title, "Із-за гір та й з-за високих" (From Beyond the Mountains and Heights, 1935), composed by Levko Revutsky with lyrics by Rylsky. By that time, the poet had already endured an arrest on the standard charge of counter-revolutionary activity and subsequent torture[11]. Subsequently, the Party official Andrii Khvylia[12] instructed Rylsky to create a song about the Father of the Peoples, thereby demonstrating his reliability. Rylsky sought the assistance of his friend, composer Levko Revutsky. As the Canadian theatre scholar Valerian Revutsky (1993: 21), son of Levko Revutsky's elder brother Dmytro[13], recalled: "…Maksym Rylsky and Uncle Levko went to my father and told him about the 'offer' – to write a song about Stalin. My father then advised them to write it to preserve their lives…"

The Song about Stalin was based on the ancient extended Cossack song "Ой з-за гір, з-за гір вилітав сокіл…" (Oh, from beyond the Mountains, from beyond the Mountains a Falcon Flew…), which exists in numerous melodic variants with an unchanged text and a highly dramatic storyline concerning a fallen Cossack. One version of this traditional song discussed here is presented in Figure 3, while Figure 4 provides an additional version for auditory reference.

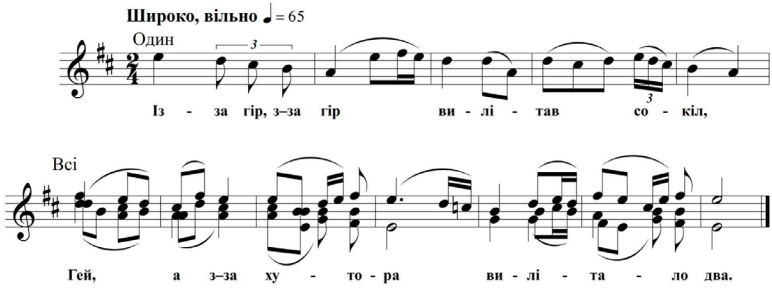

Figure 3. "Із-за гір, з-за гір вилітав сокіл…" (Oh, from beyond the Mountains, from beyond the Mountains a Falcon Flew…). (Yashchenko 1962: 118)

Figure 4. "Із-за гір, з-за гір вилітав сокіл…" (Oh, from beyond the Mountains, from beyond the Mountains a Falcon Flew…). Performed by the duet Solomyanyk consisting of Andriy Siletsky (actor, kobza player) and Viktoriya Titarova (folk music performer). URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vW2PC2xFeE

The traditional Cossack song belongs to the lyric-epic type and begins with a recitative-style solo introduction performed by a single singer. The mixolydian mode, irregular meter, elements of improvisation, and free rhythmic flow shape the characteristic intonational model typical of Ukrainian Cossack songs. Together with the central image of the falcon – one of the key heroic symbols

in Ukrainian folklore – these musical features create an authentically Cossack colouring of the song.

Phrases containing the fixed epithet 'blue-grey-winged falcon' (*сизокрилий сокіл*) and 'blue-grey eagle' (*сизий орел*) are widespread and culturally significant in Ukrainian folklore. They appear, for example, in the Cossack song "Побратався сокіл з сизокрилим орлом" (The Falcon Befriended the Blue-Grey Eagle) and in the historical song "То не орел, то не сизий" (It Is Not an Eagle, It Is Not Blue-Grey), among many others. This imagery inherently conveys notions of heroism, freedom, and strength.

In the "Song about Stalin", the authors employ the image of the blue-winged eagle in reference to Stalin, a symbolic choice grounded in this established folk tradition. The archetype of the soaring heroic bird was readily adaptable for ideological purposes. It is evident that this traditional symbolic motif provided the semantic foundation for a semiotic inversion in the Soviet mass song. In this process, the archetypal folk image was transformed into the figure of the Eagle-Stalin, which became the ritual core of the new ideological composition.

The epic verbal turn at the very beginning of "Song about Stalin", "Із-за гір з-за гір…" (From beyond the mountains), is likewise characteristic and frequently encountered in traditional songs, for example, "Із-за гори вітер повіває" (From beyond the Mountains the Wind Blows), "Ой з-за гори кам'яної" (Oh, from beyond the Stone Mountain), and so on. It functions here like a tuning fork, aligning the listener with the powerful central character.

Although the song initially invokes elements of folk symbolism, this connection is quickly abandoned. What follows is an explicit panegyric that glorifies the Leader's steadfastness and invincibility, elevates Stalin and positions him as a grand heroic guide. The achievements of the epoch are noted only in passing, while a distinctly militaristic tone underscores the collective mobilisation of society:

Із-за гір, та з-за високих Сизокрил орел летить... Не зламати крил широких, Того льоту не спинить. На вершини всі ми линем, Сонце променем в очах... Льотом сонячним орлиним Вождь показує нам шлях.	From beyond the mountains, from beyond the heights The blue-winged eagle is flying... Do not break its broad wings, That flight will not be stopped. To the top we all rush, The sun beams in our eyes... In the solar eagle's flight The leader shows us the way.

Table 2. The text of the "Song about Stalin" in Ukrainian and English. First and second verses. https://lyricstranslate.com/uk/pisnya-pro-stalina-song-stalin.html

In this way, Rylsky emerges as a professional who skilfully mastered the requisite laudatory rhetoric, which later became standardised and obligatory (Zholdak 1949), while at the same time integrating it with vivid imagery, metaphors, allegories, and allusions drawn from traditional sources.

Musicological analysis allows us to conclude that the melodic structure underwent a substantial transformation from the recitative-narrative manner of the traditional song to a march-like Soviet mass song characterised by functional harmonisation, choral texture, and a new ideological content. The "Song about Stalin" replicates only the external features of the Ukrainian Cossack tradition, ascending intonational gestures, the recurrent bird image, and the structural pattern of solo→chorus.

The musical component of the "Song about Stalin" was shaped more in the direction of the academic art-music tradition, while still fully conforming to the prescribed ideological requirements. The very first chords evoked the well-known chorus *Слава!* (Glory!) by Mykhail Glinka from the opera *Жизнь за царя* (A Life for the Tsar). Replacing the epic melismas of the original folk source, a concise 4/4 march rhythm was introduced. The dense orchestration, featuring prominent use of brass instruments, was designed to convey power and strength. The two-bar orchestral introduction, performed *tutti*, establishes the musical framework. A sustained tonic chord, akin to a conductor's signal, followed by energetic motion reminiscent of a martial call. Subsequently – consistent with

Ukrainian folk antiphone tradition – the male choir sings in parallel thirds, with the female voices joining on the third stanza of the verse (see Figure 5). The *tutti* of the mixed choir, with its steady rhythmic structure and repetition of the final two stanzas, symbolises a solemn, invincible procession. In some variants, the female voices lead the third and fourth stanzas, followed by the male voices, thus introducing a touch of tenderness or humanity to the otherwise sharply articulated march music, which carries heroic and declamatory intonations. As an example, listen to Figure 6.

The "Song about Stalin" was first published in the newspaper *Literaturna Ukraina* on March 12, 1936; however, it reached a wider audience on March 21, when it was performed during the radio broadcast of the closing ceremony of the First Decade of Ukrainian Art in Moscow by a large combined choir, creating a tremendous impression and, most importantly, pleasing the Leader of all peoples. On April 1, the text of the song in Ukrainian was published in the all-Union newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. From that time, its triumphant journey began: it was frequently performed throughout the USSR, reprinted, and translated into various languages, first of all Russian[14] (Sergeeva 1952).

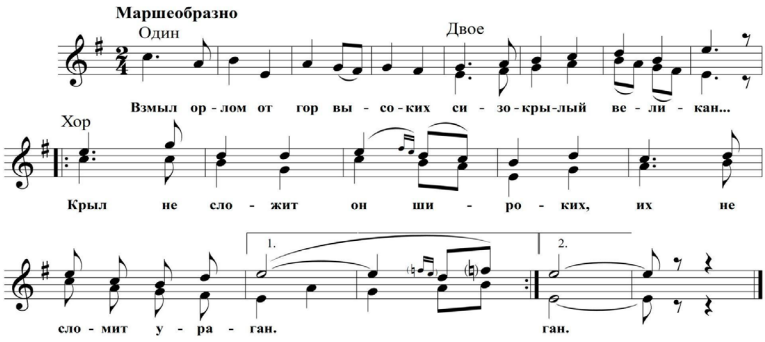

Figure 5. The "Song about Stalin". (Sergeeva 1952: 8)

Figure 6. The "Song about Stalin". Performed by the Honoured State Ukrainian Chapel *Dumka* under the direction of Nestor Horodovenko, and the Symphony Orchestra of the Ukrainian Radio Committee under the direction of Herman Adler (1937).
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ss01k0WwGh8

Therefore, the intonational motifs in "From beyond the Mountains" can later be heard in the renowned Soviet songs "Катюша" (Katyusha) by Matvey Blanter (1938) and "Три танкиста" (Three Tankmen) by the Pokras brothers (1939), both of which were created by artists born in Ukraine. These motifs also appear in the later work "Солдаты, в путь…" (Soldiers, on the Road…) by Vasyl Solovyov-Sedoj (1954), and so on. The fanfare-like introduction and the initial hymn-style motif recall the Anthem of the Soviet Union: "Союз нерушимый республик свободных" (Unbreakable Union of Free Republics, 1943). They also closely parallel the Anthem of the Ukrainian SSR: "Живи, Україно, прекрасна і сильна" (Live, Ukraine, Beautiful and Strong, 1949), whose opening is nearly identical.

In addition, due to its widespread popularity across Soviet regions the "Song about Stalin" had a significant influence on the musical lexicon of mass songs of the time and served as a kind of letter of protection for both artists, repeatedly saving their lives. However, among the 'common people', the reception of the "Song about Stalin" was more mixed[15]. Thus, through the power of musical art, and above all the new Soviet song, the Party line was actively introduced into the minds of the broadest segments of the population, the so-called masses. As Kuzyk aptly noted: "Given the socio-psychological tasks of the time, which were

developed by the country's propaganda organs, the mass song was to become a means and a weapon of the worker and peasant… In this way, a peculiar form of ideological conditioning of the ordinary person took place" (Kuzyk 2023: 151). The mass song served not only as a propagandistic genre but also as a central element of new Soviet ritual: repeated in collective performances, embedded into festive ceremonies, and integrated into the structure of musical Olympiads and other mass events, it functioned as a ritualised practice that affirmed loyalty and reinforced the ideological order of the totalitarian state.

It is noteworthy that analogous songs continue to be cultivated today in countries with dictatorial regimes. For example, the production of numerous laudatory songs about the President – the nation's leader – can currently be observed in Belarus. Even the titles of these highly rhetorical works, performed by soloists, duets, and even the Belarusian State Song and Dance Ensemble, are telling: "Саня останется с нами" (Sanya Will Stay with Us, by Roker-Dzhoker, 2010), "Батька у нас крутой!" (Our Bat'ka Is Cool!, by Yevhenii Oliinyk and Yuliia Bykova, 2023), "Ах, Александр!" (Ah, Alexander!, by Oliinyk and Anna Seluk, 2023), "Баллада о диктаторе" (The Ballad of the Dictator, by Valery Shmat and Pavlo Duhanau, 2024), "Молитва за батьку" (A Prayer for Bat'ka, by Vital Karpau, 2025), among others. These songs are dominated by panegyric sentiment and hymn-like musical motifs, while their stylistic features range from pseudo-folk idioms to the mass-song aesthetics of the 1980s. All of them, however, bear the clear hallmarks of political commission.

Therefore, we can assert that the mechanisms associated with the new rituality characteristic of Stalin's authoritarian Soviet regime of the 1930s exhibit a remarkable resemblance to contemporary practices.

Conclusions

The analysis of Ukrainian amateur and professional musical culture in the 1930s presents a demonstration of the emergence of new rituality enforced by the Soviet totalitarian regime. By utilising the symbolic significance of ritual and its ideological reinterpretation, Soviet cultural policy systematically supplanted traditional forms of folklore, public celebrations, and musical innovation with pseudo-folklore works and mass events intended to conform cultural practices to the priorities of the totalitarian state. The study situates these developments

within the broader context of Soviet cultural policy, emphasising the mechanisms of Socialist Realism and political religion.

The emergence of new 'Soviet folklore' is analysed through the perspective of how a novel canon of politically engaged songs was developed to communicate mythologised narratives of revolutionary heroism, socialist construction, and the cult of Stalin. The dissemination through performances by amateur ensembles, radio broadcasts, stage festivals, and musical Olympiads ensured their integration into everyday life, replacing an act of collective folklore creation with mass or popular culture. The use of folklore melodies with ideologically correct texts was accompanied by the censorship or removal from the public sphere of entire folklore genres, such as *dumy*, historical songs, and carols.

Choral festivals and music Olympiads of the 1930s became the embodiment of Soviet ritual practices. They combined theatrical spectacle, disciplined collective performance, and symbolic images that sacralised Party power. Borrowing certain external features from European choral traditions, these events changed their cultural purpose: instead of strengthening national identity, they served to dilute it and introduce unified Soviet political rhetoric. Due to their scale, repetition, and emotional impact, they functioned as quasi-liturgical acts within what modern scholarship defines as a system of political religion.

Mass songs emerged as the predominant medium for propagating ideological narratives. This genre, strongly endorsed by the state apparatus, experienced active development through the works of numerous Ukrainian composers. An exemplary instance is the "Song about Stalin" by Revutsky, with lyrics by Rylsky, which, through its incorporation of folk intonations and stylistic elements, quickly attained widespread popularity across the USSR. Its extensive dissemination rendered it an influential model for the musical language of subsequent Soviet mass songs.

The development of the new Soviet rituality of the 1930s exemplifies mechanisms characteristic of totalitarian regimes, specifically the instrumentalisation of culture and the strategic redefinition of ritual to secure ideological hegemony. The instances cited within the article concerning the development of pseudo-folklore, mass mobilisation through song, and the ritualisation of public ceremonies continue to hold significance for comprehending contemporary authoritarian cultural policies.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

[1] In 1929, travel abroad was prohibited. This created an 'iron curtain' that separated the USSR from the rest of the world and turned it into a closed society.

[2] Our senior colleague, the composer and musicologist Bohdana Filts (1932–2021), recalled how, even in the comparatively more liberal 1950s, the head of the Lviv branch of the Union of Composers of Ukraine, Anatolii Kos-Anatolskyi (1909–1983), who in the 1930s had been among the pioneers of Ukrainian entertainment music in western Ukraine, urged her (at that time she was a young graduate of the Lviv Conservatory) to 'write something ritual'. Such a piece, he explained, would open the doors for her to join the Union of Composers and help establish her reputation. Both of them understood perfectly well that this meant composing a work glorifying the Communist Party and its leaders (interview with composer B. Filts from Sikorska's private archive).

[3] Ukrainian *dumy* are a genre of vocal-instrumental oral tradition, a late form of the heroic epic originating in the 15th to 17th centuries that reflects significant historical events and figures central to Ukraine's past.

[4] Haydamaks were members of the national liberation movement in Right-Bank Ukraine in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In a broader sense, they represent the Ukrainian rebels.

[5] Ukrainian riflemen's songs were created in the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen Legion 1914–1918 during the national liberation struggle.

[6] Cossack: a member of a self-governing military community in Ukraine from the 15th to 18th centuries. More generally, a Ukrainian warrior.

[7] Mykhailo Hrushevskyi: a distinguished Ukrainian historian, public intellectual, and political figure. He served as the Chairman of the Central Council of the Ukrainian Peoples' Republic from 1917 to 1918.

[8] In the 1930s, the nationalist themes of Taras Shevchenko, including his "Testament", were replaced by Soviet revolutionary songs.

[9] Significantly, this event took place on the eve of the repressive wave of 1937–1938, during which the majority of the participating artists were either silenced or eliminated.

[10] Propaganda.

[11] The outcome was his 'penitential' collection, *The Sign of the Scales* (1932), which included poems celebrating Soviet reality as well as a poem about Lenin.

[12] The Head of the Department for the Arts under the Council of the People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR. In 1938 he was accused of terrorism and executed.

[13] Well-known folklorist Dmytro Revutsky (1881–1941) was brutally murdered in occupied Kyiv on the order of Soviet special services for 'nationalism'.

[14] It is significant that the "Song about Stalin" is currently being actively circulated on Russian public forums, indicating that such ritualised practices have not disappeared but continue to exist today.

[15] The state of society at that time, and therefore its mood, is reflected in the next comment in YouTube, hidden under the nickname @jdbfdhksflndsnfjds near the entry "Songs about Stalin": "My mother told me, that as children they learned this song by ear at school, and all of them sang in unison: 'Мудрий ВОШ' (Wise LOUSE) instead of 'Мудрий ВОЖДЬ' (Wise LEADER) – here is a play on words that guides us all! Times were hungry, poverty was terrible, lice were everywhere, and the children could not understand why lice on the head were bad, yet one particular louse was considered wise. They thought it had to be some exception among lice. Luckily, no one knew about these childish reflections, because the parents would have been quickly sent to Siberia for such thoughts…" URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ss01k0WwGh8

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Iryna Sikorska, PhD, senior researcher at the department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology Maksym Rylsky Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology National Academy of Science, Ukraine. Her main area of research is the history of Ukrainian music, including operas, operettas, musicians, and contemporary music. She is editor-in-chief of volumes II, IV, and V of the Ukrainian Music Encyclopedia. She is also active as a music critic and journalist.

E-mail: sikorska1959@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-3485-9206

Oksana Letychevska, PhD, researcher at the department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology Maksym Rylsky Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology at the National Academy of Science, Ukraine. Her main research area is the history of Ukrainian choral music and performance, including opera choir, famous composers and choirmasters.

E-mail: letychevska@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-6103-7072

Inna Lisniak, PhD, senior researcher at the Folklore Archive of the Estonian Literary Museum; and at the department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology Maksym Rylsky Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology National Academy of Science, Ukraine. Her research interests include Ukrainian traditional musical folklore of the vocal-instrumental genre, the transformation of musical folklore and its contemporary manifestations in performance practice, as well as the application of computational methods in ethnomusicology.

E-mail: i.lisnyak78@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-9079-0282