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Oi u luzi chervona kalyna (“Oh, the Red Viburnum in the Meadow”) as an Anthem-Song Social Roles and Genre Transformations in the Time of War

Пісня-гімн «Ой у лузі червона калина» в умовах російсько-української війни: Соціальні ролі та жанрові трансформації

Abstract. Countering the Russian invasion is the subject of many songs dating back as far as several centuries. *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* (“Oh, the Red Viburnum in the Meadow”) is one of such songs. Intonation structure of this folk song, remarkably resembling an anthem, represents the mighty power of generations and unites the communities in their struggle against the enemy. Investigating the genre transformations of this piece and its communicative models that consolidate communities serving as an attribute of Ukrainian national identity as opposed to the enemy proves the importance of the subject of this paper. The objectives of this research were the following: to study the historical and genre reminiscences of the *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* song, to analyze its impact on developing the new trends within the popular Ukrainian music and culture, to outline the communicative mechanisms used in the anthem-like pieces rooted in folk songs to influence and consolidate communities. The means of replication of this song may be identified, on the one hand, as a specifically targeted strategy, namely, seemingly random viral sharing in the Internet. On the other hand, the transformation of a genre of this song is evident. Heavy rotation of the *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* song enables concluding that it became a part of the mainstream of the present time. The very idea of the song encourages the audience to collaboration and co-creation, be it singing along, making electronic covers, singing backing vocals, etc. The fact that its symbolic and semiotic fields influenced the intensification of cross-cultural interaction between similar worldviews and became a unifying factor in the struggle against the Ruscist evil in is an important feature of this song’s replication during the war.

Keywords: *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna*, “Oh, the Red Viburnum in the Meadow”, anthem, Andriy Khlyvnyuk, pop music, genre transformations.

Introduction

Countering the Russian invasion is the subject of many songs dating back as far as several centuries. Hence, a large number of dramatic folk musical pieces gained a new life under tragic circumstances. So-called remakes of the old folk songs provide much-needed inspiration to resist the enemy, and *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* (“Oh, the Red Viburnum in the Meadow”) may be rightfully considered as iconic in this regard. Intonation structure of this folk song, remarkably resembling an anthem, represents the mighty power of generations and unites the communities in countering the enemy. Observing the genre transformations of this musical piece and studying its consolidating communication models prove the importance of the subject of this paper.

Aim of the Paper

The paper aims to describe the artistic and socio-cultural characteristics of the *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna*

song, as well as its role in consolidation of the communities on their path to achieving a common goal. The objectives are the following: to study the historical and genre reminiscences of the *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* song; to outline the extent of influence of this anthem-song on the social and cultural life of the nation in the time of war; to analyze its impact on developing the new trends within the popular Ukrainian musical culture; to summarize the communicative mechanisms used in the anthem-like pieces rooted in folk songs in consolidating communities.

Results and Discussion

The song was first mentioned in 1914. In its modern variant, it emerged in Galicia that was a part of Austro-Hungarian Empire, shortly before the eruption of the First World War. Stepan Charnetsky, a director of the Ukrainian theatre Ruska Besida, was staging Vasyl Pachovsky’s tragedy *The Sun of the Ruin* (Sonce ruiny) about the fate of Cossack hetman

Petro Doroshenko. In the finale of the play, a song with a consolidating context would suit best, thus, Charnetsky opted for *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna*. By adding the last, poetic and dramatic verse to the lyrics and by changing the melodic into the march, he radically transformed the communicative field of perception for this piece. The song was a success at the premiere and took off. Originally, another song was planned for performance, *Chy ya v luzi ne kalyna bula* ("Was not I a viburnum in the meadow"). However, the stage director preferred something more optimistic, so he offered *Rozlylysia kruti berezhechky* ("Oh, the river overflows the steep banks") and slightly changed the lyrics of the first verses and the melody of the last one. The song appealed to the Galician youth, especially the last verse.

When the First World War started, the legion of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen was organized. Over 10 000 volunteered, yet only 2500 were allowed to enlist by the Austrian authorities. Hryhori Andriy Truch, a commander of the formation of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, a talented scout, a poet, and an author of several riflemen's songs was among them. He overheard the melody from his acquaintance Ilnytskyi, who was a clerk at the Ukrainian mutual aid fund in Stryi and who attended the mentioned stage production. Inspired by the opening verse of the song, reverend Hryhori Andriy Truch complemented the lyrics with the text about fighting the Russian army.

In 1916, Ivan Bobersky, a co-founder of the Ukrainian Combat Board of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, noted that in those years, the song, with its firm belief in victory, balanced all the other songs circulating, which were predominantly sad and conveyed grief and hopelessness. This popular perception of the song contributed to its becoming an anthem of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen (Andreitsiv, 2022). It should be noted that the historical sources on the Sich Riflemen and the memoirs of the contemporaries both mention *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* as then anthem of Sich Riflemen community. At the very list, Sich units sang this march-like song during their drills.

Hence, this song of collective authorship became a folk one in the true sense of the word. Similarly, now it became popular for the very same reason and topical aim—to fight the Russian aggression. In the lyrics, it is reflected in the words "free our brother Ukrainians from the Moscovite shackles."

The song was immensely popular in Galicia part of Ukraine. Such admiration lasted till 1939, when the Second World War started and Ukrainian lands were occupied anew, now by the Stalin's horde. For any mentions of performance of *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna*, one would face arrest, exile to Siberia, or physical extermination by the Soviet occupational regime. However, before that, many cultural figures of the Western Ukraine contributed to promoting this musical piece. During the 1930s, a number of musical interpretations of the song were created for the male and mixed choirs. It is a well-known fact that Oleksandr Koshyts, Filaret Kolessa, Anatol Vakhnianyn, Yaroslav Yaroslavenko, and many other Ukrainian composers associated with the Galician composing school, contributed to the arrangements of the song's melody. "It was one of the effective

ways to maintain the relevance of the song, performed in Galicia by the members of Prosvita society, participants of the concerts commemorating Shevchenko's life, by peasants and intelligentsia" (Andreitsiv, 2022).

Only in the 1990s, during the first years of newly acquired independence, the anthem of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen resonated as one of the unofficial anthems of Ukraine. The song of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen entered the mainstream of civil rituals. One of the most typical was the ritual of setting or recreating the burial mounds for the fallen Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, previously destroyed by the Soviet authorities, as the symbols of freedom and resistance of Ukrainian people.

Apparently, the popularity of the song stems from the relevant objective of its lyrics—a struggle for liberation from the Russian aggression ("free our brother Ukrainians from the Moscovite shackles"), as well as its anthem rhythmic formula of its melody as a "call to fight." The complex of a popular motive contributed to this song's spreading as an anthem of fighting against the Russian invasion in 2022.

In Ukrainian mythopoetic system of beliefs and in traditions, guelder rose (red viburnum) is a symbol of life, blood, and fire. Many researchers emphasize its links to the imagery of sun, heat, and burning. The poetics of the text (the first four verses are the folk song, while the fifth was authored by Hryhori Truch in 1916) is rather uncomplicated, nevertheless, it is charged with powerful symbols. The image of guelder rose is juxtaposed to a young girl; hence, "A my tuiu chervonu kalynu pidii-memo" (And we'll take that red viburnum and we will raise it up) is easily associated with the image of Ukraine, as a transformed idea of national statehood that should be raised from the ashes and developed further (Andreitsiv, 2022). Historical and ethnographic sources hint that guelder rose is commonly perceived as a symbol of Ukrainian family, loyalty, harmony of life, nature, and motherhood. In addition, since the Cossack times, guelder rose signified freedom and resistance, true and cherished memories, and unity of the nation. The well-known proverb is quite telling: "Without a willow or a guelder rose, there is no Ukraine."

Why the symbol of red guelder rose is that popular? Perhaps, the reasons for that are the appealing colors of bloom and berries, the form of the shrub or its healing properties, all of which were represented in the worldview of our ancestors. Seeing the berries, proud and unsubdued even by the harshest frost, must have been symbolic for them. According to common belief, guelder rose could survive even extreme frost. This is paralleled with the belief in the resilience and the willpower of Ukrainian nation.

The etymology of the word *kalyna* (viburnum) is linked to the notion of fire and water as the first elements of earthly existence. Its white inflorescences resembled the sun, while the white color was considered sacred. The form of the seeds of red viburnum reminisces the red heart. Ukrainian name for guelder rose, *kalyna*, originates from *kalyty* (to forge), thus, unifying two mighty elements—fire and water—in the even harder material—metal. Because of that, guelder rose retains its red berries—be it in mists, in freezing rain showers, in merciless

winds, and in any frost. Guelder rose was an embodiment of the creation of the Universe, symbolizing the trinity of fire: the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars. Hence, another possible origin for the word *kalyna* may be from the ancient name for the Sun—*kolo* (a circle). A circle also symbolizes eternity. In addition, in the perception of Ukrainians, guelder rose symbolizes motherhood, with the bush itself being a mother and the flowers and berries being the family, parents, ancestral heritage, and prosperity. Guelder rose by the house is not merely a decoration but also serves as a guardian.

The guelder rose berries became a symbol of courage of those who sacrificed their lives fighting for Ukraine. Therefore, guelder rose is an emblem of courage of free unbreakable spirit, a struggle for the liberation and independence of native land, and a noble strive for freedom and human dignity. The red berries are a metaphor of blood and everlasting continuity of a bloodline. For Ukrainians, the red juice of the berries that resembles the drops of blood makes guelder rose an allegory for Cossack blood spilled for the nation.

The imagery of guelder rose is ever-present in Ukrainian folklore. In this context, guelder rose could be regarded as Ukraine itself: "And we'll take that red kalyna and we will raise it up, / And, hey-hey, we shall cheer up our glorious Ukraine!" The symbol of red guelder rose was transferred from the Cossacks to the modern-day Ukrainian military. Another recurring folk symbol involving guelder rose is a guelder rose bridge, as a passage between different states, stages of life, between life and death. The guelder rose shrub is not only a decoration but holds a profound meaning. It is a spiritual words, our heritage and materialized the spiritual desire to live peacefully in one's own land (*Kalyna — symbol ukrainskoho narodu*, 2018).

Oi u luzi chervona kalyna has fit into the popular music map of the wartime primarily because of its anthem structure and deeply rooted senses and imagery. It symbolic revival occurred in the heart of the capital, at the Sophia square. There, Andriy Khlyvnyuk, a vocalist of the BoomBox band, who volunteered to the army, performed the first verse of the song holding his firearm. The performer emphasized the anthem intonations of the song. In his interpretation, this composition becomes a masculine call for fighting, while the change of rhythm only exacerbates these features. Khlyvnyuk's February, 26 Instagram post had several million views and shares in a few days, quickly becoming viral.

The manner of Khlyvnyuk's performance as if calls all Ukraine and the world to resist Russian invasion, to rise and fight for our Motherland. Performed as a ballad, in an "overstrained" intonation, and, most importantly, in powerful and dynamic vocals it creates an impression of hearing the voice of the ancestors. In Khlyvnyuk's interpretation, every word is accentuated; he conveys the song with the understanding that one has to stand for their native land up to the end. The singer switched his usual microphone to an assault rifle and during the first days of the full-scale invasion stood up to protect Ukraine, exemplifying by his performance and his actions that this is not simply a song but a pure ideology of the Ukrainian nation.

Other prominent transformations of the song are linked to its interpretation as a rock ballade, as it was performed by the legendary Pink Floyd feat. Andriy Khlyvnyuk. The members of the classic British rock band reunited for the first time in almost 30 years in order to record this song as their support for Ukraine. In only 5 days, the video had over seven million views. With Pink Floyd revisiting this song, the war in Ukraine gained even wider exposure.

David Scott, a South-African musician known by his stage name The Kiffness, also recorded a musical collaboration with Andriy Khlyvnyuk on *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna*. Scott made a contemporary remix of the anthem of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, as he was inspired by Khlyvnyuk's courage as a singer and soldier who enlisted to fight the Russian invaders. "BoomBox singer Andriy Khlyvnyuk ended his US tour and returned home to Kyiv to defend his country from Putin. He was kind enough to let me remix this recent video of him singing a Ukrainian folk song," wrote The Kiffness on his social media page (Andrii Khlyvniuk i The Kiffness, 2022).

Ellie Goulding reinterpreted *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* as jazz. Goulding performed it in duo with Dmytro Shurov, who is a frontman of the well-known Ukrainian band Pianoboy in the framework of the Kyiv Summit of First Ladies and Gentlemen organized by Olena Zelenska. Another example of creative reinterpretation is the performance of *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* by Marlaine Maas from the German city of Aachen. She sang it in four languages stating, "I was deeply touched by this song, therefore I decided to translate it into other languages, so more people could listen to it and understand its meaning" (Nimetska vokalistka zaspivala, 2022). These interpretation has the genre features of a ballad, as if providing reference to *trouvères* and *Minnesängers*.

Kenyan band That's What She Said had its own astounding version of the legendary anthem of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen. During their Nairobi concert, the band performed the song of Ukrainian Sich riflemen in Swahili. The lead vocalist appeared on stage in the outfit featuring the colors of Ukrainian flag (Khmelnyska, 2022), and their version of the well-known song incorporated the intonations of a march and jazz improvisation.

Another important aspect of promoting *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* was the video flash-mob organized by a number of renowned Ukrainian artists who sang the song online, namely: Jamala, Eurovision 2016 winner; Natalia Mohilevska; Olha Poliakova; Pavlo Zibrov; Nastia Kamenskykh; Ivan Dorn; Nadia Dorofieieva; TV anchor Lesia Nikitiuk, comedian, and TV host Yurii Tkach. Thousands of Ukrainians all over the world joined it online, posting in the social media their own videos.

Ukrainian journalist and war correspondent Andriy Tsaplienko posted a video of the musicians from different countries performing *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* in Ukrainian. The artists from Malaysia, Estonia, Canada, India, South Africa, Brazil, US, Poland, Italy, South Korea, Finland, Lithuania, Germany, Georgia, and Latvia participated in this online challenge. In their versions, they used the folk instruments

of their respective countries. "This video represented various forms of the song's performance, such as: solo, duo, choir, and especially breathtaking was the performance of Georgian trio. Also, people from Latvia performed it as a choir" (Vaulina, 2022).

In 2022 in Lviv, on the Constitution Day, the word record of the collective singing of *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* was established. Though the center square of Lviv was the main venue of the record-winning singing, people from over 60 locations around the world in 47 countries simultaneously participated online. To reach the record-breaking numbers, several Lviv-based choirs attended the event. Even Ukrainian military from Adviiivka joined them. The orchestra of the National Ground Forces Academy accompanied the performance.

One of the unexpected performers of the song was the Finnish minister Anders Adlercreutz who played the melody of *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* on cello in order to commemorate the fallen heroes. This government official, who is also a professional concert cellist, added a video comprised of the photographs of war in Ukraine to his audio track. He dedicated his Twitter post to the 500th day of the full-scale invasion. "In memoriam to those who sacrificed their life for freedom. 500 days of unprovoked aggression, countless war crimes, the lost future of many people—and yet, also many inspiring victories. Ukraine fights for its independence but also for the independence of Europe. Finland is by your side, today and tomorrow," added Anders Adlercreutz as a caption to his video (Finskyi ministr, 2023).

At different times, *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* was performed by the Ethnographic choir "Homin" (Kyiv, 1990s), "Ne Zhurys!"; the vocal group of the Lviv-Stage Theater-Studio, The Heorhiy Maiboroda National Bandura Capella of Ukraine, Lviv Municipal Choir "Homin," Vertep band (2010), G. Veryovka Ukrainian National Honoured Academic Folk Choir, Haydamaky feat. Tonya Matviyenko, "Smerichka" Folk Song and Dance Ensemble of the Morshyn Culture Palace (led by Roman Nykyforiv), 7 Men Brass Band, etc. (Kashperskyi & Kashperska, 2022).

Conclusions

The means of replication of this song may be identified, on the one hand, as a specifically targeted strategy, namely, seemingly random viral sharing in the Internet. On the other hand, the transformation of a genre of this song is evident. Heavy rotation of the *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* song enables concluding that it became a mainstream song of the present time. Thus, it is important to understand the circumstances and situation that contributed to viral sharing of the song after being performed by Andriy Khlyvnyuk. The very idea of the song encourages the audience to collaboration and co-creation, be it singing along, making electronic covers, singing backing vocals, etc. The fact that its symbolic and semiotic fields influenced the intensification of cross-cultural interaction between similar worldviews and became a unifying factor in the struggle against the Ruscist evil in is an important feature of this song's replication during the war.

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Ковтун К.

Пісня-гімн «Ой у лузі червона калина» в умовах російсько-української війни: соціальні ролі та жанрові трансформації

Анотація. Протистоянню російській навалі присвячено багато пісень, що з'явилися в українській культурі упродовж століть. Прикладом є пісня-гімн «Ой у лузі червона Калина». Музично-інтонаційна структура цієї народної композиції, позначена гімнічністю, відображає силу покоління, гуртує спільноти для протистояння ворогові. Увага до різножанрових ретворень цієї композиції та дослідження консолідуючих комунікативних моделей її популяризації у спільнотах як певного атрибуту національної ідентичності у протистоянні з ворогом складає актуальність теми дослідження, порушеної у статті. Серед завдань — дослідити історичні та жанрові ремінісценції пісні «Ой у лузі червона калина»; проаналізувати вплив пісні «Ой у лузі червона калина» на формування нових трендів популярної української музичної культури; окреслити комунікативні механізми впливу гімнічних композицій на основі народних пісень на консолідацію спільнот. Шляхи тиражування цієї композиції можна ідентифікувати через спеціально підготовлену стратегію: з одного боку, неначе випадкове вірусне розповсюдження в мережі інтернет, з іншого — активна жанрова трансформація. Кількість ротацій пісні «Ой у лузі червона калина» дозволяє говорити, що вона стала мейнстримом сьогодення. Сам задум закликає кожного, хто слухає композицію, до співтворчості — підспівування, електронної обробки, співу разом із виконавцем у кілька голосів тощо. Важливою особливістю тиражування та популярності у світі композиції «Ой у лузі червона калина» у воєнний час є те, що пісня, її знаково-символічне поле вплинуло на активізацію крос-культурних взаємодій зі схожими світоглядними платформами, ставши фактором об'єднання у боротьбі проти рашистського зла.

Ключові слова: «Ой у лузі червона калина», пісня-гімн, визвольна боротьба, Андрій Хливнюк, популярна музика, жанрові трансформації.

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