

## LANGUAGE, CULTURE, COMMUNICATION

UKRAINIAN ELECTRONIC MUSIC IN GLOBALISATION  
AND NATIONAL REVIVAL**Andriy Bondarenko**Researcher, Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts, Ukraine  
e-mail: bondareandre@gmail.com, orcid.org/0000-0002-6856-991X**Summary**

The article considers the impact of globalisation and national revival processes on the development of electronic music in Ukraine. It is shown that in the early stages of development (the late 1990s – early 2000s) Ukrainian electronic music is dominated by the focus on Western European music culture, and early festivals of dance electronic music (“The Republic of Kazantip”, “Ultrasonic”) also borrow Russian traditions, which indicates the predominance of globalization and peripheral tendencies in this area. At the same time, the first creative searches related to the combination of electronic sounds with the sounds of Ukrainian folklore are intensified. In particular, the article considers the works of the 2000s-2010s by O. Nesterov and A. Zahaikevych, representing folk electronics in the academic sphere, and works by Katya Chilly, Stelsi, Kind of Zero representing folk electronics in non-academic music. The aesthetic basis of such combinations was the musical neo-folklore of the last third of the XX century and the achievements of folk rock in the late 1990s. Intensification of these searches in the late 2010s, in particular the popularity of such artists as Ruslana, Onuka, Go\_A allow us to talk about intensifying the national revival processes in the musical culture of Ukraine and involving Ukrainian music in the world culture preserving its national identity.

**Keywords:** electronic music, Ukrainian music, globalization, national revival, ethnonism, folk-electronics

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**1. Introduction**

The large number of works dedicated to electronic music could be divided into several areas. Technological researches are focused on studying electronic music instruments and computer software, musicological researches are focused on the analysis of the electronic music sound, styles and genres of electronic music. Cultural studies of electronic music are less represented. In particular, the issue of the impact of globalization processes on music art development on the one hand, and attempts to counter these processes by finding nationally characteristic artistic solutions on the other, is especially relevant in recent years.

At the end of the XX century intensification of globalisation led to the delimitation of cultural space into centres of world culture, producing major artistic innovations, and periphery,

oriented on the processes taking place in cultural centres (Siuta, 2006). Ukraine's position in this context is complicated by historical factors: until 1991, Ukraine was part of the USSR and, accordingly, remained a periphery in relation to Moscow as the cultural centre of the USSR. 30 years after independence proved to be a too short period to overcome the economic and social gap that separated Ukraine from the most successful countries in Europe, so the problem of Ukraine's peripheral position remains unresolved today.

At the same time, as a reaction to the processes of globalization, opposite tendencies arise – national revival, which is actualized in the art of music in search of nationally characteristic means of music expression. Globalisation and nationalism became two central phenomena of the modern world, that have both shaped and been shaped by each other (Halikiopoulou, 2013). Relevant processes are observed in contemporary music in many European countries. For example, there are significant researches related to the use of electronic music instruments with English folklore sound (Sweers, 2005), Kazakh folklore (Murzalieva, 2020) or the emergence of the Turbo-folk music genre, combining the features of modern dance electronic music and Balkan folklore, as a representative of the national identity of the Balkan peoples on the world stage (Čvoro, 2012). This paper aims to analyze the effects of globalization and national revival processes in Ukrainian electronic music.

## 2. Ukrainian electronic music under conditions of globalisation

In Ukraine, electronic music began to develop much later compared to European. If in Europe the 1950s were considered the period of electronic music formation and were associated with the work of specialized studios in Cologne and Paris, in Ukraine the first experiment in electronic music is considered to be the work “Scherzi domestici” by V. Godziatsky written in 1964. This work is performed in the style of specific music and resembles the first experiments of P. Schaeffer in the 1940s. Until the mid-1990s, electronic music in Ukraine did not have the potential to develop, due to Kyiv's peripheral position concerning Moscow and the Communist Party's hostility to creative experimentation.

Independence of Ukraine opened wide opportunities for Ukrainian musicians to learn from the European experience, to establish creative contacts with artists in Europe and the United States. At the same time, the problem of the peripheral situation remains relevant for Ukrainian artists, only the orientation changes – if before the 1990s it was exclusively about the orientation to Moscow, then after the 1990s the unidirectionality is replaced by multidirectionality – the orientation to Moscow and cultural centres of Western Europe at the same time.

In such circumstances, “for a composer from the national periphery in the process of such convergence, the fulcrum is often the principles and patterns used in the works of recognized colleagues from The “cultural centres” (Siuta, 2006: 24). What exactly are these trends in electronic music?

According to Siuta, such tendencies have musical and non-musical features. The first is the genre and stylistic orientation, which is manifested in the imitation of appropriate structural, timbre, intonation decisions. The second – in external features, such as titles of works, organization and names of festivals, etc.

As for experimental electroacoustic music, its stylistic features are largely stipulated by the fact that Ukrainian composers use foreign-made software. First of all, these are programs for sound synthesis such as Supercollider, Csound, Max / MSP, which largely determine the timbre palette of her works. These programs offer ample opportunities for generating sound objects of multiphonic and noise-like sound timbre typology, the greatest diversity of which

we find in the works by A. Zahaikevych, and later – in the younger generation of composers – O. Retinsky, A. Stuk, M. Shalygin, A. Arkhangorodska and others.

In terms of genre, no later than the end of the 2000s, Ukrainian authors mastered the main European genres of electronic music – “acoustic music” (among the most prominent works: “Coloured Fluography” by O. Nesterov, “Motus” by A. Zahaikevych, “Africa” by O. Retinsky, etc.), Music for tape and acoustic instruments (“v.runchak.b\_clari@net” by V. Runchak, “The last rite of the old wizard” by I. Nebesny, etc.) and live electronics (“Venezia”, “Mithe IV: KS” A. Zakhaykevych, etc.), video installations. Algorithmic composition technologies also have been assimilated by Ukrainian authors (“Algorhythm754” by G. Potopalsky, “Please wait” by Yu. Bulka, “Air Mechanics” by A. Zakhaykevych, etc.).

Regarding the exterior design, the Ukrainian edition of CDs “Electroacoustic works of Ukrainian composers 1964-2017” is indicative. It includes 25 works and only 2 of them are named in Ukrainian and written in transliteration – “Naoslip” by O. Chorny and “Kolomyika” by K. Olenych. All the others as well as the information about the authors is provided exclusively in English, which is evidence of the orientation of a foreign connoisseur.

As for dance electronic Music (EDM), Ukrainian authors are focused on popular EDM genres in Europe – techno, house, trance, drum-n-base etc. First EDM festivals are indicative – “The Republic of Kazantip” (1997-2013) and “Ideology” (2003-2013). The organizers of these festivals rely on well-known Western artists and prefer Russian-language PR technologies, which indicates the predominance of peripheral tendencies with a simultaneous focus on both the West (as the main centre) and Russia (as a regional centre). In 2010, however, we note a certain shift in the situation with the organization of festivals “Ultrasonic” (2011-2014) and, especially, “Gamselit” (2014-2019), which are characterized by Ukrainian-language PR-company and a more significant representation of the work of Ukrainian musicians.

### 3. National revival in Ukrainian electronic music

Despite the unfavorable political situation in Ukraine during the Russian and Soviet occupation, the interest of Ukrainian musicians in folklore has not faded, at least since the work of M. Lysenko, who managed to combine European musical genres with intonations of Ukrainian folk songs. The role of M. Lysenko in the development of Ukrainian music is compared with the role of F. Chopin for Polish or M. Glinka for Russian music.

At the beginning of the XX century, modern composers, such as I. Stravinsky, B. Bartok, partly S. Prokofiev, M. de Falla, L. Yanachek, Ukrainian composers L. Revutsky, B. Lyatoshynsky also showed interest in folklore. The work of these authors has received the general name “neo-folklore”, the stylistic feature of which is the use of individual songs of archaic folklore origin, which are developed based on repetition and variability, the theme itself is often “blurred contours” or “transfer to counterpoint layers” (*Derevyanchenko, 2005: 16*).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the so-called The “second wave of folklore”, which in the conditions of the Soviet “thaw” was embodied in the works of Ukrainian authors. A distinctive feature of the works of the “second wave of folklore” was the use of ethnophonisms, which are characterized as “timbre-sound aspect of folk instrumentation” (*Broiako, 2020: 23*). Examples of such a combination are the folk opera “Fern Blossom” by E. Stankovich, written in the mid-1970s.

In the late 1980s, neo-folklore became the property of mass culture in a number of countries in the Soviet space accompanied by “the spiritual awakening of the people and their fight for the restoration of independence” (*Klotinš, 2002: 107*). This trend also applies

to Ukrainian music culture and the organization of such festivals as Chervona Ruta and others. Finally, at the turn of the century, one can talk about the emergence of the “third wave of folklore”, associated with the interaction of folk sounds (ethnophonisms) with the latest timbres of electrical and electronic instruments. The latter can be expressed by the inclusion of folk instruments, folk style of singing, along with the involvement of recognizable plots of folk epics.

In Ukraine, the ground for attracting folklore was the most favourable. Despite the urbanization processes, by the end of the XX century in Ukraine the tradition of folk singing was preserved, notably in two forms – in the academic (for example, Vervovka choir) and authentic (for example, “Drevo”, “Bozhychi” ensembles). Note that the folk timbre is characterized by more intense higher harmonics and less intense lower formant, which gives the sound “depth and roundness”. A similar manner of singing is observed in Polish folklore, where it is called “white singing” (śpiew biały) or “śpiewokrzyk”, although the identity of Polish and Ukrainian singing styles is not in question.

Oleksandr Nestorov’s album “Contaminated Sounds” (1998) was the first experience of combining electronic with ethnic sounds in Ukrainian music. The ratios of authentic and electronic layers in this album are different. These can be timbre-texture integrations, when electronic timbres “co-intone with singing, forming urban heterophonic tutti”, or “timbre-disintegrated ensembles, where the electroacoustic layer shades singing, creating a timbre-rhythmic background” (Zahaikevych, 2008: 51-52).

In the 2000s, examples of the combination of electronic and folk sound include work of Kateryna Kondratenko (under the pseudonym Katya Chilly), Serhiy Kindzersky (under the pseudonym Kind of Zero), the band Stelsi and A. Kyrychenko.

A. Kyrychenko’s album “A Tangle of Mokosha” features a folk ensemble “Oira” and includes 10 folk songs that are sung in an authentic manner with electronic accompaniment. Their compositions are dominated by timbre-disintegrated ensembles – electronic accompaniment forms rhythmic and harmonic resistance, as well as colour effects. Songs by S. Kindzersky, featured vocal ensemble “Barvynok” combines drum-n-base electronic style and authentic vocal performed by “Barvynok” vocal ensemble. In Kateryna Kondratenko’s album “I’m Young” (2006) we find unique examples of combining authentic vocals with high, “falsetto” singing. The authentic vocals in this album are accompanied by the most refined specific electronic sound, while the accompaniment of singing in the upper tessitura is more inclined to the traditions of rock music.

In academic music, the most striking example of combining electronics with authentic singing was the project by A. Zahaikevych “Nord / Owest” (2011) – an electroacoustic performance for folk voice, violin, flute, percussion and electronics. In this composition, electronic sounds are framed into multi-layered layers with their drama of development and form an equal dialogue with authentic singing and playing on folk instruments. A. Zahaikevych’s appeal to authentic singing is not accidental – in the late 1980s – early 1990s the composer herself sang in the ensemble “Drevo” and participated in folklore expeditions, which became the “ideological prerequisite” of the composer’s appeal to “another, alternative and closed culture” (Rakunova, 2008: 97).

Authentic singing style is the most expressive, but not a necessary condition for classifying a composition as folk-electronic. Works have become more popular, in which both the specific electronic sound and the elements of authenticity remain veiled, harmoniously fitting into the general outline, sustained in the popular style with its pop vocals, and rhythmic reliance on the standard rhythm section. Ruslana’s victory at Eurovision (2004) with the song

“Wild Dances” played a significant role in popularizing this trend, proving that music inspired by Ukrainian folklore can achieve international success. A number of folk songs inspired by Ruslana were released as an electronic remix by Mikhail Nekrasov (under the pseudonym CJ Nekrasov) as bonuses to the album “Wild Dances + Eurobonus” (2004). In 2010, M. Nekrasov once again turned to ethnic themes, creating a video for “The Kukushka” with singer Inna Bordyug (performing under the pseudonym Zlata Ognevych). Thanks to the application for Eurovision, “The Kukushka” has probably become the second most popular composition including Ukrainian ethnic motifs after “Wild Dances”.

#### 4. Ukrainian electronic music in late 2010s

In the late 2010s, new projects related to the interaction of electronic and folk Music appear. First of all, the project “Onuka” is trying to combine characteristics of dance electronic music with the sound of Ukrainian folk instruments, such as bagpipes, cymbals, trembitas and others. Among the most revealing are the songs “Fire”, “Zenith”, “Who”. These songs are written in Ukrainian, and the sound of Ukrainian folk instruments is well identifiable by ear.

And, finally, a notable victory at the Ukrainian selection of the Eurovision Song Contest by Kateryna Pavlenko and the Go\_A project was achieved in 2020. Her song “Nightingale” is characterized by close to the folk style of singing, the use of Ukrainian folk instrument – “sopilka”, reliance on folklore and electronic accompaniment (pedal sounds and percussion).

What is the place of the compositions mentioned above in the globalized world culture?

According to musicologists, “in modern life, neo-folklore as a holistic phenomenon is important in the cultural and spiritual revival of the country, the preservation of the invaluable heritage of the Ukrainian people, its cultural identity both within the country and abroad” (*Chabanenko, 2019: 137*). Moreover, a combination of folk art with the techniques of modern pop “prolongs the life of folk song and its nation”, while “one-sided focus on scientific and technological achievements, which has long been accompanied by a superior attitude towards traditional cultures (especially non-European) is certainly a thing of the past.” (*Lytovka, 2013: 107*). This fully applies to electronic music.

The position of the musicians themselves is also interesting. Thus, according to N. Zhyzhenko, the appearance of her project coincided “with an explosion of self-identification” and the emergence of a tendency to “listen to Ukrainian music” (*Lesyshyn, 2019*). K. Pavlenko justifies his position as follows: “For centuries Ukraine has been trying to win the right to the existence of its culture, its language. And today is the very moment when we are not forbidden to speak Ukrainian, we are not forbidden to write and sing. You can just open a laptop and make cool Ukrainian music. Now everything is available and this is the perfect time to create something cool” (*Korshunov, 2020*).

It is noteworthy that K. Pavlenko’s victory at the Eurovision Song Contest provoked fierce discussions on social networks – part of the audience sincerely rejoiced at the success of Ukrainian songs, and others expressed scepticism if the song in Ukrainian with national characteristics can succeed in international competitions. This dispute shows a different attitude of Ukrainian citizens to national revival processes. If one part values these processes, the others perceive them as a threat. However, the very fact of the discussion testifies not only to the relevance of the folk-electronic trend but also denies the predictions of some researchers on the levelling of national cultural features soon.

## 5. Conclusions

The development of Ukrainian electronic music reflects two opposite trends in world culture in recent decades – the trend towards globalization and levelling of individual national cultures and trends towards national revival in modern forms of culture. In Ukraine, electronic music is developing with a late recovery to Western Europe and therefore in the early stages of development, was inevitably focusing on Western European traditions. At the same time, from the beginning of the XXI century, the search for a combination of electronic sounds with the characteristic sounds of Ukrainian folklore, which received a general name – folk electronics, has intensified. The success and recognition of folk electronics in Ukraine over the past few years allows considering the gradual neutralization of peripheral tendencies in the Ukrainian cultural space, forming regional cultural centres in Ukraine, attracting Ukrainian music to world culture preserving its national identity. A detailed study of Ukrainian folk electronics is a prospect for further research.

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