

Music in Ukraine: Harmony and Resilience



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Ukrainian music industry in the war time

Ukraine's Resilient Music Scene: Harmony Amidst Challenges

Mariana Bondarenko

In December, during the «[Notes from Ukraine](#)» concert at Carnegie Hall, commemorating the centenary of «Shchedryk» (Carol of the Bells), filmmaker Martin Scorsese profoundly declared, «You can kill the people, but you can't kill the culture.»

In 2022, as Russia initiated a full-scale invasion on February 24th, Ukraine's musicians united to safeguard their culture and democracy. They orchestrated numerous benefit concerts in Ukraine and worldwide, amplifying the voice of Ukraine. Music provided solace in Kharkiv's subways and the opening of the [Kharkiv Music Festival](#) took place underground. The Art Hub Odesa launched the online music marathon «[Cultural Power](#),» supporting the Ukrainian army and refugees. The Music Battalion, active since 2014, continued to organize benefit concerts and other initiatives across Ukraine. In Lviv, the Music Cultural Front emerged in March, commencing with jazz concerts at the railway station to support refugees, later hosting charity concerts and live streams from bomb shelters.

Jazz venues overcame formidable challenges, reopening their doors from April onwards in Kyiv, Odesa, Rivne, and Chernihiv. Lviv welcomed musicians from across Ukraine, enabling the continuation of music and performances. Courageous festival organizers conjured enchanting events, including the [Kyiv Bouquet Stage](#), the jubilee [Art Jazz Festival](#) in Rivne, and [Jazz Bez](#) in various cities with international line-ups. Music remained resilient and unwavering, never ceasing.

The Ukrainian Institute, dedicated to promoting Ukrainian culture abroad, faced a frozen budget during the invasion. However, support from friends, such as [Katowice City of Gardens](#), provided refuge to countless Ukrainian refugees and initiated artist residencies and concert opportunities. The Ukrainian Institute resolved to carry on its activities as an institution committed to continuing professional dialogue on the international cultural stage.

In 2022, the Ukrainian Institute initiated [first official Ukraine's participation at jazzahead!](#) in Bremen, featuring the first Ukrainian national stand, a delegation at the conference, and performances by [Vadim Neselovsky](#), [Ihor Osypov](#), and [LELEKA](#).



Minister of Culture, Claudia Roth at Ukrainian stand at jazzahead! 2023 in Bremen, Germany. Photo credit: Arkady Mitnik

Collaboration with the [Europe Jazz Network](#) yielded successful projects and initiatives, including an [interactive list of Ukrainian musicians](#) who had to leave the country due to the war, participation in the Sarajevo festival, and the addition of the [Ukrainian jazz guide](#) to the EJN website as part of the Jazz Panorama program. The fruitful work and negotiations at jazzahead! led to [Ukraine's first official delegation at WOMEX](#), featuring a national stand, exhibitions, film screenings, participation in conference networking sessions, and a concert by [Balaklava Blues](#).



Balaklava Blues in showcase program at WOMEX '22.
Photo credit: Eric van Nieuwland

The Ukrainian Institute also initiated the exhibition «[Ukrainian Jazzmen at War](#)» to honor famous Ukrainians defending their homeland. This exhibition premiered at WOMEX '22 was further presented in Warsaw at several jazz venues, Budapest Ritmo and jazzahead!. [Collaboration with the Jazz Institute in Darmstadt](#) offers hope for an increased Ukrainian presence in the largest European jazz archive. The enduring festival partnership between Szczecin Jazz and Jazz on the Dnipro resulted in a harmonious joint concert featuring Ukrainian and international musicians at Lagow Lake.

The outpouring of love and support from the Polish people and numerous initiatives have reaffirmed Ukraine's sense of belonging to a larger family. Special thanks go to Jazz Forum magazine, with whom cooperation began in 2021, and for motivating the exploration of the Ukrainian jazz scene that resulted in [special edition on Ukraine by Jazz Forum](#) in January 2023.

Almost two years have passed since the full-scale invasion in Ukraine started. Amidst war atrocities, Ukraine has been undergoing a profound transformation, and crucial indicators of music sustainability have emerged:

Resilience and Adaptability:

Musicians have demonstrated remarkable resilience and adapted to rapidly changing situations. They've converted [unconventional venues into unique concert spaces](#), even performing during electricity shortages. Foundations and crowdfunding initiatives have emerged to support musicians and music infrastructure.

Private Initiatives and NGOs:

Ukraine's civil society played a pivotal role in preserving the country's musical heritage. Private initiatives and non-governmental organizations displayed extraordinary mobility, cooperation, and resourcefulness, ensuring the sustainability of the Ukrainian music industry.

Reinventing Identity:

Musicians like Eurovision winner Jamala have turned to their cultural roots for inspiration. [Jamala's new album «QIRIM»](#) reflects a deep reconnection with her Crimean Tatar heritage.

Musical Innovation:

Musicians have incorporated the sounds and instruments of war into their programs. This

creative response includes using weapons as art objects and musical instruments.

New Initiatives and Unions:

New initiatives have emerged, such as the Institute of Improvisational Music in Lviv and the «Jazz Relocation» project in Lviv, uniting musicians and fostering new collaborations.

Emerging Festivals and Venues:

New music festivals have arisen in Ukraine, and new concert venues have enriched the music scene. Notable additions include the [Kharkiv Frontier Jazz Fest](#) in Ukraine and the internationally acclaimed [SVITANOK](#) festival, held in Norway with plans for further editions. In Kharkiv, the Yermilov Center, nestled within the historic Kharkiv University building, has become a vibrant hub for concerts and interdisciplinary events. The scene has been invigorated by the introduction of brand-new venues, including Odnodumzi in Kyiv, Na Poshti in Ternopil, and Froots in Kyiv, providing fresh platforms for musical expression and cultural exchange.

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Cultural Diplomacy in Wartime: The Ukrainian Institute's Multifaceted Approach

Amidst the challenging backdrop of wartime in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Institute (UI), a governmental institution, has been at the forefront of cultural diplomacy, using various initiatives to promote Ukrainian culture on the international stage. Here, we explore the multifaceted approach that UI has taken to engage with the world during these tumultuous times.

1. Bringing Awareness of Ukrainian Current Situation:

UI recognizes the importance of raising global awareness about Ukraine's ongoing situation. To achieve this, they have undertaken several crucial actions:

- *Cooperation with Europe Jazz Network (EJN):* UI has partnered with EJN to create a list of Ukrainian musicians who now find themselves abroad due to the war. This initiative not only brings visibility to these musicians but also serves as a testament to their resilience.
- *Sending Newsletters:* UI regularly sends newsletters to an international audience, keeping them informed about the latest Ukrainian music releases, new programs, and more. This is a vital tool for updating the world on Ukraine's cultural contributions, even during challenging times.



Ukrainian panel at European music forum: Dmytro Savkiv (32 jazz club), Joanna Grotkowska (Polish music council), Alona Dmukhovska (Music export Ukraine), Olga Bekenstein (Am I Jazz? festival) and Mariana Bondarenko (Ukrainian Institute). Photo credit: European music council

has collected stories from famous Ukrainian musicians who are currently unable to perform due to their frontline service. The resulting «Ukrainian Jazzmen at War» exhibition is a documentary photo project, displayed at various international venues, which tells the stories of these musicians. We hope to see these artists return to the stage soon, their experiences reflected in their music.

2. Implementing Cultural Programs as a Soft Power in Conflict Resolution:

UI recognizes the role of cultural programs as a form of soft power in conflict resolution. They have executed numerous initiatives to achieve this:

- *Extra Sound Program:* UI's «Extra Sound» program facilitates the participation of Ukrainian musicians at showcase festivals worldwide. This includes events such as WOMEX, jazzahead!, Waves Vienna, Reeperbahn, and c/o pop. In 2022, UI made its first official presence at jazzahead! and WOMEX with national stands, official delegations, and participation in conferences and showcase programs.
- *List of Cooperation Proposals:* UI has compiled a list of cooperation proposals from Ukraine's music industry, spanning musicians, festivals, concert venues, labels, and more. This provides a framework for collaborations and partnerships with international counterparts.
- *Climate Change Initiatives:* UI is in negotiations with Europe Jazz Network (EJN) to integrate Ukrainian concert venues and festival organizers into the green tours program, addressing climate change concerns and fostering sustainable practices in the music industry.

3. Integrating Ukraine into the International Discourse:

UI strives to integrate Ukraine into the international cultural discourse through various projects:

- *EJN's Jazz Panorama Project:* This project includes a Ukrainian online jazz guide published on the EJN website, providing a comprehensive overview of Ukraine's jazz scene to international audiences.
- *Series of Articles:* UI is preparing a series of articles focusing on Ukraine's jazz scene, offering insight into its history and evolution from the Soviet era to the present.
- *Decolonial Studies:* UI is gathering materials for translation and making them available to international audiences, fostering a deeper understanding of Ukraine's cultural identity.
- *Analytical Department:* UI has established an analytical department to conduct studies on how Ukraine is presented abroad, allowing for informed decisions regarding cultural diplomacy.

4. Acting as a Medium Between Ukrainian Artists and the International Community:

UI plays a pivotal role in connecting Ukrainian artists and institutions with the global community:

- **Gathering Inputs:** UI collects insights from Ukrainian music industry representatives and shares them with the international community, facilitating meaningful dialogues and collaborations.
- **Building Partnerships:** UI seeks to establish new partnerships with international institutions, spanning festivals, music venues, agencies, labels, media, and more. These partnerships foster cultural exchange and cooperation.

5. Creating a Platform for Ukrainian Culture Internationally:

UI works to create a platform for Ukrainian culture globally, exemplified by several programs:

- **Stockholm International Women's Jazz Festival:** UI has organized a unique program featuring only Ukrainian participants, coupled with a concert tour across five cities.
- **Special Edition in Jazz forum Magazine:** UI has published a special edition in Jazz Forum magazine, shedding light on Ukraine's vibrant jazz scene, from its historical roots to contemporary developments.



Asia Pieczykolan (Jazz Forum magazine) and Oleksii Kogan (radio journalist, art director at Leopold jazz fest) with special edition on Ukrainian jazz scene in Jazz Forum magazine. Photo credit: Arkady Mitnik

6. Capacity Building for Ukrainian Music Industry Representatives:

UI strives to enhance the capacities of Ukrainian music industry representatives:

- **Participation in Key Events:** UI facilitates the participation of Ukrainian delegates in essential events, including the Europe Jazz Network (EJN) conference, Budapest Ritmo, Jazzinstitute Darmstadt, Gothenburg conferences, and collaborations with international summer schools.
- **Artists at Risk:** UI collaborates with the Artists at Risk initiative, offering support and opportunities for artists facing challenging circumstances.
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Ukrainian and EJN delegations after a fruitful meeting and brainstorming at jazzahead! '22. Photo credit: EJN

In times of adversity, UI's commitment to cultural diplomacy remains unwavering, leveraging the power of music and art to foster understanding, resilience, and unity on the international stage. Ukraine's cultural heritage and contributions continue to shine brightly, even in the face of hardship.

Mariana Bondarenko
 Head of Music Programs at the Ukrainian Institute

Overview of Ukrainian live music industry after the start of russian aggression

Alona Dmukhovska

During the first couple of months of russian aggression in Ukraine, we had no concerts in the country because of the obvious reasons: obscurity around and security. Over the course of summer, people were trying to build a 'new normal' in the current situation - trying to do the test events in the subway stations. Because they are safe deep underground and have great acoustics. You probably have heard that U2's Bono and Edge [were playing](#) a surprise gig there, numerous Ukrainian artists [played solo concerts](#) there and even the winter season of the local TV show 'The Voice' [was filmed](#) in Kyiv underground.

During the autumn of 2022 and the beginning of this year, local promoters and music enthusiasts started organizing small-scale gigs. Small, because when you have an event for 200 people, you have to have a bomb shelter right next to it for 200 people, so when the alarm siren starts, over the course of a couple of minutes you can evacuate all of them. The electronic community in Ukraine also found a way to continue their activities - the world-known Kyiv techno club 'Closer' even [does music festivals](#) - starting early in the morning and finishing in the evening. The reason for that is the curfew in all cities that we have during the nighttime, so no events are allowed then. So yes, you have got it right - rave parties during the daylight. It's possible and still entertaining. And now you finally have an excuse to wear those fancy sunglasses while dancing to look cool.

Also, a lot of Ukrainian artists are trying to support Armed Forces of Ukraine and go to play acoustic concerts for our brave people. The frontman of one of the biggest Ukrainian rock bands, Svyatoslav Vakarchuk every couple of [months goes to the frontline](#) to make what he can best.

All of those events are taking place not because of the wish to have fun, but because of a clear humanitarian need - every single event happening now in Ukraine and abroad is not for business, but to raise donations to help those in need. Besides, it's crucially important to keep the economy moving, keep the working places and own teams active. Not to mention such well-forgotten words as 'mental health', which does not exist in our reality anymore. It's rather an important activity to stay sane.

The most extreme example of the bravery of Ukrainian artists we can see in the recent [tour 'Koptyp'](#)

(from Ukrainian: contour), meaning playing along the contour of the frontline, therefore the name. It was prepared in the form of the concert by [Stas Korolov](#) and spoken word performance 'war-някання' by [Anton Slepakov](#) and Andrii Sokolov. They were the first people with cultural events visiting recently de-occupied regions of Ukraine after many months of russian horrors. Extreme security measures, totally destroyed cities. But that was totally worth it at that exact moment when the old lady came to the artist's team: "People, you are totally crazy that you have come here with the concert! It is insane! But finally, for the first time in many months, I feel alive!" - they shared in social media afterward.

Luckily for us, international acts are starting to come back to Ukraine: we [just had The Tiger Lillies](#) who dedicated an album to Ukraine and played 2 sold-out shows in Lviv and Kyiv, UK's London Elektriccity came to play a set in July, Luxembourg-born singer-songwriter Rome played a couple of times here and continuously supports humanitarian needs at the spot. All of that gives a good sign for the foreign agents, that promoters are at place, and the audience is active, so with the proper preparation concerts in Ukraine are possible.

Considering the role of the artists, it has definitely changed now. It is the logical social position of musicians to be active now - not depending on their status or the size of the audience. This situation united many of us. Some of the musicians went to the army (such as [Andriy Khlyvniuk](#) from Bombox band as the major artist on local scene or singer-songriter [Sasha Boole](#) from a super niche genre), some are volunteering or doing social projects like [ONUKA](#), some are playing concerts home and abroad to raise awareness and money for the help such as live industry titans [DakhaBrakha](#). It's actually a very important public diplomacy mission as well. People are tired of news and war in general, but through music and personal stories ready to listen and support. Ukraine is well known for its massive volunteer movement. Artists are not an exception. Every single person can and should complement the mutual victory. This is exactly the mood we all have in the creative community.

All musicians and artists from Ukrainian are fighting at the cultural front now as well - against imperialism, against disinformation, for the opportunity to be heard for the very first time internationally and not let people forget about war crimes just around the corner. It's vitally necessary now to be vocal and visible to survive. For instance, the social media of Ukrainian prog-rock band [Stoned Jesus](#) now are partly a war diary, because the band would like to raise awareness about current events and tell their side of the story. It pisses off some of the fans, who say that they would rather play music and shut up. But music is still political, you know?

DJ [Daria Kolomiec](#) is playing super rare Ukrainian music from 60s and 70s, which was banned and buried in history by Soviets, as an opportunity to dig deeper into the creative power of our cultural heritage and remind us about war. This year she played [ESNS](#), one of the most influential showcase festivals in Europe and have been featured in The New York Times to make sure her message is heard.

Such emerging acts as [Love'n'Joy](#), recording studio Shpytal records, promo agency kontrabass. promo founded a charity foundation [Musicians Defend Ukraine](#). They play dozens of tours around the continent with their bands from the roster like Kurs Valut or Krapka;Koma to fundraise money

and buy the protective gear for fellow musicians, who are in the army now. So yes, now more than ever we have to be active internationally. As there can be no tomorrow.

Obviously, economically, the situation is extreme. People would rather donate some extra money for the security needs, rather than spend it on leisure. Therefore, pre-sales of the tickets are extremely low. The horizon of planning is for a couple of days in advance maximum as any time a new missile or drone attack can destroy another energy infrastructure. But we are ready for that as well now. The best present for the Ukrainian promoter is an electrical generator now. And yes, most of the concerts are played with them now. Even if the electricity is switched off, the audience will cover the artist anyway (just like at the famous concert of Ukrainian artists [Artem Pivovarov](#)).

Our organization Music Export Ukraine is an independent NGO, therefore we have much more flexibility than our foreign colleagues in state or business-owned export offices. We are helping to book Ukrainian artists to any festival or venue out there, who is interested in Ukrainian band ([recommended list is here](#)). We are talking to the sync agencies to help feature Ukrainian music in ads and films. Not only that, but we are doing numerous talks and concerts at the showcase conferences and festivals, we do exchange and educational projects with the international partners, fundraise money to support our team and [pay scholarships](#) to Ukrainian musicians, find jobs for Ukrainian music-related people all around the world via our network and trusted contacts.

Sometimes I feel that now we are kind of not-for-profit Mega-label and Ministry of Music altogether. Those are obviously not export office functions. But all those requests we are getting, show the need and interest in Ukrainian music abroad. Therefore, we are happy to be the contact point for the international community in their search for Ukrainian music for their event or project to make sure that our voice is heard.

To give an overview of the range of projects we do and can cooperate with, I'd like to highlight the most important ones for our team over the last 1.5 years:

“Music is an answer” project - a unique opportunity for Ukrainian musicians to run joint projects with their foreign colleagues. It was implemented within the framework of the EU-funded MusicAire grant program.

To participate in the Camp, Ukrainian non-academic musicians of any genre and scale submitted applications with an overview of their creative idea and budget. All who passed technical and creative selection have received 1,000 euros for the implementation of their projects. Overall, the program supported 25 international cooperations: joint songs and remixes, performances, and collaborations with foreign producers, music studios, and labels, which were well-covered both in Ukrainian and foreign media. As a result of these collaborations, Rolling Stone DE wrote highlighted one of the tracks, Spotify supported the premiere in “New Music Friday” playlists in 7 different countries simultaneously, legendary UK journalists included tracks from the collabs into their compilations, etc.

Presentation of Ukrainian artists at showcase festivals and conferences. Organisation supported and run the following partnership activations with the business focus: Reeperbahn Festival, WOMEX, Waves Vienna, Viva Sounds, BIME PRO!, Mama Music, Music x Media, Live at Heart, Andalucia Music Forum, ILMC, pop, but the most powerful presentation was at ESNS 2023, were:

7 Ukrainian bands and artists played fully-packed shows in front of professional audiences, media representatives, and music fans. Congratulations to Love'n'Joy, Chiller, Krapka; KOMA, JERRY HEIL, Kurs Valüt, Alina Pash, Daria Kolomic for the great shows! We hope they will accelerate your career development in the upcoming years!

Besides that, Alina Pash hosted the award show of EU's Music Moves Europe Awards, where Jerry Heil got the special Public choice awards from the audience.

Along with that, Всеукраїнська Асоціація Музичних Подій UAME received The Take A Stand Award on European Festival Awards as one of the best social projects of the previous year.

During the conference time, MEU had an opportunity to lead a specially devoted thematic discussion, «Undiscovered Ukraine: what do you have to know about the music scene of the brave nation?», get some insights and predictions during «Metal music in Eastern Europe: stronger than ever?», have a personal talk with Igor Sydorenko (Stoned Jesus) during the Beer Crate Session, participate in futuristic talks by IMMF, numerous meetings with colleagues, partner projects and educational events. Also now, Music Export Ukraine is a happy member of ESNS exchange network, which gives us the opportunity to nominate our artists as the highlights of the program. This would give them more opportunities to be featured in international media and have more chances to be booked for European festivals.

Eastern European Music Academy - is a collaborative effort between Music Export Ukraine, [RAW Music](#) (Romania), and [Lala Slovak Music Export](#) (Slovakia) with the support of "Creative Europe" program, which offers a transformative three-month hybrid project designed exclusively for independent music professionals from Eastern and Central Europe, as well as the Baltic countries.

This exclusive program is designed for talented individuals aged 18-30 who are eager to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in the music industry. Backed by renowned experts and esteemed organizations like Live Nation, Global Records, and experienced DIY companies, EEMA ensures a comprehensive learning experience that covers every aspect of the music business, from creative endeavors to strategic marketing. Over the course of 12 weeks, selected applicants will embark on a transformative journey. Through expert-led classes, tailored consultations and immersive networking opportunities, participants will acquire invaluable insights into the music business landscape.

Cooperation with European Radio Plugger. Thanks to that, 12 Ukrainian artists' tracks were pitched to European radio stations in 2022. These artists, including AKINE, Bjelle & Krapka, Bohdan Kuper, Disappeared Completely, FO SHO, I Hate Myself Because, KALUSH, Love'n'Joy, Sasha Boole, The Hardkiss, The Unsleping, and YuYu, have seen a significant increase in airtime

on European radio with over 8200 plays across 80+ stations in 20+ countries. This is a huge step forward for Ukrainian music and we couldn't be more excited for these talented artists to continue making waves in the European scene.

Music Export Ukraine was founded in 2018 to help Ukrainian emerging artists establish connections, promote their music, and develop a career on the international level. The main objectives of the organization include sustainable artist support, expanding cross-sector collaborations, organizing accessible international exchange programs and educational events for emerging artists and music professionals. Our vision is to ensure the sustainable high capacity of the national music market, and to get Ukraine to the agenda of all key music industry events and programmes globally. We are partners of British Council Ukraine Selector Pro projects and delivery partners of the Ukrainian Institute in terms of Extra Sound programs.

At the moment, Music Export Ukraine runs supported by Creative Europe hybrid capacity building project Eastern European Music Academy, which aims to professionalize emerging artists from the whole region and help them to compete on the international level. Besides, the organization is part of a research action supported by Horizon Europe program and works on the topic of data gaps in the music industry.

Full projects list can be found here: <https://musicexportukraine.com/about-meu/activities-2023>

Contacts: info@musicexportukraine.com

<https://musicexportukraine.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/musicexportukraine/>

<https://www.facebook.com/musicexportukraine>

Ukraine. Music in time of war: new realities, existential challenges

Lessia Olijnyk

Like all life in Ukraine during the war, musical life, of course, changed dramatically. But music (we are talking first of all about academic music) now not only continues to function actively, but also expands all its possibilities and influences as much as possible. She has become an important part of spiritual resistance to aggression and evil, a symbol of hope and faith in the victory of good, emotional, moral and psychological support, a means of uniting people.

New extremely bright works appeared as a reaction response of composers to tragic events. I will name only a few of them - the symphonic and choral opus «Ukraine. Music of War» and «Psalms of War» by Yevhen Stankovych (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOOijrkxbA8>), «Bucha. Lacrimosa» by Victoria Poleva (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9RzoxWmYt2g>), the choral cycle «Tears» and “Prayer for Ukraine” by Valentin Sylvestrov (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RrfCfoH_ck), «Lacrimosa» by Oleksandr Shchetynskyi, «City of Mary» (dedicated to Mariupol) by Zoltan Almasha, «Shine by the black sun» (Donbass, 2022) by Yevhena Petrichenko, «War Psalms» chamber compositions «Drop after drop» (to the heroes of Ukraine) by Maksym Shalygin, «Reading History» by Carmella Tsepkoenko (<https://youtu.be/flgMnWToWGs>), and the opera «Terrible Revenge» (based on Gogol) by Yevhen Stankovych (<https://www.facebook.com/lvivoperaofficial/videos/25.11.2022>) and many others. These and other works are heard not only in Ukraine.

During the war, the disposition of Ukrainian musical culture in the world changed dramatically. The attention of the world community to the war in Ukraine aroused interest both in the country itself and in its history and culture. In this sense music, thanks to its communicative capabilities found itself in the center of attention. Well-known art agencies began to actively involve Ukrainian soloists and orchestras in the musical life of their countries. From recent examples there is the very successful tours of the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine in Great Britain: IMG Artists organized 17 concerts in the cities of England, Scotland, and Wales. Among the classics of European music, the works of Ukrainian composers were played in these concerts, which literally became a discovery for the listeners.

A great role in the promotion of Ukrainian music is played by music festivals and competitions in Ukraine itself, which during the war expanded their geography and also became «immigrants». As an example, these are the successful «Bouquet Kyiv Stage» festivals in Oxford, London and Tbilisi ((the next one will be in the USA), the Odessa festival «2 days and 2 nights of new music» in Eckernförde (Germany), the competition of young pianists in memory of Volodymyr Horovyts in Geneva, the VII online competition «Odesa Music Olymp» (<https://www.omofestofficial.com/>),

the partner of which, by the way, is the National Committee of Ukraine IMS, and in which even children from Bakhmut took part.

We are observing a peculiar phenomenon – through music, through our musicians, Ukraine is becoming known in the world. Performers from Great Britain, Switzerland, Germany, the Baltic countries, the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Sweden, Italy, the USA, and other countries show great interest in Ukrainian music, which was previously almost unknown abroad (https://youtu.be/_pWKVJFF-Pc). In Ukraine, a platform has been created where 2,000 scores of works by Ukrainian composers are digitized and ready for use. The demand for them is growing: in just two months of the war, more than 600 applications were received from different countries of the world.

It is clear that the war brought completely new challenges and great difficulties to the existence of music, to Ukrainian musicians. A colossal number of performers, teachers, composers, musicologists, and managers found themselves in a difficult, difficult situation: hundreds were forced to live abroad, thousands became internally displaced. After February 24 of last year, many musicians took up weapons instead of instruments to defend Ukraine. Unfortunately, many of them died on the battlefield.

But the musicians of Ukraine feel a lot of support and help, how our country feels the support and help of the whole world during a cruel, unjust war.

Let me remind you of a well-known fact from ancient history. As early as the 11th century, in Kyivan Rus, as in many European countries, there were so-called music workshops, which united all those involved in the musical profession, who supported and helped each other. This is the kind of union solidarity that musicians are now showing on an international scale. After all, the musicians of Ukraine feel great support and help, just as our country feels the support and help of the whole world during an aggressive, brutal war. And I take this opportunity to express my gratitude on behalf of the musical community of Ukraine to all colleagues, partners, all international organizations, foundations for their solidarity, support and help. They are helped by special funds created in Ukraine. For example, Musicians Defend Ukraine provides musicians, artists with bulletproof vests, necessary military items, and medical supplies. The Ukrainian Emergency Aid Art Fund was also founded.

One of the first international organizations that support our musicians outside of Ukraine and in Ukraine itself was the Swiss Association «Art Without Borders». As early as March 1, 2022, the Association called on people from all over the world to help Ukrainians financially: «Usually we help young musicians on their career path, now we help them survive – medicine, food, emergency medical care». On the initiative of the International Organization for Migration, the UN Migration Agency, the Representative Office in Ukraine, with the support of the Yoshiki Foundation America, a grant program was created to support Ukrainians during the war with the help of music. This program includes stabilizing the mental health of the affected population, strengthening the social integration of war-affected children and their families. Thanks to mobility grants under the EU4 Culture program funded by the EU and other international grants, helps to continue creative activity of composers and musicologists. Another example of international support Ukrainian professors

are accepted by higher educational institutions in Europe. Another example of international support for Ukrainian musicians is the well-known company «C. Bechstein» donated its building in Berlin to Ukrainian refugees and organizes charity concerts with the participation of immigrant musicians.

The international academic mobility program Erasmus+ provides significant help to young musicians, thanks to which 87 students of higher educational musical institutions of Ukraine are currently studying in Italy, Germany, Spain, Estonia. There is also another category of Ukrainian students who, during the war, received a musical education in parallel - in Ukraine and in the institution of the country where they are now. The Vere Music Fund and other international grantmakers continue to provide grants to creative youth. And there are many such examples.

Of course, the functioning of music is supported by the state structures of Ukraine. This includes partial financing of musical projects and, importantly, permission for male musicians to temporarily leave Ukraine during tours. This makes it possible to unite artists into international musical groups. For example, «Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra» united musicians from Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Odesa and artists from various orchestras around the world. With the support of the Metropolitan Opera and the Polish National Opera under the baton of conductor Kerri-Lynn Wilson, the «Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra» made a major tour of European countries, which ended in Washington. The National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, the National Choral Chapel «Dumka», orchestras and soloists of the Ukrainian Philharmonics, the «Ukrainian Youth Orchestra» under the direction of Oksana Lyniv continue their touring activities.

The forced internal emigration of musicians who were forced to leave war zones is also a big problem. Music educational institutions in Kyiv, Lviv, and other relatively safe cities accept professors and students from all front-line regions. In the same way as abroad, musicians unite



Music for the military

in mixed collectives, where local musicians play with immigrants from Kharkiv, Luhansk, Mariupol, Kherson, Donetsk, and colleagues from Severodonetsk, Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia, etc. act as soloists and conductors.



Dmytro Morozov, the chief conductor of the Kharkiv National Theater of Opera and Ballet

Their performances are held under the slogans «For the sake of life», «Music against war», «Music of the indomitable», «Ukrainian artists with their weapons». Most musical events are held to raise funds to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine, military hospitals and help refugees. Hundreds of concerts were held in frontline areas and even on the front line. The reaction, emotions and words of gratitude of the military to these concerts are incredible!

After all, it often happens that air alarms a few minutes before the concert, or sirens during the concert force the audience to take cover. A special telethon «Concert for the whole world from the bomb shelter» was even created. The project of Kharkiv musicians was also impressive: on the streets of Kharkiv, near completely destroyed buildings, Bach's music sounds live. (<https://youtu.be/IQHZO11LcKU>)

Of course, these are only some features of the picture of musical life in modern Ukraine. But concluding my speech, I want to convey the belief of all of us that after the Victory of Ukraine, music, like all life, will gradually return to its usual, not extreme, forms of existence. And for this, a lot of support and help from colleagues and partners of the entire international music community will be needed, and among them – further cooperation with such a respectable institution as EMC/IMS.

**Secretary General of the National Committee of Ukraine IMS,
Secretary of the Board of the National Union Composers of Ukraine,
Phd
Lessia Oliinyk**

32JazzClub: A Five-Year Journey Shaping Kyiv's Jazz Landscape

Dmytro Savkiv,
Arthur Yampolsky

The December of 2022 marked a significant milestone for Kyiv's cultural scene - the five-year anniversary of the establishment of 32JazzClub, a unique haven for jazz enthusiasts and musicians alike. This exceptional journey began within the walls of Vozdvizhenka Arts House Gallery of Contemporary Art, a brainchild of Ukrainian businessman Viktor Savkiv, who set out to create a space that would transcend conventional art and music norms.

Vozdvizhenka Arts House Gallery of Contemporary Art was a bold venture from its inception. It emerged from the transformation of three separate garages into a white-cube style hall, enriched by a first-class cocktail bar. The gallery took its name from its house number, 32. It didn't take long for this establishment to become synonymous with a sign that read «32» on Vozdvyzhenska Street and the warm, welcoming smile of the legendary chef-bartender, Yuri Melnychenko, behind the bar deck.

An interesting footnote in the club's history lies in its early days. The gallery's first exhibition, «Biryuchy,» was a nod to the famous art platform in Zaporizhzhya, Ukraine. The debut exhibition was aptly named «Let My People Go,» after Roman Minin's iconic work depicting Louis Armstrong with a typical Ukrainian Cossack hairstyle. This symbolic choice set the stage for a continued celebration of Ukrainian artists and their unique fusion of culture and jazz.

Support for 32JazzClub's ventures arrived in a unique form in the fall of one fateful year. The Jazz Foundation of America offered its support, marking the first time the foundation extended its reach beyond the United States. With this newfound partnership, 32JazzClub could further its dream of bringing the spotlight to the Ukrainian jazz scene, bolstering its international presence.

While the club thrived and celebrated its successes, it couldn't escape the shadow of conflict. The ongoing war cast its long, dark shadow, presenting a new set of challenges. The cultural and informational frontlines became battlegrounds, with an online auction from the Stockholm Women's International Jazz Festival becoming a crucial theater of operation. The painting «Peace» by Jenny Svenberg, also the official image of the festival in Stockholm, was exhibited to raise funds for the support of Ukrainian culture. Such initiatives showcased the resilience and camaraderie of the global jazz community.

None of the club's members ever imagined finding themselves in such dire conditions, but their unwavering belief in the power of music and the human spirit sustained them. In the words of

Cameroonian artist Etienne Mbappe, recently performed by the New Jazz In Kyiv Band, «Musango Na Wa» translated from the Zulu language, means «Peace be with you.» This story, like the music, continued to resonate.

Introduction to 32JazzClub

Nestled in the heart of Kyiv's historic Podil region, 32JazzClub stands as a testament to the enduring power of music. Established in December 2017, it has quickly become a cherished musical oasis that defies conventions and enriches the city's cultural tapestry. This journey originated from the legacy of Vozdvizhenka Arts House Gallery of Contemporary Art, founded in 2015. In a city renowned for its diverse musical genres, 32JazzClub emerged as a pioneering project that celebrates jazz's rich history while nurturing local talent and hosting international luminaries.

A Jazz Sanctuary Amid Diversity

Kyiv boasts a rich musical tapestry encompassing classical, pop, rock, and folk genres. However, in December 2017, 32JazzClub entered the scene, ushering in a new era of creativity and sophistication. As a dedicated jazz hub, the club not only carved out its niche but also captured the attention of music enthusiasts and aficionados, defying expectations in a city where diversity reigns.

Nurturing the Local Jazz Scene

From its inception, 32JazzClub was more than just a venue; it was a sanctuary for the local jazz community. Recognizing the need to nurture and cultivate local talent, the club provided a platform for budding jazz musicians. It became a space where emerging artists could showcase their skills, experiment with new sounds, and connect with fellow enthusiasts, contributing to the evolution of the city's jazz culture.

Inaugural Jazz Bezz Festival: A Grand Opening

The club burst onto the scene by hosting the prestigious Jazz Bezz festival in its inaugural month. This event marked the club's commitment to establishing itself as a prominent jazz institution. The festival not only featured local talents but also welcomed international artists, setting the stage for cross-cultural exchange and musical brilliance.

A Heart of Musical Artistry

In the years that followed, 32JazzClub solidified its status as a mecca for jazz enthusiasts. It attracted both emerging and established musicians, who were drawn to its intimate yet electric ambiance. The club's acoustics and atmosphere provided an ideal setting for artists to present their authentic music, often debuting new singles and entire albums. The result was a dynamic interplay of creativity and expression that deeply resonated with audiences.

International Allure: Jazz Giants on Stage

The allure of 32JazzClub extended beyond the local scene, enticing renowned international musicians to grace its stage. Jazz luminaries such as Greg Osby, [Tal Cohen](#), Omer Avital, [Aaron Goldberg](#), Logan Richardson, and Benny Benack made their presence felt, enthraling audiences with their virtuosity and innovative compositions. Their performances not only showcased their individual brilliance but also elevated the club's reputation as an international jazz destination.

Surviving and Thriving Through Adversity

The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges to the music industry, forcing many venues to shutter their doors. However, 32JazzClub demonstrated remarkable resilience, adapting to the changing landscape. By embracing virtual performances and innovative streaming methods, the club managed to remain a beacon of hope for musicians and enthusiasts alike, demonstrating the unwavering spirit of the jazz community.

Supporting the Jazz Ecosystem Amidst Crisis

As the war-torn clouds of the Russian invasion cast their shadow, 32JazzClub assumed an even greater role in supporting local musicians and veteran players. Amidst the ongoing Russian invasion, the club provided a platform for expression, serving as a sanctuary where musicians could channel their emotions into their art. The result was a surge of creativity, with more than 20 new albums released by various artists, reflecting their resilience and determination.

Per Aspera ad Astra

Despite ongoing war, the club has managed to organize more than 250 concerts. In addition to the usual programs for any jazz club with jazz standards and dedications to famous jazzmen, there were many original programs ranging from modern fusion to almost avant-garde. It would be important to highlight the following events: the performances of the quintet and sextet of [pianist Ilya Eresko](#), the Ukrainian ethno-jazz program of singer Alina Zavoznaya, the modern fusion of groups of pianist Olexandr Malyshev and guitarist Mykola Zinchenko, the Ukrainian example of the European jazz mainstream from saxophonist [Viktor Pavelko](#) or double bassist Kostyantyn Ionenko, a polar example of the American jazz mainstream from trumpeter Dennis Adu and guitarist [Misha Mendelenko](#), Ukrainian neo-soul (there is such a thing) from [the Dao Park](#) group and the Liza Bayrak band, a modern take on post-bop from a group of saxophonists Mykola Ryshkov and Grigory Parshin.

In Conclusion

32JazzClub stands as a testament to the transformative power of music in the face of adversity. From its humble beginnings hosting the Jazz Bezz festival to its role as a haven for local and international musicians, the club's journey has been nothing short of remarkable. As it continues to defy the odds, even amidst global challenges, 32JazzClub beckons to the world, inviting enthusiasts to become part of a harmonious movement that celebrates the enduring spirit of jazz in Kyiv's Podil region. The club has become a symbol of hope, resilience, and the unwavering power of music to unite people in challenging times.

<https://32jazz.club/en/>

Voices of musicians.

Reflections on the war time

War and Making Music

Dennis Adu

Dennis Adu is a renowned Ukrainian jazz musician, trumpet player, composer, bandleader, senior instructor in the Department of Jazz Music at the [R. Glier Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music](#), and the conductor of the Glier Academy's Jazz Orchestra.

Since the beginning of the war, Dennis Adu has become one of those jazz musicians who clearly defined his civic position, actively resisted the aggression, and established the further direction of his personal activity. "Those first days, we didn't know what to do. And when the Ukrainian Art Front was launched in Lviv in March 2022, we did everything that was necessary: unloaded semis, directed humanitarian cargo, coordinated the settlement of refugees, played in the LV Café Jazz Club to collect money for the AFU, streamed concerts... I never saw such a coming together of people before," Dennis recalls.

The Ukrainian Art Front (UAF) is a project started by Serhiy Fedorchuk, a Ukrainian musician and music event organizer, and Olha Chertkova, the owner of Top Media Communication, a Kyiv-based communication agency whose purpose has been to collect funding for the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Volunteer work starts on the Ukrainian Art Front.

The beginning of the war found me in Western Ukraine. That day, we were returning to Kyiv by train but decided to get out in Lviv. I didn't know then what an incredible number of musicians from the entire country would gather in this city, and what kind of common effort it would eventually turn into.

After the first few days of panic, stress and sleepless nights, I got a call from Serhiy Fedorchuk. He asked if I wouldn't like to join Yakiv Tsvietinsky, Yaroslav Kazmirchuk, Vlad Hrudnytskiy, David Kolpakov, Taras Kushniruk, Mykola Honcharenko, and Dmytro Zuyev, and work at a warehouse for the needs of the military. I didn't think for long because I felt an urge to help in whatever way was possible at that moment. This was the beginning of our very wide-ranging volunteer work. The cohesion and effectiveness with which people worked was impressive.

Soon the idea came up to raise the fighting spirit of the volunteers working in the warehouse a tad: we decided that the next day during the lunch break we would put on a mini-concert right on the street.

At the train station in Lviv.

In time, Fedorchuk began to add musicians who were in Lviv at the time to his Telegram chat. There were days when we worked at other sites, such as the train station.

Several times, my task was to regulate the flow of people and cars at a pedestrian crossing. I have to admit that my conductor's skills helped me a lot as I made grand, sweeping gestures. Sometimes I had to shout because people were on their phones or they were walking without seeing me. One time, a young woman rolled down the window in her car and shouted gleefully, "You're Dennis Adu?!" and I answered, "Yes, ma'am, I certainly am. Keep going, you're holding up traffic." That was nice, but there was no time to wonder. Anything that was sad or playful I only recollected later.

Working at the call center.

I'll never forget the night that my girlfriend Yana Vyalova and I were working in the Kharkiv SOS call center that provided all kinds of information about the city. It was quiet until about five in the morning, when the calls started coming in. At that moment they began to shell Kharkiv: people were calling in a panic, asking how to evacuate from the city. All the phones were ringing at the same time. That was a truly stressful night: we understood that our task was simply to inform people, because we couldn't affect their situation in any other way.

Music once again.

On March 18, Serhiy got the idea to "demagnetize" the people who were arriving at the station on evacuation trains a little, with music. He proposed that we put together a small group and play near the main entrance. Selecting the repertoire was an important part of this performance: we had to play something that would lift people's spirits. So we decided that it had to be music from John Coltrane, Herbie Hancock and Bobby Timmons.

Then somebody shouted out: "There's a war on and your music here is really not on at this time." Others listened attentively and recorded us on their phones. After one improvisation, I could here someone in the crowd say: "Mama, look, that's Dennis Adu on the trumpet. This is really incredible." (We later photographed ourselves with this boy.)

The emotions really flowed while we played. I saw the eyes of these distraught people and felt the despair of their losses, so I tried to encourage them through my trumpet and convey something like "Everything will be fine with you. The worst is behind. You'll do ok. You're strong!"



The work of collecting sand in bags and loading these bags onto trucks for further transportation to blockmilitary (from left to right: me, M. Honcharenko, Ya. Tsvetinsky, D. Kolpakov, Ya. Kazmirchuk, V. Grudnytskyi, D. Zuyev, unknown boy) photo from my personal phone, taken by Serhii Fedorchuk



My girlfriend Yana Vyalova (jazz singer) and I «on the sand» (photo from a personal phone)



Photo 3 by Dennis Adu (poster of our performance at a warehouse in Malekhiv) photo from a personal phone.

Of course at that point, I hadn't played my horn for nearly a month, but I gathered up my spirit and strength, and played as though this was my last time.

That's when we understood that we can also bring good through music and we began to gradually play more often.

The LV Café Jazz Club.

This jazz club became a real haven for musicians in Lviv. The club's owner, Yuriy Sadoviy, took us musicians under his wing. He offered us a platform where we could play benefit concerts, hold jam sessions and rehearse. During our jams at LV, I got to know some young guys from Kharkiv and was pleasantly surprised by the skill of Lev Borovskiy, who played several wind instruments.

When I found out that the Lysenko National Musical Academy in Lviv was sheltering many young musicians and offering them the chance to practice, I called the vice-rector for scientific, pedagogical and educational work and international relations, Ostap Maichyk, who kindly received me and allowed me to visit the Academy. I also remember meeting Yuriy Gryaznov at the Club, one of the best concert photographers and videographers in Ukraine. I was pleased to see him because I knew that his photographs of the concert would be amazing.

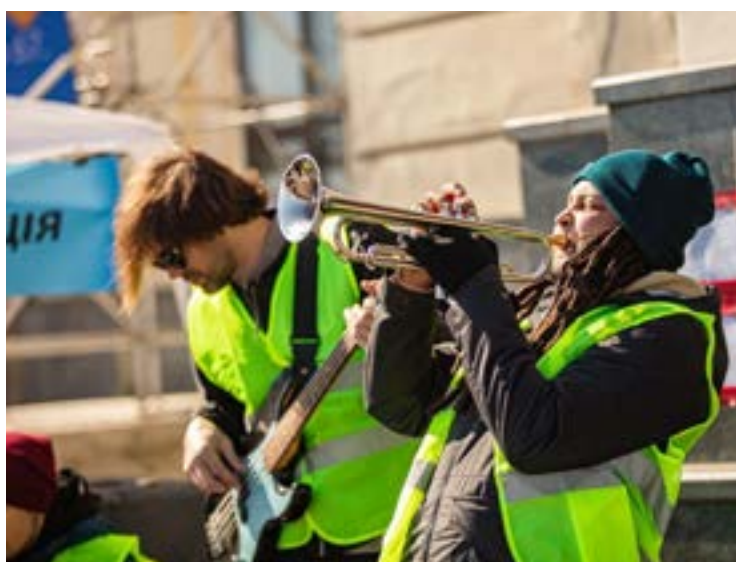
Streaming concerts:

Jazz in a Bomb Shelter. At the beginning of April, the LV Café Jazz Club turned into a cultural hub where music echoed every day, jams hummed, various different groups gathered, and people could listen to Kostyantyn Horyachiy, Taras Kushniruk, Yakiv Tsvietinsky, Leonid Petkun, Yaroslav Kazmirchuk, Serhiy Fedorchuk, and Andriy Arnautov.

At this point, Serhiy and Olha came up with another interesting project: "Jazz in a Bomb Shelter," which was carried out together with Maryna Krut, a well-known Ukrainian bandurist, singer and composer. The purpose was to draw attention in the foreign community to events in Ukraine and to collect funds for the AFU through donations during video broadcasts. At the time, this was the first concert in a bomb shelter in Lviv. We put together an entire program of songs by Maryna Krut that we adapted to our ensemble: Maryna herself singing, Serhiy on bass, Mykola on guitar, and Andriy Yuskevych on the cajon, a Peruvian percussion instrument. (<https://youtu.be/B1y1U9AP1HM>).



Leonid Petkun.
Improvised stage in front of the warehouse



Performance on the Lviv railway station square (Kostyantyn Kravchuk, Serhii Fedorchuk and Dennis Adu) photographer Yuriy Gryaznov



5 performance on the railway station square of Lviv (Davyd Kolpakov, Serhii Fedorchuk, Dennis Adu, Andriy Arnautov, Markiyana Krysa on drums, K. Kravchuk on keyboards) photo Yuriy Gryaznov

“The Unbreakables.”

Another of these projects was based on Ihor Zakus’s symphonic poem “Nezlamni” [The Unbreakables] and performed with the Academic Symphonic Orchestra of the Lviv National Philharmonic Hall under Volodymyr Syvokhin’s baton. The symphonic poem included poetry written during the first month of the war by Ukrainian poets: Kolya Kulinich, Yuriy Rybchynskiy, O.T., Mariana Savka, Vasyl Holovetskiy, Halyna Kruk, Kateryna Mikhalitsyna, Petro Maha, Pavlo Korobchuk, Borys Humeniuk, and Liubov Yakymchuk. Translations were by Viacheslav Kryshstofovych Jr. This project was made possible by the Ukrainian Art Front, the Lviv National Philharmonic Hall, and the Institute for Cultural Strategy (<https://youtu.be/EZBTOYCTZ6o>).

“Ukrainian Jazz.”

At the end of April, Mykola Kisteniov and Pavlo Ilnytskiy proposed that I arrange several well-known Ukrainian songs, as well as some American standards that Pavlo would sing in Ukrainian for the Ukrainian Jazz program. We really wanted to support the growing surge in Ukrainian culture. With the help of Vlad Sivak, the owner of the SIVAK.Concert agency, we set off on a small tour: Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Uzhhorod and Lviv, performing this program and collecting donations for the AFU.

Return to Kyiv and the Glier Academy of the Arts.

Towards the end of May, musicians began returning to their hometowns in various corners of Ukraine and I decided that it was also time for me to return to Kyiv. At that time, the situation in Kyiv was more tense compared to Lviv.

In July, the Glier Academy began its enrolment campaign and in September, we began mixed-format studies. Everyone understood that we needed to inspire students to work and help them to relieve the heavy mental state that they had experienced during attacks on their towns. We began to hold classes on site. We could really feel how everyone had been longing to make music together. For 2.5-3 hours we forgot about the horrors that were taking place in the country and only the occasional air raid siren would remind us of the reality. We all had to adjust to the conditions under which we were living—and musicians were no exception.

Back in Kyiv, invitations to perform abroad for various projects.

It was a strange feeling, as I had never travelled so much before. I left my country, which was engulfed by war, to the peaceful life of neighboring countries.



Photo 7 (Taras Kushniruk, a jazz guitarist in a warehouse in Malekhiv) photo by D. Adu



Photo 8 (from left to right: Dennis Adu, Markiyany Krysa, David Kolpakov, Usein Bekirov, Yaroslav Kazmirchuk, Mykola Goncharenko, Vlad Grudnytskyi, Yakiv Tsvetynskiy, Lyuko Mariash) photo taken by Serhii Fedorchuk



Photo 9 photos of Yuri Gryaznov (T. Kushniruk, D. Zuev, L. Putkun, D. Adu, Ya. Kazmirchuk) at a charity jam at LV Jazz Cafe

Most of all, I felt the need to bring Ukrainian culture to people and to draw the attention of different countries to the events back home, so all my performances began with Ukraine's national anthem.

First foreign concert in Trnava, Slovakia, July 22, 2022.

We were invited here by Olga Bekenstein, who was in Trnava on an art residency. I felt the responsibility of my mission and tried present our heritage as brilliantly as possible: in addition to my own original pieces, I added a few Ukrainian folk songs that I had arranged.

International Festival of New Trumpet Music, September 7, 2022.

In August 2022, I received a letter from one of the top trumpeters playing contemporary improvisational music, Dave Douglas. Dave is also one of the founders of the FONT Festival, which has taken place for more than 20 years. (The last three years, it moved online because of Covid.) Dave invited three trumpeters from Ukraine—Dmytro Bondarev, Yakiv Tsvietinsky and me—to record a short live video. In this way, Dave wanted to draw the attention of American audiences to the war going on in Ukraine again. The link to the performance of the Ukrainian trumpeters at the Festival of New Trumpet Music: <https://youtu.be/1z9UZ2ZDoJU>.

A major cultural event in Sofia initiated by the Ukrainian Institute and Mariana Bondarenko.

The Europe Jazz Conference is one of the largest conferences and showcases to which promoters, musicians, owners and art directors of festivals are invited from around the world. A few years ago, we put together a joint project with Dmytro Avksentiy, aka Koloah, a well-known Ukrainian music producer and electronic musician, thanks to Olga Bekenstein, who acquainted us and gave us the idea. I'd also like to thank the Ukrainian Institute and Mariana Bondarenko, who put considerable effort into helping us meet with a lot of interesting individuals. Later, Koloah and I were invited to the Jazzkaar in Estonia, which led to a winter festival together with an entire delegation of Ukrainian musicians.

A joint concert with Hungarian musician Robert Szakcsi Lakatos in Yvoire, France.

Organizers from the Armel Opera Competition and Festival were looking for a Ukrainian trumpeter or saxophonist to play in a duet at their Yvoire event. This turned out to be a wonderful trip and interesting concert. After playing a few bars with Robert during the sound check, we understood that we had to do a joint project. I'm hoping that this will come true very soon.

SVITANOK Festival in Norway with Bugge Wesseltoft.



Photo 10 charity jam at LV Jazz Café



Photo 11 poster for a performance at a charity event in the «36RO» club



Photo Yuri Gryaznov (Mykola Kistenov, Yana Vyalova, Leonid Petkun) performance of Yana Vyalova quintet and Dennis Adu at one of the many charity concerts aimed at raising funds for the AZOV regiments at LV

In November, Olya Bekenstein proposed that I play with the renowned Norwegian musician Bugge Wesseltoft at the newly-launched

I play with the renowned Norwegian musician Bugge Wesseltoft at the newly-launched Svitanok Festival. The event was initiated in order to popularize contemporary Ukrainian music, strengthen cultural links, and support Ukraine during Russia's war on our territory. I was pleased to discover that the idea of inviting me actually came from Bugge himself. Other participants at the festival included singer Olesia Zdorovetska, electro-acoustic musician, sound producer and drummer Stanislav Ivashchenko, and Kyiv sound producer, moviemaker and singer Mariana Klochko. The first concert took place in Oslo, at the Bla underground club. I greatly enjoyed making music with Bugge, as he has an interesting, untypical approach to music.

The next concert was in Bergen, at the Bergenkjott club. This was my first time performing improvisational music, with no prior discussion or rehearsal: we met at the sound check and when I asked if we were going to agree to a program, the woman on bass replied: "What for? I can anyway tell that everything is going to be just fine." These were experienced musicians who listened to each other and responded in the most amazing way. At the end of our performance, a little musical 'conversation' took place between the drummer and me: it felt as though we had been playing together all our lives.

San Jose Winter Jazz Festival: Counterpoint with Ukraine. This was another amazing trip and series of performances. Playing a joint program with Jazzmeia Horn and the Marcus Shelby Jazz Orchestra was an unimaginable experience!

That same winter, the San Jose Jazz Festival decided to hold their event together with the Am I Jazz? Festival, whose founder and director is Olya Bekenstein. In addition to musicians, the festival included a special show of six works called "Unzipped Pavilion" by choreographer and modern improvisational dancer Alina Sokulska, who is also a well-known painter and an installation, performance and video artist. The music line-up: Yakiv Tsvietinsky, Borys Mohylevskiy, Ihor Osypov, Olesia Zdorovetska, and Vadym Neselovskiy. Link at: <https://www.youtube.com/live/bUgl--QO6lg?feature=share>

This trip was memorable, not only because of the performances with unbelievable musicians like Ambrose Akinmusire, but also hanging out with Americans who really wanted to know what was happening in Ukraine. We found ourselves telling the truth of the reality we live in. Many people were shocked by what we told them. There was a sense that our mission was not just to popularize Ukrainian culture, but to actually talk to people, to explain how important their support at every possible level was for Ukraine.

Benefit concerts in Europe with the Impressions Jazz Quintet.

In May, I toured in Poland, Germany and Holland with Pavlo Ilnytskiy on vocals, Oleksandr Malyshev on piano, Mykola Kisteniov on bass, and Yaroslav Borys on drums. This benefit tour was organized by Vlad Sivak. For nearly two weeks, we played Ukrainian songs in original arrangements and collected donations for our soldiers.

Today.

The Ukrainian Art Front continues to work. Not long ago, we played a concert in Lviv with Serhiy Fedorchuk at the Metropolitan Gardens, once again, with the goal of collecting donations to buy a car for the Azov Battalion.

Every member of the Ukrainian Art Front is putting in the maximum effort for our common victory. I'm extremely grateful to Serhiy Fedorchuk for having got us all together and for demonstrating, right from the start, how we can be of help in this war. Every one of us has to do something so that we can overcome the enemy. The social networks of Serhiy or Vlad Sivak inspire us to make music and help our fighters get everything that they need at the front.

Personally, I think that the preservation and development of the arts is an important link in the chain of development of a nation and a modern society. I understand that by playing on my trumpet, collecting donations at concerts, and spreading our arts to the whole works, I am bringing a lot more use than I would by engaging in some other activity, not connected to music. During the first few months of the war, I saw that I could be of use in a warehouse, or regulating traffic at an intersection. I can do whatever is necessary. But I'm a jazz musician and playing music is what I do best of all.

Music, no matter what

Nataliya Lebedeva

Nataliya Lebedeva is a well-known Ukrainian jazz pianist, composer, arranger, and bandleader, as well as a senior lecturer in the Department of Jazz Music at the Glier Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music.

At the beginning of the war in 2022, Nataliya Lebedeva found herself outside Ukraine and became one of those Ukrainian jazz players to demonstrate a unique creative and civic activism in Europe, putting enormous effort into collecting money for the needs of her country and bringing new audiences to contemporary Ukrainian music.

On February 23, 2022, the author and two talented, well-known Ukrainian jazz musicians—bassist Kostiantyn Ionenko and drummer Yaroslav Borys—were playing a concert at the cozy Nevidomiy Petrovskiy [Unknown Petrovsk] club in the city of Dnipro. It was a perfectly ordinary engagement for the trio, with their original music and jokes for the audience, and after performing, a pleasant exchange with fellow musicians at the bar.

Now, however, we will remember this evening for a very long time, because, that night, the normal flow of our lives changed dramatically and this raised endless questions: what now? how will we musicians find ourselves in a new and very stressful reality?

Life became very un-ordinary for every one of us.

Among our colleagues are many who became involved in volunteer work, joined the ranks of territorial defense teams, or even enlisted in the military. But that's the subject of a very different detailed story. Right now, I'd like to focus on the facts of my own musical life: despite my own predictions and expectations, it did not stop.

Some believe that difficult and unfamiliar situations activate potential in people. I can affirm that that is so—and confirm that Ukrainian musicians in Europe have spontaneously engaged in remarkable artistic and civic activism—both those who have been living there for a long time, and those who have ended up in different European cities since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of our country. Unfortunately, it's not possible to provide a complete and detailed account of the activities of the entire community at this time, so as an example, I'd like to focus on a few significant events in which I was personally involved.

If the reader is not familiar with the works of Tamara Lukasheva, I recommend that you take note, because this is someone extraordinary and unusual. Tamara is not only a jazz singer, but also *an experienced composer and arranger. For me, personally, she is an example of a person who*

understands how musicians can influence awareness, draw attention, and create the necessary emotional background. She also knows how they can help their country, even while living abroad.

On February 24, 2023, I was lucky to participate in a huge “Solidarity Concert” dedicated to the first anniversary of the start of military action in Ukraine. Lukasheva was the initiator and artistic director of this event, which took place at the Stadtgarten European Center for Jazz and Contemporary Music in Cologne. Incidentally, the first “Solidarity Concert” actually took place in March 2022—and both programs were recorded by WDR Radio.

This was a collaborative concert involving Ukrainian and German musicians. From the point of view of artistic content, it proved a very successful synthesis between original European music written by Tamara Lukasheva and participating musicians and Ukrainian folk melodies in contemporary jazz arrangements.

We were lucky to have wonderful musicians from Germany— trumpeter Mathias Schreifl, pianist Leon Hattori, bassist Jakob Kühnemann and drummer Mathieu Clément—, who created progressive music together with the Ukrainian performers: Lukasheva, the folk group Dyvyna, Maria Subbotino-Ryzhuk, Andriy Prozorov, and the author.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8KFIYzNhCc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUJPLSJtHFQ&t=166s>

This is far from the only collaboration between Ukrainian and German musicians and symbolizes mutual understanding, support and dialogue in the language of jazz music. Earlier, circumstances finally brought me together with a wonderful Ukrainian saxophonist and composer who lives in Vienna, Andriy Prozorov.

One of our concerts was at the Porgy & Bess Club, initiated by Andriy on April 3 and 4, 2022. Porgy & Bess is a famous jazz club in Vienna that has been around since the 1990s, in a building with its own history, furnished in a comfortable and contemporary style, including a gorgeous grand piano on the stage.

The idea of this concert series was to declare solidarity with Ukraine and to get Ukrainian performers involved in this musical action. The evenings took place in a warm atmosphere where, in addition to local visitors to the club and their friends, diplomats and Ukrainian activists filled the hall. We played a varied program in a duet with singer Laura Marti, including both our own pieces and jazzy versions of Ukrainian and Armenian folk melodies. We were thrilled at the sincere, emotional feedback.

In some of the pieces, we were joined by Prozorov, a musician with a remarkable gift of melody, sensitive and dynamic, and one whose esthetic feel never fails him. Even difficult harmonic progressions and complicated rhythms are uncovered in his solos in a very melodious and inventive way. More information and fragments of the performance can be found at these links:

<https://www.porgy.at/events/10995/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Yq_ryGyx-0

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImYAEDWnZxs>

Over the last few years, I have been collaborating with well-known Ukrainian singer and composer, Laura Marti, who works in many different music styles.

Marti is a very creative individual with a great many ideas and ambitions in music. Together, we have produced jazz, ethno-jazz and various original works. In parallel, Marti has actively been working on new pop albums, so that not long ago, she released her album “24,” dedicated to current events in Ukraine.

Starting in February 2022, Marti volunteered in Western Ukraine, then moved to Germany, to the city of Cologne. Finding ourselves a short flight between Poland and Germany for just over a year, we played more than 20 benefit concerts in support of Ukraine—in Poland, Czechia, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and France.

Jazz collaboration is a pretty flexible and mobile creature. In a short time, our music with Marti turned into a duet, which considerably simplified the details of the technical rider and the logistical component. We had to perform in the most diverse spaces, from small theater foyers, under the vaults of Catholic cathedrals, on open-air stages, and in jazz clubs.

Typically, our concerts included interactions with the public. The language of music may be both universal and deep, but listeners also wanted to know that someone’s personal story, her feelings and expectations are behind the sounds they’ve been hearing. Not for the first time, I recognize this as a demonstration of solidarity, concern and interest in Ukraine, whose people have demonstrated steadfastness and self-sacrifice.

In the spring of 2022, after one of our duet performances in the town of Sarnen, Switzerland, the idea came up to organize a major, high-profile concert in Switzerland with the involvement of Ukrainian, Swiss and Austrian musicians. We were really talking about a collaboration in the form of a big band. The initiative was taken up by a Swiss philanthropist and music lover by the name of Adrian Gasser, who believed it was important to draw attention to events in Ukraine in every way possible. Swiss producer—and amazing musician—Roman Britschgi organized the event, while putting together a concept for the concert with Laura Marti. As the arranger and musical director, we invited Austrian trumpeter Andreas Pranzl, who wrote orchestral versions of Marti’s original songs and renowned Ukrainian melodies: “I’ll go to the distant hills” by Vasyl Ivasiuk, “Cheremshyna” by Vasyl Mykhailiuk and Mykola Yuriychuk, and even the national anthem of Ukraine. Our program, saturated by many different colors, also contained



the music of Andriy Prozorov, and Armenian and Swiss folk songs. The concert took place on June 9, 2022. The orchestra of European musicians performed alongside well-known Ukrainian musicians like Marti, Lebedeva, Prozorov, Dmytro Bondarev, and Illya Alabuzhev.

For me personally, this was a very significant event, not just in terms of musical impressions: people of goodwill, patrons and ordinary people needed to hear our message and the unified musical vibe. After all, this was a concert for Ukraine and 100% of the money collected went to the country's needs.

In addition, thanks to Marti's creative focus and organizational determination, and specific support from friends, we recorded two music CDs in 2022. The first of these is called *Africa* (tribute to Lars Danielsson). The recording was done by Ukrainian jazz musicians—Marti on vocals, Yakiv Tsvietinskiy on trumpet and flügelhorn, Lebedeva on piano, Yuriy Natsvishvili on bass, Dmytro Lytvynenko on drums, plus our special guest, Lars Danielsson. The music in this album was inspired long before the war. The project itself was the outcome of a musical friendship between Marti and Danielsson, a renowned Swedish bassist and composer who has been a much-sought guest and participant in jazz festivals in Ukraine.

The idea of the *Africa* project was really Marti's. Its overall idea was a creative collaboration arising out of an experimental tapestry in the language of jazz and the unfolding palette of Ukrainian lyrics in order to give the musical works a new coloring. Danielsson's exquisite and romantic instrumental compositions became songs. Incidentally, texts to the music were written in Ukrainian at the request of the composer. And when Marti proposed that I do the arrangements for this program, I tried to start from my own associations with the texts and my idea was, typically, not to tie myself to the familiar sound of the originals, but to approach them through the interpretation itself. Thus, the tranquil and seemingly thoughtful "Party on the Planet" gained an unexpectedly sharp funk feel. The title track *Africa* became a bit more complex rhythmically, while the original melody inspired me to write several small new sections with that develop to a culmination. One of the episodes in the piece "Lviv" ended up accentuating a hemiola intonation, which is seen as exotic and paints a picture of the interweaving of different languages on the streets of a tourist town.

The chord progressions that build the episodes in the composition "Asta" and the evolving unison between voice and trumpet, which grows into a brief but powerful instrumental solo, bring out a sense of changeability and mystery. Among the pieces is also a real hit, a lovely ballad called "Granada," which was the historical beginning of the artistic friendship between Marti and Danielson. The deep timbre of the flügelhorn opening the piece beautifully underscores the tender, light melody against a background of slight reharmonization in the comping. The song develops around vocal themes and a romantic flügelhorn solo, and finally Marti's improvised vocalization intimately tells its story.

It turns out that Laura Marti's Ukrainian lyrics poeticize Lars Danielson's music even more. The sound of her voice adds drama to the main theme of the piece "I Tima," while the dialog between the horn and the vocals in the solo section gradually fills it with emotion. The tiny bridge looped in the coda creates a feeling of endlessness... "over hills and over plains... we fly like angels."

At first glance, the narrative composition “Ahdes’ Theme” gains a new motif in the middle section, while the meaning of the lyrics urges listeners to hear their own internal voices.

Of all the works, my favorite combination of music and lyrics is the composition “Libretto.” The theme itself seems fairly introverted, with a delicate ostinato melody that gives it a spacious harmonic rhythm, an almost constant sense of the tonal center. And the soloist’s mesmerizing whispered repetition “I’m a free person, I’m a free person” sounds like a mantra.

The story behind the song “Laura” is intriguing, being personally dedicated by the composer, Danielson, to the singer. Sincere, lyrical, and immediately understandable, the melody offers no hint of ethnicity, time or style—wordless music that immediately warms the listener. We decided to play this composition spontaneously, without changing the original material but following our feelings. Lars gave us a wonderful gift: he participated in the recording of this work.

I have to point out the excellent debut of our rhythm section on this album: bright, talented and fairly well-known Ukrainian musicians: bassist Yuriy Natsvishvili and drummer Dima Lytvynenko. We were greatly impressed by Bauer Studios—the complete creative and technical ease of the recording process. It was a pleasure to have sound engineer Johannes Kellig ask to have the musical score before him during the recording process, like the conductor of an orchestra. The intensity of the lighting was adjusted during the recording to match the mood of the music, so that lyrical compositions were performed in subdued lighting, maintaining the right atmosphere. Indeed, being able to produce a truly Ukrainian musical project based on European musical material has been very motivating.

Link to the video announcement: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTIUsUz3N_g

Album link to Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/album/4i9lvaOa9ZWakp6J2ZpCTg?si=RgR4QICtTbiQsNKZnc7vDg&context=spotify%3Aalbum%3A4i9lvaOa9ZWakp6J2ZpCTg>

Our next recorded album was “Waves,” with music by Nataliya Lebedeva and lyrics by Laura Marti.

Vocals: Laura Marti; piano: Nataliya Lebedeva; bass: Yuriy Natsvishvili; drums: Dmytro Lytvynenko; featuring Yakiv Tsvietinskiy on flügelhorn and special guest Magnus Öström on drums.



The Waves album is a collection of contemporary original Ukrainian progressive jazz music. It includes compositions written over the last few years and, musically, they are connected in their drive towards non-standard forms, variable lengths, technically acute episodes, and contrasting emotions.

The story of this album, once again, is that instrumental works have turned into English-language vocals. And although I, as the composer, found this prospect less than inspiring at first, I have to admit that the result has definitely made the music more attractive.

I think that Marti wrote the English lyrics for a purely instrumental section very effectively and with great virtuosity. This singer is one of those performers with exceptional energy, temperament and artistry, thanks to which this album has turned out quite vibrant and varied. The reason for my obvious admiration is the title piece, Waves, in which drummer Magnus Öström, our favorite musician from Sweden back in the days of E.S.T., was recorded. He's an unusually reliable and adaptable partner, with a profound musical intelligence, an incomparable sound, and a mind that's open to any and all new ideas.

The title track was additionally lifted by Yakiv Tsvietinskiy's flügelhorn, a warm accompaniment and bold improvisational choruses. Without giving all away, I want to note that the album has seven more quartet compositions and it will be released in the fall of 2023.

The Poetic Album, with music by Laura Marti for the verses of Ukrainian poets, arranged with Nataliya Lebedeva, is the newest of those projects that we have partly completed. Some time ago, the singer came up with the idea of writing a series of songs based on the poetry of Ukrainian poets, both classical ones and well-known contemporaries. So poems were selected from Taras Shevchenko, Lesia Ukrainka, Ivan Franko, Mykhailo Kotsiubynskiy, Volodymyr Sosiura, Lina Kostenko, Serhiy Zhadan, Yuri Izdryk and others. So far, Poetic is mostly a duet album.

In the spring of 2023, a great opportunity came up for us to perform this album in Cologne and we gladly took up the invitation. The initiative came from American pianist Heather O'Donnell who happens to live in Germany. She performed at concerts a good deal as a classical pianist. Over the course of the year, O'Donnell put considerable effort into helping artists, especially those from Ukraine, by providing them with opportunities to carry out their cultural mission at various concert venues in Cologne.

TGR The Green Room, a project founded and managed by O'Donnell, is a wonderful, comfortable space with its own grand piano, a place where artists can relax and play a concert, set up an original art exhibit, exchange ideas during a creative workshop, and so on.



For us, being able to perform a huge concert program on March 25, 2023, under “Green Heaven—Artists United” was another momentous cultural event. Participants included well-known American jazz pianist and composer Richie Beirach, who has a Ukrainian grandparent. He dedicated his concert to the heroic people of Ukraine. For our duet, this was a great opportunity to acquaint European audiences with examples of Ukrainian poetry in combination with original music.

It makes no sense to try to analyze a program within any stylistic framework. For instance, we interpreted Marti’s original musical sketches in a way that concentrated on revealing the character of each song while giving our fantasies free rein. This resulted in some unexpected contrasts: the famed Shevchenko poem, *Dumy moyi* [My thoughts] ended up in a nearly danceable groove, Kotsubynsky’s lullaby “*Vechir*” [Evening] became both entertaining and playful, while Zhadan’s sharply lyrical “*Znyshchuy*” [Destroy] had a transparent and minimalist texture. In Franko’s “*Chym pisnia zhyva*” [What makes a song alive] and Ukrainka’s “*Mriye, ne zrad*” [Dream, do not deceive me], the variety among sections gave them a truly eccentric feel. Overall, it seems that the performance came across as a modern romance with jazzy elements. Once again, it’s surprising just how organically Ukrainian poetry weaves into a variety of musical contexts and offers them inimitable colorfulness.

Link to a fragment of the performance:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pb3AdDspFX8>

Ukraine’s jazz community has enormous potential and, given the opportunity, can inspire and relate to audiences in any country. This fosters the process of integration. No matter what happens, musicians have to continue to express their ideas. Creative contact with other Ukrainians who are making a substantial contribution and promoting Ukrainian culture in Europe inspires and energizes, opening doors to the music communities in other countries.

There’s no question that music is the most powerful force of influence on humans and that our musicians are capable of impressing with their emotions and sincerity.

In conclusion, I must list the individuals whom I owe thanks and whom I met personally, people who are doing so much to help our country in these difficult times, and who are also generating a brilliant image for contemporary Ukrainian jazz music, among others, in the rest of Europe: Tamara Lukasheva, Mariana Sadovska, Laura Marti, Vadym Neselovskiy Andriy Prozorov, Illya Alabuzhev, Dmytro Bondarev, Alexandra Hanke, Hryhoriy Nemyrovskiy, Roxana Smirnova, Misha Kalinin, Ihor Krasovskiy, Dmytro Markitantov, Vitaliy Ivanov, Ihor Hnydin, Anastasia Lytvyniuk, Etel Enenberg, Maryna Burch-Petrychenko, Anton Pyvovarov, musicologist Alla Vaysband, and many more.

Last but not least, it’s a personal pleasure that some of these individuals have had biographies connected to the R. Glier Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music, where the author herself works.

Roksana Smirnova and Misha Kalinin

Interview

How did your adventure with music start?

Misha: I started my adventure with music very early, at the age of seven. I played the accordion and then went to music school. But my dream has always been a guitar. At the age of 13, I started intensively learning to play this instrument. In my youth, I played a lot of rock music. At school, however, I became interested in jazz and in the following years I focused on exploring this genre.

Roksana: For me, music has also been a part of my life from an early age. My great-grandmother played the violin, my aunt played the piano, as did my mother. None of them were professional musicians, but our house has always had a unique artistic atmosphere. I started playing the piano at the age of 6. But the real love for music and understanding that I wanted to be an artist came a bit later – when I was studying jazz and improvisation. The sense of freedom and creativity that is inherent in creating this genre was something of a magnet for me.

Were you interested in jazz from the beginning?

Misha: At first, I was only interested in rock, but when I started preparing for exams at a music school, jazz appeared. It had a huge influence on me. The records I listened to and the songs I played completely changed my approach to music. I was slowly immersing myself in the world of jazz.

Roksana: I first encountered jazz when I was 13 years old. I was already playing the piano by then, but I played mostly classical pieces, sometimes I also composed my own music. In college, I discovered a world full of improvisation, rhythm and unique chords that sounded completely different from the ones I had played before. That's when I became an absolute fan.

How would you describe your musical style?

Misha: Foremost, we create our own style, our own language. The piano and the guitar are quite similar instruments in terms of technique, so we had to go a long way to find our own unique sound.

Roksana: Stylistically, we come from completely different backgrounds. We combine many styles in our music, such as impressionist music, elements of rock music, folk music, improvised contemporary music and so on.

Where do you think is the best place to play a concert? In a small pub or at a big festival? Or maybe somewhere else?

Misha: The best place is where there is a dedicated audience. When the audience is focused, we, the artists, are also completely focused. Then we can all dive deep into the world of musical let

What is Ukrainian jazz like?

Roksana: Ukrainian jazz has its roots in the Soviet Union, which meant for decades a complete ban on playing jazz as an element of Western culture. Back then, there was no free access to information and recordings like today. But in Ukraine, a lot of people were interested in jazz and fell in love with it. Jazz, which is invariably associated with freedom, was an expression of what people longed for. Thus, in an atmosphere of isolation from Western culture, Ukrainian musicians formed their own original language. In this way, they laid the foundations for the work of subsequent generations. The Ukrainian jazz scene has its own unique sound. We have many talented musicians, not only jazz, but creating in various styles. We hope that in the near future the world will discover this potential.

How has the pandemic affected your creative process?

Misha: It influenced it very much. Everything just completely faded away. It took some time to come out of that state and learn to breathe again. When the pandemic broke out, we happened to be living in China. Back to the pandemic and how Covid influenced our lives – in February 2020 we flew from Shanghai to Italy to Udinese to record a new album called «Whispers». Countries started closing their borders very quickly, one by one. Suddenly it turned out that we couldn't go back to China. We were cut off in an instant from our musical careers, which we had been building for many years. Nevertheless, we do not view this experience as completely negative. We also needed this time for some kind of internal re-evaluation of our actions and attitudes as artists.

You lived in China for many years, how do you evaluate this experience in retrospect?

Misha: It was a very valuable experience. We spent a total of 5 years in China, specifically in Shanghai. China is a gigantic country with almost endless development possibilities. More than one and a half billion people live there, so it's not hard to imagine how great the demand is, e.g. for cultural events. We have gained extremely valuable experience in working with various original projects—both our own, working with Chinese musicians and with musicians from around the world. That's how we met Jakub Krzeszowski from the JAZZ PO POLSKU Foundation, who has been successfully promoting Polish artists on the local market for years. I remember it clearly, it was during a festival in the coastal city of Xiamen where I performed with Chinese musicians. Polish musicians, Marcin Pater and his "explosive" trio also performed on the same stage (editor's note: Marcin Pater - vibraphone, Mateusz Szewczyk - bass, Tomasz Machański - drums). This is how our acquaintance with Jakub began, which resulted in a concert a few years later as part of the next JAZZ PO POLSKU project—"Warsaw Live Sessions", where they performed on April 23

How has the war in Ukraine influenced your work?

The war in Ukraine had a very strong impact on our whole life, which spontaneously divided into two parts: before and after. The war changed the way we think, but also our desires and needs. The war also had a very strong impact on our values. When it exploded, no one thought about music. And when we had the opportunity to play again, I felt that music is the jewel we

have in our lives. The most valuable things are the very things we all take for granted. We usually don't think about it. But the war showed everyone how valuable and important these basic things are.

On April 23, you will play at a concert in Warsaw's Jasmine club as part of the JAZZ PO POLSKU series. What repertoire will we be able to hear?

We will play our original music. Some songs were composed when we lived in China. Some of them were created last year in Kiev, just before the outbreak of the war, and some relatively recently. We will also play one number prepared especially for this occasion.

Have you played in Poland or Warsaw before? Have you collaborated with Polish musicians?

Misha: I have never played in Poland before. But Roksana had a performance in Poland before.

Roksana: My first performance out of Ukraine was in Kraków at the age of 17. I played at the

Roksana: My first performance out of Ukraine was in Kraków at the age of 17. I played at the festival Starzi I Młodzi. It was a great experience for me and I have great memories from that times.

Are any of the Polish artists close to you?

Misha: We have heard and listened to records of various Polish artists, the scene is very strong. Polish musicians have inspired us a lot, and we hope that someday we will have the opportunity to make a project together.

Is there anyone you would like to play a concert with in the future?

We are open to collaborations. For us, it is very important to be inspired by one another. Because when people inspire each other, it always turns out into something unique and very interesting.

Editors: Laura Żary / Jakub Krzeszowski, JAZZ PO POLSKU Foundation

Misha Kalinin - Ukrainian guitarist and composer. He is extremely versatile, comfortable in any genre and well versed in styles ranging from jazz to classical to experimental, including hip-hop, blues, rock and pop. He regularly tours Europe and Asia with his own bands Misha Kalinin Trio and Quartet. Through a non-standard approach, he breaks with the classic approach to playing the guitar, creating a completely new sound. Authentic commitment to learning and establishing new artistic contacts constantly gives his music a new dimension.

<https://www.mishakalinin.com>

Roksana Smirnova - graduated from the Odessa School of Arts and Culture in the jazz piano class, and then from the Odessa Academy of Music in the classical piano class. The combination of these two directions and types of thinking shaped her unique musical language and defined the circle of interests. As a composer, she consciously strives to build a space where there are no

boundaries. In 2017, Roksana went to Norway to record her solo album «Lullaby» in the famous Rainbow Studio with the legendary sound engineer Jan Erik Kongshaug and producer Mikhail Alperin. Roksana's music oscillates around classical, minimalist, impressionistic and jazz traditions.

<https://www.roksanasmirnova.com>

Live music video

https://youtu.be/Sa_XXKYXyqk

<https://youtu.be/nLArbimTBdo>

<https://youtu.be/LxlasefjT58>

<https://youtu.be/u11BtPLnjUU>

Misha Kalinin & Roksana Smirnova «Whispers» full album

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy_nyHXMQNxvniFAB4ZvCt-IrLuWY3x9iLZg

Serhii Artemov. In memoriam

Mariana Bondarenko

A profound loss resonates through the Ukrainian jazz community with the passing of Serhii Artemov, a renowned bass and double bass player, composer, and arranger. Artemov met his fate near Bakhmut while bravely defending his homeland during the Russian full-scale invasion. Despite having no prior military experience, he volunteered for the assault brigade of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, driven by an unwavering commitment to his country. A poignant reminder of Artemov's sacrifice comes in the form of a military honor, as he posthumously receives the Medal «For Military Service to Ukraine.» His brother, Andriy, accepted the award on his behalf.



Serhii Artemov with Danylo Vinarikov Ensemble at Am I Jazz online showcase 2021,

Artemov was a distinguished figure in the Dnipro jazz scene, gaining prominence with his Vibe Trio and later contributing to projects such as Dark Side Trio, Danylo Vinarikov Ensemble, and Elevation Trio.

He is also a good friend of Ukrainian institute, and all our team is thankful to him for the cooperation in 2020 at Am I Jazz online showcase, where he performed with Danylo Vinarikov Ensemble. Additionally he participated in events like Szczecin Jazz and Good Vibe Festival in Poland in 2021.

Mateusz Prus, director of Good Vibe Festival: «Serhii Artemov was an exceptionally talented and warm-hearted young man. In 2021, I had the pleasure of inviting his band, the Danylo Vinarikov Ensemble, to perform at the Good Vibe Festival in Koszalin. The concert took place in the exquisite hall of the Koszalin



Serhii Artemov with Danylo Vinarikov Ensemble at Good Vibe Festival,

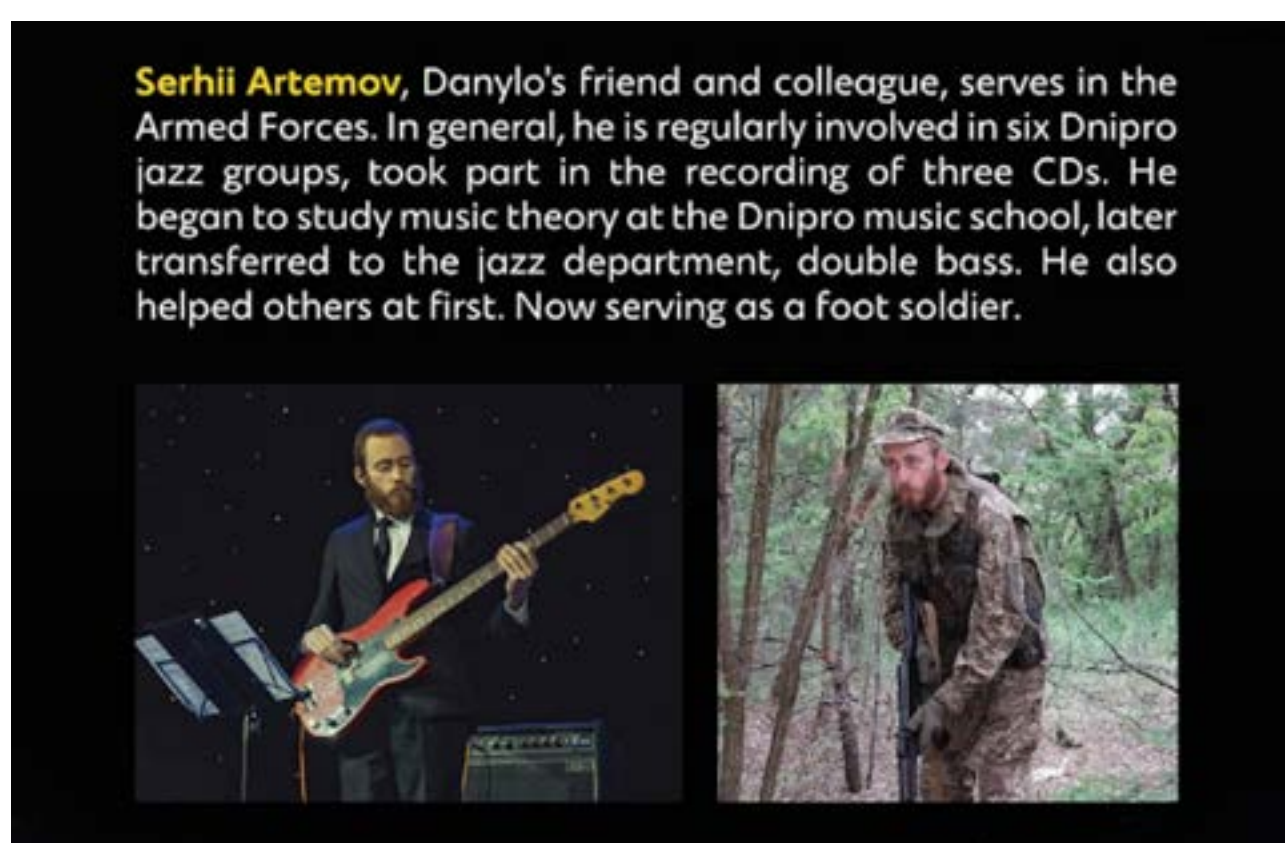
Philharmonic, where 600 people gathered in September. Little did we know that a few months later, Russia would launch an attack on Ukraine, prompting Serhii to join the army and defend his homeland.

During their time in Koszalin, we spoke with the band about the potential for conflict, and they acknowledged the looming risk, noting various indicators that hinted at the possibility. Regrettably, as history unfolded, Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine. Even during nighttime strolls in Koszalin, Serhii appeared somewhat reserved, yet exuded warmth through his modest and quiet demeanor, always accompanied by a sincere smile. He displayed a genuine curiosity about Poland, the city of Koszalin, its culture, and customs.

At the age of 29, an opportune time for a musician, Serhii had immense potential for significant achievements. Beyond his skillful playing, he was also a talented composer. The organizers of the Good Vibe Festival were deeply saddened by the tragic news of his passing on the front lines. Serhii Artemov's untimely death was a profound loss, cutting short a promising career and leaving a void in the hearts of those who knew him.»

Serhii Artemov was featured in the exhibition by Ukrainian Institute and Jazzography.in.ua titled "[Ukrainian jazzmen at war](http://Ukrainianjazzmenatwar.com)".

Though physically absent, Serhii Artemov's legacy as a remarkable musician, a wonderful person, and a defender of Ukraine will endure. The community urges partners and friends to share this tribute, play Artemov's music across various platforms, and ensure his music lives on.



Serhii Artemov featuring in the exhibition "Ukrainian jazzmen at war"

Misha: "Before the formation of the Vibe Trio, we had already played together in various musical collaborations, and Serhii got into our company at the beginning of his studies at the music high school - he studied at the theoretical department, and then decided to continue his studies on double bass and bass guitar. At that time, we had a great need for a bass player, and Serhii showed his interest in jazz, as well as understanding of harmony and the structure of music in general. I remember, then we even felt a kind of elation from his appearance, we had big hopes for him. And for good reason.



photo credit: Olya Lavrik



photos from the concert in Art Area DK in Kharkiv, 2018

His strength as a musician was obvious from the very beginning, and later it only revealed itself and became a permanent feature of his creative personality. This is his broad understanding of music as a phenomenon and special attitude towards its creation. It may sound like basic stuff, but what I mean are not that common qualities. There are many wonderful musicians, but the opportunity to play and make music with Serhii gave me the feeling that together we will be able to create something special, real. And this is not only my opinion - I hear similar things from other musicians, both Ukrainians and touring Americans and Europeans, who had the chance to play with Serhii."

Dmytro Lytvynenko, a good friend and drummer in Vibe Trio and Dark Side Trio, shared his reflections on Serhii, describing him as a remarkably bright and sensitive individual. Serhii possessed a strong character, evident both in his approach to life and his passion for music. While he valued the advice of others, he always maintained a distinct and thoughtful perspective on various matters. Serhii's interests were diverse, demonstrating a multifaceted personality. He was an avid reader, engrossed in chess, and even explored capoeira, a Brazilian martial art, for a while. However, music held a special place in his heart, consistently taking precedence in his pursuits. Despite facing the challenges of a difficult fate, becoming an orphan at the age of 16, Serhii remarkably transformed into an exceptionally kind and joyful individual. His magnetic personality drew in a fascinating array of diverse and talented people.



photo credit: Tetyana Shlapak

Yakiv Tsvetinsky (trumpet player and friend of Serhii) shares his story of acquaintance and friendship with Serhii:

"My acquaintance with Serhii Artemov spanned over 13-14 years, dating back to our time at the Music Academy. From our earliest encounters, Serhii stood out to me with his remarkable intuition and exceptional memory. Even in our early student days, when musical prowess was still developing, Serhii exhibited a mature understanding of music, surpassing many of us. His initial foray into jazz marked his first experience with the genre, yet he played with a sophistication that set him ahead of the curve.

Our musical collaboration extended into Alma De Bossa, a commercial project with Latin American covers. Despite the unconventional nature of this period, we toured and played

Serhii's ability to connect with people from all walks of life added to his allure. In our downtime, we delved into jazz theory, listened to music, enjoyed beer, and shared moments watching The Simpsons.

During the early 2010s, jazz was a niche in Dnipro, with limited venues for performances. Serhii played a pivotal role in changing this landscape. He introduced me to Unknown Petrovskyi, a club that would become a hub for jazz in the city. Serhii initiated concerts and jam sessions, drawing a substantial crowd to the club. This period marked the beginning of a vibrant jazz community in Dnipro, and Serhii played a crucial role in shaping its trajectory.

Our musical collaboration continued in the group Le Noir, where Serhii's unique compositions immediately stood out. Unfortunately, personal challenges led to a hiatus from music for Serhii, and our paths temporarily diverged. However, this period of introspection profoundly influenced his relationship with music and people, shaping the conscious choices he later made upon returning to the musical scene.

Upon reconnection, we formed the Four Bros project, where Serhii's organizational skills and innovative compositions became the driving force. Through this project, Serhii encouraged us to be authentic in our musical expression, a lesson that fundamentally changed my approach to music.

Life took me abroad for a while, and upon my return, Serhii was involved in Vibe Trio and Dark Side Trio. Though we didn't collaborate directly, his influence continued to resonate in our occasional joint performances. I deeply regret not having the chance to catch up and create more music together.

His sudden demise left a void, and at his funeral, I witnessed the diverse group of people from all over Ukraine he had touched throughout his life. Serhii's ability to unite individuals from various backgrounds was a testament to his unique charisma. I am grateful to Serhii for the positive impact he had on my life, though it's challenging to imagine my musical future without him. His memory lives on in the hearts of those he touched, and the lessons he imparted continue to shape our musical journeys."

Ksenia Slobodian, a pianist and a close friend of Serhii, recalls their initial encounter, which took place during a jam session in 2017. She vividly remembers the first time she heard Serhii play – his performance exuded sensuality, as if he were conversing through his bass guitar, displaying a keen sensitivity to the music. Serhii's distinctive features, such as his long fingers and clear, expressive eyes, caught the attention of many. Despite his youth, he emanated wisdom, always approachable and modest.

One memorable experience was attending a concert featuring Serhii with the Vibe Trio band, accompanied by Dmytro Lytvynenko on drums and Mykhailo Lyshenko on keys. The unique setup of the concert, with the musicians positioned at the center of the hall, established a direct «connection» with the audience. Serhii and Mykhailo presented original compositions, showcasing Serhii's extraordinary and unexpected ideas that left the audience in awe. Ksenia vividly recalls

being moved to tears by the deep and conceptual nature of their music, describing the team as a groundbreaking discovery of its time.

Serhii Artemov's musical contributions will continue through an upcoming album recorded with the Vibe Trio. Misha Lyshenko shares insight into some pieces, «Dreamcatcher,» «Roads to Go,» and «Digital Monks,» inviting others to engage with and perform these compositions as a tribute to Artemov's memory: "He left behind a certain volume of music that we have the opportunity to play, promote, share with others. And fortunately, it's very good music, which makes this process pleasant and fulfilling for everyone. Personally, I feel how it helps me cope with this loss. It doesn't make it easy in any sense, but... I can do something for Serhii, it's very valuable."

«Dreamcatcher»: Serhii Artemov's Unrecorded Melody

«Dreamcatcher» holds a special place in the musical journey of Serhii Artemov and the Vibe Trio. It stands as the inaugural composition that Artemov brought to the rehearsal, even preceding the formation of their trio. Unfortunately, there is no existing audio or video recording of this enchanting tune, adding a sense of mystery and exclusivity to its legacy.

The tempo of «Dreamcatcher» hovers around 140 beats per minute, offering a rhythmic foundation for the composition. However, Artemov, in his creative spirit, encouraged a liberated interpretation, emphasizing that the tempo should not serve as a constraint. This open-minded approach invites musicians and listeners alike to explore the nuances of the melody without rigid limitations.



photo credit Yuri Gryaznov

DREAMCATCHER

COMPOSED BY SERGEY ARTEMOV

PIANO **BASS INTRODUCTION** $G7(b9)$ $A7(b9\#9)$ $E^b7(\#11b9\#5)$ $B7/D\#$ Dm^b $A9(\#9\#5)/C\#$

6 **A** Dm^9 $Csus^{13}$ $B^b_{MAT}7(\#11)$ $E^b7(\#11b9\#5)$ Dm^9 Cm^{13} $B^b_{MAT}7(\#11)$ $A11(\#9\#5)$

14 Dm^9 $Csus^{13}$ $B^b_{MAT}7(\#11)$ $E^b7(\#11b9\#5)$ Dm^9 Cm^{13} $B^b_{MAT}7(\#11)$ $A11(\#9\#5)$

22 **B** Dm^9 $EMAT7(\#11)$ $G^b_{MAT}7$ $E^b_{MAT}7$ Dm^9 $EMAT7(\#11)$ $G^b_{MAT}7$ $E^b_{MAT}7$

26 Dm^9 $EMAT7(\#11)$ $G^b_{MAT}7$ $E^b_{MAT}7$ Dm^9 $EMAT7(\#11)$ $G^b_{MAT}7$ | 1. $G7(b9)$ | 2. $G7(b9)$

31 **BRIDGE** $E^b7(\#11b9\#5)$ $A7(b9\#9)$ $E^b7(\#11b9\#5)$ $A7(b9\#9)$

39 **A** Dm^9 $Csus^{13}$ $B^b_{MAT}7(\#11)$ $E^b7(\#11b9\#5)$ Dm^9 Cm^{13} $B^b_{MAT}7(\#11)$ $A11(\#9\#5)$

47 Dm^9 $Csus^{13}$ $B^b_{MAT}7(\#11)$ $E^b7(\#11b9\#5)$ Dm^9 Cm^{13} $B^b_{MAT}7(\#11)$ $A11(\#9\#5)$

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SOLOS ON A A BRIDGE A FORM

2
55 **A** DM^9 $Csus^{13}$ $B^b_{MAT}7(\sharp 11)$ $E^b7(\sharp 11b9\sharp 5)$ DM^9 CM^{13} $B^b_{MAT}7(\sharp 11)$ $A11(\sharp 9\sharp 5)$
PNO.

63 DM^9 $Csus^{13}$ $B^b_{MAT}7(\sharp 11)$ $E^b7(\sharp 11b9\sharp 5)$ DM^9 CM^{13} $B^b_{MAT}7(\sharp 11)$ $A11(\sharp 9\sharp 5)$
PNO.

BRIDGE
71 $E^b7(\sharp 11b9\sharp 5)$ $A7(\sharp 9\sharp 5)$ $E^b7(\sharp 11b9\sharp 5)$ $A7(\sharp 9\sharp 5)$
PNO.

79 **A** DM^9 $Csus^{13}$ $B^b_{MAT}7(\sharp 11)$ $E^b7(\sharp 11b9\sharp 5)$ DM^9 CM^{13} $B^b_{MAT}7(\sharp 11)$ $A11(\sharp 9\sharp 5)$
PNO.

87 DM^9 $Csus^{13}$ $B^b_{MAT}7(\sharp 11)$ $E^b7(\sharp 11b9\sharp 5)$ DM^9 CM^{13} $B^b_{MAT}7(\sharp 11)$ $A11(\sharp 9\sharp 5)$
PNO.

95 **B** DM^9 $EMAT7(\sharp 11)$ $G^b_{MAT}7$ $E^b_{MAT}7$ DM^9 $EMAT7(\sharp 11)$ $G^b_{MAT}7$ $E^b_{MAT}7$
PNO.

99 DM^9 $EMAT7(\sharp 11)$ $G^b_{MAT}7$ $E^b_{MAT}7$ DM^9 $EMAT7(\sharp 11)$ $G^b_{MAT}7$ | 1. $G7(\flat 5)$ | 2. $G7(\flat 5)$
PNO.

BRIDGE
104 $A7(\sharp 9\sharp 5)$ $E^b7(\sharp 11b9\sharp 5)$ $A7(\sharp 9\sharp 5)$ $E^b7(\sharp 11b9\sharp 5)$
PNO.

112 $A7(\sharp 9\sharp 5)$ $E^b7(\sharp 11b9\sharp 5)$ $A7(\sharp 9\sharp 5)$ $E^b7(\sharp 11b9\sharp 5)$
PNO.
REPEAT AD LIB ITIMES

C
120 DM^9 $EMAT7(\sharp 11)$ $G^b_{MAT}7$ $E^b_{MAT}7$ $G_{MAT}7$ DM^9 $EMAT7(\sharp 11)$ $G^b_{MAT}7$ $E^b_{MAT}7$ $C\sharp 08$
PNO.

126 DM^9 $EMAT7(\sharp 11)$ $G^b_{MAT}7$ $E^b_{MAT}7$ $G_{MAT}7$ DM^9 $EMAT7(\sharp 11)$ CM^{\sharp}
PNO.

131 DM^9 $EMAT7(\sharp 11)$ CM^{\sharp} DM^9 $EMAT7(\sharp 11)$ $A7(\sharp 9\sharp 5)$ DM^9 CM^{13}
PNO.

85.
PNO.

«Roads to Go»: Serhii Artemov's Musical Odyssey

«Roads to Go,» a masterpiece penned by Serhii Artemov, held a special place in the repertoire of the Vibe Trio, often serving as the grand finale for their concerts. This composition stands out as one of Artemov's most captivating works, seamlessly blending fusion elements with melodious tunes and skillfully uniting diverse moods and styles.

Artemov's artistic brilliance is evident in the intricate fusion of genres within «Roads to Go.» The composition takes the listener on a compelling journey, navigating through various musical landscapes. The fusion elements introduce a dynamic energy, while the singable melodies create an emotional resonance that captivates audiences.

For those eager to experience the magic of «Roads to Go,» a live studio performance is available [here](#). This rendition not only showcases the technical prowess of Serhii Artemov and the Vibe Trio but also captures the essence of the composition's diverse influences.

As you listen, immerse yourself in the evolving textures and rhythms that define this musical voyage. The live performance adds a layer of spontaneity and authenticity, providing a genuine glimpse into the collaborative synergy of the ensemble.

«Digital Monks»: A Musical Exploration by Serhii Artemov and Vibe Trio

In the creative process of «Digital Monks,» Serhii Artemov, the visionary behind the composition, shared that it encapsulates elements that resonate with all of us. During rehearsals, Artemov prompted the ensemble to envision how renowned guitarist John Scofield would interpret the melody, instantly transforming the musical context. This approach introduced a unique perspective and enriched the creative dynamics of the piece.

In shaping the overall aesthetic vision of «Digital Monks,» the Vibe Trio drew inspiration from the distinctive sound of Medeski Martin Wood. While the final result took on a different and special character, the initial influences of Scofield and Medeski Martin Wood provide valuable insight for those seeking to interpret and play this composition. These references offer a gateway into the nuanced nuances and stylistic elements embedded within the composition.

One noteworthy aspect the ensemble focused on was the swing feel of the piece. They discovered a sweet spot that delicately balances between triplets and straight-8s, creating a rhythmic tension that enhances the overall musical experience. This intentional approach to rhythm adds depth and complexity to the composition, inviting fellow musicians to explore and experiment with the interplay of rhythmic elements.

«Digital Monks» stands as a testament to Serhii Artemov's innovative approach to music, encouraging musicians to embrace diverse influences and transcend conventional boundaries. As others embark on their interpretation of this composition, the guidance provided by Artemov's suggested influences and attention to rhythmic nuances serves as both an homage to his legacy and an invitation for creative exploration.

Live performance in Kharkiv: https://youtu.be/KN94Bge3L_Q

Explore Serhii Artemov's music. As we honor his memory, let the music of Serhii Artemov live on.

Watch [Am I Jazz? – Danylo Vinarikov Ensemble](#)

Dark Side Trio [Spotify](#)

Mariana Bondarenko, Ukrainian Institute

Road to go

by Sergey Artemov

1st time bass and synth only

5

9 **A** Am F#ø FΔ Dm6 G#aug Am F#ø EbΔ(#11) CΔ(#11)

13 Am F#ø FΔ Dm6 G#aug Am F#ø FΔ(#11)

17 **Interlude**
Aopen

21

25 **B** DΔ BbΔ Asus4 E/G# Em/G

30 F#m7 Asus13 F#7/A# C° D7b9 Abm7 GΔ Fm7 EΔ

35 Ebm7 Ab7 DbΔ F7/C Bm FΔ(#11)

SOLOS on A,
on cue go to B.
After solos play A,
Interlude and go
to DRUMS SOLO

2 **DRUMS SOLO**

39 A-open

42 **C** F#m7 FΔ D#m7 DΔ F#m7 FΔ D#m7 DΔ

50 F#m7 F7 D#m7 D7

54 F#m7 F7 D#m7 D7

58 FΔ(#11)

DIGITAL MONKS

Funk ala MMW
Swinging 8s

by Sergey Artemov

Am¹¹ A^bsus⁴/C Am¹¹ A^bsus⁴/C

VAMP

A1 **A2**

5 Am¹¹ A^bsus⁴/C Am¹¹ A^bsus⁴/C

9 Am¹¹ A^bsus⁴/C Am¹¹ A^bsus⁴/C

B1 **B2**

13 B^bm^Δ7 B[∅] E⁷

17 F^Δ7 D⁷ G

C

21 Am¹¹ A^bsus⁴/C Am¹¹ A^bsus⁴/C

repeat 4 times

Solos on ABB,
play C after each solo
for the drums solo.
After head out play A one more once
and take the CODA last time.

25 Am¹¹ A^bsus⁴/C

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**Jazz and
improvisational
music from Ukraine
Retrospective**

Jazz in Ukraine

In lieu of a foreword

Oleksij Kogan

The history of jazz in Ukraine falls more-or-less into two periods. The first was when the country was still part of the USSR, while the second started in 1991 and continues to this day. This is the new history of Ukrainian jazz. Since this article is not a work of fundamental research, those who are interested in a fuller history of jazz in Ukraine should read Volodymyr Symonenko's Ukrainian Encyclopedia of Jazz, published by Tsentmuzinform in 2004. Symonenko (1940-1998) was a musicologist and archivist, the author of several wonderful books and collections of notes, an unsurpassed narrator and lecturer, and the first president of the Ukrainian Association of Jazz. He basically dedicated his entire life to the Encyclopedia, which was only published in 2004, after his death, with additions prepared by another historian of Ukrainian jazz, Iukhym Markov.

In essence, the Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Jazz is an important historical document that encompasses all the jazz history of Ukraine in the 20th century: the personalities, the festivals, jazz education, radio and television broadcasts, bibliography, discography, critical writings, and print editions.

Another very successful, in my opinion, attempt to tell about the most interesting Ukrainian musicians who are making the history of modern Ukrainian jazz is *The Music That We Choose*, compiled by the team of Viacheslav Kryshchovych Jr., jazzman Ihor Zakus and publisher Yulia Oliynyk and published by Tempora in 2006. It's a terrific publication, accompanied by a series of video and audio materials. It's worth remembering that the main advantage of all encyclopedias and guides is also one of their main flaws. While these publications are prepared for printing, numerous events take place that are not reflected in the books. I hope that specialists will be found to write the history of Ukrainian jazz, as I'm convinced that it will be of interest and not just to Ukrainians themselves.

Once again, I want to emphasize that this article is just a subjective and very personal view of the events that influenced and continue to influence the development of jazz in Ukraine. Although neither a historian nor an archivist, I have worked in radio all my life and can tell you the history of our jazz in the language of music. This is far easier to do in a radio broadcast. The Kyiv station Old Fashioned Radio has recorded 50 hour-long episodes of the program "Jazz Train from Ukraine." I believe that music allows us to feel events and the variety of views among Ukrainian musicians more. Whoever said "Music is the trails that can take you back to different periods of your life" captured it well.

So, let's start, I suppose, with the early Sixties.

1960 - 1991

- 1962** - Benny Goodman's Big Band performs in Kyiv in September.
- 1962** - The Mriya opens as the first jazz club in Kyiv
- 1964** - Pianist and composer Ihor Khoma organizes and leads the famed Lviv ensemble, Medikus.
- 1966** - Kyiv's Mriya Jazz Club organizes the first competition of jazz ensembles.
- 1969** - A jazz festival is launched in Donetsk and continues until 1989 (Donetsk 100 to Donetsk 120).
- 1966** - The Earl Hines band performs in Kyiv.
- 1970** - Volodymyr Symonenko brings out his compilation of sheet music called "The Melody of Jazz," published by Muzychna Ukraina. This was effectively the first collection of jazz music in the USSR, along the lines of the Real Book series of jazz standards. It continued to be popular among jazz players for many years.
- 1971** - Duke Ellington's Big Band performs in Kyiv in September.
- 1972** - The Thad Jones and Mel Lewis Big Band performs in Kyiv in April.
- 1974** - Radio correspondent Mykola Ammosov establishes the first program called "25 Minutes of Jazz Music" on the state-run Promin station. It ran until 1984.
- 1978** - The Melodia record company issues its renowned platter called "A Lyrical Mood" with the participation of Valeriy Kolesnikov on trumpet, Volodymyr Molotkov on guitar, Viacheslav Novikov on piano, and Alexander Christidis on drums.
- 1980** - Symonenko establishes a department of pop and jazz performance at the R. Glier Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music.
- 1981** - Symonenko publishes yet another book, called The Lexicon of Jazz, which becomes a bestseller among soviet jazz fans.
- 1981** - Saxophonist, bayan [button accordion] player and teacher Oleksandr Hebel organizes a jazz ensemble for children at Music School #10 in Kryvyi Rih. In 1983, it was turned into the first kids' big band in the world. This orchestra was to be a school for many talented children, among them many of today's Ukrainian jazz stars. Hebel's orchestra travelled around the world and became a "successful Ukrainian cultural export." After Hebel moved to Germany, Oleh Hruzin and Viktor Basiuk took over the orchestra. It was Basiuk who established a strong children's ensemble later, called the Little Band Academy in Kyiv.
- 1987** - The Holosiyevo '87 Jazz Festival in Kyiv proves to be a big hit.
- 1987** - The Pat Metheny group performs in Kyiv in an unforgettable concert and organizes a huge jam session of American and Ukrainian jazz players.
- 1991** - The Dnipro Tour Festival and its French partners organize a unique event with over 70 musicians, journalists, producers and promoters from France from the ARFI, together with their Ukrainian colleagues, aboard a ship with the romantic name "XXV Congress of the Communist Party." The cruise down the Dnipro River includes stops and concerts in Kaniv, Dnipro, Kakhovka and Kherson, just as the putsch in Moscow begins. The final concert, a big band "marmite infernale,"

takes place in Odesa, where the Potemkin stairs are completely jammed with fans. The big band sits on top of a high dais above the sea, under a huge screen where Sergei Eisenstein's famous film "The Battleship Potemkin" is projected. The musicians play original tunes composed as a special accompaniment to the silent film. This tourney led to numerous Franco-Ukrainian jazz initiatives and some interesting joint projects were launched. The Ukrainian folk trio Derevo, performing with the French drum quartet Baron Samedi in the closing concert, enjoyed a tremendous audience response. The musicians called this project "Dyakuyu" [Thanks].



Olexij Kogan, Pat Metheny and Arkady Mitnik
Kyiv, 1988



Olexander Nesterov
Kyiv, 1988



Serhij Shvirst
Kyiv, 1988

Of course, this is an incomplete list of all the developments in jazz in soviet Ukraine. I deliberately avoided personalities, because it's impossible to mention everybody. In those years, jazz lived mostly in the big cities, a life force supported by jazz lovers who were dedicated, persistent and consistent. There weren't that many of them, but they all deserve our respect and appreciation.

In August 1991 everything changed. For the better. Ukraine finally gained independence.

In the early 1990s, everything began to shift. Slowly, step-by-step, a new generation of musicians emerged, and the audience of jazz fans grew noticeably younger. Ukraine was still at the stage where intuition replaced information (and jazz fans were no exception), but changes were coming. In March 1992, Ukraine's state radio station Promin introduced a 60-minute program called "The Hour of the Melomane," which continued for a decade. A bit later, Dmytro Haliony's DDD (Jazz to 24:00) appeared.

In the mid-1990s, musicians began moving to the capital, under the influence of the world-famous formula, "If you want people to hear about you, you have to be known in the capital." This meant that members of the jazz communities in Vinnytsia, Kharkiv, Odesa, Kryvyi Rih and Donetsk began to show up in Kyiv. Meanwhile, local festivals flourished in Odesa, Kryvyi Rih, Dnipro, Cherkasy, Sumy, and Nikopol.

Ukrainian listeners were able to tune into jazz on FM stations like Continent, Radio ERA FM, Nostalgie, Renaissance, Europe Plus, and Radio Lux. Collector and jazz enthusiast Leonid Goldstein produced an interesting original program for television.

In August 1999, Jazz Wednesdays was launched at the Dynamo Lux Club in Kyiv. Over three years, more than 152 concerts took place, fragments of which were issued on 14 CDs. Later, the renowned

German-Ukrainian entrepreneur Eric Eigner established a venue for jazz musicians to perform in his three Art Clubs: 44, Al Capone and Ring. Life began to gain meaning. And jazz.

Here are some of the main advantages and accomplishments of Ukraine's independence with regard to jazz culture:

- Ukrainian jazz players learned to play American jazz standards.
- Ukrainian musicians became equal partners with their American and European colleagues, which has led to interesting international projects.
- Original compositions that blend folk elements in a natural manner have made it possible to identify Ukrainian performers similarly to the way that Polish, Balkan, Arabic, Spanish and other musicians are.
- Ukrainian musicians have gained training and experience abroad at some of the top music institutions under a variety of programs, and many have returned to Ukraine to share their knowledge and experience with young musicians.
- In the years since Ukraine became independent, more than 400 original albums have been produced by Ukrainian musicians, 10% of which contained jazz standards and the music of renowned composers, while 90% contained original music. This is clearly a good trend. In my opinion, once Ukrainian musicians know and play the standards well, they're bound to create their own music that can eventually become Ukrainian jazz standards.
- Today, pretty much all the current styles of music are available in Ukraine, from archaic to ultra-avant-garde. Ihor Zakus's Jazz Kolo art agency actively promotes Ukrainian jazz both at home and abroad.
- In the last 15 years, many talented Ukrainian musicians are living and playing abroad.
- The jazz community in Ukraine has generated numerous jazz agencies along with a variety of exciting festivals, radio stations and jazz clubs, of which there are never enough in Ukraine.



Big Band Kryvyi Rih



Volodymyr Anchipolovsky,
Kyiv, 1988

- The best-known international festivals—Leopolis Jazz Fest, Jazz Bez and Jazz in Kyiv—have established a very positive cultural image and reputation for Ukrainian jazz over the last decade.

Right now, Ukraine is under fire, but life goes on. There will be more about everything going on in jazz today—after victory.

Oleksiy Kogan,
radio journalist, art director of Leopolis Jazz Festival,
art director of Jazz in Kyiv production company

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photo: Arkady Mitnik <https://www.jazzimage.me/>



Olexij Kogan
Lviv, 2017

Women in Ukrainian Jazz

Kateryna Ziabliuk

The important thing to keep in mind is that to understand jazz in Ukraine and the role it plays for Ukrainians, it is necessary to know where it historically originated. Eventually, this logical scheme applies to any country and culture, but it is quite easy to miss small events that may have changed the course of events almost radically.

For Ukraine, as for the rest of Europe, jazz came in the interwar period, and even before the infamous repressions, it was associated with dancing and continuous fun (it would be called «light music» for a long time). Slowly, chapels and orchestras appeared at institutes and cultural centres, as well as theatre groups that involved musicians in performances. The most vivid development took place, of course, in large cities, mainly in Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv (among the documented ones, groups led by students of the Yuliy Meytus Music and Drama Institute) and Lviv. Most jazz musicians of those times focused not so much on the traditional, «indigenous» sound that came to them through records from abroad, but on the direction called «thea-jazz» - the aforementioned combination of theatrical performances with «pop» concerts.

Up to a certain point, the history largely coincided with the Polish one, though with an obvious lag in terms of documented materials. The largest number of surviving recordings represent the Lviv scene, often performed by Polish musicians with whom Ukrainian musicians collaborated. For example, in the 1930s, Leonid Yablonsky's Yabtsy Jazz band appeared, with the Ukrainian singer Renata Yarosevych (Anders) as its soloist, a key figure in Ukrainian music who established dialogues with foreign scenes and, together with her musicians, launched trends that continued to be developed by new generations of Ukrainian jazz musicians. In fact, she was one of the first women of the Ukrainian «light music» of that time.

In the first decades of its existence in Ukraine, jazz was about the tireless struggle for freedom. Just as with Ukrainian-language literature, films and other musical genres, jazz was repressed with very serious sentences. Just as futurism reshaped the worldview of people at different social levels, whether they liked it or not, so jazz, or pop music of the time, was turning from an unobtrusive entertainment genre into a tool for rooting "Ukrainianness" wherever possible. A serious threat to the authorities of the time.

At this point, namely in the 40s and 60s, the intertwined Polish-Ukrainian history of jazz began to unravel. The most active musicians of that time focused primarily on Ukrainian texts, often on reworking folk songs, and almost always on elaborate arrangements for large bands, which often included choirs and folk instruments alongside a classical jazz/jazz-funk rhythm section. One of these groups was Lviv's "Medicus" by Ihor Khoma, who later presented his music in Poland, Germany, and Estonia, released records there, and until the very end, despite the threats

of the authorities, stuck to the same idea as he had at the beginning - the establishment of Ukrainian jazz as a self-sufficient unit. Khoma also worked in a hospital, and during the so-called «Zhdanovshchyna» (a period of intense struggle against the «national bourgeoisie» under Stalin and the revolutionary ideologue Andrei Zhdanov, who was close to him), he received many threats that undermined his reputation and threatened his life and well-being. This put so much pressure on him that at some point he suffered a heart attack, after which he was never able to recover and return to his work.

It took quite a while for the next generations of Ukrainians to take up the baton. First of all, because few people believed that this lofty idea made sense: living through a time of complete (for many, delicate and invisible) denial of the human being as an individual and any attempts to find one's own identity, there is no impulse to even want to realise the need for this. Few people talked about discrimination based on class, gender, nationality, or any biological characteristics, because there were priorities - one had to survive. And in general, what is the point of opening your self up to the outside and exposing yourself to a non-discussive expulsion from at least your society, the one you so carefully build for yourself and your loved ones with common political views and categorical traditions? Indeed, there was no question of who you really were - everyone had the same priority.

Jazz encouraged the destruction of this sociological cage. Even those who were against the «invasive influences» spent so much time and energy fighting them that there was no room for their own well-being. Eventually, at some point, this bubble burst, and it turned out that the Nurt, which had been oppressed for years, lived and thrived «in the basements». For 30 years, since independence, jazz has been looking for ways out through any gap, acquiring its own unique forms, and the dynamics of recent years indicate a return to the trajectory of bright «Ukrainianness», which was discussed almost a hundred years ago.

To be fair, all Ukrainian jazz musicians deserve essays, portraits and research works in their honour, because this is not yet happening and we hope that in the near future the amplitude of this topic will only expand. However, there is a category that arouses considerable interest around the world, namely women in jazz. This is really important, because if you look through any chapter of history, especially the one related to Eastern European culture, it is difficult to find women there. It all depends on the appropriateness of the accent. There will be no sharp appeals, no complaints, or formal lists of names and surnames. Let's start with something extremely natural and simple - portraits of several women, key figures in the history of Ukrainian jazz, from different generations, with different experiences and ways of perceiving music and the world. Most importantly, they are the ones who had a special influence on the author of this article due to their «otherness», and every thought about them is filled with kindness and gratitude.

The first Ukrainian jazz instrumentalist that cannot be overlooked is the pianist and composer Nataliya Lebedeva. One of the manifestations of her uniqueness is that she is mentioned in a wide variety of musical (and not only) circles, which seem to be barely connected, and it turns out that she has tried her hand at least once everywhere. Similarly, everywhere she goes, she gathers a variety of opinions about her personality and activities: there are as many disagreeers as supporters because of her categorical judgements, which, after all, have a significant impact on the development of events on the Ukrainian jazz scene.

Lebedeva studied at the Conservatory, at the classical piano department, became interested in jazz back in the 90s and was one of the first «activists» to take jazz out of the stereotype of chamber restaurant music and present it as a rich language for intercultural communication. She was one of those who argued that we should be «Ukrainian jazz», not American jazz, at a time when everyone else wanted to become the next Keith Jarrett or Dexter Gordon. Of course, no one paid attention to this, except for a narrow circle of musicians (including Ihor Zakus and his Jazz Kolo), who in their own way regularly cultivate this idea to this day.

Sometime in the early 2000s, Lebedeva began teaching at one of the few institutions in Ukraine with a jazz department, the Reinhold Gliere Institute of Music in Kyiv. She gave individual piano lessons as well as ensembles, and for us young musicians, she was an example of a determined leader. We never knew what would happen at a lecture - whether she would leave us to learn the parts on our own, or respond with a motivating tap on the table after an unsuccessful coda; she could both praise us generously and discourage us from having anything to do with music. In any case, when such a «carrot and stick» methodology became obvious, eyes were opened to the deeper lessons that were hidden behind it all. Lebedeva always told her pianists that if they learned to play this or that composition well on a bad instrument, then real music would flow from that good instrument. Just like a motivating shake on a wooden table, she tried to convey this necessary spirit of struggle to us with all our conscious and subconscious minds. It has its own rules, rhythm, and ethics, which cannot be compromised, because then you and your comrades perish.

Nataliya Lebedeva is a leader of several projects, where she experiments with merging traditional jazz with classical music, and one of them was exceptionally successful due to a sheer amount of performances abroad, collaborating with local musicians. The program is based on the music of Bach, where she invited two young violinists, It is easy to imagine how mind-blowing this experience was for twenty-something Ukrainian students, something they dare to dream about in a quite far future. Lebedeva stayed calm and convinced, delicately teasing on their shyness, saying in a meantime: "So, why are you still sitting there? Go ahead! There are master-classes in the city of X, I will send you the application, you fill that and go there!". This concrete statement always evoked a lot of thoughts in minds of young jazz adepts. After all, it always worked.

One of those young students, who felt the fiery motivating approach of Nataliya Lebedeva, was the pianist Maryna Kramarenko. While many students still retained the desire to be like their idols, which Lebedeva did not tolerate, Kramarenko quickly got rid of it, and now the difference between their lifestyles is quite different. It's hard to say what kind of contact they have at the moment, but once Maryna reminisced her first visit to Lebedeva, where she heard: «Well, you don't know how to play, but you can compose like that, it's so impressive!" Indeed, from the point of view of the academic Ukrainian school, this is really unusual. And this is actually the difference between Nataliya Lebedeva's generation and Maryna's, who started talking about music as something she couldn't live without. It was always something deeper than just the instrument and technique, something that made her sit down at the piano every time she felt exceptionally good or bad. This is also what she tells her students in her lectures, always emphasising the dialogue with ourselves and the people around us; when this dialogue takes place, there is always something to compose about.

For several years, Maryna Kramarenko has been actively performing with her trio, with bassist Valentyn Pastukhov and drummer Oleksandr Korsun. They played their own music, sometimes you could hear arrangements of compositions by Esbjörn Svensson or Riyuki Sakamoto, which, in the end, fit so well into Marina's aesthetic that such facts simply cease to matter. At the time, there were very few musicians performing this kind of music, so one could hear a variety of opinions about it, from sincere admiration to those peremptory ones like Lebedeva's. But no one could think of making bad comments, because again, there was something more than music. There was an honest dialogue that was expressed in the language of the audience's eyes on stage. According to Maryna's stories, her meetings with her musicians usually took place during rehearsals, and this is exactly how she wanted to communicate with these people. They got to know her, and she got to know them, and everyone accepted each other, whether they individually shared it or not. That's what always encouraged you to approach her with a smile and talk about anything, even a mundane topic, and you would know that you would both enjoy it.

In her music, Kramarenko has eliminated a feature that was once «fashionable» among Ukrainian musicians: fast composition. Most of her compositions, she says, are created in the course of ordinary music-making for pleasure, without any expectations of herself. Intuition will always follow a spontaneous motif, and Maryna can spend a long time running this idea through her head until it is ready to emerge as a complete form. Because of this, there are compositions that she is not able to play because they have too much emotional value for her, and those that will lift her up at that moment.

During the war, Maryna spent a lot of time in Finland, where she was able to continue her artistic work and receive decent support. It took her a while to recover and get back to playing, but now she has gained a sense of freedom and independence, which are so important to her, and she claims that Finland is guiding her to a new stage in her life.

Two of the most important lessons learnt from meeting Nataliya Lebedeva and Maryna Kramarenko - keeping the fire going and maintaining a dialogue with yourself and others - opened the door to a number of new acquaintances, primarily those from the younger generation who only recently were those impressed students of all the jazz departments in the country. The right people are at the time when your intentions are clear and your position is completely in line with you. It was at this stage of self-development we met with vocalist Alina Zalozna and pianist Ksenia Slobodian. The place of contact was the small town of Chodzież near Poznań, at Cho-Jazz masterclasses. Alina is from Kherson, and Ksenia is from Dnipro, so at the time they had little opportunity to get a push from Lebedeva to go abroad for an interesting event, so it gives me a warm thought that there are plenty of dedicated fans like her all over Ukraine.

Unlike Lebedeva and Kramarenko, both girls are in the first waves of their formation as artists, and this is a process that is quite interesting to watch. From the very beginning, Ksenia, who also had the opportunity to meet the same teachers in class, created the image of someone who was always thirsty, happy with every meeting with musicians, ready to be inspired by everything that came her way. And also to inspire others. In 2022, she was supposed to release her debut album, but this has been postponed to 2023. However, from what it seems, this does not break her, but on the contrary, gives her an even greater impetus to create music. Ksenia has always claimed

that she composes best when she has some powerful impulse, fresh and sometimes not fully comprehensible to her. Although her creative spirit is always active, and these days, she is writing new music about the unbreakable spirit of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and every Ukrainian. At some point, she realised how much she was drawn to folk music and how powerful this source is and how much she wanted it to be known outside of Ukraine. This idea has become so deeply ingrained in her that she is now able to infect others with it, in an exceptionally friendly way, but without seeming to care what others say.

Alina, in turn, is gaining distinctive features of a leader in various fields of musical activity. She is a fountain of ideas on the topic of relationships between musicians, possible options for the development of the scene, management and production, in which she can objectively see all the advantages and disadvantages. Alina also turns to folk music and strives to create a new Ukrainian scene that will be different from German, French, Polish or any other. And again, she finds it easy to find a common language with travellers and fans of deep hours-long dialogue, both musical and verbal. In both things, she doesn't want to have insurmountable boundaries. This is something that is very different from previous generations, where the focus was more inward, on developing your music on your own, because that's what you can safely count on. Does this indicate the existence of uncompromising trust? Not completely. It seems to be about a willingness to take risks to develop your own position.

Another interesting personality is at a similar stage of openness to risk - the double bassist Khrystyna Kirik. Originally from Kyiv, she studied jazz, and at some point her sphere of influence expanded to such nooks and crannies that few people in Ukraine had ever guessed about, let alone dared to enter. Two years ago, Kirik released the album 2+2 with her band, KK4TET. The very fact that she decided to record it analogue, using a Studer A-80, is a testament to her strikingly different way of thinking. Later on, the FREEBUTTREE project was formed by young musicians and became the first improvisational music laboratory of this scale in Ukraine. In short, a thirst for something that no one around her has ever done before, and is unlikely to ever do again. Khrystyna is silent and modest, and she is likely to remain so. One has to believe that you can miss a lot about her if you don't look her in the eye and exchange a few words, and then it becomes clear (at least approximately) that there is a separate world there and a quiet rebellion against the modern system of thinking, which is primarily presented by the classical European school.

While many have taken on the noble mission of establishing Ukrainian jazz through folk culture, Khrystyna approached it from the perspective of a freedom-loving improvising soul. In her music, you won't hear familiar melodies, there will be a short motif and space for each of her musicians to say: «hey, we're here, and we're going to tell you the most interesting stories from our neighbourhoods!». After that, Christina's work was often compared to Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry and Roland Kirk, for the fire that actually quietly burns in her eyes.

This is how the modern history of Ukrainian jazz is being created now. Why is it so important to know what happened before? It makes it clear that the goal does not change over the years - unfortunately and fortunately, we, Ukrainian musicians, still have a long and intense way to go before we discover our true sound. This is what everyone is burning for now, as much as they

can due to the circumstances, and this diversity that has suddenly burst into flames with all possible force makes us sob with emotion, and then get up and move on confidently.

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Notes on Kyiv Jazz:

From the 1920s to today

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Jazz music is an integral part of modern world musical culture. The combination of two different approaches to contemporary jazz—turning to the traditions of the past and yearning to be individual—has resulted in the varied picture of the jazz world now. Jazz in the Soviet Union was affected because active interest in this type of music was effectively non-existent because for a long time Ukraine did not participate in the cultural dialogue between Europe and America. This was inevitable, given the ideological, cultural and political nature of the USSR. This, of course, led to jazz in the Soviet Union being behind developments in the rest of Europe. After all, jazz implies an ongoing creative process of renewal and mutual exchange.

Some facts from the history of jazz in Kyiv from the 1920s to the 1960s.

The story of jazz in Ukraine began in 1924, when Kharkiv composer and pianist Yuliy Meitus organized the first Ukrainian jazz band. The ensemble included a xylophone, violin, piano, percussion instruments and drums. At the time, Meitus was the conductor at the Kharkiv Opera Theater. With the help of director Les Kurbas, who had a collection of jazz records, Meitus put together a concert of jazz music at the Ivan Franko State Drama Theater in Kharkiv on December 29, 1925. At the time Kharkiv was the capital of Ukraine.

Another key event of that time was the performance of a comedy called “Hello, you’re listening to Radio 477” in 1928, with music by Meitus and B. Kryzhanivskiy, and libretto by M. Johansen and V. Chechvianskiy. The first symphonic jazz in Ukraine was organized for this production. A few years earlier, a jazz band was established in Kyiv in 1925 by the musical director of Les Kurbas’s Berezil Theater, Leonid Entelis.

In 1926, the American Jazz Kings, a sextet led by Frank Withers, came to Ukraine on a soviet tour. After their performances in Kharkiv, Kyiv and Odesa, Ukrainian jazz received the impetus for rapid development. Igor Klyucharyov and Oleksandr Volodarsky became well-known band leaders in the pre-war period. Volodarsky’s jazz orchestra began touring many Ukrainian cities from 1937 on.

In the post-war period, many military orchestras appeared, with jazz orchestras as components. In 1945, the best-known jazz band was at the Kyiv College of Communication.

The opening of restaurants during this time also fostered the growth of jazz music: the older generation of musicians would play there after returning to Kyiv from evacuation or serving at the front. The best jazz ensembles could be heard at the Dynamo Restaurant, the Ukraina Hotel and a summer restaurant called Poplavok. They typically played popular melodies from American movies that appeared in the country after the Second World War, such as "The Roaring Twenties," "Sun Valley Serenade," "New Moon," and many more.

In 1946, the best Kyiv musicians were engaged by the State Jazz Orchestra of the Ukrainian SSR at the Kyiv State Performance Hall. Its artistic director was Yuriy Tymoshenko and its musical directors Filip Kessler and Vsevolod Rozhdestvenskiy.

During this same period, a number of independent big bands began to perform in different Houses of Culture, bringing to public attention future well-known local jazzmen. The most renowned band leaders, in addition to Vasyl Petrus, were Nikolai Kozlov, Yuriy Kalozhynskiy, and Ilya Gass. By 1951 there were two jazz groups in Kyiv: the Vasyl Petrus Orchestra and the ensemble at the Dynamo Restaurant, where pianist and band leader Pylyp Bryl played with trumpeter Yevhen Bezin, clarinetist Leonid Sherling, accordionist Natan Gutharets, and drummer Leonid Zaiderman. In 1955, composer Yevhen Zubtsov organized the first professional Pops Orchestra at the Ukrainian Republican Performance Hall. By 1957, the orchestra became a standard big band.

This, essentially, was the end of the first stage of jazz in Kyiv, which was tied to the melodies of Gershwin, Chaplin, and Kern, together with fragments from operettas and musical scores from foreign films.

The second phase started in the summer of 1957 with a significant event: the All-World Festival of Youth, which took place in Moscow. Its international competition of pop and jazz music drew improvisational jazz groups from Poland, the Netherlands, Italy, Austria, and even the famed Big Band of French musical composer Michel Legrand. After the festival, this last band came to Kyiv, where local musicians heard real jazz live and a new wave of interest in improvisational jazz was set in motion.

Young jazz musicians began to improvise in their own circles and at private parties. Among those who stood out were: trumpet players Anatoly Zinkevych, Yevhen Yatsenko, Anatoliy Bronnikov; trombone players Yuriy Bratolyubov, Mykola Beshudov, Albert Pomianskiy, and Pavlo Zhukovskiy; saxophonists Boris Lyudmer, Mark Reznytskiy, Vadym Dmytrenko, and Yevhen Yeryomenko; guitarists Volodymyr Dunayev, Leonid Samoilovych, Kostiantyn Khodos, and Stanislav Kolesnik; pianists Volodymyr Symonenko, Vadym Ilyin, Yuriy Kasatkin, Yevhen Derhunov, and Volodymyr Medveychuk; bassists Natan Kopylenko, Leonid Lapta and Zorian Khamistos; and drummers Yuriy Pyetin, Lev Zaliapin and Vitaliy Machulin.

Those musicians who caught on to the nature of jazz more quickly organized spontaneous groups and played at various parties in a variety of institutions and enterprises or joined

professional groups. In early 1960, three professional groups were playing in Kyiv: the Kyiv State Circus Orchestra under Petrus, the Ballet on Ice jazz orchestra under conductor Viktor Falkovskiy, and the Pops Orchestra of the Ukrainian Republican Performance Hall under conductor Vasyl Lysyts. In 1961, Ihor Petrenko took over.

This led to a jazz boom in Kyiv in the early 1960s. After the Michel Legrand tour, young musicians began to play jazz at independent groups that began popping up in almost all post-secondary institutions and Houses of Culture connected to state enterprises. This was a new period of jazz development in Kyiv, tied to the activities of jazz clubs.

Jazz clubs of the late 1960s through the 1980s: concerts, festivals, lectures, and jam sessions

Kyiv clubs for young people became cultural and musical centers for jazz music over the 1960s-1980s. Musicians and listeners alike became familiar with jazz and adapted it to their local environment thanks to the efforts of enthusiasts and the organizers of three Kyiv clubs. The club movement became a cultural phenomenon that entrenched jazz in the musical art of Kyiv and Ukraine.

The history of Kyiv jazz remains poorly studied to this day. The evolving club period from 1962 to 1990 and the establishment of jazz in Kyiv provided the foundation for professional jazz performance in the country's capital today. The main impulse came from renowned Kyiv musicians and community activists such as Symonenko, Markov, Reznytskyi, Kolesnik, Derhunov, and Oleksiy Kogan.

The first soviet jazz clubs acted as multifaceted venues for studying and performing jazz music, promoting and disseminating it, and communicating with jazz musicians from other ethnic groups, both within the Soviet Union and beyond it. These clubs mainly held concerts, organized creative get-togethers, offered lectures, and organized festivals and jam sessions. This was the essence of the club movement.

Over a 28-year period, three jazz clubs dominated at different times: the first Kyiv jazz club lasted from March 17, 1962 to summer 1964, the second lasted from October 1965 to summer 1968, while the third lasted from April 26, 1986 to October 1990. The three Kyiv clubs differed significantly. The 1962 Creative Youth Club was a collection of enthusiasts that included both musicians and writers, poets and painters. The Youth Club of the late 1960s was more structured



December 1962, jam session in cafe-club "Mriia" (Dream). Jazz quintet of Eugene Iatsenko from the left to the right: Oleksander Khristidis - drums, Iukhym Markov - double bass, Eugene Iatsenko - trumpet, Oleksii Vasyliiev - tenor saxophone, Serhij Baranov - piano



1968, Cafe "Khreshatyk": Iukhym Markov - double bass, Marten Tafel accordion, Volodymyr Anchypolovsky - saxophone.



1968, concert cafe "Khreshatyk". Jazz quintet from the left to the right: Viktor Buzdes - drums, Volodymyr Molotkov - guitar, Mark Reznytskyi - flute, Iukhym Markov - double bass, Volodymyr Khorunzhyj - piano

and here music became the main focus. What's more, from 1967 on, the jazz club was able to engage in commercial activity, which made it possible to invite jazz groups from across the Union to perform at concerts.

In 1986, the jazz club fell under the aegis of the Union of Composers of Ukraine and was granted one day a week to hold events at the Café Sevastopol. Leonid Goldshteyn organized video viewings there, where it was possible to watch films about jazz and receive guests. It was here that the need for cultural dialog was finally realized: nearly all the invited musicians participated with the Kyivites in jam sessions and discussions. Among the jazz lovers who came there were renowned Ukrainian composers like Myroslav Skoryk, Yevhen Stankovych, Ivan Karabyts and Oleksandr Zlotnyk.

The Kyiv jazz clubs survived until 1991. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the youth movement of which these clubs were part also came to an end.

Being one kind of youth club, the jazz club was in a position to generate ideas and to organize and hold various events. Starting in the 80s, these activities began to get press. For instance, *Moloda Gvardia* regularly published articles under a column called "Phonograph" and a subsection called "Jazz Club." Most of them were written by the editor of the club's information office, Oleksiy Kogan.

Since the clubs' main activity was organizing concerts and festivals, the concerts generally involved the clubs' house bands and ensembles established by musicians who were active both at the clubs and in other city bands. Thus, right after the opening of the first Kyiv jazz club in 1962, the first concert was dedicated to the launch of the Creative Youth Club on October 14. In addition to jazz standards, the program included songs by Ukrainian composers. In addition to concerts performed by house musicians, the jazz clubs organized get-togethers with touring musicians. For instance, an unsurpassed meeting with Duke Ellington at the Union of Composers of Ukraine took place on September 29, 1971.

But the Third Kyiv jazz club (1986-1990) was the most active at all, including in organizing performances and get-togethers. All this can be seen in the reports in Kogan's "Jazz Club" column in *Moloda Gvardia*.

Playing regularly at concerts gave musicians much-needed ongoing practice and contact with their audience, while organizing and participating in festivals was a form of communication about the jazz world that led to the exchange of ideas and growing mastery of performance itself.

One key jazz club event in Kyiv in the 1980s was the Holosiyevo-88 festival. It took place in several rounds and was written up in the press at all stages. This first All-Union Festival of jazz music in Ukraine took place over May 20-29, 1988, and was a major event for the entire city. Over those 10 days there were 14 concerts, each of which involved 3-4 groups. The best bands from nine soviet republics were sent to the festival. Ukraine itself was represented by groups from eight of its oblasts, all of which were selected through local competitions. Kyiv, of course, was represented by the best bands: Jazz Impressionists under Anatoliy Aleksanyan, a contemporary

chamber jazz group under Oleksandr Nesterov, the Oleksandr Kolontyrskiy Quartet, the Stanislav Kolesnik Trio, the Dmytro Naidych Quartet, the Volodymyr Karpovych Ensemble, the Volodymyr Anchypolovskiy Quartet, a solo piano performance by Petro Pashkov, the Tsvirkunove Chyslo [The Cricket's Number] Trio under Oleh Putyatin, and the Glier Conservatory's Big Band under Anatoliy Sharfman. Altogether, 37 groups participated in the festival, which was a real success and enjoyed a great press response. The audience was able to hear different types of jazz and to hear musicians from different cities and the stars of homegrown jazz.

An equally important activity of the clubs was organizing lectures and other events to propagate jazz, to raise awareness and educate people in it. At different times, the lectures were presented by jazz musicians and activists like Volodymyr Symonenko and Petro Poltariev.

But the most creative form in jazz, one that established cultural dialogue in its most direct form, was the jam session: informal get-togethers among musicians in which a main group plays, but any new musician can join in, replacing one of the participants. Of course, this kind of activity requires a certain level of mastery and familiarity with the music. As a product of jazz culture, the jam session has no equal in other styles of music, setting up a situation in which a mutual exchange takes place both rapidly and richly.

When the Mria Youth Club-Café officially opened its doors in Kyiv on Dec. 1, 1962, the city's jazz life shifted to it for seven long years. The musicians would choose a day when all restaurants were closed and organized a huge jam. The jam session organized by Symonenko at the café on Dec. 9, 1962, was recorded by the foreign language editorial team at Ukrainske Radio and then broadcast in Canada and the US, bit by bit. The jam included the Pylyp Bryl Quartet, a select trio with Viacheslav Novikov on piano, Iukhym Markov on bass, and Oleksandr Khristidis on drums, and others.

From the sixties to the eighties, Kyiv's jazz clubs existed mainly under the influence of historical conditions. Still, jazz was evolving because of the personalities: musicians who, having heard jazz, became fans of this music forever. Most often, they radically changed the direction their entire lives were heading in.

Contemporary jazz education in Kyiv

The development of jazz performance in Ukraine was an integral part of the development of jazz schooling in Kyiv. In 1980, the Glier State Musical Academy in Kyiv opened a department of pop and jazz music, initiated by Volodymyr Symonenko, who was its first head. On September 1, 2000, the Academy began to offer a post-secondary degree program in jazz.

From the very start, the teaching staff of the department of jazz at Glier involved qualified teachers who were also well-known jazz musicians, including individuals who had won national and international prizes at various jazz festivals: Iukhym Markov, Oleksii Saranchin, Oleksandr Harkaviy, Tamara Hrach, Volodymyr Kopot, Nataliya Lebedeva, Oleksandr Rukomoinikov, and Oleksandr Shapoval; and musicians who were educators: Viktor Petrushenko, Yuriy Kafelnikov, Volodymyr Voskresenskiy, Vadym Narodyt'skyy, and Veronika Tormakhova. Later the department

hired Mykola Hudyma, Dmytro Oleksandrov, Pavlo Stolbov, Leonid Haisman, Oleksandr Vyshnepolskiy, Serhiy Kapelyushok, Yulia Loboda, Artem Mendelenko, Dennis Adu, Viktor Pavelko, Anna Dontsova, Aniko Dolidze, Olha Lytvynenko, Oleg Markov, Yakiv Tsvietinskiy, Volodymyr Voshkolup, Rodion Ivanov, Ievgen Seleznov, and Denys Yefremenko. Immediately talented young musicians from across the country were drawn to the department.

R. Glier Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music is the first music school to focus on the art of jazz and is Ukraine's best-known national educational institute in this area. Today, this department is the heart of all of Ukraine's most significant jazz events and the center for the formation and development of mastery among students. Every year, the Academy graduates young jazz musicians who have developed their own style, significant performance experience, and prospects for employment.

The teaching staff in the department are all active jazz musicians. Ihor Zakus heads the department today. The department currently offers both Bachelor and Masters degrees under its "Pop (jazz) musical arts" and "Jazz vocals" programs. Every year its graduates add to the ranks of contemporary jazz musicians both in Ukraine and abroad.

R. Glier Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music continues to operate despite the current very difficult situation. Using mixed live and online forms of learning makes it possible to continue studies even under these conditions. For students who live in Kyiv, individual and practical lessons take place at the Academy. Given the security situation, the Academy has a bomb shelter.

Despite the situation in Ukraine, the Academy continues to organize concerts, academic performances and in-class tests of skills, it provides master classes with well-known performers, and organizes concert tours to other cities of Ukraine and beyond. The level of skill and masterfulness of its students opens the path for them to integrate into the European and American jazz communities. It can confidently be stated that the artistic dialog between Ukraine and countries where jazz is a long-standing tradition is en route to a rapid expansion, even today. The Academy is determined to keep organizing master classes, both offline and online, launching joint creative projects, establishing joint orchestral and ensemble playing, and providing student exchanges and student bands.

Our goal is to preserve and expand traditions, to entrench the identity of Ukrainian cultural and its further evolution, to integrate our musicians into the world community of jazz art, and to support young talent in every possible way.

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Jazz Music in Kharkiv: The path to professional art

Alina Kharenko

Alina Kharenko, PhD

In honor of 100 years of Ukrainian jazz

In Ukraine, jazz music began to take shape in the 1920s and had an enormous impact on the musical tastes of a broad circle of listeners, especially in the larger industrial cities. In the last few decades, jazz music has been evolving intensively in Ukraine, as is testified by the number of international jazz festivals, the introduction of formal studies in jazz in the country, and the performances of Ukrainian jazz musicians on the academic philharmonic stage and at prestigious international forums. Research into jazz is also growing, which can be seen in the growing number of dissertations that touch on different aspects of the development of Ukrainian and world jazz culture. Slowly, but surely, jazz is also winning over television and radio as the number of audio recordings of original music keeps expanding.

The city of Kharkiv has played a special role in the history of jazz in Ukraine. For one thing, the process of establishing jazz began earlier than in other Ukrainian cities. For another, professional education in Kharkiv has fostered the emergence and flourishing of a unique school of jazz in the last 30 years that has been training highly professional musicians known, not just in Ukraine but far beyond its borders.

An in-depth study of a wide array of archival, historical, academic, journalistic, scored musical, and educational sources has made it possible to expand informational resources concerning the role of jazz in the musical culture of Kharkiv. Its current state can be described as a discrete historical and cultural phenomenon that has been at the forefront of broader cultural processes in Ukraine.

Jazz, of course, has its roots in cultural interaction: the intermingling of European and African traditions. As the techniques of jazz music spread, musical artistry in different countries led to a synthesis of jazz expression and a variety of folk music. Jazz took on shape in different ways on different continents and had its own specific development and functioning in the cultural life of a given country. At the same time, jazz became a kind of universal language among different continents, a force unifying aficionados across the world, regardless of race, creed or national origin.

The establishment of jazz in Ukraine also has its special history and is marked by the process of adapting American jazz traditions to the national musical culture. From what was originally a restaurant entertainment art, jazz has evolved into a professional art, repeating the path of jazz in the US, but in a more compressed timeframe while hampered by ideological obstacles.

The evolution of jazz in Kharkiv has undergone three main stages:

- (1) genesis or birth (1920s-1940s)
- (2) creative groups on the path to professionalism (1950s-1980s)
- (3) the formation and crystallization of professional jazz in Kharkiv (1980s-2022)

The transforming esthetics of jazz and styles of musical genre in each of these stages provided the criteria for such a division, as jazz went through its development from a mass cultural phenomenon to an elite art, leading to a shift in the composition of ensembles and their repertoires, to growing technical artistry in performing, and to greater complexity in the musical language.

The starting point in the development of jazz in Kharkiv came in the 1920s, when the city was the capital of Ukraine (1919-1934). Its status as a capital enlivened the arts in Kharkiv, which was seen as one of the strongest industrial, scientific, educational and cultural centers, not only in Ukraine but in the entire former Soviet Union. In addition to expanding education and reviving the farm sector and industry in Kharkiv, culture became a major hub of activity: literature and theater thrived, and institutions of higher musical education were being established, along with a philharmonic hall, museums and numerous libraries [3]. Notably, at this very stage that is now actively studied as a “Golden Age” of the arts in Kharkiv was when jazz also began to develop.

Not coincidentally, renowned composer Isaak Dunayevsky first became acquainted with the jazz during this period of Kharkiv’s history, 1919-1924. Dunayevsky worked in the drama theater, writing music for numerous shows, using elements of ragtime and American dance music [4, p. 13]. Unfortunately, Dunayevsky left Kharkiv just before the first jazz groups emerged, one of which was the Ukrainian Symphony Orchestra, which was shortly renamed the Pop Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, under the baton of Joseph Schillinger¹. This was the prototype of the first jazz symphony in the world [2].

In 1924, Yuliy Meitus organized the first jazz ensemble, called a jazz band in those days, that worked at the Berezil Theater².

Berezil Theater Jazz Band under Y. Meitus

On December 29, 1925, Meitus’s band performed at the Kharkiv State Drama Theater with a solo repertoire that included pieces by African-American and European composers. This was the first concert of jazz music in Ukraine [5, p. 78]. In May 1926, a jam session took place in Kharkiv that involve Meitus’s musicians and the American Jazz Kings sextet under Frank Withers, with



Berezil Theater Jazz Band under Y. Meitus

¹ J.M. Schillinger (1895, Kharkiv–1943, New York), avant-garde composer, art theorist, promoter of electronic music and jazz, teacher, author of such fundamental works as “The Schillinger System of Musical Composition” and “The Mathematical Basis of the Arts.” After emigrating to the US in the 1930s, he became one of the most popular musicologists and taught the basics of composition in New York until his death. His students included George Gershwin, Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, Tom Dorsey, Gerry Mulligan and many others.

² Berezil was a theater studio founded in 1922 by renowned Ukrainian director, actor and playwright Les Kurbas in Kyiv. The theater later move to Kharkiv.



Piano Jazz Review by Y. Meitus, "Hello, you're listening to Radio 477," which is now kept in the museum of the Shevchenko State Academic Ukrainian Drama Theater in Kharkiv.

renowned New Orleans clarinetist Sidney Bechet. Yet another key event in the shaping of jazz music in Kharkiv was the 1928 premier of the first jazz review in Ukraine, called "Hello, you're listening to Radio 477"¹ with libretto by M. Johansen and V. Chechevianskiy, music by Meitus, and directing by V. Skliarenko and B. Balaban, with the participation of the Berezil Theater.

In 1928, the first Ukrainian theater jazz was launched in Kharkiv, directed by Borys Rensky [5, p. 93]. It went on to run an extensive touring schedule, which was a major factor in acquainting those living in other cities with new types and genres of pop and jazz culture.

Starting in the 1930s, as in the rest of Ukraine, amateur jazz clubs began to pop up in Kharkiv, along with jazz orchestras and ensembles connected to factories, institutes, cinemas, and in many of the educational facilities in the city: in construction and engineering colleges, in the railway engineering institute, in humanitarian and polytechnic institutes, and so on.

The government's attitude towards jazz was ambivalent across the Soviet Union and at various points its harsh criticism of jazz art grew sharper. The spirit of freedom expressed in improvisations was seen by soviet ideologists as "propaganda for the American lifestyle." And so the only public place for musicians to perform jazz in those years was entertainment establishments.

Oleksandr Feldman², a Kharkiv musician who spent 50 years playing pop and jazz music, remembers how locals sought any opportunity to listen to jazz. Of course, there was no sheet music of jazz pieces, so the musicians all played their favorite melodies by ear. A kind of "musical exchange" played a major role in the lives of Kharkiv musicians at that time. As Feldman notes, city musicians would get together to talk about the latest news and exchange repertoires every week at a designated time. This was where they could also buy brand-name musical instruments, which were practically inaccessible in retail chains in those days.

At the end of the 1950s and early 1960s, Kharkiv jazz grew to a new level. Typical of this period was an attitude towards jazz as a serious form of music: on one hand, the mastery of

1 Y. Meitus, "Hello, you're listening to Radio 477!" the first Ukrainian jazz musical, video recording, Mystetskiy Arsenal (Art Arsenal), Kyiv, 2018, at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=beaGS94AIn0&list=PLtj25ZLjRgOsaBJHobmRb-UYUATgCPV18&index=4>

2 Oleksandr Yakovych Feldman (1937) restaurant singer, bass player, an eye-witness and participant of the jazz life in Kharkiv.



Pop orchestra of the Kharkiv Construction College, conductor O. Litvinov, 1964



Kharkivianka National Women's Pop Symphony Orchestra, conductor O. Litvinov, 1966

improvisational techniques and on the other, growing professionalism among amateur musicians. It's no accident that the top jazz pianists who are known around the world today, Leonid Chyzhyik and Daniel Kramer, began to acquire their level of mastery precisely in Kharkiv. At this same time, composers also began to develop, their works dominated by academic traditions while using elements of the jazz lexicon.

During this same period, pop-jazz bands run by Oleksandr Litvinov¹ became significant: he conducted the pop orchestras of the Kharchovyk House of Culture of the Polytechnical Institute, as well as those of the Houses of Culture of the Rope Plant and the Construction College.

Fans of Litvinov's works sometimes call this period when the idea of establishing a unique women's pop symphony orchestra called "Kharkivianka" came to fruition, with Litvinov conducting for 12 years a "Golden Age." The orchestra was well known throughout the Soviet Union and often toured Ukraine and beyond its borders. It performed many times with popular professional singers.

Looking at the work of jazz groups of this period, it's clear that there were some significant points: compositions that generally reflected academic traditions, primarily because of the choice of academic genres such as suites, scherzos, waltzes, fantasias, concerti and so on; the use of individual elements of the jazz lexicon, such as syncopation, dotted rhythm, and a specific kind of articulation, were applied; the timbre of the different instruments typical of jazz was used to advantage (an example of this might be the technique of polystylistics and collage, when the composer included jazz instruments in a traditional academic orchestra or stylized certain fragments of a work in a jazz manner); and a group's repertoire that was primarily pop music.

In 1961, Roman Frumkin began conducting a jazz band in the Tsentralniy Restaurant. In addition to works by well-known Ukrainian and international composers, the ensemble performed jazz pieces by Kharkiv composers like Volodymyr Zolotukhin, Valentyn Ivanov, Mykhaylo Pekker, and Volodynyr Yoffe. It was this restaurant band that started a tradition of jam sessions. They would begin immediately after the restaurant closed for the night and other Kharkiv bands would join in. Sometimes touring foreign bands would also come around.

¹ O.I. Litvinov (1927-2007) composer, conductor, arranger, National Artist of Ukraine, member of the Ukrainian Academy of Science of National Progress.



The Tsentralniy Restaurant's jazz ensemble, 1963

One strong impulse for the development of professional jazz in Kharkiv was the introduction of a special **educational system** in post-secondary institutions. In 1988, the Liatoshynskiy Music College in Kharkiv opened a Department of Pop Music, while in 1992, the Faculty of Pop and Jazz Arts opened at Kharkiv's Kotliarevskiy National University of the Arts. From that point on, jazz musicians in Kharkiv became very active in concert and festival circuits, directly as a result of this department, which began to produce musicians of a high professional caliber. Among of the first teachers in this faculty, next to its dean, Litvinov, were Viktor Churikov and Serhiy Davydov, who established their own professional jazz schools.

Viktor Churikov himself is a saxophonist, lecturer and the author of numerous methodological and learning guides. It was on his initiative that the jazz ensemble **Consensus**¹ (1987-1996) was formed, including Churikov, Lev Shpigel on trumpet and flügelhorn, Davydov on piano, Leonid Heisman on bass guitar, and Yuriy Medovnyk on drums. The sextet went on to perform in Ukraine, France and Germany.

Looking at the work of this jazz ensemble, there are obviously radical differences from the work of earlier groups, which confirms the growing professionalism of jazz performance: the traditional combo, a repertoire of exclusively jazz works in mainstream, bebop, hard bop, and post-bop styles, alongside original pieces and arrangements of Ukrainian folk songs by Davydov. Multiscale approaches can be seen in the improvisations, unusual extraction of sound, the use of special ways of playing that belong to a separate style, the use of metro-rhythmic patterns that are associated with traditional jazz; and the growing significance of improvisation as an integral part of the composition.

*Serhiy Davydov*² is a pianist, composer and arranger, art historian, lecturer, and member of prestigious jazz festivals both in Ukraine and abroad. Co-founder and art director of the Kharkiv International Za Jazz Fest, he also organized monthly concerts at the oblast philharmonic hall called "Jazz Evenings with Serhiy Davydov." In 1991, he interned in the Department of Jazz at the University of Cincinnati, in the US. In addition to his active concert schedule, the pianist does research work and defended his doctoral thesis in 2015. [2]

1 Consensus Jazz Sextet at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BluL_h8ax6I

2 Serhiy Davydov, The evening of improvisations, video recording, Kharkiv Assemblies, Kharkiv, 2020 at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5yEoL_yXCO

To date, the Department of Pop and Jazz Music at Kotliarevskiy National University of the Arts in Kharkiv has graduated a large number of professional jazz musicians who participate in a variety of jazz bands and perform at prestigious international festivals and competition. Graduates from the department set up professional jazz groups with considerable creative potential, including Cxid-Side (1995), Jazz by Five (1995), The Marinita Trio (1997)¹, The Magnifika Group (2005), S.Mart.Sound (2006), Acoustic Quartet (2009)², Show Boat (2010), The Velvet Band (2010), and The Jazz Road Quartet (2011). One indicator of their professionalism is their use of complex contemporary musical language, virtuoso mastery of their instruments, as well as their mastery of improvisation and many other aspects of contemporary jazz.

One significant event in the Kharkiv jazz scene has been the emergence of jazz festivals: local ones at first, and eventually international ones. Under the annual International Kharkiv Za Jazz Fest, many renowned musicians from many countries have performed on a series of prestigious platforms in Kharkiv: from the US, Germany, France, Poland, and so on. The audiences have been able to enjoy the art of improvisation by famous foreign jazz players like bassist Ron Carter, pianists Martial Solal and Gonzalo Rubalcaba, guitarists John Scofield and Paul Bollenback, saxophonists Jed Levy and Bill Evans, drummer Adam Nussbaum, Hendrik Meurkens on harmonica, bassist Mariusz Bogdanowicz, and pianist-composer Vadim Neselovskyi. The value of jazz festivals in terms of interaction is obvious to the audience and the various performers participating in the creative process. The festival environment offers the most natural conditions for mingling among individuals from different cultures, leading to a stronger exchange of spiritual and creative experience, and offering a fundamentally new artistic space that can take shape in the process of communicating. Moreover, holding such events has been an important stage in Ukraine's engagement in world culture and in establishing Kharkiv as one of the country's multicultural centers.

Notably, every year one of the main criteria for the festival movement was the principle of making the participation of promising young Kharkiv musicians mandatory, regardless of the many different concepts for organizing concerts. This approach led to the Fourth International Kharkiv Za Jazz Fest in 2011 having the slogan, "Kharkiv Jazz." At the opening of the festival, the first Ukrainian community project was presented—a documentary film about Kharkiv's jazz musicians, directed by Dmytro Konovalov—and numerous professional jazz groups performed original music.

In other words, the establishment of jazz in Kharkiv has gone a very long way, from the work of amateur groups oriented towards jazz to professional improvisational art at the highest concert level. In this way, Kharkiv followed the same path as jazz in the US, but in a much more compressed timeframe, having to overcome ideological obstacles along the way. A professional educational system has increased both potential and opportunities for Kharkiv jazz musicians, while the city's international jazz festivals foster the development of international connections and the exchange of creative practices.

Analyzing the creative efforts of Kharkiv's jazz groups since 1924 allows us to conclude that,

1 Marinita "Ornaments of the East," Marinita & The Agabeyli Brothers, 2013 at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_Feo8DJQIE
2 Acoustic Quartet, Anticipation of New, 2017 at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uj_6s6p7Yg

today, Kharkiv jazz is truly professional jazz:

- the instrumental mix of jazz groups has changed;
- the repertoire has changed: instead of performing pop compositions, musicians perform their own arrangements of jazz standards and compose original jazz music;
- improvisation has come to the fore and is performed within the framework of a specific jazz style and meets all its criteria;
- musical language has become more complex: melody, harmony, metro-rhythm, and so on;
- the artistic technique of performance has grown considerably.

Kharkiv's place in the jazz scene in Ukraine is unique. During the first stage of establishing jazz in Ukraine, Kharkiv was a lot like New Orleans, while in the current mature stage, it's a lot like the Chicago scene. These comparisons are based both on an evaluating of the activity of the earliest jazz groups that gave a major impulse for the development of this art in Kharkiv, and on the high level of mastery among professional jazz musicians.

Despite the current state of war and constant shelling, Kharkiv today is holding the cultural "front" firmly. It continues to hold numerous concerts and festivals¹, which confirms the city's status as one of the leaders of the jazz scene in Ukraine.



Kharkiv Frontier Jazz Fest. Photo: Suspilne Kharkiv, 2022

1 Kharkiv Frontier Jazz Fest, Kharkiv Media Hub, 2022 at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omd7PiqEdSc>

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How folk and jazz mingle in the Kharkiv music scene

Alina Kharenko

In the late 20th century, jazz became one of the platforms where numerous combinations of a variety of musical categories were experimented with. Jazz itself was born nearly a century ago and, in and of itself, is the result of interactions among different ethnic traditions. The combination of Ukrainian folk traditions in music and jazz led to the emergence of a special stratum and syncretic style. An examination of the work of professional Kharkiv jazz groups and soloists makes it possible to formulate the main principles underlying the development of musical material and the ways in which folk and jazz music interact.

As noted by musicologist Anatoliy Ivanytskiy, the folk arts of a given people contains the historical traces of development not only of that given ethos, but also the genetic and cultural memory of the entire pathway taken by the human race since the earliest societies [1, p. 25]. It's no surprise, then, that leading scholars of jazz call the early (archaic, authentic) period of the history of jazz "folklore." Indeed, oral and dialogic forms of "conversing" among musicians, the mechanisms of communication at the level of performance and articulation, the predominance of the group over the individual, improvisation, the means of transmitting and preserving musical materials, and the form of performance are all foundational traits of folklore that are also typical of early jazz.

The rapid growth of improvisational skills among musicians and the transition of jazz from dance halls to the philharmonic stage explain its evolution from the level of urban folklore and household music to a highly professional art. This was fostered by numerous experiments in blending jazz with other cultural forms, which led to the emergence of a large number of original artistic phenomena and trends. Equally importantly, contemporary jazz effectively does not set creative restrictions on the performer, including those beyond the musical, allowing the freedom to choose the means of expression, the types of communication with the listening audience, and ancillary creative tools.

Over the late 20th century, jazz musicians widely adopted various traditions from around the world, such as Latin America, Spain, Azerbaijan, and India. Elements of folk music began to appear in the weave of jazz, becoming "europeanized," and overlaying the harmonic and rhythmic idioms of jazz. Even such very distinctive folk phenomena as Azeri mugam and the Indian konnakol, which involves performing percussive syllables vocally, have found a place within the framework of traditional jazz form.

We can see many examples of elements of folk and jazz being combined among Ukrainian jazz musicians as well. After all, jazz began to "infiltrate" Ukraine back in the 1920s. Having absorbed all the experience of the world, jazz has firmly established itself in Ukraine and is now developing successfully thanks to the creativity of top Ukrainian musicians. As it did in the US, jazz is evolving in Ukraine quite intensively from its "restaurant entertainment" phase to a professional art that includes a musical language enriched with novel folk elements.

At this stage, it's pretty clear that a special stratum and syncretic stylistic trend have emerged in jazz through interacting with Ukrainian folk elements. Among others, Andriy Furdychko notes: "Ukrainian folk-jazz coexists artistically with folk music, folk pop, and other relatively modern blends of musical style and direction." [5, p. 125] How jazz and folk work together can be seen in the works of many professional Ukrainian jazz musicians, such as guitarist Enver Izmaylov, composer Nataliya Lebedeva, pianist Serhiy Davydov, guitarist Ihor Zakus, and pianist Oleksiy Boholiubov.

Historically, jazz rooted itself in Kharkiv earlier than in other cities of Ukraine. Moreover, the city's musicians demonstrated interest in their national roots during every phase of its development, choosing various approaches to interacting, from arranging folk songs in a jazz style, to juxtaposing or quoting folk music materials, to writing original compositions based on folk songs. Still, in addition to experimenting with Ukrainian folklore and jazz, Kharkiv musicians have produced original jazz arrangement of Sephardic, Roma, Azeri (pianist Maryna Zakharova) and Iranian folk songs (the Kharkiv Student Jazz Club at Kotliarevskiy National University of the Arts in Kharkiv).

It's worth noting that this article deliberately does not consider yet another similar area, that is, the numerous treatments and arrangements for small-scale national ensembles that play mixed genres and include "stylistic multiplicity in modern musical arts" (classics, jazz, folk and pop)" [4, p. 52] in their repertoires. The purpose here is to examine purely professional jazz, precisely because this tradition has never been lost since its establishment.

In the late fifties and early sixties, the period when professional jazz musicianship was taking shape in Kharkiv, the work of composer, conductor and National Artist of Ukraine, Prof. Oleksandr Litvinov had a considerable impact, especially his **arrangements on Ukrainian themes for pop symphonies**. These include "Four Ukrainian rhapsodies for a pop orchestra," "Three Ukrainian pieces for accordion and pop symphony," "Concert pieces on Ukrainian themes for piano and pop symphony," "Ukrainian fantasy for soloists, choir and pop symphony," and "Dance for a choir and pop symphony." These arrangements are examples of a compositional approach to weaving a musical tapestry, which emerges through the complete fixation of all the components in the score, in the traditional professional European academic work. Improvisation appears only in the comping of the rhythm section.

In general, Litvinov's work formed the intersection between academic and jazz stylistic trends, giving birth to a kind of synthesis and extending the tradition of sympho-jazz established in the works of musicians like bandleader Paul Whiteman, pianist George Gershwin, pianist Oleksandr Tsfasman, and singer Leonid Utiosov. The masterful nature of his arrangements is based on the principle of a maximally full development of the creative image, demonstrating its multi-dimensionality and revealing deep layers of meaning. With this goal in mind, the master saturates the musical tapestry with undertones and counterpoints to the main melody. Just as important is the way that variations are introduced: through new harmonies, timbres, rhythms and textures, the themes of Ukrainian folk songs take on many shades of emotion and meaning.

The appearance of **purely jazz arrangements** of Ukrainian folk songs came through the work of the Consensus professional jazz ensemble. It was organized in Kharkiv in the 1990s and included Viktor Churikov on saxophone, Lev Shpigel on trumpet and flugelhorn, Serhiy Davydov on piano, Leonid Heisman on bass guitar, and Yuriy Medovnyk on drums. The Consensus repertoire generally included improvisations on themes from jazz standards, original compositions, and arrangements of Ukrainian songs by Davydov, among which the most outstanding were “Kolyskova” [Lullaby] and “Cholovik-piyaka” [My husband the drinker]. These two compositions were often performed on various jazz festivals in Ukraine, France and Germany. The choice of folk songs that lay at the foundation of jazz arrangements was not based on the popularity of a given song but on how readily it could be transformed into a jazz form in the opinion of the musicians. The first criterion for choosing a song was the expressiveness of the musical and morphological qualities of the original source that would receive a new sound in the conception of the jazz arrangement.

Consensus’s works were structurally traditional jazz compositions in which the melodies of folk songs were used as themes for improvisation. In this particular case, it’s notable that the form and means of structuring the musical material in jazz are similar to folk instrumental music: making variations on a theme and playing on the basis of a chosen scale, combining individual motifs and rhythmic variety, and focusing on development through improvisation. Consensus’ arrangements of folk melodies are a rethinking of the intonation, the meter and rhythm, as well as the harmonies. At the same time, the musicians enrich the musical language using jazz elements: polytonality, polyrhythm, polymetry, swing, and original sound production.

Continuing the tradition of Consensus, original arrangements of Ukrainian folk songs began to appear in the repertoires of young Kharkiv jazz groups in the 2000s, including Fima Chupakhin’s Acoustic Quartet, Yevhen Abin’s Show Boat and Bohdan Stetsiuk’s Jazz Road Quartet. The creative works of these ensembles are dominated by arrangements of popular Ukrainian folk songs, such as “Podolianochka” [Girl from Podillia], “Kolyskova,” “Yikhav Kozak mistom” [A Kozak rode through town], “Tsvite teren” [The thorn is blooming], and “Oy u vyshnevomu sadochku” [Oh, in the little cherry orchard]. Yet the greatest achievement in this area has been the appearance of the disk “Krosna,” a 2015 recording of Acoustic Quartet and Anya Chaikovska¹. The album contains jazz arrangements of mostly folk songs from Polissia, the northern forested swath of Ukraine, a genre that includes vesnianky or spring songs (“Bystrenkiyi richenky” [Fast-running little rivers], “Vesnianka” [Spring song], “Vesno krasno” [Beautiful spring], “Zbyraitesia, divky-molodytsi” [Get ready, you young girls and young matrons]), koliady or carols (“A v Yerusalymi” [Meanwhile in Jerusalem], “Na Yordani” [On the Jordan], “Ishly try babushky” [Three old women walking]), and two wedding songs (“Pomizh tryoma dorohamy’ [Among three roads], and “Postavliu ya svyechu” [I’ll place a candle]).

The predominance of songs from the spring cycle, the dominance of major keys, the transparency of the textures, and Chaikovska’s exceptionally lyrical vocals not only provide a unique sound for these compositions, but also underscore the symbolic name of the album. “Krosna” is a kind of musical weaving loom, from which extraordinary folk tapestries emerge with jazz patterns, depending on the perception of the listener. On one hand, all the compositions in this album are

1 Anya Chaikovska & Acoustic Quartet, Krosna, audio recording, Soundcloud, 2015 at: https://soundcloud.com/tchaikovskaya_aq

linked to the couplet form, which is typical of both jazz and folk music. On the other, on account of the instrumental insertions of the improvisational component—mostly in the middle of the piece—the development moves organically from start to finish.

Another significant feature of Ukrainian folk music is the type of polyphony used by the Acoustic Quartet. The principle of increasing or reducing the number of voices typical of Ukrainian folk songs has been applied by these musicians using technology. In compositions like “Bystrenkiyi richenky,” “A v Yerusalyimi,” “Vesnianka” and “Ishly try babushky,” the sound engineer overlays recordings of the soloist’s own backing tracks onto the musical fabric. Notably, the lyrics of the back-vocals written by Chaikovska herself serve to more deeply uncover the meaning of the songs. At the same time, the subvocal polyphony, imitation and second-third voice of the trumpet, violin and ocarina bring a freshness and originality to the sound of this jazz arrangement.

The use of triple time meters (6/8 and 3/4), as well as variable and mixed meters (5/4), gives the vocals on Krosna compositions a kind of danceability. The presence of syncopation, the specific rhythmic formulas, the accent on the attenuated bass line and the drum section, and chords with superstructures in the keyboard part all point to the jazz roots of these arrangements.

An interesting example of yet another kind of interaction between the deep folk layer and contemporary musicianship in Kharkiv jazz is their direct juxtaposition on the stage. This can be seen in an experimental project of the Kotliarevsky University of Arts students’ jazz club and the Stezhka (Pathway) folk group¹. The concept behind this project is to study and recreate traditional folk performance of Sloboda Ukraine, the northeast corner of the country, by connecting the sound of old folk songs with the harmonious style of the Sloboda ethnic costume and matching the stage design. The group’s repertoire is based on expeditionary audio recordings in the university’s folk learning lab. This is evident in the professional selection of materials from the indigenous regional tradition.

Thus, through creative cooperation, the Sloboda folk tradition is being combined with the basic principles of development in jazz music, which underscores the adaptability of Ukrainian folk music. Among the pieces presented in an experimental performance were unique songs from Sloboda Ukraine, such as “Oy chy doma, doma” [Oh, is he home, home], “Oy vesna, vesna” [Oh spring, spring], “Oy rano, rano” [Oh early, early (in the morning)], “Letila zozulia” [The cuckoo was flying], “Vesniane vedinnia kozy” [Driving the she-goat in spring]. Stezhka performs these folk songs in the authentic folk singing style while giving them a jazz spin, developing the musical material through the accompaniment of a jazz ensemble with improvisational solos that follow the rhythmic formulas and intonations of the original source. The structure ends with a repeat of the theme in the original folk song by the female ensemble, resulting in a kind of arc.

What’s unique about this project is that the folk songs have a new sound while simultaneously preserving the basic oral traditions: live music-making that hasn’t changed for hundreds of years. Ukrainian folk songs in this case are carefully transformed by jazz musicians from their usual context to an equally comfortable, organic musical atmosphere that gently envelops the original.

1 Kharkiv Student Jazz Club & Stezhka, “Oy Rano, Rano”, video recording, Kharkiv, 2015, at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCr_zDyZdks

Incidentally, a similar example of juxtaposing authentic Ukrainian vocalizing and jazz music can also be seen in the mentioned album *Krosna* by Acoustic Quartet and Anya Chaikovska. In compositions like “Zbyraitesia, divky-molodytsi” the musicians use an audio clip from the Kyiv folk group Otava, whose a capella polyphonic singing, in combination with a jazz arrangement, forces the listener to look at the creative instrumental palette of expressive means anew.

One of the first instances in Ukraine of the most difficult type of synthesis, a jazz-based understanding of Ukrainian folk music is connected to pianist, composer, arranger, candidate of art history, and lecturer at Kotliarevskiy National University of the Arts, Serhiy Davydov. The arrival of his “Ukrainian Jazz Round Danes” in 2006 confirmed the brilliantly individual thinking of this musician. In the context of chamber music, he established his own unique musical language, based on the combination of jazz idiom with elements of Ukrainian folksong. The ensemble that participated in the recording of this disk included musicians who were well-known both in Ukraine and abroad: Davydov himself on piano, Oleksandr Rukomoinikov on soprano and tenor saxes, Leonid Haisman on bass guitar, and Ievgen Seleznev on drums.

The album contains eleven contrasting compositions, four of which are simply called “Dance,” which leads to the notion that it is really a cycle within a cycle. Dances, also known as khorovody in Ukrainian, choreographed choruses, and karahody in Russian, round dances in which the independent moves of individual dancers predominates, according to Anatoliy Ivanytskiy, “are basically moving games for girls that consist of various types of figures and changing places at an unhurried pace. They are accompanied by singing and have a largely ritual meaning, are carried out in spring (vesnianky, hayivky, postovi) and summer (on the Feast of the Trinity, Ivana Kupaila, and at harvest) ... round dances are repeated as long as there are dancers willing to stand in the center of the circles.” [2, pp 43-44].

As evidence of the intentionality of these compositions, the composer points precisely at the internal sense of circular movement. However, it should be noted that the ordering of these four pieces is also a demonstration of intramusical intentionality, given that their numbering is connected to the use of similar meters in the piece. For instance, “Dance #3: Waltz for Iryna” is written in time, “Dance #4: Wagon with square wheels” in 4/4 time, “Dance #5” in 5/4 and “Dance #6” in 6/4 time. In terms of their form, all the compositions on the album uphold the traditional spirit of jazz where, after the introduction, the group exposition of the theme involves serial improvisation by all members of the ensemble. However, each piece has its unique arrangement and its genre-stylistic approach. Davydov subtly makes use of the various timbres of each instrument to inject originality and convey the specific nature of each work. For instance, in “Dance #3: Waltz for Iryna,” Davydov chose to use the soprano sax for its crystal clear and gentle timbre, while in “Dance #4: Wagon with square wheels,” the introduction imitates the movement of a wagon through the timbre of the bass guitar. However, before proceeding to a more detailed analysis of this album, it makes sense to understand the basic stylistic constants of Ukrainian national style that ensure its ethnic commonality with jazz in Davydov’s music.

For instance, the works of Valentyna Matiashuk demonstrate such basic traits of the Ukrainian

ethos as affect the shaping of national style in general: sensitivity, gentleness, tolerance, deep lyricism, emotionality, rich imagination, sentimentality, love of freedom, a gentle sense of humor, individualism, and introversion, all of which manifest in a love of peace and a focus on personal internal freedom [2, p. 127]. All these characteristics can be seen in the music of “Ukrainian Jazz Round Dances,” coming across in melodic saturation, harmonic subtlety, strong imagery, and versatile texture and intonation in an exceptionally creative combination in the eleven pieces of the cycle.

This supports musicologist Yevhen Nazaikinskiy’s conviction that national style is a manifestation of socio-cultural and socio-psychological factors that tend to manifest themselves in the work of composers [3, p. 50]. The other broadly national factor, according to Nazaikinskiy, is “the influence of a single linguistic system, meaning phonetics, grammar and intonation, on the music of all local and individual folk and composers’ styles” [3, p. 51]. Thus, the compositions in Davydov’s album are generically differentiated by melodic type. There is a clear line separating the recitative in “Machaon” and “Zustrich” [The meeting], the cantilena carrying the melody in “Dance #3: Waltz for Iryna,” “Shvydkoplynnist” [Transience], and “Rozmova” [The conversation], and the instrumental melody in “Dance #6” and “Decolleté.”

In melodic terms, these works reflect the author’s individual sense of the Ukrainian ethnic language of music, which manifests itself, not only in the material of the opening themes, but



Fig.1 S. Davydov, “Dance #3: Waltz for Iryna,” Part A (author transcription)

also in the improvisation of the musicians. It’s a matter of using not only certain intonations, but also the imagery of Ukrainian folklore within the context of entirely avant-garde jazz thinking.

Thus, if we analyze the generic streams of the main theme of “Dance #3: Waltz for Iryna,”¹ it’s possible to draw a parallel with the lyrical everyday songs of Podniprovia, the Dnipro Valley region, according to Ivanytskiy. This is confirmed by the sung cantilena melody, the smoothness of the vocals, the subvocal polyphonic texture, the moderate tempo and rhythm—a smooth, calm style that is subsumed to the melodic element (see Fig. 1).

Still, the further specific syncopation in the accompaniment that clearly belongs to the jazz waltz genre, the shifting accent, the ternary rhythmic proportions, the chording with superstructure and improvisation indicate that this work belongs to jazz.

In addition to using the entire arsenal of jazz methods for organizing the aural fabric of his music, Davydov deliberately adapts the original national element to his personal emotional and psychological make-up at a highly professional level.

Applying historical and comparative methods, as well as genre-stylistic analysis, this comprehensive and systemic approach has proved fruitful in terms of identifying general trends in interactions between Ukrainian folk and jazz music in the work of professional jazz groups and soloists in

1 Rukomoinikov, O., Davydov, S., “Round Dance #3: Waltz for Iryna,” video recording, “O. Rukomoinikov and S. Davydov and friends” Concert, National Philharmonia of Ukraine, Kyiv, 2018. At: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jfxggjlo-TU>

Kharkiv: the arrangement of folk songs, the juxtaposition or citation of folk music material in jazz composition and the composing of original works based on folklore. The result of such mutual interaction has been the formation of a unique figurative intonation in Sloboda folk-jazz, founded on a combination of national elements and contemporary expressive means.

When they turn to folklore, jazz musicians establish a unique musical language in which various stylistic elements are collected. During its early formation in the US, jazz borrowed such elements as specific rhythms and a different approach to using scales from the musical folklore of African-Americans, whereas in our time, Ukrainian folklore gave jazz a broad singing melody and the original principles underlying polyphonic folk singing.

The synthesis of the distant and the contemporary, enriching music with new possibilities, experiments in the syntax of music—rhythm, structure and form—, in the morphology of music—rhythmic design, the high contour of pitch and intervals—and in the phonetics of music—timbre, character, manner, mode, and intonation—, all these factors inspire Kharkiv musicians to write jazz compositions based on folk music and explain their continuing interest in this particular format.

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