

MUSICAL AMATEUR PERFORMANCE IN UKRAINE OF THE 1930S AS THE MANIFESTATION OF SOVIET TOTALITARIAN IDEOLOGY

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SUMMARY. The article comprehensively examines antinomies of the amateur performance development in Ukraine of 1930s. The factual basis of the research is the materials of the newspapers, magazines, and musical journals of this period. It is proved that the phenomenon of amateur performance, as one of the most significant phenomena of totalitarian society's mass culture, consists in its contradictory nature: on the one hand, mass artistic movement, population's sincere faith and enthusiasm, and on the other, politicization, ideological engagement, fear of physical destruction. The actions of the Soviet authorities in the one of most dramatic periods of the last century for Ukraine – the 1930s – regarding the dissemination and support of musical amateur music are analyzed (for example, regular financial support, awarding of bonuses, patronage, organization of public events, set-up of publishing activities, training systems for amateur performance leaders, which, in general, contributed to raising musical amateur movement in Ukraine to a professional level). At the same time, it is found that amateur performance was one of the tools for shaping the ideology of a totalitarian society.

Keywords: Ukrainian culture of 1930s, amateur performance, totalitarian society, politicization of art.

Introduction

Amateur performance is very specific for Soviet ideology phenomenon. The definition appeared in Soviet time and was the symbol of “mass art

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motion"⁴. The collective creativity of the masses was an influential tool of the Soviet authorities' ideologues to a "new socialist man" upbringing and one of the important means of agitating and propagating the ideas of communism. The culture of Ukraine in 1930s — one of the most tragedy period of the history — has fully felt the ideological pressure of the authorities, and the amateur performance, one "of the most grandiose phenomena of Soviet culture"⁵, was one of the instruments of totalitarian ideology. At the same time musical amateur performance was characterized by its contradictory nature, double standards, which was generally typical of the Soviet period.

In general, the problem of totalitarian regime influence to a culture is one of the centers of musicological researches now. From very important publications, which dedicated of Stalin's regime, we can name the books and articles by Marina Frolova-Walker⁶, Levon Hakobian⁷, Lois Paula Vaduva⁸, Pauline Fairclough⁹ etc. The period of 1930s in USSR in different aspects was studied in the works such Ukrainian and Russian researchers as Maya Rzhavska¹⁰, Nelli Shakhnazarova¹¹, Vira Aheyeva¹², Mykhaylo Kosiv¹³, Serhiy Bilokin¹⁴ and others. However, among modern Ukrainian scholars, the proposed issue – the 1930s amateur performance – is virtually unexamined, which is due to the great ideological engagement and politicization of this type of art. To a different extent amateur performance is studied in the context of the Ukrainian folk instruments' development in the first part of the 20th century,

⁴ Nosov, Leonid. *Musical Amateur Performances of Soviet Ukraine (1917–1967)*. Kyiv, Musical Ukraine, 1968, p. 3.

⁵ Ryl'skyi, Mykhaylo. "The Flowering of Folk Art in Ukraine." *Folk Art and Ethnography*, 1957, 1, p. 17.

⁶ Frolova-Walker, Marina. *Stalin's Music Prize: Soviet Culture and Politics*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2016. 384 p.

⁷ Hakobian, Levon. *Music of the Soviet Era: 1917–1991*, Second Edition, London & New York: Routledge, 2017. 462 p.

⁸ Vaduva, Lois Paula. "The ideologization of music in the stalinist era," *Studia UBB Musica*, LXIV, 1, 2019, p. 173–184.

⁹ Fairclough, Pauline "The Russian Revolution and Music," *Twentieth-century music*, 16(1), 2019, p. 157–164.

¹⁰ Rzhavska, Maya. *At the Turn of Epochs: The Music of Over-Dnieper-Lands Ukraine in the First Third of the XXth Century in the Socio-Cultural Context of the Period*. Kyiv, Autograph, 2005, 325 pp.

¹¹ Shakhnazarova, Nelli. *Paradoxes of Soviet Musical Culture. The 1930s*. Moscow, Indrik, 2001, 128 pp.

¹² Aheyeva, Vira. *The Art of Balance: Maksym Ryl'skyi against the Background of the Era*. Kyiv, Knyha, 2012, 392 pp.

¹³ Kosiv, Mykhaylo. *On Ukraine: Publicistic Articles and Essays*. Lviv, Ivan Fedorov UPI, Phoenix LLC, 1992, 80 pp.

¹⁴ Bilokin, Serhiy. *Mass Terror as an Instrument of State Administration in the USSR. 1917–1941*. Kyiv, PenMen, 2017, 768 pp.

particularly by Ruslana Bezuhla¹⁵, Inna Lisnyak¹⁶, Vasyl Nechepa and Mykola Shudria¹⁷, Andriy Stashevskiy and Olena Rieznik¹⁸, Tetiana Cherneta¹⁹, Petro Shymanskyi²⁰ etc. In the article by the American researcher William Noll the impact of the 1930s Stalinist policy on Ukrainian folk art is analyzed²¹.

The analytical material of the article is based on the facts, which was published in different newspapers (for example, *The Communist*, *Proceedings of the AUCEC*²², *Kolbud*, *The Rural Theatre*) and journals (for example, *Music for the Masses* (1928–1930), *Music of the Masses* (1931), *The Soviet Music* (1933–1941), and *Folk Art* (since 1939)). The authors of the article introduce numerous facts scattered on the pages of periodicals of the 1930s.

The main purposes of the article are demonstrating the forming of musical amateur performance in Ukraine of 1930s, the state policy in this sphere, and the basic forms of amateur performance activity. We would like to stress the difficulties in evaluation of this phenomenon, its ambivalent role for Ukrainian culture.

Ideological background and state policy

The establishment of the multinational Soviet state as a totalitarian one dates back to the 1930s. During this period, a well-thought-out system of ideological pressure, which permeated the entire sphere of human existence, was created. While giving a meaning to the mechanism of forming the influence of the totalitarian state on the culture, Nelli Shakhnazarova pointed to the method chosen by the authorities, namely *half-truth*, in which “the grains of truth, specific facts, whose reality could not be disputed <...> allowed Soviet leaders to manipulate public opinion as the authorities needed,

¹⁵ Bezuhla, Ruslana. *Button Accordion Art in the Ukrainian Musical Culture (Mid- to Late XXth Century)*. An author's abstract of Ph.D. thesis in Art Criticism. Specialty 17.00.01 (Theory and History of Culture), Kyiv, Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts, 2004, 21 pp.

¹⁶ Lisniak, Inna. *Academic Bandura Art of Ukraine in the Late XXth to Early XXIst Century*. Kyiv, Publishing Rylskiy IASFE, 2019, 254 pp.

¹⁷ Nechepa, Vasyl & Shudria, Mykola (ed). *While Banduras Are Rolling and Sobbing*. Kyiv, IAPM, 2006, 251 pp.

¹⁸ Stashevskiy, Andriy & Olena Rieznik. *The Glorious Path of Kreminna Masters. Researching the Production of Musical Instruments in Kreminschyna: A Scientific Essay*. Luhansk–Kreminna, Rubizhne City Printing House LLC, 2010, 231 pp.

¹⁹ Cherneta, Tetiana. *Bandura Art of Dnipropetrovshchyna: From Amateurism to Academicism*. Kyiv, SAGMSCA, 2017, 256 pp.

²⁰ Shymanskyi, Petro. *Volyn Musical Activities in the 1920s to 1930s*. An author's abstract of Ph.D. thesis in Art Criticism. Specialty 17.00.03. Tchaikovsky National Musical Academy of Ukraine. Kyiv, 1999, 16 pp.

²¹ Noll, William. “A Parallel Culture in Ukraine during the Stalinism Period.” *Rodovid*, 1993, 5, pp. 37–41.

²² All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee.

and thereby to cover up a huge array of lies with them”²³. That is, the Soviet government declared well-known, universally recognized concepts, such as *fraternity, liberty, and equality*, but used them primarily for their own purposes.

In this context, the organization of a clear system of amateur performance and the involvement of millions of people of all ages into its *ranks* made it easier to manage the masses, to implement political ideologemes, using the method of “*half-truth*”. Pretending what was desired to be real, ideologues of the Soviet art mistakenly equated musical amateur performance, which developed not in line with the immanent laws of art, but by order from above. According to William Noll, in the 1930s, the policy of Soviet power created and supported in every way the phenomenon of *parallel culture*, which supplanted the real folk art²⁴. Modern Ukrainian researchers consider musical amateur performance – a component of amateur performance – as organized amateurism, in contrast to spontaneous amateurism – folk art²⁵.

Researcher Petro Shymanskyi noted that in the early 1920s, amateur performance became more active in the musical life of Eastern Ukraine; and this trend can be traced in Western Ukraine as well. Since then, a large number of choirs, orchestras (symphonic and folk ones, brass and wind bands), ensembles (strings ones, accordionists), and bandura choirs had been organized²⁶.

The level of musical amateur performance gradually increased. This was due to various factors. The latter included the state’s interest in this area, and hence significant financial investments, material incentives, regular assistance from professional musicians (organized patronage practice)²⁷, gradual establishment of musical and methodological literature publications, and creation of an extensive network of folk-art houses and cultural centers²⁸

²³ Shakhnazarova, Nelli. *Paradoxes of Soviet Musical Culture. The 1930s*. Moscow, Indrik, 2001, p. 102.

²⁴ Noll, William. “A Parallel Culture in Ukraine during the Stalinism Period.” *Rodovid*, 1993, 5, pp. 37–41.

²⁵ Bezuhla, Ruslana. *Button Accordion Art in the Ukrainian Musical Culture (Mid- to Late XXth Century)*. An author’s abstract of Ph.D. thesis in Art Criticism. Specialty 17.00.01 (Theory and History of Culture), Kyiv, Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts, 2004, p. 9.

²⁶ Shymanskyi, Petro. *Volyn Musical Activities in the 1920s to 1930s*. An author’s abstract of Ph.D. thesis in Art Criticism. Specialty 17.00.03. Tchaikovsky National Musical Academy of Ukraine. Kyiv, 1999, p. 6.

²⁷ It should be noted that quite often professional musicians were appointed leaders of amateur musical groups, for example, a prominent Ukrainian conductor Kostiantyn Pihrov (1876–1962) led an amateur choir in Odesa; consultants of the choral capella “Bolshevik” were: People’s Artist of Ukraine Mykhaylo Donets’ (1883–1941), composers Viktor Kosenko (1896–1938) and Vasyl Smekalin (1901–1940) and many others.

²⁸ It should be added that regional houses of folk art in 1939 carried out significant work on the artistic education of amateur groups; they provided systematic methodological assistance, advice, direct care and control, published music for choirs and orchestras; on their basis were organized libraries with musical departments, etc.

throughout the former USSR. In addition, permanent coverage of musical amateur performance events in professional periodicals was happened.

The most significant events of musical amateur performance, which served to unite the *Soviet people* were various Olympiads, including musical ones. They occurred at different levels – from the regional to the All-Ukrainian one, and in almost all cities of the former Ukrainian SSR. At the heart of the musical Olympiads lay the Olympic system of wrestling, so that the best participants passed to the offensive stage, as well as the self-made movement of the most distant territories, especially the rural population. Trade union of Ukraine had begun to conduct their annual reviews of amateur art since 1930, with all the inherent pathos and mass of the time. Such events lasted for several days and gathered thousands of participants on stage, and the jury consisted of famous artists and cultural figures. In 1931 Kharkiv hosted the First All-Ukrainian Musical Olympiad, which lasted three days and had a total of more than 2,000 participants (there were almost 4,000 candidates from Mariupol, Kremenchuh, Mykolayiv, Vinnytsia, Luhansk, Odesa, Poltava, Kharkiv, and Kyiv, who took part at the qualifying stages). A competition for creating mass songs, choirs, cantatas, orchestral works, and bandura ensembles with relevant themes was announced especially for the event.

The scale of holding Olympiads is impressive in its scope; for example: a choir and an orchestra of accordianists each consisting of 1,000 participants, a brass band embracing 300 people. However, this *huge machine*, a *biomass* was used primarily for the *apothotic* performance of ideological works, such as *The Internationale* or *A Song about Stalin* with lyrics by Maksym Rylskyi (1895–1964) and music by Lev Revutskyi (1889–1877) etc.

Music Olympiads were held in the following nominations: choirs, bandura ensembles, string ensembles, symphony, wind, and folk orchestras, small ensembles, vocal soloists, instrumentalists, children's groups, and choruses. The most popular form of musical amateur performance in the 1930s were female vocal ensembles (in general choirs predominated over instrumental groups). Such a situation is clear, on the one hand: evident were the lack of musical instruments and problems of their transportation across villages and nooks of the former USSR. On the other hand, Ukraine has long been famous for its traditions of choral singing, especially church singing. Often members of church choirs became the basis of amateur choral groups. In the early 1930s, when the anti-church campaign was only gaining momentum, some choristers sang in both church and amateur choirs.

Financial incentives considerably stimulated amateur performers to improve their professional level. Often the best participants in Olympiads and other competitions received cash prizes. For example, the first prize could be 1000 roubles, the second – 800 roubles, the third – 500 roubles, and the fourth – 350 roubles. Leaders of groups, soloists of choirs, and composers

were awarded separately²⁹. The pages of the then magazines were about creating the most favorable, almost ideal conditions for the development of musical amateur performance. Actually, the authorities have introduced financial support for the amateur segment. Given the importance of this *cultural area*, funding for amateur performance increased here and there by 212.1 % (!). For instance, in 1937 for the development of amateur performance 2,595 thousand roubles, while in 1939 – 5,505 thousand roubles was allocated³⁰. The *rapid, magnificent development of folk art*, including amateur performance, is eloquently evidenced by the statistics of the time. For example, in 1937 there were 23,700 musical amateur performance groups in Ukraine, while in 1939 – 31,900, and the total number of amateur performance participants was 573,363³¹.

Apart from numerous Olympiads, a far-flung form of amateur performance in the 1930s was also the holding of radio Olympiads, festivals, socialistic emulations, relay races, *Days of Music*, *Musical Exhibitions*, various competitions and so on. Musical amateur performance movement was a significant part of the military complex as well. Children's groups were an important component of this trend to.

Despite all the multiple-vector processes related to the development of musical amateur performance, its functioning was determined by a complex nature. This is evidenced, in particular, by the introduction of corresponding education for amateur musicians. In 1922 musical schools and colleges were opened there professional and amateur musicians had possibility to study. In Kharkiv's Music and Industrial College were organized courses for choral conductors. Special Working Conservatories were opened in Kyiv (1928), Kharkiv (1928), Odesa (1932)³². In 1932 in the village of Vodychky (now – Khmelnytskyi Region) the First All-Ukrainian Collective Farm University of Amateur Performance was opened and a workshop for making musical instruments was organized. To establish the educational process, the institution was, on the basis of patronage, attached to both the Mykola Lysenko Kyiv Music and Drama Institute and the Kyiv Art Institute. Its alumni received the specialties of leaders of amateur performance groups and instructors-organizers of mass musical amateur performance. In 1939 the institution was transferred to Kherson, where it was named the *Kherson State College of Leaders of Amateur Art Groups*. In 1939 a Music and Vocal Studio was opened in the village of Lozovatka (now Cherkasy region). For several years, the students of the studio had a successful performance in the hall of the Kyiv State Conservatory (now - Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music).

²⁹ A Ukrainian Conference on Folk Songs." *Soviet Music*, 6–7, pp. 96–97.

³⁰ Hankin, Ye., O. Kazimirov, D. Shknevskiy. "Amateur Art of Ukraine." *Folk Art*, 1939, 1, p. 58.

³¹ "Folk Art Is Growing and Flourishing." *Folk Art*, 1939, 1, p. 3.

³² From the 1939/40 school year, the Workers' Conservatories were transformed into evening schools for adults with a four-year term of study.

Repertoire policy

Button accordion³³ amateur performance in these years has received the most. Not without an ideological implication – *Let's put button accordions to the service of the Komsomol!* (as researchers note), "...the instrument has really become a kind of symbol of mass music in the country, and further – Every club or house of culture, all the amateur performance activity of any organizations 'commenced' with playing a button accordion. Every school or kindergarten, vocational school or university, pioneer camp or sanatorium necessarily had not only a button accordion, but also its own button accordionist, who held on his shoulders (literally or figuratively) all cultural and educational activities"³⁴. The development of solo and ensemble button accordion performances was expedited by the opening of a number of industrial factories for the production of accordions, and later – button accordions, in various Ukrainian cities (Kyiv, 1931; Kharkiv, 1931; Kremynne, 1933, Zhytomyr, 1939). It should also be added that the issue of musical instruments was resolved in an organized manner. A 1934 resolution *On the Development of the Music Industry* was about expanding the production of wind, plucked, and folk instruments³⁵.

The mastery of artistic skills gained such momentum that amateur groups attempted to perform in opera and symphonic genres as well. At the opening of the *Workers' Opera Company* earliest in the USSR (Odesa, 1936), the opera *Madama Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini (directed by O. Nikolayev, conductor Klymentiy Dominchen) was staged. The first issue of the *Soviet Music* journal (1936) stated that all parts of the opera were performed by workers themselves: water transport technicians, engineers, loaders, workers, and others.

The enthusiasm of people in the field of musical amateur performance, at the same time - the complex, multi-vector development of this area, is evidenced by the fact that some amateur groups worked without any financial incentives, for instance, the symphony orchestra of the Kyiv Red Banner of Labour Factory. At the Amateur Art Olympiad held in Kyiv in 1936, the orchestra performed a sizable program: an overture from the opera *Natalka Poltavka* by Mykola Lysenko (1842–1912), *Egmont* by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), and *Der Freischütz* by Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826).

Actually, many musical amateur groups achieved considerable professional success. Noted for their high level of performance were both choirs (Kyiv Choir of the South-Western Railway, choir of Makiyivka Works No. 15, Lohvytsia Choir, Industrial Cooperation's Club Ensemble (Poltava),

³³ In Europe, the name "button accordion" was established for a bayan.

³⁴ Stashevskiy, Andriy & Olena Rieznik. *The Glorious Path of Kremynna Masters. Researching the Production of Musical Instruments in Kremynshchyna: A Scientific Essay*. Luhansk–Kremynna, Rubizhne City Printing House LLC, 2010, p. 6.

³⁵ Nosov, Leonid. *Musical Amateur Performances of Soviet Ukraine (1917–1967)*. Kyiv, Musical Ukraine, 1968, p. 47.

Regional Industrial Council's Choir (Chernihiv), and many others), and symphonic groups (one of the Kharkiv Steam Engine Building Plant, Small Symphony Orchestra of the First Stalin Artel (Kyiv), etc.); as well as folk groups (Mykolayiv Regional Amateur Orchestra of Folk Instruments, Orchestra of Ukrainian Folk Instruments at the Kharkiv Workers' Club *Metallist*, Dombra Orchestra of the Metal Industry Union (Kyiv), etc.), brass bands (one of the *State Trade* club (Kyiv), etc.), button accordion ensembles (First Komsomol Ukrainian Chamber Ensemble of Button Accordionists (village of Novi Kaydaky, now part of Dnipro City), etc.), domra players (septet of domras (Kyiv), etc.); as well as ensembles of bandura players (Myrhorod Choir of Bandura Players, S. Dzerzhynskyi Plant's Choir (Dnipropetrovsk, now – Dnipro)), and others. Many gifted musicians who later continued their studies at artistic higher educational institutions *had emerged* from amateur music. Among them were singers (Borys Hmyria (1903–1969), Oleksandr Zhyla (1924–1978), Rayisa Kolesnyk (нар. 1939), Yevheniya Miroshnychenko (1931–2009), Oksana Petrusenko (1900–1940) and others), composers (Heorhiy Mayboroda (1913–1992), Platon Mayboroda (1918–1989), Tayisiya Shutenko (1905–1975), et al.), conductors (Mykola Gvozd /1937–2010/), button accordionists (Mykola Rizol /1919–2007/), and others.

The musical amateur performance development in the context of Ukrainian 1930s national catastrophe

However, all the achievements, and a completely, at first glance, optimistic and pathetic picture of amateur performance development in Soviet Ukraine in the 1930s, were in the tragically context. The historical period from the October Coup to the outbreak of World War II is considered by historians as "...a *national catastrophe*, which led to a break in the historical tradition"³⁶. This *break*, which occurred in the very 1930s, was accompanied by terror, famine, and repressions. According to Orest Subtelnyy's calculations, in the 1930s, out of 240 writers, 200 disappeared, and out of 85 linguists, 62 evanesced³⁷. Upholders of national culture, well-known scholars, researchers, almost the entire national elite were repressed and brutally liquidated. Among them were Hnat Khotkevych (1877–1938), Mykhaylo Domontovych (1885–1937), and many others. The *Berezil* experimental theatre and its founder Les' Kurbas (1887–1937) were liquidated and murdered. Writers Hryhorii Kosynka (1899–1934), Kost Bureviy (1888–1934), Dmytro Falkivskyi (1898–1934), Oleksa Vlyzko (1908–1934), and Ivan Krushelnytskyi (1905–1934) were also killed; young stage directors Mykola Sasym (?–1937) and Borys

³⁶ Bilokin, Serhiy. *Mass Terror as an Instrument of State Administration in the USSR. 1917–1941*. Kyiv, PenMen, 2017, p. 7.

³⁷ Subtelnyy, Orest. *Ukraine: A History*. Kyiv, Lybid, 1991, p. 364.

Drobynskiy (1904–1937) were repressed and later shot dead; and a monumental painting workshop headed by Mykhaylo Boychuk (1982–1937) was destroyed. According to the well-known historian and culturologist Mykhaylo Kosiv, five million people were repressed by the Stalinist totalitarian system in Ukraine³⁸.

In their actions, the totalitarian authorities did not take into account the professional and social status of a person, his/her age, a personal contribution to the intellectual treasury of society, and so on. Among all musicians, folk-professional performers on kobza and bandura, who were regarded by the authorities as propagators of musical nationalism, have been almost the most severely affected; they "...were perceived by society as bearers of historical traditions close to the people"³⁹. Therefore, "the activities of kobzars and bandura players were strictly regulated by the propaganda system, hence, revolutionary songs and dumas appeared in their repertoire, whose creators were often themselves"⁴⁰. Among examples of the *kobzar* repertoire of the 1920s to 1950s were the songs: *The Stars of Communism Are Shining; Forever with Moscow* by Pavlo Nosach (1890–1966); *Glory to the Commune and Lenin* by Ivan Zaporozhchenko (1872–1932), *A Duma on Lenin* by Yehor Movchan (1898–1968); and the duma *On the Red Army, on Lenin and His Faithful Sons* composed by Stepan Pasiuha (1862–1933), Pavlo Hashchenko (?–1933), Petro Drevchenko (1863–1934), and Hryhoriy Tsybko (?–?).

Playing Ukrainian folk instruments (bandura, kobza), Ukrainian songs in the repertoire of professional and amateur musicians were sufficient grounds for accusing them of nationalism. Serhiy Lobko (1889–1982) was under investigation (1938–1939) for his Ukrainian national clothes during his performances with the bandura ensemble⁴¹. According to Lesia Barvinok, a member of the Nikopol Bandura Ensemble, apart from the strict censorship of the repertoire and passing the procedure of approving concert programs, it was necessary to obtain permission for each concert trip⁴². While investigating the features of functioning of folk-professional performers (kobzars, bandura players) during the 1930s, scholars note that it was during this period that "emotional and figurative, and thus ethic and aesthetic,

³⁸ Kosiv, Mykhaylo. *On Ukraine: Publicistic Articles and Essays*. Lviv, Ivan Fedorov UPI, Phoenix LLC, 1992, p. 47.

³⁹ Rzhavska, Maya. *At the Turn of Epochs: The Music of Over-Dnieper-Lands Ukraine in the First Third of the XXth Century in the Socio-Cultural Context of the Period*. Kyiv, Autograph, 2005, p. 80.

⁴⁰ Cherneta, Tetiana. *Bandura Art of Dnipropetrovshchyna: From Amateuism to Academicism*. Kyiv, SAGMSCA, 2017, p. 85.

⁴¹ Serhiy Lobko's accusations of nationalism, anti-Semitism, and agitation against the Soviet government were not confirmed, so he was released on bail.

⁴² Varyvoda, L. "While Kobza Players Were Arrested in Kharkiv, Lesya Barvinok Lived in Nikopol." *Reporter*, 2003, 36 (342), May 6, p. 4.

spiritual and psychological, principles nurtured for centuries and substantial for the Ukrainian art, were rudely destroyed (in particular, in the activities of many bandura choirs and ensembles of that time). Given that bandura is a symbolic instrument for the Ukrainian culture, these regressive processes in the relevant area of creativity were particularly evident⁴³.

It was in the 1930s that both individual performers and members of musical groups were repressed. According to memoirs of the bandura player Volodymyr Kalnin (1924–1991), during the tour in Dniprodzerzhynsk (now – Kamyanske), artists of the Uman bandura choir were arrested after the concert⁴⁴. Ivan But (1885–1948) and Fedir Tsyhanenko (1897–1973) were repressed; Vasyl Nosachevskyi (1885–1961), Fedir Zakora (1906–1987) and many other artists were exiled to the Gulag. Vasyl Kurylenko (1907–1972) was imprisoned by the PCIA (NKVD) organs (1938–1939), as a result of which he became disabled. For the lecture-concert *Sound Loudly, My Bandura* in Kryvyi Rih, Volodymyr Kalnin was *invited* for an interlocution to the city party committee and was accused of nationalism. His father, Borys Kalnin (?–1946), who also played bandura, died in exile at the Jezkazgan ore mine. Master of musical instruments, inventor, and experimentalist Oleksandr Korniyevskyi (1889–1988) from Chernihivshchyna wrote, in a letter to Oleksiy Nyrko (April 23, 1987), that in the 1930s, he received 80 orders for the production of banduras from Vinnytsia, Dnipropetrovsk, Zhytomyr and other cities; yet, he had to reject them all because this kind of activities was private and began to attract attention from government officials. In 1937, the master underwent repressions and sent to Siberia without trial for ten years, in his own words, for disseminating the lore on banduras, supporting the national spirit of Ukraine, and making banduras for nationalists⁴⁵.

So, *nationalism* has become one of the main charges, being sufficient, according to the punitive authorities, to be sentenced to imprisonment or physical destruction. Under the close supervision of Soviet ideologists were not only performers on folk musical instruments, who conducted individual creative activities, but also those who engaged in the amateur music.

Against the background of total fear, the hushing up of millions of deaths, repressions and famines in the *granary of Europe* staggering are people's incomprehensible faith in a *bright future* and their enthusiasm. While reflecting on paradoxes of the 1930s Soviet musical culture, the Russian researcher Nelli Shakhnazarova, whose childhood and school years fell on this period, expressed: "From the height of experience, knowledge, and our

⁴³ Lisniak, Inna. *Academic Bandura Art of Ukraine in the Late XXth to Early XXIst Century*. Kyiv, Publishing Rylskyi IASFE, 2019, p. 53.

⁴⁴ Stetsiuk, Volodymyr. "With a Bandura Throughout All the Life." *Metallurgist*, 1991, 48 (4736), November 23, p. 10.

⁴⁵ Nechepa, Vasyl & Shudria, Mykola (ed). *While Banduras Are Rolling and Sobbing*. Kyiv, IAPM, 2006, p. 151.

unfettered thoughts, we, the generation of the 1930s, as well as the generation of the 1980s, nowadays with bewilderment and bitterness watch footage of documentaries and feature films, which has preserved for us the pages of everyday life and manners and customs, temper, psychology, and mentality of the past era, of our youth. These hands rising up in a single rush, exalted faces staring at a leader, mechanically depersonalized rows of sports parades and numerous other signs of happy enthusiasm. It is impossible to explain all this by rational logic. But that was the reality⁴⁶.

It should be emphasized that the regime's strategy towards the cultural segment lay in equating artists with manufacturers whose main task was to *serve* the general population. However, according to the French culturologist J. Baudrillard, the ideology of *cultural production* is an antithesis of any culture⁴⁷, which is once again indicative of the artificiality of amateur performance development, in particular in Soviet Ukraine in the 1930s.

Thus, the Ukrainian art, including music art in those years, developed under the slogan: *Music – To the Front of Socialist Construction!*⁴⁸. At the same time, while *servicing* the masses, nobody cared about physical and emotional states of artists, the organization of concerts, about providing them with travel facilities, payment for work, and so on. This approach is more reminiscent of the exploitation of artistic units. And this applied to both professional and amateur segments. Instead, the party leadership closely monitored the statistics recorded on paper. For example, over 1925 Kyiv Bandura Ensemble *served* the masses of workers and peasants, giving 26–27 concerts a week in different cities of Ukraine, i.e. two or three concerts a day (sic!)⁴⁹. In total, in three years, the Ensemble gave more than 1,297 concerts, being attended by 393,000 listeners⁵⁰. Most of the concerts took place in the countryside. From road junctions, musicians reached on foot or by animal-drawn means (carts, sledges, etc.). It is obvious that such a large number of concerts and existing working conditions did not leave musicians time either to prepare or to maintain their physical state. In this context, Vira Aheyeva's statement is appropriate that in the Soviet Union, there was no private life at all, nor artists' own needs; instead, everything was collective: "...everything private must be

⁴⁶ Shakhnazarova, Nelli. *Paradoxes of Soviet Musical Culture. The 1930s*. Moscow, Indrik, 2001, p. 8.

⁴⁷ Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Translated from French by Volodymyr Khovkhun, Kyiv, Solomiya Pavlychko Publishing House, 2004, p. 96.

⁴⁸ Nosov, Leonid. *Musical Amateur Performances of Soviet Ukraine (1917–1967)*. Kyiv, Musical Ukraine, 1968, p. 37.

⁴⁹ National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Ryl'skyi Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology: f. 14-κ1, u.i. 3, 13 folios: Staff Reporting Notes, Meeting and Session Reports of the 1st Ukrainian Artistic Kobzar Chorus.

⁵⁰ Being Transposed from the Hands of a Beggar to the Service of the Soviet Culture (On Kobza and Kobza Art)." *Music*, 1927, 4, p. 28.

sacrificed to the abstract faceless collective”⁵¹. And he who dared to have his own opinion, distinct from the collective one, immediately became an *enemy of the people*. The exclusively *servicing* function of musicians, typical of the next decade as well, can be traced in all kinds of arts. For instance, the role of a poet was equated to “...serving staff, an unskilled assistant in large-scale industrial production”⁵². In this context, it is worth mentioning the statement of Walter Benjamin that while losing its social function, art is politicized⁵³.

In addition to their *manufacturing* task, the work of artists, including amateur performers, was strictly regulated. In the early 1930s, the *Central Headquarters for the Artistic Service of Mass Campaigns* was established; it was later replaced by the *Central Directive and Methodological Station for Amateur Art* (CDMSAA)⁵⁴, with the latter solving important tasks in the light of the then dominant communist ideology. Apart from purely artistic issues, the established methodological station fought a constant battle for *purifying* amateur music from *anti-Soviet influences*. It should be noted that the *purification* occurred not only by means of a ban on performing a certain repertoire, but sometimes via the physical destruction of artists as well.

Indeed, a large number of the population was involved in the creative process, however, on the other hand, strict regulation and control over creativity made the latter artificial and impersonal. The holding of the First All-Ukrainian Workers' and Collective Farmers' Olympiad in Kharkiv in 1934 just after the 1932–1933 Holodomor looks cynical with its appeals: “Let's mobilize amateur performance for the implementation of socialist construction plans, for the struggle for Bolshevik collective farms, and for the prosperous life of collective farmers”⁵⁵. The Olympiad was designed to demonstrate the *victorious* realization of the ideas of collectivization in the countryside and the erection of new buildings for the first five-year plan. In order to establish full control over the field of amateur performance, an instruction for preparation for the Olympiad was written, repertoire lists (46,000!) were compiled, special teams were formed to check activities of amateur groups, while their leaders were obliged to keep records of their activities and fill diaries.

The pathological atmosphere of fear and oppression, as consequence of a totalitarian society, has permeated all realms of society at that time. The danger of being suspected in anything illicit sometimes led to absurdity in

⁵¹ Aheyeva, Vira. *The Art of Balance: Maksym Rylskyi against the Background of the Era*. Kyiv, Knyha, 2012, p. 284.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁵³ Benjamin, Walter. “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” *Walter Benjamin, Selected Essays*, Moscow, Medium, 1996, p. 28.

⁵⁴ In 1939, the CDMSAA was reorganized into the Central House of Folk Art.

⁵⁵ Proclamation of the All-Ukrainian Organizing Committee of the First Workers' and Collective Farmers' Amateur Art Olympiad.” *Soviet Music*, 1934, 2/3, p. 41.

creative work. A formalistic⁵⁶ approach could be seen even at the level of chanting individual words. Such a complaint has once been received by one of the most qualified amateur choirs of Southwestern Railway (Kyiv) during the performance of the Ukrainian folk song *And the Geese Came Flying*: in the word *geese*, choristers sang the syllables with equal accent. The author of the article *Displaying the Creative Forces* called this chanting *behaving affectedly* and saw in it a formalistic approach⁵⁷. Millions of innocent victims of totalitarianism in Soviet Ukraine have been charged with formal crimes.

Conclusions

The Ukrainian Soviet musical amateur performance is one of the most significant phenomena of the 1930s mass culture, which cannot be unambiguously assessed. Having analyzed materials of periodicals, professional journals of these years, we can conclude that the phenomenon of amateur performance consisted in its contradictory, ambivalent nature, namely: the complicated intersection of a sincere desire of broad sections of the population for their creative expression, the mass artistic movement from the external point of view on this phenomenon, as well as the incredibly strong political and ideological pressure, as a strong means of forming the worldview of Soviet man, which is a deep inner essence of this process.

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⁵⁶ In the 1930s, formalism became an ideological accusation.

⁵⁷ Vasylenko, Hr. "Displaying the Creative Forces." *Soviet Music*, 1936, 8, p. 33.

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