



# ABOUT FOLKLORE IN THE CREATIVE ACTIVITY OF MYKHAILO STARYTSKY AND MYKOLA LYSENKO AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE FORMATION OF THE UKRAINIAN PROFESSIONAL MUSIC AND DRAMA THEATER

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the study of folklore activities of Ukrainian playwright, writer, poet, translator, theatrical and cultural figure, director, philanthropist, director of the first Ukrainian professional theater, the so-called “theater of luminaries”, Mykhailo Starytsky (1840–1904) and the founder of the Ukrainian national opera, composer, pianist, conductor, folklorist, public figure Mykola Lysenko (1842–1912). The main attention is paid to the analysis of the playwright’s use of descriptions of rituals, customs, traditions, folk morals of Ukrainians, as well as examples of the use of small folk genres, phraseology. It was found that for the Ukrainian community the study and preservation of folk traditions in the second half of the 19th century played an important role in the formation of national self-identification and national consciousness. The origins, features and functions of ethnography in Starytsky’s works are determined, in particular it is proved that the playwright’s use of descriptions of Christian and pre-Christian rites was primarily aimed at a true image of traditional Ukrainian society, an important component of which were ancient rituals, games, music and drama actions. It is shown how the rites of the winter and summer cycles of the folk calendar are reflected in various ways in the artist’s work, which is the most saturated with various bright rituals and customs. It is proved that the study of folk music significantly influenced the composer’s creativity. It is confirmed, that folklore in the works of Starytsky and Lysenko had a positive effect on the formation of the Ukrainian professional theater as a music and drama one.

**Keywords:** ethnography, folklore, Mykhailo Starytsky, Mykola Lysenko, national identity, Ukrainian folk song, Ukrainian music and drama theater.

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## 1. Introduction

In the Ukrainian art of that period there was a development of new styles, in particular realism. Still retaining certain elements of Romanticism (ethnography, focus on peasant themes), Ukrainian realism finally began to study and shed light on the social and psychological problems that currently troubled the community. At that time, those Ukrainian territories that were part of the Russian Empire lost all political rights and freedoms and quickly became a colony in which all socio-political, economic, scientific, cultural and even spiritual institutions were created and operated under the direction of the Tsarist Chancellery in Saint Petersburg, Russia. That is why the appeal of Ukrainian artists of the 19th century to the study and

popularization of samples of oral folk art, especially its music genres, which was carried out in the tradition of Romanticism, was the impetus for the intensification of nation-building processes. Nowadays, when from the point of view of the history of world civilization Ukraine has recently gained independence (1991) and in the minds of some Ukrainians the features of the colonial mentality are still clearly visible, scientific rethinking of the history of Ukraine of the 19th century, including music and theater, is relevant national paradigm.

Ethnography was most affected by the repertoire of the Ukrainian theater of the time, which, on the one hand, concentrated great creative potential, and on the other, remained the only environment where the Ukrainian culture could develop more or less freely due to the fact that in 1872 the imperial government allowed Ukrainian performances by private groups in Kyiv, Ukraine. It was from that time that the theatrical movement became active, the soul of which was Starytsky, so ethnography could not but influence both his theatrical activity in particular and the Ukrainian music and drama theater in general.

## 2. Analysis of recent research and publications

Much has been written about ethnography in the Ukrainian culture. As early as the second half of the 19th century, Oleksandr Opanasovych Potebnya (1887) devoted a separate large monograph to this topic, "Explanations of Malorussian and Related Folk Songs". Genre nature, specifics of motives, images of New Year songs and Christmas carols, content and poetics of folklore works have been the subject of research by many scholars (Voitovych, 2002; Gavadzin, 2009, 2010; Khnatiuk, 1914; Grinchenko, 1899; Davydiuk, 2002; Dei, 1965, 1977; Sumtsov, 1886; Tkach, 2008; Franko, 1982; Chebaniuk, 1987). At the same time, the work of Starytsky as a theatrical figure and playwright was the subject of scientific research by many scholars (Biletsky & Mamontov, 1941; Hranat, 2010; Zahaykevych, 2005; Izvarina, 2011; Stetsenko, 1969; Tsybaniova, 1996; Shubravska, 1990).

Researchers of Starytsky's creative work note that in his dramatic works the author introduced a new direction in the Ukrainian literature, the most important feature of which was ethnography. The term *ethnography*, as it is mentioned in the *Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language*, means "accurate reproduction of traditional forms of life, customs, rituals, etc. without delving into social processes" (Bilodid et al., 1971, p. 491). However, scholars' assessment of this feature of the playwright is not unequivocal. Thus,

"Stage interrupts the purely literary side. A bold innovator in his lyrics, Starytsky did not have the strength to break free from the pattern and routine in drama, traditional accessories of the old Ukrainian drama, such as singing, dancing, vodka and superficial ethnography in general (Efremov, 2002, p. 499).

For a long time in the domestic literary criticism there was an opinion that ethnographic elements, of which there are many in Starytsky's plays, reduce the aesthetic value of works, that folk songs, dances, customs as standard things are not needed by modern viewers (Starytsky, 1984, p. 16). Some academicians once defended the ethnography of Starytsky's plays. The scholars emphasized that the playwright's attention to the ethnographic elements of the Ukrainian people was not only a means of expressing sympathy and compassion for the common people, but also an attempt to touch the finest strings of the human soul and, equally

important in tsarist censorship, “a large number of folk songs, dances, language pearls, and colorful household items in plays often contributed to the skillful concealment of the main, often ‘seditious’ thought of a stage work” (Biletsky & Mamontov, 1941, p. 76).

The last decades have been marked by the increasing attention of the public and researchers to the life, creative work and social activity of Lysenko. During 1992–2012, more than 40 scientific-practical and scientific-theoretical conferences took place in Ukraine, where the figure of one of the most prominent figures of Ukrainian culture of the late 19th – early 20th centuries, was covered not only from the traditional and musicological point of view, but also in the broad general cultural, historical, literary, theatrical and even political aspects (Nehreichuk, 2009; Shulgina & Antonova, 2016). Important material for the characterization of Lysenko’s personality is his music creativity, multifaceted activities, as well as correspondence arranged by Lysenko (2004), memoirs about him (Pylypchuk, 2003), and historical documents.

Thus, the purpose of the article is to find out how the folklore activities of Starytsky and Lysenko affected the formation of the Ukrainian music and drama theater.

The materials of the research were the texts of dramatic works and productions by Starytsky and music compositions by Lysenko.

The study used general scientific methods of cognition: analysis, synthesis, generalization, which allowed to process a significant amount of material, to draw theoretical conclusions. The use of methodological principles of objectivity, historicism and systematics made it possible to analyze historical processes in all their contradictions and diversity, taking into account different views on certain issues. The application of an interdisciplinary approach made it possible to attract the results of scientific research in the history of music, history of theater, art history.

### 3. Discussion

#### 3.1. Folklore sources of Ukrainian music and drama theater

The Ukrainian music and drama theater of the 19th century, which was noted for its synthetic nature (it combined acting, music, speech, singing, and choreography), as a cultural phenomenon and artistic phenomenon was based on folk genres and folk traditions.

Even the most ancient artistic manifestations of the East Slavs in the form of ceremonial acts were characterized by syncretism: they contained elements of literature, music, and drama art. In addition, already in the most ancient family, hunting, agricultural rituals, games, dances, and the actors-performers were separated from the audience and the role of the actors themselves was clearly defined. Over time, mass games and rituals developed into an original genre of Ukrainian oral folk art – folk drama, which was characterized by a more or less stable plot, traditional characters and decorative design. We mean the well-known Ukrainian folk dramas *Mill* (in Ukrainian: *Melnytsia*), *Grandfather and Grandmother* (in Ukrainian: *Did ta baba*), *Goat* (in Ukrainian: *Koza*), *Malanka/Melanka* (*malanka/melanka* – a girl, symbol of water), *The Pope and the Death* (in Ukrainian: *Pip i smert*), *Throne* (in Ukrainian: *Tron*), *King Herod Tsar Irod* (in English: *Tsar Irod*), and others:

“Even in such simple folk performances as *Goat* or *Malanka*, it is planned <...> synthetic means of expression: equal participation of words, music, dance, facial expressions

and appropriate theatrical props (costumes, makeup, stage design)" (Arkhymovych, 1956, p. 11).

Even more expressive music and drama character is such a folk ritual act as a wedding: there is a clear division of roles, songs alternate with the obligatory conversational elements, music performs various functions, and ritual actions are subject to the laws of drama, etc.

Thus, Ukrainian oral folk art was the source from which various genres of national music and drama arose and developed. Moreover,

"Some characteristic, peculiar features of Ukrainian folk music, undoubtedly, had a great influence on the formation of further stages of Ukrainian music theater. For example, in such typical plays as the operettas *Oh, Don't Go Hryts, to the Party or I'm Going for Neman*, the music and drama is nothing but a developed, elaborated staging of a folk song. That is why, perhaps, this type of work was one of the most common in Ukraine for many decades, well received by listeners, found a quick response from the widest audience" (Arkhymovych, 1956, p. 11).

Folklore elements had a significant impact on such an early Ukrainian literary drama genre as school drama, which existed in educational institutions in Ukraine from the middle of the 17th to the middle of the 18th century. According to the rules of composition of works of this genre, the choir was an obligatory element of the action. In addition, the content of the school play often included singing and dancing (for example, a folk wedding ceremony with dancing and singing in the drama *Olexii Is a Man of God* (in Ukrainian: *Olexij ie liudynoiu Bozhoiu*). The language of such works was poetic and often close to the language of Ukrainian folk dramas (for example, dramas *On the Perversion of Hell* (in Ukrainian: *Slovo pro zburennia pekla*), *God's Mercy* (in Ukrainian: *Bozhe myloserdia*), etc.). Thus, school drama was built using folk song traditions, not only as a purely genre of drama, but also as a music one, and it was in the school theater that the features that later became decisive for the Ukrainian music and drama theater appeared.

For various reasons, the school theater declined, but in the same period (17th–18th centuries) is actively developing a purely folk theater genre – nativity drama, which is considered a bridge between folk music and drama genres, old school drama, and new Ukrainian literary drama.

The nativity scene theater, or nativity scene, is, in fact, a Ukrainian version of the puppet theater popular with many peoples, which, however, is a purely national work in its content. The content of the nativity drama consisted of two parts: the first was a traditional Christmas story, and the second was small interludes that were almost completely unrelated to the religious action of the previous part. Each of the two parts was marked with Ukrainian flavor and contained a music component: in the first dialogues alternated with chants and choral performances, and the content of the second necessarily included popular folk dances and folk songs (the latter often performed the functions that in classical opera laid on the *aria* and *arioso*). Thus, music was one of the main means of revealing the content and depicting images in the nativity drama. In general, the nativity scene as a kind of Ukrainian national theater is one of the important sources of formation of various genres of national theatrical art and an example of creative rethinking and use of folk songs in theatrical action.

As for school drama, its defining features were: entertainment, syncretism, synthesis of the traditions of medieval allegorical theater and baroque tendencies.

However, the conclusions regarding the influence of the Ukrainian school theater on the formation of the national music and drama art are extremely important. In particular, we cannot disagree with the researcher that the first work of new Ukrainian drama – *Natalka Poltavka* by Ivan Petrovych Kotliarevsky – is associated with the following traditions of school drama: music performances alternate with conversational dialogues; to characterize the characters “taken from the ordinary people” folk songs are used; the work ends with a chorus, which expresses the main idea-morality of the whole play (Izvarina, 2011, p. 64).

Thus, the school theater is one of the key sources of Ukrainian music and drama theater of Starytsky, which flourished in the second half of the 19th century.

After the ban on theatrical performances (school drama) in educational institutions, the music and stage life in Ukraine gradually moved to the landed estates. The history of estate culture is covered by scholars in works that have been published in foreign publications (Andrzejowski, 1861; Dobrzyński, 1970; Iliński, 1970; Komorowski, 1985; Karasowski, 1859; Król-Kaczorowska, 1971; Czachowska & Raszewski, 1973; Skibiński, 1963).

Striving to diversify and adding entertainment to their monotonous lives and taking as an example the customs and way of life established in the royal and princely palaces, rich landowners set up serf choirs, chapels, orchestras and even theaters in their estates:

“This phenomenon can be largely explained not only by the imitation of Russian and Ukrainian landowners of court life, but also by the high development of folk music and choreography, which the landowners tried to use for their music and drama performances” (Boboshko et al., 1967, p. 76).

In order to create perfect performances, the richest magnates invited professional actors, including foreign ones, and professional directors, artists and musicians to their theaters.

### 3.2. Mykhailo Starytsky as an ethnographer and folklorist

It was at the end of the 19th century that prominent figures of science and culture became significantly interested in the Ukrainian calendar rituals. This tendency found expression in the work of Starytsky, as evidenced by his legacy in the field of theater and literature. It is known that from childhood the future artist was directly in the folk environment, observed folk customs, rituals, games, and participated in them. Having lost his mother at an early age, Starytsky was raised in the family of his uncle Vitaliy Romanovych Lysenko, where he befriended his cousin Lysenko, a future prominent Ukrainian composer, the founder of the Ukrainian opera. The boys studied in different cities: Starytsky was in Poltava gymnasium, Ukraine, Lysenko was in Kyiv boarding school, Ukraine, but they spent summer vacations together in the family village of Lysenkiv, Ukraine, which, like every Ukrainian village, was rich in traditional rites. While the brothers were studying at the gymnasium, the Lysenko family moved to the village of Zhovnyne, Ukraine, where a new spacious house was built. Here is how Starytsky recalls the first vacation in this village,

“Almost most of the day, we spent on the shores of a quiet and affectionate Sula; they bathed two or three times a day, fished, walked in the meadows and listened to folk

songs: not far away, near the mill, the inhabitants of the street gathered, boys and girls sang" (Vasylenko, 1972, p. 60).

At that time, Lysenko and Starytsky were just watching the games of the village youth: "but still the party of the youth and its songs made an impression on us" (Vasylenko, 1972, p. 60). However, during the next vacation in Zhovnyne, the brothers began to actively participate in folk festivals and collect samples of folk art,

"We started this vacation by going directly to the 'street' and trying to get acquainted with the whole village, in order to promote their ideas and rapprochement, merging with the people, and the collecting the ethnographic material" (Vasylenko, 1972, p. 62).

So later Starytsky, as a connoisseur of local flavor, was able to accurately convey it in his works. At the same time, as Volodimir Gavadin notes, "M. Starytsky's views were formed in connection with the influence of the ideas of late romanticism in the Dnieper region, which provided an appeal to the origins of people's life, its traditional culture" (2009, p. 274). "He clings to his native land, analyzes in his dramas the urgent needs and higher spiritual interests of the Ukrainian countryside", Franko (1982) remarks about Starytsky. And since the village itself was the bearer of authentic folk culture, so, depicting the peasants and rural life, the playwright, of course, reproduced the traditional culture, customs and rituals of Ukrainians. Folk-poetic foundations of Ukrainian folklore, rituals found a place in the creative heritage of Starytsky, and this had a positive impact on the preservation and representation at a high artistic and literary level of important aspects of everyday life, in which calendar rituals occupy a very important place.

### 3.3. Reproduction of winter and summer rituals in the plays of Mykhailo Starytsky

It should be emphasized that Starytsky paid great attention to the reflection of the rituals of the winter and summer cycles of the folk ritual calendar. And this is not accidental, because it is in the folk songs of these periods of the calendar year there is the largest layer of ancient pagan relics, which in relict form are closely intertwined with the Christian layer, and at the same time the folk calendar of these periods is extremely rich in various magical rituals. On the other hand, the oldest calendar-ritual actions and songs that accompanied them later became the source of Ukrainian drama and theatrical art, as

"<...> elements of theatrical action are clearly traced in the songs-games of the calendar-ritual cycle, where the content itself stage interpretation is provided, for example, in the songs-games *Podolianochka*, *Perepilka*, *Mak*, *Pshono*, *Severyn*, *Neliub*, *Cholovik i Zhinka*, *Volodar*, etc." (Izvarina, 2011, p. 43).

And these same songs-plays, characterized by a combination of singing, dancing, music, acting, over time significantly influenced the music and drama direction of the Ukrainian theater and affected the genre and stylistic features of Starytsky's theater.

An example of a vivid reflection of Starytsky's elements of winter calendar rituals is *Christmas Eve/Christmas Night* (in Ukrainian: *Rizdviana Nich*, 1832), written on the basis of Gogol's (2015) novel of the same name. The playwright worked on this work for a long time: first on the text of the operetta, staged in 1872, and later (during 1877–1882) on the

libretto for the opera, the music for which was written by Lysenko and which saw the light of the ramp in 1883. There is a successful combination of the calendar cycle (carols) with national factors (Cossack motive), which is characteristic of the self-consciousness of the inhabitants of the Dnieper region, Ukraine. The whole plot of the work is based on the ancient, highly revered by Ukrainians holiday of the Nativity of Jesus, which contains elements of the ancient Slavic carol. According to Gavadzin, ancient cosmological and demonological beliefs were also embodied here, which were an essential attribute of Koliada (Christmas carols) (Gavadzin, 2009, p. 276).

In his *Christmas Eve*, Starytsky conveys in detail the caroling rite with all its specifics in the conditions of the Ukrainian village of the second half of the 19th century, when this rite still retained its authenticity. In a review of the theatrical production of *Christmas Eve/Christmas Night*, Franko (1982, pp. 417–428) emphasizes the high literary value of the libretto, “Simple motifs of carols, tank and humorous songs, and even surprisingly melodic Cossack songs like pearls woven into a dramatic recitative”. Starytsky presented many interesting ancient carols, such as: *Good evening to You, my Lord* (in Ukrainian: *Dobryi vechir tobi, pane hospodariu!*), *Rejoice! Oh, rejoice, the Earth* (in Ukrainian: *Raduisia! Oi, raduisia, zemle*), etc.

We see the reproduction of the ancient and no less saturated with pagan remnants of Malanka’s holiday in the dramatic work of Starytsky *Oh, Don’t Go, Hryts, to the Party* (in Ukrainian: *Oi, ne hody, Khrytsiu, tai na vechornytsi*), in which the playwright conveys the ancient custom when Malanka was led by girls. Yes, one of the heroines addresses her friends, “What about the girls, are we going to lead Melan?”, who support her and start singing carols generously: “Oh, come out, my lord, to greet the young lady from your house! Take out blavatas, velvets, good food, drinks. Generous evening!”. Prominent public and cultural figure of Transcarpathia, a historical-geographic region in southwestern Ukraine, incorporating the Southern slopes of the Carpathian Mountains and a portion of the adjoining Zakarpattia Lowland. It was noted the calendar-ritual context of the drama *Oh, Don’t Go, Hryts, to the Party*, “Everything happening on the stage was ours, it was dear to us. Our magic song was heard, our word flowed, there we saw our customs – our carolers with stars, going from house to house, our church” (Gavadzin, 2009, p. 278). Such responses indicate that, indeed, M. Starytsky caught and reflected the unique codes of national self-consciousness, which embody the worldview and moral and aesthetic features of the entire Ukrainian people.

An important feature of the drama *Oh, Don’t Go, Hryts, to the Party*, which influenced its ideological and semantic content and ethnographic features, was that the play was written on the basis of the folk song of the same name. The content of the song not only determined the plot of the dramatic work, but also determined the filling with folk music and ritual elements. Although the song *Oh, Don’t Go, Hryts, to the Party* inspired many Ukrainian writers to create their own works, none of the predecessor authors “managed to delve so deeply into the psychology of the characters, so organically combine folklore elements with the poetics of the whole work and so skillfully develop dramatic intrigue” (Stetsenko, 1969, p. 340). The well-known researcher of music and drama focuses on an innovative approach to the treatment of the famous folk song plot, “songs of high poetry, and this made it possible to create an interesting play based on the motif of the song” (Shubravska, 1990, p. 58).

Starytsky defined the genre of his work as “folk drama with music, singing and dancing”. Indeed, this play concentrates the most typical features of Ukrainian music and drama: the folk song basis of the melody of the play; truthfulness in the reproduction of pictures of life and everyday life, in particular, folk rites and customs; organic interweaving of music elements into the dramatic fabric of the play. Moreover, the author, developing the plot, creating characters, on the one hand, focused more on real life and not on the song, on the other hand, knowledge of rural life, traditions, moral rules, he gained not only from living observations, but also from folk songs.

Thus, the drama *Oh, Don't Go, Hryts, to the Party*, which is marked by its nationality, realistic direction and ethnography, under the direction of Starytsky grew into a highly artistic performance, which enchanted the audience with successful scenery, skillful dancing, singing, picturesqueness, emotional performance, the wonderful sound of the orchestra, and voices. And although researchers, including Shubravska, accuse the playwright of overloading his play to some extent with folklore and ethnographic scenes, which in some cases causes a slowdown, such an “overload” can be justified by the fact that the depicted events take place on holidays, and the true reproduction of Ukrainian holidays without songs cannot exist:

“Such songs as *Oh, in the Meadow and on the Shore, How I Went for Strawberries in the Woods*, which are performed in the first case by a Hrytso's relative Khoma and a choir of boys, and in the second case – by Hrytso's sister Daryna and a choir of girls, also have no direct attitude to the development of the plot, but they are part of the spiritual atmosphere of young people during leisure time” (Shubravska, 1990, p. 59).

So, the play *Oh, Don't Go, Hryts, to the Party* is an example of a Ukrainian music and drama play, which is based on folk songs, full of ethnographic components (songs, dances, rituals, household details) and recreates true pictures of folk life.

Ukrainian ritual songs and actions of the summer cycle, as well as winter, are a combination of Christian traditions and the oldest pre-Christian pagan layers. In Starytsky's creative work there are two plays that recreate folk summer holidays in Ukraine – the operetta *Drowned* (in Ukrainian: *Utoplēna*, first performed in 1880), written on the basis of Gogol's (2020) novel *May Night, or the Drowned Maiden* (in Russian: *Mayskaya noch', ili Utoplennitsa*, originally published in 1831) and a drama with singing and music *St. John's Eve* (in Russian: *Večer nakanune Ivana Kupala*, originally published in 1830), which is considered a reworking of the work of one Polish writer, although the story with a similar title is by Gogol (2017).

The period of late spring and early summer in the folk calendar is associated with beliefs about mermaids who gather on the Green Festival along rivers, dance and try to drag into the water and tickle one of the boys (because, according to popular belief, mermaids are the souls of girls, who committed suicide, drowned because of unrequited love); about a fern flower that blooms on the Kupala night, and whoever finds it, it will open the place where the treasure is hidden; about divination with wreaths – putting wreaths woven of herbs and flowers into the river on the water, and wherever they float such future for the girl they will bring, etc. Although the described customs are pre-Christian, and the phrases *Green Holidays, Green Sunday, Ivan Kupala* are the names of Orthodox Christian holidays, but Starytsky recreated this period of Ukrainian folk life, focusing more on the oldest calendar and ritual traditions.



### 3.4. Mykola Lysenko – messiah of Ukrainian music

In the context of becoming a professional Ukrainian music and drama theater, Lysenko is first mentioned as a composer – author of music to 21 performances of the so-called “luminary theater” and 10 operetta and operas, covering virtually all the stage music genres known at that time. However, his merit is to bring the folk song to the professional stage and elevate it to the level of high art.

Lysenko was an expert and connoisseur of Ukrainian song, because he came from an ancient Cossack family, which honored folk traditions, ceremonies, native words and native melody. His father, Romanovych Lysenko, a colonel of the Kirassyr Regiment, was engaged in ethnographic research at the advanced age; sang Ukrainian songs well, skillfully picking up the accompaniment for the piano. The future composer heard folk songs in the house of his grandmother Maria and grandfather Mykola Buliubashiv, in his uncles’ Andrii Romanovych and Alexandr Zakharovych Lysenkiv (the latter played well on the bandura, and was fond of Cossack antiquity and Ukrainian history) (Lysenko, 2004). “<...> It is safe to say”, Starytsky writes,

“that the first sprouts of national feeling were born in Lysenko under the influence of his granny and in the rapprochement with the performing with the people, and then they appeared poetically when they met Olexandr Zakharovych. Since then people’s mood began to penetrate into the music talent of Lysenko: firstly, he began to record tunes of ancient songs and pick up their accompaniment, and secondly, he began to create ‘cos-sachky’ and perform them on the piano with such brilliance and chic, in front of which the dulcimers and the violin with the tambourine faded” (Vasylenko, 1972, p. 61).

So, since then, Ukrainian folk motifs have become the leading in Lysenko’s composing work.

And further, throughout his life Lysenko was tirelessly engaged in folklore activities – searching, recording and music processing of Ukrainian folk songs. Undoubtedly, he did a tremendous amount of work in collecting and publishing music folklore, promoting and studying folk art: he collected, edited and processed a large number of Ukrainian folk writing material (more than 600 songs), and performed a number of theoretical studies in the field of folk music. So, having met with the famous Ukrainian kobzar Ostap Veresai and having studied his repertoire, Lysenko wrote a scientific exploration *Characteristics of music features of Ukrainian ballads and songs performed by O. Veresay*.

It should be noted that the composer was not only interested in Ukrainian folklore. In 1873 Lysenko made a trip to the Slavic lands (Galicia, Hutsul Republic, Serbia), during which he recorded Polish, Serbian, Croatian, Moravian, Czech songs, which he then included in his repertoire of choral concerts. So, later, organizing performances of amateur choirs led by him, Lysenko “has actively promoted the collected folklore material, has revealed to listeners the artistic riches of folk songs, has instilled love for it” (Koliada et al., 2015, p. 49).

In the course of many years of folklore work Lysenko developed a whole program of selection and processing of folk works. In his letters to Filaret Kolessa, to the editorial board of the newspaper *Zoria*, he called to record only “truly folk songs devoid of anti-artistic elements” (Bulat, 1965, p. 27). These letters testify to the composer’s wide awareness of the state of folklore at that time and his professionalism in working with folk songs. Thus, Kolessa

devoted his article “Folk direction in the works of Mykola Lysenko”, read at the evening in memory of Lysenko in Lviv in 1912,

“He devoted himself to the collecting of folklore and collections of arrangements of folk songs, only mentioning at the end of the publication other areas of creative activity of the artist. Here is one of his conclusions, ‘Even if Lysenko did not write anything more, with the same collections and harmonizations of folk songs he completed the work, which is simply epochal significance for the development of Ukrainian music’” (Kobryn, 2017, p. 106).

The artist sought to attract as many people as possible to collaborate in the field of national self-determination through music. He creates choirs that sing arrangements of folk songs, or works written on the basis of folk imagery, intonation and stylistic base, travels with the choirs of Ukraine so that as many townspeople and peasants as possible hear Ukrainian songs in professional performance: “<...> Where Lysenko appeared, a choir was formed at once, which he conducted” (Granat, 2009, p. 28), Starytsky mentioned.

The composer’s work with choirs can be divided into two stages:

- 1) 1860–1890 – management of amateur singing groups;
- 2) 1900 – the organization of professional bands.

Among the choirs of the “amateur” period, to the organization and activities of which the composer joined, mention the singing group of students of Kiev University, Ukraine (since 1860), a public choir of music lovers (1872), in which people of different specialties sang for fun: “it included students, teachers, doctors, government officials, etc. <...>. The choir has formed a large, more than 50 souls, exclusively male” (Baraban, 1990, p. 189). In 1874–1875, while studying in Saint Petersburg, Russia, Mykola Vitaliyovych founded an amateur choir and free choir courses in the Salt Town, Russia. In the 1880s, Lysenko assembled a mixed choir in Kyiv, and also took care of the singing groups of *Hromada* and *Kyiv’s Boyan*.

An outstanding event of the national cultural and music life was the five trips of the artist with the choir to Ukraine – 1893, 1897, 1898, 1900, and 1902. Behind each of them is a huge organizational, educational, educational work. The composer was assisted in these travels by young musicians – Kyrylo Stetsenko, Semen Hulak-Artemovsky, Alexander Koshetz, Yevhen Volodymyrovych Kovalenko, Porfirii Danylovych Demutskyi, and Yakiv Yatsynevych, who in the near future continued the work of the composer with development of national music culture. Folk songs and the Ukrainian language were heard throughout Lysenko’s concert events throughout Ukraine; in cities, towns, villages (Gadyach (Ukraine), Boryspil (Ukraine), etc.) choirs were created on the model of singing groups of Lysenko. The concerts were of a broad educational nature. They were called “the best course in Slavic studies” because, along with Ukrainian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Polish, Russian, and Moravian folk songs were played here. The program included music by classical works: Ludwig van Beethoven, Richard Wagner, Arthur Rubinstein, Stanislav Monyushko; *Requiem* (composed in 1791) by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *The Seasons* (in German: *Die Jahreszeiten*, first performed in 1801) by Joseph Haydn, *Chained Gray Cuckoo* (in Ukrainian: *Zakuvala ta syva zozulia*, first performed in 1872) by Petro Nishchynsky. Lysenko’s cantatas *Thresholds Are Beating* (in Ukrainian: *Byut porohy*, first performed in 1886), *Ivan Gus* (first performed in 1881), *Rejoice, Unpolished Level* (in Ukrainian: *Raduisia nyvo nepolytaya*, first performed in 1883), the choir *Oh No, No* (in Ukrainian: *Oi*,

*nema ni vitru, ni khvyli*, from the poem by Taras Shevchenko (2015) *Hamaliya* (in Ukrainian: *Gamaliyah*)), and other works of the composer occupied a prominent place.

The multifaceted significance of Lysenko's choral activity also determined the content of his music. Along with the arrangements of social songs (*Oh, the Black Cloud Has Come* (in Ukrainian: *Oi nastupyla ta chorna hmara*, first performed in 1918), *About Bondarivna* (in Ukrainian: *Pro Bondarivnu*, first performed in 1897)) there are works-protests against the oppression of the Ukrainian language. In response to the Ems Ukaz (1876) there are choirs *Na Pru* with the words of Starytsky, sublime-patriotic cantata *Beating the Rapids* (in Ukrainian: *Biut porohy*, first performed in 1878), a song for the choir *Our Ataman Gamaliyah* (in Ukrainian: *Nash otaman Gamaliyah*, first performed in 1880–1900), a majestic story *A Cloud Rises from the Estuary* (in Ukrainian: *Vstaie hmara z-za lymanu*, first performed in 1880–1900). A separate group consists of lyrical compositions: *Dream* (in Ukrainian: *Son*, first first performed in 1880–1900), (in Ukrainian: *Son*, first performed in 1880–1900), *Wide, High* (in Ukrainian: *Shyrokaya, vysokaya*, first performed in 1880–1900) with the words of Shevchenko, arrangement of the folk song *Floating Boat* (in Ukrainian: *Plyve choven*, first performed in 1880–1900). An important component of Lysenko's repertoire were choral arrangements of songs: historical (*Hey, Don't Be Surprised*, in Ukrainian: *Hei, ne dyvuite*, first performed in 1917; *Maxim the Cossack Zaliznyak*, in Ukrainian: *Maksym kozak Zalizniak*, first performed in 1868), recruiting (*Oh, I'll Let the Horse in the Garden*, in Ukrainian: *Oi, pushchu konychenka ya v sadu*, first performed in 1868), Cossack (*Oh, the Cossack Did Not Know*, in Ukrainian: *Oi, ne znav kozak*, first performed in 1955), humorous (*Didn't Heat, Didn't Cook* (in Ukrainian: *Ne topyla, ne varyla*, first performed in 1891), about love (*Oh, Gilya-Gilya, Geese* (in Ukrainian: *Oi hylia-hylia, husonky*, first performed in 1891), "burlatsky", etc., ceremonial folklore (collections *Youth* (in Ukrainian: *Molodoshchi*), two wreaths of spring flowers, *Kupala (Bathing) Business* (in Ukrainian: *Kupalska Sprava*), *Wedding* (in Ukrainian: *Vesilia*), and *Christmas Carols* (in Ukrainian: *Koliadky ta Shedrivky*).

After one of his travels with the choir, Lysenko wrote, "I traveled all over Poltava region and was in Kyiv region, in Cherkasy and Smila. <...> He woke up sleeping countrymen with songs" (Biletsky & Mamontov, 1942). The motive of awakening, unification around folk songs, Ukrainian music, native language, creation of a nationally oriented layer of listeners and performers determined all the conscious activity of the composer, aimed at proclaiming the Ukrainian national idea through art.

A circle of enthusiasts of the Ukrainian idea and the desire to raise national culture to the European level gathers around Lysenko. These are not only his friends and relatives who supported him from a young age: Starytsky, Olena Pchilka, Lesya Ukrainka, Marko Kropyvnytskyi, Mykhailo Drahomanov, and Sofia Rusova, but also comrades in "communities" – composers K. Stetsenko, Yatsynevych, who worked with him during trips with the choir. Mykhailo Kalachevsky, Vladimir Sokalsky, and others support his initiatives. Lysenko establishes contacts with artists of Western Ukraine and significantly influences the processes of awareness of the importance of folk music for the creation of a nationally defined music style. Anatol Vakhnianin, Kolessa, Ostap Nyzhankivsky, Sydir Vorobkevych, Stanyslav Lyudkevych, and other composers, poet Franko became real allies in the creation of a single national music space. Lysenko's works are performed in Galicia and Bukovina. Composers adopt the organizational experience of M. Lysenko and accept his worldview on the ways of development of national music.

It is through folklore style Lysenko receives national determination and the music language is formed in the semiotic system. Figurative, dramatic, genre, and stylistic components of the composer's style become music signs, in which the main ideological and figurative imperatives of the national, and therefore for Lysenko, folk worldview are generalized and typified. Including:

- ancient feeling of life-giving energy of the earth, conditionality of existence of Ukrainians by work on the Earth (five cycles of ceremonial songs: *Youth, Wedding, Kupala (Bathing) Business, Christmas Carols, Vesnianky* (first performed in 1875), opera-carol *Christmas Eve/Christmas Night*;
- semantization of dance as a primitive manifestation of life energy in comparison with the spiritual beginning – singing: a collection of “dances and spring songs” *Youth*, dances in operas *Christmas Eve/Christmas Night* (finale of the second edition), mermaid dances in *Drowned*, dance suite based on the folk song *Oh, the Girl-Dove* (in Ukrainian: *Oi divchyna-horlytsia*) and *Cossack* (in Ukrainian: *Kozachka*) in the second act of *Taras Bulba* (in Russian: *Tarás Búl'ba*, originally published in 1835, first performed in 1890) (Gogol, 2003), *Blizzard* (in Ukrainian: *Metelytsia*) in *Winter and Spring* (in Ukrainian: *Zyma i Vesna*), etc.);
- timbre-acoustic originality of the existence of folklore as a result of the realization of the existential need to mark oneself in the world: the specifics of kobzar singing, reproduced in arrangements of folk songs, dramas (*Sunday, Holy* (in Ukrainian: *U nedilenku sviatuïu*)), solo-songs on historical themes (*Hetmans, Hetmans* (in Ukrainian: *Hetmany, hetmany*); *Oh, What Have You Blackened* (in Ukrainian: *Oi choho ty pochrnilo*); *Green Field* (in Ukrainian: *Zeleneie pole*)), undertone polyphony of choral works and arrangements of folk songs, research of folk instruments and reproduction of acoustic features of lyre, bagpipe, bandura in creativity (first and second Ukrainian rhapsodies for piano, thought *Sunday Morning-Early* (in Ukrainian: *U nediliu rano vrantsi*), Kobzar's song and *Hey, the Eagle Is Flying* (in Ukrainian: *Hei, lita orel*) performed by Taras from the opera *Taras Bulba*, etc.);
- coexistence of real and imaginary, real and fantastic in folk life, customs, rituals (appeal to the plots for operas to the works of Gogol, based on knowledge of Ukrainian folklore, customs and rituals, in which the heroic, fantastic, real, comic and poetic closely intertwined in a perfect artistic form – the operas *Christmas Eve/Christmas Night, May Night* (in Ukrainian: *Maiska Nich*, first performed in 1885), *Taras Bulba*)).

Typification through style and music language of his own sense of nationality, which was firmly based on the sound material of “living” in the time of Lysenko folklore, is one of the factors of realistic features in the work of the master.

Finally, aware of the extraordinary artistic power and beauty of folk art, his important role in the development of professional music, Lysenko devoted his life to his study, and then, based on deep knowledge of Ukrainian song, managed to elevate it to a new qualitative level and make it indispensable part of not only professional music, but also theatrical art. In general, in the socio-cultural conditions that prevailed in Ukraine in the second half of the 19th century – in the early 20th century, the theater became almost the only possible place to convey the Ukrainian word and music to the audience and listener:

“Constant struggle for national identity, cultural work, the desire to awaken the spirit of the nation in the conditions of blockade and historical memory prompted M. Lysenko to focus on theatrical and choral genres” (Taranchenko, 2017, p. 28).

And the song became the basis for the formation of the repertoire of professional Ukrainian music and drama theater, in which the prominent place was occupied by works of various genres, based on folk poetic sources: operas, operettas, vaudeville, music dramas, music comedies, and others (Nemchenko, 2016). And in this great merit belongs to Lysenko.

#### 4. Conclusions

Starytsky's considerable attention to ethnography and folklore is one of the important means of expressing the pictures of peasant life. However, gradually something new enters the life of Ukrainian society. Customs and rituals play an extremely important role not only in terms of reproducing the features of people's lives, but also in the direction of preserving a certain national identity at the local level. They represent the characteristic features of the people's soul, which is clearly reflected in their literary expression and theatrical production.

Lysenko's music work unfolded in close connection with the development of the national theater. Thanks to the composer's folklore activity – collecting, studying and creative use of the huge treasures of national folk music and folklore, dating back to his childhood.

Thus, as we see in the work of Starytsky there is a significant calendar-ritual component, bright ethnographic features and folklore elements, which in many cases become the basis for the formation and development of Ukrainian theater as a music drama.

Folk music became an important component of Ukrainian music and drama theater: it complemented the psychological characters, provided plays with national flavor.

The artists saw the greatest aesthetic effect in the multifunctional use of folk music or music written in the folk style. The song not only adorned the performances, attracted with familiar motives and good singing of the actors, it revealed the characters, the emotional mood of the *mise-en-scène*. Music created multifaceted subtexts of stage situations, in operas and operettas there was the basis of drama. The introduction of a music plan of action as an equal component along with verbal and game principles was one of the main factors of innovation of Starytsky and Lysenko.

Starytsky's music and drama theater, which achieved the most impressive creative results in 1872–1885, raised Ukrainian stage art to the top of European drama, laid the foundations of modern directing, management, and acting, became one of the most outstanding pages in the relentless cultural progress of the nation to the spiritual peaks of ideology, truth, and beauty in art.

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