Making SHUM: Restorative Nostalgia and the Post-Euromaidan Ukrainian Music Revival: A Case Study Analysis of Go_A, ONUKA, and KARNA

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Making SHUM: Restorative Nostalgia and the Post-Euromaidan Ukrainian Music Revival

A Case Study Analysis of Go_A, ONUKA, and KARNA

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A Thesis in MA Russian and Eurasian Studies

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Ukrainian Electro-Folk Band, Go_A.

Credit: Anastasiia Mantach.

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Abstract

Triggered by the Euromaidan protests of 2013/14, Ukraine over the past eight years has experienced a cultural revival as a response to Russian aggression. This revival has manifested itself no more so than in music, where numerous Ukrainian artists have used traditional instruments and ethnic motifs in combination with broader, "western" styles of popular music. In this thesis I will argue that the motivation behind this music revival - and by extension the wider cultural revival in general - is a restorative nostalgia for a free, flourishing, democratic, western-oriented, independent Ukraine that is entirely separate from Russia. After noting the stark similarities between music revivalism and restorative nostalgia, I will answer how more deeply held restorative nostalgic sentiments manifest themselves in Ukrainian revivalist music, and investigate *why* these sentiments manifest themselves in the way that they do. I will argue that contemporary Ukrainian revivalist popular music is instrumentalising the past in present-day culture in order to "create a future". I term this process "signposting" insofar that signposts create a future for those who follow them, promising where they will eventually end up should they choose that path.

Given Russia's renewed, full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022, this topic is particularly current, and will demonstrate Ukrainian culture's tenacity, ingenuity, adaptability and resilience in the face of Russian military and cultural aggression. While the discussions in this thesis predominantly focus on cultural artefacts from between 2014 and 2021, all evidence is pointing to another Ukrainian cultural revival borne out of the events of 2022 that will make the revival of the past decade seem fairly timid by comparison. To this end, I include an afterword looking at Ukrainian music during the latest chapter of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

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Introduction

Crucial for understanding the power that music can have as an agent of culture - and for understanding everything that I will discuss in this thesis - is the following quotation from music scholar Nelli Samikova: ‘Music has become the tool [by] which different cultures can transmit their uniqueness through to the whole world, because it easily absorbs all the changes, correlating with the demands of the contemporary world’ (Samikova 2020: 140). Musical cultures are unique and adaptable, they can be powerful conveyors of national identities, they can permit change and innovation, staying both loyal to their roots but resisting extinction at the hands of modernity. Music can be an expression of a nation’s history, their people, their identity, their language, and what some may describe as their “soul”. Music can be an expression of a nation’s past, their present, and their future.

Ukraine, like many countries, has form in looking to its past to make the case for its present existence. Similarly, Ukraine, like many countries, has form in using music as a primary vehicle for this process. Sergei Parajanov’s 1965 film, *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, based on a novel of the same name by Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky, tells the story of two young Ukrainian Hutsuls in the Carpathian mountains and is a veritable symphony in all things Hutsul. The soundtrack in particular is a constant, chaotic whirl of ancient Hutsul sounds, and through including folk instruments such as the *sopilka*, *trembita*, *tsymbaly*, and *bandura*, Hutsul music is therefore foregrounded as a critically important part of Ukrainian identity. An awareness of this film and what it represents is especially important for what I will come to discuss as it ‘sparked a broader interest in the Carpathians as a space that affirmed Ukrainian cultural difference, from Russians in particular’ (First 2022). In the same article, the history scholar Joshua First notes that *Shadows* is not isolated in this regard, discussing eight other films which demonstrate that Ukraine has long struggled ‘for recognition as a distinct people and culture’ (ibid.). To give another example of the role that music has historically played in the forging of Ukrainian identity, Sergei Zhuk’s 2010 book *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dniepropetrovsk, 1960-1985*, analyses how Brezhnev’s cultural repression led to a revived Ukrainian nationalism in the 1980s in which rock music - influenced by western culture - was one of its main vehicles.

Especially since 2014, Ukrainian music has once again become an arena for building and championing a unique national identity which, at its heart, serves the same function of opposition to Russia as Parajanov's *Shadows* and Dniepropetrovsk's rock music did. Only two days before Russia's 24th February invasion of Ukraine, *NPR* published an article entitled 'For Ukrainian musicians, rejecting Russia is a matter of national pride'. They discuss how Ukrainian musicians are using music to assert their national identity, 'reviving old Ukrainian musical traditions', as well as noting how the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) has 'become a litmus test' of Ukraine's cultural assertiveness (Estrin et al. 2022). Similarly, in a 2016 interview with *Day Kyiv*, the frontwoman of the band ONUKA - whom I will discuss in chapter 4 - boasted, 'every time I hear my Russian friends saying "You Ukrainians are at it again! You have overtaken us again!" I am really glad [...] New Ukrainian music towers over Russian [music]. The cultural renaissance is the only fitting name for it, I believe' (Lubchak 2016). It is therefore clear that a major motivation of Ukrainian cultural revivals past and present is Russia-orientated, insofar that they are constantly trying to outdo, better, and separate themselves from the country that has historically and still today attempts to deny Ukraine the right to its own existence. As I will argue with reference to theories on restorative nostalgia and music revivalism, it is indeed a revivalist, oppositional, and future-oriented dynamic that has come to manifest itself in certain post-Euromaidan Ukrainian pop music.

In chapter 1, I will conduct a literature review of the theoretical concepts underpinning my argument, those being restorative nostalgia and music revivalism. After dealing with both concepts individually, I will demonstrate the similarities between them, arguing that music revivalism is a manifestation of more deeply held restorative nostalgic sentiments. In chapter 2, I will contextualise my forthcoming analysis by discussing how Ukraine arrived in a place ripe for a cultural revival. I will look at its most notable manifestations since the turn of the millennium and discuss the wider motive behind the revival, that is, pushing back against a Russia which has increasingly denied Ukraine a right to its own history, culture, identity, language, and so forth. In chapters 3 to 5, I will conduct three case study analyses of popular Ukrainian artists to ascertain how - in the wider context of the post-Euromaidan cultural revival - more deeply held restorative nostalgic sentiments manifest themselves in Ukrainian revivalist music, and investigate *why* these sentiments manifest themselves in the way that

they do. This is the main research question of this thesis. My answer to this question, put simply, is that Ukrainian restorative nostalgic, revivalist, popular music is *creating a future* for the country at a time when its future is being threatened by Russia. I term this phenomenon “signposting” because road signs are essentially a promise to those who follow them of where they will eventually end up. The artists and songs which I will discuss in this thesis, I argue, are doing very much the same thing, pointing the listener towards Ukraine’s future by reviving past historical, musical and aesthetic memes in the present. In these chapters, I will discuss the electro-folk bands Go_A and ONUKA, and the heavy-metal band, KARNA.

In chapter 6, I had intended to conduct original research to try and ascertain if there were regional variations in how the above Ukrainian bands and others are perceived throughout Ukraine. This would have given tentative indications of to what extent the revivalist sentiments of these groups are shared by Ukrainians from region to region. Russia’s full-scale, renewed invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022 made this research practically very difficult, but, more importantly, ethically unjustifiable. Put bluntly, it is not acceptable to be conducting original academic research on Ukrainian culture with the help of Ukrainian people when their homes are being bombed, and their friends and families massacred.

Instead, following my conclusion, I offer an afterword looking at the role that Ukrainian music has played during the war in 2022. Keeping morale high and feeding solidarity is paramount in times of war, and, not for the first time, music has emerged as a leading vehicle of hope, defiance, pain, solidarity, and even humour. The overall thread running throughout this thesis is Ukrainian music’s desire to sculpt a unique cultural identity that is separate from Russia, pushing back against rhetoric that denies that Ukraine should even exist, taking inspiration from traditional Ukrainian folklore and marrying it with contemporary music styles. Ukrainian music responding to Russia’s 2022 invasion is evidence of precisely this process.

On a theoretical basis, this thesis will attempt to close a gap between the related concepts of restorative nostalgia and music revivalism. With regards to my individual research, by analysing the use of folk instruments, allegorical lyrics, poetic music videos, and turning to

the words of the artists themselves in media interviews, I will reveal how Ukrainian musicians are channelling restorative nostalgic sentiments through a contemporary music revival as they take past musical traditions and repurpose them for the creation of a contemporary yet uniquely Ukrainian national identity. Indeed, this entire topic deserves a renewed focus in light of the latest chapter in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. Once the current war is over, however, it is likely that we will witness a Ukrainian cultural revival on a magnitude we have never experienced before. Looking to the future, I hope this thesis can serve as an analysis of the "prelude" to the next stage of Ukraine's fight for its survival, which, by all accounts, has already begun.

Chapter 1 - Introducing (Restorative) Nostalgia and Music Revivalism

Introducing (Restorative) Nostalgia

It is the late cultural theorist Svetlana Boym's 2001 book, *The Future of Nostalgia*, that has come to be understood as a pioneering work on the phenomenon of nostalgia. She defines nostalgia as a 'longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed [...] a sentiment of loss and displacement, but [...] also a romance with one's own fantasy' (Boym 2001: xiii). There are therefore conflicting emotional processes underpinning nostalgia, namely a simultaneous longing for sights, sounds, smells, people or places that have become displaced from the present condition. Extrapolating this argument further, one sees how nostalgia has at its core a tension between past and present: it is a phenomenon that arises from a conflict between the transience of human behaviour and the immutability of the passage of time. In a similar vein, Sedikides et al. define nostalgia as a 'yearning for one's past, a yearning that may include but is not limited to one's homeland. This yearning may pertain, for example, to events, persons, or sights', and is a 'universal experience, present and prevalent across the lifespan' (Sedikides et al. 2004: 202).

We can therefore deduce further characteristics of the phenomenon of nostalgia. Firstly, it operates in opposition to history and serves a cross-temporal function in which reveries into the past repurpose historical memes to suit a present reality. As Boym writes, 'nostalgia is a rebellion against the modern idea of time [...] the nostalgic desires to obliterate history and

turn it into private or collective mythology, to revisit time as space, refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition' (Boym 2011). This underlines a key feature of nostalgia, that being that it originates from a dissatisfaction with the present, thereby necessitating turning to the past to fill that void for the sake of the future. Indeed, Boym also notes that such 'fantasies' are both 'determined by needs of the present and have a direct impact on realities of the future' (Boym 2001: xvi). Secondly, it is not only a phenomenon unique to individuals, but can be extrapolated across entire peoples to provide a powerful collective ideal of a "better place" and a "simpler time". Nostalgic sentiments can manifest themselves in a 'collective mythology', and are a 'universal experience' that are often linked to the notion of a 'homeland'. It is a psychological disposition that can be felt across an entire population and throughout their history. Noting that nostalgia is not only retrospective but prospective too, Boym proposes two different types of nostalgia, namely reflective and restorative nostalgia, the latter of which will be the focus of this thesis.

Restorative nostalgia 'stresses *nostos* (home) and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home' (Boym 2001: xviii), which, according to Boym's previously mentioned definition of nostalgia, 'no longer exists or has never existed'. It is not only a desire for the past that defines restorative nostalgia, but the desire to experience it again. Scholar Gizela Horváth writes that restorative nostalgia feeds off of a 'moment of idealization' in which the past is viewed as 'the golden age, a "prelapsarian" state, characterized by such harmony, peace, happiness, maybe even virtuousness, which far exceeds the current circumstances, but would be pleasant to achieve once more' (Horváth 2018: 148). Restorative nostalgia is therefore characterised by a rose-tinted conceptualisation of history where adherents of the homeland try to recreate the perceived idyll that may have existed in the past, but is absent in the present. This is achieved by 'reconstructing emblems and rituals of home and homeland in an attempt to conquer and specialize time' (Boym 2001: 49). Restorative nostalgia recycles and updates aspects of this perceived 'golden age' to serve a very real present-day purpose. Restorative nostalgia therefore can also at times resemble a desire to fulfil certain prophecies insofar as it 'protects the absolute truth' (ibid. xviii), and 'returns and rebuilds one's homeland with paranoid determination' (Boym 2011). It shapes the path back and guides people towards the prelapsarian homeland that their ancestors never enjoyed or had taken away from them.

For comparison, however, reflective nostalgia ‘is more concerned with historical and individual time, with the irrevocability of the past and human finitude’ (Boym 2001: 49). Horváth writes that a longing for the past is followed by a ‘reflexive, critical attitude’ where idealisation is replaced with an ‘infusion of desire with irony and humor’ (Horváth 2018: 151), in which the subject-matter of nostalgia is accepted as being retired to the passing of time, not exactly left to rot but to serve as a reminder of previous lives and the progress made since. The essence of reflective nostalgia is that its subject-matter is understood as obsolete in all practical purposes other than emotional, hence allowing for the injection of humour, irony and critical reflection vis-à-vis the subject-matter. Restorative nostalgia on the other hand ‘takes itself dead seriously’ (Boym 2001: 49), and updates the subject-matter to serve a very deliberate present-day function. Boym writes that the ‘past for the restorative nostalgic is a value for the present [...] freshly painted in its “original image” [to] remain eternally young’ and, most intriguingly for the given case study, has been ‘at the core of recent national and religious revivals’ (Boym 2001: xviii).

Perhaps the differences between restorative and reflective nostalgia could be best summed up with a hypothetical example. Taking as the subject-matter the instantly recognisable Trabant car - a staple of so-called *Ostalgie*, or nostalgia for East Germany - reflective nostalgia would see a small toy Trabant on the windowsill and reminisce about its appalling build quality and shocking reliability while a brand-new 300km/h BMW sits on the driveway outside. Restorative nostalgia on the other hand would reimagine the Trabant as a symbol of rugged East German resourcefulness and resilience, and begin mass-producing bigger, better, and more powerful Trabants in a wider revival of East German nationhood, communist or otherwise. Indeed, according to Boym, ‘[reflective and restorative nostalgia] can use the same triggers of memory and symbols [...] but tell different stories about it’ (ibid. 49).

It is this notion of restorative nostalgia with which we will be engaging in this thesis, applied to contemporary Ukrainian music. Continuing the discussion of the characteristics of restorative nostalgia, it is important to note that the phenomenon ‘knows two main plots - the return to origins and the conspiracy’ (Boym 2011). While the return to origins has been outlined above as a ‘transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home’ that reaches back to a

bygone era, reviving and revitalising practises, cultures, customs, symbols, languages and so on, it is important to understand the motivations behind this process. It is the presence of a conspiracy, Boym argues, that necessitates the nostalgic restoration of a perceived homeland that may or may not have ever existed. In the face of this conspiracy that threatens to do harm unto the adherents of the homeland, it is by reviving, practising and updating past customs and traditions that the people in question hope to derive a newfound confidence, legitimacy and recognition. By simultaneously driving themselves away from the conspiracy and drawing their own societal group closer, they strengthen their own collective identity and reimagine themselves as a unique and separate people residing in a unique and separate homeland. Restorative nostalgia reconstructs what has been lost, oppressed, or simply never truly existed, to create a safe space, a home, a homeland, where one can freely express one's identity without fear of persecution, to exhibit to yourselves and to the world that the "home" that you are creating is unique, separate, and resilient to the conspiracy. Central to this is the issue of *survival* because the conspiracy threatens the homeland's and its adherents' future existence.

In Ukrainian restorative nostalgia, the 'conspiracy' against which the 'return to origins' is fighting, is, of course, Russia. Both historically and still to this day Russia denies Ukraine a right to its own existence, exhibiting very real plans to literally erase Ukraine from the past, present, and future. One must also note, however, that restorative nostalgia can be corrupted if the 'conspiracy' driving the restorative nostalgia is entirely invented. Vladimir Putin's Soviet and imperial restorative nostalgia, culminating in their 2014 and 2022 invasions of Ukraine, is an example of what can happen when restorative nostalgia is driven by an entirely invented conspiracy, in this case being the myths of Ukrainian neo-Nazism and a malign "collective West" that is out to destroy Russia. In both the Ukrainian and Russian cases, it is notable that Boym writes that nostalgia can be an 'individual mechanism of survival [...] and a cure' (Boym 2011), stressing that it is a *continued future existence* that underpins the motivations of restorative nostalgia. This is of course especially relevant when extrapolated across entire societal groups or nations, because restorative nostalgia 'evokes national past and future' (Boym 2001: 49). Restorative nostalgia is a vehicle through which a people can resist a present reality by reviving the past in order to survive in the future.

Jacob Juhl et al.'s studies prove the positive psychological effects of nostalgia in managing an existential threat. They write that nostalgia is a 'self-relevant, but highly social, and generally positive emotional reflection on the past that fulfils a number of psychological functions' (Juhl et al. 2010: 310). These include being a 'source of positive affect', boosting 'self-esteem and implicit self-positive associations', strengthening social bonds, and provoking 'greater feelings of being "loved" and "protected"'. Most relevant for their study, however, is the conclusion that nostalgia can 'appease existential concerns and mitigate the effects of [awareness of death]' (ibid. 313). In much a similar vein, Xinyue Zhou et al.'s research into the effects of nostalgia highlighted that it is a 'psychological resource that protects and fosters mental health [...] strengthens social connectedness and belongingness' and can be a 'potent coping mechanism in situations of self-threat and social threat [...which...] can strengthen psychological resistance to the vicissitudes of life' (Zhou et al. 2008: 1028).

In the face of this threat - or, to use Boym's terminology on restorative nostalgia, 'conspiracy' - nostalgia can therefore serve a powerful, individual, and collective psychological function. Far from being a meaningless and self-indulgent reverie into the past, nostalgia can be a rational and effective call-to-arms that primes and binds nostalgics together to create a community that instrumentalises the past in order to counter the 'conspiracy' that purports to do them harm. According to Juhl et al.: 'Nostalgia is a part of the arsenal of psychological mechanisms that enables people to use the past to fight the future' (ibid. 314). Restorative nostalgia therefore has at its heart one fundamental motivation: *survival*.

Introducing Music Revivalism

In her 1999 article "Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory", scholar Tamara Livingston defines music revivals as 'any social movement with the goal of restoring and preserving a musical tradition which is believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past', the purpose of which can be both to 'serve as cultural opposition and as an alternative to mainstream culture' and to 'improve existing culture through the values based on historical value and authenticity expressed by revivalists' (Livingston 1999: 68). Furthermore, she writes that music revivals do not happen randomly, but are also 'shaped by the social,

political and economic circumstances which motivated the revivalists to take action in the first place' (ibid.). Music revivals, therefore, are cultural phenomena in which contemporary 'revivalists' find inspiration for their artwork in a historical tradition considered to be defunct or dying, and seek to restore and preserve those practises, often with ulterior and occasionally political motivations. Indeed, music revivals will often be part of a wider cultural revival, defined as the 'formation of a group identity around a common culture, where a claim is forwarded that the aspects of culture with which the group identifies have been recovered after losses due to colonization, forced or voluntary relocation, oppression, or modernization' (Encyclopedia.com 2019). These are 'predominantly associated with minority populations and frequently underwrites demands for rights, restitutions, and political or legal recognition as an ethnic group' (ibid.). At this juncture one must recall that restorative nostalgia has been 'at the core of recent national and religious revivals', and also note that Ukraine's cultural revival since 2014 'has been at the heart of the counteroffensive against Russian aggression' (Pesenti 2021). I will discuss the motivations and characteristics of the Ukrainian cultural revival more generally in chapter 2.

There is, however, an underlying tension in Livingston's 1999 theory on music revivals. While she argues that the essence of music revivals is to restore and preserve - as if in a museum - this stands in opposition to the argument that music revivals are motivated by present-day political and economic factors. The tension lies in the intended endgame of a music revival. Is it to restore, preserve, and put on display? Or to affect wider and lasting societal change? Furthermore, she writes that music revivalists have tended to 'reject modern technological innovations such as electric instruments and contemporary popular style influences in favor of acoustic instruments and "historically accurate" styles' (Livingston 1999: 69). As I will show in this thesis with closer analysis of contemporary Ukrainian artists, it is precisely the amalgamation of traditional and contemporary styles that has characterised Ukrainian revivalist pop. This is in fact not unique to Ukrainian music, and can also be observed in the Mongolian band "The HU", who 'combine hard rock and heavy metal with Mongolian throat singing and traditional Mongolian instruments' (Willis 2021). Incidentally, they too exhibit a whiff of restorative nostalgia in their artistry insofar as they call their own unique brand of music 'hunnu rock', after the Hunnu Empire that existed between roughly 200 BCE and 450 CE (ibid.).

Livingston's early theory on music revivals is therefore incompatible with 21st-century revivalist popular music. A failure to embrace 'modern technological innovations' in revivalist music would risk turning the revived musical tradition into an anachronism that cannot be reconciled with the modern condition - that is to say, a museum artefact that is restored and preserved, but never again utilised to a contemporary end. This situation would be totally antithetical to the highly contemporaneous 'social, political and economic circumstances' that may motivate the wider cultural revival movement. Put simply, the contemporary social activism which motivates cultural revivals must be reflected in the music of the time. This would *not* be achieved by rejecting modern musical techniques that would make the music equally as contemporary as the wider movement out of which it was born.

Music scholars Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell's edited book *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival* provides a helpful theoretical foundation to disentangle the tensions in Livingston's article. They identify four general motivational categories for a music revival. These are:

1. A dissatisfaction with aspects of the modern world;
2. To bolster the identity of an ethnic group, minority group, or nation, which is often coupled with a distancing from, or othering of, foreign, ethnic or cultural elements;
3. Political, for left and right-wing purposes;
4. Practical response to natural or human disasters (Hill & Bithell 2014: 10-12).

This is valuable insofar as it codifies why and under what conditions a music revival takes place. Putting aside the tensions discussed above, both Livingston, and Hill and Bithell stress that revivalist music can be an effective form of activism, because, according to the latter, it can be a source of inspiration, legitimacy, and healing (ibid. 12). Hill and Bithell's four motivational categories for a music revival show that while the subject-matter of the revival has its origins in the past - that is to say traditional instruments, sounds, motifs, perhaps costumes or indeed lyrics pertaining to the past - the motivations for and operation of the revival itself lie very much in the present. As I argued above, this must therefore be reflected in the style of music produced. Again, one must stress that this does *not* mean that "older"

aspects of the given musical tradition are replaced, but rather harmonised with contemporary musical techniques.

Scholar Owe Ronström's contribution to *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival* is useful in helping us conceptualise the harmonisation of old and new in revivalist music, as well as beginning to bridge the gap between restorative nostalgia and music revivalism. Moreover, he further resolves the tension between past and present that exists in Livingston's article by introducing a third vector to the temporal nexus of music revival. Although the musical traditions' origins lie in the past and are revived in the present, Ronström writes that 'as much as revivals are about what has happened, they are also about what may, should, or must happen [...] there are revivals not because there has been a past, but because there is a future to come' (Ronström 2014: 44). Music revivals are therefore *future-oriented*. Ronström continues: 'revivals are productions whereby things, actions, or ideas are actively brought from one context to another to make them accessible to new actors, in new places and times [...] fundamentally, then, revival is an act of translation' (ibid.). Contrary to Livingston's assertion that revivalists 'reject modern technological innovations', Ronström argues that music from one era must be translated to suit another era, lest it become an anachronism, a museum artefact. I argue that it is by uniting traditional ethnic and folk music with modern innovations, such as electronic music or other contemporary genres or modes, that this act of translation is completed. In this sense the musical traditions of old have neither been so radically changed that they no longer resemble their past, nor simply been carbon-copied for the sake of "authenticity" or "historical accuracy". As analyses of contemporary Ukrainian pop music will show, this act of translation has *updated* centuries-old musical traditions to better match wider cultural styles and trends in the 21st-century. Ronström writes that this can be done is by using 'tropes, metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche' (ibid.), and analysing Ukrainian revivalist music in the following chapters will reveal as much. When combined, these strategies invoke 'vast mythical landscapes' that can become 'explosively charged with implicit meaning and be used as tools or weapons by individuals and groups to expand social and cultural space and to win and exercise power' (ibid.). This foregrounds revivals as serving an ostensibly political purpose with the future in mind.

Returning to the question of activism, it becomes clear that revivals hark back to the past in

order to find legitimacy in the present, in order to secure survival in the future. In explicitly mentioning the pull of the future in the theory of music revival, Ronström has united the concept with the essence of activism. Revivals are 'products of social processes by which the absent is represented in the present, for purposes in the future' (ibid. 45). As outlined by Hill and Bithell, music revivals can be employed as part of wider social or political movements that campaign to secure a better future, which is particularly relevant with regards to their second and fourth motivational categories for a music revival, both of which have the question of survival at their heart. The musical traditions that Livingston describes as 'disappearing or relegated to the past' will die out if not revived. Indeed there is no middle-ground between surviving or dying: they are mutually exclusive, irreconcilable processes. Therefore, by actively preventing a musical tradition's death through its revival, ultimately, the music revival's endgame is survival.

A Natural Alliance? Understanding Music Revivalism as an Expression of Restorative Nostalgic Sentiments

One can now begin to see the similarities between music revivalism and restorative nostalgia. They both find their inspiration in a historical subject-matter that is perceived to be lost, oppressed, or disappearing. They both trace their motivations back to a dissatisfaction with the contemporary world, thus giving them the potential to be effective vehicles of social, cultural, and political activism or societal healing in the present day. Finally, both concepts have the creation of a future at their heart where the subject-matter has been reconstructed and translated to suit contemporary society. As I outlined above in my discussion of both restorative nostalgia and music revivalism, at the core of this nexus lies the future-oriented notion of survival. I argue, therefore, that rather than being unrelated concepts, a music revival is a natural expression of restorative nostalgic sentiments in which the nostalgia for the 'lost home' and the desire for ' rights, restitutions, and political or legal recognition as an ethnic group' converge. Restorative nostalgic dreams can be fulfilled by a music revival that utilises and updates the musical traditions of the 'homeland' for which the national or ethnic group are yearning, thereby recreating that which they perceived to have been lost, founding a new cultural realm that is legitimate and separate from the majoritarian 'conspiracy'. The

fundamental bind that links restorative nostalgia and music revivalism is that they are both trying to *create a future*. In my analysis of Ukrainian revivalist music, I term this process "signposting" insofar the various tropes and metaphors point the listener to Ukraine's future as a successful, sovereign country with a unique language, culture and identity, legitimate and internationally recognised as indisputably separate from Russia. Indeed, signposts create a future by showing those that follow them where they will eventually end up if they choose to follow that path.

While restorative nostalgia and music revivalism's similarities are many, research that explicitly combines the two has not yet received much attention. To be clear, I am not arguing that the two concepts are the same thing, but rather that music revivalism can be an expression of restorative nostalgic sentiments. There have, however, been a couple of scholarly contributions to this end. Professor of Media & Communication at Erasmus University in Rotterdam Arno van der Hoeven provides a good base combining music and nostalgia, while scholar Badia Ahad-Legardy's chapter on restorative nostalgia and music revivalism in black communities and the wider Black Lives Matter movement provides an insightful case study of how a combination of the two can be employed by historically marginalised groups for political purposes.

Van der Hoeven analyses how nostalgic narratives are mobilised and interpreted by musical actors. The key concept of his chapter is 'popular music nostalgia', defined as 'a longing for the past that is evoked through popular music's production and consumption or representations of its history and heritage' (van der Hoeven 2018: 1-2). Therefore, nostalgia is a psychological phenomenon that can be experienced or provoked through a musical stimulus. Indeed, returning to the origins of nostalgia, it was Swiss soldiers hearing a song that first led Swiss physician Johannes Hofer to establish a theory of nostalgia in 1688. To add medical research to the equation, a 2018 University of Utah study showed that playing familiar songs to sufferers of Alzheimer's disease can offer relief from anxiety, depression, or agitation (Kish 2018). Far from being an accessory to nostalgia, both cultural and scientific scholarly literature points to the ability of music to affect a considerable nostalgic reaction.

Returning to van der Hoeven, he briefly discusses how nostalgia has been perceived both negatively and positively. While nostalgia has been associated with a 'selective and rose-tinted understanding of the past, a trivialisation of history, sentimentality, a lack of creativity, and conservatism', a more positive viewpoint is that 'it enables people to draw meaningful connections between the past, present and future' (van der Hoeven 2018: 3). He further explains why nostalgic music can be divisive, and it is this fact that helps us understand how restorative nostalgic music functions. He argues that nostalgia can constitute the collective identity of subcultures or displaced communities, thereby rendering nostalgia simultaneously inclusive and exclusive. (Music) nostalgia can be used to bind communities who have a shared nostalgia tighter by excluding other communities who do not share or identify with that nostalgia. Indeed, anybody who might claim susceptibility to a certain nostalgic tendency while not belonging to the corresponding demographic - whether it be linguistic, ethnic, age, gender, sexual orientation etc. - could very well be accused of insincerity, disingenuousness, or cultural appropriation.

In her book on black nostalgia, and more specifically, in the chapter on restorative nostalgia and the music of Black Lives Matter, Ahad-Legardy argues that music can be a vehicle for restorative nostalgic sentiments and that the two can operate in tandem for political means. She writes that 'black restorative nostalgia involves revivifying a black communal spirit of resistance and solidarity made through intentional intertextuality with the imagery, iconography and sound of the civil rights and Black Power eras' (Ahad-Legardy 2021: 61). The response of black music to recent events, she argues, has been to 'establish continuity between the long civil rights and Black Power movements and the contemporary present to capture the emancipatory ethos of a civil rights era' (ibid.). This highlights restorative nostalgic music as a response to a present problem, thereby linking us back to Hill and Bithell's four motivational categories of a cultural revival, at least two of which have a political subtext. To use Ronström's terminology, recent black music has translated the ethos of the civil rights era to today, making that all important link between past and present that underpins both nostalgia and music revival. The essence of this, crucially, is to engender a 'communal spirit of resistance and solidarity', which in turn chimes with van der Hoeven's assertion that nostalgia can constitute part of a collective identity, functioning as a glue that draws and binds together members of that collective group. Restorative nostalgia therefore

attempts a ‘transhistorical construction of a lost home’ (Boym 2001: xviii), while “revivified” black music has fulfilled a desire for ‘temporal continuity’ (Ahad-Legardy 2021: 62).

The conclusion is that both concepts have the creation of a future - that is to say, survival - as their fundamental motivation, achieved by instrumentalising the past in present cultural production. These processes exploit the fact that both nostalgia and music can evoke positive psychological reactions to mitigate dissatisfaction with the present. This is especially potent when mixed with questions of ethnicity, nationalism, language and identity, and, in the Ukrainian context, war. In the chapters to come I will argue that the harmonisation of traditional and modern sounds ‘translates’ and updates historical culture to show adherents of the ‘homeland’ that their past is still relevant, applicable, and legitimate. In doing so, the artist constructs auditory signposts which point the listener to where they believe the future of their collective homeland lies. This is applicable to not only Ukrainian and black music, but to the aforementioned Mongolian metal band, The HU. Although their self-styled “hunnu rock” does not exactly advocate the second coming of the Mongol Empire, the music and visuals simultaneously ‘evoke pride in [Mongolia’s] nomadic culture’ while also criticising the country’s propensity for ‘emptily boasting about the past’ (Jones 2019). Indeed, journalist and academic Josh Jones also notes that Mongolian rock in the 1980s was as a means of ‘fiercely asserting an independent cultural identity against the hegemonic Soviet Union’, and that some of The HU’s lyrics are very similar to those of that era. There is opportunity for further research in this regard.

What follows in chapter 2 is a discussion of the wider Ukrainian cultural revival in the 21st century. While the Orange Revolution served as a precursor for the divergence of the Ukrainian and Russian cultural spheres, it was the Russian annexation of Crimea and ensuing war in the Donbas that triggered a considerably larger cultural revival.

Chapter 2 - Overview of the 21st-century Ukrainian Cultural Revival

In any discussion of Ukraine's 21st-century cultural revival, it is important to understand how Ukrainian culture resulted in being in a position ripe for revival by the end of the 20th century. After its short-lived independence between 1918 and 1920, Soviet Ukraine was unable to set its own public cultural policy as the regime in Moscow tried to 'bring Ukrainian culture wholly into its service', reducing it 'to the level of a of a provincial, inferior culture' in order to eventually 'assimilate it into the so-called 'multinational Soviet culture'' (Strikha 2006: 101). That is not to say that the Soviets intended to "kill Ukrainian culture", but rather realign it to fit with Soviet ideology. The result of this, writes scholar Maksym Strikha, is that Ukraine built up a 'massive public cultural infrastructure' whose output peaked in the 1970s, but was then followed by a period of stagnation (ibid.). During the *perestroika* years, however, the possibility of a 'genuine national cultural policy for Ukraine' (ibid. 102) arose, resulting in dissident writer and scholar Ivan Dziuba publishing an essay in 1988 in which he called for a 'new cultural Ukrainianization'. He wrote: 'there is a need for a philosophical and sociological concept of Ukrainian national culture [...] for culture-makers - people of the arts - this also implies the necessity of a special kind of self-perception or spiritual condition that one could describe as a sense of mission or as patriotism inspired by reason, spirit and a broad, humanist world view' (Dziuba 1998: 315; Strikha 2006: 102). One can see how this sentiment chimes with the above discussions on restorative nostalgia and cultural/music revivalism.

Upon the collapse of the USSR, however, the individual 'sense of mission' which Dziuba had advocated was 'now supplemented by a demand that the independent Ukrainian state develop a clear and effective cultural policy' (Strikha 2006: 102). Rather than being the product of personal endeavours, it was believed that the state should be the main force behind cultural production. But Ukrainian culture, deprived of the state support that had underpinned it throughout the 20th century, faced a number of challenges. It struggled for 'audiences, their attention and money', and had to compete with 'openness and globalization' that flooded the market with international content (ibid. 105). Meanwhile, Ukraine also had to address the fact that 'Ukraineophone culture of ethnic Ukrainians' did not necessarily represent 'the shared culture of this ethnically diverse nation' (ibid.). In other words, there did not exist one

homogenous Ukrainian people out of which one homogenous Ukrainian culture could develop once freed from the imposition of umbrella Soviet culture. Moving to the 21st century, although it was the events of 2013-14 which have proven to be the most decisive in shaping the country's cultural trajectory in recent years (Botanova 2021; Lepeska 2016; Levitina 2021; Pesenti 2020; Pesenti 2021), one cannot ignore the importance of the Orange Revolution in 2004 in kick-starting the political and cultural divergence of Ukraine away from Russia. According to the editor of *Atlantic Council*'s "UkraineAlert" series Peter Dickinson, the 'Orange Revolution [...] had a profound effect on how Ukrainians perceived themselves and their national identity' as the protests 'served as a national awakening, establishing Ukraine's democratic credentials and setting the country on a path that diverged sharply from the increasing authoritarianism of Vladimir Putin's Russia' (Dickinson 2020).

There were promising initial developments both before and after the Orange Revolution. For example, Ukraine's decision to participate in the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) in 2003 was motivated by a desire to "sell Ukraine to Europe" with the aim of 'improving the international image of the country' (Jordan 2015: 120). This is as relevant today as it was 20 years ago. Indeed, Paul Jordan, a scholar on Eurovision, writes that the ESC has long been an event where 'national identity and the politics of identity are performed', serving as a 'platform for performing essentialised narratives of national identity' (ibid. 117). Turning to the Ukrainian singer Ruslana, her victory in the 2004 contest with *Wild Dances*, 'derived from Hutsul songs and rituals from the Carpathian region of western Ukraine [...] arguably boosted self-esteem and the image of the country' (ibid. 120). While the song framed the country as 'being at the heart of Europe' (ibid. 121), it simultaneously raised questions about the complex nature of Ukrainian identity which the song - derived from the traditions of a small corner of a much larger country - had ignored. Her comments upon winning in May 2004 show that she saw her victory as an opportunity to offer a different view of Ukraine to the world, its origins lying in a restorative nostalgic, revivalist, if not highly selective conceptualisation of Ukrainian identity: 'All of us are making a positive image of Ukraine. I want my country to open up before you with friendship and hospitality [...] I would like you to forget about Chernobyl' (The Age 2004). Indeed, Fawkes wrote that it was precisely Ruslana's victory that triggered a folk revival in the Carpathians, showing pop music's ability to provoke a cultural activism if not only in the region in question (Fawkes 2004). Ruslana's

music took on an even sharper focus in the wake of the Orange Revolution. She played a very active role in the protests, joining hundreds of thousands or demonstrators in Kyiv's Maidan square and going on hunger strike in protest at the rigged original election that sparked the protests (McLaughlin 2017). She also dedicated her 2005 song *Dance with the Wolves* to the Orange Revolution, including numerous original videos from the protests in the song's music video (RuslanaTube 2004).

A fully-fledged Ukrainian cultural revival struggled to gain traction, however. Some three years after the Orange Revolution, the Ukrainian language held 'something of an ambivalent position in the culture sphere' and 'Ukrainian language culture producers complain[ed] that they [did] not receive sufficient support or attention' (Ohana 2007). Furthermore, the roles of Ukrainian and Russian in the political sphere had become 'problematised [...] becoming something of a political tool in the battles being waged by the various camps in Ukraine for the hearts and minds of the voters' (ibid.). It was therefore the duality of culture in Ukraine between 2004 and 2013 - that being Russian and Ukrainian - and the cleavages it created inside Ukraine, that prevented a unified national Ukrainian culture coming to the fore. Furthermore, it was the crises, mismanagement and infighting of Viktor Yushchenko's and Yulia Tymoshenko's leadership between 2004 and 2010 that ultimately lead to the victory of pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovych - who had lost the 2004 election despite Russian backing - in the 2010 presidential election, thereby signalling 'the death of the Orange Revolution' (Kramer 2010). While I will not engage with the reasons why here, it is important to understand that the 'dreams [of the Orange Revolution] were never realized, leading to tremendous disillusionment among Ukrainians and observers in the West' (ibid.). Piquantly, in an article similar to David Kramer's, journalist James Marson quotes civil-society activist Dmytro Potekhin saying in 2010 that because of widespread dissatisfaction with both Yanukovych and Tymoshenko, 'Ukrainians are ready to be mobilized [...] there's just no-one to mobilize them' (Marson 2010). It was the events of Euromaidan and Vladimir Putin's subsequent annexation of Crimea and fomentation of war in the Donbas that gave a renewed impetus to the question of Ukrainian identity, radically changing the cultural status quo and resulting in a considerable revival of national Ukrainian cultural production in all spheres. Foreign policy analyst Jeffrey Mankoff argued shortly after the annexation of Crimea that the events would 'only bolster Ukrainian nationalism and push Kiev closer to Europe' (Mankoff

2014: 61), and the cultural revival that one can observe to have taken place over the last eight years proves Mankoff's prediction to have been very accurate indeed.

Marina Pesenti's 2020 *Chatham House* report on the Ukrainian cultural revival provides an extremely detailed description and analysis of the processes, successes and failures of cultural reform and revival in the country. The 'Euromaidan movement spurred a powerful wave of cultural activism' that drew on Ukraine's dynamic grassroots creative community, which, supported by the reform of state cultural institutions, 'served as a powerful trigger for a gradual shift in Ukraine's national identity away from the dualistic status quo' towards a more 'values-based identity, shared by diverse groups across the country' (Pesenti 2020: 4). This, according to Pesenti, has 'slowly strengthened Ukraine's Western orientation and signified a drift away from its eastern Slavic identity' (ibid. 25). Most notably for the coming discussions of Ukrainian post-Euromaidan popular music, is that Russia's aggression and Ukraine's shifting identity resulted in cultural output and policy 'reappropriating Ukraine's forgotten cultural heritage' (ibid. 26), that is to say, being driven by an underlying restorative nostalgia. Indeed, Pesenti writes that 'this trend was informed by a post-colonial drive to shake off the discourse of Russian cultural superiority, and to recast this heritage as part of the European cultural movement' (ibid.).

With regards to music, this cultural revival has translated into a music revival in which 'a new school of Ukrainian musicians has breathed life into the old music and transformed it into something modern', taking ancient motifs and remaking them 'with a new sound, turning them into a new form of Ukrainian folk' (Levitina 2021). What must be mentioned, however, is that while Ukrainian revivalist music's purpose is largely uniform across the whole phenomenon - to create a renewed conception of Ukrainian identity through a "western" cultural prism - it is not in any way limited to one style; it can be adapted to suit numerous genres. To that end, I will now turn to three case studies of post-Euromaidan Ukrainian revivalist music, subjecting the band, the music, the lyrics, and occasionally the music videos to an analysis in order to better understand how restorative nostalgic sentiments are manifesting themselves in Ukrainian music revivalism.

Chapter 3 - Go_A

The Band

Active since 2012 but only releasing their first album *Idy na zvuk* in 2016, Go_A are an electro-folk band from Kyiv consisting of folklorist and lead singer Kateryna Pavlenko, sopilka-player Ihor Didenchuk, guitarist Ivan Hryhoriak, and founder and all-round musician Taras Shevchenko, whose idea it was to create a group that would 'combine electronic music with ethnic motifs' (Podorozhnyuk 2016).[1] Originally supposed to perform in the cancelled 2020 ESC with their song *Solovey*, they shot to international fame after the 2021 ESC in which they sang *SHUM*, a high-tempo folklore-inspired rave song rich in symbolism. Although coming fifth overall, they came second place in the public vote behind the eventual winners, Italy (Eurovision World 2021).

Before we deal with their music, we must note that Go_A exhibit restorative nostalgic and revivalist sentiments in their name. It consists of a combination of "Go" and "A", meaning "Alpha", that being the first letter of the ancient Greek alphabet and symbolising 'the origin and beginning of everything in the world, as well as your home or roots'; the name Go_A can therefore be understood as meaning a 'return to the beginning' (Podorozhnyuk 2016).[2] This is a remarkable parallel to Boym's assertion that the 'return to origins' is a 'main plot' of restorative nostalgia. Meanwhile, in a 2020 interview with the *Ukrainian Independent Information Agency (UNIAN)*, lead singer Pavlenko said the point of their artistry was to be new, different, and experimental, saying 'why do what everyone else does? It seems to me that the point of creativity is to create something that does not yet exist' (Korshunov 2020).[3]

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[1] 'Ідея виникнення гурту, що буде комбінувати сучасну електронну музику з етнічними мотивами [...]'

[2] 'Назву гурту було складено із англійського слова "Go" – "йти", та давньогрецької літери "Альфа", що уособлює першопричину та початок всього у світі, а також домівку або коріння. Тож "Go-A" можна розуміти як "повернення до початків".'

[3] 'Але навіщо робити те, що роблять всі? Мені здається, що сенс творчості в тому, щоб створювати те, чого ще нема.'

Combining the meaning of "Go_A" with their desire to create a new type of music with Ukrainian folkloric roots, one sees how Go_A are attempting to create a 'transhistorical construction of the lost home' by translating old folk music into a more contemporary, experimental style, with a very deliberate and conscious 'return to origins' as its metaphorical engine. In the same *UNIAN* interview, Pavlenko adds the final 'plot' of restorative nostalgia to the rationale behind their artistry, that being the 'conspiracy'. She argues that 'for centuries, Ukraine has tried to win the right to the existence of its own culture, its own language. And today you can just open your laptop and make cool Ukrainian music. Now everything is available and this is the ideal moment to create something cool' (ibid.).[4] In this sense, Pavlenko shows that their music is not just drawing upon folklore as inspiration to no particular end, but doing so for a very clear purpose, that being a public declaration and expression of Ukraine's right to its own language and culture, and, by extension, identity and nation. What is important is that Go_A categorises their music in ethnic or national terms, fusing internationally popular electronic music with the unique folkloric markers of national identity. There is also a sense of triangulation in Pavlenko's words between the "old" (the language and culture); the "new" (the laptop); and Ukraine. They can all be neatly combined and repackaged to show that Ukraine was, is, and always will be a nation and people within their own right, no matter what social or technological developments the country and the world may experience in its future. It is, then, just as much an expression of adaptability as it is integrity.

In addition to this, in a 2021 interview with *Kyiv Daily*, Shevchenko engages with the essence of folk music, arguing that all music is to a certain extent 'modern folk' insofar that folk is the 'music of the people', whether it be 'rap, industrial, or electronic' (Fedorina 2021).[5] Therefore, in order for any particular music to be classed as 'folk' according to Shevchenko's conceptualisation of the genre, the music must be performing a certain social function. He

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[4] 'Сторіччями Україна намагалась вибороти право на існування своєї культури, своєї мови. І сьогодні той самий момент, коли нам не забороняють говорити українською, не забороняють писати й співати. Можна просто відкрити ноутбук і робити класну українську музику. Зараз все доступно і це ідеальний момент, щоб творити щось класне.'

[5] 'Є теорія, що вся музика — це сучасний фолк. Що таке фолк? Це — музика народу. А музика народу зараз може бути репом, або індастріалом, або електронікою.'

continues by arguing that ‘folk today is a reinterpretation of our lives - of the past, of the future [and] superimposing this reinterpretation on certain musical fragments’ (ibid.).[6] In this regard, Go_A’s revivalist electro-folk music can be seen as a vehicle for representing or enabling broader societal changes, attempting to make sense of the past and the future in the context of present-day realities. It is clear that according to Shevchenko’s understanding of what constitutes folk music, it must serve some ulterior purpose, and Go_A are fashioning a nostalgic, transhistorical reconstruction to provoke positive psychological reactions among the audience in response to a certain contemporary dissatisfaction as outlined by Hill and Bithell. Taking a closer look at Go_A songs will highlight frequent evocations of rebirth, regeneration, and revival, all wrapped up in the mysticism of ‘tropes, metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche’ as argued by Ronström. These then act as a signpost pointing Ukraine to a brighter, stronger, independent future. Although not explicitly referred to in the music itself, one must bear in mind the socio-political context in which this music was produced, as discussed above. Below, I discuss Go_A’s 2021 Eurovision song *SHUM*, as well as the final two songs from their 2016 album, *Idy na zvuk* (Follow the sound), and *Povernis’* (Come back).

Song 1: SHUM

Firstly, one must discuss the name of the song, *SHUM*. Those with knowledge of Slavic languages would correctly understand this to mean “noise”. Indeed, in its most primitive sense, that is precisely what a song is: a deliberate auditory statement made in order for a person to listen to, enjoy, or interpret. In naming their song “NOISE” - and writing it entirely in capital letters - the name is not only a simple statement of fact but a declarative wake-up call designed to grab somebody’s attention. Explaining the name of the song more precisely, however, Shevchenko reveals that “SHUM” is actually a play on words hiding a second, more profound connotation to ancient Ukrainian folklore and mythology. In a 2021 interview with *ESCXTRA*, he explains that ‘Shum [...] is basically a spiritual force that our ancestors believed in [...] our ancestors danced and sang their songs loudly to evoke spring, to evoke ‘shum’ [...] we’re trying to awake spring, but in a global sense, to wake people up from the

[6] ‘Я думаю, що фолк сьогодні — це переосмислення нашого життя — мінулого, майбутнього. Та накладання оцього переосмислення на певні музичні фрагменти.’

pandemic and bring joy and happiness' (Christou 2021). Pavlenko gives a very similar argument, saying that *SHUM* is about 'the spirit of forests and the awakening of spring [...] when spring comes to the world in a global sense, nature regenerates and 'sleeping' people wake up from their sadness, rage and despair, it's time to sow joy and happiness so that everybody in the world can finally be happy' (Boomkens 2021).

As an analysis of the lyrics will show, the song ostensibly connotes hope and regeneration after a long and difficult period of physical and spiritual darkness, whereupon the summoning and arrival of spring heralds a brighter future. While Pavlenko and Shevchenko refer to the COVID-19 pandemic as the proverbial "global winter" from which the world is "waking up", it is not hard to see how these sentiments can also be applied to specifically Ukraine and their constant struggles against a Russia that attempts to deny Ukraine's right to its own existence and identity.[7] Indeed, this and other songs to be discussed in this thesis are attempting to herald a Ukraine that finds itself in a political and cultural springtime, with the promise of a metaphorical summer just around the corner. Pavlenko highlights the importance of folklore in this process, alluding to precisely those restorative nostalgic and music revivalist processes outlined above. She argues that folklore is a 'huge part of Ukrainian culture', 'it's very important to know your cultural roots to understand where you are going', and that 'if you know and understand your past it's easier to think about doing things right in the future' (Boomkens 2021). In other words, Pavlenko is calling for a renewed focus and revival of Ukraine's unique folkloric past in order to give the country a specific political and cultural direction *into the future*.

During their performance at Eurovision in 2021, this notion was also encapsulated on stage. Shevchenko explains that their stage was 'basically an allegorical raft that we use from past to the future. Our staging is like going from our ancient Ukrainian roots to modern cyberpunk. It has a lot to do with Ukrainian mythology and Ukrainian culture' (Christou 2021). Not only in the lyrics, but in the staging of their performance, Go_A physically and transhistorically reconstructed their 'lost home', translating their cultural identity from one

[7] It should be noted that Eurovision, despite its history of very obvious political biases, is "officially" apolitical, and any song which is overtly political or refers to political disputes, would not be allowed to compete.

bygone era into the current age.[8] Furthermore, this is off the back of several years' worth of politically-informed Eurovision entries from Ukraine, in which the contemporaneous domestic politics of the country have often manifested themselves - albeit covertly - on stage (Jordan 2015).

Moving on to the song itself, *SHUM*'s lyrics originally resembled a traditional Ukrainian folk song that is often referred to as *"A v nashoho shuma"*, or just *"Shum"* by academics and folklorists (Smith 2021). So as to not repeat Smith's article in this regard, in this section I will be referring to the slightly shorter, updated version that was performed at Eurovision in 2021 which, aside from the odd moment, has quite different lyrics from the original. This Eurovision version of *SHUM* honours the 'vesnyanka', or a traditional ritual folk song, the purpose of which was 'to persuade the mysterious forces of nature [i.e. *Shum*] to provide the people with a bountiful harvest and a happy life' (Mushnyka 1993). The opening lyrics read '*Spring song, spring song / Where have you spent your winter?'*, heralding the arrival of spring. The line *'Shum, get entwined with periwinkle'* is of notable symbolic value as periwinkle in Ukrainian folklore symbolises 'youth, immortality, true love, beauty, loyalty, harmonious relationships, home and others' (Cholodová 2017: 3051). The song builds layers of nature-related symbolism of rebirth, prosperity, and happiness, as the country emerges and revives after a period of "winter", however one may conceptualise this. *'Sowing, sowing, sowing, sowing hemp plants'* is notable as the traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirts - *vyshyvanka* - were originally made from hemp, and, depending on what patterns or flowers were embroidered on the shirt, could symbolise anything from peace, happiness, fertility, masculinity, motherhood, the water, the sun, or warding off evil spirits (Ukrainian Recipes 2018). *SHUM* is therefore stressing not only life's rebirth after the winter, but invoking agriculture as an investment in the future for the protection of people's lives and livelihoods.

A hypnotic *sopilka* solo forms a thinly-scored bridge into the second verse, both underscoring the unmistakable ethnic Ukrainianness that was invoked in the first verse and giving a sense that the instrumentation is indeed summoning and 'persuading the mysterious forces of

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[8] For a full analysis of Go_A's staging of *SHUM* at Eurovision 2021, see Alya Shandra's article 'Why was Ukraine's Eurovision performance by Go_A so mesmerizing?'. *Euromaidan Press*. May 25, 2021. https://euromaidanpress.com/2021/05/25/pan-european-archetypes-goa-ukraine-eurovision-performance/ (accessed 4th May 2022)

nature' to reveal themselves. In the second verse a *drymba* - a plucked folk instrument played at the mouth that frequently appears or can be heard in Parajanov's *Shadows* - is used to add texture and increase the sensation that the listener is being drawn into the *vesnyanka*. The music video of *SHUM* certainly appears to be invoking precisely this notion as dancers, apparently entranced by the sound of the accompanying *sopilka*, dancing around a bonfire, strip off their hazmat suits - representing Ukraine casting off its connotation with death and disaster since Chernobyl - before descending into a full-on rave entirely absent of any inhibition (Appendix, Figure 1). The sound of the *sopilka* and *drymba*, combined with the symbolism in the lyrics, give the song a very strong ethnically Ukrainian feel, hypnotising, entrancing, guiding and signposting the Ukrainian listener to the physical or indeed metaphorical springtime of the nation which the song is evoking. Its seamless harmonisation with electronic sounds and cyberpunk staging ensure that *SHUM* is by no means a rehashed version of an ancient *vesnyanka*, but one that has adopted an approximate style while translating it through modern cultural techniques to better match the contemporary environment in which it was conceived.

Song 2: Idy na zvuk

Their song *Idy na zvuk* (Follow the sound), which also happens to be the name of the whole album, is perhaps the clearest example of restorative nostalgic and music revivalist signposting in this entire thesis. To begin with, the entire album being called *Idy na zvuk* is a command to the Ukrainian listener to go back to their cultural roots as represented by the employment of traditional musical instruments, but in this updated, 21-century context. The name of the album, as well as its penultimate song, is therefore an expression of the same sentiment that Go_A espouses in the name of their band. One must however not lose sight of the fact that the action of following is future-oriented. One must follow a set of signposts in the present in order to reach your intended destination in the future. While the *sopilka* in Go_A and the *trembita* in ONUKA represent the past, it is the way in which they are employed in the music that points the listener to the future.

To this end, the song *Idy na zvuk* begins with a haunting *sopilka* solo accompanied by a cello, ebbing and flowing while electronic sounds are gradually introduced underneath before

reaching a moderate climax. At this point Pavlenko enters with lyrics *'Follow the sound',* sung four times over. The 'sound' that Pavlenko is referring to is quite clearly that of the preceding *sopilka*, made all the more obvious as she repeats the same tune that the *sopilka* played in her lyric. It is a command to follow the sound of the *sopilka* and all that it represents. The lyrics of the opening chorus are equally pertinent: *'Follow the sound / Where everything begins like it is supposed to, and for no reason / Where hundreds of hands / Are going up into the sky, and you know for sure - you are not alone'*. This 'sound' - the *sopilka* - also represents the fulfilment of some kind of prophecy, one that is both necessary but entirely spontaneous. Read in this light, the above lyrics sound much like the beginning of a divine creation story in which people, united by a belief in this "prophecy", are reaching up into the boundless opportunity of the sky. This journey begins at Ukraine's historical and cultural origins, creating a kind of universal truth of Ukraine's "divine" existence, precluding any discussions of Ukraine's legitimacy as an independent cultural and political entity.

The idea of boundless opportunity returns in the first verse, but not without the caveat of universal struggle in order to achieve this: *'Not everything is simple, but everything is possible [...] Follow the sound - you can feel that it's near / Follow the sound - don't stop, go / Follow the sound - live as a sea of waves / Made of a thousand droplets, one of which is you'*. The middle-eight offers an even more heartfelt plea to those who need encouragement on this national journey, with the sound of the *sopilka* constantly returning to remind the Ukrainian listener of what is in their *'heart'*: *'And when you are left somewhere by yourself, without a roof, embraced by the rain / Remember the moments when you were not alone, when your heart was filled with something more important'*. These lyrics stress societal unity on this national journey as the people are guided towards their rightful homeland by the sound of the *sopilka*. *Idy na zvuk* does not pretend that the journey will be easy, but recognises the difficulties that will stand in their way, pleading with the listener not to give up hope in times of darkness. Condensed down, the message of *Idy na zvuk* is therefore: "no matter how tough the journey may be, follow the sound of Ukraine's bright past and you will arrive at Ukraine's brighter future".

Song 3: Povernis'

The final Go_A song which I will discuss is *Povernis'* (Come back). This is by all accounts a fairly standard high-tempo, somewhat repetitive number with a typical Europop dance vibe and a powerful lyric. In of itself there is nothing too remarkable about this song, however a closer analysis of both the lyrics and instrumentation reveal *Povernis'* to be embodying Boym's restorative nostalgic idea of the recreation or rediscovering of a prelapsarian 'lost home'. I read this song as having two parts: the call, consisting of approximately the first three minutes and fifteen seconds; and the response, consisting of the final forty seconds. The call is fast and upbeat, driven by a heavy baseline of electronic sounds and a strong drumbeat. The first verse reads, *'There is a place for memories in every heart / There is a place for dreams in every heart / How much light I can see in your infinitely blue gaze / I believed in you / So you believe in me'*. I will return to these lyrics presently. The lyrics in the chorus are earnest and yearning, dreaming, if not desperate for the song's subject - whatever it may be - to *'Come back / like it used to be'*. Pavlenko sings that she would give the subject *'hundreds of flowers*' for it to *'just come back'*. What exactly the subject is of the lyric's desperation is not yet clear, although there is an intriguing clue dropped within the poetry of the first verse and chorus.

The Ukrainian word used for 'blue' in the first verse is 'блакитний', which, as the equivalent of the Russian 'голубой', more closely refers to a sky blue rather than a dark blue. The fact that Pavenklo highlights the amount of light and infinity within this sky blue suggests that this could well be a reference to the sky itself. The singer, on the other hand, is willing to give *'hundreds of flowers'* to be reunited with this metaphorical sky. When discussing flowers in a Ukrainian context, one must of course not forget that the national flower of Ukraine is a bright yellow sunflower. Therefore, we have a situation whereby the singer is desperately yearning for her (potentially) bright, yellow sunflowers to be reunited with the bright blue sky, which, with some poetic licence, could very well be interpreted as dreaming for Ukraine itself - the flag of which consists of two horizontal bands of blue and yellow - to 'come back' and to be 'like it used to be'. Further clues as to the true identity of the song's subject are given in the second verse and the middle-eight: *'We're hostages to distance once again / As if the world was divided in two'*, and *'Just catch my words / Overcoming the distance between*

us / And everything will be in colour'. It is clear that these two parts, while being temporarily separated, actually belong together, and Pavlenko expresses a burning desire to reunite them and restore what once was in its full, technicolour glory.

After over three minutes worth of call in which traditional Ukrainian folk instruments are entirely absent, a whirling *sopilka* solo forms the response, all but confirming our suspicions that the singer is yearning for Ukraine itself to come back to her. This solo represents the closure of the separation between Pavlenko, the yellow of her sunflowers, and the blue of the sky, culminating in a metaphor of one peaceful and prosperous Ukraine, unified under the yellow and blue of the flag, being led towards a better future by a musical signpost whose origins lie in the past.

Chapter 4 - ONUKA

The Band

Active since 2013 and releasing their eponymous first album in 2014, ONUKA, like Go_A, is an electro-folk band that combines traditional instruments such as the *sopilka*, *bandura*, and *trembita* with electronic sounds in a contemporary and occasionally highly experimental, alternative style. Their rise to fame both in Ukraine and abroad was rapid, with their song *Misto* (City) being heard all over Kyiv after its release, as well as performing at Sziget music festival in Budapest in summer 2015 (Panasov 2018). Two days after their interval performance at the 2017 ESC in Kyiv, ONUKA's song *Vidlik* (Countdown) broke into the charts of several European countries and the band attracted a considerable foreign social media following (ibid.). The music video of their 2019 song *Zenit*, which I will discuss later in this chapter, also won the Best Music Video award at the Around International film festival in 2021 (Odessa Journal 2021). Both this popularity and lead singer Nata Zhyzhchenko's ability to fuse 'Ukrainian antiquity with electronic modernity' (Panasov 2018) make ONUKA a very apt and insightful case study into the phenomenon of Ukrainian restorative nostalgic, revivalist music. Unlike Go_A, who sing exclusively in Ukrainian, ONUKA sings in both Ukrainian and English.

Again, much like Go_A, a discussion of the band's name gives some clues as to their inspiration, offering yet more parallels to that which was discussed in chapter 1. ONUKA (онука), meaning "granddaughter" in Ukrainian, is a tribute to Zhyzhchenko's grandfather Oleksandr Shlyonchuk who made Zhyzhchenko her first *sopilka* as a child and taught her to play it, 'largely predetermining [her] life' (Boomkens 2017). By naming the band thus, Zhyzhchenko expresses a serious and sincere restorative nostalgia towards her grandfather's legacy. It is another example of resurrecting memories of the 'lost home' that had existed in the past, and reformulating them in an updated context, thereby giving the lived experience and inherited knowledge of our ancestors a new importance and relevance, and in doing so creating that 'transhistorical reconstruction'. Zhyzhchenko expressed precisely this rationale in another interview in 2017: 'I wanted the Ukrainian youth to get acquainted with their traditional instruments, but not in an old and boring way but with a modern view, that was the beginning of the ONUKA sound' (Azucar Magazine 2017). Borrowing Ronström's highly apt terminology, ONUKA is translating how traditional Ukrainian folk instruments were used in the past to suit a new, but related, genre of music, thereby helping Ukraine to sculpt their own unique national identity in the 21st century. Returning to Boomkens' interview, Zhyzhchenko again asserts much the same rationale and leaves us in no doubt as to the purpose of her music: 'Folklore [...] means 'folk wisdom'. It is knowledge filtered by centuries. These are our roots, from which we came and to which we'll return! I want the world to discover at least a part of this greatness through the prism of the present!' (Boomkens 2017). Clearly, Zhyzhchenko is advocating for much the same Boymian 'return to origins' as Go_A.

Zhyzhchenko's music is a direct and conscious appeal to the 'homeland' whose common roots she is reviving anew in 21st-century cultural production. It is important to stress too that this is not in order to create a "museum artefact" but to actively encourage and call upon the adherents of that lost 'homeland' to knowingly and willingly return to those roots in the future. Recalling van der Hoeven's theory of popular music nostalgia - which he defined as being 'evoked through popular music's production and consumption or representations of its history and heritage' - Zhyzhchenko's explicit referencing of folk-instrument-maker and musician grandfather makes ONUKA's name an even stronger case for restorative nostalgic sentiments being interwoven throughout their revivalist music. Indeed Boomkens, in his own words, writes that ONUKA 'bring electronic drums, trombones, French horns and Ukrainian

folk instruments like the *bandura* and the *sopilka* to the stage, combining traditional and modern elements to showcase Ukraine as a nation that is just as firmly rooted in the present as it is in the past' (Boomkens 2017). Other aspects of their music, too, speak heavily to Hill and Bithell's fourth motivational category of a music revival, namely as a practical response to a human disaster. Their EP *Vidlik*, released in 2017, contained a 30th anniversary commemoration of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, while the rest of the EP showed that ONUKA, while Ukraine was entering its fourth year of the Russia-Ukraine war, 'was reacting with the times'. Panasov writes that 'soft and cozy images of 2014 were replaced by severe and warlike ones', 'harsher rhythms and aggressive sounds' began to appear, and Zhyzhchenko's 'live performances grew more expressive, with stronger emotions and more dance [such that] ONUKA appeared to follow an actual pulse, to feel destructive forces' global pressure' (Panasov 2018). I now turn to the title song of that EP, *Vidlik*, an uncompromising and categorical declaration of a desire for freedom and a new beginning in the face of that omnipresent 'conspiracy'.

Song 1: Vidlik

Vidlik is a thinly-scored, punchy, metronomically relentless number with primitive yet pertinent lyrics. What begins as *buhay* bassline is gradually thickened and fleshed out with an electronic bassline of a similar sound and identical rhythm, while harsh *trembita* and trombone accents punctuate the score at periodic intervals, keeping the intensity of the song high. The music video is determined and defiant, a montage of strikingly futuristic and abstract visual poetry that occasionally shows highly futurised Ukrainian motifs. The *trembita* players at 42 seconds (Figure 2) broadly resemble the kind which we see in Parajanov's *Shadows*, but are dressed in entirely black costumes with no discernable details. Similarly, one also sees a traditional Ukrainian floral headdress, the *vinok*, at 49 seconds (Figure 3), but so stylised and minimalised to better suit the video's alternative aesthetic.

As for the lyrics, they consist of three identical verses each consisting of four different lines: *'I. Breathe. Want. / I. Stop. Conversation. / I. Start. Countdown. / Only. Future. Ready.'*. As I mentioned above, the first line suggests that one is being strangled or oppressed, confined in such a way that is unnatural. It is therefore implied that an external actor is the strangler or

oppressor, preventing you from having the freedom that you crave. In Boym's theory of restorative nostalgia, this line is alluding to the conspiracy that is threatening one's existence, hence requiring the return to origins to fight back against it. When analysing the second line, we can recall Go_A's song *Idy na zvuk* that struck down any debate on the legitimacy of Ukraine as a state, arguing instead that it began "just like it was supposed to" and "for no reason". ONUKA is doing much the same thing, signalling that the time for discussion and debate is over, and action must be taken in order to fulfil the prophecy, so to speak. Indeed, the singer then starts the countdown, a motif that introduces the video and consistently returns throughout, suggesting that something noteworthy is about to happen. The music video begins with a digital countdown clock, a rabbit's ears prick up as the song increases in intensity, and we see a start/stop switch towards the end, showing that the choice to "start" is ready to be made. The listener/viewer just needs to have confidence and seize the opportunity. The final line gives that encouragement by arguing that the future is waiting: *'Only. Future. Ready.'*. Once more we see the leitmotif of the future, and how drawing on and revamping historical memes is signposting the listener towards that future. As is made clear in the discussion of ONUKA as an artist above, Zhyzhchenko notes that the creation of a Ukraine that points towards the future is very much the aim of her music, and *Vidlik*, with its Ukrainian folk instruments combined with electronic music, underlines what type of future awaits Ukraine if they are brave enough to "start the countdown".

Song 2: Zenit

ONUKA's 2019 song *Zenit* (Zenith) is a symphony in folkloric imagery and sounds that was designed not only to resemble a traditional Ukrainian *vesnyanka* (24 Showbiz 2019)[9], but to place Ukrainian Hutsul identity in a wider cosmopolitan context that affirms Ukrainian identity's rightful place on the global cultural stage. Samikova notes that such a 'polycultural' trend has become common in Ukrainian ethno-pop music because of the desire to 'preserve the national traditions and cultural uniqueness [of nations] and to incorporate them into the modern globalizing world' (Samikova 2020: 139). That is to say that ethnicity in the 21st century is not a particularly unique feature when considered in isolation, but becomes special when compared and contrasted with other, similar cultures that one cannot help but encounter

[9] 'ONUKA випустила пісню ZENIT на зразок старої української веснянки'

in a globalised society. Indeed, *Zenit*'s music video was 'dedicated to the beauty of the world around us', and to convey this message the video united Ukrainian, Mexican, Japanese, African, and Ukrainian ethnic motifs (Ghelfi 2020). The music video has a magical, fairytale, shamanistic atmosphere that simultaneously combines the aforementioned worldly but ethnically Ukrainian motifs with panoramic views of the mountains, rivers, and forests of Ukraine. It should also be mentioned that some nuances of the video were inspired by Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky's 1911 novel *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, upon which Parajanov's 1965 film was based, and that Zhyzhchenko naturally associates fairytales and mythology with Kotsiubynsky's ethnographic realism (Butsko 2019; Google Arts & Culture 2022). A wide range of folk instruments are audible and visible in the song and its accompanying music video, including *telenkas*, *trembitas, tsymbaly*, and what appears to be a cossack *tulumbas* drum. Meanwhile, Zhyzhchenko and the suitably dressed supporting dancers all engage in ritualistic *vesnyanka*-esque dancing.

The sounds of the *trembitas* and the origin of the children's backing vocals are also noteworthy in understanding the symbolism behind the song. In a 2019 interview with *Vogue UA*, Zhyzhchenko revealed that the sounds of the *trembitas* are not originally ONUKA's but are instead taken from her grandfather's own recordings, thus making a defining feature of *Zenit* an homage both to her grandfather and to Ukraine's ancient past (Vogue UA 2019). It is evidence that this ancient past can still play an important and recognisable role in an increasingly connected, polycultural, and cosmopolitan world. Announcing the release of *Zenit* on ONUKA's Facebook page on 27th May 2019, Zhyzhchenko wrote: 'I was aiming to create something like an old Ukrainian ritual song of a spellbound character. Light, sunny and life-affirming. To sing about the beauty of the world we live in, despite all it's [sic] flaws and contradictions. Make a stop for a second. Find your direction while the sun is at it's [sic] zenith' (ONUKA 2019b). Before I move on to discuss the lyrics more closely, one will note once more that the Ukrainian music revival is hinged on the question of providing direction, and *Zenit* is another example of the infusion of ancient folklore and contemporary art that signposts the country towards the artist's intended future for the country, as invoked above by Zhyzhchenko.

For clarity, two versions of *Zenit* exist. One is the three-and-a-half minute music video version that exists on YouTube; the other is a four-and-a-half minute version that exists on online streaming platforms. For the sake of continuity only, in this section I will be referring to the former. *Zenit* opens with a raspy *telenka* solo accompanied by a sparse but strong drumbeat, before opening up after four bars with a long, declarative blare from brass instruments and a *trembita*, ending with a clear upwards inflection from the latter. After the opening eight bars the lyrics begin, *'There, where the mountains are high I fly freely / There, where the water is deep I swim freely'*. The obvious conclusion is that Zhyzhchenko is expressing a profound connection with nature and the freedom she gleans from being surrounded by its most extreme manifestations. Particularly when considering the song's Hutsul origins and panoramas of the Carpathian Mountains in the music video, combined with the heavy influence of traditional Ukrainian instruments associated predominantly with the Hutsuls, the lyrics and music are therefore invoking the Hutsul heartlands as being synonymous with freedom and independence. With regards to references and images of open water, this could be a reference Ukraine's Black Sea coastline, ensuring that the freedom gleaned from Ukraine's natural space is not exclusively a Carpathian phenomenon. No matter where one finds oneself, the pre-chorus asserts that the music will provide you with inner strength: *'I fly freely in the sky / My melody is strong'*. Listening to the song, one notices that much of the instrumental parts are built around the same introductory *telenka* ostinato, soon descending into a cacophony of noise in an instrumental chorus devoid of lyrics. The line sung by the children's choir *'the wind freezes as the sun rises at its zenith'* precedes this breakdown, suggesting that the triumphant roar of the brass and *trembita* and the uninhibited *vesnyanka* dancing in the music video are the musical embodiment of the sun at its zenith (Figure 4). It is indeed a vibrant, stirring, and life-affirming expression of freedom, summoned by reimagined traditional Ukrainian folk music. *Zenit* is a cacophonous mix of the old and new Ukraine that entrances and empowers, imagining ethnic melodies as being the key to freedom. To this end, the song and music video end with a triumphant and defiant *trembita* blast, held aloft in the air as the sun sets in the background (Figure 5), suggesting that although the sun may no longer be at its zenith, the melody, embodying a state of 'temporal continuity' in the words of Ahad-Legardy, can carry you forward and guarantee your freedom from one day to the next.

Song 3: ONUKA's Interval Act Performance at Eurovision 2017

Given that much of that which has been already discussed is effectively a marketing exercise directed both at Ukraine itself and to the rest of the world on Ukraine's behalf, it would be prudent to discuss ONUKA's performance during the interval of the 2017 ESC (ONUKA & NAONI 2017). Recalling Jordan's assertion that the ESC has long 'served as a platform for performing essentialised narratives of national identity', it should therefore be of no surprise that ONUKA, already massively popular in Ukraine and with a growing popularity in Europe, was chosen as the interval act. The ESC interval is the perfect stage upon which to market a national culture to hundreds of millions of people across the world, and ONUKA, collaborating with the National Academic Orchestra of Folk Instruments (NAONI), took full advantage of this. One must of course not forget the 1994 ESC interval act in Dublin which catapulted Riverdance to global fame, broadcasting Irish culture to some 300 million people and making it the global sensation that it still is today almost 30 years later (Hayes 2015; RTÉ 2017).

Somewhat predictably, perhaps, Zhyzhchenko begins the act with a *sopilka* solo. As the song builds and intensifies, the melody is repeated by a group of *tsymbaly* and *bandura* as the camera pans above and around the orchestra, offering close-ups of musicians dressed in traditional folk costumes. Three *trembitas* are then raised into the air and let out a triumphant, declarative roar much like those we hear in *Zenit*. All of this happens in under one minute, rapidly introducing uniquely Ukrainian icons to a vast international audience. For the next five and a half minutes, the performance winds its way through a mashup of a number of ONUKA's songs, including *Vidlik*. Following the performance, *Destinations UA* wrote that 'ONUKA is very traditional and ultra-modern at the same time, with each sound and every visual element well thought and placed. Every composition is highly professional, but at the same time full of love and soul' (Figure 6; Destinations UA 2017). With the whole show reaching over 180 million viewers (Eurovision 2017), ONUKA's interval act was therefore a mass broadcast of combining historical musical memes with a contemporary style to create a uniquely different cultural product that serves to fill a void in Ukraine's modern national identity. By revamping and showcasing Ukrainian folk motifs, Ukrainian identity derives contemporary legitimacy because it proves that its past is still relevant and valuable today.

The success that followed was considerable. In the days following the ESC, ONUKA's *Vidlik* topped the iTunes electronic chart in the UK, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden, came in at number two in Belgium, number three in France and Switzerland, and number four in Australia (Kobevko 2017). Building on their collaboration during the ESC interval act, ONUKA and NAONI went on to release a live album in December 2017, and followed by a second in December 2019. While it may be difficult to quantify to what extent ONUKA has been a successful marketing tool for Ukraine since 2017, the country's thumping victory in the 2022 ESC - winning 439 points out of a possible 468 from the public vote (Eurovision 2022) - suggests that the international market is thoroughly primed and ready to embrace Ukrainian cultural production like never before. While the sheer scale of Kalush Orchestra's 2022 victory could well be put down to solidarity voting in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it has at least drawn considerable attention to the way contemporary Ukrainian culture manifests itself on the global stage. Following Ukraine's 2022 ESC victory, the English-language Ukrainian news outlet UkraineWorld tweeted, '#KalushOrchestra victory at #Eurovision2022 is a sign of Europe'[s] solidarity. But it is also a result of [the] renaissance of Ukrainian culture in recent years and decades. Take the deep folk traditions and combine them with modern technology and style: this is the Ukrainian approach' (UkraineWorld 2022). For information about the more specific traditional folk elements employed in Kalush Orchestra's victorious performance, please see Voschchevska's tweet from 15th May 2022 (Voshchevska 2022).

Chapter 5 - KARNA

The Band

The final band which I will discuss in depth will push the boundaries of what one can deem to be restorative nostalgic and revivalist music. Departing from the electro-folk of Go_A and ONUKA, KARNA is a heavy metal and folk rock band from Ivano-Frankivsk in western Ukraine. Initially active from 1997 until 2010, the band reformed in 2013 and in 2017

revealed a new self-proclaimed genre of music: "Hutsul Metal" (Pan'kiv & Zen' 2017).[10] In this chapter, I will analyse their 2017 song *Party на Прикарпатті* (Party in Subcarpathia), and their 2021 single, *Dobryy vechir* (Good Evening).

It must first be mentioned that KARNA are by no means as popular as ONUKA or Go_A. At the time of writing, the official music video of Go_A's *SHUM* had some 27 million views on YouTube, ONUKA's *Vidlik* had 8.5 million views, and KARNA's *Party на Прикарпатті* had 3.5 million views. In terms of followers on Facebook, ONUKA had approximately 99,000, while Go_A and KARNA were fairly similar at approximately 24,000 and 23,000 respectively. That said, Ukrainian journalists Pan'kiv and Zen' write that KARNA are mainstays of the Ukrainian rock scene: 'Ukrainian rock is hard to imagine without KARNA. They attract a large number of fans at major festivals, are known and recognised throughout Ukraine, and actively create new singles and shoot music videos' (Pan'kiv & Zen' 2017).[11] Their brand of "Hutsul metal" is therefore well-known and indeed well-received across Ukraine, and, although further research in this direction is needed when the situation in Ukraine allows for it, it very tentatively points to evidence of a broader national affiliation with western Ukrainian, Hutsul identity. Indeed, KARNA have in the past noted that their understanding of "Hutsulness" is not cemented in ethnic conceptualisations of the term, but is rather first and foremost an all-Ukrainian attitude that has the potential to provide the whole country with a kind of cultural-historic anchor to its national identity. In the above interview, vocalist Oleksiy Shmanyov, who left the band in 2019, said that '[being Hutsul] is such a state of mind, regardless of which part of Ukraine you come from' (ibid.).[12] Equally, guitarist and backing vocalist Vlad Yarun noted that when they have in the past performed in eastern

[10] Recall The HU's self-proclaimed "hunnu rock", mentioned in chapter 1.

[11] 'Український рок важко уявити без гурту «Карна». Вони збирають велику кількість шанувальників на великих фестивалях, мають всеукраїнське визнання, та активно створюють нові сингли, знімають кліпи.'

[12] 'Гуцул – це такий душевний стан, незалежно від того, з якої ти частини України. Ми любимо свою державу.'

Ukraine, they would all be introduced as "Hutsuls" even though half the band are originally from Kyiv, and not Lviv or Ivano-Frankivsk, as were the other two members (ibid.).[13]

While their heavy rock is very different from Go_A's and ONUKA's electro-folk, other interviews with KARNA reveal that their motivations for combining traditional Hutsul sounds with a more contemporary musical style are much the same, proving that Ukrainian restorative nostalgic, revivalist music can indeed be a much broader phenomenon than first appeared possible. In an April 2017 interview with *RBK-Ukrayina*, Yarun notes that this combination is a deliberate western-oriented tactic to serve a deliberate western-oriented purpose. Yarun said that their "Hutsul metal" 'sounds the way we feel - modern western sound and our folk melodies [...] we wanted to show the combination of western culture and Ukrainian Hutsul culture' (RBK-Ukrayina 2017).[14]

Another aspect of KARNA's "Hutsul metal" that aims to unite both western musical culture with traditional Hutsul culture is the *arkan*, meaning rope, or a closed circular dance traditionally performed by men around a bonfire. In KARNA's live performances, fans will often form a wide circle, dance in a ring, and then as the music reaches its climax the *arkan* collapses into a typical western heavy metal "slam pit" (Tkachyova 2017; FIRESTARTER 2021). As was written in the *RBK-Ukrayina* article, 'traditionally, in the middle of the concert, the team [KARNA] invited the audience to form a "metal-*arkan*". During the song [...] guitarist Vlad Yarun came down from the stage to the audience. Continuing to play, he entered the circle of people - the "Carpathian *arkan*" - and at the culmination of the song began a [slam pit]' (RBK-Ukrayina 2018).[15] Yarun noted that this peculiarity of their concerts is trying to achieve the same thing as their music, namely a combination of ancient Ukrainian

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[13] 'Дуже смішно, коли приїжджаємо кудись на Схід і ведучий нас оголошує, як гуцулів! А в нас два гуцула із Києва, один зі Львова, а один з Франківська.'

[14] 'Він звучить так, як ми відчуваємо - сучасний західний саунд і наші фольклорні мелодії [...] Цим ми хотіли показати поєднання західної культури з українською гуцульською.'

[15] 'Традиційно в середині концерту команда закликала глядачів до "метал-аркану". Під час звучання треку під назвою "Дідько" гітарист Влад Ярун спустився зі сцени до публіки. Продовжуючи грати, зайшов у центр кола з людей – "карпатського аркану", а в кульмінаційний момент пісні почався шалений слем.'

tradition with modern western culture: ‘it is the same with our metal-*arkan*, it is a combination of [a slam pit] which is performed by fans of heavy [metal] music at music festivals, with a Ukrainian *arkan*’ (ibid.).[16] In 2019, KARNA even released a song to this effect, called *Arkan*, which, as should be expected, combines traditional *sopilka* melodies with a heavy electric guitar baseline and plenty of drums. The lyric video, too, also depicts a *baraban* and a *tsymbaly* with the due heavy metal aesthetic (Figure 7). One can therefore be in little doubt as to the motivations behind their music. KARNA is showing that Ukraine has a place in even the most obscure parts of western culture in an attempt to underline the country’s natural western orientation.

Song 1: Party на Прикарпатті

This idea is evident in the title of their 2017 song *Party на Прикарпатті* (Party in Subcarpathia) which combines both the English word “Party”, written in Latin script, with “*на Прикарпатті*”, written in Ukrainian cyrillic script. The stylisation of the title is a visual representation of the concatenation of both western culture and Ukrainian territory, and the heartlands of Ukrainian nationalism at that. Given the discussions I have had thus far in this thesis, the song itself is perhaps what one would imagine if typical heavy metal were to be sprinkled with reminders of its Ukrainian origins. As is to be expected, there is no shortage of electric guitars and drums while the *sopilka* makes appearances in both a counterpoint bridge between the first and second verses with an electric guitar, and as a solo in the final thirty seconds. One notices how KARNA are using standard western heavy metal rock as the foundations of their work, while the Ukrainian flourishes in the *sopilka* form their unique selling point. It is neither a complete upending of the heavy metal genre, nor even an experimental reimagination. It is a pointed and successful attempt to build a new and unique art form within a pre-existing framework, demonstrating that Ukraine and Ukrainians have something to offer and can be considered part of the western heavy rock world, as is their stated desire.

[16] ‘Так само як наш метал-аркан - це поєднання circle pit (слем), який виконують фани важкої музики на музичних фестивалях, з українським арканом.’

In the YouTube version of *Party на Прикарпатті*, the song opens with some ten seconds of whirling, chaotic, traditional Hutsul music very similar to that which one hears in Parajanov's *Shadows*.[17] From the beginning of the song, therefore, the listener is made aware of the historical origins of this contemporary Ukrainian artistry. At the end, the music video cuts to a video taken from an old Ukrainian Television and Radio (*Ukrayins'ke telebachennya i radiomovlennya*) broadcast showing people dressed in traditional Hutsul costumes playing traditional music, without any non-Ukrainian additions. This is a very obvious demonstration of Boym's idea of the 'transhistorical construction of the lost home' insofar as KARNA create a direct link between the historical origins of their Hutsul identity, and their contemporary, western, Hutsul-inspired heavy metal. Thinking back to Ronström's ideas of seeing music revivalism as a form of 'translation', it is clear that by showing this old Hutsul video KARNA are paying homage to their "source text", so to speak. They are notifying the consumer of the band's origins in the past, of their present success, and of the direction they want to take their music and the people they represent in the future. It is signposting Ukraine's western, Hutsul-inspired future through a Kuleshovian juxtaposition of the past and the present.

It should be mentioned that KARNA are not the only Ukrainian rock band to be doing this, as the combination of western rock with Ukrainian folk elements has become commonplace in the country's rock scene. As Svitlana Man'ko noted with reference to artists such as Motanka, Vopli Vidopliassova, and Kozak System, despite 'the processes of globalisation that make it possible to get acquainted with the musical cultures of different countries [...] domestic rock artists still often used national original sound in their work', which are combined with rock vocal techniques (Man'ko 2021: 34-35).[18] It should therefore be of little surprise that the lead

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[17] For another example of this music, please see *Hutsul's'ki starovynni melodiy* (2021), at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOXzmFPQl4I&ab_channel=%D0%93%D1%83%D1%86%D1%83%D0%BB.Hutsul.

[18] 'Таким чином, можна зазначити, що завдяки процесам глобалізації, які дають змогу країнам знайомитися з музичними культурами різних країн, розширюється спектр музичних можливостей [...] Але варто наголосити на тому, що вітчизняні рок-артисти і раніше часто застосовували у власній творчості національне самобутнє звучання, що проявлялося в обраному інструментарії, фольклорних наіграшах, використанні елементів народної манери співу, а на сучасному етапі розвитку, до цієї бази додається більш активне їх поєднання з прийомами рок-вокалу.'

singer of Motanka, Viktor Verba, speaking about the band's eponymous 2019 album, said 'At the end of the album [...] you will shed many tears for our ancestors who fought for the Ukrainian word and homeland. You will be able to fully experience how nature breathes and talks to you. You will definitely become more interested in your roots and native land' (Notatky 2019).[19]

Elements within the actual music video of *Party на Прикарпатті* are also worth noting. Circles are the leitmotif of the music video, which could represent a number of things. Throughout there are allusions to the aforementioned metal-*arkan* in which various musicians sing or play their instruments surrounded by dancers either rotating around in a ring, or reaching inside the circle (Figure 8). More intriguingly, however, and worthy of a more lengthy discussion, is that the then-lead singer Oleksiy Shmaniov draws a chalk circle around himself on the ground at the beginning of the video, and much of the action in the music video takes place either inside or directly outside this circle. The immediate inference would be that this is some kind of pagan magic circle, that, according to author of several books of alternative religious practices Scott Cunningham, was used by ceremonial magicians to 'protect the magician from the forces which he or she raises' (Cunningham 2004: 57). In Wicca, he writes that 'during magical workings the air within the circle can grow uncomfortably hot and close - it will truly feel different from the outside world, charged with energy and alive with power. The circle is a product of energy, a palpable construction that can be sensed and felt with experience. It isn't just a ring of flowers or a cord, but a solid, viable barrier' (ibid. 60). A magic circle can, therefore, either defend its operators from evil spirits on the outside, *or* draw the operators on the inside closer together. Returning to *Party на Прикарпатті*, it is clear that the invocation of a magic circle has implications for our understanding of restorative nostalgia and its two main characteristics. It is a 'return to origins' that draws adherents of the homeland together in the face of an outside 'conspiracy' that threatens to do them harm. While not represented by magic circles, it would not be a stretch to say that the Black Lives Matter movement is motivated by the same kind of

[19] 'Під закінчення альбому, де ми підготували найсильніші пісні, у вас проллється не одна сльоза за наших предків, які боролися за українське слово та рідну землю. Ви зможете повною мірою відчути, як природа дихає і розмовляє з вами. Ви точно більше почнете цікавитись своїм корінням та рідним краєм.'

cross-societal spiritual solidarity described by Cunningham in ritual magic. It is not the circle itself which is important, but rather what its employment symbolises.

A whole range of conclusions can therefore be drawn. Whereby the *arkan* represents the Ukrainian people and the musicians in the centre represent Ukraine, the *arkan* - functioning like a pagan magic circle - is expressing Ukrainian identity *and* protecting Ukraine. The harmony of their traditional Ukrainian dance on the outside and contemporary Ukrainian music on the inside is summoning a lost or dying Ukrainian "sphere of energy" that bolsters Ukrainian solidarity and strength, protecting those both on the perimeter and within the metal-*arkan* magic circle, creating a fortress that cannot be breached by the 'conspiracy'. Furthermore, later on in the music video a Ukrainian Orthodox priest appears, and amongst the heavy metal pandamonium begins sprinkling the dancers with holy water. This adds another layer to the metaphor because '[Orthodox] people believe that [sprinkling water] protects them from harm and will keep them from getting sick and help them be successful' (Suko 2015). *Party на Прикарпатті* is an overwhelming amalgam of modern and traditional, western and Ukrainian, pagan and Orthodox, defending the perimeter by summoning spirits within, functioning as a polycultural signpost that KARNA would like Ukraine to follow.

Song 2: Dobryy Vechir

Marking the Day of Ukrainian Literature and Language on 9th November 2021, KARNA released *Dobryy Vechir*, a song interestingly devoid of the kind of folk music elements noted in every other song discussed thus far. What it lacks in nostalgia and revivalism in form, however, it more than makes up for in sentiment: the song and especially the music video are a highly allegorical dedication to the Ukrainian intelligentsia of the 20th century. In an interview with Kseniia Ivas' of *UA: Ukrainian Radio*, lead singer Oleksa Yarosh said that 'we are a very rich nation: in addition to [Taras] Shevchenko, [Ivan] Franko, Lesia Ukrainka, we still have many artists and scientists. It is the Ukrainian intelligentsia that gives us the opportunity to feel like a nation. In the twentieth century, they wanted to destroy it, but

failed' (Ivas' 2021).[20] Speaking to *24 Showbiz*, the video's director Viktor Skuratovskyy noted six of the main allegories in the song and video. The title of the song represents the 'current state of Ukrainian culture', as does the music video's setting in an abandoned theatre (24 Showbiz 2021)[21]. It is therefore a reflection of Livingston's earlier assertion that musical - and that is to say, cultural - revivals occur when a musical tradition 'is believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past'. This then may explain the absence of the kind of folk instruments present in other songs analysed in this thesis. *Dobryy Vechir* is an angry, defiant lament of a faltering Ukrainian culture that is withering and in need of revival. The monsters are a similarly defiant allegory, representing 'figures of Ukrainian culture who, despite their condition and difficulties, still play on stage'[22], while the altar, on which you can see photos of leading figures of the 20th century Ukrainian intelligentsia such as Ivan Ohienko, Hnat Khotkevych, Lesia Kurbas, Solomiya Krushelnytska, Maria Zankovetska and Olha Kobylyanska, 'is a collective image of the educated [Ukrainian] intelligentsia'[23] (ibid.; Figure 9). Meanwhile, a security guard represents those who do not allow the theatre - that is to say, Ukrainian culture - to decline; and a female student, who sits in the theatre listening to different music through her earphones and reading a magazine, represents 'young people, most of whom are unfamiliar with the creators and ancestors of culture'[24] (ibid.). During the video, she is disturbed by the monsters below and "wakes up" to the history of Ukrainian culture that was lurking beneath. She encounters lead singer Oleksa Yarosh, sharing a brief romance, before waking up from her dream and finding a KARNA-branded plectrum in her hand.

As for the song and lyrics, as I mentioned earlier *Dobryy vechir* does not contain any uniquely Ukrainian folk motifs, the absence of which could signify the decay into which

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[20] 'Ми нація досить багата: окрім Шевченка, Франка, Лесі Українки, у нас ще є багато митців і науковців. Саме українська інтелігенція дає нам можливість відчувати себе нацією. В XX столітті її хотіли знищити, але не вийшло.'

[21] 'це сьогоднішній стан української культури'

[22] 'діячі української культури, які незважаючи на свій стан та труднощі досі грають на сцені'

[23] 'він є збірним образом освіченої інтелігенції'

[24] 'молодь, яка в своїй більшості не знайома із творцями та предками культури'

traditional Ukrainian culture has fallen. The song is addressed to ‘those who are not yet asleep’, presumably meaning those still alive and still fighting for Ukrainian culture. The lyrics evoke nostalgia, togetherness, and a homecoming: *‘may you dream about the rustle of the grove / and fields of milk and honey’*; *‘let the road run smoothly, for the driver rushing home / let the night be clear to you / greetings to all cities’*. KARNA, depicted in the music video as representatives of Ukrainian culture of old, railing against the feared twilight years of Ukrainian culture, are issuing a plea for modern Ukraine to take and stand and unite, pleading not to let disunity take the country into proverbial darkness: *‘do not let lovers quarrel anymore / warmth to all, relatives and parents’*. While not nostalgically revivalist in form, the sentiment is very much still there as KARNA urge Ukrainians to look towards their ancestors’ struggles for an independent identity to inform their own present and future struggles for the same thing. Unlike the explicitly revivalist *Povernis*, *Idy na Zvuk*, or *Zenit*, for example, *Dobryy vechir* is implicitly revivalist, not seeking to point listeners towards where the artists believe Ukraine should go, but instead issuing a warning about where it has been headed. It does not suggest that Ukraine’s bright future is just beyond their reach, but fears that it is slipping away, implicitly stressing the need for a revival.

KARNA therefore shows us the versatility and flexibility of Ukrainian music revivalism. Although it almost always manifests itself through some element of traditional folk culture - be it through instrumentation, singing style, or lyrics - it can span different musical genres and thus appeal to a wider range of people both at home and abroad than previously conceived. If someone is not receptive to Go_A’s or ONUKA’s revivalist electro-folk, for example, they may find KARNA’s heavy metal more enjoyable. In *Party на Прикарпатті*, KARNA stresses the importance of a more collective energy than displayed by other artists, and *Dobryy vechir* demonstrates a greater focus on the state of *current* Ukrainian culture, and not only focussing on where this culture should go.

Conclusion

The dearth of literature combining Boym's thoughts on restorative nostalgia and theories of music revivalism is, in my opinion, extremely surprising. With reference to the Ukrainian cultural revival from 2014, this thesis has attempted to plug this gap by researching how and why restorative nostalgic sentiments have manifested themselves in post-Euromaidan Ukrainian revivalist popular music. In the introduction, I showed that Ukraine has a history of preserving and reviving its often threatened national identity through music, thereby laying the foundations for a discussion of more contemporary music. In chapter 1, I analysed previous literature on restorative nostalgia and music revivalism, concluding that music revivalism - as a practical response to political oppression, war, or natural disaster, for example - can be a manifestation of more deeply held restorative nostalgic sentiments that seek to revive the spirit and ideology of a prelapsarian time and space in order to *create a future*. I called this process "signposting". In chapter 2, I contextualised subsequent analyses of Ukrainian music by discussing the course of the wider Ukrainian cultural revival since both the Orange Revolution in 2004, and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. It is important to stress that Ukraine's cultural revival has emerged as a practical response to Russian aggression that has constantly sought to deny Ukraine's right to ownership of its own history and identity. Ukraine's cultural response therefore tries to prove the opposite, reviving and reinventing uniquely Ukrainian folk traditions to suit the 21st century, thereby achieving a 'transhistorical construction of the lost home', and bolstering their national sense of self. This discussion was necessary in order to understand the wider ideology, processes, and motivations behind the bands and songs that I analysed in chapters 3-5.

In these sections, I concluded that Go_A and ONUKA exhibit considerable restorative nostalgic tendencies in their instrumentation, lyrics, and even their names. While the combination of traditional Ukrainian folk music and modern electronic music is designed to show that Ukraine can occupy a unique space in the global cultural sphere that is separate from Russia, thereby strengthening its own sense of self both domestically and internationally, lyrics often evoke freedom, nature, and the future. When these are combined with the instrumentation, a desire is conveyed for Ukraine to create for itself a future by returning to and reimagining its ancient origins. While KARNA are a slight departure from

the likes of Go_A and ONUKA insofar that *Dobryy vechir* laments that which has happened rather than looking forward to that which should happen, they do however demonstrate the versatility of restorative nostalgic, revivalist music in both form and content. Ukrainian folk instruments can be employed just as naturally in heavy metal as in electronic music, and the poetry of their music video to *Party на Прикарпатті* can be understood as a visual representation of the relationship between what Boym terms the 'return to origins' and the 'conspiracy'. Furthermore, the bands analysed have given numerous interviews to media outlets in which they express a desire for Ukraine to return to its origins, to become a part of the "western world", and to defend its right to its own history, culture, language and identity through music that combines traditional Ukrainian motifs with a more contemporary western foundation.

While I have focussed on Go_A, ONUKA, and KARNA in this thesis, I have far from exhausted Ukrainian artists which demonstrate such tendencies. Motanka, Alina Pash, DakhaBrakha, and Ukraine's victorious 2022 Eurovision entry, Kalush Orchestra, offer further opportunities for research on this topic. Ukrainian musicians are carving out their own uniquely Ukrainian cultural space in the wider global cultural sphere, acting as self-affirming evidence of the legitimacy and reality of the country's cultural and political independence from its most aggressive imperial detractor. Ukrainian restorative nostalgic, revivalist music is if anything a political marketing strategy with a serious existential function. It seeks a 'return to origins' to fight against the 'conspiracy' that quite literally seeks to wipe it off the face of the Earth, reimagining the ancient culture of a time that they perceive to represent Ukraine at its freest.

A question which I had hoped to answer in this thesis concerned how Ukrainian revivalist music was perceived throughout the country to try and establish if there were any regional variations in its popularity. Russia's full-scale 24th February 2022 invasion made this research practically very difficult and, given the circumstances, ethically unjustifiable. One preliminary conclusion one can draw from the war, however, is that Russia's actions have completely destroyed any remaining notions that Russia and Ukraine are in any way "brotherly nations", regardless of where in Ukraine one might conduct such research in the future. This therefore paves the way for an all-Ukrainian cultural revival the likes of which

we have not seen before, especially given how receptive the “western world” has been to the Ukrainian cause since 24th February 2022. If there wasn’t much of a global market for Ukrainian culture before 2022, there almost certainly is one now.

Much research will have to be done on this topic in the years to come, and I hope that this thesis will offer a window into some of the ideas underpinning Ukraine’s musical revival before 2022, potentially informing Ukraine’s inevitable revival after the war’s conclusion. Below, I offer an afterword looking at how Ukrainian musicians have responded to the war in 2022, and the importance of music for the Ukrainian cause in both the present and the future.

Afterword: Ukrainian Music During the Russia-Ukraine War in 2022

American scholar Arthur Upham Pope wrote in 1941 that ‘the outnumbered, ill-equipped, or even outmaneuvered may triumph if their morale is markedly superior’, citing Napoleon’s maxim that ‘in war morale forces are to physical as three to one’ (Pope, 1941: 195). In amongst the devastation and suffering of the current war, Ukrainians and allies abroad have indeed endeavoured to keep solidarity and morale high, understanding its importance especially when the invading Russians’ morale has reportedly been dire. The contribution of Ukrainian musicians and Ukrainian songs in this has been nothing short of remarkable. The strength in unity that music engenders has been exhibited *par excellence*, binding Ukrainians together in hope, sorrow, anger, defiance, and even mirth. History scholar Catherine Bateson writes that ‘music [...] has often been the predominant cultural product of war and military service. Those fighting, and those wanting to write about those fighting, have employed music and song as a comforting tonic, as a political statement, as a tool for remembrance, and as a general pastime’ (Bateson 2019). The musical response to the disaster of war in Ukraine in 2022 if anything underlines every point made during this thesis, and is worth discussing. Faced with destruction, Ukrainians have used music to rally in defiance and defence of their nation. We can of course also not forget Ukraine’s thumping victory at Eurovision in 2022, which, if anything, is evidence that Europe as a whole is also receiving Ukrainian music as a vehicle of solidarity with Ukraine, and is therefore primed to consume Ukrainian culture in unprecedented quantities in the future.

As early as the 3rd March, barely one week after Russia's renewed invasion, the BBC published an article discussing numerous Ukrainian musicians who were using their fame to share the reality of the war (Savage 2022a). Impromtu concerts popped up on the streets of Kyiv (Reucher 2022), the cellist Denys Karachevtsev played Bach amongst the ruins of Kharkiv (Hall 2022), while classical musicians in the same city hosted a concert in a metro station (BBC 2022). Seven-year-old girl Amelia Anisovych went viral after singing "Let It Go" from Disney's film *Frozen* from a bomb shelter, and then went on to sing the Ukrainian National Anthem at a fundraising concert in Łódź, in Poland (Timsit 2022). The World War I Ukrainian patriotic song *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* (Oh, the Red Viburnum in the Meadow) has enjoyed a colossal revival after the lead singer from the Ukrainian band BoomBox, Andriy Khlyvnyuk, went viral after posting an acapella version on Instagram standing in Kyiv's Sophia Square (Khlyvnyuk 2022). The legendary rock band Pink Floyd then reunited to record their first new song in 28 years based on Khlyvnyuk's video, which, intended as a 'morale booster' and a call 'for peace', propelled *Oi u luzi chervona kalyna* to international fame (Savage 2022b). The song has since become a rallying cry for the Ukrainian cause worldwide, being remixed and reimagined numerous times, including in a video of one Ukrainian refugee being joined by 300 Lithuanians in another rendition of the song (Rekasiute 2022). Writing in 2017, scholar Uljana Cholodová said that in Ukrainian folklore the viburnum symbolises 'beauty, health, women, a girl's virginity, love, harmony and fullness of life, motherhood, fertility, family, blood, and sadness', while more recently coming to represent 'memory, the native land, homeland, Ukraine, loyalty, struggle, even protests, and Cossacks blood' (Cholodová 2017: 3050). The reimagining of the symbolism of the viburnum in the context of the 2022 war, and its renewed significance as a Ukrainian patriotic and protest song, is if anything another example of a restorative nostalgic music revival responding to catastrophic human disaster.

It is not only older music that has been reimagined, but new songs have also emerged capturing the stoicism, defiance, and even occasional humour of the Ukrainian resistance. Go_A also released a viburnum-inspired song called *Kalyna* on 18th March. In a post on Facebook announcing the song's release, they wrote:

‘Kalyna (guelder-rose) is a symbol that has been a part of Ukrainian culture since ancient times. Its meanings were transferred through the ages in legends and songs. A broken kalyna tree was a sign of trouble and tragedy; abuse of this tree was a shameful act. Ukrainian people carefully protected it because there was a belief that kalyna grew only next to good people. According to our ancestors, kalyna has a power that brings immortality and can unite generations to fight evil. The song “Kalyna” is a message to the World that [we] should be united for the future of humanity. All funds will go to Ukraine.’ (Go_A 2022b).

This is if anything yet more evidence of Go_A’s fundamental *raison d’être* and the broader Ukrainian desire to seek comfort and fortitude during times of crisis by looking to the country’s historical folklore so deeply entwined with notions of freedom and independence. Since the start of the war, lead singer Kateryna Pavlenko has also been touring Europe to raise money and awareness for the Ukrainian cause, performing in Italy, the Czech Republic, Poland, and the Netherlands. In the latter case, announcing a concert in The Hague, Go_A posted on their Facebook page, ‘Symbolic place, isn't it? [...] If you are now in the Netherlands, come and sing with us! Let's show the whole world that we are strong, united and unconquered! Together we will definitely win!’ (Go_A 2022c). Arguably most significant of all, however, was Go_A’s announcement in May 2022 that they would be performing at Glastonbury, one of the most famous music festivals in the world (Go_A 2022d). Meanwhile, ONUKA has re-released versions of her songs *Holos* (Voice) and *Guns Don’t Shoot* over videos made up of footage from the war and global protests, and also perfomed an impromptu concert with NAONI at Kyiv central railway station in April (ONUKA 2022a; 2022b, and 2022c). KARNA on the other hand released their song *Mama Halychyna* on 15th April, and Oleksa Yarosh has actually joined the Ukrainian army (KARNA 2022).

Other songs have also become globally famous, perhaps no more so than the darkly humorous “Bayraktar Song”, named after the much-lauded Turkish drones which have been instrumental in slowing Russia’s advance. The lyrics are pithily insulting, with one verse being roughly translated as *‘They wanted to invade us with force / And we took offence at these orcs / Russian bandits are turned into ghosts by… Bayraktar!’* (Igman 2022). Since the song emerged, it has become another rallying cry for the Ukrainian resistance and, perhaps

most amusingly of all, was employed by protesters in occupied Kherson as they taunted Russian soldiers by forcing them to listen to it through a megaphone (Tanir 2022). Ukrainian pop singer Max Barsikh also released a defiant song called *Don't F@ck With Ukraine*, mashing together footage from the war and traditional Ukrainian culture in the music video, demonstrating more Kuleshovian temporal continuity between the current Ukrainian defence and the future survival of Ukrainian culture (Barsikh 2022).

All of this would indicate that the Ukrainian cultural revival in response to the 2022 war has already started. Since Vladimir Putin's renewed invasion on 24th February, Ukrainians have responded to the explosions of Russia's bombs with an explosion of Ukrainianness which has centralised music as one of its most important vehicles. A near-irrepressible expression of defiance and solidarity, Ukrainian music during the 2022 war is binding the population together in a rejuvenated and more-than-ever existential defence of Ukrainian identity, in which traditional Ukrainian motifs occasionally - but not always - are reimagined and recontextualised to suit the present reality. A great example of this is the "Saint Javelin: Protector of Ukraine" meme that depicts an icon of the Virgin Mary cradling a Javelin anti-tank missile (Query 2022). Returning to music, however, perhaps the most compelling evidence of the Ukrainian music and cultural revival to come lies in Apple Music's streaming statistics for Ukraine. In a tweet on 6th May 2022, Ukrainian diplomat and author Olexander Scherba noted that the top 10 songs being streamed on Apple Music in Ukraine, were *all* either partially or entirely by Ukrainian artists. 'Usually it was mostly American, Russian…Ukrainian youth listening mostly Ukrainian - it's bigger than one could imagine' (Scherba 2022). If the current trajectory of Ukrainian culture both in Ukraine and abroad is anything to go by, it is likely that the Ukrainian cultural revival of the coming decade will make the revival of the past decade look fairly timid by comparison.

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Appendix

Figure 1 - A still from the music video of *SHUM*, by Go_A, depicting modern dancers dancing a *vesnyanka*-esque dance in a forest next to a bonfire. Note the band playing in the background, consisting of lead singer Kateryna Pavlenko, an electric guitar, a mix board, and a *sopilka*.

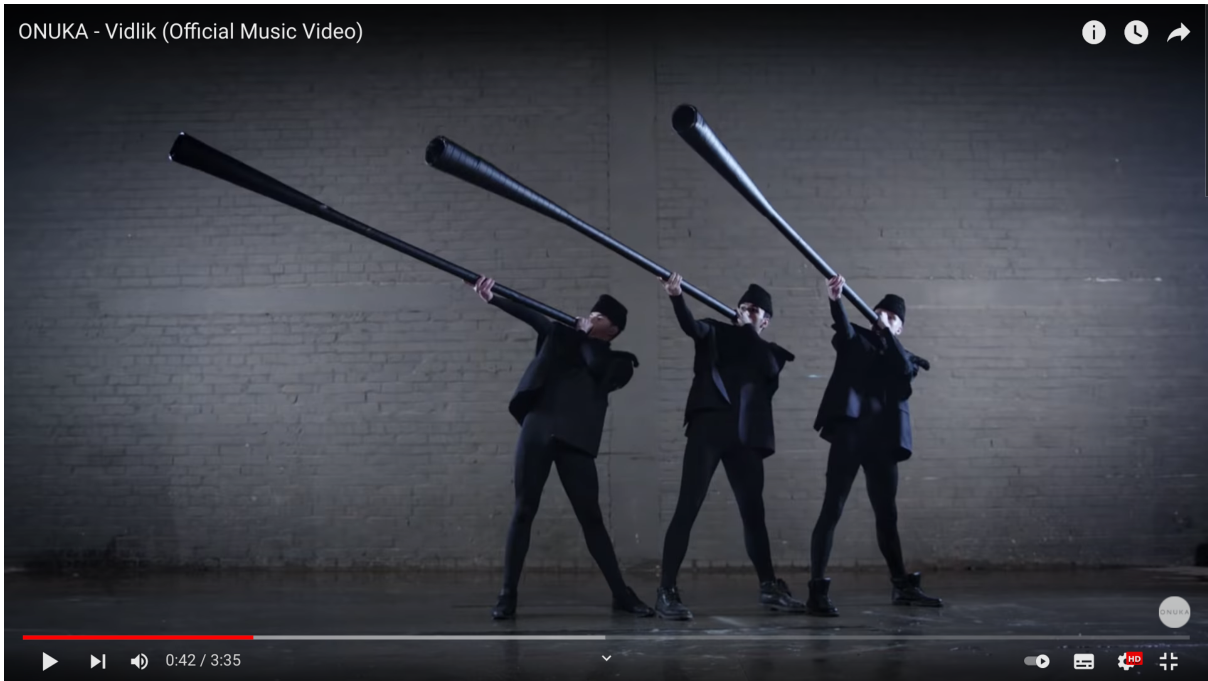

Figure 2 - A still from the music video of *Vidlik*, by ONUKA, showing stylised *trembita* players.

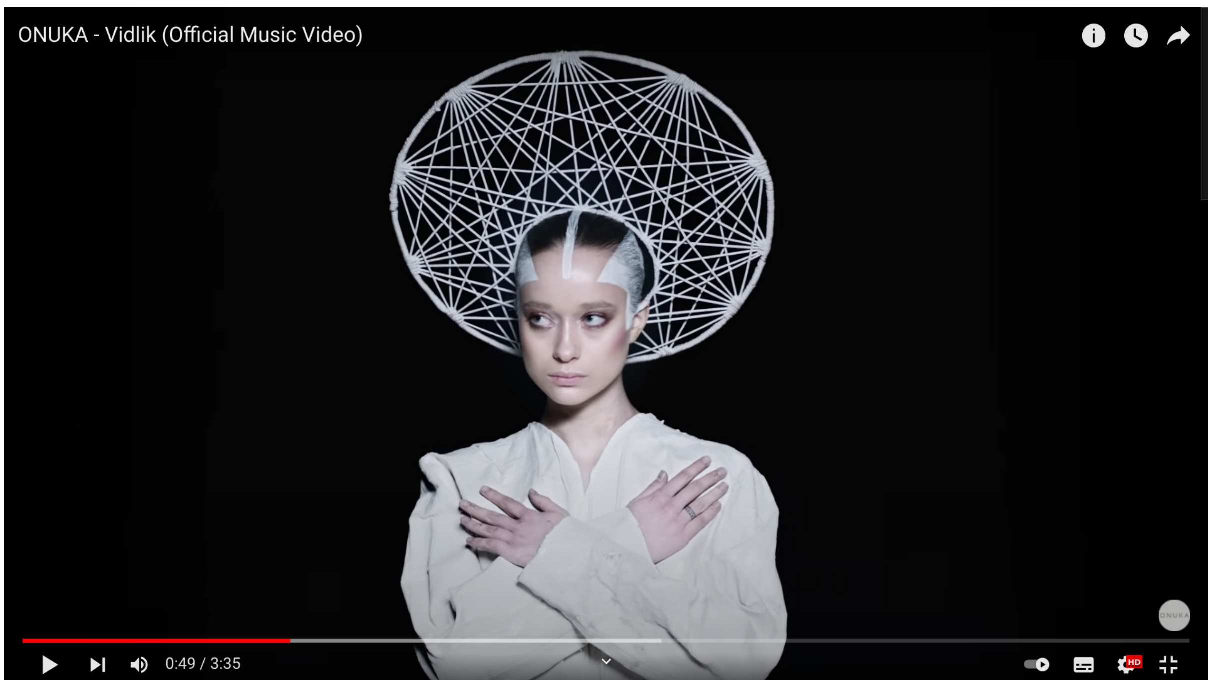

Figure 3 - A still from the music video of *Vidlik*, by ONUKA, showing a woman wearing a stylised *vinok* headdress.

Figure 4 - A still from the music video of *Zenit*, by ONUKA, depicting a *vesnyanka* dance performed by Zhyzhchenko (centre), two dancers, a *telenka* player (far left), a *tsymbaly* player (second from left), and a *trembita* player (second from right), all dressed in folkloric costumes.

Figure 5 - A still from the end of the music video of *Zenit*, by ONUKA, showing a folkloric *trembita* player raising the instrument into the sky as the sun sets in the distance.

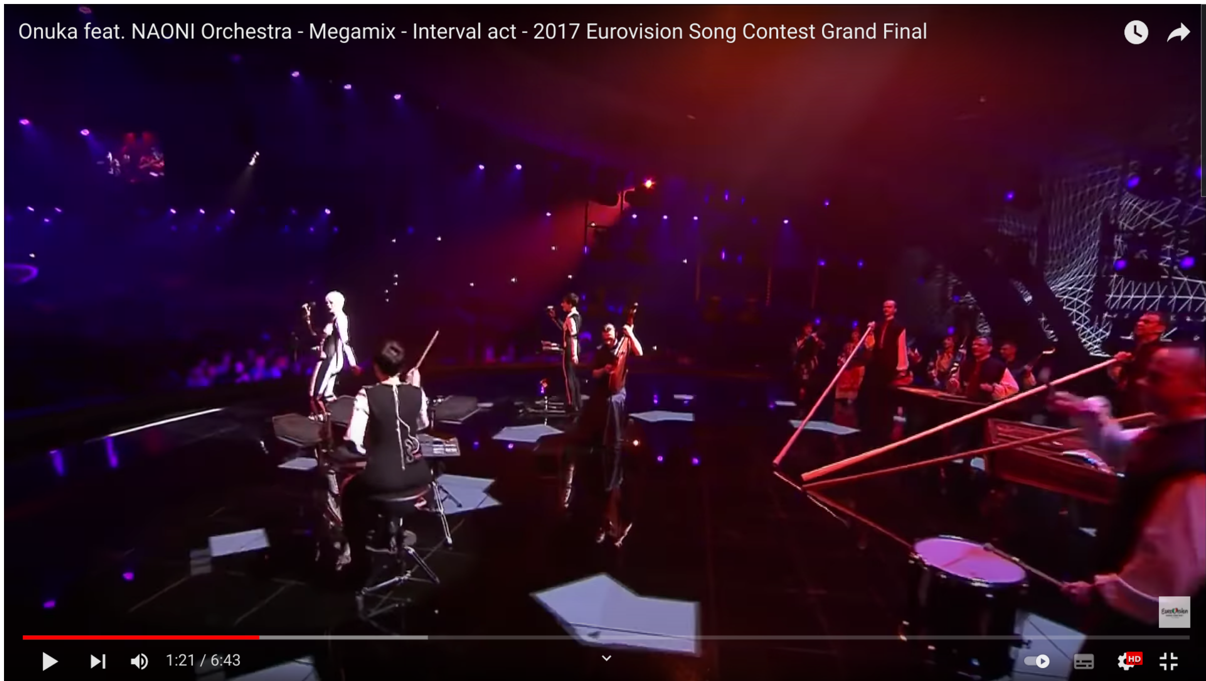

Figure 6 - A still from ONUKA and NAONI's Eurovision interval act in 2017, showing lead singer Zhyzhchenko at the front alongside electronic instruments, while Ukrainian folk instruments such as the *bandura*, *trembita*, and *tsymbaly* play a supporting role in the background.

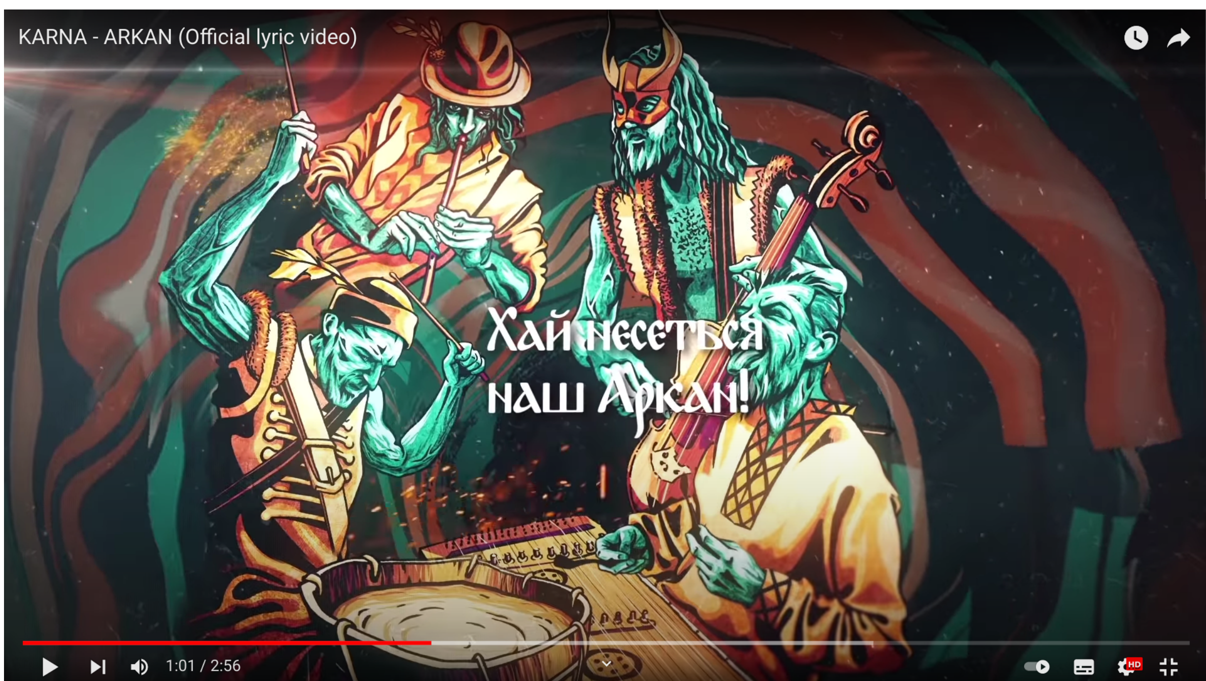

Figure 7 - A still from the lyric video of *Arkan*, by KARNA, depicting heavy metal, folkloric incarnations of a cello, *sopilka*, *baraban*, and *tsymbaly* player.

Figure 8 - A still from the music video of *Party на Прикарпатті*, by KARNA, showing a "metal-*arkan*" dancing around the drum kit. Note also the faint chalk circle around the kit, drawn at the start of the music video.

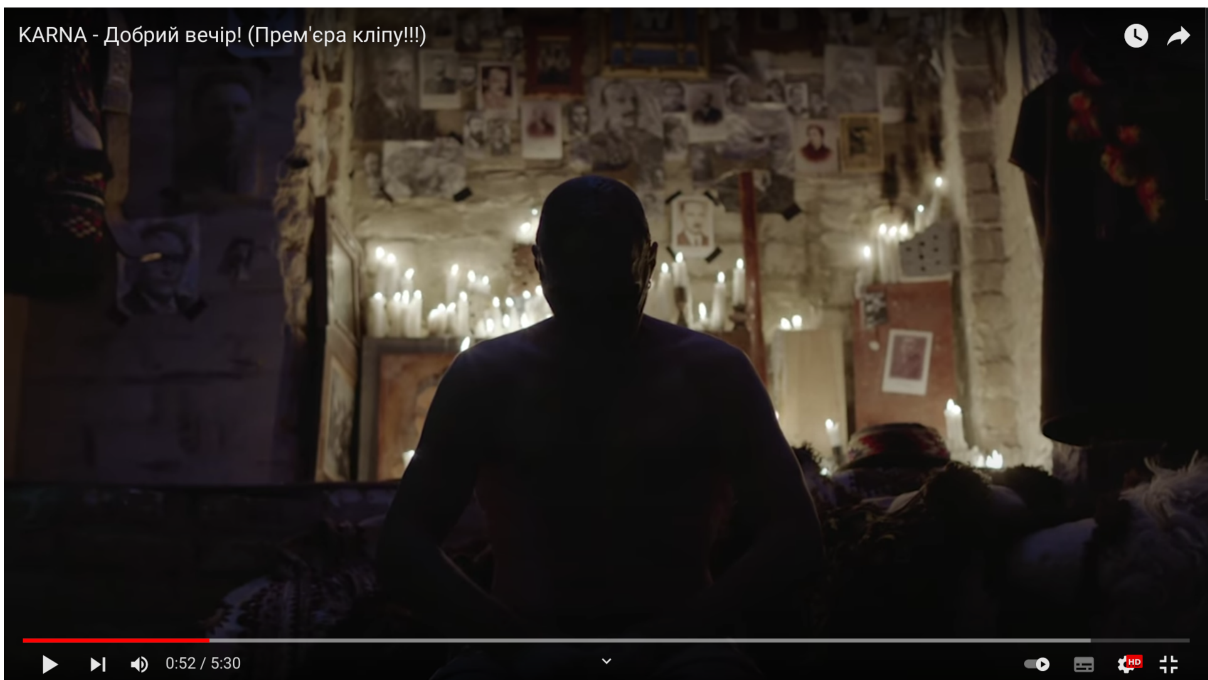

Figure 9 - A still from the music video of *Dobryy vechir*, by KARNA, showing one of the "monsters" sitting in front of the shrine to historical members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia.