

Passing on Instrumental Music Traditions in Family (based on Information collected in Folklore Expeditions to Hutsul region, West Ukraine)

RAYISA GUSAK

(*Païca Gycaκ*)

Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts, Ukraine

Anotacija. Ukrainos etnomuzikologė, tradicinės instrumentinės muzikos tyrinėtoja [Raisa Gusak](#) (*Païca Gycaκ*) savo straipsnyje tyrinėja Karpatų Huculų regiono kaimo gyvensenoje išlikusių instrumentinio muzikavimo tradicijų tęstinumo ir jų išsaugojimo ateities kartoms aktualijas. Daugiausia dėmesio čia yra skiriama galimiems pasikeitimams asmeniniais muzikos instrumentais tarpusavio susitarimu bei muzikavimo tradicijų perteikimo ypatybėms šeimoje. Tai paskutinis užsienyje paskelbtas autorės mokslinis straipsnis.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: globalizacijos procesas, vaikai, mokymas, atlikėjų mokyklos, vedantieji muzikantai, instrumentinės muzikos tradicijos, vestuvių muzikantai.

Abstract. Issues of preservation of instrumental music traditions in the Carpaty region, mainly in *Hutsulshchyna* and villages of several adjoining regions, are discussed in the article of Ukrainian ethnomusicologist, folk instrumental music researcher [Rayisa Gusak](#) (*Païca Gycaκ*). The focus is made on types of sharing of music instruments and passing on instrumental music traditions within the family boundaries. It is the last published abroad her scientific article.

Key words: globalization processes, children, learning, performance schools, leading musicians, instrumental music traditions, wedding musicians.

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Problems of preserving instrumental music traditions and their passing on within the family boundaries have been increasingly urgent today, in the period of globalization. This is specifically true with *Hutsulshchyna*, a highland region of Carpaty area, where for centuries the local environment was favorable for preservation and development of instrumental traditions. Forests always provided craftsmen with materials for instrument making. The genres of instrumental music (shepherds', hunters', calendar, family ritual music etc.), existing from times immemorial, preserved not only instruments per se, but the wide range of traditional instrumental music with its colorful features (style, content structures, means of artistic expression and specific performance techniques).

During our folklore expeditions to *Hutsulshchyna* and villages of adjoining regions¹ (1974, 1983–1984, 1988, 1993–1995) we kept emphasizing the problems related with passing on and preservation of traditions within the family boundaries.

Our earliest observations of family musicians were aimed at selecting traditional music instruments, their sharing by children, training within the family boundaries or beyond (in performance schools, with leading musicians or wedding musicians).

According to legends, fiddle hang on the wall of village houses since long ago. It was not accidental that this instrument used and continues to be the prevailing one with Hutsul musicians. Children can reveal love for a fiddle very early. It is quite often that children start making first steps in learning the fiddle playing by their own: “He learned to play from local musicians by rather a passive method: by hearing, prying or trying to make a fiddle. Then, having earned the money, he bought the instrument in Kelmentsy at a fair, when he was seventeen or so. In 40–60s he kept playing in a band, more often with tambourine player (author’s translation)” (1, P. 117). It is A. Ivanitskiy’s description of the earliest steps of learning taken by a Bessarabian fiddler. We came across similar cases in *Hutsulshchyna* as well: local youth are prone to band music performance, with a rhythmic instrument performer being the first one to join the solo fiddler.²

Parents often dreamt that their children would play fiddle, and if they were well-off, they would bring the children to folk leading fiddlers for learning, which formed the tradition. Several performing schools were born in *Hutsulshchyna* in the past, based on adaptation, picking out a tune, improvisation etc. The musical pedagogy of this school is described in detail by V. Matsiyevskaya (2, P. 62).

In families with two or more children, parents might bring them all at once to one leading musician of their region, to learn playing. Sometimes the parents’ desire might coincide with still unconscious desire of the children. Probably, all the children learned to play one instrument first. Even three children could play fiddle only. As an example, the emphasis needs to be made on “the specific type of preservation of the old tradition of band performance with three fiddles” (5, P. 176), the excellent performing culture of the singular trio of brothers-fiddlers: Spiridon, Kiril and Luca Prilipchan (the Hutsul area in the Bukovyna region). Unfortunately, they have gone, but they could create an exemplar band of “Troyisti

¹ Transcarpathian region includes Rakhiv district and the adjoining Tyachiv district, Invano-Frankivsk region includes Kosiv and Verkhovyna districts, Chernivtsi region includes Putylsk district.

² In the past, a fiddler used to join kolyada players in highland area as the first instrumental performer, later on they were joined by rhythmic instrument performer, and still later there occurred harmonic accompaniment in form of a small Hutsul cymbals performer.

musyky” (4) of the European level (according to I. Matsiyevskiy), because one fiddler masterly played the melody in high register with characteristic features of improvisation, the second one played counterpoint, supporting voice, and used accord facture in case of need, whereas the third one played bass by holding the instrument low on the breast, tilting it to the right, for convenient playing on low strings. Unfortunately, they did not pass their regional traditions to anybody.

When parents see the results of learning and feel the children’s desire, they can chose various instruments for each child (such as a fiddle, small Hutsul cembalo, a wooden wind-instrument, bubo, bearing in mind that elder children in a family also played various music instruments). This tendency is specific for the families with parents dreaming to create an artistic family band. We believe that instrumental music traditions used to be passed on in such families by respective criteria. Consideration was given to age, physical and physiological specifics, musical talents, feeling of rhythm, memory, because, as V. Matsiyevskaya observes, “given the non-literacy tradition, it needs special emphasis as the one unknown to academic arts...” (3, P. 42).

A vivid example of passing on and preservation of Transcarpatian instrumental music traditions is the Hudak family from the village of Teresvy, Tyachiv district. We met them first as early as in 1985, when the father, Anton Ivanovych Hudak, was director of a folk instruments orchestra at Teresvy woodworking factory. He played fiddle, drymba and many traditional music wind-instruments. His effort as the director was focused at preservation of century long traditions of instrumental sounding in his artistic band; he was always seeking to enrich the coloring and qualities of music, so characteristic for the Transcarpathian region. Vasyl, one of his sons, was learning to play cymbals, whereas the second son, Volodymyr, was learning to play accordion (accordion was widespread in some Transcarpathian regions of that time). The choice of instruments like these was caused by the willingness to preserve instrumental music traditions in the family band as well. Although later on the children got higher professional education, it should be stressed that they have not abandoned the instrumental tradition of local regions, using it as the background in their artistic work.

We came across a similar case in the village of Kvasy, Rakhiv district, Transcarpathia, where in the large family dynasty of Kabal-Tafiychuk we could see both instrumental musicians and talented masters of music instrument playing. Hafiya Vasylivna Kabal, a teacher, told us a family story. Recalling her childhood, she said that the love for music in their family had been inculcated by her father (fiddler and cymbalist). Three brothers and two sisters learned to play mandolin, pipe, drymba, cymbals, fiddle and accordion.

The important role in development and preservation of the traditional instrumental music culture in the village belongs to Lesya Kabal (Kovbasnyuk), a daughter of Hafiya Vasylivna. Recalling her childhood, Lesya told us that father had played fiddle, uncle Dmytro had played *geligonka*³, uncle Stepan had played accordion, aunt Halya had played pipe, mother had played *mandolin* and *drymba*, uncle Vasyly had played *cymbals*, whereas brother Taras had played tambourine or guitar. Small Lesya had liked guitar playing most of all. Although she had graduated Uzhhorod Music College named after D. Zadora, music department of Transcarpathian National University named after V. Stefanyk (the class of fiddle and choral conducting), she has not abandoned music traditions. At present Lesya works as a teacher of music arts in Kvasy secondary school, inculcating love for folk arts in youth. Lesya participated in the family band of Tafiychuk for some time, but later she joined Kvasy band of Hutsul folk instruments. Today, her professional competencies and practical skills contribute to preservation and development of instrumental music traditions in Rakhiv district; she is constantly in quest for artistic inspiration.

The village of Kvasy, Rakhiv district, is famous for not only instrumental musicians, but for makers of traditional Hutsul music instruments. Some of them need to be recalled, which used to make *trembitas*, *frilkas*, *floyaras*, *fiddles*, *cymbals* and *geligonkas*, i. e. the instruments played by an orchestra band today. One of them is Dmytro Vasylyovych Tafiychuk, a very talented master (the husband of Hafiya Vasylivna).

Another well-known maker of trembitas, Dmytro Yuriyovych Kabal (born in 1948), adapted family traditions from his father; he started up by helping to repair trembitas, and later on he began to make the instrument by his own. Trembitas used to be made of metal (brass, tin-plate) in this village, they were curved rather than straight. Now these wonderful instruments are made by father with help of his son, Dmytro, born in 1970. The instruments are widely used in processions (sendoff to polonyna) and in calendar observations (kolyada). They have small weight, and can be conveniently carried long distances.

Transcarpathia is the place of residence of dozens of ethnic groups, each of them willing to preserve traditional music culture. Some signs of assimilation can be observed, such as adaptation of Slovak, Hungarian or Romanian music intonations. Unfortunately, globalization processes in the studied regions

³ It is *garmoshka* of Czech origin, an exotic instrument for Rakhiv district. However, bearing in mind its folk origin, it is not something peculiar that it has remained in the folk music of Kvasy village as well. This instrument appeared after the war; Mykola Kachuryak was the first to play *gelionka*, he had to sell his cow to buy this music instrument.

have implications for the traditional local culture. Yet, in many villages of Hutsulshchyna effort is made to preserve traditional Hutsul music and traditional music instruments.

In the village of Shepit, Kosiv district, Ivano-Frankivsk region, three brothers play music, Mykola, Yuriy and Mykhaylo Danyschuk (countrymen call them “brothers Palahnyuks”). Their main instruments are fiddle, cymbals and bubo. Thanks to Mykola, the eldest of the brothers, they could become professional wedding musicians. While a fiddle used to be in almost each Hutsul family long ago, beginning with late half of 20 century various traditional music instruments could be found in nearly each Hutsul house.

Playing traditional wind-instruments used to be learned on polonynas, in time of herding. It is not accidental that the shepherd genre occurred earlier than others in the traditional instrumental music. New wind-instruments used to appear in highlands, and elder brothers passed on the traditions of Hutsul folk tunes and wind-instruments making. These instruments were used first as a solo instrument, and later on – as a band one.

When Mykola Danyschuk from the village of Shepit (born in 1944) learned to play the Hutsul instrument *fluyerka* (short opened flute), he was invited to play with adult musicians at weddings, where he continued to learn playing this instrument and extended the repertoire; apart from polonyna or shepherd music, he learned to play dance music as well. By listening to adult musicians, the boy could learn to play cymbals and fiddle. Soon after that he began to encourage younger brothers to play other instruments, because he wanted to have his own wedding chapel. With time passage, Mykola stood out of the other musicians by his masterly playing fiddle, whereas Mykola’s brother learned to play cymbals and became an unexcelled tambourine performer.

According to our observations, young boys were seeking to learn music instruments without parents’ help; later on they created a family band. They all are authentic folk musicians: whatever they perform they could learn “by hearing” from previous generations. Presently, younger musicians, who are their children, have already known musical notation, but each Hutsul melody they play is learned by the traditional method, “by hearing”.

The brothers have not played often together in the latest time, only in case of need to record something on cassette or disk (which seems to be globalization effects). They tend to play with musicians from different villages.

In the aforementioned Kosiv district of Ivano-Frankivsk region (the village of Prokurava) we came across the Harasymiyuk family. I had good luck to talk with Yuriy Romanovych, a well known expert in Hutsul fiddle traditions, and to record his playing and his comments when performing the music. His son

Vasyl could brilliantly master Hutsul cymbals and various traditional wooden wind-instruments. His grandson Mykola adapted the tradition of excellent fiddle performance from the grandfather, and his grandson Vasyl adapted the arts of cymbal performance from the father. This family continued traditions of Hutsul instrumental music with fiddle and cymbals, two main instruments of “Troyisti mysky” band. Once these instruments are added by tambourine, they can play at weddings.

We came across an interesting case of passing on Hutsul traditions from father to son (the village of Proskurava, Kosiv district, Ivano-Frankivsk region). It used to be a family with nobody playing music instruments. However, father, when a young boy of about 16, took a fiddle in his hand for the first time. It is said that it is too late. Yet, the practice of wedding playing and persistent individual trainings had good effects. The fiddler was gradually improving his skill. When his son was 5, he gave him a fiddle and was his first teacher of playing traditional Hutsul tunes. When the boy was 6, he was brought to a children’s music school, where he was gradually learning the elements of academic fiddle arts. It is so important to care that a child does not abandon primary classes of traditional performance. Unfortunately, sometimes it is required by teachers of music schools as well.

However, small Nazariy was learning at school and from his father. The boy’s talent was noticed at school, and after its graduation he was given recommendations to continue classes in a special music college. In spite of this, the boy purposefully continues to master folk methods of playing and Hutsul intonations. Now both father and son are being invited to play in different wedding bands, although at first they used to play together. When a fiddler is invited to play at wedding, it means that his professionalism is recognized (knowledge of wedding repertoire in various villages, of style, of artistic expression methods).

Yet, globalization processes have some negative effects for Hutsulshchyna. For example, quite often family bands can perform at festivals. Some of the invited bands or folk instruments orchestras consciously or unconsciously ruin the Hutsul instrumental tradition by, say, applying tempered music instruments to non-tempered tradition. It should be recalled that as early as in 1990 a Hutsul family band was invited to St. Petersburg (then Leningrad) from Putilsk district of Chernivtsi region (Bukovyna, Hutsulshchyna) to the festival “Spring Wedding”. When looking at them, we could see that parents and four sons were playing factory made music instruments together with their “director accordionist”, and the first song performed by the smallest son, standing on a chair, was the popular Ukrainian folk song “*Oy, na hori dva dubky*” (“Oh, two small oaks on the hill”). Neither music instruments nor the repertoire nor the folk song could show the

beauty of the Hutsul melody. As regards “director accordionist”, he also failed to help this family band in a way.

We have examined six patterns of passing on traditions and preservation of the traditional instrumental music culture within the family boundaries of Hutsulshchyna (Putilsk district, Chernivtsi region – 1 pattern), Carpathian Hutsulshchyna (Kosiv district, Ivano-Frankivsk region – 3 patterns), Transcarpathian Hutsulshchyna (Rakhiv and Tyachiv districts – 2 patterns). Each region has own criteria and peculiarities.

Conclusions

The following can be emphasized as the conclusion from our observation and study in three regions of *Hutsulshchyna*:

1. Learning, preservation and passing on traditions:

a) early phases in learning to play traditional wooden wind-instruments, first steps to acquire skills of their making, and passing on instrumental traditions are the phenomena that truly exist in the nature environment, on polonynas when herding, and can be referred to as “shepherd music culture” (the author’s term). It may be encouraged by relatives or other musicians; this is traditional solo performance;

b) learning to play other, mainly string instruments, mastered by young people later on, takes place within families with elder musicians, in order to create a family band, at music schools, when meeting leaders of wedding music, or at folklore schools, which, unfortunately, have no regularity today;

c) passing on instrumental music tradition within the family boundaries from teachers like grandfather, father, elder brothers or closest relatives who can cover two important aspects: be “both propagators and creators⁴”;

d) support of consciously combined learning of traditional and academic instrumental arts;

e) individual learning of traditional music instruments, without parents’ help.

2. Sharing of music instruments in families with many children:

a) all the children learn to play one music instrument;

b) the children learn to play various instruments for creating a family artistic band, of which the main ones are fiddle, cymbals and wooden wind-instruments.

3. The considerable role in preservation of traditional music instrument culture belongs to masters of traditional music instruments.

⁴ “Propagators are ones who makes interpretation of the already existing idea; they are keepers of tradition canons. The second category is creators of new compositions...” (2, P. 63–64).

It should be noted that in spite of explicitly negative effects of globalization processes and gradual blurring of local distinctions, traditional instrumental music with Ukrainian traditional instruments continues to be played in highland regions of Carpaty. Studies of its practicing and preservation need to involve scientific rethinking. This will give understanding of priority values and become the successful cultural asset for future generations.

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RAYISA GUSAK

(Païca Гусак)

TRADICINĖS INSTRUMENTINĖS MUZIKOS SKLAIDA ŠEIMOJE (remiantis folkloro ekspedicijų Vakarų Ukrainos Huculų regione medžiaga)

Santrauka

Ukrainos etnomuzikologė, tradicinės instrumentinės muzikos tyrinėtoja Raisa Gusak (Païca Гусак) savo straipsnyje tyrinėja Karpatų Huculų regiono kaimo gyvensenoje išlikusių instrumentinio muzikavimo tradicijų tęstinumo ir jų išsaugojimo ateities kartoms aktualijas. Tyrimų medžiaga buvo surinkta 1974, 1983–1984, 1988, 1993–1995 metais folkloro ekspedicijų Užkarpatės srities (Закарпаття) Rachivo (Рахів), Tiačivo (Тячів) rajonų, Ivano Frankivsko srities (Івано-Франківщина) Kosivo (Косів) ir Ver-

chovinos (*Верховина*) rajonų bei Černivcių (*Чернівці*) srities Putylsko (*Путильськ*) rajono kaimuose. Daugiausia dėmesio čia yra skiriama gali-
miems pasikeitimams asmeniniais muzikos instrumentais tarpusavio susita-
rimu bei muzikavimo tradicijų perteikimo ypatybėms šeimoje.

Tyrimo metu buvo padarytos šios išvados:

1. Svarbiausi muzikavimo tradicijų išsaugojimo bei perdavimo iš kartos į kartą aspektai yra (a) „piemenų muzikos kultūra“; t. y. ankstyvasis moky-
mosi groti solo tradiciniais piemenų pučiamaisiais instrumentais etapas, pa-
dedant vyresniesiems šeimos nariams ar kitiems muzikantams, pirmoji jų
gamybos patirtis gamtos aplinkoje; (b) praktinė pažintis su sudėtingesnės
konstrukcijos tradiciniais styginiais muzikos instrumentais, muzikavimas
šeimos ansambliuose, muzikos mokyklose, vestuvių muzikos repertuaro
mokymasis; (c) kūrybinis šeimyninio muzikavimo procesas kartu su sene-
liais, tėvais, vyresniaisiais broliais ne tik kopijuojant, bet ir savitai perku-
riant girdimas melodijas; (d) tradicinio ir akademinio muzikavimo pradžia;
(e) individuali ir savarankiška tradicinio muzikavimo praktika.

2. Šeimos ansamblyje turimų tradicinių muzikos instrumentų tarpusavio
dalybos: (a) pirmas etapas, kai vaikai muzikuoja vienu savo instrumentu;
(b) keičiasi instrumentais tarpusavyje, natūraliai perimdami muzikavimo
smuikais, cimbolais ar įvairiais mediniais pučiamaisiais instrumentais tra-
dicijas.

3. Svarbi tradicinės instrumentinės muzikos gyvavimo ir jos perdavimo iš
kartos į kartą prielaida yra galimybė bendrauti su kaime žinomais muzikos
instrumentų gamintojais bei meistrais.

Autorė pažymi, kad, nepaisant visuotinai ir agresyviai plintančių negaty-
vių globalizacijos procesų bei negrįžtamai nykstančių lokalaus ir regioninio
muzikavimo specifikos ribų, natūrali muzikavimo tradicija Ukrainos Užkar-
patės kaimuose yra gyva ir populiari daugelio Karpatų kalniečių šeimose.
Šio proceso moksliniai tyrimai, nuolatinis domėjimasis folklorinės vietinių
žmonių veiklos tąsa taip pat prisideda prie šio proceso propagavimo įvairaus
amžiaus vaikams, jo vertės pajutimo būsimiems ateities kartų tradiciniams
muzikantams.

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