UKRAINIAN-CANADIAN FOLK MUSIC
OF THE WATERFORD AREA
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Background

For a period of eight weeks in May and June, 1974, we were engaged in recording Ukrainian music in the Waterford area, Norfolk County, Ontario.

The Ukrainian-Canadian population in the Waterford area is primarily involved in agricultural pursuits, although some of the people work in the factories in Brantford and other nearby urban centres, and farm part-time. All of our informants were either Ukrainian-born or first-generation Canadians. Although most of the population is bilingual, Ukrainian remains the preferred first language.

Much of the musical activity centres on the churches. These are: Greek Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Ukrainian-Greek Catholic. The Greek Orthodox and Ukrainian-Greek Catholic churches have choirs, while the Waterford Gospel Singers (a mixed vocal quartet with electric accordion) appear to fulfil this function within the Pentecostal church. As far as we were able to ascertain, the performance of sacred music during public worship services is largely restricted to the established church choirs: congregational singing does not appear to be prominent, although the corpus of sacred music is apparently quite familiar to the populace at large.

Musical activity in the area is at its peak in the winter, when choirs practice during the week and perform in church on Sunday as well. The repertoire of the choirs appears to consist mainly of traditional Ukrainian material, in addition to a few more recently composed items by well-known Ukrainian composers. The repertoire of the Greek-Orthodox choir also contains several selections composed locally by the current choirmaster. All sacred texts as well as secular are sung in Ukrainian.

While traditional Ukrainian sacred music is still thriving in the community, the secular songs have not fared as well. These, it would seem, are being rapidly forgotten. Our collecting project therefore focussed on secular songs as we felt that these would soon be lost, whereas the religious songs, because of the importance of the churches in the musical life of the area, would tend to survive much longer.

We were fortunate that one of the co-authors is a former member of the community. The project coincided in time with spring planting, a busy time in this farming community. If it were not for the fact that the co-author’s family was well-known in the community it is doubtful if as many people would have taken the time to help us.

During the two-month stay in the area we managed to record a total of 23 secular items from 10 singers. While this collection by no means exhausted the repertoire of the singers, it is evident that requests for sacred materials would have yielded a much larger collection. All of the singers we approached had been at one time or another in one of the choirs. It may be that with the concentration of emphasis on religious songs, people felt ill-prepared when asked to sing non-religious songs.
Secular songs do not appear to have been passed on from one generation to the next on a large scale. Thus there is a discrepancy in the repertoires of different generations. Mrs. Gulka, who is eighty, performed songs for us which were not, for the most part, familiar to singers who were middle-aged. The younger people appear to know almost none of the older, traditional secular songs. The only young singers we found were the Waterford Gospel Singers, who contributed three religious songs which are direct from modern Ukraine. They know no specifically secular songs.

Thus, traditions of Ukrainian secular folk music appear to be dying out with the older generations. The decline is also evident in the realm of instrumental folk music. Traditional Ukrainian instruments are no longer in use. We found three cymbaly (an instrument of the hammered dulcimer family, such as the Hungarian cimbalon) which had been built by members of the community. The date of manufacture of these instruments was estimated by informants to be, respectively, c. 1960, c. 1945 and c. 1925. At present these instruments are in disuse. The sole surviving player of the cymbaly admitted that his demonstration of the instrument for us was the first time he had played it in "many years." He declined to have us record his playing. Other folk instrumentalists were located (piano-accordion, violin) but none are presently active.

Of course it is evident that our collecting of folk songs in the Waterford Ukrainian community was not of sufficient duration or intensity to allow us to explore in depth the amounts and kinds of Ukrainian musical survivals and/or adaptations which exist, nor to thoroughly investigate Old World musical survivals versus New World musical adaptations — and the cultural context of all of the above. Hopefully, additional field research into this interesting musical community will be possible in the future, and some of these fundamental questions can be broached.

Acknowledgements

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APPENDIX 1

Singing Styles

The Ukrainian singers prefer a full vocal sound with a strong vibrato. Except for slow ballads (of which we collected only one, ex. j), the songs are performed very loudly and forcefully. Glissandos are quite common. Only one singer, Max Taupeka, uses any other ornamentations:

![Appendix 3, ex. i]

The singers often varied the phrasing and pulse of the melody. This may be partially accounted for by the lack of instrumental accompaniment and by the fact that many of the performers had difficulty remembering the songs. These variations occurred, however, only when there was a solo voice, which suggests that melodic variation is part of the singing style.

![Appendix 3, ex.t]

Textual Content of the Songs

In terms of textual content, the songs we collected would appear to fall into four main categories:

1. **Love Songs**: These songs can be divided into groups. One group utilizes a subjective approach, presenting the views and feelings of one of the lovers. The other group is objective in that it provides the views of both the man and the woman. An example of the first group is “Dark Eyes” (appendix 3, ex. r). An example of the second group is “Dark I Am Dark” (ex. 2).

2. **Narrative Ballads**: The story of Halya (ex. 1) is an example of this group.

3. **Lyrical Songs**: This category contains two songs. “Why, Why, Why”, (ex. 3), collected from Mrs. Gulka, is a nostalgic, sad song which she likes because it reminds her of the Ukraine. Mr. Dwornick’s song of the grave (ex. 6) is similar to Mrs. Gulka’s song in that both deal with the remembrance of the past.

4. **Songs with Religious Content**: This grouping contains five songs, three from the Waterford Gospel Singers, and one each from Mr. Dwornick and...
and Mrs. Gulka (see examples 4 and 5). We were unable to discover whether or not any of these songs are being performed in the churches today.

APPENDIX 2

The transcriptions which follow are of two types. Those which include the text of the first stanza with the melody are transcriptions done directly from the tapes. Those which place the texts underneath the melody use an abstracted version of the song. Translations of the texts are for the most part literal.

Example No. 1:

[**HALYA**]

[sung by the quartet: soloist is Max Taupeka]

1) **The Cossacks were going home from war.**
   They tricked Halya and took her with them.
   Oh you Halya, young Halya,
   They tricked Halya and took her with them.

2) **And they drove Halya through the dark forests.**
   They tied Halya to the pine with her braids.
   Oh you Halya, young Halya,
   They tied Halya to the pine with her braids.
3) They tied Halya to the pine with her braids.
They set the pine afire from both sides.
Oh you Halya, young Halya,
They set the pine afire from both sides.

4) The pine burns, Halya speaks.
Anybody in the forest who hears her, let them save her.
Oh you Halya, young Halya,
Anybody in the forest who hears her, let them save her.

5) A Cossack who sleeps in the field answered her:
   "I will recognize your voice from afar."
Oh you Halya, young Halya,
   "I will recognize your voice from afar."

6) Another Cossack standing in the field also answered:
   "I recognize your voice from afar."
Oh you Halya, young Halya,
   "I recognize your voice from afar."

Example No. 2

DARK, I AM DARK

[sung by the trio]
Example No. 3

WHY, WHY, WHY  
[sung by Mrs. Gulka]

1) Dark, oh! I am dark,  
Dark as a gypsy.  
Why have I fallen in love with (twice)  
The dark Ivanko?

2) Oh yes I have fallen in love with  
Ivanko, yes Ivanko.  
Tall and stately (twice)  
He wears an embroidered shirt.

3) I love you, Marusia,  
I love you for your nature.  
I love to watch you (twice)  
As you go for the water.

4) As you go for the water (twice)  
I love to look (twice)  
Marusia, after you.

5) In the field there are two oaks,  
Both of them are green.  
We are so matched, (twice)  
Both of us are dark.

6) Oh I will go into the forest,  
I will rock the oak.  
I will not leave this place (twice)  
I will not leave my love.

Example No. 3
3) Why, why, why, oh my earth,
Why are you so dear to me? (twice)
Why, why, why, oh my earth,
Does your beauty so charm me?

2) With what, with what, with what do you charm me?
Your birdsongs, your vivid flowers of the forests.
With what, with what, with what do your waters enchant me?
Your currents that run here.

3) With that, with that, with that, know, my child,
Because here you first saw the flower, here in the summer meadow.
With that, with that, with that, know, my child,
Because these mountains, these forests, are your own country.

4) Here, here, here are your ancestors.
Here they spilt their blood for their faith in freedom.
Here, here, here are all your closest,
My heart, and your loved ones.

Example No. 4
WHEN THE DAY ENDS
[sung by the Waterford Gospel Singers]
When this work finishes, my soul,
And when I remember the teachings of Jesus Christ,
I will see heavenly glory there
And eternal joy will be mine.

Chorus: We will go where there will be no tragedy.
We will go where there will always be great peace.
We are going to the holy gates through the level steppes.
We will rest in heaven.

There will be no sadness nor terrible sin,
Only eternal happiness in the Saviour Christ.
And rivers of tears will flow from Christ’s eyes
For his loyal and saved children.

Chorus:

Let us try, brethren, to join here.
Reward awaits His loyal flock.
In the heavenly city, together with Christ,
We will govern forever.
1) Heaven and earth (twice)  
Today are celebrating  
Angels and people (twice)  
Merrily triumphing.  

2) Christ is born  
God has given birth.  
Angels are singing  
They are welcoming the Prince.  
The shepherds are praising,  
They are telling of the miracle.

Example No. 6  
IN THE FIELD IS A GRAVE [sung by Mr. Dwornick]

[1] Ой у полі могила  
З вітром розгорила  
Повій вітре буйлесенький  
Чоб я не чорнила  

[2] Щоб я не чорнила  
Щоб я не марніла  
Щоб по мені правда росла  
Май ще і зеленіла

APPENDIX 3  
Index of Recorded Materials

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<tr>
<th>Singers</th>
<th>Song Title</th>
<th>First Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Mrs. Gulka</td>
<td>a) Why, Why, Why</td>
<td>In the green meadow</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Why, why, why, oh my earth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c)</td>
<td>I will throw my coat on the shelf</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d)</td>
<td>In the cherry orchard the nightingale sings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>e)</td>
<td>By the time of fall, that fall</td>
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<td></td>
<td>f)</td>
<td>Make me a place, God in Heaven</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g)</td>
<td>A girl was standing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2] Mr. Taupeka       h) *The Moon Is In The Sky*  The moon is in the sky
3] Mr. Zackamarko   i) *Such a Night, Oh God*  Such a night, God, moonlit
4] Mr. Dwornick     j)  –  and starry
5] Waterford Gospel  k)  –  It rustles, it roars
Singers          l)  –  In the field is a grave
                        m)  –  Heaven and earth
6] Mr. Taupeka       n) *When The Day Ends*  When this work finishes, my
Mr. Zackamarko    o) *Le Bo Le Bo*  soul
                        p) *This Is The Way I Serve*  I want to sing in praise of
You                     q) *Oh Holoburaldra*  Jesus Christ
                        r) *Dark Eyes*  Dark eyes, black brows
7] Mr. Zackamarko   s) *Dark, I Am Dark*  Dark, oh I am dark
Mrs. Roffianishun  t) *Halya*  The Cossacks were going home
Mrs. Rndkow       u) *Cucumber Song*  from war
                         v) *My Mother Was Beating*  I will plant cucumbers close
Me                     w) *When The Day Ends*  to the water
8] Singers as above [7]  x)  –  My mother was beating me
plus Mr. Taupeka

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Résumé: *Anthony Proracki et Alan Henderson ont recueilli, l’été dernier, de*  
*la musique folklorique Ukrainienne dans la région de Waterford, Ontario.*  
*Dans ce premier rapport de leurs découvertes, ils résument sommairement*  
*le genre de chants qu’ils ont enregistrés et en donnent des exemples avec*  
*traductions en langue anglaise.*