

Transformation of the Melody "Schedryk": Synthesis of Traditions and Modernity

Iryna Tsiuriak

Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhytomyr

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4369-9360>

Abstract. Synthesized art forms as a component of modern musical culture are theoretically summarized; the features of the national component of Ukrainian music of the 21st century are highlighted for the perspective of further research. It is clear: there is a whole conglomerate of works absolutely intact from the point of view of analysis, which should be given iconic definitions and critical consideration. The popularity of the world-famous carol "Schedryk" has been proven once again: an increase in the number, the appearance of new types of musical accompaniment and synthesis in concert performances by famous performers, rock musicians, and groups.

Keywords: modern music, Ukrainian Shchedryk, synthesis of arts, musical trends, famous performers.

Today's music is a separate world that requires skill from the performer, and certain training from the listener. You should not blindly criticize or mindlessly adore new trends. Since modern rhythms reach the roots of ancient rites, it becomes obvious: music has always been and remains the main way for a person to emotionally reset.

The topicality of the topic is increasing due to insufficient coverage of the phenomenon in science. The direct dependence of the emergence of musical cultures on social changes is undeniable. This multifaceted phenomenon is integrated into mass culture, it simultaneously feeds on it and acts as a factor in its transformation.

The talented arrangement of Mykola Leontovych turned the Ukrainian Shchedryka into a world Christmas song, and the historic tours of the Ukrainian Republican Chapel under the leadership of Oleksandr Koshys brought it to the international arena, making Shchedryk a world-famous symbol.

"Shchedryk" crossed the ocean in 1922, having been performed in Ukrainian at New York's Carnegie Hall, and 15 years later, an American of Ukrainian origin and NBC employee Petro Vilhovskyi wrote the English text of this work, known as "Carol of the Bells" [1].

As Tina Peresunko, a researcher of the popularity of "Schedryk" in the USA, notes: "...the average American, listening to the popular "Schedryk", most likely does not know its author; and this is normal, because people often do not think about the creators of famous melodies that are heard around. The researcher emphasizes that such ignorance of the author is not a problem, because we ourselves do not always identify the authors of the songs we know" [2].

Despite the fact that the melody of the Ukrainian composer Mykola Leontovych, known as "Shchedryk", became the basis for "Carol of the Bells", in the USA the first publication in 1936 by the authorship of the Carl Fischer publishing house indicated: the author of the music is Leontovych, the author of the text is Peter Vilhovsky. This was confirmed by a 1937 registration requiring American choirs to cite Leontovich. For more than 100 years, this melody has been heard all over the world. Ukrainian "Shchedryk" won world recognition, becoming a real cultural phenomenon. The melody sounds in films and cartoons of any genre, and its interpretations are created by both beginners and world stars. Thanks to the experiments of representatives of various musical styles, each cover turns into an original and bright masterpiece.

2022 was marked by Mykola Leontovych: in honor of the artist's 145th anniversary, large-scale cultural projects and competitions were prepared. The international community actively participated in commemorating the composer, and performers from different countries interpreted "Shchedryk" in a new way, preserving its unique flavor through instrumental and stylistic experiments. The declaration of 2022 as the year of Mykola Leontovich became an opportunity for a deep understanding of his legacy, the event united musicians from all over the world, who creatively reinterpreted the elements of "Schedryk" in their work, integrating his characteristic sound into modern instrumentation and performance style.

In particular:

- Anna Reker, this performance by a Ukrainian woman with Andre Rieu's orchestra was particularly resonant, which touched the world and reminded of the Ukrainian origin of the carol [3].
- VV.Oleg Skrypka's voice acts magically and you no longer notice how you are singing along with him [4].
- Rock-H. The musicians of the Rock-H group recorded their rock version of "Schedryka". The composition was performed accompanied by an orchestra [5].
- ZAPAL, a Ukrainian cover band, presented a world-famous composition. The melody "Schedryk" in their performance is distinguished by its original sound due to cymbals [6].
- Mormon Tabernacle Choir. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, performed the "Generous" truly magnificently [7].
- Pentatonix. A cover version of "Schedryk" was released by three-time Grammy award winners American group Pentatonix back in 2012 [8].
- Laima Vaikule. In the New Year's commercial, the Latvian singer sang "Shchedryk" in Ukrainian, which became part of the festive context [9].

Thanks to the symbiosis with rock music, the work acquires a special drive and expression, which is emphasized by the powerful sound of electronic instruments. Christmas classic, presented his own version of "The Generous". This cover, which

impresses with its original arrangement, will surely find a response in the hearts of Heavy Metal connoisseurs, and their original and technical work fits perfectly into the canons of rock culture [10].

It is worth emphasizing the introduction of creative approaches during the study of "Folk musical creativity", "Basic musical instrument" and passing concert performance practice. A good example was the performance of Yevhen Mashkovskyi and Yulia Kotenko with the author's interpretation of "Shchedryk" (electric guitar and keyboard), which was counted as a result of practice and allowed students to realize their creative potential through non-standard solutions [11].

Thus, the potential of "Shchedryk" today goes beyond the boundaries of art, and in today's conditions, it makes it possible to interpret it as a communicative platform, a means of ideological influence on a wide audience and a representative case for the introduction of creative technologies.

References

1. Ukrainskyi "Shchedryk": nezvychaini vykonannia rizdvianoi pisni [Ukrainian "Shchedryk": unusual performances of a Christmas song] : URL: <https://mezha.net/ua/bukvy/ukrainskij-shchedrik-neobychnye-ispolnenija-rozhdestvenskoj-pesni> (data zvernennia: 05.01.2026).
2. Avtorka proektu "Svitovyj triumf Shchedryka" Tina Peresunko [Author of the project "World Triumph of Shchedryk" Tina Peresunko]: URL: <https://www.unian.ua/society/avtorka-proektu-svitoviy-triumf-shchedrika-tina-peresunko-shchedrik-buv-golosom-ukrajini-u-sviti-pid-chas-viyni-za-nezalezhnist-petlyura-hotiv-pokazati-pisneyu-shcho-ukrajina-ne-rosiya-novini-ukrajini-11269946.html> (data zvernennia: 05.01.2026).
3. Anna Reker zvorushyla zal vykonanniam "Shchedryka" [Anna Reker moved the audience with her performance of "Shchedryk"] : URL: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DRFTGaJCDTU> (data zvernennia: 05.01.2026).
4. VV : URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kh89By_lhE0
5. Rock-H : URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UU_3E4s8ILA
6. ZAPAL : URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dsUnpnJvv0>
7. The Tabernacle Choir : URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-W2Bkz_Rno.
8. Pentatonix : URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSUFzC6_fp8.
9. ukraine_tv : URL: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DRmCweeDNeR>.
10. Orion's Reign : URL: <https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=jzsSpsJimPw&list=PLUslguL7dlvHnsTRRjsB2p24F2OTrgekD>.
11. Mashkovskyi Ye., Kotenko Yu. "Shchedryk" : URL: <https://www.facebook.com/100004198727306/videos/pcb.1842458745904065/1842454759237797>.