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Identity Politics and Western Canadian Ukrainian Musics: Globalizing the Local or Localizing the Global?

Ethnomusicologists have been grappling for years with the phenomenon of "global-ization," an issue that has been examined through various changing paradigms (Guilbault 1999). Conversations on the Society for Ethnomusicology's electronic discussion list, like those regarding "periphery music flows" and "ethnic musics versus globalization," remind us that the issue is a current one, still vibrant, value-laden, and argued passionately. My own work in Ukrainian diaspora communities presents an additional dynamic to this debate, since diaspora communities do not easily lend themselves to definition along the lines of "here" or "there": are they enculturated, assimilated, hybrid, transcultural?

In this paper, I will explore how musicians in western Canadian Ukrainian contexts use music to construct local senses of identity and Ukrainianness while participating in a more global sense of Ukrainian history and nationhood. My focus will be on the musics of two ensembles, the Kubasonics, based in Edmonton, Alberta, and Alexis Kochan's Paris to Kyiv, based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. An examination of one album by each ensemble, both released in the spring of 1998, provides insight into how globalization problematizes "nationhood" while at the same time allowing for its re-creation. Album art, musical gesture and style, and interview commentary illustrate how these artists, and the strategies they choose in creating their musics, are tied up with local and essentialized images of Ukrainian identity, as well as with globalizing transnational aes-thetic value systems and cultural markets. Ultimately, these musics provide us with a means to get at the nature of power relations underpinning musical strategies.[1]

In the past, theorists have worried that globalizing processes threaten to turn all of us into one homogeneous world culture. Miyoshi warned that we will see "all regional cultures obliterated before long" in transnational corporatism that completely economizes culture, " a 'universal' consumerism that spreads beyond the boundaries of the first world into the second and the third, providing they have leftover money to spend" (1998:259). Others have suggested that the postmodern condition has let us choose what we want to be from all kinds of music, which has afforded us freedoms we have not enjoyed before in history. Stuart Hall has written that these postmodern possibilities are the means by which disenfranchised peoples can become empowered:

> The moment they want to get hold of, not nineteenth century technology to
> make all the mistakes the West did for another hundred years, but to get
> hold of that and get hold of some of the modern technologies to speak their
> own tongue, to speak of their own condition, then they are out of place,
> then the Other is not where it is. (Hall 1998:39)

More recently, we have come to understand these discourses and processes of production as multiplicitous, a complex of interwoven alliances.[2] As John Tomlinson describes this network of relationships, "the understanding of globalization as involving a 'dialectic' of opposed principles and tendencies—the local and the global, universalism and particularism—[is] now common, particularly in accounts which foreground cultural issues" (1999:16). However we understand transnational musical practices, we must look beyond their surface to get at the nature of the power relations underpinning musical strategies. That is, we must examine:

> how globalization alters the context of meaning construction: how it affects
> people's senses of identity, the experiences of place and of the self in rela-
> tion to place, how it impacts on shared understanding, values, desires,
> myths, hopes and fears that have developed around locally situated life. (20)

We must explore how "globalization"—"the rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependences that characterize modern social life"(2)—affects people's everyday realities, of which musical practices are a part. Tomlinson continues his discussion of "local life" as

> the vast order of human existence which continues, because of the con-
> straints of physical embodiment, to dominate even in a globalized world....
> Globalization *is* transforming this local order but the significance of this
> transformation reaches beyond technological accomplishments of communi-
> cation and transport. (9)

For this reason, ethnographies of specific histories, memories, and individual sites of musical production, such as this paper, which examine the dynamics of locality and globalization on a case by case basis, work to illuminate what Tomlinson calls "the messiness and particularity of actual cultural practices" (6).

My own experiences as a western Canadian Ukrainian, growing up in rural Alberta in the centre of the largest diasporic Ukrainian block settlement outside Ukraine, and now living in Toronto's Ukrainian community, have afforded me a unique understanding of how contemporary performances of Ukrainianness are part of present postcolonial redefinitions of nationhood. Globalization problematizes "nationhood" at the same time as it allows for its re-creation. To paraphrase Appadurai, the pressure to homogenize gives way to resistance and fragmentation (1990). Clear examples of this include current redefinitions of nations in Europe, fluctuations of post-Soviet nation-states (of which Ukraine is one), and new geopolitical reconfigurations. This is also manifest in music, a prime site for reconfiguring concepts of community and nation.

In my view, transnationalism and the economization of culture, along with redefinitions of nation and belonging, have undoubtedly changed our understandings and production of culture. However, this is not always cause for despair. Instead, we still see metonymic constructs of nationhood, often based on the very regional identities whose supposed loss theorists bemoan. Since, as Tomlinson writes, "the key to [globalization's] impact is in the transformation of localities themselves" (1999:29), in what follows I describe a brief history of western Canadian Ukrainian musical production. The impact of globalization within this context becomes clear in the subsequent descriptions of the musics and production choices of the Kubasonics and Paris to Kyiv.

A Western Canadian Ukrainian Context

Ukrainian communities across the whole of Canada are quite different in their make-up, due principally to immigration and settlement patterns throughout the country. In Ukrainian scholarship, Ukrainian immigration to Canada is described as having occurred in three waves spanning the twentieth century. There is a distinction made between the two more recent waves of immigration and the first wave. The second and third, representing immigrants who came to Canada after each of the world wars, is far more urban than were the rurally grounded pioneers of the first wave. The third wave of immigrants included many professionals and intelligentsia who settled mainly in cities and towns, particularly Toronto and its surrounding area. Political refugees torn from their homes during World War II, they were unable to return to their homes in Ukraine under Stalin's control. These Displaced Persons lived in camps that had been established especially for them in occupied Germany until their permanent resettlement to the Americas, Australia, and various European countries, which began in 1947. Thirty thousand came to Canada as the third wave of Ukrainian immigrants. While not all Ukrainians in Toronto are descendants or members of this third wave, these communities are definitely characterized by the Displaced Persons population. The strong organizational skills and nationalistic tendencies of this group immediately influenced the communities of which they became a part and continue to be a deciding force in the identity of Toronto's Ukrainian communities. The second wave of Ukrainian immigrants was characterized by political émigrés who fled post–World War I political persecution and consisted of a much smaller population than both the third and first waves of immigrants. Due in part to poor economic conditions in farming regions, as well as

more restrictive policies that limited interwar immigration, these Ukrainians tended to settle in cities like Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Toronto.

The first wave of Ukrainian settlement to Canada began in the 1890s, and it is this immigrant population that forms the western Canadian Ukrainian context for this paper. A farming population that left their eastern European peasant homes in search of farmland, this group was encouraged by the Canadian government to settle the prairies. While a great deal of their time was spent at labour, they also worked to maintain and preserve their culture by establishing reading rooms and groups for drama, dance, and music. They built halls in which they held community functions and dances, established many churches of both the Catholic and Orthodox faiths, and formed strong political organizations to voice their concerns.

This considerable social activity made them almost too visible and resulted in their suffering overt discrimination and internment in many instances during World War I. Reflecting mainstream Canadian attitudes, the anglophone conservative press vilified Ukrainians as the scum of Europe—"physical and moral degenerates not fit to be classed as white men."[3] Clifford Sifton, a Canadian Minister of the Interior, patronizingly defended Ukrainian peasants as good for pioneer settlement when he said, "I think a stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations, with a stout wife and half a dozen children is a good quality."[4]

The children of these stalwart peasants, schooled in English Canadian language and custom, began taking professional jobs off the farms and assimilated quickly into mainstream Canadian culture while still maintaining ties to their families and heritage. More recently, this western Canadian Ukrainian community has benefited from Canada's multicultural policies and has been recognized for having played an essential role in the growth and development of their new country.

It is from this stalwart stock that come the Kubasonics and Alexis Kochan. These artists are part of a rich heritage of Ukrainian musical production in Western Canada. This heritage of production is the topic of Brian Cherwick's recent doctoral thesis, "Polkas on the Prairies: Ukrainian Music and the Construction of Identity"(1999). Cherwick's opening sentence reads: "Music is the lifeblood of the Ukrainian community in western Canada" (1). He describes the music of western Canadian Ukrainians as linked strongly to ideas and memories of peasant or farming experiences.

The unique sounds of Ukrainian music help to create a distinct space that can transport the listener to another time and place. That place may be a peasant village in Ukraine or a rural farmstead on the Canadian prairies. The place may be a family kitchen where friends gather to sing and play traditional tunes on the fiddle or tsymbaly or a Ukrainian community hall packed with dancers whirling to the beat of a Ukrainian polka band (1).

The peasant or "folk" associations are doubly strong for Ukrainians in Western Canada. Not only is their historical experience tied to rural experience, as I described ear-

lier, but the modern nation-building project of Ukraine, which began in the late nineteenth century, is based directly on Herder's romantic nationalism. The heightened role of folklore in recognition of ethnic distinctions is a crucial element of Herder's ideology in this context. [5]

In his thesis, Cherwick notes that music is what still connects people to Ukrainian culture whether they are singing Christmas carols around a holiday ritual dinner table, dancing at a cousin's wedding, or celebrating a long weekend with friends at a hall party. He explains that Ukrainian music produced in Western Canada is a "unique product of its environment" (1) and observes that it provides as much an understanding of Western Canadian culture and history as it does Ukrainian culture. These issues link the development of this music to Canadian cultural development in general and, more specifically, to policies of multiculturalism and the predicament of diaspora cultures. While there are grave concerns regarding the homogenizing effect of multiculturalism, Ukrainians in Canada have largely benefited from these policies. As Cherwick notes,

> The Ukrainian community throughout Canada has developed a network of
> organizations which strive to provide both an ethnic environment in which
> its members can function comfortably, and an ethnic image that can be pre-
> sented to the rest of the North American population (6).

Furthermore, the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada developed chiefly in isolation from the homeland, due to the history of Ukrainian and Soviet politics. Cherwick continues, "the result [was] an environment ripe for the development of a unique form of Ukrainian identity" (9). He connects the music, a symbol of ethnic identity for Ukrainian Canadians who still identify with the peasant culture of their ancestors, to a specific history of musicians who brought their music to Canada and to technological developments in Western Canada. Cherwick also explains that this powerful ethnic symbol is a means for Ukrainians in Canada "to access a Ukrainian culture and community that would otherwise be denied to them by the complexities of Ukrainian language, traditional social patterns or involvement in community politics" (Stokes qtd. in Cherwick 1999:13). This is a clear example of how globalizing processes—in the wake of transnational highways designed by colonial powers, along which migrated great numbers of people—have affected people's everyday lives. Ukrainian music was objectified as a symbolic cultural element, carried across continents and oceans, and subsequently used in the (re)creation or re-membering of a culture in a new place. As Cherwick notes elsewhere, "one of the most salient features [of ethnicity] remains the fact that it seeks to link images of a distant past with the present" (7). In the case of Ukrainians in Western Canada, the past is associated with things rural, with peasants and farming. Hence, western Canadian Ukrainian music, "one of the external cultural symbols which continues to have a consolidating effect for Ukrainian Canadians long after such symbols as language, values and belief systems cease to be centrally important" (5), tends to be nuanced by peasant imagery.

Ukrainian peasant traditions of the past, like all traditions, can be understood as reinvented and reconstructed. Through the processes of reconstruction, some particular

elements have become objectified within the tradition of Ukrainian music in Western Canada. This tradition draws upon a foundation brought with immigrants to their new homes in Canada, as they existed in Ukraine in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From this heritage, musicians "who provided music for dancing at community events are the forerunners of the Canadian Ukrainian dance band musicians" (19). The folk orchestra that served as a prototype for western Canadian Ukrainians included violin, tsymbaly, and drum. This type of ensemble was popular in the villages of western Ukraine, where most western Canadian Ukrainians have their roots. Moreover, the popularity of the tsymbaly, which is relatively easy to construct, may also be a result of the limited economic resources of the pioneers (54–55).

Repertoire is also based on "traditional Ukrainian pieces; [with] an emphasis on providing music for dancing rather than ritual music" (55) and on songs and dances of the immigrants' native villages. Ukrainian musicians combined these traditional pieces with what they heard on the radio and on commercial records, resulting in the phenomenon of Ukrainian country music, as described by Klymasz (1972) in the 1970s. This is one example of Ukrainian musicians of the Canadian prairies combining their traditions "with those of the mainstream cultures where they have come to reside, resulting in inter-ethnic fusions" (Lipsitz qtd. in Cherwick 1999:22). On the prairies, Mickey and Bunny and the D-Drifters 5 developed their "unique hybrid of Ukrainian country and western music" during the 1960s (28). This fusion of musics continued, resulting in the creation of somewhat more sleek and highly produced versions of Ukrainian songs and dances. The Yevshan recording company, and groups such as Rushnychok, emerged in Montreal during the 1970s. In the 1980s, Ron Cahute and his group, Burya, inspired numerous bands with music that "incorporated western Canadian rural repertoires with eastern Canadian urban sensibilities" (29). The rurally nuanced repertoire of Ukrainian musicians in Western Canada continues to be characterized by variations of polkas, waltzes, and traditional Ukrainian dances (131), usually heard at live performance events such as hall parties, weddings, social dances, and festivals (64).

With this context in mind, I will now consider the music of the Kubasonics and Paris to Kyiv. Each of these ensembles fosters different understandings of Ukrainianness, distinct from the context of western Canadian Ukrainian music that I have outlined, and different from each other. In what follows, I discuss how they are both plugged into transnational cultural markets that provide them additional choices with regard to repertoire and instrumentation. Yet they are seemingly on opposite ends of the dichotomy that normally characterizes the "postmodern," the dichotomy between the nihilistic homogenizing results of globalizing processes and the utopian liberating opportunities that these processes afford world citizens whose voices have not been heard before.

Global Devils and Local Boys

The Kubasonics deliberately reach for local audiences by blatantly referencing western Canadian Ukrainian cultural elements. Their name clearly evokes western Canadian Ukrainian culture. The prefix, "Kuba-," derives from the Ukrainian word for garlic sau-

sage. Properly pronounced, the Ukrainian word for sausage is "kovbassa." But no one in Western Canada, unless they are recent Ukrainian immigrants, pronounces it that way; there the word is "kubassa" —hence "kuba-sonics." Most western Canadian Ukrainian descendants speak little Ukrainian anymore. They do include some Ukrainian words in their vocabulary, though, such as those for traditional foods still eaten mainly during holiday celebrations.

The title of the Kubasonics' album is *Miaso*, which means "meat." The album art for *Miaso* also includes photos that many western Canadian Ukrainians would recognize. A band photo inside the liner notes displays four traditional instruments that would have been used in Ukrainian dance bands from the early twentieth century: the drum, violin, bass, and tsymbaly (see Figure 1). This group shot was taken in a modern meat packing plant, with some of the equipment and paraphernalia providing a backdrop. The band's violinist, Beth Cherwick, is wearing an embroidered dress of a style that peasant immigrant women would have worn at the turn of the century.[6] Inside the album cover are photos of the musicians playing a gig, with microphones and instruments visible (see Figure 2). Many western Canadian Ukrainians, especially those who live around Edmonton, will recognize that the musicians are playing in the bandshell at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Museum. This open-air museum is located thirty-five minutes outside of Edmonton, in the heart of the largest block settlement of Ukrainians in Canada. It is the site of many well-attended local Ukrainian summertime festivals. Another page inside the album cover contains an educational guide to some indigenous Ukrainian musical instruments (see Figure 3).
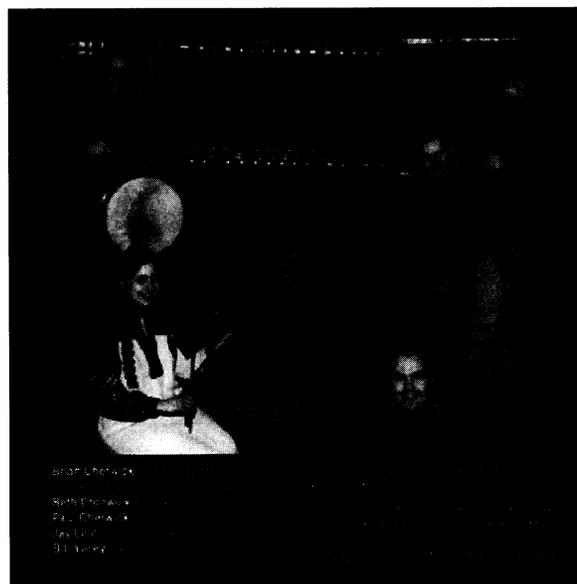
FIGURE 1 The Kubasonics, from the *Miaso* CD liner notes.
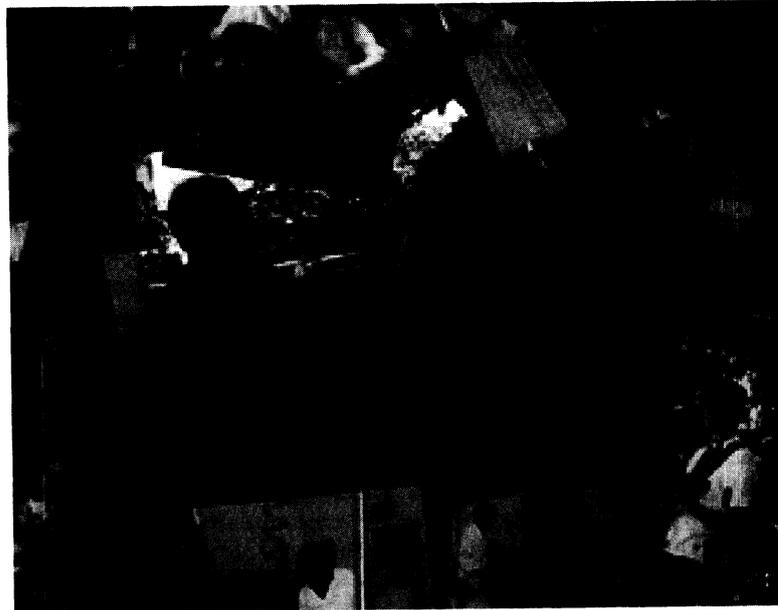Reproduced by permission of Brian Cherwick.

FIGURE 2 The Kubasonics in performance.
Reproduced by permission of Brian Cherwick.

Tsymbaly (dulcimer) Of Middle Eastern origin, dulcimers or tsymbaly have been popular in Ukraine for centuries and along with the violin are a favourite among Ukrainians in Canada. It has up to 144 strings arranged together in groups of six for each note. It is tuned chromatically and played by striking the strings with wooden hammers.

Duda (bagpipe) This Ukrainian bagpipe is from the mountain region in southwestern Ukraine. Made from a goat skin, it has one pipe which plays both the melody notes and a drone, and a second pipe which produces a lower pitched drone. Legend says that one must give the instrument a "drink" for it to play well.

Lira (hurdy-gurdy) The instrument has three strings, one for the melody and two that produce a drone accompaniment. The sound is produced by turning a rosined wheel that rubs against the strings. This instrument was traditionally played by blind musicians who sang religious songs and epic ballads.

Drymba (jaw harp) Played by pressing the instrument's frame against the teeth and plucking its metal tongue, while the player changes the size and shape of the mouth opening.

Sopilka A flute with a notch or fipple (dentse) to help produce the sound.

Dvodentsivka A flute with two pipes tuned a third apart, each with finger holes so that one musician can play both a melody and harmony simultaneously.

Zholomiha A double piped flute, with one pipe producing only a single pitch or drone.

Telenka A long flute without any finger holes. It is played by blowing air at different speeds to create different pitches, or by covering the end with one finger to lower those pitches.

Bass Sopilka A larger, lower pitched version of the sopilka.

Buhai (friction drum) A rosined horsetail passes through the drum skin. Sound is produced by rubbing the tail with wet hands. The instrument's name means "bull" since it give the sound of a bull grunting.

Resheto (hand drum) Legend says the drum's head should be made from the skin of a mean dog to give the best sound.

FIGURE 3
A guide to traditional Ukrainian musical instruments.
Reproduced by permission of Brian Cherwick.

The remaining pages of the cover include detailed descriptions for each musical track, including references to originals of covers, and playing styles. The Kubasonics' music can be characterized in two basic forms: traditional Ukrainian music in contemporary arrangement, or covers of non-Ukrainian tunes that reference well-known North American artists and mainstream popular music sounds.[7] In what follows, I discuss a track that falls in the latter category, called "Devil Went Down to Vegreville." It is a cover of the Charlie Daniels 1979 country rock hit, "The Devil Went Down to Georgia." [8] Elements within this piece bear direct reference to a localized western Canadian Ukrainian context.

First, the title of the song includes the name of the small agricultural town in Alberta, called Vegreville, a major cultural centre for Ukrainians for almost 100 years. Though the town's population is ageing—most of the young people have moved to nearby Edmonton—it continues to be a prominent site of western Canadian Ukrainian heritage and a place to which many young Ukrainians return for visits to grandparents. It is also the site of the annual Ukrainian Pysanka Festival, where dance, music, and craft competitions have been taking place throughout the first weekend of July for more than twenty-five years. Dance parties, which showcase several bands, are held each night of the festival and are a major attraction.

Second, I would draw attention to implicit meanings in verbal and musical gestures. The lyrics of "Devil Went Down to Vegreville" tell the story of a devil who makes a bet with a mortal: whoever can play his instrument better wins.[9] If the devil wins, he gets the mortal's soul. If the mortal wins, he gets a golden instrument. In Charlie Daniels's version, the instrument is a fiddle; in the Kubasonics' version, the instrument is a tsymbaly, the Ukrainian version of a hammered dulcimer.[10] Brian Cherwick, the band's leader and tsymbaly player, described his performance practice on the instrument:

> The instrument is usually held on the performer's lap. Sometimes it is suspended around the performer's neck on a strap. Another possibility is to place the instrument on a stand. When I play, I use all of the above. With the Kubasonics, I usually place my instrument on a keyboard stand or an ironing board. The keyboard stand is a bit more streamlined, but the ironing board gets more of a reaction. (Cherwick 1999a)

In "Devil Went Down to Vegreville," the devil duels with a young Ukrainian named Slavko. I asked Brian to tell me a bit about how he played each role in the song, that is, how he used musical gestures to characterize both the devil and Slavko:

> I think that in the Charlie Daniels recording, the idea is that the slick loud devil is certain that he will defeat the country bumpkin fiddler. In terms of the fiddler, the loud rock beat is the antithesis of the old-time fiddle music. Even with all the loud "demon music," the old-time fiddler has superior technique and wins the contest.

I don't think that I consciously did anything differently. If you compare the two, the arrangements are pretty similar. I made the devil a bit more devilly (including the spooky noises) and made Slavko a bit more bumpkinny (giving him a farm Ukrainian accent), but the main idea is the same. (1999a)

It seems that Brian's juxtaposition of characters, with regard to musical gestures, was less intended than a parody of the original tune.

This leads to the third element I would like to highlight in the Kubasonics' version: stereotypical representation of Ukrainianness, nuanced as rural and Western Canadian. When Slavko speaks or sings it is in the stereotypical accent of a Ukrainian Canadian immigrant peasant farmer speaking English. This is a localized, regional articulation of a western Canadian Ukrainianness, spoken with the "voice" of a North American. It is spoken by the "primitive," the "other," who is using not only his own musical language but also some of the "modern technologies" of the West. I will return to this point in the conclusion of this paper.

While the Kubasonics' music references a local essentialized Ukrainian identity, it is also part of more far-reaching cultural markets. Brian, the leader, is an ethnomusicologist at the University of Alberta. He bases his music not only on his experiences growing up in Canada but also on his research in Ukraine. In fact, most of the indigenous Ukrainian instruments used by the band were acquired on his travels in Ukraine and are unfamiliar, even "exotic," to most local western Canadian Ukrainians. Aware of this, the band included the elaborate instrument guide in the liner notes. Brian's musical talent and skills, developed while growing up in Manitoba and performing in his uncle's band, furthered through travels and education in Ukraine, have provided him with extensive knowledge of Ukrainian instruments and traditional culture. His knowledge and understanding is evident in his impressive use and description of these instruments and is recognized in many Ukrainian communities. Brian has also pointed out to me that the name "kubasonic" can have yet another layer of meaning. A native Ukrainian speaker, or someone who has spent time in Ukraine, will recognize the suffix "-nyk" (-nic) as denoting a person who has a penchant for something: in this case, kubassa. This layer of meaning is more evidence of his great familiarity with Ukraine and its culture; it connects with Ukrainians halfway around the globe as well as with new immigrants who might hear the Kubasonics.

The Kubasonics do not play for only Ukrainian audiences. Their performance experiences include many folk festivals in Western Canada, as well as in Alaska. They also play nightclubs in Edmonton, like the folk-oriented Sidetrack Café. They don't play the repertoire of a typical Ukrainian band for weddings and evening dances, nor does their repertoire primarily include the usual list of polkas and waltzes—though when they were hired once for a dance gig, they specially prepared tunes to make the evening danceable. Furthermore, all the musicians have full-time jobs which allow them creative autonomy, which they might not otherwise have. They have received no direct outside funding for their CD project, just the money from their own pockets and what they have earned from gigs. While Brian speaks Ukrainian fluently and has considerable knowledge and experiences of Ukraine, all evident in his identity and

music-making practices, he has told me that the language he speaks most readily at home and in most places is English. He also notes that he speaks Ukrainian with a Canadian accent. By making this self-aware statement, he places himself at a distance from things Ukrainian and has constructed his everyday existence as that of a citizen of a larger world, who speaks the language of "global(izing)" culture.

From Paris to Kyiv

Alexis Kochan and the ensemble Paris to Kyiv explicitly try to avoid referencing local Ukrainian identity by incorporating non-Ukrainian elements. As Alexis mentioned in an interview, she envisions her music as an "atypical Ukrainian music ... not the regular folk ditties, accordions, or polka beat and dance rhythms" usually played by Ukrainian bands in Western Canada (1999). The strategies this group chooses when creating its music fit into familiar discourses of "World Music." As with the Kubasonics, the group's name provides an important clue to the aspirations of the musicians. Paris to Kyiv makes a direct connection with a Western European cultural power.[11]

The album art of the band's *Variances* CD contains nothing recognizably Ukrainian. The photos clearly attempt to reference the more ancient and far-reaching Indo-European and Byzantine "exotic" roots of Ukrainian culture. The henna hand decorations are not part of any Ukrainian tradition with which I am familiar (see Figure 4). The back cover art is a collage of photos. Again, nothing in these images references Ukrainianness. Even the photo of Alexis dressed in a white gown and head scarf makes ambiguous cultural references. Other photos, particularly those of the tree, stone, and iron window, almost seem to reference the album art of world music artist Loreena McKennitt[12] (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 4
Variances CD inside cover art.
Reproduced by permission of
Alexis Kochan.

FIGURE 5 *Variances* CD back cover art.
Reproduced by permission of Alexis Kochan.

In fact, Alexis herself told me that she has been accused of trying to jump on the "Celtic bandwagon," of which McKennitt is a part. Specifically, Paris to Kyiv's incorporation of Northumbrian pipes on the *Variances* recording has drawn this criticism. Julian Kytasy, who plays in the group, told me that when he met with Alexis to plan the recording she had already made a definite choice to include pipes for "a distinctive English Isles sound." Moreover, it seems clear that Alexis models at least her performance persona after McKennitt. In interviews, she has pointed out parallels between herself and McKennitt. For example, like McKennitt, Alexis chooses to perform and record "old songs that few people know about, and set [them] to new musical material." Also like McKennitt, Alexis prides herself on the fact that she does "all the business stuff [herself]" (personal communication 1999).

Among the percussion on this recording are an udu drum, dumbek, buffalo drum, congas, and djembe. Use of these instruments deliberately creates a pastiche and provides, in Alexis's words, "more of a world music sound" that would appeal to audiences wider than just Ukrainians. Regarding her intent and music, Alexis told me she tries to "reach beyond nationhood" to produce music that "speaks to the soul of a people, uses ancient symbols of eroticism, the loss of virginity and rebirth ..." music "particular about the Ukrainian soul but also universal ... interfacing with other musics of the world." Music, she says, is "old/ancient, folkloric, ritualistic ... it is the

jewellery of a culture, beauty, purity ... it speaks to the 'truth' about Ukraine ... based in prehistorical tradition ... with purposes we don't know about." Alexis's target audience, in her own words, is a "cultish, artsy, more intellectual crowd."[13]

Further to the intent of her musical production, Alexis says, "I'm not interested in having the musicians imitate anything, instead to contribute their own special talent, and speak their own version of this [Ukrainian] musical language." She consciously does "not want to appropriate Ukrainian music," but "breathe new life into ... chants and folk songs of the melancholy, the missed moments of Ukrainian history". She is motivated by a wish that her creative output be an educational and artistic venture and a music that could become popularly listened to by "art-house, alternative audiences" (1999). Alexis believes she has been successful in her intent and has remained true to her motivation. According to her, at the time I conducted interviews for this paper, she had sold more albums than most independent artists in Canada. She told me she had been on the HMV Indie List for weeks in Toronto. Her music gets much airplay on the CBC, on shows such as "Roots and Wings." Certainly, the fact that she is being promoted by the World Music Institute of New York speaks to some success in her reaching a world music market.

But at the same time that Alexis reaches for a world music audience, her musical language is based in specific senses of Ukrainianness, as has already been alluded to in her own characterization of her music, "missed moments of Ukrainian history ... particular about the Ukrainian soul." Alexis lets her "gut instinct" guide her to the "'truth' of the [Ukrainian] culture" (1999). She believes that truth comes from deep within eastern Ukraine. Yet many Ukrainian historians state that the eastern part of the country has, due to longer rule by the Russian Empire, been more Russified than the western lands, which are credited as being the stronghold of Ukrainian culture (Hornjatkevyc 1999).[14] The western region even gained political autonomy from Austro-Hungarian rule for a short time early in the twentieth century.

Perhaps the most obvious Ukrainian element in this music is the Ukrainian language of the texts. Still, Alexis deliberately set the lyrics back in the mix to sound like one of the instruments so that they are, in her words, "not a barrier." Despite the position of the lyrics, Alexis's western Canadian Ukrainian pronunciations are readily audible. Also, when she sings, her vocal aesthetic is based in "the bottom of [her] voice ... [she] put[s] the ornaments and grace notes, twists and turns, where [she] thinks they would sound most beautiful."[15] What she thinks of as beautiful is based on her intuition, "a certain kind of intelligence ... belief," on her experiences travelling and researching in Ukraine, and educated guesses. As she told me, it is "an understanding of what I think is Ukrainian" (1999).

Likewise, the musical material created by Paris to Kyiv is based on Ukrainianisms. The melodies on *Variances* are based on transcriptions published in Ukrainian folk song compendiums and Ukrainian Christian liturgical chant material (Kytasy 1999). However, the liner notes are sparse, including only the track titles and arrangement credits. The notes do not make any reference to the material itself (clearly contrasting The Kubasonics' liner notes, which provide explicit references for the reader). Julian Kytasy,

whom many Ukrainians will recognize as "nash" or "one of our own," plays the Ukrainian bandura in almost every track. [16] A resident of New York, he is active within the larger arts community and is the only musician on the album who does not live in Winnipeg, where the music is produced. Yet, because of his performance and teaching activities on various continents, Kytasy is likely the most widely known musician in Ukrainian communities around the world and is therefore associated with things Ukrainian.

Further situating Alexis within a specifically western Canadian Ukrainian context are her special thanks, listed inside the album cover. They are given to:

> Multiculturalism Program of Canadian Heritage, Manitoba Arts Council, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Ukrainian Canadian Congress—Manitoba Centennial Commission, Ukrainian Canadian Foundation of Taras Shevchenko, Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre—Oseredok, Carpathia Credit Union, City of Winnipeg, Murray Yankoski for Contemporary Printing....

All of these institutions or organizations provided funding for the Paris to Kyiv project. Several Ukrainian communities other than those in Manitoba have supported Alexis's music by hiring her to perform at Ukrainian celebratory functions, such as Shevchenko concerts (Soltykevych 1999).[17] Also dependent upon grants from Canada Council for the Arts, she tailors her music to fit into the "cultish, artsy, more intellectual crowd" mentioned above, which she believes this funding agency tries to target (personal communication 1999). Thus, musicians themselves are not always the central actors in the processes of musical creation; funding agencies like the ones mentioned above, disc jockeys, producers, and concert promoters all have something to do with the choices that are made in the creation and performance of the music they support. They, too, are involved in the power relations that make up the underpinnings of musical strategies.

The Primitives Have Escaped!

Both the Kubasonics' and Alexis Kochan's reconceptualizations of Ukrainianisms raise issues of how these musicians remember who they are and where they come from. Markers of Ukrainianness like those evoked by these musicians—style of dress, accent, lyrics, melodies, repertoire, sound qualities, and timbres—work together to re-enact localized culture and values. These essentialized notions of Ukrainianness are predicated on specific discourses of memory and history. Rather than natural models of "authenticity" or "truth," they are embodiments of these values and related identity politics. Whether or not the values are related specifically to Ukrainian nationhood—understood as part of an established Ukrainian folklore, (post)Soviet politics, transnational diaspora, or intradiasporic definitions—it is clear that this production is linked at least more generally to constructs and discourses of the (M)odern nation. These values are related to the dichotomy between traditional community and modern (or postmodern) society that has, in the past, guided academics in their search for social theory.

In contemporary debates about modernity and the transnational processes of globalization, people tend to reference mainly stylistic features—parody, pastiche, conflation of elements from different time periods, and so forth.[18] But the choices we make in constructing postmodern senses of identity are not made from a limitless range, with complete freedom to choose whatever we want. The choices we make depend on economics, politics, and culture, all bound up in relations of power. In other words, instead of only discussing the postmodern condition with stylistic descriptives like "parody," and "pastiche," we must look instead at the social and political underpinnings, asking why artists make some choices over others.[19]

While the Kubasonics intend to appeal to local western Canadian Ukrainian audiences they are also hooked into global systems of cultural circulation; these include being provided with a song to parody, a specific history and cultural understandings that inspired them to create that parody, and the means and space to produce and perform their music. Although it seems that, by referencing many musical traditions, Alexis Kochan's musical strategies trivialize difference, she is tied up between essentialized understandings of Ukrainian identity and localized Western Canadian cultural politics. It is clear, from the examples I have discussed in this paper, that the global/local paradigm does not operate purely as a dichotomy but more as a continuum, or a convergence of any number of factors at different times and in different places. Both groups of musicians market particular representations of Ukrainianness, and both use resources, musical and otherwise, made available to them through transnational cultural markets, to create their own distinctive musics. The different musics of the Kubasonics and Paris to Kyiv also demonstrate that the diverse Ukrainian diaspora cannot be reduced to unified representations of nationhood or ethnicity. Instead, as in Paul Gilroy's discussion of a diverse Black diaspora in *Black Atlantic* (1993), Ukrainian diaspora communities provide "a means to reexamine the problems of nationality, location, identity, and historical memory" (Gilroy 1992:193).

Both of the musics I have described in this paper are "world musics" in the sense that they

> [embody] a hybrid character that embrace[s] attentiveness to musical, social or political change occurring elsewhere ... they are industrialized; they fuse capital, technical and musical elements from diverse origins; and they are frequently accompanied by an ethnographic and educational discourse. (Guilbault 1997:31)

Charles Keil has worried about "the global economy eroding the old nation-state identities and leaving [no] space for local communities to reassert themselves" (qtd. in Guilbault 1997:34). But, as Tony Mitchell points out, one clearly positive effect of "World Music" is that it has exposed Western listeners to musical forms that have traditionally been appropriated by rock and popular musics. Furthermore, as a result of this exposure, we have come to understand that "notions of musical purity and authenticity are an idealistic form of colonialist nostalgia" (Mitchell 1993:335).

Clifford writes, "When every cultural agent (especially global capitalism) is mixing and matching forms, we need to be able to recognize strategic claims for localism or authenticity as possible sites of resistance and empowerment rather than simple nativism" (1997:183). Paris to Kyiv provides an interesting counter-example, since the ensemble's view is a kind of "non-nativist" view of authenticity; they mobilize an authenticity claim but one based in avoiding local marks of difference. In this light, the musics I have described in this paper invite us to reconfigure concepts of community and nation and to

> move beyond the quest for narratives of originary and initial subjectivities, and to address new questions that acknowledge the complexity and fluidity of meanings involved in the act of constructing and rearticulating identities through music ... [to examine] the processes by which these are constituted and continually reformulating and realigning themselves.... (Guilbault 1997:34)

The assertions of Paris to Kyiv may be understood as limited because local identity is not being presented at the fore but in transnational world music commodity form. However, I would argue that although it may not be the main intent of the musicians to present local identity, the members cannot hide these markers of their identity. For example, the lyrics are in Ukrainian, sung with a Canadian accent; furthermore, in my experiences on various continents, the bandura is not yet a well-known instrument outside Ukrainian communities. In the case of the Kubasonics, their assertions may be limited because the group does not have a broad listenership outside their community; yet, their audiences are at least as far-reaching as many other groups that play in folk festival circuits. Finally, these musics are more frequently noticed and discussed as a result of discourses such as the one that has produced this paper. This occurs in both academic and non-academic spaces; I have presented this research at a major international ethnomusicology conference and have also written reviews for popular and academic press reviews based on this material. Contradicting Keil's predictions, with the examples I have outlined in this paper, I have shown that there are indeed spaces for local communities and identities to reassert themselves within the global economy.[20] Nonetheless, in my research I endeavour to extend this examination of music and culture to the socio-cultural negotiations implicit in these musics.

Stuart Hall has asked:

> Is the local just a local exception, just what used to be called a blip in history?... Or is it also, itself, in an extremely contradictory state? It is also moving, historically being transformed, speaking across older and new languages. Think about the languages of modern contemporary music, and try to ask where are the traditional musics left that have never heard a modern musical transcription? Are there any musics left that have not heard some other music? All the most explosive modern musics are crossovers. The aesthetics of modern popular musics is the aesthetics of the hybrid, the aesthetics of the crossover, the aesthetics of the diaspora, the aesthetics of creolization. It is the mix of musics which is exciting to a young person who

comes right out of what Europe is pleased to think of as some ancient civilization, and which Europe can control. The West can control it if only they will stay there, if only they will remain simple tribal folks. The moment they want to get hold of, not nineteenth century technology to make all the mistakes the West did for another hundred years, but to get hold of that and get hold of some of the modern technologies to speak their own tongue, to speak of their own condition, then they are out of place, then the Other is not where it is. The primitive has somehow escaped from control. (1998:38–39)

The invocations and articulations of Ukrainianness and global culture of both the Kubasonics and Paris to Kyiv help us understand strategic claims for the authenticity of the local as resistance and empowerment rather than simple nativism (Clifford 1997:183), particularly when we recognize the specific histories of these diaspora communities. These one-time Ukrainian "primitives," beasts of the Prairies, stalwart peasants, have now acquired new voices with which to sing. They sing about themselves, in their own tongues, across older and new languages, and are heard as part of global culture, creating and re-creating explosive modern musics.

Notes

1. See Straw (1991:250), where he writes,

   while it is apparent that a global pop music culture now [early 1990s] exists as a repertory of resources for any given musician, the criteria by which those resources are deemed appropriate to a given conjuncture are nevertheless worked out in an ongoing complex elaboration and definition of values.

2. Ethnomusicologist Ingrid Monson discusses these issues in relation to specific music-making practices in the introduction to her recent publication, *The African Diaspora* (2000).

3. This writer goes on to call Ukrainians "disgusting creatures" and wondered how "beings having human form could have sunk to such a bestial level" (*Winnipeg Telegram* 7 July, 2 Nov 1899; *Belleville Intelligencer*; *Halifax Herald* 18 March 1899).

4. "The Immigrants Canada Wants," in the 1 April 1922 issue of *Maclean's*. See Lehr (1994).

5. See Kamenetsky (1973: 836–848) on Herder's romantic nationalism, and Linke (1995: 1–26) for his views on the role of folklore in ethnic distinctions.

6. See comparative photos in Lupul (1982:154, 155, 158) and Martynowych (1991:133).

7. I have included examples of each of these forms of music on the *Topia* web site. For the Kubasonics' contemporary arrangement of an indigenous, traditional Ukrainian dance, listen to "Hutsulka." Also, notice at the end of this track someone announces, "That's tsymbaly music, my friends!" I asked Brian from where had he taken this small sample. This was his response:

   This was recorded live at the 1974 CFCW [Country and Western Radio Station] dulcimer contest. The guy talking is a radio announcer Dan Chomlak who was the host of the Ukrainian Hour of CFCW (and many other stations across Western Canada) for many years.

   I listened to his show as a kid (it was broadcast nightly in Winnipeg). I also met him several times when I was a bit older. I also know his nephew pretty well. Dan is no longer in radio.

   For an example of the Kubasonics covering a non-Ukrainian popular music, listen to their rendition of Bo Diddley's "Bo Diddley"; the Kubasonics version is titled "Solomon."

8. Listen to the Kubasonics' "Devil Went Down to Vegreville" on the *Topia* web site.

9. Notice, in addition to the elements highlighted in this paper as Ukrainian, that in Slavko's final verse, he curses at the devil in Ukrainian, *"ty, kholero!"* ("you, cholera!").

Further situating these lyrics within a local context are those of the chorus. Its last line reads "Matsumoto Hot Dog, Go Child Go!" Brian explained that these are lyrics taken from a handy teaching trick his wife, Beth, uses with her violin students. She teaches Suzuki Method to students in Edmonton, and Brian says that, beyond the Kubasonics, probably only Beth's students would understand the reference. Beth uses the phrase "Matsumoto Hot Dog" to help children grasp that particular rhythmic phrase pattern.

10. See Figure 3, an instrument guide, for tsymbaly. I asked Brian to describe the tsymbaly and its sound:

> Tsymbaly is the Ukrainian version of a hammered dulcimer. It's kind of difficult to describe in text off the top of my head, but here it is. In a nutshell, the instrument is a box zither with a trapezoid-shaped body. Strings are grouped in courses of 5 or 6 strings each. They pass over and under two bridges, one running along the right-hand side of the instrument, the other running down the middle. The middle bridge divides some of the courses by a ratio of 3 to 2, producing a perfect fifth over the right-hand bridge, allowing the full length of string to vibrate. It is tuned more or less chromatically, but depending on the size of the instrument, some are diatonic or diatonic with some chromatic areas. The sound is produced by striking the strings with hammers allowing the strings to vibrate. Sometimes they are damped using the hand. In some cases, the strings can also be plucked. (Cherwick 1999b)

11. "Kyiv" is a transliteration of the Ukrainian city's name from Ukrainian; "Kiev" is transliterated from Russian.

12. See, for example, the cover of McKennitt's album *Mask and Mirror*.

13. On 1 May 1999, Alexis and Paris to Kyiv performed a concert in New York, sponsored by the World Music Institute. The WMI's self-defined mandate is to promote "traditional music from various countries and cultures ... music of professional quality that are authentic, rooted in tradition, but can be popular." This definition is from an interview conversation I had with Helene Browning, one of the directors of the Institute (1999).

14. Dr. Hornjatkevyc teaches Ukrainian language and culture at the University of Alberta and works at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (also at the University of Alberta). He is a bandura player of some acclaim, as well as a teacher of performance on the instrument. He has written widely on the bandura and its musical history and traditions.

15. Alexis gives performance workshops for Ukrainian music, sometimes with Julian Kytasy. When describing the vocal performance technique she teaches in these workshops, she explained that, while she recognizes that her technique is not the indigenous Slavic vocal "open voice" or "white voice," it is her estimation of it.

16. An indigenous Ukrainian composite chordophone that sounds much like a harp, the bandura, Ukraine's national instrument, strongly evokes narratives of nation.

17. Orest Soltykevych conducts a radio program on the University of Alberta radio station, CJSR, titled "Sounds Ukrainian." He is also a music teacher in an Edmonton school, and conducts various Ukrainian community choirs in Edmonton, Alberta.

Taras Shevchenko is Ukraine's national poet. Every year in various Ukrainian communities around the world, concerts are celebrated in honour of his birth. Of Alexis's performance at a Shevchenko concert in Edmonton, Soltykevych wrote in an e-mail that it was "a very unique and suitable presentation—everyone enjoyed her performance—not easy to adapt to a

Shevchenko theme." He further elaborated that Alexis had learned some of the performed pieces, in addition to her own music with Julian Kytasy, based on Shevchenko's poetry (Soltykevych 1999).

18. See the extended discussion of this in Best and Kellner (1997:124–94).

19. James Clifford addresses this in his newest book, *Routes*. He writes:

> I do think "postmodernism" can serve as a translation term, to help make visible and valid something strange (as modernism did for the early twentieth-century primitivists discovering African and Oceanian "art"); but I want to insist on the crucial *traduttore* in the *traditore*, the lack of and "equals" sign, the reality of what's missed and distorted in the very act of understanding, appreciating, describing. One keeps getting closer *and* farther away from the truth of different cultural/historical predicaments. This reflects a historical process by which the global is always localized, its range of equivalences cut down to size. It's a process that can be contained—temporarily, violently—but not stopped. New political subjects, I assume, will continue to emerge, demanding that their excluded history be recognized. (1997:41–42)

20. Erlmann provides a discussion of these same issues: "Translocal production processes and their agents are masked in the idiom and spectacle of local worlds"(1993:9).

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