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# Ukrainian Folklore Influences in the Music of Myroslav Skoryk: Historical Background and Performance Guide to Selected Violin Works

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**UKRAINIAN FOLKLORE INFLUENCES  
IN THE MUSIC OF MYROSLAV SKORYK:  
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND PERFORMANCE  
GUIDE TO SELECTED VIOLIN WORKS**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

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## ABSTRACT

Myroslav Skoryk is one of the most influential Ukrainian composers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. His works draw extensively on the folk traditions of Ukraine to evoke various aspects of the country's cultural legacy.

The violin holds a special place in the cultural, societal, and historical heritage of Ukraine. Skoryk's works for violin draw on both Ukrainian folk traditions as well as classical performance traditions. The intricacies of Skoryk's folk-inspired classical pieces of music are rooted in the oral traditions of Ukrainian folk music.

This document provides background information on certain Ukrainian folk music traditions and their connection to selected works by Skoryk that combine folk elements with traditional Western Classical characteristics. This information aims to guide the player to a better understanding and more effective performance of these pieces.

My Lecture Recital performance in February, and this accompanying Written Document focus on *Dibrova Zelena*, *Carpathian Rhapsody*, and *Hutsul Triptych: II. "Dance"* – are the examples of how Skoryk blends the mostly oral tradition of folk music with more complex classical procedures, particularly as they apply to the violin. The goal is to provide a useful performance guide for the professional player while also enlightening the general reader who is interested in discovering new Ukrainian pieces.

Skoryk's violin music represents a distinctive and important contribution to the violin repertory. A working knowledge of the folk roots of Skoryk's compositions and the methods he employed in transferring folk elements into his violin works is essential to the performer's understanding and effective interpretation.

## I. UKRAINIAN FOLK MUSIC TRADITIONS

Ukraine, known as the land of blue skies and fields of wheat, is an exceptionally diverse Eastern European country. Its cultural legacy dates back to the ninth century when the region was inhabited by a number of proto-Slavic tribes, who formed the first Eastern Slavic state, Kievan Rus<sup>1</sup>. Music has had a prominent and profound effect on various aspects of Ukrainian culture since the establishment of Kievan Rus', through the invasion of the Mongols in the thirteenth century, and into Ukraine's current era after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

A large part of music education throughout the history of Ukraine has begun with young students participating in various activities serving to promote and preserve Ukrainian traditions, history, and culture. Thus, traditional songs have been passed from older to younger generations for centuries. Ukrainian people have used songs and instrumental music to nourish their minds and souls in various life situations. Such songs can be divided into ritual and non-ritual<sup>2</sup> songs, all of which also had ethnic and social importance. Moreover, every event or occasion had a set of songs or instrumental pieces accompanying it: songs celebrating birth, wedding songs, battlefield songs, etc.

In Ukrainian culture, nature plays an extremely important role in various aspects of life. There is always a strong connection between nature and the supernatural, which creates mystical connotations in most Ukrainian folk music.

It was customary for Ukrainians to pick up any instrument available or even craft musical instruments from other implements in their daily lives. People would use these instruments in

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<sup>1</sup> Mykhailo Zhdan, "Kyivan Rus'," Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine, accessed May 15, 2018, <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CK%5CY%5CKyivanRushDA.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Mykola Mushynka, "Ritual Songs," Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine, accessed May 15, 2018, <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CR%5CI%5CRitualsongs.htm>

conjunction with their voices to create music. This is how folk music training was passed from generation to generation, as an oral tradition, before the development of standardized professional music education. According to the article from the leading Ukrainian language magazine in the USA “Ukrainian people”, “Traditional Ukrainian music is predominantly heterophonic: the same melody is distributed among different voice parts, with one leading voice, mostly in a middle register. The lead singer (*zaspivoovach*) starts singing and determines the course of the melody, and the other voices often come in later. This heterophonic group singing is often embellished by an independent voice in a very high register (*vyvodtshyk*).”<sup>3</sup>

One of the more popular genres in this heterophonic style is the *Ballad*. It is a structurally convenient genre of song due to the overall extended length. This length provides room for the extended text setting and an abundance of melodic improvisation. The example below is an excerpt from a popular Ukrainian Cossacks<sup>4</sup> folk song *Ой, чий то кінь стоїть* (English tr. *Whose Horse is Standing There*).

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<sup>3</sup> Traditional Ukrainian Songs and Music, *Ukrainian People*, May 16, 2017, <https://ukrainianpeople.us/traditional-ukrainian-songs-and-music/>

<sup>4</sup> Serhii Plokyh, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1.

Example 1. Ukrainian folk song *Ой, чий то кінь стоїть* (*Oh, Whose Horse is Standing There*), mm.1-5.



An important Slavic group to consider is the Hutsuls, who inhabited a region in the Carpathian Mountains. In regards to instrumental music, it is important to note the formation of the Hutsul *trio* called *troyista muzyka*<sup>5</sup>. It is a group of three musicians playing flute, violin, and *bandura*. These three instruments can be replaced with either drum, or *zhaleika*, *tsymbaly*, or any other instrument common and specific to Ukrainian culture. The role of this trio is similar to a role of a modern chamber ensemble. As mentioned previously, folk music accommodated dances, march processions, funeral ceremonies, and major holiday events.

Many instruments were and are used in the day-to-day lives of Ukrainians. Below are descriptions of some of the more important ones:

- The *sopilka* is a popular woodwind instruments. It has six fingerholes, and is approximately 12-16 inches long. It is mainly used as one of the lead voices in instrumental ensemble.

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<sup>5</sup> Chris Haigh, *The Fiddle Handbook* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2009), 120.

- The *zhaleika* is a folk clarinet with a single reed. This woodwind instrument has a diatonic tuning, and could be made of various materials. It is also normally tuned to a Mixolydian mode and its range is rather small, only one octave.
- The *trembita* is an alpine horn. This instrument is highly popular in the western part of Ukraine, as the Hutsuls played the trembitas in the mountains. It is a very long instrument, and its size (approximately 120 inches) makes it extremely challenging to navigate and produce any sound. The range of the trembita is close to three octaves, which makes it similar to the French horn with its natural harmonic series. The trembita was mainly used in the mountains as a warning signal.
- The *bandura* is one of the most popular plucked-string instruments, and it combines features of the lute and the harp. It is normally used as a type of psaltery, and evolved from another lute-like instrument, the *kobza*. Musicians playing on the bandura are usually referred to as *kobzari*, the wandering musicians who sang epic songs.
- The *tsymbaly* is another string instrument, which is closest in its shape and form to the dulcimer. The Ukrainian tsymbaly is similar in construction to the *husli*, and it has a large wooden box with a soundboard on which strings are strung across in sets of three to five. The strings are struck with wooden hammers.

Prior to considering some of the main characteristics of Ukrainian folk music specifically, it is crucial to examine some of the key elements of Eastern European folk music in general:

- Nonpulsatile songs, which have no fixed beat and often are embellished by expressive ornamentations, with a distinct Middle Eastern influence.

- Epic songs, which are extremely long (known to last several hours) and usually based on heroic tales sung by a single person.
- Asymmetrical meters, which are very typical of the Balkans and Bulgaria. This aspect describes complex meters and beats that change duration often and suddenly in fast tempos.
- Repetitive dance rhythms, which we will discuss further in one of Skoryk's pieces.
- Bright and resonant timbres, which are very typical for singers in Eastern Europe. In such singing, women especially tend to cultivate glottal sound effects and a very powerful focused singing.
- Pentatonic scales and modal scales that fall outside the traditional major/minor system, which are especially prominent in the folk music of Hungary.

In order to fully understand the cultural importance of music and its origins in Ukraine, one must consider other countries in the region. Such regions include: The Baltics, the Caucasus, the Slavic states, the Balkans, and the former Soviet States. However, defining the borders of Eastern Europe can be complex if we consider only the geographical placement of the countries, as Eastern Europe represents several countries that often share a common cultural heritage. According to the research done by Roman Horbyk, "Ukrainian folk music has a major difference from other traditions such as Russian, Polish or Czech; historically, Asiatic peoples (Tatars, Turks and others often nomadic nations) influenced Ukrainian music significantly giving it its specifically Oriental expression, tendencies to alterations and exotic chromaticism"<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Roman Horbyk, "Being Different Against the Wind: A Crash Course in the History of Ukrainian Classical Music," Ukraine Research Group Blog, accessed July 2018, <http://blogg.sh.se/re-ukraine/culture/being-different-against-the-wind-a-crash-course-in-the-history-of-ukrainian-classical-music/>

One of the main aspects that set Ukrainian folk music apart from Asian or Western European music is its use of traditional church modes as well as more exotic scales, where it often demonstrates its chromatic character.

For example, in some of this more exotic scales such as Hungarian or Gypsy minor scale has an interval of augmented 2nd between third and fourth notes of the mode and a half step between fourth and fifth notes of the scale, as shown in the example below:

Example 2. Hungarian minor scale.



The augmented seconds in this scale and others like it, could end up sounding slightly out of tune to the ears of those who are not familiar with this music. The performer has to emphasize the interval by stretching the distance between the two notes. The fingers corresponding to those two notes will be placed father apart from each other. Because of that the left hand will also come around the neck of the violin a little more.

As mentioned above, much of Ukrainian folk music is based on traditional church modes such as: Lydian, Phrygian, Mixolydian, Dorian, and mixtures of modes. The *Hutsul mode* (Ukrainian minor scale) is known as one of the more exotic scales specific to the music of Ukraine. This is a minor scale with raised 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> scale degrees. Also, in Ukraine it is considered by many to be the Ukrainian Dorian mode.

Example 3. Hutsul scale (Ukrainian minor scale)



An example below is an excerpt from *Ten pieces for violin and piano: "Hutsulka"* by Ukrainian composer Vadim Gomolyaka. This piece is based on the Hutsul mode and the melody is shown in the violin part.

Example 4. V. Gomolyaka. *Ten pieces for violin and piano: "Hutsulka"*, mm. 19-26.

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 19-22) shows the violin part in treble clef with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and a *sul G* instruction. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic, featuring a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand. The second system (measures 23-26) continues the violin melody, which concludes with a quarter rest, and the piano accompaniment, which ends with a quarter rest in the right hand.

Ukrainian folk melodies are often characterized by extensive use of leading tones without resolution, harmonic 3rds, occasional wide leaps of 5ths and 6ths, as well as melodic motion outlining an interval of a 4th. The example below is an excerpt from the Ukrainian folk song *Oï, y vishnevomu sadu* (*Oh, in the Cherry Garden*), which is based on a harmonic minor scale featuring harmonic 3rds.

Example 5. Ukrainian folk song *Ой, у вишневому саду* (*Oh, in the Cherry Garden*), mm.1-12.

The musical score is presented in four systems. The first system shows the vocal line in treble clef, 3/4 time, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 75. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The second system continues the vocal line, with a change to 2/4 time. The third system shows the piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs), 4/4 time, featuring a triplet in the right hand. The fourth system continues the piano accompaniment, with a change to 3/4 time.

Ukrainian art music of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century can be organized under three general categories. Each category differs depending on the ethnicity and geographical placement of a given composer, on a composer's work outside of Ukraine, on their political beliefs, and the composer's nationalistic views. Important composers and performers can be categorized as follows:

- Composers of Ukrainian ethnicity such as Mykola Lysenko, Kyrylo Stetsenko, Sydir Vorobkevych, Levko Revutsky, and Mykola Leontovych fall under the category of

musicians who lived and worked in Ukraine, and who represented the Ukrainian national school of music. It is important to note that the well-known *Carol of the Bells* is a modern arrangement of a Ukrainian Christmas carol *Schedryk*, which originally was composed by M. Leontovych.

- The second category includes composers and performers who were born in Ukraine, and worked there for some time, but were not Ukrainian in their ethnicity and most commonly associated with Russian culture. This category brings to light the importance of diversity of the country's music and culture and the role of the large percentage of ethnic minorities on the territory of Ukraine. Musicians who belong to this category are Vladimir Horowitz (pianist and composer), David Oistrakh (violinist and violist), Reinhold Glière (composer), Yuliy Meitus (composer), Sviatoslav Richter (pianist), Isaac Stern (violinist), and Sergei Prokofiev (composer and pianist).
- The last category includes composers who have made a significant impact on the development of music in Ukraine while not being a part of Ukrainian culture and living outside of its territory. Some of the most prominent composers in this category were Bortniansky, Berezovsky, Dunayevsky, Fomenko, Lawryshyn, and Sydorenko.

The stylistic evolution of music in Ukraine can be divided into three periods as follows:

- First period, 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century: during this time, traditional folk instruments such as the kobza, turban, fiddle (violin), and bandura played an extremely important role. Moreover, traditional Ukrainian music was an equally valuable discipline in the curriculum of top schools and academies of the time including the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.
- Second period, late 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century: raise and promotion of the nationalistic views with strong emphasis on the folk and traditional elements of music were very

prominent. Musicians were exploring various musical styles by means of combining Ukrainian folklore with traditions and rules of Western European music schools of the time. The late 19th Century was marked by the new stream of interest in national folklore in countries such as Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, Spain, Norway, etc. Thus, the term *neofolklorism* is often applied. Of course, when we consider influences of neighboring regions of Eastern Europe on Ukraine and its folklore, it is crucial to consider the work of composers such as Béla Bartók (1881-1945), who went through a listening experience that would change his musical life and career. Bartok heard a young maid singing a simple folk tune, and this experience urged the composer to write the song down, following which he spent many years collecting examples of Hungarian folk music. It was thanks to Bartok and his close friend Zoltan Kodaly that traditional folk music of Hungary was not only collected and written down from its oral representation, but was also transformed and adapted to raise to the level of works of musical art. In Ukraine, as an example, the “New Folklore Stream” was promoted by such composers as M. Skoryk, Lesya Dychko, and Ischenko; in Russia: Sviridov, Schedrin, Slonimsky; among other representative composers: Stravinsky, and previously mentioned Bartok and Kodaly.

- Third period, 20<sup>th</sup> century to present day: it is considered to be the most complex and stylistically multifaceted period in the history of music in Ukraine. Despite the general title “modern”, music created during this period ranges anywhere from neo-classicism and neo-folk to *Avant Garde*, Soviet patriotic songs, and film music. The most prominent composers of this period were Samuel Maykapar, Lev Revutsky, Yevhen Stankovych, and Virko Baley. Moreover, this time period is still unfolding nowadays, and it is crucial to acknowledge one of its most exceptional and prominent representatives and a

descendant of several generations of Ukrainian musicians, nationally and internationally renowned composer, conductor, and musicologist Myroslav Skoryk.

## II. MYROSLAV SKORYK: LIFE AND WORKS

Myroslav Skoryk is one of today's most influential Ukrainian composers, and his name is frequently associated with the Music of Ukraine by musicians and the general population of the country. Born into a music-loving family in 1938, Skoryk proved to have an exceptional musical talent, which was quickly recognized by his great aunt Solomiia Krushelnytska, who was a famous opera singer of the time. It was with her encouragement that Skoryk was enrolled in a music school. However, his studies were interrupted by the wave of Stalinist repressions, and in 1947, his entire family was arrested and exiled to Siberia.

Upon the family's return to Lviv in 1955, after Joseph Stalin's death, Skoryk resumed his musical education and graduated from the Lviv Conservatory under the studies of Adam Soltys, Roman Simovych, and Stanislav Liudkevych. Following his graduation, he enrolled at the Moscow Conservatory where he studied composition with the famous Dmitri Kabalevsky. Upon his graduation from Moscow Conservatory, Skoryk lectured in composition at the Lviv Conservatory and the Kyiv Conservatory. Skoryk has been professor in history of Ukrainian music at the Kiyv National Music Academy of Ukraine, as well as artistic director of the Kyiv Music Fest and the National Opera of Ukraine, for which he was awarded a distinguished national Shevchenko prize. He currently resides and devotes his time to composition and conducting in Lviv, Ukraine.

Skoryk's compositional output is quite large and consists of over two hundred works in a variety of genres. For the 60's generation, for example, the composer is widely recognized for his film scores: *Melody* to Volodymyr Denisenko's movie *Vysokiy Pereval (High Mountain Pass)* and *Hutsul Triptych* to Serhii Paradzhanov's movie entitled *Tini zabutykh predkiv (Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors)*. Some of his most notable symphonic and chamber works

include the ballet scores *Stonecutters* and *The Return of the Butterfly*, a symphonic paraphrase on the themes from Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*; symphonic tone poems such as *Waltz, Stronger than Death*, *Carpathian Concerto*, *Penitential Psalm* – a work written in 2015 in honor of the “Heavenly Hundred”, the protesters killed by snipers during the Ukrainian Revolution of 2014; Suite for String Orchestra; Cantata for Soloists, Choir and Symphonic Orchestra; Partitas for string orchestra; string quartets; opera *Moses*; collection of Preludes and Fugues for piano solo; three Piano Concertos; collection of vocal works on poems of classical and contemporary poets; and collections of pieces for solo piano, solo viola, and solo violin.

Myroslav Skoryk's compositional oeuvre devoted to the violin holds a special place in the legacy of Ukrainian music in general, and in the string music literature heritage specifically. The role of the violin or fiddle and its predecessors is of exceptional historical value, for this instrument, along with the kobza and bandura, is rightfully considered to be one of the most prominent instruments used in the performance of folk music in the entire western region of Ukraine, including the Carpathian Mountains and the area surrounding them. Skoryk, a descendant of the Galichina region of the country, became to a great extent expected to re-create in his violin music the folkloristic features of the Carpathians. This music's unique modal inflections would later blend with the composer's experimental compositional techniques involving modal mixtures, improvisation, jazz and blues scales, folk-tune adaptation, and elements of neo-baroque and neo-classicism. Some of Skoryk's most prominent works for the violin include: the famous *Melody* in A minor, two sonatas for violin and piano, five concertos for violin and orchestra, a collection of paraphrases on traditional Ukrainian folk-songs such as *Dibrova Zelena* for violin and piano, arrangements of the composer's chamber works for solo

violin, and original works for violin such as *Aria and Waltz*, *Spanish Dance*, *Caprice* for solo violin, *Lullaby*, and *Carpathian Rhapsody*.

The prevalent characteristics of Myroslav Skoryk's writing for the violin is his masterful ability to combine the standards of classical violin playing with purely experimental and unconventional use of the coloristic possibilities of the string instrument to create unique sonic imagery, which one can easily recognize once taking a closer look at some, if not all, of the composer's works for violin.

Due to the significant impact of folklore and cultural traditions on the art and music of Ukraine, as well as the influence of neighboring countries and their cultures, the music of Myroslav Skoryk combines in itself traditions of Ukrainian folk music and elements of Western European music legacy.

Most music conservatories of Ukraine have standard repertoire requirements, and the following chapter introduces us to these three pieces *Dibrova Zelena*, *Carpathian Rhapsody*, and *Hutsul Triptych: "Dance"* by Skoryk as they became an important part of violin repertoire in my country.

### III. *DIBROVA ZELENA*

*Dibrova Zelena* for violin and piano is an arrangement of a traditional Ukrainian folk song of the same title, translated as *The Green Meadow*. Below is the original text and English translation:

Діброво зелена, озовись до мене,  
Озовись до сина вся моя родина!

Green Meadow, speak back to me,  
Speak back to your son, oh my homeland!

Як ішов я з дому, не сказав нікому:  
Ні неньки, ні тата, ні сестри, ні брата!

Once I left home, I didn't tell anyone:  
No mother, no father, no sister, no brother!

Тепер голівонька посивіла в мене,  
Ти стоїш, діброво, все ж така зелена!

As my head became gray,  
You still stand here as green as ever, oh,  
Green Meadow!

Ukrainian folk songs are predominantly strophic in form, and have an easily recognizable Verse-Refrain structure. In such a structure, the refrain serves as connecting musical idea, and it normally sets the same text to the same music. The refrain frequently states the overall moral of the story. In contrast, the verses use different texts over the course of the song, providing detailed description of the main events of the story being told as well as giving emphasis to the emotional connotations of the text supported by music. *Dibrova Zelena* is partially an exception from the rule, for it merges verse and refrain into one musical segment.

Thus, the following structural description of this song is as shown below:

- Verse-Refrain 1**      Діброво зелена, озовись до мене,  
Озовись до сина вся моя родина!
- Verse-Refrain 2**      Як ішов я з дому, не сказав нікому:  
Ні неньки, ні тата, ні сестри, ні брата!
- Verse-Refrain 3**      Тепер голівонька посивіла в мене,  
Ти стоїш, діброво, все ж така зелена!

The idea of triplicity is an extremely peculiar trait, which sets apart not only the original folk song but also Skoryk's instrumental setting of it. First of all, most Ukrainian folk songs are extremely long and can easily have 10-12 verses, if not more. In modern Ukraine, it is customary to sing only selected and most popular verses to accommodate performance practice. Second of all, most songs are based on such subject matter as worshipping of nature, freedom, love, and the country and its people. Therefore, coming across a song such as *Dibrova Zelena*, which has only three sections, is extremely unusual, especially taking into account its subject matter – faith in God and reliance on God's help while on the journey through life. For Ukrainian culture and traditions, such three-part structure occurs as a reference to religious beliefs and Christianity, and it historically serves as a symbol of the Holy Trinity (God The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit). The notion of triplicity bears another meaning when we look at the circumstances, which led Skoryk to have composed this arrangement: *Dibrova Zelena* was a musical tribute to the composer's late great-aunt Solomiya Krushelnytska, one of the greatest sopranos of her time. Such musical commemorations are the direct indication of religious symbolism for western part of Ukraine, where it is customary to sing folk songs at funerals that use Christian liturgy.

Skoryk's arrangement of *Dibrova Zelena* for violin with piano accompaniment preserves the three-part structure, with the exception of having a lengthy solo piano introduction. The composer also adds transitional music material after each statement of verse-refrain, thus altering and 'upgrading' the instrumental version of this song to be perceived as a typical Verse and Refrain formal organization. For the purpose of our study, we will consider the main tune of the song to be a statement of *verse*, and the transitional music material to be an instrumental *refrain* respectively. Below are examples of verse and refrain as they appear in this arrangement.

Example 6. Ukrainian folk song *Dibrova Zelena* (*The Green Meadow*) for violin and piano, arr. by M. Skoryk. Verse 1, mm.13-21.

The musical score consists of two staves of music in 3/4 time. The first staff begins with the tempo marking 'a tempo' and the dynamic marking 'mp'. Above the first staff, the instruction 'sul G' is written. The melody starts with a quarter note, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note. The second staff continues the melody with a quarter note, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note. Above the second staff, there is a 'V' marking and a box containing the number '2'. The score ends with a quarter note.

Example 7. Ukrainian folk song *Dibrova Zelena (The Green Meadow)* for violin and piano, arr. by M. Skoryk. Refrain 1, mm.21-31.

Musical score for Example 7, Refrain 1, mm. 21-31. The score is arranged for violin and piano. It consists of three staves. The top staff is for the violin, featuring a trill (tr.) and a five-fingered scale (5). The middle staff is for the piano, featuring a triplet (3) and a forte dynamic (f). The bottom staff is for the piano, featuring a piano dynamic (p), a seven-fingered scale (7), and a six-fingered scale (6). The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 8. Ukrainian folk song *Dibrova Zelena (The Green Meadow)* for violin and piano, arr. by M. Skoryk. Verse 2, mm.32-33.

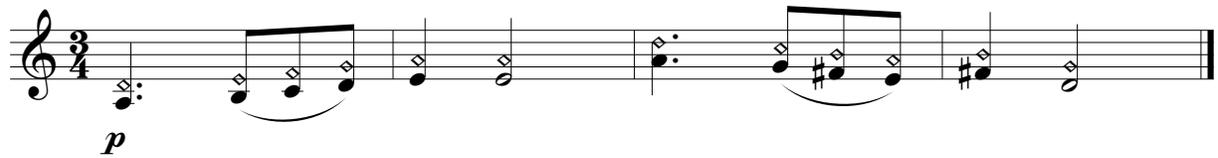
Musical score for Example 8, Verse 2, mm. 32-33. The score is arranged for violin and piano. It consists of three staves. The top staff is for the violin, featuring a forte dynamic (f) and a triplet (3). The middle staff is for the piano, featuring a forte dynamic (f). The bottom staff is for the piano, featuring a forte dynamic (f). The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 9. Ukrainian folk song *Dibrova Zelena (The Green Meadow)* for violin and piano, arr. by M. Skoryk. Refrain 2, mm. 41-45.

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The musical score is arranged in three systems, each with a violin part on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The first system (measures 41-42) features a violin part with a *ff* dynamic and a piano accompaniment with a *ff* dynamic. The second system (measures 43-44) includes a *sf* dynamic marking in the piano part. The third system (measures 45-46) concludes the refrain. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 10. Ukrainian folk song *Dibrova Zelena (The Green Meadow)* for violin and piano, arr. by M. Skoryk. Verse 3, mm. 57- 60.



Example 11. Ukrainian folk song *Dibrova Zelena (The Green Meadow)* for violin and piano, arr. by M. Skoryk. Refrain 3, mm. 66-70.



When performing traditional Ukrainian music on violin, one must note various connotations and implications such music bears from a cultural point of view. Firstly, Ukrainian instrumental folk music relies heavily on depicting the human voice and imitating other sounds such as birds singing, water falling, people stomping their feet during dance, and folk instruments playing. *Dibrova Zelena* in its instrumental version also imitates the human voice crying, sobbing, and breathing heavily, and therefore requires a wide vibrato in combination with one's ability to produce deep and rich sound full of overtones. The very first verse of Skoryk's arrangement indicates *sul G* for the violin, which requires great control of intonation and position shifts on the G-string.

Furthermore, Skoryk's arrangement of this song employs imitation of traditional folk instruments, such as the *bandura* and the *tsymbaly*, which is especially prominent in the opening

of the solo piano part. The violin also serves as an imitative instrument during the third statement of the verse during which the main theme is played in harmonics and clearly resembles the Ukrainian *sopilka*, a woodwind instrument used to imitate bird song and sounds of nature.

A large number of traditional folk songs are based on the Aeolian mode, with slight alterations of the scale, creating, for example, augmented second intervals between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> scale degrees, or the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> scale degrees. Skoryk also uses modal mixtures, a frequent feature of traditional Ukrainian music, combining Aeolian and Phrygian mode with elements of pentatonicism.

The second verse of *Dibrova Zelena* is written in a much more virtuosic manner and the main challenge here is to achieve complete command of the technique of string crossings. The verse opens with a broken (arpeggiated) g-minor chord, G D B-flat G, which needs to be treated with good care of sound and should be practiced separately. In such practice, the violinist must make sure that the lower two strings are connected to the top two strings, smoothing out the string crossing, ending with a good quality, resonant vibrato on the top note. The next step is to achieve a sense of continuous motion by preparing the left hand for the double-stops. In order to achieve the feeling of a long phrase in the *Agitato* section, one should consider treating the melodic line of the violin part with *rubato* feeling. During the refrain of the second verse, octaves present another technical challenge for violinist. The difficulty is to play the octaves not only precisely in tune, but also achieving smooth shifts between various positions of the hand on the instrument. It is crucial for the violinist's left hand to be as relaxed and flexible as possible, emphasizing the lower note of the octave without using excessive finger pressure during shifts. In general, the octave passages in the *Agitato* section need to be treated with vibrato on almost every longer note value, for it will ultimately create the effect of "singing through the hands".

In the last verse of *Dibrova Zelena*, the main theme of the verse is re-stated in harmonics, and creates an auditory image of the *sopilka* mentioned previously. The technique used for playing harmonics is similar to that of playing octaves of the previous section, except the fourth finger should be flat and barely touching the string. The main task is to make sure each harmonic is clearly heard through finding a proper finger placement on the fingerboard, maintaining more weight on the first finger. Also, less vibrato is desirable to not obstruct the purity of sound on the harmonics.

#### IV. *CARPATHIAN RHAPSODY*

*Carpathian Rhapsody* for violin and piano differs from *Dibrova Zelena* in that it is an original composition, not an arrangement of an existing tune. However, the piece stands out as a clear representation of folk-inspired music. Compositional techniques similar to the *Dibrova Zelena* arrangement are used here: creation of augmented seconds (in this particular piece, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the scale is lowered and the 4<sup>th</sup> of the scale is raised), modal mixtures, and elements of pentatonicism. In addition, the composer explores an improvisatory aspect of violin playing by referencing to the music of Hungary, with the note “in the style of Franz Liszt”. He also uses imitative elements of traditional musical instruments such as the *zhaleika*, a woodwind instrument that is usually tuned in the Mixolydian mode. An example of this can be found in the running passagework of the piano part, accompanied by a short melodic answers in the solo violin. Elements of traditional dance music with emphasis on the weak beats are also used to create specific musical effects pertinent to the traditional music of the country.

The notion of the structural organization of the *Carpathian Rhapsody* is crucial for the violinist to deliver a successful performance of this work. However, one should also consider the differences between Skoryk’s treatment of the term *rhapsody* with that of Liszt. In his approach to composing the well-known Hungarian Rhapsodies, Franz Liszt combined elements of improvisation within the frame of two main structural sections – the *lassan*<sup>7</sup> (meaning “slow” in Hungarian) and the *friska*<sup>8</sup> (meaning “fast”, respectively). Both of these sections are of the most prominent elements present in a typical Gypsy improvisation, a main feature of Hungarian folk

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<sup>7</sup> David E. Schneider, *Bartók, Hungary, and the Renewal of Tradition: Case Studies in the Intersection of Modernity and Nationality* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 18.

<sup>8</sup> David E. Schneider, *Bartók, Hungary, and the Renewal of Tradition: Case Studies in the Intersection of Modernity and Nationality* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 18.

music. Ukrainian folk music of the Carpathians, however, is much more sectional and typically does not follow a clear-cut two-part structural organization. Rather, improvised folk music of the Carpathians tends to shift from slow to fast to slow several times, depending on the occasion the music is used for.

Skoryk's *Carpathian Rhapsody* has a total of seven distinct sections and a *Coda*. As mentioned earlier, each of the sections serves different musical purposes and each demonstrates distinctive rhythmic and modal characteristics. The very opening section marked *Rubato* – *recitativo/ Andante* occupies mm. 1-29 and can rightly be classified as the slow section of the piece.

Example 12. M. Skoryk. *Carpathian Rhapsody* for violin and piano, mm. 1-6.

Similar to its Hungarian relative, the *lassan*, this opening section is highly improvisatory in nature and uses coloristic possibilities of both violin and piano to create the sense of spontaneity and complete musical freedom. The composer uses a variety of scales and modes, shifting musical ideas from augmented scale patterns to elements of Hutsul, Dorian, Phrygian, Mixolydian, and Locrian modes. Such harmonically and modally dense writing poses performance challenges for both violinist and pianist. Therefore, one of the main tasks in the learning process of the opening section is for the violinist to maintain a long phrase, as he varies the bow speed and weight to achieve the necessary improvisatory effect, without obstructing the

quality and resonance of the strings. Balancing the piano accompaniment part with the solo violin part is another important goal, and both violinist and pianist should be attentive to each other's middle and low registers while putting this section together, so all voices can be heard.

The second section of the *Carpathian Rhapsody* (mm. 30-63) serves as the opening segment of the larger structural organization, which in turn consists of a total of five distinct segments that can be put under the general term "fast section". However, assigning the very specific term *friska* to this compilation of segments would not serve the purpose of understanding the true meaning of how this work is composed and what would be standard performance practice for it. Unlike its Hungarian counterpart, the fast section of this Rhapsody is based on a collection of Ukrainian folk dances, which are classified as *Hopak* dances.

Ukrainian *Hopak* is an extremely sectional dance and involves alternating groups of dancers taking turns to present their variation of movement to an up-beat music setting, and, depending on the gender of the dancer the music tends to change its texture and speed. It is customary for the *Hopak* to start on the slower side and speed up over the course of only a few measures, and only men usually dances to the beginning of this dance. Therefore, the tempo marking in m.30 at the beginning of the first dance segment should not start at the actual speed, rather it should be treated as a gradual increase from the previous tempo *Rubato* to the final *Allegretto*. In its traditional form, the opening segment of the *Hopak* is heavily based on jumps, sit-ups, and rapid turns, all of which is displayed in Skoryk's violin and piano part mm. 30-39:



Example 14. M. Skoryk. *Carpathian Rhapsody* for violin and piano, mm. 64-67.

The musical score for Example 14, M. Skoryk's *Carpathian Rhapsody*, measures 64-67, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 64-65) shows the violin part with an 8va marking and the piano part with a dynamic marking of *p*. The second system (measures 66-67) shows the violin part with an 8va marking and the piano part with a dynamic marking of *mp*. The piano part features a melodic line with a trill in measure 65. The violin part features a melodic line with a trill in measure 65.

The third segment of the *Hopak* is oftentimes used as the point of uniting all dancing forces as well as creating an element of conversation through alternating pairs of people dancing in a round. This is an element of another Ukrainian dance also known as *khorovod* – the so-called personalization of the sun through circular movement. One of the most typical stylistic features of the round dances within the *Hopak* is the recurring turning gesture, which is done by pairs or groups of people in a sequence. Skoryk's musical language in the third segment of the fast section of the *Carpathian Rhapsody* (mm. 81-112) is full of circular sequences alternating between the solo violin and the piano part with accents on the off-beats in the accompaniment

figure. Thus, if the melody is presented in the violin part, the piano contrasts it with bravura syncopations, and *vice versa*:

Example 15. M. Skoryk. *Carpathian Rhapsody* for violin and piano, mm. 81-88.

The musical score for Example 15, M. Skoryk's *Carpathian Rhapsody* for violin and piano, measures 81-88, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 81-84, and the second system covers measures 85-88. The violin part features a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the piano accompaniment consists of rhythmic chords and a steady bass line. Dynamics include forte (f) and piano (p).

The fourth segment of the *Hopak* dance commonly serves as the transitional device preparing the return of all men to take charge of the dance floor and present once more their edgy choreography full of sit-ups, jumps, and extremely fast turns. Skoryk creates a masterful musical segment, which quotes several of the key musical ideas presented in the previous segments, and logically transitions into the fifth and last part of the main dance. The tempo-marking *Allegretto* in m. 137 should be treated similarly to the marking in m.30, being a gradual increase in tempo over the course of several measures rather than being an immediate tempo change.

Following the last section of the dance in Skoryk's rhapsody, the slow part (*lassus*) is restated with slight alteration of figurations in both violin and piano part, and it serves as the final transition into the Coda of m.173 through the end. In the actual *Hopak* dance, it is customary for several or all men to walk back on stage and dance their *Hopak* part one last time at twice or three times the speed of its original tempo. Therefore, Skoryk's marking *Presto* and *Prestissimo* in this case should be treated literally and the players should sound as if they are going as fast as humanly possible. The most important technical task in the coda for both violin and piano is to produce a sound that is rich and vibrant in quality, yet performed at an unsettling and harsh speed.

The above presented brief overview of structural intricacies of the *Carpathian Rhapsody* is aimed to assist violinists to understand the key aspects of Ukrainian folk music, especially when it is put within the frame-work of another music and dance form which are not commonly known outside of the Ukrainian culture.

*Carpathian Rhapsody* a piece full of contrasts, and the very first note of this composition sets the stage for a performance full of unpredicted shifts and jumps of mood and overall character. Moreover, the very first note needs to be treated with extreme precision: proper attack and active vibrato must be executed and followed by a diminuendo. The theme of this opening section of the piece is restated several times, and one should pay careful attention to the difference in the mood and purpose of each of these restatements.

In the violin part in mm. 30-63, the main challenge is to achieve clear-pitched tone on the G-string while preserving the character of the main theme. Each repetition of the main theme needs to be sped up in order to prepare the beginning of the next segment featuring running passagework in the piano part mm. 64-80.

In the third segment of the fast section of the *Carpathian Rhapsody* (mm. 81-112), the offbeat chords in the violin part present substantial difficulty for violinist. First, the spacing of the chord requires unusual stretching, especially for the smaller hand. This, in turn, creates difficulty in achieving good intonation. Second, these off-beat chords are not supposed to be broken, and therefore violinist should aim to play all four strings at the same time by placing the bow almost on the fingerboard where it is significantly easier to grasp all four strings. Another challenge for performer is the abundance of major and minor sixth double-stops, which is quite difficult to play clearly especially for the violinists with smaller hands. There is also a tendency for hand dis-coordination, and therefore a violinist should devote some time to slow practice of this segment.

From m.137 and through the very end of the *Carpathian Rhapsody*, the music material is repeated and all of the technical difficulties remain the same.

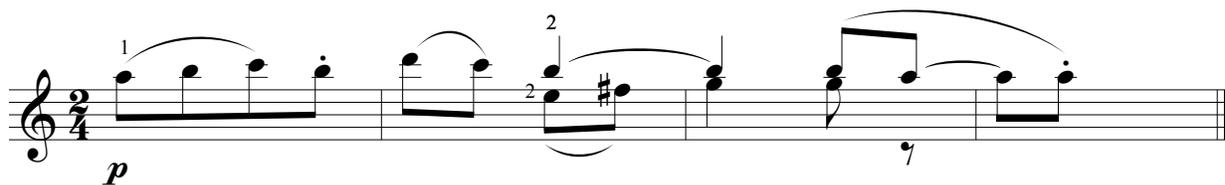
## V. *HUTSUL TRIPTYCH: II. “DANCE”*

*Hutsul Triptych: II. “Dance”* (arrangement for violin and piano) is an example of traditional instrumental music of Ukraine. This composition is based on one of the most common celebratory folk dances of the Western part of the country – the *kolomya (kolomyka)*.

The *kolomyka* has preserved a triplicity of independent forms: song, instrumental piece, and dance. The *kolomyka* can be danced with either choral or instrumental support, or both. Initially, it was a Western Ukrainian dance form originating in the Carpathians. For the pieces that have lyrics attached, the lyrics can vary greatly and are usually in the form of short couplets reflecting everyday activity. *Kolomykas* usually have a wide melodic range, intricate syncopated rhythms, and a variety of melisma. Variants of the *kolomyka* include the *hutsulka, verkhovyna, bukovynka, and arkan*.

In accordance with the traditional layout of *kolomyka*, Skoryk’s Dance follows ABACA1 structure with every section subdivided into aba1b1 verses. *Kolomyka* is traditionally a fast dance, which occasionally has one brief slow verse (sub-section). In this piece, we can observe the main fast motive in mm.1-3.5 and its recurrences throughout the first page of the solo violin part.

Example 16. M. Skoryk. *Hutsul Triptych: II. “Dance”* for violin and piano, mm.1-3.5.



Example 17. M. Skoryk. *Hutsul Triptych: II. "Dance"* for violin and piano, mm. 1-23.

The musical score for Example 17 consists of four staves. The first staff is in treble clef, 2/4 time, marked 'Vivace' and 'p'. It features a series of eighth notes with slurs and accents. The second staff continues the melody with a box labeled '1' above a measure. The third staff shows a piano accompaniment with chords and a box labeled '4' above a measure, marked 'mf'. The fourth staff continues the piano part with a box labeled '2' above a measure.

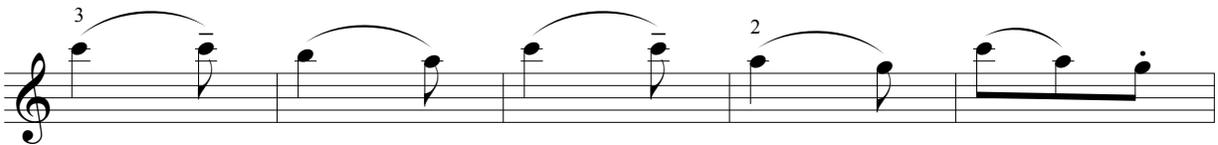
A typical characteristic of the dance of *kolomyjka* is its rhythmic hemiolas as well as emphasis on the offbeats. The main motive consists of a total of seven quarter-note beats. The shift of the strong beat gives an illusion of the main motive being distributed within a 7/4 time signature (3/4+2/4+2/4), although the score marking is 2/4. The tune goes through a total of four restatements before a ten-beat “tail” motive occurs, starting from two 16<sup>th</sup>-notes b-c# and d-quarter in the example below:

Example 18. M. Skoryk. *Hutsul Triptych: II. "Dance"* for violin and piano, mm. 12-23.

The musical score for Example 18 consists of two staves. The first staff is in treble clef, 2/4 time, marked 'mf'. It features a series of eighth notes with slurs and accents, and a box labeled '4' above a measure. The second staff continues the melody with a box labeled '2' above a measure.

For the purpose of this study, let us consider mm.1-19 as one complete statement of the dance tune that can be deconstructed into a total of four 7-beat motives with a 10-beat “tail” motive. From mm.20-60, we can observe two more reiterations of the complete statement of the dance tune, with a slight deviation from the main tonal area. It is then followed by a brief transitional segment with rhythmic diminution of mm.60-74, leading into the slow cantabile section of the dance (mm. 75-100):

Example 19. M. Skoryk. *Hutsul Triptych: II. “Dance”* for violin and piano, mm. 75-100.



From mm.101, the composer brings back the main 3/4+2/4+2/4 tune redistributed evenly between the piano part and the violin solo. The entire A section is restated and then followed by a completely different character of the C section (mm.154-254). The distinguishing quality of this part of the piece is its shift from 2/4 to 3/4, with integrated segments consisting of 7 quarter-note beats. The latter serves not only as a reference to the opening tune, but also as a unifying rhythmical structure of the entire piece.

Example 20. M. Skoryk. *Hutsul Triptych: II. "Dance"* for violin and piano, mm. 154-156.

The musical score for Example 20, M. Skoryk's *Hutsul Triptych: II. "Dance"*, measures 154-156, is presented in G major and 2/4 time. The violin part (top staff) begins with a melisma marked '1' and 'mf', featuring a long note on G4 followed by a sequence of eighth notes: A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The piano part (bottom two staves) provides harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The piece concludes with a final cadence in 2/4 time.

The last section of the piece occupies mm. 255 through the end and presents one more restatement of the complete dance tune of the opening, with slight harmonic alterations and added chromatic passagework in the piano part. The entire movement is one of the most representative original works of Skoryk specific to folk dances of Ukraine.

Because this work is another example of musical rendition of traditional Ukrainian folk dances, it presents the violinist with technical and musical tasks similar to those found in Skoryk's *Carpathian Rhapsody*. From a violinist's perspective, the mixture of modes in this music needs to be treated with utmost attention and care. Some of the intervallic relations within the modes used in this piece are not based on functional harmony and clear tonality, but rather on varied pitch relations and elements of non-tempered tuning. In such tuning, smaller intervals need to be smaller, and larger intervals should sound wider, respectively. As an example, rehearsal 16 of the *Dance* has a melisma, which a performer can choose to approach through slides of micro tones between an interval of a second, rather than playing it in a traditional classical fashion.

## VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The folk music of Ukraine is, like most types of folk music, characterized by the predominant influence and reliance on oral traditions such as rhythmic and modal patterns, modes, and dances. A performer must consider that a substantial amount of music written in Ukraine bears stylistic features of folk tradition and, therefore, is designed to accommodate special occasions, instruments, and sounds.

It is important to note that works such as *Zelena Dibrova*, *Carpathian Rhapsody*, and *Hutsul Tryptych: II. "Dance"* have a variety of arrangements and in modern Ukraine such pieces can be performed as not only solo violin works, but also as larger ensemble works which include both classical orchestral instruments and traditional folk instruments of the country. Myroslav Skoryk's pieces for solo violin represent the culture, music, and traditions of Ukraine. One of the country's outstanding composers, Skoryk, devoted his lifetime to reviving and re-implementing Ukrainian culture within the frame of the classical music world. In his compositions, Myroslav Skoryk brings a musical crossroad, which interweaves classical genres and folk traditions. Skoryk maintains the simplicity by using folk-like melodies and folk dances that keep you grounded and they are easy to listen to. This simplicity makes this music accessible to so many listeners from different cultures all around the world.

The main purpose of this document has been to provide a violinist or a general reader with the background to Ukrainian music and traditions, but also to provide a look at performance related challenges, and to provide certain recommendations to ensure a successful interpretation.

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## APPENDIX. PERMISSION CORRESPONDENCE

**Iuliia Alyeksyeyeva** <ialyeksyeyeva@gmail.com>

Nov 13, 2018, 2:01 PM  

to dumamuse ▾

Hello,

I am a Doctoral student at Louisiana State University, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I am in the final stage of writing my dissertation. I am writing about M.Skoryk's:

"Carpathian Rhapsody" for violin and piano,

"Zelena Dibrova" for violin and piano,

"Hutsul Triptych: II.Dance" for violin and piano.

I will be using small examples from the parts and the score. However, since the work is not in public domain yet, I will need a letter of permission to include those examples in "Fair Use" for Educational Purposes.

I saw that you have some of these pieces on the website, but for the Triptych it is a orchestra version.

I have tried to contact the composer, but I have not received a reply and I live in USA.

Would you be able to help me with this matter?

Thank you,

Iuliia Alyeksyeyeva  
cell: (985) 320-9776  
email: [ialyeksyeyeva@gmail.com](mailto:ialyeksyeyeva@gmail.com)



557 Barron Avenue  
Woodbridge, NJ 07095  
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e-mail: dumamuse@aol.com  
website: www.dumamusic.com

**Letter of Permission to Use Examples from Myroslav Skoryk's  
"Carpathian Rhapsody", "Hutsul Triptych" and "Zelena Dibrova"**

This letter grants permission to Iuliia Alyeksyeyeva to use examples from Myroslav Skoryk's "Carpathian Rhapsody", "Hutsul Triptych" and "Zelena Dibrova" in her doctoral dissertation, as long as credit is cited for the work and the composer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Oleksander Kuzyszyn'. The signature is fluid and extends to the right with a long horizontal stroke.

Oleksander Kuzyszyn  
Duma Music, Inc.  
Publisher for the Works of Myroslav Skoryk  
www.dumamusic.com

## VITA

Iuliia Alyeksyeyeva is a violinist and vocalist from Kherson, Ukraine. She began her musical career at age 7 when she was admitted to Music School # 1 in Kherson. In 2002, she continued her education as a professional musician studying violin at Kherson Musical College. Iuliia was awarded a full scholarship to attend Southeastern Louisiana University in 2007 where she studied under Professor of Violin and Director of the SLU Chamber Orchestra, Dr. Yakov Voldman. Iuliia graduated *magna cum laude* when she received both her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees with concentrations in Violin Performance from SLU. Iuliia is in pursuit of her Doctorate of Musical Arts concentrating in Violin Performance in the studio of Professor Espen Lilleslåtten and minoring in Jazz Studies under Dr. Willis Delony at Louisiana State University.

Iuliia is an active performer and educator. She regularly performs with Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, Acadiana Symphony Orchestra, Gulf Coast Symphony Orchestra, Lake Charles Symphony Orchestra, and Rapides Symphony Orchestra as a violinist. She has further performed violin in productions with Natalie Cole, Johnny Mathis, Michael Bolton, Diana Ross, Lang Lang, SooBeen Lee, Branford Marsalis, Dianne Reeves, Gladys Knight, Marc Broussard, and many others. She has also been featured as a vocalist in performances by Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, Rapides Symphony Orchestra, Jefferson Performing Arts Society, Southeastern Louisiana University Alumni Jazz Band, Southeastern Louisiana University Jazz Band, Louisiana State University Jazz Ensemble, and various local bands. Iuliia has instructed dozens of students in violin and viola performance as a Teaching Artist with Kids Orchestra in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and dozens more in violin, viola, piano, and voice in various private music studios.