

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHORAL ART DURING A WAR

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**Abstract:** The article examines the main trends in the development of art during the war in the context of Ukrainian contemporary musical culture. Choir troupes, as a form of revealing the participants' creative potential, are a means of uniting people, allowing joining the cultural heritage to become an essential part of rehabilitation in extreme conditions. It is the reason for the relevance of the theme of the study. This article aims to establish the main areas of choral art impact during the war and to identify changes in the methodology and content of choral art under extreme conditions. The article describes how we can mount new directions of choral art development and thematic constants in war conditions.

**Keywords:** Choral Art, Military Activities, Choral Genres, Choral Styles, Conducting and Choral School.

### 1 Introduction

Recent events have been a tremendous and frightening challenge to the entire Ukrainian choral ensemble system. It has set many challenges for governmental and non-governmental creative teams, the educational system, and music institutions, requiring global, cardinal, and substantial shifts in choral art, especially in the coordinate system of the music industry.

The development of choral art for the creative industry is a fundamental theme, and the war was a pivotal factor in implementing transformations. Civilizational processes such as pandemonium and war have been a catalyst for reforming the managerial and communication foundations in the European and Ukrainian musical arts (Cleland et al., 2020, Juško-Štekele, 2022). Nowadays, this is a vast field for research work. We should analyze the extent and degree of changes in the content and artistic and creative approaches to the choral art. The basis of cultural influences, concert and festival activities (Shcherbonos, 2014), changes and the quality of the repertoire performed, and cultural aspects that influence audiences (Boghian, 2019; Čuhlová, 2019) are being reconsidered. Such shifts in the music industry were caused first by quarantine restrictions due to the pandemic and then by the ongoing active hostilities in Ukraine.

Choral art has long contributed to the discovery of human creativity. It is also a way for people from different social groups, levels of affluence, age, gender, etc., to come together. Furthermore, the choral singing art opens the possibility of getting acquainted with the folk-song heritage of the world and promotes public performances, festivals, and concert activities.

In order to establish the specifics and main trends in choral art during wartime, it is necessary to consider the features and main directions of choral art development in the XXI century in the context of Ukrainian and European musical culture. All this involves the consideration of the main directions of development and the activities of outstanding teams or figures who experienced a successful experience under martial law conditions. The research is scientifically directed to establish the main changes in paradigms and two socio-political trends affecting the development of Ukrainian choral art.

Several studies have named the features and conditions for the successful functioning of choral groups in all types of settlements in Ukraine in Soviet and post-Soviet times (Puchko, 2007). This type of research involves considering those factors designed to preserve the tradition and transform the organizational foundations necessary for the growth of skill and professionalism of choral ensembles. Therefore, consideration of

the realities of contemporary life and choral development is an essential part of the research paradigm.

The music industry's broad, creative, and artistic character should be viewed from the perspective of defining algorithms for creating favorable conditions for the development and functioning of the choral arts.

### 2 Literature Review

The formation and development of a highly professional choir involve much work on the part of the conductor, performers, orchestrators, composers, and all management and administration representatives. Historians of musicology, theorists, and practitioners of choral art have determined (Riabukha, 2017; Tsiupa, 2016) that the formation of a high level of choral art is a long, complex process that requires much effort and requires personal qualities of conductors and leaders - organizational skills, creative potential and initiative.

Some art studies have noted that a large constellation of prominent conductors who have also worked with choral art has been developing, strengthening, and expanding in Ukraine for a long time (Tkachenko, 2016; Martynyuk, 2020). These figures are the organizers and participants of influential schools (M. Kolessa, M. Lysenko, P. Demutsky), and further development of skills belongs to contemporaries - I. Bermes, I. Hamkala, S. Datsyuk, L. Ivanishina, A. Avdievsky, E. Bondar, L. Baida, E. Savchuk.

Studies of the history and development of choral art in Ukraine have identified the existence of many conducting and choral schools (Martynyuk, 2020). In the context of consideration of musical and educational processes in Ukraine, as well as historical and pedagogical aspects of the study of the phenomenon of choral art, Lviv, Odesa, Kyiv, and Kharkiv conducting and choral schools of the XX - early XXI century are singled out consideration and comparison of the development and functioning of choral traditions of Ukraine, awareness of their experience.

It was noted that the Lviv School of Conducting and Choir is characterized primarily by the constant expansion of the genre spectrum, multifunctionality of the artist-teacher, and the tendency to increase the performance of interpretive models of Ukrainian and world choral music, innovative activities in pedagogical approaches and teaching principles. Furthermore, from the end of the XX to the beginning of the XXI century, Lviv Conducting and Choral School has a solid scientific base and is working to deepen and expand the range of scientific problems that define this conducting and choral school.

Most of the works emphasize the trend toward developing Ukrainian choral art and pedagogy, as well as the positive dynamics of the development of choral art in Western Ukraine.

The heritage and traditions of the Odesa Conducting and Choral School of the XX-XXI centuries were also considered (Martynyuk, 2020). The versatility and multifunctionality of the conductor's work, high level of musical education, tendency to master different types of choral performance (academic choral singing; singing in folk traditions, chamber choral singing, male choral singing) and openness of artists to experiments and all levels of cooperation were named.

Ukrainian choral art is also represented by the Kyiv Conducting and Choral School of the XX-beginning of the XXI century. In some studies (Kovalyk, 2010; Bondar, 2005), its bright character and power are noted. The school representatives' creative work is characterized by the implementation of deep musical and theoretical knowledge in the educational system. Several researchers testify to the trend toward universalism in creative

activity and educational priorities. The Kyiv school was always marked by performing and pedagogical activity.

The performing and pedagogical system of the Kharkiv Conducting and Choral School was investigated in art history works (Martynyuk, 2020). Among the dominant features were high performance, pedagogical excellence, and active scientific and managerial activities. In addition, there is a constant updating of teaching methods in education. As a result, the performing style of conductors and ensembles is becoming more complex. The Kharkiv Composing School actively cooperates with representatives of choral singing.

Research in a separate area reveals the scientific and practical foundations of choral art's style and genre palette (Dzivilivskiy, 2020). The scientist notes that the importance of the category of genre and style in choral art is an objective and concrete reality rooted in practice, where choral music is a multilayered and complex form of evolution, as well as adaptation to the modern requirements of creative attitudes and society.

The range of research in music education is defined by considering the problems associated with implementing distance education, which has become popular in recent times. This form activates and motivates creative individuals to learn and perform under crisis and stressful conditions (Cleland et al., 2020). We are talking about the transition and adaptation to distant forms of communication and changes of perception by all participants in the creative process. The main one was identified as being open to change, motivation, social support, and adapting to new forms of leadership and administration (Ko et al., 2013; Wynne-Jones, 2021). Such practices helped some choral ensembles adapt to the extreme war conditions, evacuation, and difficulties in carrying out their activities.

This study aims to establish the main influences of choral art in war conditions and to determine changes in the methodology and content under extreme conditions. The article describes how new directions of choral art development and thematic constants can be mounted under war conditions. It involves several specific tasks:

- to establish the main lines of action and development of the choral arts during the war;
- identify the new needs and difficulties encountered in the realization of choral activities during the war;
- to identify trends of change in choral art from the viewpoints of choral ensembles' members;
- to establish the personal opinions of choral members on changes in choral activities from February 2022 to May 2022.

### 3 Methods and materials

The methodology is based on a comprehensive research approach. It is used in this paper to describe, elaborate, and perform research tasks. Scientific and theoretical studies of choral art, its genre, stylistic and regional specificity involve using descriptive methods, analysis, and synthesis. Moreover, the research nature implies a sound theoretical foundation and consideration of past research experience.

The online survey method was used from February 27, 2022, to May 27, 2022, and lasted three months. The survey was conducted using Google Drive forms among choral groups from different regions of Ukraine, representing other conducting schools, genres, stylistic trends, forms of ownership, and traditions.

The study used data from work with the Ivano-Frankivsk National Academic Hutsul Song and Dance Ensemble "Hutsulia" (C1), representing the Lviv Conducting and Choral School. It is a professional state-owned ensemble with a glorious and long history and traditions.

The Academic Choir named after Viacheslav Palkin (Kharkiv Conducting and Choral School), was also involved - C2. Since 1990, the Kharkiv Chamber Choir was called the Academic Choir named after Viacheslav Palkin, became a professional ensemble, and joined the Kharkiv Regional Philharmonic Society as part of the artistic team. The large and powerful Kyiv Conducting and Choral School is represented by the Archdiocesan Chamber Choir "Oranta" (Lutsk) - C3. The Student Choir of the Odesa National Music Academy named after A. Nezhdanova (C4), is a bright representative of the Odesa Conducting and Choral School. We chose 120 choir members, 10 teachers, and conductors working and studying in Ukrainian culture and education institutions to participate in the survey.

Surveying is the focus of the proposed study. It is a way to monitor the attitudes of all participants in choral activities to show attitudes toward changes related to martial law in extreme situations. Both this and the experiment allow us to define changes in choral art as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The extent to which these changes are systemic, affecting creativity, training and concert activities is reasoned. Questioning is applied to assess changes that have occurred in the personal and professional activities of music industry workers working under conditions of war. The professional skills importance and the vision of their mission while realizing the ideological and artistic precepts of choral art during the war are determined. Regarding the topic of communication, distance work, attitudes toward changes in methods of communication, management, and cooperation, and how much need participants in the educational process of application of interactive learning tools in a distance learning environment. The research aim also determined the use of surveys, questionnaires, and statistical and mathematical methods (qualitative and quantitative).

The survey process was conducted over a three-month period in three stages. First, we formulated questions and survey techniques according to the viewpoints of performers, orchestrators, conductors, and teachers, which were established through regular surveys.

The first stage (March 2022) involved a survey determining the difficulties and problems associated with choral performance during wartime. The second stage (April 2022) included a survey whose analysis provided an opportunity to identify trends in choral art from the perspective of choral members. Finally, the third stage (May 2022) established the personal opinions of choral members about changes in choral activities between February 2022 and May 2022.

We completed questionnaires with the consent of respondents who voluntarily agreed to participate in this study - the research team adhered to ethical principles throughout the experiment. Information collected through the questionnaires did not affect participants' dignity or anonymity. The study didn't contain non-invasive interventions; our team applied no actions that affected respondents' honesty and frankness, and the research team did not violate the interviewees' interests.

Among the disadvantages and difficulties observed during the experiment are: the heavy emotional state of the respondents, the time required (3 months), and communication challenges. Also, it is impossible to determine the reasons for these assessments (selected), as the research team did not have the opportunity to conduct a broad qualitative investigation.

### 4 Results

The Ukrainian choral art keeps developing even in extreme conditions and hardships caused by the war. The level of choral performance and orchestral mastery continues to grow, the musical language and compositional creativity in the choral genre become more complex, and the schools of conductors at higher educational institutions continue their creative search. All these tendencies call for even greater efforts in the professional training of future artists in the choral art.

The war significantly changed the direction of choral art development in Ukraine. However, on the whole, it is possible to identify several trends in the activities of Ukrainian choral groups, which began to be actively introduced under martial law (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The main directions of the choral art development during the war



Choral art during the war should be aimed at supporting the morale of the Ukrainian army and creating positive therapeutic influences on civilians caught up in war situations. Everyone involved in choral activities should create propaganda works, strengthen the people's spirit, and support the population supporting their army. Choral art is meant to appeal to be prepared to lose and skulk, which is an integral part of the war. For example, the Halychyna Chamber Choir "Yevshan" (<https://galician-choir.com>), existing in Ukraine since 1990, took part in the all-Ukrainian action of support "Prayer for Ukraine" its repertoire is actively supplemented by works of Ukrainian composers, stylized works on folklore themes (M. Datsko, M. Lysenko).

The anti-war movement is also becoming a part of Ukrainian choral art. First of all, this should be a government policy and part of the activities of pacifist public organizations. It is working to change the repertoire, the audience, and the script to agitate for peace, to condemn violence and destruction. Choral groups in the South and East of Ukraine, such as the Academic Choir named after Viacheslav Palkin and the Student Choir of the Odesa National Music Academy named after A. Nezhdanova, faced this need. These are changes in the works of Russian Soviet composers, the active introduction into the repertoire of the heritage of contemporary Ukrainian artists.

Choral art can also aim to demoralize the enemy, first of all, a loud and demonstrative rejection of works that are the cultural and national heritage of the enemy. For example, Ukraine refused to perform works by Russian composers, partly by Soviet composers, and a complete rejection of the history and art of the enemy's culture. For example, in Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil oblasts, city authorities prohibited street performers from singing in Russian (War in Ukraine, 2022).

During the war, choral groups and representatives of the choral arts should continue to be active in concert and public activities for charitable purposes. The money earned through performances is sent to support the army, meet humanitarian needs, and support war-affected citizens. In addition, the arts can be a rewarding and supportive experience for audiences. Such are concerts in a war zone for civilians hiding from death and destruction.

A different theme that has influenced the development of choral art in war is the charitable work of art people. This possible participation in the reconstruction after the war, an active concert schedule, the funds' collection for the wounded and the injured, the restoration of the national economy, and assistance to the refugees and the victims. For example, the Oranta Choir and the Yevshan Choir actively perform charity concerts and raise funds to support the military ("Despite the War," 2022).

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Table 1: New demands and emerging difficulties in implementing choral activities during the war (author's elaboration)

№	Difficulties	Group	Significant	Not significant	None
1.	to acquire and develop practical skills	C1	23%	57%	20%
		C2	40%	57%	3%
		C3	30%	40%	30%
		C4	25%	60%	15%
2.	cooperate and communicate (lack of premises, opportunities to gather)	C1	23%	57%	23%
		C2	40%	60%	10%
		C3	15%	75%	10%
		C4	32%	60%	8%
3.	radically altered repertoire, large volumes of novelties	C1	30%	60%	10%
		C2	20%	77%	3%
		C3	10%	84%	6%
		C4	10%	70%	20%
4.	psychological problems of colleagues and audiences	C1	45%	45%	10%
		C2	50%	47%	3%
		C3	50%	40%	10%
		C4	28%	78%	0
5.	a lot of own resources have been spent	C1	10%	75%	15%
		C2	42%	45%	3%
		C3	18%	52%	30%
		C4	25%	70%	5%
6.	unable to work creatively, personal problems, stress	C1	65%	30%	5%
		C2	60%	37%	3%
		C3	50%	33%	17%
		C4	32%	46%	12%
7.	financial difficulties, no necessary premises, conditions, tools, equipment	C1	10%	60%	30%
		C2	70%	30%	0%
		C3	73%	12%	25%
		C4	26%	34%	40%

The choirs' members identified the main concerns, which they consider to be quite significant. Among the biggest are

psychological and personal problems (on average, 96% of respondents noted their presence). Respondents also named the more severe ones the problem of material difficulties and proper conditions. Constant bombings (C2), sirens, alarms, delays in wages, and their reduction were cited as an argument. These are understandable factors, too. Less problematic was distant communication, the difficulty of not having direct contact because the quarantine system of prohibitions led to the fact that everyone was used to such a system. However, such communication was problematic (76% of respondents). In the final survey phase (May 2022), respondents were also asked to evaluate the role and place of the choral arts during the war. Again, we offered a series of closed-ended questions. The results are presented as percentages.

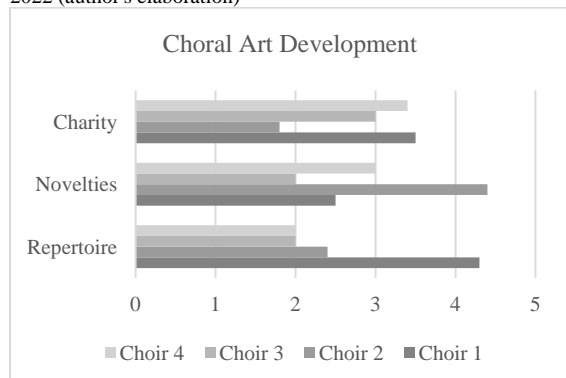
Table 2: Change tendencies in choral art from the perspective of choral members (author's elaboration)

	Question	Yes				No			
		C1	C2	C3	C4	C1	C2	C3	C4
1	Does the war affect the choral art and repertoire?	86	94	80	90	14	6	20	10
2	Does the war affect the manner and style of performance?	15	32	12	27	85	68	88	73
3	Will the war have a lasting effect on the arts?	75	97	89	90	25	3	11	10
4	Is the choral art developing?	89	68	83	74	11	32	17	26

As the survey results show, all choral groups believe that Ukrainian choral art is developing (79% of respondents in total) and has undergone significant changes in the repertoire (87%). However, some respondents noticed fewer changes in stylistics and manner of performance (28% in total). In addition, some respondents do not see the early effects of the war (11%).

The study also analyzed the changes in the performance of choral groups that they underwent during the war. In addition, the research team monitored publications on these choral groups and surveyed members of the choral groups about their forms of activity. Finally, we evaluated it according to a 5-point scale (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Choral activities change from February 2022 to May 2022 (author's elaboration)



As can be seen from the Figure 2, results during the war, active charitable activity is less in C2 because it was in the territory of active military operations and had limited opportunities, but during this period should be noted high innovative activity of the team, work with the repertoire and its changes. Thus, concert programs of modern Ukrainian composers were developed, and special attention was paid to composers of Slobozhanshchyna, compositions by E. Stankovych and V. Runchak. The Hutsulia

choir showed the most significant activity in the changes caused by the war: it is an active work with the repertoire, appeals to the results of modern Ukrainian composers, and was noted for great charity activities (participation in fundraising, charity performances). Consequently, depending on the degree of the extremity of the situation, the distance to the places of active hostilities, the activities of choral groups take place. Where there is an opportunity to conduct the energetic concert and charitable activities, there is work to improve skills, changes, and the formation of the repertoire.

## 5 Discussion

The development of choral art in the Ukrainian space is defined by deep traditions, a high level of performing skills, rich and diverse repertoire, which in the current extreme situation has received a new impetus to the development and strengthening of national foundations.

Andriichuk (2020) studied amateur choral collectives of Ukraine, taking place against the background of the development of Ukrainian musical culture in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. The researcher noted that significant historical shifts contribute to the emergence of new directions of "waves". So, in the Ukrainian choral art during the thaw, the first wave appeared, where the music in the clubs and palaces of culture contributed to the development of amateur choral art, the second wave arose in the days of the announcement of the independence of Ukraine, where the development of choral art occurs in line with the intensive development of national culture and art (Andriichuk, 2020). Participation in various festivals and competitions stimulates its development. Our research can be considered to describe the beginning of the "third wave" of shift and choral art development in Ukraine. We noted significant changes in the repertoire, the intensity of charitable concert activities increased, and the majority of respondents identified (90%) the presence of long-term changes.

A series of theoretical studies on the definition of specificity, styles, and genres (Bermesu, 2022; Martynyuk, 2019) of choral art pointed to its complexity and tendency to change, and extrapolations of genres indicated that the basis of choral singing is a set of timbre and composition positions: harmonies, textures, techniques that define the choral parts and groups, the musical composition, etc. (Batovsjka, 2019). The development of the artistic paradigm is determined by the aspiration of Ukrainian choral art to develop. In our study, we presented that choral ensemble believe that Ukrainian choral art is constantly evolving (in total, 79% of respondents). Ukrainian choral troupes experience changes in the repertoire (87%), genre and style priorities of artists, and evolution in the manner of performance (28%). All of this demonstrates the ongoing development of choral art in Ukraine.

An article on the role of art in war (Brancati, 2018) described 5 main areas in which art and war can be represented. These are agitational works, cherishing and disseminating their own culture, pacifist and charitable activities, and functions of material and moral support by artists of their people. The research results of our study showed the scientific potential of this direction. Respondents during the survey identified the above principles of development, which are being developed and actively supported by members of the choral collectives throughout Ukraine.

In our opinion, further research in the development and study of choral genres and styles will significantly expand the scientific and practical base of choral art, as well as contribute to the deepening of methodological principles of choral studies.

## 6 Conclusions

The development of choral art during the war can be effective and associated with the sharp socio-political changes in Ukraine. The evolution of this music branch is determined by the constant work on improving performance skills, deepening the knowledge

system on the conducting and choral art, highlighting the historical evolution of choral art, and the innovation of views on this development.

The technology of choral craftsmanship and music education need systemic solutions to facilitate the interaction of all participants in the creative process with the involvement of opportunities and innovations in art education, which in wartime appear as a challenge to the artist.

The development of choral art in times of war involves the focus on supporting the fighting spirit of the Ukrainian army; creating a positive atmosphere for listeners who find themselves in a situation of war; work on writing propaganda and patriotic works that strengthen the popular spirit; active participation in the anti-war movement protests against violence and civilian deaths; demoralizing the enemy, the active denial of his cultural manifestos; energetic concert and educational activities for charity, supporting the population and their military forces.

In the future, we should work on the development of the content components of the new training and conducting disciplines aimed at changes in the system of artistic education and culture in the state; comprehensively update the performance style of conductors and choral groups, to work in the context of the constant complication of the language of contemporary music. In our opinion, it is also necessary to actively develop the scientific-theoretical base of the choral art development to cover the achievements of scientific thought in publications.

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