

Revitalizing Besermyan *Krezh*': From the Original Sources to the Stage Versions

There is always an essential difference in the performance of traditional music in its authentic environment and on stage. Even if the performers are "authentic" bearers of tradition, music and music-making change their original meaning on stage, since they are taken out of the context of vernacular culture. In the case of the contemporary revivalist process, however, this difference is multiplied because of the specific motivation and cultural background of all participants in the musical event – the musicians themselves and their audience.

This paper will discuss the challenges of being a professional stage folk music performer and the strategies for solving them. The modern stage performer faces different expectations of the audience than it was in the original folk environment. The stage musician is expected to have a high level of professional skills, a creative approach to interpreting music, and at the same time a commitment to the genuineness of musical content and of the experience being created. The performer's own motivation may vary, but it usually includes the desire to give a second life to the folkloric tradition they are practicing, and in doing so, to implement their own creative ideas.

The author of the paper, being a stage performer of Besermyan *krezh*'es (northern Udmurtia) and their long-term collector and researcher, based on her own experience of revitalization of this disappearing folklore tradition, will analyze different strategies of both revivalist activity and the realization of her musical creative pursuits. Using the examples of the author's concert projects, the author will discuss autobiographically such different approaches to the revitalization and actualization of this ancient vocal genre as a analytical and performing attempt to restore the improvisational and variation techniques of *krezh*'es; an experiment in the fusion of traditional and modern free improvisation; and placing *krezh*'es in the context of folk tales and legends. The ultimate goal of these experiments is to create authenticity of the traditional music experience both from the performer's and the audience's point of view.

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