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KUY: TRADITIONAL GENRE IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC OF SOVIET AND POST-SOVIET KAZAKHSTAN

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ABSTRACT

The art of kuy (traditional piece for Kazakh musical instruments, mainly for lute chordophone dombra) is important part of intangible national heritage and mean of national identity. The transformation of kuy in 20^{th} century in westernized Kazakh music was examined to define the role of it in modern national art. Kuy in oral tradition and in composers' creativity was studied from the views of music endangerment approach, ethnomusicological genre theory, cultural interaction theory and musical nationalism theory.

Keywords: Kazakh art, dombra, kuy, symphonic kuy, westernized culture

KUY: GENERE TRADIZIONALE NELLA MUSICA CONTEMPORANEA DEL KAZAKISTAN NELL'EPOCA SOVIETICA E POST-SOVIETICA

SINTESI

L'arte del kuy (pezzo tradizionale in uso per gli strumenti musicali kazaki, principalmente per il liuto cordofono dombra) è un importante elemento del patrimonio nazionale intangibile e per la stessa identità nazionale. Viene qui presentata la sua trasformazione avvenuta nel sec. XX nella musica occidentalizzata kazaka per definire il suo ruolo nell'arte nazionale moderna. Il Kuy nella tradizione orale e nella creatività dei compositori è stato oggetto di studio dal punto di vista di un approccio della musica come specie minacciata di estinzione e delle teorie del genere etnomusicologico, dell'interazione culturale e del nazionalismo musicale.

Parole chiave: arte kazaka, dombra, kuy, kuy sinfonico, cultura occidentalizzata

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INTRODUCTION

In 2014 the Kazakh dombra kuy was included in the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. The ancient genre of kuy is widespread throughout Kazakhstan and has ancient roots.

Kazakhstan is a country that occupies a vast territory in the center of the Eurasian continent. The population of the region, mostly nomadic, has led a traditional lifestyle until the 1930-s. Ethnographers who have studied the everyday life of numerous tribes were amazed with *uniformity of language and culture throughout the country*. One of the important signs of the Kazakh clan ties is *dombra*. As Jennifer C. Post puts it "many would identify the dombra as the national instrument for Kazakhs, no matter where they live". Even Kazakhs who live outside their Motherland (in Mongolia, China, Russia, Uzbekistan etc.) associate their cultural identity with *kuy* (Post, 2007). Kuys are concise solo compositions for dombra. They bring together representatives of various social strata and sub-ethnic groups (*zhuzes* and tribes). They are still important means of Interethnic communication as well as an important part of cultural ecology in Kazakhstan

The art of kuy has faced new challenges with the development of the technological progress of the modern era. Kazakhs, as many other non-European ethnicities, were undergoing a process of cultural paradigm change in the 20th century. National school of composition was formed in the 1930-s. It needed material for shaping the new national style that would be synthesized with the European genres (symphonies, operas, chamber and vocal compositions). One of the sources for that synthesis was found in *dombra kuy*, that was later implemented in chamber and orchestra forms by composers of different generations.

Starting from the middle of the 20th century *kuy* is performed in two traditions: *endogenous* (Kazakh traditional music) and *exogenous* (western-kind music). This raises the question of genre viability. Catherine Grant, author of the viability theory, states: "I use the term music genre to refer to a discrete musical tradition, a defined or in some way unified by a set of features" (Grant, 2014, xiii). Is there any boundary between traditional and westernized kuy? How can the same genre represent two different traditions? Through the answers to these questions we can get an idea of Kazakh culture's complexity and Kazakh national identity in music.

KAZAKH DOMBRA AND THE GENESIS OF THE "KUY" GENRE

National musical art is determined by the mentality of people. It reflects the complexity of their worldview, ethnic sound-ideals (the term introduced by F. Bose), language, and ritual system. Instruments, performing style, and genre system of traditional music depend on several factors: the geographical and climatic conditions, features of economy, history and ethnogenesis, and also of language and speech (Utegalieva, 2013). In this regard, the wide spread of the dombra kuys (and dombra itself) among the Kazakh people appears to be natural. The size and design of the instrument ideally suit the nomadic way of life: a compact instrument, relatively simple in its structure, it offers a wide range of



Fig. 1: a) ancient dombra (Makhambet's dombra, 1st half of 19th century); b) reconstructed modern dombra of unified shape (A. Jubanov's dombra, 1930–40s) from the collection of Kazakh State Museum of Musical Instruments in Almaty (photo by authors)

possibilities. It is both used for accompanying the singing, and for pure instrumental performance. The timbre of dombra, rich in overtones, reflects *ethnic timberphonic sound-ideal* (term according to Utegalieva, 2013).

In respect of traditional musical art the term *kuy* means a composition for any traditional instrument. The Turkic etymology of the word *kuy* is very broad. S. Utegalieva reports on 12 meanings (2013, 69): tune, melody, sound, instrumental piece and music in general. Besides these obvious meanings related to music, there are also psychological meanings found as well: condition, harmony, good mood, mode of action, etc.

In addition to *kuy*, the genre system of Kazakh traditional music includes songs of different professional traditions that vary with every region, epos and small epic forms (*dastan*), everyday songs, ritual folklore. Dombra is common for almost all the genres.

A. Muhambetova connects the origin of kuy as an instrumental genre to the tradition of illustrating the story with instrumental music. She offers four types of relations between verbal text and music of kuy: *kuy within a legend (as an illustration), legend*-

kuy (legend that told by musical means), kuy together with the legend (kuy that is connected with story), kuy and the legend (kuy that is often performed with story of its appearance). They "reflect different stages of the gradual evolution of a syncretic music-making form, as well as its transformation into a pure musical form" (Amanov, Mukhambetova, 2002, 143). The principle of connection of the musical text with non-musical modalities (a story, a legend) clearly reflects the syncretism of philosophical thought and music in the mentality of Kazakh people. It is present in all the regional schools and traditions.

There are essential similarities between the art of kuy and western music. The masterpiece of Kazakh oral tradition's professional art has individual (not collective) authorship, as it is in the written tradition. Compositional thinking of a "higher level" was shaped during the evolution of traditional instrumental genre (*kuy*). Creative principles inherent to European instrumental music can be found in kuys as a form: variation, rondo, and register development. The genesis of kuy occurred in the musical environment of nomadic Turkic culture with minimal cultural contacts with European music.

There are few regional *dombra* traditions. They all share the principle of timbre-register structural development. S. Utegalieva points that it is "one of the fundamental and universal features of the instrumental and vocal-instrumental music of all Turkic peoples" (Utegalieva, 2013, 239).

Kuy's theoretical fundamentals were studied by a special field of Kazakh musicology that has developed in the last decades of the 20th century. Application of methods of Euro-

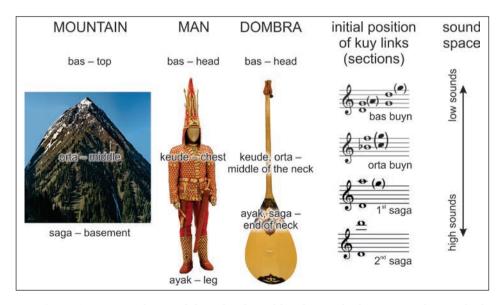


Fig. 2: B. Amanov's scheme of three-level world order applied to nature, human body and music

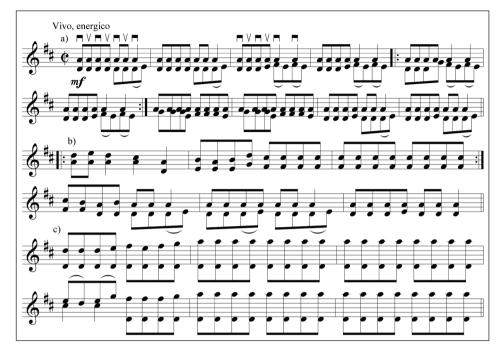


Fig. 3: Dayrabay. Kuy "Dayrabay": a) bas buyn (bars1-10); b) orta buyn (bars 15–20); c) saga (bars 28–33)

pean science to the analysis of the kuy genre was not sufficient to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the genre's compositional properties. B. Amanov (1985) proposed to apply traditional notions on canon of *kuy*-forming through folk terms. He connected the three zoned register structure with the structure of the dombra. (In traditional culture the dombra is associated with the human body and a three-level world order). The initial (low) register-zone is called *bas buyn* (main link or main section), medium is *orta buyn* (middle link), and culminating (high) is *saga* (place between the neck and the body of dombra) (Amanov, Mukhambetova, 2002, 217–219). The scheme of B. Amanov illustrates the linguistic and cultural concepts that were used to express ideas about dombra music (Jumagaliyeva, Sakharbayeva, Ulkenbayeva, 2015).

The unique features of kuy genre lie in its ability to maintain historical substrates from the most archaic onomatopoeic forms to auctorial samples of professional oral tradition art. For convenience let's imagine the current state of the traditional kuy genre as it is shown in the table below (*Tab 1*).

The structure of traditional kuy's genre system reflects at least two important historical stages of changes. The first one is the stage of classical kuy formation with its "infrastructure" – professional carriers of the genre, their followers, amateur musicians

Folklore kuy		Kuy of oral professional tradition		
Kuy as a part of syncretic genre	Archaic kuys (or kuys with lost authorship)	Kuy in continuing tradition (ustaz-shakirt traditional system of art transmission)	Kuy as a kind of folklorism (imita- tion of traditional kuy by contempo- rary authors, who are not involved in traditional system)	

Tab. 1: Genre system of traditional kuy

and fans. The second one is the stage of inclusion of kuy into the genre system of westerntype music, and of its familiarization by composers of the new formation.

The first period is described in ethnomusicological literature as canonization and classicization. Many musical traditions are characterized with similar processes. Thus, Butler Schofield described similar processes, using example of Hindustani music (2010). It is remarkable that, according to her research, the classicization of Hindustani traditional instrumental music happened without western influences in Mughal times (Schofield, 2010, 489–490). However, in contrast to India, classicization in the Kazakh music wasn't related to the attribution of instrumental traditions as court music. Kuy has always been a democratic art, addressed to the whole nation, but not to individual classes of society. The reasons for kuy classicization in relation to historical boarders of the process have yet to be investigated. We'll just suppose that the lower historical boarder of traditional dombra genre classicization is mid-18th century when the Kazakh nation recovered from a devastating *Zunghars' invasion*¹ and experienced a period of economic recovery thanks to joining the Russian Empire. The degree of cultural influence of the West still remained minimal.

The second period is connected with the formation of the new national tradition – Kazakh music of western type created by composers. This was accompanied with an overall cultural paradigm change and westernization of the Kazakh culture.

THE CHANGE OF THE CULTURAL PARADIGM IN THE SOVIET EAST

Many non-European cultures were westernized in the 20th century. There is a difference between the countries of Southeast Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia in terms of development of the Western cultural model. In such countries as Korea, Japan, India, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, Morocco, etc., the Western model of culture was naturalized *evolutionary* within one or two centuries (19th – mid. 20th centuries). In China and in the former Soviet Union (Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,

² Zunghar is Mongolian people that "fought repeated wars against Kazakhs" (Atwood, 2004) in Early 18th century.

Tatarstan), as well as among the peoples of Russia (Tuva, Khakass, Bashkir, Altai and others.) this process had a *revolutionary* nature due to political circumstances. David Fossum describes it on example of Turkmen music as a *westernizing reform* (Fossum, 2015). Traditional music has undergone the "transition from oral to written referral and also the institutionalization of its pedagogy" (Fossum, 2015, 204).

In the 1930–1950s the ideological settings have determined the perception of folk and professional art of oral tradition as the art of the past, whereas the introduction of Western art forms was perceived as a progressive phenomenon (Shakhnazarova, 1982). However, people's need in the tradition that existed for centuries has not disappeared, and thus this led to a sense of loss of heritage. The reaction to the imbalance between traditional and newly introduced art forms in the last decades of the 20th century has become a process of reviving of cultural identity, and it is distinctively expressed in music. One of the clearest reflections of these processes in the Kazakh musical art can be seen in the fate of the *kuy* genre. On one hand, the authentic and institutionalized forms of traditional kuy continue to develop. On the other hand, the kuy becomes the mean for experiments of composers on mixing European and Kazakh elements in their music language.

KUY REFLECTED IN THE TYPES OF COMPOSITIONAL THINKING

The genre experiments that use the model of *dombra kuy* have become possible due to the change of cultural paradigm, the transition to the industrial and postindustrial society in the 20th century. As the result, there has evolved what may be referred to as bilingual language environment. Russian scholar V. Yunusova points out these musical "languages" as different types of compositional thinking: traditional and western (more precisely – traditionally-oriented and west-oriented) (Yunusova, 2005, 539).

The inseparable links between *kuy* and nomadic worldview, the breadth of its spread and popularity amongst the people provides a viability of the genre in the conditions of cultural paradigm change. This process may be comprehended in terms of cultural-ecological approach (Grant, 2015). Changes in ecology of society and nature evoked changes in the genre system of the Kazakh music. Since the 1930-s many local traditions that form the national heritage when brought together, coexist with national western-type music that also has evolved during the formation of the 20th century heritage.

The genre of kuy has been attracting the attention of composers of the new formation since the 1930-s, due to its centuries-approved form, imaginative richness, and popularity among the people. This frequent addressing to traditional instrumental music raises the question of the relationship between traditional kuy genre and forms of its adaptation into the composer's creative work. Composers implement *kuys* in opera scenes, in symphonic and chamber works; not only do they cite the theme of famous traditional compositions, but also apply the transcription of whole kuy, as well as composing kuys themselves, imitating the masters of the past. In the 1960–70s the substantive genre *Symphonic kuy* has appeared.

What is the difference between traditional kuy and its composers' versions? And how their relationship is manifested? Does the cultural and historical process cause and also explain the evoking of such kuys?

There are two main differences between traditional dombra kuy and kuy-pieces for the European instruments and orchestras, created by composers: addressees and the genetic basis. The representative of the oral tradition addresses kuy, first of all, to his ethnic group – to Kazakhs. The composer of modern Western-type tradition who refers to the genre of kuy is inspired by the idea to familiarize national art as a part of the world's cultural heritage. On one hand, this is a form of "returning to the roots", to the heritage of the past. On the other hand, the duality of composers' kuys, the synthesis of Western and traditional compositional principles allow to attract a wider audience. This kind of music is interesting to representatives of the Kazakh ethnos, to carriers of the tradition. At the same time the orchestral sound, combined with exotic for non-Kazakh listener harmony, melody and rhythm is well accepted outside of Kazakhstan.

Traditional and composers version kuy have different genetic bases despite some similar external signs of its musical form and same genre titles. This fact is explained in terms of the so-called "generative" approach that is proposed by I. Zemtsovsky. He suggested to understand the genre not only as "a collection of works of a known type", but also as "the production of samples of such type based on the existing model that derives from social and creative stimuli" (Zemtsovsky, 1983). Such models that called "generating" in case of kuys for solo folk instrument (dombra) and for the Western instruments and ensembles belong to different traditions. The first generating model is defined by Turkic ethnic timber-phonic sound-ideal and timbre-register principle of development. The second model is formed by the genre system and instruments of the Western tradition and, above all, social and creative stimuli of written tradition. In particular, Symphonic kuy as a genre is based on the generating models of transcription and one-part symphonic pieces such as overtures, pictures, poems, etc. The composer creating such kind of work acts as researcher, as if studying the genre model of kuy from outside. Such use of it in academic genres can be then characterized as folklorism.

Thus the use of kuy in the composers' works is a secondary phenomenon, belonging rather to the modern Western-type tradition than to the indigenous Kazakh art. The correlation of the kuy elements and Western means of musical expression in the symphonic kuys is of particular interest to study.

MASTERING KUY IN COMPOSERS' CREATIVITY

Many composers and researchers paid attention to the potential of philosophical generalizations of kuy comparable to a symphony. Thus the author of one of the first kuy transcriptions for piano ethnographer A. Zataevich (1869–1936) noted the particular acoustic property of two-voiced dombra: richness of overtones, creating the impression of "grand in miniature". Researcher believed that the kuy transcription for Piano and ensembles of Western instruments would contribute to the disclosure of "underlying symphonic potential of kuys" (Zataevich, 2002, 21).

It is natural that Kazakh composers of the first generation (1930–1950s, Dzhumakova) adapted the traditional genres to the norms of the European genre system also applying the experience of Russian school of 19th and early 20th century (Dzhumakova, 2003).

Thus, many well-known songs of traditional poets and musicians (*akyns*) Birzhan-sal, Akhan-sere, Zhayau Musa, Abay and others as far as kuys of Kurmangazy, Dauletkerey, Dina etc. have been borrowed by first opera composers in Kazakhstan (E. Brusilovsky, A. Zhubanov, L. Hamidi, M. Tulebaev).

One of the first successful experiments of giving new sounding to kuy was quite naturally the creation of *traditional kuys transcriptions for the orchestra of reconstructed folk instruments*. The orchestra was established by the composer and researcher Akhmet Zhubanov (1906–1968). He implemented the model of Russian folk instruments orchestra of so-called "Andreyev" type. The orchestra included performers, representatives of oral traditions, not familiar with musical notation. During the two years (1932–1934) A. Zhubanov succeeded in finding of a method for transitioning to the ensemble and orchestral playing without a detailed study of the music theory. And the orchestra began to perform. It would be wrong to call the experience of creating an orchestra of folk instruments undoubtedly successful. Criticism, mainly by folklorists, subjected both to an inevitable practice of selecting one "best" of several kuy versions prevailing among the people, and a gradual reduction of the musical text's oral transmission role, and reconstruction of instruments. However, this "experiment" was viable. Currently, a number of folk orchestras are functioning successfully in Kazakhstan. Their repertoire includes both transcriptions of almost all known dombra kuys and specially written for them authors' kuys.

However, the approach to the symphonic implementation of dombra kuy was not found immediately (Kotlova, 2004). The next step was the *inclusion of kuy transcription* in cyclic composition. One of the first experiments of this kind was the use of Kurmangazy kuys in the "Sary-Arka" Symphony-suite by E. Brusilovsky (1943). The phrase symphonic kuy has become a genre definition together with the appearance of E. Rakhmadiyev's symphonic kuys: *Dairabai* (1961), *Kudasha-Duman* (1973), *Orytpa* (1977) and others. In fact they are creative paraphrases of traditional kuys. Principal similarity of Kazakh kuy and western symphonic miniatures (overture or symphonic picture) allows the composer to recreate traditional kuy as form of orchestral fantasy.

The first pieces of the *symphonic kuy* genre (a term introduced by E. Rakhmadiev), induced a broad discussion among Kazakhstani composers. When applying the artistic text of kuy to symphonic transcriptions, many composers have questioned the justification of the genre definition. According to G. Zhubanova's opinion this genre definition has a formal character ("echo of Ordinance on formalism in music in 1948"). She writes: "Joining the European word and such terms as 'kuy', 'mugham' one gets mixed sympho-folk genre. In fact its difference is insignificant in relation to the previously created 'Balbraun' by E. Brusilovsky, 'Dance' from 'Birzhan and Sarah' by M. Tulebaev, 'Folk Dance' from 'The Legend of White Bird' by the author of these lines ..." (Zhubanova, 1997, 22). (*The above-mentioned pieces are transcriptions of 19th century dombra kuys for symphonic orchestra*.)

However, in reality, the genre name (*symphonic kuy*) was formalized. Many contemporaries of E. Rakhmadiyev and young composers of subsequent generations began to use the term *symphonic kuy* for their orchestral works. Among the authors who applied this genre there were: T. Mukhamedzhanov, B. Kydyrbek, E. Omirov, E. Khusainov, V.

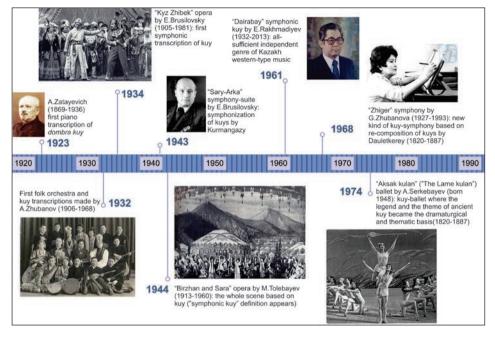


Fig. 4: The timeline of kuy mastering in pieces of composer

Strigotsky-Pak, A. Meirbekov, A. Toksanbayev, A. Raimkulova, A. Bestybayev, T. Kazhgaliyev, A. Abdinurov and others. Now symphonic kuys are the important part of heritage of Western-type music culture in Kazakhstan.

This shows the timeline of kuy mastering during the soviet decades. It reflects the search of traditional and western genres synthesis. We outline several areas of genre development, which can be used as a basis for genre typology of symphonic kuy.

WAYS OF INTERACTION OF TRADITIONAL KUY AND WESTERN GENRES

During more than 70-years history of mastering kuy in compositional art, many kinds of orchestral kuys have appeared. Having analyzed many pieces written from 1920s till today, we offer the typology of musical interaction between Kazakh and western genres:

All varieties of the symphonic kuy genre are intertextual and dialectic to various extents. In the transcriptions of traditional kuys composer works with text of a particular piece (*prototext*), builds an artistic dialogue with the author of the original kuy, with the images and ideas of the opus (*metatext*). When using only a fragment (quote) of traditional kuy, and especially in the symphonic kuys that are based on the original material a complex form of dialogue appears. Composer interacts not only with one author or one work, but with the text of all the instrumental music of the past, and moreover, with

By subject- matter	transcriptions of tradi- tional dombra kuys		author's kuy with musical quotations		kuy on the composer's (new) material		
By structure	_	intementations of		uses western form with kuy as a separate section		uses western compos- ite (rondo) form with a dispersed kuy	
By per- forming means	for orchestra of folk instru- ments	for symphonic orchestra		for wind orchestra		for chamber orchestra	

Tab. 2: Typology of kuy and symphonic genres interaction

the text of the whole traditional culture (*hypertext*). The genre model of the dombra kuy becomes a specific expression of hypertext of the "past". As the "present" the text of new Kazakh culture based on the compositional principles of western music acts.

One-part symphonic genres of Western genre system such as program overture, poem, fantasy, or scherzo are compositionally close to Kazakh kuy. As a result, the term *symphonic kuy* is widely used for a variety of orchestral pieces in individual forms.

CONCLUSION

In the 20th century the Kazakh culture has undergone the process of westernization. It had resulted in coexistence of two musical spheres – traditional and national music of western type. Kuy as an idea has become a bridge connecting these spheres. By the beginning of the 20th century Kazakh kuy has already developed from archaic onomatopoeic forms to authors' masterpieces with high degree of artistic generalization. In traditional kuy one may find complex compositional principles that attract composers' interest. Harmony of dombra music, its structural features, and ways of musical idea development became basic elements of national style in music of composers of the new written tradition.

At the same time the interaction of two types of compositional thinking as far as two different national traditions wasn't unilateral: traditional musicians mastered notation, institutional education system. The music of western type actively impacted the process of formation of national style and of genre system. In the area of the traditional art this has caused changes in its environment and infrastructure. Nowadays we can hear dombra kuy not only in Kazakh yurt (nomadic tent) but also within the ambient of concert halls.

Thus both traditional and composers' kuy have representative function in contemporary conditions. The idea of "kazakhness" came to the world stages thanks to kuy. This musical genre represents culture of Kazakh people as a whole throughout its history.

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KUY: TRADICIONALNA ZVRST SODOBNE GLASBE V SOVJETSKEM IN POST-SOVJETSKEM KAZAHSTANU

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POVZETEK

Avtorici sta preučili, kako v sodobni nacionalni umetnosti opredeliti kuy (tradicionalna kazahstanska inštrumentalna zvrst), ki se je v 20. stoletju preoblikovala v zahodni način kazahstanske glasbe. Raziskali sta kuy v ustnem izročilu in v okviru ustvarjalnosti skladateljev, in sicer glede pristopa ogroženosti glasbe ter teorij etnomuzikologije, kulturne interakcije in glasbenega nacionalizma. Tradicionalni kuy ostaja pomembno sredstvo medetnične komunikacije, pa tudi pomemben del kulture v Kazahstanu skozi celotno 20. stoletje. Po drugi strani so kazahstanski skladatelji novega zahodnega žanra glasbe, ki so se pojavili po letu 1930, dejansko uporabljaji načela harmonije in strukture starodavne strunske lutnje – kuy dombra, da bi na tak način v okviru orkestrov zahodnega tipa izrazili nacionalni slog v glasbi, še posebej simfoničnih kuyev. V 21. stoletju je simfonični kuy postal način prezentacije sodobne nacionalne kulture v svetu, v obliki sinteze antične dediščine in sodobnih zahodnih kazahstanskih trendov glasbe.

Ključne besede: kazahstanska umetnost, dombra, kuy, simfonični kuy, zahodnjaška kultura

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