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Classical Crossover and Its Russian and Ukrainian Interpretations

Abstract

This article aims to explore the phenomenon of “classical crossover,” a contemporary music trend that blends “high” and “low” elements. In addition to analyzing the genre’s main features and cultural preconditions for its emergence, the article will examine its historical origins and development. The second part of the article focuses on examples of classical crossover in Russian and Ukrainian music, with an analysis of several artists who have ventured into this new type of production, including the Terem Quartet, Anna Netrebko, Olga Chubareva, and Arina Domski. By applying historical and cultural methodology, the article suggests that classical crossover has a broad audience in Russia and Ukraine, allowing musicians to introduce elite classical music to the masses. Although some may view the genre as a dilution of classical music’s distinctive qualities in order to cater to popular tastes, it also provides musicians with the opportunity to create original pieces that

merge tradition with innovation. Considering all of the above, the author of this article aims to explore the cultural significance and impact of classical crossover in the music industry.

Keywords

classical crossover, music studies, music genres, mass culture

Abstrakt

Classical crossover i jego rosyjskie i ukraińskie interpretacje

Artykuł jest analizą zjawiska *classical crossover* obecnego we współczesnej muzyce, a polegającego na łączeniu elementów „wysokich” i „niskich”. Celem artykułu jest opisanie głównych cech tego gatunku i okoliczności kulturowych, które doprowadziły do jego powstania, a także zbadanie jego historycznej genezy i etapów rozwoju. Druga część artykułu skupia się na przykładach *classical crossover* w muzyce rosyjskiej i ukraińskiej. Analizie poddano twórczość wybranych rosyjskich i ukraińskich artystów, którzy reprezentują ten nurt, takich jak Terem Quartet, Anna Netrebko, Olga Chubareva i Arina Domska. Wykorzystując metodologię historycznokulturową artykuł sugeruje, że *classical crossover* ma szeroką publiczność w Rosji i w Ukrainie, ponieważ oswaja ją skutecznie z elitarną muzyką klasyczną. Chociaż niektórzy dostrzegają w tym trendzie tendencję do rozmywania charakterystycznych cech muzyki klasycznej w celu zaspokojenia popularnych gustów, daje on również muzykom możliwość tworzenia oryginalnych utworów, które łączą tradycję z innowacją. Uwzględniając powyższe elementy, autorka stara się zbadać kulturowe znaczenie gatunku *classical crossover* i jego wpływ na przemysł muzyczny.

Słowa kluczowe

classical crossover, muzykologia, gatunki muzyczne, kultura popularna

Tracing the Origins

The contemporary artistic culture is characterized by a multiplicity of manifestations that very often involve a fusion and interaction of different elements, aimed at creating a composite but, at the same time, harmonious overall framework. Anatolii Tšuker has pointed to its characteristic tendency towards a deepening and broadening of forms of synthesis, expressed by blending elements of different art forms and blurring the boundaries between genres.¹ This tendency also finds its expression in music, thus giving rise to the notion of “crossover,” used to describe content borrowed from several different genres, whose popularity transcends the conventional boundaries of music and its styles. The term was coined at a time when there was a growing need to capture “borderline” stylistic phenomena that did not fit the historically established framework. In its broadest sense, crossover means “intersection”; however, there are specialized definitions of this term in literature, cinema, music, as well as in the natural and technical sciences. All, in one way or another, refer to crossover as the fusion of objects or elements, functions, characters, storylines, styles, or genres.

It is exactly this synthesis that has given birth to the musical trend of “classical crossover,” which presents itself as a singular fusion of “high” and “low” elements, of tradition and innovation—the rapprochement of two worlds placed at the antipodes, the academic world on one side and the world of the masses on the other. Tšuker states:

For academic music, these new contacts represent a way to achieve an opening, an opportunity to initiate a “dialogue” with a broader audience, using a language that sounds more familiar and comprehensible; for mass music, on the other hand, it is a way to overcome certain limits, an attempt to ennoble itself, to overcome the banalities of its content, enriching it with more incisive aesthetic elements.²

As the result of an artistic synthesis, classical crossover merges elements of classical and mass music culture, combining the professionalism of academic performance and the aesthetics of composition with contemporary trends in mass music genres. It therefore includes contemporary interpretations of classical works as well as “classical” interpretations of compositions belonging to mass

¹ Anatolii Tšuker, *Irok, i simfoniia* (Moskva: Kompozitor, 1993), 39. Well-established Russian and Ukrainian names are given in the most popular versions, while others are transliterated according to ALA-LC system.

² Tšuker, *Irok, i simfoniia*, 39.

music genres, but also hybrid creations made with the specific aim of giving rise to a “classical crossover opera.” It is possible to classify all experiments in this field of performance into three groups:

a) Modern interpretations of classical compositions. This category includes remixes (compositions with an accentuated metric basis, usually electronic, in which melodic fragments of famous academic works are used as leitmotifs), vocal arrangements of instrumental pieces, arrangements of operatic arias, Neapolitan songs, and fragments of symphonic works.

b) Pop-culture compositions that have been academized through a kind of ennoblement. This category includes pop and rock songs which received a qualitatively different sound in the interpretation of classical crossover artists. The original sound characteristic of mass music genres is replaced in such interpretations with sounds that are more in line with the lyrical-symphonic style; rock, pop, and jazz voices are substituted by academic voices, and symphonic instruments are added to the instrumental accompaniment.

c) Original works created in the context of the so-called middle culture, in which the musical characteristics of both genres are vividly expressed. These works currently form the core of the classical crossover repertoire and are exclusively associated with representatives of this musical genre.

It seems worthwhile to consider the origins of classical crossover in the context of postmodernity. Jean-François Lyotard points to such inherent features of the postmodern as pluralism of forms and techniques, and rapprochement with mass culture. Nadezhda Mankovskaiā notes that the characteristic features of postmodernism are

stylistic syncretism, quotation as a creative method, fragmentariness and the principle of assemblage, a sensual attitude towards the world, hedonism, fusion of genres, of the “high” and “low,” of high and mass culture, theatricalization of modern culture, reproductivity, serialism, and rebroadcasting, focused on mass culture, consumer aesthetics, new technological tools of mass communication.³

Similarly to painting, architecture, and literature, postmodernism in music tends to reinterpret traditions on the basis of their free combinations, reinterpretations of artistic heritage, collage, and quotation.⁴

³ Nadezhda Borisovna Mankovskaiā, *Estetika postmodernizma* (Sankt Peterburg: Aleteiā, 2000), 139–140.

⁴ Mankovskaiā, *Estetika postmodernizma*, 188.

The emergence of classical crossover is also closely linked to the notion of “middle culture,” which has a fairly broad interpretation. On the one hand, it includes any artistic works that balance on the edge of academic art, and, therefore, it refers not only to musical performances. On the other hand, the “middle culture” is often seen in the context of postmodernism and covers a wide range of phenomena associated with the breaking of all possible norms and canons, the blurring of boundaries between academic and non-academic traditions, and the emergence of new forms of creative activity:

A characteristic feature of performances of “middle culture” is to present academic music in an accessible and attractive way to a wide audience, to establish contact with the public, to overcome the gap between “high” art and the average person, which emerged in the era of Romanticism. It is well known that mass interest in artistic activity, its approval and appreciation by large audiences, are linked to the category of “popularity,” and works of musical classics presented by “middle culture” performers in a characteristic manner began to fit into it.⁵

The second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century was not an easy period for academic performing arts. While the well-established and, in some cases, struggling philharmonic tradition was undeniably important, new, alternative forms of presentation of academic music were emerging and evolving. Interpreting older classical music, middle-culture performers balanced on the boundary between elite and mass culture, organically combining different artistic traditions. In their creative quests, the foundations of academic performance were reinterpreted, and among the most important were the transformations of the roles of author, performer, and listener, the renewal of concert rituals and forms of music presentation, and the transformations of the performed pieces.⁶ Analyzing this trend, we can note that in this way academic music conforms and adapts to the tastes of the mass consumer and begins to function according to the laws of the popular art. The focus on the demand and the artist’s popularity are directly related to the “middle zone,” where the performing skills and the sophisticated aesthetic code of the composition are combined with the features of entertainment genres. In a sense, this also occurred because classic music, including such forms as art song, chamber music, opera, and symphony, no

⁵ Ul'ia Vladimirovna Verevkina, *Neakademicheskoe ispolnenie akademicheskoi muzyki: Aktual'nye tendentsii poslednei treti xx–nachala xxi veka* (Dissertatsiia na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni kandidata iskusstvovedeniia, Rostovskaia gosudarstvennaia konservatoriia im. S. V. Rakhmaninova, Rostov na Donu, 2012), 17.

⁶ Verevkina, *Neakademicheskoe ispolnenie*, 17.

longer enjoys the same degree of cultural heritage or prestige, mainly due to recording and broadcasting media.⁷ As James Parakilas put it:

The assumption that people need to be prepared to hear classical music is largely abandoned, undermined by the nature of radio itself. Classical music is no longer a ritual which you must dress up and travel to a public building to hear. Now it comes out of your speakers and into your ears before you know what it is, sometimes before you are awake.⁸

Classical music, however, ennobles consumption processes, as it envelops and pushes commercial objectives into the background, creating the illusion that the value of things or services purchased is not expressed only in economic terms. What is exploited here is the authority of classical music as a high art, inseparable from spirituality, personal involvement, and excellence in quality. With classical music, the consumption process acquires an entourage of high-society discourse about “high matters,” and thus the utilitarian nature of the commercial arrangement is somehow neutralized.⁹ Nevertheless, a certain reluctance towards crossover phenomena exists in the academic community and some scholars tend to share the opinion of classical music purists regarding the role of the classical-crossover in modern culture, namely that crossover artists

contribute to the death of classical music by presenting overly simplified cover versions of complex works. The huge overnight success of some poorly educated classical-crossover artists understandably upsets highly talented, still less successful classical musicians with decades of training behind them.¹⁰

Analyzing the socio-cultural and economic reasons for this phenomenon, Fedor Shak emphasizes the negative impact of the financial component, noting that classical crossover remains a phenomenon alien to the principles of high art and it is subordinated to commercial, and by no means artistic, principles and

⁷ Elizabeth Llewellyn, *Crossover: Boundaries, Hybridity, and the Problem of Opposing Cultures* (Southampton: University of Southampton, 2010), 10.

⁸ James Parakilas, “Classical Music as Popular Music,” *Journal of Musicology* 3, no. 1 (1984): 16.

⁹ Dariĭa Aleksandrovna Zhukov, “Klassicheskaĭ muzyka kak soprovozhdenie povsednevnosti: Formy i printsipy funktsionirovaniĭa,” *Chelovek i kul'tura*, no. 2 (2012).

¹⁰ Balázs Alpár, *Crossing Over: Musicological and Sociopsychological Aspects of Blending Classical and Popular Music* (Wien: Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst, 2016), 18.

needs.¹¹ However, classical crossover artists have different objectives than opera singers, and they also have their own performance techniques, so it is not quite fair to compare these two groups.¹²

Leaving aside the axiological aspect, we may note that the crossover movement suggests not only “free crossing of stylistic boundaries, but also, as a rule, a directional vector of evolution—from ‘local’ art, confined within certain boundaries (racial, subcultural, etc.) to mass art, aimed at satisfying the demands of a wide audience.”¹³ A “reverse” movement is also possible, but this kind of creative activity remains in its own stylistic niche, without exerting influence on the academic sphere, and is of interest mainly to the author’s devoted admirers. Ideally, the art of crossover implies the musician’s ability to create an organic, artistically convincing synthesis, as well as the ability not only to experiment audaciously, but also to evaluate the result objectively, guided by internal norms of taste.¹⁴

Classical crossover is a synthetic musical art form. Its evolution has largely been influenced by new opportunities for popularization of academic music that opened up gradually throughout the twentieth century, thanks to the emergence of new means of mass communication. The invention of gramophone recording and radio allowed widespread broadcasting of classical recordings, as well as their distribution through duplication on magnetic tapes and records. The beginning of mass duplication of recordings created an alternative to the traditional concert form of popularizing the classics. It was possible to reach a large number of audiences, but at the same time the unexpectedness intrinsic to live performance was eliminated. However, thanks to sound recording, it became possible to conduct various experiments on the fusion of music material that is different in terms of style and texture, which later formed the basis of classical crossover.

Developing in parallel with radio broadcasting, the sound film created new opportunities for the popularization of classical music. Music became an integral part of cinematic art and an important component in its system of artistic expression. Music can be used to create the atmosphere of the action,

¹¹ Fedor Mikhailovich Shak, *Dzhaz i massovaiā muzyka v soĭsiokulʹturnykh protsessakh vtoroi poloviny xx-nachala xxi veka* (Disseratsiia na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni kandidata iskusstvovedeniā, Rostovskii gosudarstvennaia konservatoriia im. S. V. Rakhmaninova, Rostov na Donu, 2018), 322.

¹² “What is Classical Crossover?,” Classical Crossover website, accessed February 18, 2023, http://www.classical-crossover.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=142&Itemid=126.

¹³ Anna Evgen’evna Krom, “Amerikanskiĭ muzykal’nyi minimalizm i iskusstvo krossoverov: Paralleli i vzaimodeistviia,” *Muzykovedenie*, no. 12 (2018): 10.

¹⁴ Anna Evgen’evna Krom, “Krossover: Sushchnost’ poniatiia i opyt ego primeneniia v izuchenii amerikanskogo minimalizma,” *Uchenie zapiski Rossiiskoi akademii muzyki imeni Gnesinykh*, no. 3 (2019): 87.

to convey the characteristics of the environment in which the protagonists live and work. Music may also be part of the film's structure as a leitmotif, serving as a characteristic of a particular character or phenomenon.¹⁵ In the mid-twentieth century, musical films in which vocal performances were woven into the plot were very popular. An active promoter of academic music in the 1940s and 1950s was the American singer and actor Mario Lanza. He had academic vocal skills and actively popularized in cinema the tenor opera repertoire and newly composed non-classical compositions such as *Granada*, *Be My Love*, *Because You're Mine*, and others. Mario Lanza became one of the first and most successful artists whose works can be defined as "classical crossover," even though the genre itself was formed much later.

Due to the rapid breakthrough of classical crossover in the music industry, an abundance of similar terms has emerged. In the 1990s, classical crossover was known under a number of different denominations, including "classical pop," "popera," "operatic pop," "neoclassical," "contemporary classical" or simply "crossover." In the early 1990s, "classical crossover" appeared for the first time in *Billboard* magazine as a separate category, while in the nomination list of the Grammy Music Awards it was present from 1999 to 2011. It was therefore in the 1990s that some sort of official recognition of classical crossover began, although in fact a process of definition had already started in the 1930s–50s, and in the last decades of the 20th century the classical crossover genre finally took shape. This was preceded by a series of creative experiments in combining different styles in music: the fusion of classical and jazz elements in the work of George Gershwin (the opera *Porgy and Bess*), rock sounds and academic vocals in the work of Andrew Lloyd Webber (the famous *Phantom of the Opera*). In the late 1980s, Queen leader Freddie Mercury and the opera diva Montserrat Caballé together performed *Barcelona*, a perfect example of a fusion of academic and rock vocals. Duets combining academic and pop/rock/vocal groups are one of the most common forms of classical crossover expression in music today. In the 1990s, electronic music became increasingly popular, and there was a growing trend towards its use in the on-screen arts. It is worth recalling, however, that a reinterpretation of classical music in a postmodern key was proposed as early as 1969, by an American composer, Wendy Carlos, author of the album *The Well-Tempered Synthesizer*, which brought together works by classical European composers with an entirely new arrangement obtained by means of an impressive musical synthesiser.

¹⁵ Vitaliĭ Fedorovich Poznin, *Audiovizual'nyĭ produkt: tekhnologiĭa plūs tvorchestvo* (Sankt Peterburg: Sankt-Peterburgskiiĭ gosudarstvennyiĭ universitet kino i televideniĭa, 2006), 171.

Another great example of classical crossover is the series of benefit concerts featuring Luciano Pavarotti, entitled *Pavarotti & Friends*, in various editions over a time span from 1992 to 2003. These were absolutely new shows and the wide diffusion they had was a clear sign that this new musical trend was meeting with the appreciation of a large public. These were not simply concerts in which artists from different musical traditions participated, but artistic performances in which different genres merged. For example, Pavarotti duetted with the most famous exponents of the pop scene, such as Mariah Carey, Brian Adams, Stevie Wonder, Elton John, Patricia Kaas, Sting, Ricky Martin, Eros Ramazzotti, and others. These performances covered the most diverse genres, from opera arias to Neapolitan songs, to rock and rap compositions. In this regard, particularly famous was Pavarotti's duet with the rap singer Giovanotti, also known as Lorenzo Cherubini, performed during the charity concert *Together for the Children of Bosnia*, held in 1995 in Modena. This example fully reflects the concept of classical crossover, while also demonstrating the degree of "democratisation" of musical culture at the turn of the 20th to the 21st century.

Classical Crossover in Russian and Ukrainian Interpretations

Russia, too, has witnessed this phenomenon, which has become increasingly widespread since the end of the last century; suffice it to mention the musical group Terem Quartet from St. Petersburg, a true forerunner of the crossover, which entered the Russian music scene in 1986. Inspired by the Russian national culture, the musicians use folk instruments: the domra and the alto domra (precursors of the balalaika), the accordion and the double bass, which create a unique and surprisingly expressive sound when played together. The instruments reveal their full potential as the sound that they emanate manages to harmonize organically with the classical repertoire, jazz, folk-rock, and contemporary music, generating results that are as exceptional as they are unexpected, as when in 1994, during a concert in Vatican City, as guests of Pope John Paul II, Terem Quartet performed Vittorio Monti's "Ciarda." Among the group's first concerts there was *Un ballo in maschera* in 2006, performed together with the State Chamber Orchestra Moscow Virtuosi. The programme included *Liber-tango* by Piazzola, Prokof'ev's *Gavotta*, the *Flea Waltz*, *Cancan*, and the waltz from the famous Soviet film *Beregis avotomobilya*, better known in English as *Uncommon Thief*, or *Watch Out for the Automobile*, directed by Eldar Riāzanov.

Also in 2006, IŪrii Bashmet, the Grammy Award-winning Russian cellist, together with the chamber orchestra Moscow Soloists, of which he is the director,

and with the participation of Boris Frumkin's jazz trio, organized the Crossover Concerto. During the performance, jazz pieces by Gershwin, Rodgers, and Kern, arranged by Boris Frumkin and Ūrii Ūkushev, were performed, as well as fragments from Broadway musicals and American films from the 1930s and 1960s. In 2009, Ūrii Bashmet and the jazz saxophone virtuoso Igor Butman merged their talents and orchestras in the US tour of *Crossover Concert*, with a programme that featured pieces from the classical repertoire of the Moscow Soloists and jazz arrangements of Russian classics by Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, as well as the *Jazz Suite for Viola, Saxophone, Piano and Orchestra* composed by Igor Raikhelson.

A figure that certainly deserves mentioning in the context of Russian classical crossover is the internationally renowned soprano Anna Netrebko. Famous for her brilliant career as opera singer and the winner of numerous prizes, Anna Netrebko has not only renewed the representational style of *bel canto*, but also created a number of classical crossover projects, participating in duet with one of Russia's biggest pop stars, Filipp Kirkorov, and performing a song together with DJ Groove, a famous electronic musician, known not only for his house, downtempo, and techno melodies, but also for rearranging famous classical operas and songs by other composers. Netrebko, in a way, lent Groove her voice for a performance of the aria *Flower Duet* from the opera *Lakmé* by Léo Delibes; however, the DJ made major changes in terms of harmony and compositional measure. Finally, the soprano, together with her husband Ūsif Ūivazov, an Azerbaijani tenor, produced an entire album of songs in Russian, Italian, French, and English, written in her honor by the contemporary Russian composer Igor Krutoi.

With regard to Ukraine, nowadays there are very few performers who organically combine classical singing and contemporary non-academic music. The main reasons for the very insignificant presence of classical crossover performers are the peculiarities of the socio-cultural situation, including the lack of an appropriate audience.¹⁶ However, the first evidence of classical crossover can be observed to some extent since the 1960s, when Ukrainian popular music began to develop. At that time, new musical rhythms and styles appeared in the Soviet and Ukrainian musical panorama due to the influence of the West, and a new aesthetics of sound started to emerge. Popular music began to play an important role in the recovery and actualization of national traditions, in the process of integration and cultural development of the society.

¹⁶ Svitlana Stepanivna Muravitska, "Klasychnyĭ krossover u suchasnomu muzychnomu prostori Ukraĭni," *Mystetstvovoznachchi zapysky: zb. nauk. prafś, no. 39* (2021): 179–180.

Thus, significant changes took place in popular music: songs of Soviet propaganda started being replaced by lyrical compositions and vocal masterpieces that have become classics of the new Ukrainian vocal scene: *Pisnia pro rushnik* (Song about the Towel-Cloth), *Dva kolory* (Two Colors), *Chornobryvsi* (Marigold), *Āk tebe ne liubyty, Kyiēve mii?* (How Can I Not Love You, Kyiv of Mine?), etc. Their authors were famous academic composers: Ihor Shamo, Platon Maiboroda, Oleksandr Bilash, Volodymyr Vermenych, who wrote music to the verse of prominent songwriters, such as Mykhaĭlo Tkach, Andrii Malyshko, Borys Oliinyk, Dmytro Lutsenko, Mykola Synhaiivs'kyi, Dmytro Pavlychko, and others. The lyrics of these songs were full of solemn, highly emotional motives, of love to the mother, to the native land, to a small homeland village. Singers with classical vocal training were engaged to perform these popular songs; among them were Ūrii Huliiāēv, Dmytro Hnatiūk, Larysa Ostapenko, Anatoliĭ Mokrenko, Diana Petrynenko, and others.¹⁷ These performers were versatile singers who

took into account the specifics of all three main singing traditions—folk, academic and pop. Their unique natural talent, mastery of reaching into the depths of vocal pop art, was opposed to all negative judgments about mass music. In the world of modern vocal art, this synthesis has its own name—“classical crossover.”¹⁸

In this regard, it is appropriate to mention the television show *Zirky v operi* (Stars in the Opera)—an adaptation of the British program *Popstar to Operastar*—aired on 1plus1 channel in Ukraine in 2012. This project had a great success among the audience. It took place in Ivan Franko National Academic Theatre, where famous Ukrainian singers performed accompanied by the symphony orchestra. *Stars in the Opera* was the first musical show in Ukraine in which musicians approached classical crossover, performing songs where opera singing was combined with pop music, rock, etc. This can be vividly perceived in the duet of the pop singer Jamala and the classical vocalist Vlad Pavliūk, who successfully performed the soundtrack to the James Bond film *Tomorrow Never Dies*. The duo created a brilliant interpretation of this composition, in which classical singing was combined with elements of pop music, blues, and soul. Another memorable appearance was, arguably, the duet of Alexander Ponomarev and the opera singer Irina Kulik, who performed, among other songs, *The Show Must Go On* and *The*

¹⁷ Muravits'ka, “Klasychnyi crossover,” 181.

¹⁸ Tetiāna Viktorivna Samaĭ, *Vokal'ne mystetstvo estrady: Ukraĭns'kyĭ kontekst* (Kyiv: Chetvertakhyvliā, 2019), 19.

Phantom of the Opera, the latter translated into Ukrainian by Ponomarev. In these compositions, the interaction of opera singing with rock and pop music is clearly heard, and the great success of these performances, and of the show in general, evidences a certain degree of public interest in opera singing; this interest, however, seems to be at its highest when the academic performance is combined with more familiar and “light” musical genres.

In this light, it is also worth mentioning a famous opera singer awarded the title of People’s Artist of Ukraine,¹⁹ soloist of the Ukrainian National Philharmonic, Olga Chubareva. In 2013, she launched an international art project entitled *Lady Opera*, which aims to promote academic opera singing and classical music. Famous singers and musicians are involved in this project, and the concerts transform into real shows, with the use of lighting effects, scenography and scenery, personally designed by Chubareva, who plays the role of singer, producer, and director.²⁰ Her versatile soprano allows her to combine classical singing with jazz and pop, giving rise to classical crossover interpretations. Several different concert programs have already been created within the framework of this project, including *Lady Opera, Europe, Sny Roksolany* (Dreams of Roxelana), *Vivere, Opera: Jazz. Blues*.²¹

The singer who officially declares herself as the only female classical crossover artist in Ukraine is the soprano Arina Domski, born in 1987, who graduated from the Reinhold Glière Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music and later the Tchaikovsky National Music Academy (Conservatory). Her professional career began in 2012, with the release of her first single *Ti amerò*, performed in classical crossover during a charity ball in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The video for this song immediately got into circulation on the British channel C Music TV, making the singer famous not only in her home country but also in Northern Europe. Among Domski’s works, it is worth mentioning the *Opera Show* of 2018, a 90-minute performance consisting of 24 songs that cover different periods and music trends. Each piece in the program is a different theatrical story, involving an orchestra, chorus, and ballet dancers. During the show, the singer performed fragments and musical arrangements of *Carmina Burana* by Carl Orff, *Flower Duet* by Léo Delibes, *Madama Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini, *Prince Igor* by Alexander Borodin, pieces by Händel, Mozart, and Tchaikovsky.

¹⁹ The highest honorary title awarded to outstanding performing artists whose merits are exceptional in the sphere of the development of the performing arts, such as theatre, music, dance, circus, cinema, etc.

²⁰ Ivan Vasylovych Bobul, “Klasychnyĭkrossover u prostori suchasnoho muzychnoho mysteĭstva,” *Natsional’na akademiĭa kerivnykh kadriŭ kul’tury i mysteĭstv*, no. 1 (2022): 127.

²¹ “Olga Chubareva,” Ukrainian Philharmonics website, accessed December 1, 2022, <https://www.filarmonia.com.ua/about/artists/solisty-vokalisty/olga-chubareva/>.

Bel canto and orchestral execution were combined with special effects, ballet, and breathtaking stage sets. Music critics note that *Opera Show* is a new format of theatrical production, which contributes to attracting sizeable audiences to operatic music: both fans of the genre and the wider public that appreciate the pop culture. In this way, the stylistic renewal of the traditional genre seems to be a necessary condition for its further successful functioning in the era of globalization and convergence of values of different cultures.²² As in the best pop-opera tradition, the singer's artistic choices are based on the combination of classical music with cultural and musical elements of pop, with the addition of a further component, that is, the "spectacularity" evident in the exaltation of female sensuality and extraordinary scenery that strikes the spectators' sensibility. Thus, in her video for *Nessun Dorma* from Giacomo Puccini's *Turandot*, the singer broke the stereotypes about opera singers by appearing in quite a bold and unexpected image: completely nude but for the veiled intimate parts. In a short video on YouTube, the singer introduces the classic crossover genre to a modern audience, sharing her own vision and explaining her inspiration for performing in this genre:

Once I came across the following statement from a British music critic: "We can reconstruct the music of the 17th century but we cannot reconstruct 'the ear' of the 17th century." And this is true. Entertainment, cultural needs, and perception were different in those times. Nowadays, classical music as well as academic singing seem monotonous and obscure to the modern audience, as completely different rhythms are in style today. But luckily, mankind hasn't thrown away achievements of the past, having readjusted them to "the ear" of the 21st century. . . . I don't want to be predictable. I want to amaze the audience all the time. I want to extend the limits of classical crossover genre and to attract the young audience to this type of music. . . . I don't like being ascribed to showbiz representatives. My music is art. This music is for those people who know the value of true art and for those who have exquisite art taste.²³

This short review of artists who make use of the phenomenon of classical crossover on the Russian and Ukrainian musical panorama represents only a very brief excursus, as the representatives of this quasi-genre are numerous and most of them enjoy great fame and the love of the public. This allows us to state

²² Muravitsk'a, "Klasychnyi crossover," 183.

²³ "Arina Domska about Classical Crossover Genre," YouTube, accessed October 10, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVPvAFHP5MA&t=1335> (0:17–1:02; 2:19–2:31; 3:40–3:50).

that, even though in some contexts the term crossover might have a negative connotation, associated with cultural appropriation, implying the dilution of music's distinctive qualities in order to better correspond to mass tastes, this cultural phenomenon has a wide audience. For musicians, classical crossover enables spreading classical and academic music among the masses and, on the other hand, it represents an opportunity to create original pieces that generate surprising and unexpected effects.



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