

Comparative Analysis of the Performance of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D Major, Opus 35 on Prima Kobyz and Violin

Análise comparativa da execução do Concerto para violino em ré maior, Opus 35, de Tchaikovsky, sobre Prima Kobyz e violino



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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the specifics of performing classical violin repertoire on the prima kobyz using the example of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35. The research methodology included a musicological analysis aimed at comparing the technical, timbral, and performance features of the

two instruments, as well as the influence of aesthetics and the way the instruments produced sound on the interpretation of a musical work. Additionally, a survey was conducted among 50 professional performers, comprising 25 women and 25 men, at the Kurmangazy National Conservatory of Kazakhstan and the Kurmangazy State Orchestra of Kazakhstan. The study found that 40% of respondents considered the technical differences between playing the prima kobyz and the violin to be significant, and another 40% considered these difficulties to be moderate, indicating the need to adapt performance techniques. Fifty percent of respondents noted the prima kobyz's high ability to convey lyrical timbre nuances, and sixty percent – its potential to create a new interpretive aesthetic in the performance of classical works. The analysis of the concerto's performance on the prima kobyz revealed that the unique timbre of this instrument contributed to the enrichment of the work's artistic and emotional content, as well as the expansion of its interpretive possibilities. The theoretical analysis revealed that the prima kobyz, as an instrument, along with the violin, had the potential to expand the performance repertoire by adapting classical works, such as Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35.

Keywords: musical adaptation, folk performance, aesthetics of musical instruments, musical culture, female musician, gender equality.

Resumo: O objetivo deste estudo foi investigar as especificidades da execução do repertório clássico para violino na prima kobyz utilizando o exemplo do Concerto para Violino em Ré maior, Opus 35, de Tchaikovsky. A metodologia de investigação incluiu uma análise musicológica com o objetivo de comparar as características técnicas, tímbricas e de execução dos dois instrumentos, bem como a influência da estética e da forma como o instrumento produzia o som na interpretação de uma obra musical. Além disso, foi realizado um inquérito a 50 músicos profissionais, incluindo 25 mulheres e 25 homens, do Conservatório Nacional Kurmangazy do Cazaquistão e da Orquestra Estatal Kurmangazy do Cazaquistão. O

estudo apurou que 40% dos inquiridos consideraram significativas as diferenças técnicas entre tocar a prima kobyz e o violino, e outros 40% consideraram estas dificuldades moderadas, indicando a necessidade de adaptação das técnicas de execução. 50% dos inquiridos notaram a elevada capacidade da prima kobyz para transmitir nuances tímbricas líricas, e 60%, o seu potencial para criar uma nova estética interpretativa na execução de obras clássicas. A análise da execução do concerto na prima kobyz mostrou que o timbre singular deste instrumento contribuiu para o enriquecimento do conteúdo artístico e emocional da obra e para o alargamento das suas possibilidades interpretativas. A análise teórica revelou que a prima kobyz, enquanto instrumento, juntamente com o violino, tinha o potencial de expandir o repertório performativo através da adaptação de obras clássicas, como o Concerto para Violino em Ré Maior, Opus 35, de Tchaikovsky.

Palavras-chave: adaptação musical, performance folclórica, estética de instrumentos musicais, cultura musical, musicista feminina, igualdade de género.

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1. Introduction

The relevance of this study is underscored by the need to expand the boundaries of musicological research on the adaptation of classical works for folk instruments, particularly the prima kobyz. In the context of the development of musical art, it is essential to analyse the specifics of performing classical repertoire on traditional instruments, which allows these instruments to be considered in new interpretations. It is particularly relevant to study the performance of concertos for violin on the prima kobyz, as this instrument has a unique timbre palette and technical capabilities that differ from those of classical stringed instruments. In addition, the consideration of gender aspects, particularly the significant increase in the participation of women in performing the kobyz in the 1930s, adds value to the study by highlighting social change and empowerment for women in the performing arts.

Since the 1970s, the Kazakh musical space has demonstrated a particular interest in folk music and the reevaluation of folk performance, particularly through the revival of traditional musical instruments. Thus, Jammulamadaka and Gupta (2024), as modern neo-traditionalist practitioners in India, utilised customs not to recreate the past, but to construct a new sociocultural reality. One of the most significant updates to folk musical instruments was the introduction of the prima kobyz. In the study, Junussova and Utegalieva (2023) analysed the role of the prima kobyz in the contemporary musical culture of Kazakhstan. One of the key aspects of the study was to identify the changes that the instrument has undergone in the context of modern requirements for performance skills and adaptation to a diverse musical repertoire. Separately, the authors considered the prospects for developing the prima kobyz in educational and concert environments. In particular, the researchers highlighted the growing interest among young performers, as well as the support of state and cultural institutions, which create the preconditions for the instrument's popularisation at the international level. In the study, Shugay

and Bultbayeva (2024) examined the specific features of the performance technique on the Kazakh prima kobyz. The main focus was on analysing the adaptation of traditional playing techniques to the modern repertoire. The authors described technical aspects such as the use of different strokes, dynamic contrasts, and the latest methods of sound production. In turn, Murzaliyeva and Karomat (2023) examined the revival of folk music in contemporary Kazakh cultural space. The authors analysed how traditional musical genres are adapting to modern conditions, integrating into academic education, concert activities and the media space. The authors noted a growing interest in Kazakh folk instruments and vocal traditions, particularly among young people. The conclusions emphasised the importance of state support, festival initiatives and intercultural exchanges for the preservation and further development of traditional music in Kazakhstan in the 21st century.

The repertoire for the prima kobyz is somewhat limited, as the instrument has only recently entered the professional music scene. This lack of an established repertoire creates a need for compositional strategies that can bridge traditional and academic idioms. For example, in the work, Bovkanyuk and Duday (2022) studied the phenomenon of artistic translation in music as one of the critical factors contributing to the academicisation of folk instruments. The authors analysed how the adaptation of folk motifs within the academic musical tradition affects the status and perception of these instruments in the professional environment. Key attention was paid to the methods of adaptation, including orchestration, harmonisation and modernisation of the technical capabilities of folk instruments such as the accordion, bandura, or flute. In turn, Bogatyryova (2021) studied the performance interpretation of violin works adapted for performance on the domra. The study covered the analysis of performance techniques, including the use of legato, articulation, and dynamics, which enable the conveyance of the

violin style on the domra. Particular attention is paid to adapting the classical repertoire to the specific characteristics of the domra, with its unique sound production design.

Although most of the repertoire of prima kobyz performers consists of arrangements of works for other instruments or folk music, in the 21st century in Kazakhstan, there is a tendency to compose academic music for folk instruments. Therefore, Rakymzhan and Suiekenova (2020) presented a musical and performance analysis of the concerto for prima kobyz and folk orchestra written by Musrepova. The authors considered this work to be a landmark example of contemporary Kazakh music. The researchers focused on the specifics of the performance techniques inherent in prima kobyz and how these techniques are implemented in the concerto. The article analyses in detail the structure of the concert, its main themes, means of expression and methods of orchestration. One of the main theses of the authors is the conclusion that the prima kobyz in this work reveals itself not only as a traditional instrument, but also as a universal means of expression capable of conveying deep emotional images. Thus, the authors note that this concert contributes to the popularisation of the prima kobyz and presents its possibilities in the academic environment.

Folk music plays a crucial role in shaping the worldview of young people, and Darkembayeva et al. (2023) explored the formation of moral values through interaction with folk music. The central thesis of the study was that folk music serves not only as a means of aesthetic education, but also as an effective tool of moral influence. The authors drew attention to the need to integrate folk music into the modern educational system as a means of forming a spiritually prosperous and morally stable personality.

This study aimed to investigate the peculiarities of performing classical violin works on the prima kobyz, particularly through the analysis of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35. The objectives of the study were to analyse the historical aspects of the development of the prima kobyz as an instrument in the context

of the Kazakh musical space. The specificity of its performance technique was revealed through a comparative musicological analysis of the performance of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35, for violin and orchestra, as well as for violin and prima kobyz. The research also included an examination of gender equality trends, particularly the role of women in Kazakhstan's musical culture. Its results substantiated the importance of performing on the prima kobyz.

2. Materials and Methods

The research was based on a combination of musicological analysis and empirical methods of studying the specifics of performing classical violin repertoire on the prima kobyz. The methods used made it possible not only to analyse the technical and performance aspects of the two instruments, but also to identify aesthetic differences related to the way of sound production and interpretation of a musical piece.

The first stage was musicological analysis as the primary tool for comparing the violin and the prima kobyz. This stage of the research involved studying various parameters, including the technical capabilities of the instruments, timbre characteristics, dynamic nuances, and specific performance techniques. Particular attention was paid to the elements of phrasing, articulation and sound production, which were of key importance for creating the artistic image of a work. The analysis was conducted using Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35, which exemplified the technical and artistic capabilities of the violin, as well as the peculiarities of its adaptation for the prima kobyz.

The second stage involved the systematic observation of performance practice, which included the analysis of recordings of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35, on both instruments, including a comparison of interpretive decisions regarding timbre, expressiveness, performance technique, and general sound aesthetics. The observation also made it possible to study how the design features of the prima kobyz influence the dynamic balance with the orchestra.

The third stage of the study was a questionnaire. The survey was conducted among students in November 2024 at the Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory and the Kurmangazy Kazakh State Orchestra. The study involved 50 respondents (25 women and 25 men) who provided written consent to participate in the survey. The study was conducted in accordance with the WMA Declaration of Helsinki – Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Participants (2025) and the Code of Ethics (2018) of the American Sociological Association. All respondents were informed about the purpose of the survey, given the opportunity to voluntarily participate, and assured that their data would be kept anonymous and confidential.

The inclusion criteria were: music education or studying at a higher music education institution, work experience or training in the field of academic music performance, and familiarity with stringed instruments. The exclusion criteria were: a lack of musical experience or an unwillingness to participate in the study. The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain empirical data on the perception of technical and aesthetic characteristics of the prima kobyz in the context of performing classical repertoire. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions, which were grouped into thematic blocks:

- technical aspect:
 1. What technical difficulties arise when performing classical violin works on the prima kobyz? Are these difficulties fundamentally different from playing the violin?
 2. How do the constructional features of the prima kobyz (strings, bow, body) affect the performance of fast passages and double notes compared to the violin?
 3. Have you ever used unconventional sound production techniques to adapt a violin part to the prima kobyz? If so, which ones?

- timbre aspect:
 1. How do you assess the ability of the prima kobyz to reproduce the timbre nuances necessary for performing the lyrical parts of violin works (for example, in the second movement of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35)?
 2. Do you think that the unique timbre of the prima kobyz can bring new interpretive possibilities to classical works? Which ones?
- the performance aspect:
 1. How does the change of instrument affect the artistic image of a piece of music?
 2. Is Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35 perceived differently when performed on the prima kobyz?
 3. Can the prima kobyz provide the same emotional accents traditionally associated with the violin, or does it create an entirely different aesthetic?
- orchestral aspect:
 1. Do you think that teaching the prima kobyz includes enough materials to adapt the classical repertoire?
 2. What methodological gaps exist in this area?
 3. What pedagogical approaches can help to improve the technical skills of prima kobyz performers to play classical repertoire?
- pedagogical aspect:
 1. Do you think that teaching the prima kobyz includes enough materials to adapt the classical repertoire?
 2. What pedagogical approaches can help to improve the technical skills of prima kobyz performers to play classical repertoire?

- repertoire aspect:

1. Do you think that performing classical repertoire on the prima kobyz contributes to the process of academicisation of this instrument?

2. In your opinion, how does the performance of European classical music influence the development of the modern school of prima kobyz performance?

3. Some questions are repeated across different thematic sections of the questionnaire. This was done intentionally to examine specific issues, such as pedagogical approaches, from multiple contextual angles and ensure the consistency and depth of responses.

3. Results

3.1 Historical aspects of the development of prima kobyz as an instrument in the context of the Kazakh musical space

The folklore tradition of Kazakhstan is a vital component of its musical heritage. The folk music of the Kazakh people reflects the spiritual world, everyday traditions, customs and historical experience. One of the main components of this culture is folk instruments, which were used to perform ritual and labour songs, as well as to recreate epic and lyrical subjects (Kelmendi, 2024). Among the traditional instruments, a special place is occupied by stringed instruments such as dombra, kobyz, and shertpe, which served as a necessary means of expressing emotions and narrative (Mukhtarova, 2022). The kobyz is an ancient instrument of sacred significance, used in shamanic rites and healing practices. It was made of wood and camel or goat skin, and string materials, such as horse hair, provided a special timbre and colouration. The technique of playing it involved the use of cuticles to grip the strings, which preserved the instrument's unique sound (Tazhibayeva, 2024).

Over time, the kobyz instrument has undergone evolutionary changes. One of the most significant transformations was the emergence of the prima kobyz, an improved version of the traditional instrument. The creation of the prima kobyz was a crucial step in the development of Kazakh musical culture, as the instrument gained new opportunities for performing classical academic music and became more suitable for orchestral performance. Instead of a leather soundboard and horsehair, metal violin strings were used for the strings, and the playing technique remained the same – fingering, which preserved the traditional Kazakh style of performance.

One of the main reasons for the creation of the prima kobyz was the desire to adapt the instrument to the needs of orchestral music. Initially, the Kazakh Folk Orchestra, founded in 1934 by Akhmed Zhubanov, attempted to utilise traditional instruments, including the kobyz. However, the problem arose due to limitations in the range of sound: the kobyz had the same register as the dombra, which made it difficult to use in the orchestra. Therefore, it was decided to modernise this instrument by creating a prima kobyz with a broader range and the ability to play both traditional folk music and classical violin pieces (Junussova, Utegalieva, 2023). The expansion of the range was necessary for performing more complex compositions of classical music. In addition, the prima kobyz made it possible to use a bow, similar to a violin, which greatly expanded the performer's technical capabilities.

A critical aspect of the development of the prima kobyz was its ability to preserve traditional Kazakh performance techniques. The technique of playing with the nail method, characteristic of the traditional kobyz, was retained on the prima kobyz, thereby preserving the instrument's authenticity. When performing on the prima kobyz, the performer utilises the bow and techniques inherent in classical European music, which enables the performance of complex virtuoso strokes and expressive pieces (Yildiz, 2025; Filipchuk et al., 2022). From a technical standpoint, the prima kobyz has significant advantages over the kobyz. The size of the

prima kobyz is smaller, its body consists of separate parts: neck, soundboard and body joints, which resemble the construction of a violin or cello. The soundboards are made of various types of wood, including maple, birch, or walnut. The soundboard material gives the instrument a rich and vibrant sound palette (Figure 1). In addition, the prima kobyz features a violin-like tuning system that enables quick tuning of the instrument, particularly to frequencies corresponding to European temperament.

Figure 1 – Prima kobyz



The prima kobyz is not the only instrument of this kind in Central Asia. In Kyrgyzstan, there is a similar instrument called the kyyak-prima, which is identical to the prima kobyz. However, the difference lies in the fact that the kyyak-prima uses violin-like strings and the playing technique involves pressing the strings with the fingers, unlike the Kazakh prima kobyz, which retains the traditional nail technique. The prima kobyz, being an instrument that combines elements of traditional Kazakh musical culture with influences from the European classical tradition, plays a crucial role in shaping

the modern musical landscape of Kazakhstan. The uniqueness of this instrument lies in its ability to preserve and broadcast a rich spectrum of folk sounds, while meeting the requirements of classical academic music (Guliyeva and Kopanitsa, 2024).

The prima kobyz has also become a vital component in the development of the performing arts in Kazakhstan. The use of modern teaching methods and the adaptation of classical musical principles have brought this instrument to the level of professional performance. Playing the prima kobyz is taught in numerous music schools, both at the primary and higher education levels. In particular, a whole school of prima kobyz performance was formed at the Kazakh National Conservatory named after Kurmangazy.

3.2 Specificity of the performance technique on the prima kobyz on the example of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35

The growing interest of contemporary performers and researchers in the prima kobyz is due to its deep historical background and significance in the context of traditional Kazakh musical culture. The unique timbre colouring of the prima kobyz and its ability to adapt within a multi-genre musical environment determine the prospects of its integration into the academic (classical) musical tradition. At the same time, achieving a high level of performance skills in the performance of classical repertoire, particularly works written for the violin, requires taking into account the specific technical features of the instrument, which differ significantly from those of traditional violin technique.

The importance of the performance technique on the prima kobyz lies in the instrument's ability to convey the artistic concept of a work, as well as in its capacity to reproduce the rich timbre and dynamic nuances that are integral to classical music. Given the structural differences between the prima kobyz and the violin (a special body, a specific bow and strings), the performer needs to adapt both the sound production technique and interpretive

approaches. In particular, playing the prima kobyz requires the use of unique strokes, precise control of dynamics, and a fine sense of resonance (Li, 2022). The integration of the prima kobyz into classical music not only contributes to the academicisation of this instrument but also opens up new opportunities for rethinking the traditional repertoire. Performing classical works, such as Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35 for violin and orchestra, provides new interpretive perspectives and emphasises the ability of the prima kobyz to enrich contemporary performance practice.

The performance of the violin repertoire on the prima kobyz exhibits a unique specificity, resulting from the combination of playing techniques inherent in the traditional Kazakh instrument and the requirements of European academic music (Görsev Kiliç, 2025). The prima kobyz, although created in the likeness of the violin, has significant differences in construction, timbre properties and sound production techniques that affect the adaptation of violin works. In general, the phenomenon of the prima kobyz stems from the fact that it was created as an instrument suitable for performing academic European music while also preserving the authenticity of the Kazakh musical space. The combination of a typical violin approach to performance and the folk tradition of playing the kobyz has even been given a name: "Hybrid Technique Synthesis Theory" (Rakymzhan, Suiekenova, 2020).

Kazakh composers have formed a repertoire for the prima kobyz, working in two main directions: reinterpreting traditional melodies in new arrangements that preserve folklore features (for example, in the works of Zhubanov), and integrating folk elements into European musical forms (as in the compositions of Tulebayev and Brusilovsky). Particular attention is paid to the creation of large-scale forms for the prima kobyz, which facilitates its integration into the academic musical space (Junussova, Utegalieva, 2024). In general, the prima kobyz faces specific challenges in forming an academic repertoire. Unlike other instruments with a long history, the kobyz lacks a significant classical heritage that could serve as a

basis for training performers. Classical music plays a crucial role in shaping a musician's consciousness, thought, and culture (Franklin, 2022). It helps to discipline artistic thinking and contributes to the development of technical and emotional skills. Accordingly, it is for this purpose that numerous adaptations of the best examples of academic music for folk instruments are created: the accordion, dombra, and, accordingly, prima kobyz. These arrangements comprise a significant part of the repertoire of a prima kobyz performer, as classical music provides the foundation that enables musicians to develop both technically and spiritually.

Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35, written in 1878, occupies an essential place in the violin repertoire. The concerto belongs to the Romantic era and combines dramatic expression, melodic richness and technical virtuosity (Shmarko and Hrechanyk, 2023). Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35, consists of three movements. The first movement, Allegro moderato (D-dur), presents a wide range of emotional intensity: from heroism to lyricism. The second movement – Canzonetta (Andante, g-moll) has dominant elements of musical expression characteristic of a lyrical expression, in particular, a flexible rhythm and soft phrasing. The third movement, Finale (Allegro vivacissimo, D-dur), employs dance rhythmic formulas, a fast tempo, and accented metrical structures, bringing it closer to the aesthetics of folk-dance music. One of the key artistic features of the concert is its intonational unity. The thematic material of each movement is interconnected, which creates a sense of the work's integrity. The composer employs a vast arsenal of musical expressiveness, including timbre interaction, dynamic contrasts, and polyphonic elements, which ensure interaction between the soloist and the orchestra (Alikperova, 2022).

The third movement is most often performed on the prima kobyz. This phenomenon is attributed to the ideological and figurative brightness of the movement, as well as its technical complexity. The movement begins with an attaca, featuring an orchestral tutti that serves as a dynamic introduction to the finale

and establishes the overall tempo and rhythmic character of the entire movement—the two main musical images – the main and side parts – alternate, forming a harmonious contrast. The main theme-refrain is repeated three times, each time receiving new means of development and colouring. The image is harmoniously complemented by two episodes with a side part that sounds in the keys of A-dur (exposition) and G-dur (reprise). The repetitions of the sections are not mechanical, as they are subject to variations each time. In the second performance of the side part, new ornamental elements appear, while the lyrical episode undergoes a significant thematic and textural development, which complicates the musical fabric.

The third movement of the concerto reflects folk life, realised through musical form, timbres and rhythmic structures. The main theme, which is the central element of the composition, does not appear immediately but is gradually revealed after the introduction. The initial stage of the performance is characterised by a short, dynamic melodic turn, which gradually slows down, supported by heavy basses. The musical movement at this stage reflects the search for an expressive direction, culminating in a cadence of a violin solo on the G-string, which has a rich sound. The rhythmic pattern of this phrase should remain clear and expressive, even in its freedom of performance. The technical performance of the decomposed chords in the lower part of the bow requires high unity of movement and naturalness of performance.

The central theme unfolds in active movement, with characteristic vigour and accentuated rhythmicism, requiring the use of a large-scale stroke to convey its dynamic potential. This contrasts with the light spiccato characteristic of other moments of the work. The general mood of the finale is not that of a light dance, but rather a reflection of real folk life. The musical development culminates in the coda, where an explosion of triumphant joy is heard.

The side theme has signs of genre closeness to dance, including a clear metrical organisation, rehearsed rhythmic formulas and symmetrical phrasing. The theme is focused on the background of the quintet in the cellos, while the violin solo on the G-string adds melody to it. In the second part of the side theme, the composer uses variations with original colouring, which adds playfulness and irony to the music. The transition to the minor variations creates an interesting contrast: the slowing down of the tempo and the transition to the elegiac minor cause a contrast with the previous emotional upsurge. The final coda unites all the themes of the finale, summarising these themes through the repetition of the central motifs and the integration of thematic elements, which creates a sense of integrity.

The violin concerto, particularly in the works of composers such as Tchaikovsky, has become a pivotal milestone in the development of performance on stringed instruments. The genre presents not only the technical capabilities of the performer, but also the ability to convey the emotional spectrum of music (Shershova and Chaika, 2024). The peculiarity of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35, lies in its variety of intonational aspects, complex dramatic structure, and expressive musical images, which create an opportunity for the performer to demonstrate artistic skill and depth of interpretation. Given the specifics of the prima kobyz, a traditional Kazakh instrument that combines elements of national colour and a European approach to performance, the significance of such works becomes even more significant. The prima kobyz, with its unique timbre palette, can embody the ideas of the concert, including its bright energy, lyricism, and drama.

The prima kobyz and the violin, as stringed instruments, share many similarities in their technical aspects of playing, but there are also significant differences that determine the specifics of performance on each instrument. The basic strokes, such as *détaché*, *legato*, *staccato*, *spiccato*, and *martelé*, are used on both the violin and the prima kobyz. These strokes require similar coordination between the bow and the fingers of the left hand.

For example, when performing legato on both instruments, it is essential to maintain a smooth and even sound, regardless of the transition between strings. Techniques such as trills, double notes, and flageolets are standard to both instruments. The performer must place the fingers precisely to obtain a clear sound. The prima kobyz features metal strings and a distinct body, which differs significantly from that of the violin. The prima kobyz has a more authentic, deeper sound, which brings it closer to the keel kobyz. This phenomenon, in turn, necessitates the adaptation of dynamic and articulation techniques to this timbre (Table 1).

Table 1 – Comparison of violin and prima kobyz

Criteria	Violin	Prima kobyz
Technical capabilities	Four strings	Four strings
	Using a bow for sound production	Using a bow for sound production
	Strumming is done with a “finger pad”	Fingering technique for playing the strings
	High range (up to five octaves)	Extended range (up to four octaves), but with specific timbre features
Timbre characteristics	Great opportunities for virtuoso performance thanks to stroke techniques	Ability to adapt to classical music while maintaining the traditional Kazakh style of performance
	Fine, clear tone	Velvety, deep timbre
	High contrast in dynamics and expressiveness	Softer, warmer tone
	Wide range of dynamic shades	Wide range of dynamic shades
Implementation aspects	A wide range of sound production techniques (bowing, pizzicato, percussive strokes)	Preservation of the traditional Kazakh nail technique, which produces a unique sound, but integration of violin touches
	Performing complex classical and virtuoso pieces	Performing classical pieces with an adapted technique

Source: developed by the author based on literature analysis Junussova and Utegaliyeva (2024), Rakymzhan and Suiekenova (2020).

3.3. Analysis of respondents' answers about the adaptation of the violin repertoire to the prima kobyz

As part of this study, a survey was conducted to examine various aspects of performing classical works on the prima kobyz compared to the violin, including technical aspects, timbre, performance, orchestral considerations, pedagogical implications, and repertoire (Table 2). The respondents, both men and women, shared opinions on the difficulties of performance, the influence of the instrument's construction on the performance of complex technical elements, the ability of the prima kobyz to reproduce timbre nuances, and its role in changing the artistic image of musical works.

Table 2 – Survey results

Question	Possible responses	Men's responses	Women's responses	Total percentage of responses
What are the technical difficulties that arise when performing classical violin pieces on the prima kobyz? Are these difficulties fundamentally different from playing the violin?	There are no difficulties	4	6	20%
	There are minor differences	12	8	40%
	Significant differences	9	11	40%
How do the design features of the prima kobyz (strings, bow, body) affect the performance of fast passages and double notes compared to the violin?	Facilitate the implementation	7	8	30%
	Complicate the implementation	9	11	40%
	Do not affect	9	6	30%

Have you ever used unconventional sound production techniques to adapt a violin part to the prima kobyz? If so, which ones?	Yes	13	12	50%
	No	7	11	40%
	Not sure	5	1	10%
How do you assess the ability of the prima kobyz to reproduce the timbre nuances necessary for performing the lyrical parts of violin works (for example, in the second movement of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35)?	High	12	13	50%
	Medium	9	6	40%
	Low	4	6	10%
Do you think that the unique timbre of the prima kobyz can bring new interpretive possibilities to classical works? Which ones?	Yes	10	20	60%
	Partially	11	4	30%
	No	4	1	10%
How does the change of instrument affect the artistic image of a piece of music?	Improves	17	8	50%
	Does not affect	7	8	30%
	Changes radically	1	9	20%
Is Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35, perceived differently when performed on the prima kobyz?	Yes	9	16	50%
	Partially	7	8	30%
	No	9	1	20%

Can the prima kobyz provide the same emotional accents that are traditionally associated with the violin, or does it create an entirely different aesthetic?	Preserves	8	12	40%
	Forms a new aesthetic	17	13	60%
Do you think the Prima Kobyz teaching programme includes enough materials to adapt the classical repertoire?	Yes	12	8	40%
	Partially	8	12	40%
	No	5	5	20%
What methodological gaps exist in this area?	Lack of literature	4	6	20%
	Lack of methods	12	8	40%
	Lack of work	9	11	40%
What pedagogical approaches can help to improve the technical skills of prima kobyz performers to play classical repertoire?	Master classes	13	17	60%
	Individual lessons	12	8	40%
Do you think that teaching the prima kobyz includes enough materials to adapt the classical repertoire?	Yes	20	15	70%
	Partially	3	7	20%
	No	2	3	10%

What pedagogical approaches can help to improve the technical skills of prima kobyz performers to play classical repertoire?	Innovative	18	12	60%
	Traditional	7	13	40%
Do you think that performing classical repertoire on the prima kobyz contributes to the process of academicisation of this instrument?	Yes	16	19	70%
	Partially	6	4	20%
	No	3	2	10%
How do you think the performance of European classical music affects the development of the modern school of prima kobyz?	Significantly contribute	14	11	50%
	Partially contribute	8	7	30%
	Does not contribute	3	7	20%

The results of the survey showed that the majority of respondents noted the existence of technical difficulties when performing classical violin works on the prima kobyz. Specifically, 40% of respondents considered these difficulties to be slightly different from traditional violin technique, while another 40% perceived these differences as significant. Such assessments indicate the need to adapt performance techniques to the structural specifics of the instrument. At the same time, the responses regarding the influence of the prima kobyz structure on the performance of fast passages and double notes revealed some ambiguity: 40% of respondents believe that these elements are more complicated, 30% do not notice any significant changes, and another 30% point to simplification. Half of the respondents confirmed the use of non-traditional sound production techniques, which emphasises

the relevance of developing specialised methodological materials for the adaptation of classical repertoire.

The timbre characteristics of the prima kobyz were generally assessed positively: 50% of the survey participants believe the instrument is capable of conveying the lyrical nuances of classical works, and 60% of respondents noted that its unique timbre opens up new interpretive possibilities. Regarding the impact of replacing the instrument on the artistic image of a piece of music, respondents' opinions were divided between estimates of both improvement (50%) and significant transformation (20%). This confirms that the prima kobyz forms its aesthetic system of performance, which differs from the violin one: in particular, 60% of respondents indicated that Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35, performed on the prima kobyz is perceived differently than when performed on the violin. The educational process, according to the responses, needs improvement: a lack of academic literature (20%), methodological materials (40%), and adapted works (40%) was recorded. Master classes (60%) and individual lessons (40%) were most often mentioned by respondents as practical pedagogical approaches, indicating the expediency of applying a personalised approach to teaching pryma kobyz, taking into account the specifics of performing classical repertoire.

3.4. Prima kobyz in the context of gender equality

Music, as an art form, has historically been associated with specific gender roles, in which men have traditionally occupied dominant positions, which was reflected not only in composing but also in performance. It is essential to note that in many cultures, music, particularly instrumental music, was traditionally considered a male domain (Ahmetzhanova, 2020). Women, in particular in the context of folk music and traditions, did not have access to many instruments, and the participation in musical performance was often limited to vocal forms or folkloric roles. However, as social and cultural conditions changed in the 20th century, women began to gradually overcome these barriers and gain recognition

in the music world. The kobyz has traditionally been associated with shamanic practices and folk music. The instrument has historically performed a sacred function and was used in religious rites, particularly in the context of the cult practices of Kazakh nomadic tribes. Accordingly, the role of the kobyz was an integral part of shamanic rituals. It was men, mostly shamans, who played the kobyz, and women were not allowed to play this instrument (Gonçalves, 2024). This practice was characteristic not only of Kazakh culture but also of many nations, where ritual music was considered predominantly a male activity.

The development of performance on the prima kobyz is becoming an essential tool for promoting the ideas of gender equality in the musical arts. Female performers on the prima kobyz not only present high technical skills, but also expand the horizons of interpretation. In the 1930s in Kazakhstan, women in the field of traditional music, including playing the prima kobyz, faced limited access to music education due to the sociocultural and gender norms of the time (Khairullayeva et al., 2022). However, in 1945, the Kurmangazy National Conservatory of Kazakhstan began training specialists in folk instruments, including the prima kobyz. At that time, the Department of Folk Instruments became an important centre of music education, although most of the teachers and students at the first stages were men. Gradually, with the development of the curriculum and the encouragement of women's participation in music, women, such as F. Balgayeva, became prominent specialists in this field. Since the establishment of the Kazakh State Academic Orchestra of Folk Instruments, named after Kurmangazy, under the leadership of Zhubanov, women have become indispensable performers and even concertmasters of the prima kobyz group, which not only demonstrates a high level of skill but also highlights the importance of gender equality in the music world.

One of the key figures in the formation of Kazakhstan's national musical culture, particularly in the development of kobyz playing, was G. Bayazitova. During the 1930s and 1950s, this woman served as the concertmaster of the prima kobyz group, following G. Bayazitova, who led the group of prima kobyz players in the Kazakh State Academic Orchestra of Folk Instruments, named after Kurmangazy, for 22 years. From 1962 to 1972, the post of concertmaster was held by A. Zhamanshalova-Shagirova. From 1961 to 1979 – M. Kalenbayeva. In 1981, R. Musakodzhayeva became the concertmaster of the leading group. She was then replaced by G. Iztileuova, and in 1984, by G. Boltaeva. Between 1992 and 2002, the concertmaster of the prima kobyz group was P. Koishieva, and since 2002, it has been Ermagambetova. In 2005, A. Adilova (Iskakova) was elected to the position of concertmaster, and since 2014, R. Asel (Baltin, 2020) has held this position. All these women are the concertmasters of the Prima Kobyz group in the orchestra, which was established under the leadership of the renowned musician and teacher Akhmet Zhubanov. They not only preserved but also developed the tradition of playing the prima kobyz, thereby glorifying this instrument on the international stage. This phenomenon not only emphasises the significant participation of women in shaping the Kazakh musical space, but also serves as convincing evidence of the gradual implementation of the principles of gender equality in the field of academic performing arts.

Among the women who have made a significant contribution to the development of the performing arts on the prima kobyz, it is worth noting L. Tazhibayeva. This prominent figure significantly expanded the opportunities for self-expression in the musical arts. L. Tazhibayeva became the world's first inventor of the electric kobyz, which was an essential innovation in the field of musical technology. L. Tazhibayeva's career is a vivid example of how a woman can not only work within traditional forms but also actively transform these forms, creating new approaches to performance. In particular, L. Tazhibayeva does not limit herself to playing traditional musical forms, but uses the kobyz as an instrument

to combine it with modern musical genres such as rock, jazz, and techno. L. Tazhibayeva presents that this instrument can sound in different styles, which opens up new horizons for the musical creative process (Khodjaeva, 2020).

L. Tazhibayeva's work as a teacher is especially important. L. Tazhibayeva actively promotes the development of women in music, passing on the experience and knowledge to new generations of kobyzists (Kusainova, 2023). In addition, L. Tazhibayeva is the organiser of an international online championship for kobyzists, which not only promotes the instrument but also provides an opportunity for cultural exchange among musicians from different countries. This event promotes the development of the kobyz school, enhances the professional skills of participants, and expands opportunities for self-expression within the international music community.

4. Discussion

The development of the prima kobyz is a crucial aspect of the evolution of Kazakh musical culture, where the traditional instrument has been adapted to meet the needs of modern performance while retaining its uniqueness and connection to folk music. Improvements in design, technical capabilities and the preservation of traditional playing on this instrument have contributed to the development of musical practice in Kazakhstan, and the prima kobyz has become an essential instrument in modern orchestras and musical groups. The need to update folk instruments was emphasised in the study by Matsunobu (2023), who considered rethinking the role of folk instruments, in particular the Japanese instrument shakuhachi, as educational instruments in the context of music education.

The results of this study showed that prima kobyz, as a renewal and rethinking of the traditional kobyz, is a significant achievement in Kazakh musical culture, as the process of preserving folk traditions involves the constant involvement of new participants.

Therefore, the creation of *prima kobyz*, which undoubtedly possesses greater performance capabilities, is a crucial step in preserving the folk tradition of instrumental performance in Kazakhstan and integrating this culture into the global academic sphere. In the study, Sandu (2024) analysed the preservation of traditional wind instruments, in particular the Romanian alphorn, in the modern musical space. One of the key conclusions was that the alphorn, being an integral part of Romanian folk culture, has almost disappeared from everyday use, which makes it challenging to study. Similarly, the author emphasised that the preservation of this instrument depends on the support of folklorists, musicians and researchers, as well as on the historical and sociocultural conditions that influenced its evolution. Achildiyeva et al. (2021) explored the history and significance of the *tanbur* as one of the ancient musical instruments. They emphasised the need to revive traditional instruments in the context of globalisation and technological development. The importance of preserving folk instruments was also written about by Hong and Wu (2022). The authors proposed the use of augmented reality to protect and promote traditional Chinese musical instruments.

The process of rethinking and updating folk instruments was studied by Shaboyan (2022), who explored the role of the *duduk* as an ensemble and orchestral musical instrument. The author noted that the adaptation of this folk instrument for modern musical performance, particularly in the context of orchestral arrangements, where the *duduk* plays a crucial role in creating a colour and timbre palette, is a significant contribution to the development and popularisation of the Armenian folk tradition.

To preserve the tradition of performing on folk instruments, it is necessary to teach the playing of these instruments in various music educational institutions. The results of this study emphasise that in Kazakhstan, playing the *prima kobyz* is actively taught in numerous music schools and higher musical educational institutions, including the Kurmangazy National Conservatory of Kazakhstan. The study emphasised that it is essential to integrate

the academic repertoire, or rather its arrangements for the prima kobyz, into the teaching process. The same conclusion was reached by Dutchak (2022), who, in the study, examined the development of academic folk-instrumental education in Ukraine and Western Europe, compared methods of teaching folk instruments and the integration into academic curricula. The author emphasised the importance of an educational approach to teaching traditional instruments. Similarly, in the study, Li (2022) emphasised the role of learning folk music, particularly learning specific techniques for playing folk instruments such as the erhu and guqin. However, the author considered the use of online courses for the study and dissemination of Chinese folk music, with a particular focus on technologies that enable greater access to folk music education through online platforms. The author emphasised the importance of technological progress in teaching music, in particular, playing folk instruments.

The study identified two main categories of repertoire for the prima kobyz. The first is folk music, or pieces written specifically for this instrument. The second category is adaptations. First and foremost, these are adaptations of the best examples of academic violin repertoire; however, it is also possible to adapt jazz music and works from contemporary pop culture. The repertoire is essential in the process of a performer's development, which is why music schools focus on performing adaptations of academic music. Similarly, Kelly-McHale (2022) investigated the relationship between musical repertoire and the practice of teaching folk instruments. The author emphasised that the choice of repertoire for folk instruments has a significant impact on the musical development of students, as it enables a better understanding of traditions, playing techniques, and cultural characteristics.

Adaptations of the academic violin repertoire are typical for the prima kobyz. This study, in particular, analysed Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35, and the peculiarities of performing the concerto on the prima kobyz. The results highlighted that the change of instrument affects both the technical difficulties for the

performer and the overall aesthetic of the interpretation. Thus, the practice of arranging works for a symphony orchestra for a folk orchestra is quite typical. In particular, Trikozyuk (2024) analysed the timbre and tessitura transformations that occur when adapting symphonic and chamber works for folk orchestras in the Kharkiv region. The author drew attention to the need to preserve the specificity of folk instruments when adapting classical works, as well as the importance of finding a balance between the traditional sound of folk orchestras and the requirements of symphonic music.

Both academic music and folk music are essential for the development of a musician. Therefore, academic musicians and performers on instruments that are not considered folk instruments are being encouraged to join the folk tradition for the comprehensive development. For example, in the work, Begovic (2023) studied the arrangements of seven traditional folk pieces from the Balkan region for guitar. The author analysed the techniques that allow preserving cultural authenticity in the process of arrangement, as well as the challenges that arise when interpreting folk songs through academic instruments. This study emphasises the importance of folk music for a professional musician. Similarly, Koning et al. (2020) examined the development of a big band repertoire based on local folk song melodies adapted explicitly for elementary students. The authors emphasised the importance of using folk themes to develop students' musical abilities and preserve cultural heritage.

An example of the successful integration of folk music teaching can be seen in Austria. In the study, Lin (2024) considered the role of Austria as an example of the successful implementation of intercultural music education through an ethnomusicological approach. The author emphasised the importance of studying folk music as a way of preserving and disseminating cultural heritage in a globalised world. In order to popularise the folklore tradition, composers of the 21st century often incorporate elements of the musical language of a particular tradition into their works. In particular, Beibei (2024) examined the aspects of Jiangnan folk

music incorporated into contemporary ethnic instrumental music. The author focused on how traditional motifs and techniques of playing folk instruments, characteristic of the Jiangnan region, are integrated into modern musical compositions, while maintaining their authenticity. Poland's experience in ensuring gender equality, as presented in the study by Nikolaeva (2021), is relevant to the analysis of the Kazakh context, particularly regarding the participation of women in the performance practice of playing the prima kobyz.

The modernisation of the instrument, which included a change in its range, allowed for the introduction of new musical styles and sound possibilities, which greatly expanded the repertoire and technical capabilities of performers. In the 1930s, gender barriers in music were particularly pronounced in Kazakhstan, as men predominantly performed the country's traditional music, and women often lacked access to serious musical education or opportunities to perform on large stages. This situation was not unique to Kazakhstan. Shved (2022) analysed the gender-based barriers faced by female artists in electronic music in Ukraine. The author emphasised various factors that prevented women from fully realising themselves in the music scene, including sociocultural biases and the underestimation of their contribution to electronic music. Qiu (2023) analysed the role of women composers in the musical culture of 20th-century China. The author explored the difficulties faced by women in the music industry, from limited educational opportunities to social stereotypes that prevented women from being recognised as professionals. Similarly, Devaney and Hughes (2023) analysed the current state of gender equality in the field of music technology. The authors emphasised the importance of integrating women's experiences and perspectives into industry development. They proposed several strategies to improve women's access to music technology, including education, increasing the visibility of women professionals, and creating supportive communities.

The study highlighted the critical role of the prima kobyz as a renewed folk instrument in the musical culture of Kazakhstan. Its development and integration into the academic environment contribute to the preservation of traditions through modernisation and teaching in educational institutions.

5. Conclusions

The study revealed that folk music is a vital component of a nation's cultural heritage, serving as a means to identify and preserve its national traditions. At the same time, in the modern world, it not only retains its authentic sound but also continues to evolve, becoming an integral part of the academic music space. The results of the study highlighted the importance of including folk instruments, such as the prima kobyz, in the performance of classical works, which contributes to the popularisation and cultural dialogue between traditional and academic musical forms.

Adapted from European traditions, the prima kobyz was created, which, due to its structural features, including a wooden soundboard similar to a violin and violin-like strings, enables the performance of complex classical works, such as violin concertos. At the same time, the prima kobyz has retained the peculiarities of playing on the kobyz, through playing with a nail plate, which is atypical for the technique of playing stringed instruments. The study emphasised that the issue of the prima kobyz repertoire is essential in the context of its development as an academic instrument. The use of classical works from around the world, such as Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35, contributes to the technical enrichment of the instrument. The repertoire of the prima kobyz, which was historically based on folk cues, is expanding thanks to arrangements and new compositions by authors. The results of the study have shown that Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35, is distinguished by its emotional diversity and technical complexity. Its performance on the Prima Kobyz requires adaptation to the instrument's specifics. The main performance features include the use of the kobyz timbre palette, which enables

the conveyance of national colouring even in works of European classical music. The adaptation of the concerto for prima kobyz not only contributes to the development of the performing technique, but also popularises the instrument outside Kazakhstan.

The study noted that the prima kobyz has become an essential symbol of gender equality in music, mainly due to the participation of women in the development of the instrument. The role of women in the Kazakh musical tradition, particularly in the performance of the prima kobyz, was noted primarily against the backdrop of historical and social changes, during which music, traditionally associated with male roles, gradually opened up opportunities for women. The prima kobyz, like many other instruments, was initially associated with the male population; however, in the 20th century, women emerged who not only gained recognition in this genre but also significantly influenced its development. A unique fact is that all the concertmasters of the prima kobyz group in the Kazakh State Academic Orchestra of Folk Instruments named after Kurmangazy were women, in particular, G. Bayazitova, F. Balgayeva, A. Zhamanshalova-Shagirova, M. Kalenbayeva, R. Musakozhaeva, G. Iztileuova, G. Boltaeva, R. Koishieva, J. Ermagambetova, A. Adylova (Iskakova), Ə. Rakimzhan. The celebration of these women is a testament to the shift in cultural perceptions of women's roles in music, as well as their contributions to the preservation and development of Kazakh musical culture.

The study was limited due to the relatively limited repertoire for the prima kobyz, which makes it challenging to analyse the performance potential of this instrument in an academic context. Additionally, the historical development of the prima kobyz is not covered in sufficient detail, as the study primarily focuses on the current state of the instrument. The analysis of gender inequality remained general, without specific statistics, due to the limited availability of such materials in the public domain. Prospects for further research include a detailed analysis of gender aspects in the context of the development of folk instruments, which requires additional attention, particularly the study of the contributions

of women performers and composers. In addition, the use of an interdisciplinary approach that combines musicology, pedagogy, and cultural studies can contribute to the development of new methods of teaching *prima kobyz*.

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Research ethics committee approval

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the Declaration of Helsinki (1964) and its later amendments, and was approved by the Ethics Committee of Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory (Approval No. 884952). Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

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