

Innovations in Traditional Vocal Techniques: The Integration of Historical Performance and Contemporary Stage Practices

Inovações nas técnicas vocais tradicionais: a integração da performance histórica e das práticas cénicas contemporâneas



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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to explore the principal dimensions of the traditional Kazakhstani vocal art and the processes involved in its modernisation through transformation in concert performance contexts. The key components of Kazakhstan's national musical heritage are systematically categorised. The study focuses on analysing the content and functional importance of the principal elements within the Kazakh oral professional music tradition. Foundational categories of the national art form are considered as part of a unified and intricate system, and their structural and functional relevance is examined accordingly. The study incorporates a quantitative evaluation of the relative importance of the core elements of oral-professional and folk music-making, alongside mechanisms for their renewal and preservation in a contemporary guise. The study identifies the principal constituents of traditional musical creativity. These include intonation (95%), rhythm (92%), timbre (91%), form-building (90%), texture (87%), and the specific characteristics of articulation and sound production (97%). The study also establishes the main principles of an innovative approach to oral-professional music. Namely, the expansion of ensemble composition through the introduction of timbres from European acoustic and electronic instruments (70%), the application of vocal techniques associated with Western popular music and rock (94%), stylistic transformation via the addition of prominent harmonic accompaniment (89%), and alterations in musical texture (93%). Criteria and principles for determining the uniqueness of oral-professional and folk music samples are also identified.

Keywords: vocals, popular music, folk creativity, national instrument, dombra, kobyz, improvisation.

Resumo: O objetivo do estudo é explorar as principais dimensões da arte vocal tradicional do Cazaquistão e os processos envolvidos na sua modernização através da transformação em contextos

de concertos. Os componentes-chave do património musical nacional do Cazaquistão são sistematicamente categorizados. O estudo centra-se na análise do conteúdo e da importância funcional dos principais elementos da tradição musical oral profissional cazaque. As categorias fundamentais da forma de arte nacional são consideradas como parte de um sistema unificado e complexo, e a sua relevância estrutural e funcional é examinada em conformidade. O estudo incorpora uma avaliação quantitativa da importância relativa dos elementos centrais da música oral profissional e folclórica, juntamente com mecanismos para a sua renovação e preservação numa forma contemporânea. O estudo identifica os principais constituintes da criatividade musical tradicional. Estes incluem entoação (95%), ritmo (92%), timbre (91%), construção da forma (90%), textura (87%) e as características específicas da articulação e produção sonora (97%). O estudo também estabelece os princípios fundamentais de uma abordagem inovadora à música oral-profissional. Nomeadamente, a expansão da composição em conjunto através da introdução de timbres de instrumentos acústicos e eletrónicos europeus (70%), a aplicação de técnicas vocais associadas à música popular ocidental e ao rock (94%), a transformação estilística através da adição de acompanhamento harmónico proeminente (89%) e alterações na textura musical (93%). Também são identificados critérios e princípios para determinar a singularidade das amostras de música oral profissional e folclórica.

Palavras-chave: vocais, música popular, criatividade folclórica, instrumento nacional, dombra, kobyz, improvisação.

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1. Introduction

Innovations within the framework of traditional vocal performance techniques, along with methods for integrating oral-traditional art into the modern concert performances, constitute one of the most prominent areas of focus in the twenty-first century. This relevance stems from the dual orientation of stage-based interpretations of Kazakhstan's musical heritage: on the one hand, there is an aim to preserve and showcase the uniqueness of national musical sources; on the other, such practice implies their recontextualisation and renewed interpretation. The central issue addressed in this study is the continued lack of comprehensive insight into the preservation of the distinctiveness of traditional national vocal performance in its reinterpretation.

Musicological scholarship in other countries covered selected aspects of this issue. For example, Batovska et al. (2022) explored the relationship between tradition and innovation in vocal and choral performance, highlighting its profound connection with various domains of social life and its influence on the aesthetic development of collective consciousness. Their study emphasised the enduring foundation of the classical education system in this field while recognising its openness to transformation across genre, form, and performative attributes. Murzaliyeva and Akparova (2020) addressed the modernisation of national musical art. They introduced the concept of an "alternative soundscape". Within the context of Kazakh-staged musical creativity, this was described as an expressive palette comprising diverse, localised versions of rhythmically structured electronic music, featuring the electro-dombra and genres such as hard rock, indie, hard rap, and experimental rock.

Stage performance in the twenty-first century, increasingly shaped by the integration of electronic music, emerges as a site for experimentation with core elements of traditional musical performance (Wang et al., 2023). Zhang (2024) arrived at a similar conclusion, suggesting that this trend broadens the expressive

resources associated with national folklore and the oral-traditional heritage of China. These, as primary cultural sources of an ethnic group, inspire twenty-first-century composers to create original works in which the spiritual code of musical culture interacts with ultramodern approaches to shaping the sound environment through technology.

An exploration of nationalism in the piece “Feel the Sounds of Kenya” by CeeRoo was undertaken by Wairiuko (2024), who identified the use of electronic sound sources interwoven with elements of Kenya’s traditional culture. The researcher asserts that this synthesis has the potential to broaden the musical language and modernise the normative systems of African ethnic cultures. The synthesis of classical and computer-based performance also gained relevance in the twenty-first century, as demonstrated in an art project analysed by Hui and Kuo (2024). This distinctive piece, staged in the city of San Salvador (Taiwan), brings together acoustic instruments, elements of modern computer technologies (including electronic music), and the intonational-rhythmic foundation of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Dominican chant. It was conceived as a vivid audio interpretation of the city of San Salvador’s historical journey. According to Hui and Kuo, the project, titled “Ashes to Ashes”, revives early vocal traditions by synthesising them with software tools developed within a twenty-first-century framework. The project demonstrates considerable potential for further development.

The enrichment of music education through the achievements of diverse cultures remains a subject of particular importance (Zhou et al., 2024). The study conducted by Lei and Savina (2024) established that the effectiveness of twenty-first-century music education in training professional vocalists is grounded in the preservation of centuries-old traditional musical knowledge and its integration within the framework of global classical academic vocal art. This tradition is represented, as the researchers highlight, by a variety of national schools, including Italian, German, French,

Russian, and Ukrainian traditions. Through its synthesis with the vocal practices of different peoples, the outcome enriches and modernises national musical heritage.

The mechanisms required to modernise the foundations of professional music rooted in oral tradition call for further, in-depth investigation. This field was addressed by Hnatiuk (2023). Through the example of Guo Wenjing's opera "Wolf Cub Village", the study illuminated the staging of ancient national traditions and their transformation within the framework of the European-style opera genre. According to Hnatiuk, the renewal of ancient musical sources may be so extensive that it is perceived as an auditory manifestation of the avant-garde. The creation of a complex, multifaceted vocal-instrumental palette, deeply intertwined with China's national artistry, reflects the growing polyculturalism. This phenomenon encapsulates the transformation of traditional music through its enrichment and expansion via the stylistic and compositional techniques of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

All of the aforementioned academic contributions affirm the relevance of investigating the application of innovation in contemporary vocal performance on stage. Specific gaps remain in these studies, particularly the staging of the national music of Kazakhstan in the twenty-first century, which has not yet been comprehensively addressed. Thus, the purpose of the study is to explore the transformation of national art and assess its importance in shaping the identity of national popular music. The objectives of the study include identifying the core elements of modern reinterpretations of traditional songs and of contemporary songs performed in a traditional style, and examining their content and roles within the larger cultural context.

2. Materials and methods

The materials used in this study focus on the nationalisation of popular music, notably the incorporation of traditional vocal

techniques and melismatic ornamentation. Performances by prominent Kazakh pop artists were analysed for their use of elements drawn from native songcraft. Examples include Gaukhar Kaspakova's rendition of "Қысмет", Meruyert Musrali and Moldir Auylbekova's "Әдемі қыз", and songs by groups such as MuzArt and Konır, as well as soloists Ramazan Stamgazyev, Ardak Balazhanova, Yerbolat Kudaibergenov, Karakat Abildina, and Baurzhan Retbayev (notably "Aqsunqar"), among others.

To represent a wide range of modern reinterpretations of Kazakh oral-professional traditions, the musical examples were chosen using a consistent framework. Three criteria were used to select the performances: (2) a range of stylistic approaches, from rigorous preservation of traditional techniques to experimental integration of electronic and pop elements; (3) the availability of high-quality audio-visual documentation that allows for in-depth analysis of intonation, rhythm, timbre, and texture; and (4) the inclusion of nationally recognised artists and ensembles whose work has demonstrably contributed to the popularisation of traditional music (e.g., MuzArt, Konır, Er-Turan). These standards ensured that the collection of examples represented both traditional and modern practices, enabling a fair comparison of how essential elements of traditional music are maintained, altered, or reframed for the twenty-first century.

Each example was systematically identified for its key components of Kazakhstan's musical tradition, followed by an analysis of their content and function within the contexts of intonation, rhythmic structure, genre conventions, and form-building. To ensure transparency in the quantitative evaluations, the ratings were determined through a methodical examination of specific audio and video recordings by the authors. A ten-point rating system was used to assess the relative significance and functional role of essential elements of Kazakh oral-professional and folk traditions, with ten points representing 100%. In addition to other aspects such as stylistic distinctiveness, the incorporation of traditional instruments, and the preservation of dialect features,

the parameters evaluated included intonation, articulation and sound production, rhythm, timbre, texture, and form-building. Values were converted into percentages (e.g., intonation 95%, articulation 97%) after each component was analysed in relation to its expressive and structural function in performance. These numbers represent the authors' assessment of each component's relative importance in influencing the stage reinterpretation of national music in the twenty-first century.

A questionnaire was then formulated to probe the principal features of professional oral music and folklore, innovative approaches to their reinterpretation, and strategies for preserving their authenticity and distinctiveness. The items were evaluated against the musical examples cited above. The questions are as follows:

1. Does intonation serve as the foundation of musical composition in both professional oral and folk traditions?
2. Does rhythm play a critical role in expressing the identity of national music among popular artists?
3. Can timbre, vocal or instrumental, remain intact as an indicator of national uniqueness within twenty-first-century stage music?
4. Does the principle of form-building, which has characterised professional oral music for centuries, continue to shape new compositions?
5. Do contemporary pop musicians promote the distinctive textures of Kazakh oral-professional creativity?
6. Do popular vocal-instrumental ensembles faithfully embody the articulation and sound-production techniques that symbolise the traditional sonic ideal?
7. Is the expansion of performer line-ups through the use of European acoustic and electronic timbres a significant factor in modern stage interpretations of national-cultural works?

8. Does the profound interweaving of stylistic features from popular music, rock, and the melismatic techniques of traditional song represent an effective means of preserving national identity in contemporary art?
9. Is the stylistic evolution achieved by introducing rich chordal accompaniment a significant factor in the renewal of traditional music?
10. Does the modernisation of distribution methods, through multimedia resources and online platforms, play a notable role in popularising professional oral traditions?
11. Is the preservation of a distinctive dialect crucial to maintaining the uniqueness of national music?
12. Do the original oral-professional traditions of Kazakhstan openly embrace transformation across various aspects of musical expression?
13. Does the incorporation of elements from live folk theatre into stage versions of musical works provide a solid foundation for transmitting authentic national traditions?
14. Are the original tempo and rhythmic patterns important for this purpose?
15. Can the visual projection of gestures and expressions characteristic of oral-professional music serve as indicators of its authenticity?
16. Does the reflection of inherent syncretism define the uniqueness of oral-professional creativity and folklore?
17. Is the projection of native speech patterns onto vocal performance essential?
18. Does meaning transmission through atmosphere and mood play a vital role?
19. Is the use of instruments specific to oral-professional traditions and folklore central to preserving national heritage?

All of the above questions were raised and addressed through the analysis of audio and video recordings showcasing twenty-first-century stage interpretations of the oral-professional musical heritage of Kazakhstan. Their examination illuminated the most noteworthy elements of traditional musical art, those that confer authenticity, maintain expressive power, and ensure continued social relevance in the twenty-first century. These elements reflect the foundations of national mentality, spiritual values, and moral-aesthetic outlooks formed over centuries. The study also identified the most pertinent and promising principles for modernising the extensive legacy of oral-professional music and folklore in the context of contemporary concert performance. Methods were developed to achieve faithful realisations of oral-professional traditions and folklore during their innovative transformation on stage.

3. Results

The innovative reinterpretation of oral-professional music, together with its incorporation into the work of contemporary pop vocalists, constitutes a complex, integrated system. The foundations of Kazakh oral-professional music are built upon a limited but highly expressive set of elements: intonation, rhythm, timbre, and form-building. Melodic motifs often orbit around a central pitch, creating a sense of stability, while rhythm is characterised by flexible metre and sudden accelerations that convey dynamism. These features form the structural and emotional core of the tradition.

In contemporary stage reinterpretations, these foundations are not merely preserved but expanded through deliberate innovations in timbre and texture. Layering the dombra with counter-voices, synthesised sounds, or orchestral timbres does not simply add variety; it repositions traditional material within a broader, global soundscape. Groups such as “Улытай” exemplify this approach, using electric guitar and percussion to recast heroic narratives embedded in traditional *kyus* into a modern idiom. The

insertion of a Bach prelude into Dauletkerey's Королы illustrates how canonical European references can frame Kazakh material to emphasise its universality without diminishing its local roots.

The cycle "Kuyler jinagi" (2023) illustrates how traditional Kazakh idioms are strategically reinterpreted rather than merely reproduced. The opening piece employs exclamatory vocal styles typical of oral-professional practice, positioning them as markers of authenticity within a modern concert setting. The third piece highlights rhythmic flexibility, shifting between 3/8 and 6/8, with rapid tempi that symbolically evoke the heroic ethos of male dance traditions. Subsequent works expand this dialogue: the fourth integrates the kernei with dombra and software-generated orchestral textures, juxtaposing ancestral timbres with digital soundscapes, while the fifth and sixth foreground improvisatory virtuosity on the dombra, where counterpoint emerges from layered anchor tones in the higher register. The addition of violin, electric guitar, and percussion further underscores how traditional motifs are recontextualised within polyphonic and cross-genre frameworks. Across the cycle, narrow-range melodic cells revolving around a central pitch are repeatedly transposed, creating dynamic momentum. This principle resonates with broader regional practices, such as the episodic, ascending structure of the "myram" (Azerbaijan), demonstrating how local traditions adapt through a shared logic of variation and expansion.

Pop-stage adaptations intensify this negotiation. The incorporation of wide interval leaps, jazz-like vocal timbres, and choreographic elements creates a hybrid performance language that appeals to contemporary audiences while affirming cultural specificity. Notably, the sense of a European professional-performance tradition is also made by the use of the piano, which appears as a solo instrument at the opening of the composition and in ensemble with dombra and percussion. Choreographic elements often appear in music videos. In doing so, the principle of polyphony is reflected. The dual-dombra accompaniment of national dance songs (New Air Astana Onboard Music, 2023) demonstrates how polyphony can be created from within tradition.

The use of piano, viola, and electric guitar timbres, along with tonal-functional harmonic elements such as seventh chords and sequence chords (heard in the first “Qazaqsha kuyler”, 2023), introduces features typical of pop-stage performance. In that same piece, the dombra part exhibits polyphony. Polyphonic enrichment (whether through multiple dombras or computer-generated voices) signals a departure from monophonic roots while retaining recognisable motifs. Twenty-first-century musicians are also seeking European instrumental timbres that complement the dombra and blend harmoniously with it. One of the most effective solutions is the addition of acoustic guitar (which is featured prominently in the final “Qazaqsha kuyler”, 2023), rendering Kazakh oral-tradition music attractive to the pop stage and contemporary in sound. Performative techniques interpreted as low-register recitative (symbolising incantation) and extreme vocalisation also occur, along with sounds imitating prolonged moans and the howls of the elements (Er-Turan, 2012). There, alongside the dombra’s timbre, the kobyz, zhetygen, and dauylpaz are employed. This way, the atmosphere of Kazakhstan’s centuries-old national art is recreated in a pop-stage context.

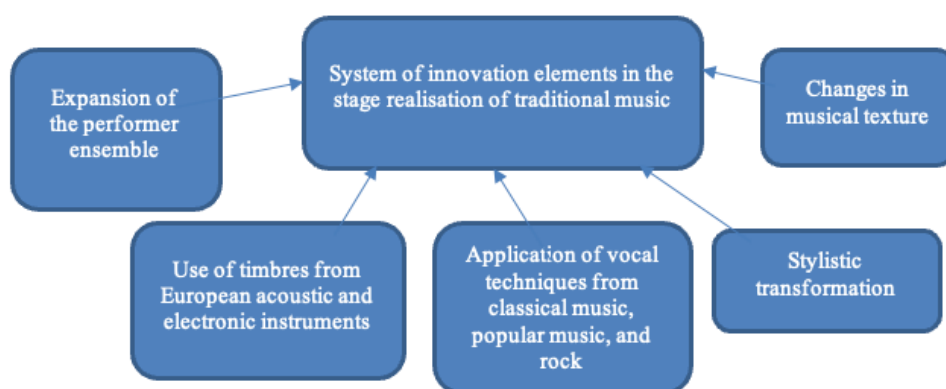
Improvisation remains a cornerstone of the traditional music of Kazakhstan, even in twenty-first-century stage interpretations of the nation’s art. This form presupposes a presentation of musical material unconstrained by the strictures of academic European or folk-dance structures. This reflects the uniqueness of its structure, conveying the characteristics of ethnic musical thinking. Also belonging to these components of oral-professional art is the system of technical vocal techniques. Its distinctiveness lies in the unconventional use of the singing apparatus, unlike that of the academic professional tradition. Thus, masters of Kazakh art exploit the possibilities of the oro-pharyngeal channel of the larynx. This approach dictates the character of sound production and its overtone spectrum. Moreover, it gives rise to the polyphony typical of low-register singing in the oral-professional tradition, combining whistle and vibrato effects.

Through the lenses of performance theory and ethnomusicology, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of how Kazakh oral-professional music is being reinterpreted on modern stages. Each re-staging of traditional material is not only an artistic act but also a re-situation of cultural memory, as Rice (1987) points out that music functions in relation to time, place, and metaphor. Schechner's (2003) idea of performance as "restored behaviour", in which past acts are reenacted and changed in the present, is consistent with the theatrical staging, multimedia design, and choreographic gestures used in these performances. According to this viewpoint, using traditional instruments like the dombra and kobyz in orchestral or digital settings produces what Feld (2016) refers to as an "acoustemology", or a method of knowing and experiencing the world through sound, in addition to diversifying timbre. As a result, the findings suggest that performance serves both as a means of preservation and as an epistemological exercise that reinterprets tradition in light of global circumstances.

In Kazakh oral-professional music, tradition should be viewed as a cultural resource that is continuously reactivated in performance rather than as a fixed inheritance. Flexible rhythms and narrow-range motifs represent what Hobsbawm (1983) refers to as the "invention of tradition", in which adaptation is used to assert continuity. According to Stokes (1994), innovation is a negotiation between local heritage and global aesthetics. For example, combining dombra with an electric guitar or synthesiser reframes ancestral sound as both globally relevant and nationally specific. These customs also serve as indicators of national identity. According to Bourdieu (1979), instruments such as the dombra and kobyz carry symbolic capital, turning stage performances into sites of cultural legitimation that fit Anderson's concept of "imagined communities". Lastly, Bhabha's (1994) "third space", where tradition and modernity converge to create new meanings, is best illustrated by the syncretism seen in hybrid ensembles and multimedia staging.

Regarding innovations, alongside the aforementioned principles of employing various chamber ensembles or full orchestras and adapting source material to new timbres, attention must be drawn to transformations in vocal texture. Specifically, polyphony is created in some cases and, conversely, unison in others. A breakthrough in the interpretation of Central Asian oral-professional heritage was its adaptation for vocal ensembles, especially pop and choral groups, transforming inherently monophonic material into a richly layered, multi-timbral texture (Karabalaeva et al., 2025). Figure 1 indicates the fundamental features of innovative transmission of national folklore and professional oral-tradition music.

Figure 1 - Components of the innovative approach to oral-professional music in the twenty-first century



Among the listed elements of the renewed stage interpretation of oral-professional art in the twenty-first century, particular attention is given to the synthesis of various singing techniques and the stylistic transformation of source materials. Thus, there is an in-depth interaction and combination of elements of Kazakh traditional vocal art and the foundations of popular song. In particular, the vocal line encompasses the extensive intonational repertoire of twentieth- and twenty-first-century pop music. The unique musical culture of Kazakhstan introduces instrumental resources that convey national distinctiveness.

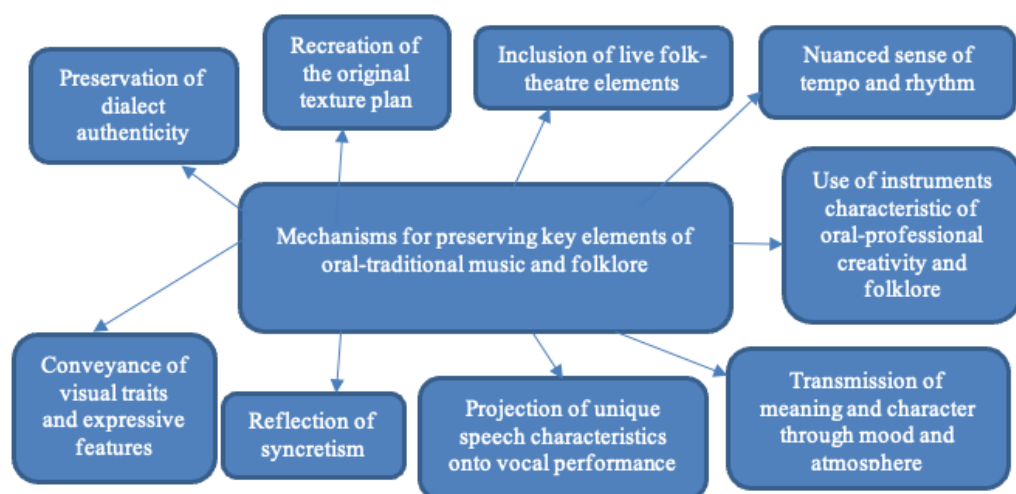
Pop-stage music and its various styles play a substantial role in enriching the vocal technique of Kazakh performers and in spreading genre-stylistic renewal within their practice. It offers stage artists the opportunity to unite a broad spectrum of vocal performance features that characterise both Kazakhstan's oral-professional tradition and global pop culture of the twenty-first century. In particular, there is a synthesis of such national Kazakh performance manners as the recitative of individual tones, micro-intonations (found in the practice of akyns in eastern Kazakhstan), improvisation based on complex metres or freed from any strict bar structure, and styles typical of various pop-music genres. Thus, genres and styles arising from the creative activity of European stage masters enter the sphere of Kazakh vocal art.

Software and multimedia resources play no lesser role in the modernisation of Kazakh professional oral-tradition music. Thus, through engineering technologies, twenty-first-century artists can create a textured panorama of electronic timbres, enabling the realisation of special sound effects planned by the concert director (Luzan et al., 2021; Svyrydiuk et al., 2022). Artificial intelligence tools are also used as an expressive complement to the music-making process (Zaitseva et al., 2023). They provide dynamic visual backdrops for performances, depicting the musicians themselves, their instruments, and unique works of visual art that symbolise the work's meaning and concept. The Internet platform, in turn, ensures the dissemination of Kazakh oral-professional art to an international listening audience.

The preservation of oral-traditional music in the twenty-first century should be understood not simply as a matter of reproducing inherited forms but as a deliberate cultural strategy aimed at safeguarding spiritual values and reinforcing ethnic identity within a globalised cultural space (Kultenko and Savytska, 2025). Performers employ mechanisms that demonstrate their effort to strike a balance between authenticity and contemporaneity. For instance, retaining dialectal pronunciation

or original textural structures is not a technical detail alone but a means of anchoring performance in the historical and linguistic memory of the community. Theatrical practices, tempo choices, and rhythmic fidelity function as interpretive tools that connect audiences to the social and ritual contexts from which these works emerged. Moreover, the integration of choreography, stage design, and multimedia elements demonstrates how syncretism (the blending of music, poetry, and visuality) remains a defining characteristic of the tradition, even when reframed for modern stages (Ma et al., 2024; Titova and Sosnytska, 2020; Titova et al., 2023). The selective use of national instruments such as the *dombra* and *kobyz* further illustrates this strategy: their presence in contemporary performances symbolises continuity, while their interaction with new arrangements reflects adaptability. Taken together, these practices constitute a system of cultural mediation in which oral-professional music is not merely preserved but actively reinterpreted as a living repository of national values. Figure 2 schematically presents these mechanisms, highlighting their interdependence as both artistic and identity-affirming processes.

Figure 2 - Mechanisms for preserving the uniqueness of oral-professional art and folklore in the twenty-first century



Not through simple reproduction, but through strategic adaptation of linguistic, musical, and performative codes, Kazakh oral-traditional performance becomes popular in contemporary contexts. The emphasis on dialectal pronunciation and the use of the state language in song texts serve as cultural markers, anchoring popular music in national identity while making it legible to broad audiences (Kelmendi, 2024). Vocal techniques such as recitative delivery, elongated low-register syllables, and emphatic exclamations in the upper range (Er-Turan, 2012) illustrate how stylistic choices function as semiotic cues that signal continuity with folk practice. Beyond sound, staging practices play a critical role: the integration of choreography, visual design, and symbolic gestures transforms performances into ritualised enactments of collective memory, foregrounding the multifunctionality of oral-professional art as simultaneously a spiritual, aesthetic, and narrative expression. The selective use of traditional instruments not only preserves timbral authenticity but also conveys the nomadic worldview embedded in these soundscapes, where shouts, incantations, and interjections symbolise human communication with nature. At the same time, the maximal use of vocal resources, exemplified in the performance art of D. Kudaibergen, demonstrates how traditional techniques can be expanded to achieve global resonance without losing ethnic specificity. The pentatonic foundation and reliance on repetition and variation provide structural continuity, while improvisational practices and unison singing allow for creative renewal. Thus, concert performances, festivals, and popular ensembles do more than transmit heritage; they reinterpret it in ways that sustain cultural distinctiveness while enabling participation in global musical discourse.

In assessing the functional role and relevance of the components of traditional Kazakh art in the context of twenty-first-century stage performances, it was established that a broad spectrum of elements from professional oral-tradition music and folklore is significant for concert projects. In accordance with

the analysis results, such components include the intonational framework of the sources, their characteristic rhythm, and the structuring of thematic material, as well as texture, timbre, and the articulation and sound-production techniques employed in the oral-professional and folk traditions of Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

Table 1 presents data on the components of the national source material, the techniques for interpreting its innovative stage, and the methods for preserving the authenticity of the oral-professional culture and folk creativity. The importance and demand for each are expressed as percentages.

Table 1 - Key components of professional traditional music and folklore samples, techniques for their renewal in the twenty-first century

Component of traditional art	Importance within oral-professional music and folklore
Intonational framework	95%
Characteristic rhythm	92%
Structuring of thematic material	90%
Texture (faktura)	87%
Timbre	91%
Articulation and sound-production techniques	97%
Technique for renewing traditional art	Importance within oral-professional music and folklore
Increased complexity of texture	93%
Addition of tonal-system foundations concentrated in chordal accompaniment	89%
Expansion of vocal-technique resources based on academic and pop music	94%
Enrichment of instrumental timbral palette via symphonic and pop ensembles	70%

The high importance assigned to key components of national music and the strong demand for their renewal confirm that oral-professional art and folklore are now widely recognised as vital cultural assets in the twenty-first century. Academic and popular

genres, jazz, rock, fusion, and rap, provide the tools needed to transform traditional source materials, allowing for their creative reinterpretation and modernisation.

As a result of analysing the video sources cited above, it was established that the mission of national performers is to preserve oral-traditional culture and maintain it at the highest standard by employing elements characteristic of the ethnic art form. These elements primarily include the technique of sound production (articulation), the intonational repertoire, and the rhythmic distinctiveness of oral-traditional music. Moreover, the timbral qualities of voices and instruments, the principles of form-building at both the syntactic and large-scale thematic levels, and the structure of the musical texture, which favours monophony, are of considerable importance.

The analysis of video sources confirms that expanding the range of performance techniques plays a key role in renewing oral-professional music and folklore by focusing on the modernisation of traditional art through pop-stage and computer-technology resources. This expansion occurs through the integration of the sound-production and articulation features inherent in national oral-professional music into the complex palette of academic and pop-stage sound-formation and presentation techniques.

Equally important is enriching the musical texture (*faktura*) by incorporating instruments from academic and pop ensembles into the stage interpretation of folkloric and oral-professional heritage. This method offers a wide range of possibilities for creating an expressive accompaniment to the principal theme (melody) that engages listeners and introduces timbral diversity into its presentation.

Table 2 presents data on the importance and demand for the set of techniques aimed at preserving the authenticity of oral-professional music and folklore. These data were obtained through an independent analysis of video sources representing a modern interpretation of Kazakh traditional music.

Table 2 - Mechanisms for preserving the uniqueness of traditional musical creativity samples in the twenty-first century

Techniques for maintaining the authenticity of folklore and oral professional music	Demand for the technique
Preservation of dialect authenticity	98%
Recreation of the original texture plan	88%
Inclusion of live folk-theatre elements	96%
Nuanced sense of tempo and rhythm	94%
Use of instruments characteristic of oral-professional creativity and folklore	97%
Conveyance of visual traits and expressive features	95%
Reflection of syncretism	92%
Projection of unique speech characteristics onto vocal performance	89%
Transmission of meaning and character through mood and atmosphere	87%

The demand for specific mechanisms of preserving oral-professional music and folklore traditions is notably high. The principles of maintaining dialect authenticity and of using characteristic instrumentation that conveys the ambience of time and place emerged as most significant in the analysis. Equally crucial for the present and future of national traditional culture and folk creativity is the visual aspect of performance and its expressive features, the transmission of a distinct rhythm, and the syncretic nature of source materials. The presence of speech and articulation characteristics native to the creators of professional music and folklore in vocal performance, the overall texture plan grounded in the canons of traditional musical composition, and the atmosphere generated during interpretation also contribute to the effect of an authentically conventional musical environment.

Thus, the innovation in stage versions of professional oral-tradition music and folklore represents a complex, multi-component yet integrated system. Each element significantly contributes to its functioning and maintains a close connection with the others. Viewing this artistic phenomenon as a holistic complex provides a sound foundation for the preservation, flourishing, and dissemination of the centuries-old national cultural heritage of Central Asia within the global cultural context.

4. Discussion

Musicological studies of the twenty-first century attest to the scale and diversity of innovative transformations in traditional music and folklore within performers' concert activity. Tkach (2021) demonstrated the importance of traditional vocal art in concert performances by academic ensembles, folk groups, and pop artists in the twenty-first century. This creative-practice approach, in the researcher's view, constitutes the basis for stylisation as a significant strand of professional compositional technique. It ensures the illumination, preservation, popularisation, and renewal of national musical heritage through the transformation of individual authorial consciousness. Consequently, authentic folk singing styles and the expanded repertoire of twenty-first-century composition and pop music find their stage embodiment. Osypenko (2019) observed that stage versions of vocal works created in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries reflect the sound-production techniques, dialects, and textures characteristic of folk songs across various genres. The researcher emphasises that contemporary musical practice offers a range of unique models for shaping folk song based on the analysis of its intonational-rhythmic foundations, form-building specifics, and the character of its imagery. These findings represent a key aspect of the modernised stage interpretation of oral-professional and folkloric samples in the twenty-first century, as demonstrated by the present study.

The scope and multi-component nature of concert interpretation by vocalists were also examined by Winnie (2017), who investigated the full spectrum of vocal-training elements. According to the researcher, essential skills include breath control, use of the resonator, bel canto technique, and familiarity with popular, jazz, rock, folk, and professional singing traditions. These components remain highly relevant for vocalists, including those in folk and oral-professional styles, providing the basis for stage versions of national works that engage modern audiences. Repertoire diversity further encourages young singers to explore multiple genres while deepening their connection to the tradition

most aligned with their artistic identity (Miethlich and Oldenburg, 2019). This study concludes that vocal training and formation constitute a process that integrates elements of folk and oral-professional creativity with academic and popular performance styles. Its relevance is corroborated by Zhou (2023), whose work on integrating centuries-old indigenous Chinese music into twenty-first-century classical music education demonstrates the potential to deliver a novel, engaging sound of national folk and oral-professional repertoire to global audiences. This finding aligns with the present study, which holds that the uniqueness of performing original oral-professional and folkloric materials derives from their organic, highly professional synthesis with global academic and popular music practices.

The importance of intonation, a key category in folk and oral-professional music for twenty-first-century concert singing, emerges in this study and was also addressed by Brown et al. (2024). Those researchers examined natural tonal scales as they occur in vocal traditions worldwide. The study focused on vocal sequences of pitches that capture the relationships among individual tones, revealing the characteristic intonational features of particular ethnic groups. The principle identified by the current study facilitates the revelation and promotion of one of the key elements of oral-professional music and folklore under innovative stage interpretations in the twenty-first century.

The enrichment of vocal music of folkloric and oral-professional origin with visual elements — specifically fragmentary and complete choreographic compositions and on-stage video projections — was examined by Hu and Yang (2024). The authors found that digital technologies used in training sessions positively affect students' mastery of musical and performance disciplines, particularly vocal technique. Their modernisation drives preservation and flourishing of oral-professional music and folklore through stylistic, compositional-technical, structural, and genre-based renewal, a principle emphasised in this study and echoed by Wang (2022). The specialist noted that combining

folk creativity and traditional art with academic and pop vocal styles, and students' study of their foundations, cultivates the qualities of truly versatile, top-level performers. Use of software and multimedia resources may prove highly effective in achieving these aims.

A reinvigorated reading of oral-professional music and folklore through acoustic and electronic instrumentation was studied by Duisebekova et al. (2024). Those authors explored the creation of diverse repertoires by symphony orchestras and vocal-instrumental ensembles based on arrangements of traditional music. In the youth scenes of countries such as Poland and Serbia, performers remain drawn to traditional renderings of vocal works from the oral-professional and folkloric traditions (Akinci et al., 2022). The potential for twenty-first-century vocalists to master performance techniques typical of folk, oral-professional, academic, and popular music is affirmed by Xia's (2022) findings. According to the researcher, a clear interconnection exists between traditional vocal manner and the technical approaches refined in academic and pop singing practices.

This study emphasises the importance of examining the specific features of intonation and rhythmic structure, form-building, and the genre nature of ethnic musical art, which also forms the foundation of the paper by Hu (2022). As noted by the specialist, the quality of professional vocal training in the 21st century is based on deep and comprehensive mastery of performance techniques characteristic of the professional music of the oral tradition. Mastery of these techniques enables singers to demonstrate themselves at a high professional level in popular performance. According to the Hu, learning traditional music contributes to improving intonation (0.815), supporting high-quality sound production (0.806), and extending the vocal range (0.718). In this respect, the results of the study mentioned above correlate with the findings on innovation in the field of professional oral musical

art presented in this academic publication. The role of intonation, as one of the key aspects of national creativity, accounts for 95% of the data in the present study.

The promising nature of combining elements of popular music and professional oral creativity, highlighted in this study, is also noted by An (2024) in the context of folklore in Mongolia. On the example of the reinterpreted versions of two songs reflecting the mode of traditional music from the central region of Mongolia (Namindalai and Tes River's Hymn), the principles of integrating elements of the heavy metal style into the context of professional oral creativity are examined. These include a modernised instrumental accompaniment featuring morin khuur, balalaika, electric guitars, and percussion. With its help, the musicians recreate a particular colouration typical of Mongolian music. The canons of throat singing (Kömei) also contribute to this effect, imparting a unique national character to the ensemble's performance. All of the above data align with the results of the present study, which demonstrated a profound interconnection between the heritage of professional music in the oral tradition and folklore with key elements of the academic and popular spheres.

Beyer and Finke (2019) discuss the fundamental importance of tradition, as was also revealed in the present study. The researchers consider "tradition" as a scientific term that encompasses various meanings depending on the context in which it is applied. The significance of understanding this concept is highlighted as a key phenomenon of social life in Central Asian countries. According to the data of the present study, this subject is relevant for the musical art of the 21st century. Tradition concentrates the creative experience of previous generations, which, undergoing modernisation at present, acquires a fresh sound while retaining depth and multidimensionality in its internal content (Yang et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2023). The mentioned concept aligns with the conclusions of the proposed academic work. The singer's skill in approaching the stage embodiment of melodies from different genres and styles, a role noted in the present study, was examined

by Hughes (2024). The author pointed out that the most in-demand approach is a universal (cross-genre) vocal technique. This allows the singer to adapt easily to the conditions of various stylistic directions. Engineering resources support the creation of expressive interpretative effects. In particular, microphones provide performers with the freedom to manipulate the dynamic plan of a piece and ensure ease, refined vocal delivery, and the harmonious blending of various register lines.

The modernised popular versions of traditional Kazakh music performance examined in the present study helped to describe a series of techniques used by musicians during their stage performances. According to Hughes (2023), the concert practice of the 20th and 21st centuries offer global audiences various forms of treatment of folklore sources and professional music of the oral tradition. One such type of creative interpretation is arrangement, which implies the preservation of the original's fundamental features. Another type involves the radical reworking of the heritage of professional oral music and folklore—the remake (Seok et al., 2021). With this practice, the uniqueness of the source is revealed, offering resources that can provide unexpected, innovative solutions and open an unlimited field for the creative realisation of the boldest ideas for 21st-century musicians.

Using the example of the Nigerian musician Lagbaja, Ogunsanya (2024) described the artistic transformation of traditional performance, whereby artists wear Yoruba masks (a group of indigenous West African tribes). Innovations include an updated ensemble of musical instruments accompanying the chants and the use of recording technologies to capture the performances of musicians representing one of Africa's ethnic groups. In this way, popular music genres and the art of oral tradition become a platform for interethnic and interreligious communication in Nigeria and across the continent more broadly. A similar conclusion is reached in the present paper through the examination of the synthesis of innovation and oral-professional art using the example of the traditional music of Kazakhstan.

The modernisation of samples of folklore and oral-professional music through multimedia resources and advanced engineering technologies, as discussed in this study, is also explored by Yadaei et al. (2022). The researchers emphasise the role of engineering in the preservation and dissemination of oral-professional music samples. Specifically, the researchers investigate the mechanism by which choreographic elements are reformatted into a system of intonations and rhythmic cells that encapsulate a nation's cultural code. This concept aligns with the findings of the present research on the renewal of oral-professional music samples from Kazakhstan through software (creating stage decorations and forming synthetic sounds closely resembling the authentic performance).

The stage art of Kazakhstan in the twenty-first century possesses unlimited potential for the recreation and preservation of the foundations of authentic performance. Considering the ideological and philosophical context of the literary basis of vocal works, popular musicians serve as transmitters of the high culture of oral-professional creativity that has long belonged to the Kazakh people. Its renewal occurs through the use of stylistic foundations and technologies characteristic of the present period, as noted in this study and in Potter's (1998) study. This same idea is examined from the perspective of the conditions under which the stage realisation of oral-traditional works takes place. Of particular importance is the musicians' professionalism in transmitting the ethnic group's cultural heritage to audiences in the twenty-first century. All elements of the concert and performance activity of oral-traditional music professionals are thus shown to be deeply interconnected, in accordance with the view expressed by Himonides (2019).

Recent studies and the present analysis show that Kazakh oral-traditional vocal art is gaining visibility on internet platforms. Its digital dissemination ensures documentation of authentic styles, preservation of unique ethnic materials, and their global popularisation, particularly in vocal music (Tiainen, 2013). The

results of this study, particularly the materials that reflect the creative principles of “Er-Turan”, serve as confirmation of this concept. The voice is interpreted in the context of twenty-first-century musicology and, in this study, as an indicator of a complex of aspects conveying human nature. It reflects a person’s inner emotional state, perception of the surrounding world, and the domestic and social conditions in which they were born, raised, and live.

The most valuable information is that which conveys the mentality of the people, their spiritual and moral perspectives, and their ethnic code, as Efremov (2025) and Weidman (2014) state. Principles of vocal training in the twenty-first century are acquiring increased importance. This process has become a complex pedagogical phenomenon that has developed a wide range of essential skills in future stage performers. These include vocal technique, understanding of artistic mastery, command of performance presentation technologies, ability to collaborate with other participants, and the capacity for improvisation and emotionally charged image delivery, as highlighted by Kulaha and Segeda (2021). The presented concepts regarding the development of professional vocal skills correspond to several aspects of this study. These include intonation (95%) and the principles of articulation and sound production (97%).

The relevance of the interaction between Kazakhstan’s national culture and the achievements of global civilisation in the twenty-first century, as considered in this study in relation to vocal performance art, is noted by Latukha and Malko (2019). They examined the mechanisms for establishing the most effective approaches in management, implemented to realise large-scale international projects involving various organisations and associations. The importance of incorporating Kazakh national instrumentation into twenty-first-century stage interpretations of folklore and oral-professional creativity, as demonstrated in the present study, is confirmed by Demirci et al. (2022). The researchers analysed the historical trajectory of one of Kazakhstan’s leading

musical instruments (kobyz), and its role in the performance of the nation's epic heritage (gaşıgtik jir, romandik epos, liro epostik jir).

Daukeyeva (2021) examined the throat-singing practice highlighted in this study. The researcher focused on the tradition of sound production known as "Kömei", which was brought to Kazakhstan from the Altai region in the early twenty-first century. It was transformed into a national sound that became a symbol of the Turkic nomadic origins of Kazakh spiritual and musical culture. The versatility of this style of sound production and singing stems from its flexible integration into contemporary popular music and its contribution to the modernisation of oral-professional heritage and folklore on stage. This presents an opportunity for pop singers, on the one hand, to convey the deep origins of Kazakh music, and, on the other hand, to create works that embody the atmosphere of globalisation.

5. Conclusions

The study, covering twenty-first-century innovations within the traditional music and folklore of a Central Asian people (Kazakhstan), identified the key components of the national culture, the principal elements for renewing source materials, and the mechanisms for preserving their unique character. The constituents of traditional musical creativity were determined. These include intonation, rhythm, timbre, and form-building. Intonation constitutes an expressive melodic model spanning thirds, fourths, and fifths, as shown by the assessment of twenty-first-century Kazakh art video sources. Its importance was rated at 95%. Repetition of a prominent rhythmic formula throughout a work or its sections (92%) establishes the ostinato foundation that underpins the pulsating accompaniment and its distinctive timbral colour. Exploiting the low-register capabilities of the national instrument (dombra) further underscores its uniqueness. The role of timbre as one of the key components of oral-professional and folk music corresponded to 91%. Structural composition is achieved through precise variation, including the transposition

and repetition of particular dombra techniques, often technically demanding and performed with a plectrum. The importance of form-building was rated at 90%. The role of texture was assessed at 87%. Articulation and sound production, as foundational components of professional oral-traditional and folk music, proved crucial for Kazakh pop culture at 97%.

The elements of an innovative approach to oral-professional music were also identified. These include the enlargement of performing forces through the use of timbres drawn from European acoustic and electronic instruments. Modernisation likewise involves applying vocal techniques from popular music and rock. Renewal of the foundations of national art takes place through stylistic transformation and changes in texture. The mechanisms for preserving the uniqueness of oral-professional art and folklore were also elucidated. Among these, particular importance attaches to maintaining the authenticity of the dialect and recreating the original textural framework. This encompasses incorporating live folk theatre elements while retaining the source material's tempo and rhythm. The process also involves the transmission of the original's visual characteristics and expressive qualities, the reflection of its inherent syncretism, the projection of unique speech patterns onto vocal performance, the communication of meaning and character through mood and atmosphere, and the use of instruments typical of oral-professional practice and folklore. These principles for embodying the distinctive traits of professional oral-traditional music in Kazakhstan are evident in a series of YouTube video sources ("Kuyler jinagi"; "New Air Astana Onboard Music"; "Qazaqsha kuyler"; "Er-Turan").

Limitations of the study derive from its reliance on only five video sources, which illustrate twenty-first-century artists' approaches to interpreting the heritage of traditional music in Kazakhstan. Future studies should uncover and theoretically substantiate the elements of modernising oral-professional practice and the mechanisms by which different compositions of

folklore ensembles implement them in concert performance. The value of insights into musical expressivity, genre orientation, and compositional-technical resources underscores the necessity for such enquiry.

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Authorship contribution

Meruyet Mukhsiyanova: Conceptualization, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. Zulfiya Kassimova: Formal analysis, Methodology, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. Gaukhar Kaspakova: Resources, Validation, Formal analysis, Writing – Original Draft. Janel Abeltayeva: Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing – Review & Editing. Gaukhar Umirzakova: Formal analysis, Resources, Writing – Review & Editing.

Research ethics committee approval

All procedures performed in the study were in accordance with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments. The scientific research can be implemented in its current form.

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