

Hashtag folk. On the topic of transformations of traditional folk music in Poland.

Agata Krajewska

Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach

ORCID: 0000-0002-5662-0132

ABSTRACT: Folkgenres created as a type of popular music are most often impoverished and present a pop-culture manner of seeing that which is ‘folk’. Their substantive value, the context in which they are utilized and performed, as well as the artistic level is rightfully under scrutiny by folklorists. Assuming that the inspiration to create folkdisco, folkmetal or folkrap songs (variants of disco, metal and rap genres with folk-inspired ‘elements’) comes from traditional music, often collected from archival sources (i.e. phonographical repositories), the author has carried out a detailed analysis of the verbal and musical strata of such songs in order to demonstrate the mechanisms of transformation of traditional folk music as seen in the popularmilieu.

KEY WORDS: music folklore, folk, music genres, music traditions, pop music, folk music

Inspirations drawn from traditional Polish music combined with popular music genres, such as *disco*, *discopolo* and *pop*, or with ‘heavier music’ represented by *rock* or *metal*, or even mixed with *classical music* or *jazz*, are not new on the music scene. There is an ongoing debate on the subject of their musical transformations, which are increasingly more invasive, and divisions between the genres of *folklore* and *folklorism*. Questions are raised regarding the ‘limits of music’. What is and what no longer can be considered *inspiration*? Where does the tradition end, and has this moment already passed when music became dominated by technology (electronics, synthesisers, music videos)? The importance of this subject for both *practitioners of folklore* and its researchers has been underlined by the sheer number of interdisciplinary studies presented at the International Scientific Conference *Folk-Folklore-Folklorism*¹ organised during the International Folk Music Festival *Mikolajki Folkowe* in Lublin in December 2020. Latest Polish publications on the subject discuss new contexts of these musical transformations in the lyrical, musical and ceremonial layers. It becomes more common to talk about traditions created on the Internet, about the «virtual construct» (Rokosz, 2019: 213), and the consequences of folk music’s global reach.

The positive ones, such as the growing popularity and recognition of regional music and its availability; and the negative ones: its increasing banality, shallow comprehension of the music and its contexts, disappearance of authentic traditions, and its progressively weaker link with the original creators (Rokosz, 2019: 212-213). One Polish ethnomusicologist and specialist in Culture Studies, Tomasz Rokosz, points out that music videos, which accompany many songs, create their plot using images: «the image accompanies the action, usually moving along the lyrics, very often even duplicating them, following the aesthetics of art naïve. It is the old rule of parallelism and repetition, the basis of the folk style of art, superimposed on the new genres» (Rokosz, 2019: 214). The author underlines that this modern manner of creating tradition is interconnected with the categories of time and space. Archaic elements are ennobled. Reconstruction of traditional music acts as a time machine which transports its performers to the past. This process is enabled by computers which make it possible (Rokosz, 2019: 214). There are other important changes when it comes to the availability of phonographic archives. As we will see on the examples cited in the text ‘interludes’ made of archival music become transformed in many new songs (for instance in rap) due to being widely available for use. This article discusses main fields of transformations which are still alive and ongoing. It is crucial to underline that tendencies ‘to use’ folklore in other genres also exist because artists always experiment and look for new sounds. This article examines the following trends: *folkdiscopolo*, *folkdisco*, their variant based on the music of Polish Highlanders - *folkrap*, *folkmetal* and *heavy folk*, on the examples of modern music available on YouTube between 2018 and 2020. These choice were influenced by a phenomenon typical for contemporary social media,

¹<https://pismofolkowe.pl/news/folk-folklor-folklorizm-program-konferencji-5715> [accessed: 17.12.2020]

called *folksonomia*. It is the practice of content categorisation/classification management done by the people themselves (Zaremba, 2011). Many artists *tag* their compositions using the prefix *folk*. These compositions are analysed and discussed here in order to highlight the elements of *folk* which are most strongly emphasised.

Because of the many varied interpretations and definitions of the terms *folk* – *folklore* – *folklorism* in Polish and international research we need to specify that in this article *folklore* is understood as traditional music, with its original context and stylistic features of its region, sung in specific circumstances; non-theatrical, authentic. Subsequently, all transformations and modifications are categorised as *folk* and *folklorism*. The latter term has been analysed in greater detail, due to interesting changes and rather extreme interpretations. 'Extreme' folklorism can be found in all interpretations which have little to do with authentic folklore music, but are still seen and understood as 'folk' by the wider public and the creators themselves. The history of *folk* genres in the article starts with *discopolo*, a type of music very popular among the Polish community in the USA. It is represented by the song «Hej Kasiu, Kasiu» («Hey Kathy, Kathy») which has been interpreted by a *discopolo* artist, Erdol, in 2018. This song is accompanied by a music video showing a teenager dancing, dressed in fashionable urban style. Modern choreography is performed alongside artificial, electronic accompaniment and a singing style typical for *discopolo*, which combines the melodic layer with folk lyrics (a mixture of different fragments of famous folk songs from the archives of Oskar Kolberg and Adolf Dygacz).

#FOLKDISCOPOLO : The song «Hej Kasiu, Kasiu» («Hey Kathy, Kathy») is also known as a pop rendition from the 1970s by a Chicago-based Polish diaspora band Biało-Czerwoni. At that time the same melody was accompanied by instruments, including a keyboard, with extended and emphasised percussion and solo guitars. Evidently, the band's goal was to integrate the Poles living in Chicago. Songs such as the one mentioned above referred to the tradition of the Polish feast (Polish: *polska biesiada*) and to wedding hits (Polish: *szlagiery*) played on electronic keyboard instruments. Above all, they used folk material strongly present in the musical layer of the memory of contemporary emigrants. Polish *discopolo* described as a genre originating in «Polish folk music, mixed with rock rhythms, played at barn dances, weddings, and other feasts, played on electronic instruments»², as well as «[a genre of] a song with unsophisticated lyrics (often playful and ribald) and melodies referring to the pastoral folk music traditions, most often accompanied by electronic keyboard instruments, [played] mainly at disco dances, as well as disco polo festivals»³ has been built on the same fundamentals.

The theme of 'acoustic postcards from the USA', which served as an inspiration in the formation of *disco polo* is recalled many times in the analyses of the genre. It is mentioned, among others, by Olga Wachcińska while reflecting on the relation between *disco polo* and *folklore* (Wachcińska, 2012: 89). Similarly, Olga Drenda discusses it in the article titled «Drugi obieg polskiej piosenki» («The second circulation of Polish song») (Drenda, 2015), highlighting the findings of «the forerunner of ethnographic research on disco polo» (Drenda, 2015), Anna Kowalczyk:

The impulse for the formation of this genre [disco polo – AK] came to Poland from across the Ocean due to the presence of acoustic postcards with musical hits of the bands of the Polish diaspora. At the time when the authorities in Poland established one official canon of folklore represented by the Śląsk Song and Dance Ensemble and the State Folk Ensemble of Song and Dance 'Mazowsze' musicians of Polish origins in the USA continued their interest in popular music, songs played at feasts and dances, thus preserving the barnyard cabaret and dance repertoire of the pre-war times.

(Drenda, 2015)

Keeping in mind the above definitions and observations we can assume that the hypothetical 'journey' of the song «Hej Kasiu, Kasiu» («Hey Kathy, Kathy») began as a folk song. The song was, in turn, transformed into a pop song played during feasts, and subsequently (recently, in 2018!) into a *disco polo* cover. Even though it has almost completely lost the *folklore* elements (for the purpose of this article it was impossible to determine which version of the song is the original one, or whether such original exists at all), its uncomplicated melody, with the ambitus not more than a perfect fifth, from c^1 to g^1 , oscillating around tonic chords and repetitive (main motif is repeated four times in the refrain), shows similarities with practices commonly used in traditional songs from different ethnographic regions. For example, the cover version of «Hej Kasiu, Kasiu» («Hey Kathy, Kathy») (see illustration no.1) compared with the song titled «Lepsa ja sobie nizli ty» («I'm better for myself than you»)

²<https://encyklopedia.interia.pl/kultura-sztuka/muzyka-rozrywkowa/news-disco-polo,nId,2016686> [accessed: 16.10.2020].

³ Ibid.

⁴, placed in the minor mode, with an identical sequence of notes in the first two bars (without rhythm), with the ambitus of a perfect fifth, from a¹ to e² (see illustration no.2):



Illustration no. 1 «Hej Kasiu, Kasiu» («Hey Kathy, Kathy»), verse, bars 1-4, own elaboration based on a recording by a Polish diaspora band Biało Czerowni, transposed into c-moll.



Illustration no. 2 «Lepsa ja sobie niżli ty» («I'm better for myself than you»), bars 1-6, elaboration by Instytut im. Oskara Kolberga⁵.

The song also includes motifs popular in folklore: 'red apple', 'in my garden', 'wreath', 'rowan tree', 'window'

(Lyrics below appear in the musical interpretation of both Erdol and Biało-Czerowni)

*Red rowan tree berries,
I will go to the girl to ask about her wreath.
Red apple in my garden,
How much longer will I suffer in this wreath?*

ref:
*Hey Kathy, Kathy come give me the wreath,
I will bid to buy you a golden ring.
Hey Johnny, Johnny I won't give you the wreath,
'cause you will lose it or sell it.*

*A snowflake of winter fell,
Will you tell me Kathy if you want me?
'though I'm painting flowers on my window,
How much longer will I suffer in this wreath?*

«Hej Kasiu, Kasiu» («Hey Kathy, Kathy») can be classified as a vernacular song on the theme of love⁶ (Wężowicz-Ziółkowska, 1991), in which the subject, a lover by the name of Johnny, expresses a wish to buy the wreath, the symbol of Kathy's maidenhood. She is unwilling to give it up. The motif of the payment for the wreath, commonly used in folk songs, can also be found in a song with the incipit *Chodziła dziewczula po olszowym lasku* (A girl was strolling in an alder forest)⁷ collected by Oskar Kolberg in Greater Poland:
*A girl was strolling in an alder forest,
Johnny went after her dressed in yellow damask.*

⁴Lepsa ja sobie niżli ty, DWOK t. 2, p. 90, no. 123.

⁵Lepsa ja sobie niżli ty, <http://www.oskarkolberg.pl/pl-PL/MusicDb/Details/7d6766f8-a408-495b-9ee0-205f7ac2ddc5> [accessed: 18.10.2020].

⁶ Elaboration on the categorisation of 'love songs/ballads' has been done by Dobrosława Wężowicz-Ziółkowska in her work titled *Miłość ludowa (Folklore love)* which describes motifs of love in folk texts, including: forced love, insidious love, unhappy love, unrequited love, unstable love, tragic love and extramarital love. See: D. Wężowicz-Ziółkowska, *Miłość ludowa*, Wrocław 1991.

⁷Chodziła dziewczula po olszowym lasku, DWOK T. 12, no. 238.

*She hang her wreath on a fence,
Johnny leave me, poor orphan, in peace.*

*If you really were a poor orphan,
You wouldn't weave a wreath of pure gold.*

(...)

*He gave Kathy a hundred zlotys, that lover of hers,
take it, my Kathy, it's for your wreath.*

*I will take it, I won't take, still it is too little,
For my wreath, so pretty, to pay.*

*Your hundred zlotys they will put in my pocket,
and my beautiful wreath drive away by six horses⁸*

A thematic association can be found here: Kathy, knowing the value of her wreath, does not agree to the payment offered by Johnny. There are other well-known songs with the theme of 'buying a ring' as mentioned in «Hej Kasiu, Kasiu» («Hey Kathy, Kathy»). In a work song with the incipit *Murarz mi z miasta przywiózł pierścionek* (A mason brought me a ring from the city)⁹, registered by Adolf Dygacz in Zagłębie Dąbrowskie region of south-west Poland, the lover woos his intended by offering her a ring, but she rejects his advances and chooses another man dear to her heart – a steelworker:

*A mason brought me a ring from the city,
a carpenter beautiful wreath made of roses,
a steelworker didn't give any gifts,
for the steelworker my heart beats*

An informant from Porąbka in the city of Sosnowiec in Zagłębie Dąbrowskie also sings about a golden ring:

[...]
*O my cooper,
hand me a [wedding] ring,
and I will give you a golden ring onto this right hand,
and I will give you a golden ring onto this right hand.¹⁰*

Similarlily from Lgota Murowana in Zagłębie Dąbrowskie:

[...]
*There was no other but Johnny.
there was no other but Johnny
Promised to give me, promised to give me,
promised to give me, a golden ring.¹¹*

The lyrical contents of the song «Hej Kasiu, Kasiu» («Hey Kathy, Kathy») as performed by Erdol raise questions about the reasons for using such lyrics in an arrangement from 2018. Return to the tradition of 'buying the wreath' seems doubtful in the era after sexual revolution. Is it, then, only a symptom of the 'fashion for folklore' ('playing folklore') which yields major profits (as evident by the fees of *Zenek*, currently the most popular *discopolo* singer in Poland) and, as such, is widespread among increasingly younger creators who try to

⁸ <http://antologia.oskarkolberg.pl/pl-PL/Home/Song?id=8598> [accessed: 11.10.2020].

⁹ The song was written down by Adolf Dygacz in Sosnowiec and sung by informat, Józef Czechowski. The piece is one of the numerous instances of a work song documented by A. Dygacz. See: *Murarz mi z miasta przywiózł pierścionek*: http://simuz.pl/sim/a_multimedia/index.php [accessed: 11.10.2020].

¹⁰ The song was written down by Adolf Dygacz in Porąbka, and sung by informant, Helena Jędryczka. See: *Z koneweczką po wodę*: http://simuz.pl/sim/a_multimedia/index.php [accessed: 11.10.2020].

¹¹ The song was written down by Adolf Dygacz in Lgota Murowana and sung by informant, Maria Major. See: *Hej w lesie, w lesie, koło Ligoty*: http://simuz.pl/sim/a_multimedia/index.php [accessed: 11.10.2020].

make a name for themselves in the world of showbusiness? Or perhaps a search for a 'different', 'unique' path? Even though the answer to this question does not lie in the lyrical and musical analyses of songs, it is necessary to stress that a significant shift is occurring in the realm of music. New genres are being created in which traditional motifs are reinterpreted, and tagged #folkdisco, #folkdiscopolo or #folkrap, with the hashtag always prefixed by the word *folk*. These may be remixes (electronic renditions of songs) combining *folklore* with electronic music or rap. They transform the folklore elements and significantly lessen the prestige (Bartmiński, 1996: 717), nevertheless, they function as deformed 'continuations' to sustain the *folklore*. Folklorists who attempt to define the current state of *folklore* stress that «today traditional music is used mostly for entertainment – and its original variant is unfortunately seen through this prism – or in order to promote regional or local specificity, identity»¹². As a result, playing music is void of its former spontaneity. It is most often an artificially constructed situation which refocuses its original main characteristic - its common use. Music is no longer used to express oneself and to communicate. Perhaps a detailed analysis of songs such as «Hej Kasiu, Kasiu» («Hey Kathy, Kathy») makes no sense because the basis of their creation (or re-creation) does not lie in rites and rituals and old customs. Presently, music is associated only with good entertainment, regardless of contents and structure of a song. In the words of Olga Wachcińska (who also states that *discopolo* is not an incarnation of folklore):

Even though it comes from folklore traditions, disco polo has been formed by another kind of culture. The world of the analysed songs is a happy one, a one with no conflicts, filled with joy and calling for carefree fun. The main problem for the people who inhabit it is how to find one true love. There is no place for worries, illnesses or death.(...) It seems that, for the fans of disco polo, it is this offer of a carefree world, which lauds a specific understanding of happiness, that makes it so attractive (Wachcińska, 2012: 100-101).

It is necessary to clarify the nature of *folklore* as understood by *disco* and *disco polo* creators when attempting to characterise the genres of *folkdisco* and *folkdiscopolo*. We should also recognise which melodic or verbal feature determines the addition of 'folk' in the name of a music genre (or lack thereof). When is disco 'pure' and when does it start to function as *folkdisco*? In the introduction to the article «Drugi obieg polskiej piosenki» («The second circulation of Polish songs») O. Drenda writes: «saying that disco polo is a contemporary folklore creation is no longer valid: disco polo music had a lot in common with contemporary folklore, but that was over 20 years ago» (Drenda, 2015). She also states that «contemporary disco polo is almost void of localised specificities, which would classify it as a modern type of folklore culture. The singers no longer sing in a *pretty*, boyish voice which dominated the 90s, and the songs, polished during production process, are based more on the beat than the sentimental melody(...)» (Drenda, 2015). It is hard to disagree that the standardised disco polo songs are typified by disco beats and a characteristic nasal timbre of the singers' voice (i.e. the manner of singing typical for Zenon Martyniuk, proclaimed «king of disco polo»¹³ by the mass media). However, can the disco polo from 20 years ago be classified as *modern folklore*? Does the term function as a synonym in present-day discourse to describe a music genre inspired by traditional *folklore* or *folklorism*? Is the *disco polodiscopolo* described as *modern folklore* the same as contemporary *folkdiscopolo*?

The term *modern folklore* found in on-line sources functions as a synonym to «modern art created in the out-of-the-city context, in the countryside»¹⁴; or as «folklore in a modern edition»¹⁵. In the articles «Czy istnieje folklor współczesny» («Does modern folklore exist?») Jan Adamowski writes that «substantively satisfactory answer to the question posed in the title does not yet exist, mostly because of its generalisation – as a 'yes' or 'no' question; and mainly due to the lack of critical insight into the subject» (Adamowski, 2005). Due to terminological inconsistencies and many unresolved and ambiguous controversies when it comes to these 'vaguely named' genres, such as *modern folklore* and *folklorism* (Dziadowiec, 2016: 80-98) (and their derivatives under different names, for example, *new city folklore* (Rokosz, 2004: 21-41) this text's preliminary position is that music genres tagged #folk include all works inspired by traditional folklore, which are erroneously called *modern folklore*, and more correctly *modern folklorism*. The following analysis demonstrates which verbal, musical, and visual features determine the addition of the *folk* prefix in the names of music genres, or the folk

¹² W. Grozdew-Kołacińska, A. Mirek, *Wiejska muzyka wciąż inspiruje*.

¹³ <https://widal.pl/zenek-martyniuk-przejdzie-do-historii-krol-disco-polo-w-podreczniku-szkolnym/> [accessed: 16.10.2020].

¹⁴ <http://cowidac.artmuseum.pl/pl/path/contemporary-folk-art> [accessed: 16.10.2020].

¹⁵ <https://www.koncertomania.pl/top-lista/107439-13-najlepszych-polskich-piosenek-folkowych.html> [accessed: 16.10.2020].

hashtag (#folk) being applied to them. The same features are found in works with the admixture of folk, characterised as such by the authors of said compositions (bands/groups/singers), or their consumers (listeners).

#folkdisco : The song «Mama ostrzegała» («My mama warned me»)¹⁶ performed by the band Daj to głośniej and tagged #FolkDisco by the performers themselves has 144092262 views¹⁷. The music video was launched on YouTube on 26 May 2019 which highlights the popularity of the song – it has had 144 thousand views in 17 months. The music video was filmed in The Pottery Centre in Medynia Głogowska (Łańcut County, the Borough of Czarna) which exhibits historical 19th century residential buildings with contemporary furnishings and equipment, including a ceramics furnace. This place was created as part of a project called «Medynia – gliniane złoża» («Medynia – clay deposits») in order to revive pottery traditions in The Medynia Centre¹⁸. The plot of the video contains artificially performed, stereotypically rural activities shown in an amusing, caricatural way: hanging the laundry, drawing the water from the well, making clay pots (reference to regional traditions). The lead singer (a woman) is chased by an older woman with a broom, while dressed in a styled folk dress, which includes a skirt, a corset and a shawl. This image is mixed with modern dance choreography performed by a group of three, dressed in pseudo-folk outfits and wearing wreaths. The verbal layer of the song is also based on phrases and imagery related with folklore: the lyrical subject of the song, a girl with dark eyes, sits by the river and ponders the words of her mother, who had warned her about spinsterhood. Moreover, the lyrics speak about wreath weaving and the refrain ends with the words «beauty is like water» (its fades away). This motif is also found in a song collected by Oskar Kolberg titled «Wije wiater po dębinie» («Wind flows through the oak trees»)¹⁹ (see illustration no. 3).

Lyrics to «Mama ostrzegała» («My mama warned me») by Daj to głośniej:

Intro:

lay la la lay, lay la la lay, lay la la lay, one, two, one, two, three.

*A girl was sitting by the river
her love looked into her dark eyes.
He asked her if she wants him, if she likes him,
it's nothing, but I don't think you're the one!*

ref:

*My mama, my mama, my mama warned me,
you'll be alone, alone, weaving your wreaths,
when the moon shines on everything,
Your loved one will not come.*

*My mama, my mama, my mama warned me,
you'll be alone, alone, weaving your wreaths,
beauty is like water,
it does not want to wait, it fades away! Opa!*

¹⁶The band called Daj to głośniej performs the song «Mamaostrzegała» <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0o6GsYoMak> [accessed: 16.10.2020].

¹⁷ By 18.10.2020.

¹⁸ <http://medynia.gok-czarna.pl.zetorzszow.eu/zagroda-garncarska> [accessed: 16.10.2020].

¹⁹ *Wije wiater po dębinie*, DWOK, t. 1, p. 351, no. 139.

Wie-je wia- ter, po dę- bi- nie, mo- ja mło- dość mar- nie gi- nie,
 Wo- da pój- dzie, przy- dzie wo- da, mo- ja nie wro- ci u- fo- da.

5
 gi- nie mło- dość i u- ro- da, prę- dziej gi- nie jã- 3 -kó wo- da.

Illustration no.3, «Wieje wiatr po dębinie» («Wind flows through the oak trees»),elaboration by Instytut im. Oskara Kolberga²⁰.

The melodic layer of the song uses almost exclusively electronically modified, incessantly repeated sounds with the *four-to-the-floor* beat, typical for disco music. As a result, comprehension of the accompanying words is lost (repetition of similarly sounding words: ‘mama’ [mama], ‘sama’ [alone]) which separates it from any traditional models of music. Classification of the song as *#folkdisco* by the performersthemselves is based almost only on its visual aspect. Another singer who represents the genre of *folkdisco* is Folk Lady²¹. She is an artist who uses the reference to folklore in her stage name more than in her work. We, as listeners and viewers, can assume that she wants to be associated with this genre of music. However, her songs in the style of *disco polo* are connected with folk (more precisely: a tacky form of folklorism) only through the highly stylised, folk-ish music video, and her stage name. In comparison with *Daj to głośniej*, Folk Lady’s music video is filled with kitsch, caricature, tackiness and promiscuity (see illustration no. 4) visible in clothing, architecture, and props, as well as the behaviour of the ‘characters’ in the video. There are, therefore, extreme cases of ‘creations’ which should be classified as *#pseudo-folkdisco*, even if the inspiration behind them is rooted in...folklore(?).

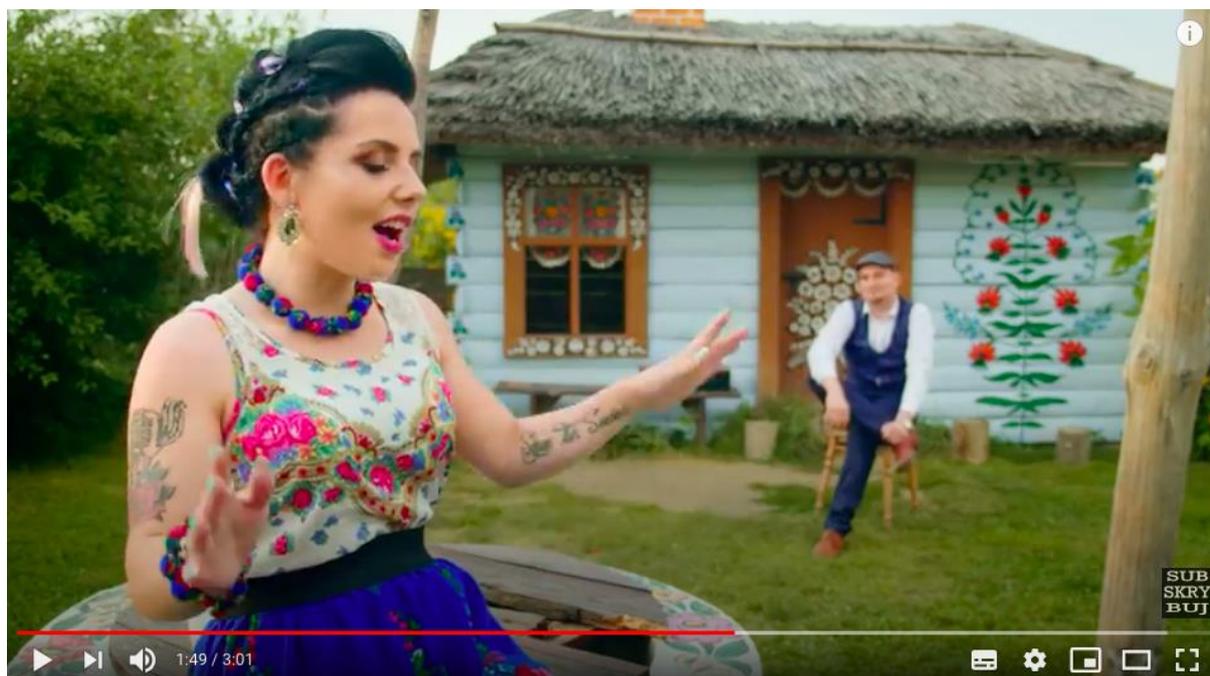


Illustration no. 4, Folk Lady in the music video to «Sasanka».

#folkdisco, #folkdiscopolowith a touch of the Gorals : In addition to the examples of *disco* and *disco polo* ‘with a folk twist’ whose musical and verbal layer is nearly impossible to classify when it comes to

²⁰ <http://oskarkolberg.pl/pl-PL/MusicDb/Details/81d0e3c2-5c54-45f4-b472-519be518ba92> [accessed: 26.10.2020]

²¹ Singer: *Folk Lady*, song: *Sasanka*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j57Yt2AnHeE> [accessed: 26.10.2020].

ethnographical origins of its inspirations, there is an emerging sub-genre of songs inspired by the music of Polish Highlanders (the Gorals) which relies mainly on musical traditions of the Podhale region of Poland, naturally modifying them to a large extent. Here we encounter many more elements (than in the musical scores mentioned previously) typically associated with *folklore* and the Highlanders. For instance: exploitation of lyrics from old sources which include phrases from local dialects, dominated by isosyllabism and stanzas of 12 syllables, containing the well-known particle «hej» («hey») and distich rhymes *aa*.

When it comes to music the relation between the lead singer and the band is retained, whereas instrumentals and accompaniment are still played on traditional instruments, mostly the violin, quite often held by the player in the traditional way, placed on the chest or the breastbone. Elements of polyphony (usually interludes for two voices) are employed in the refrain, and vary rarely in the whole song. Modulation typical for the Highlanders' singing is also present because the timbre of voice is crucial and as such it usually is not disfigured by disco polo mannerism. Melody is based on the Highlanders' music scale with characteristic half-steps between scale degrees four and five, as well as scale degrees six and seven (Wesołowski, 1986: 145). The ambitus is that of a sixth or an octave. Rhythm is usually placed in the 2/4 metre. Music videos contain frames of the dance known as «Zbójnicki» («Brigandish Dance» – traditional dance of the Polish Highlanders from Podhale), the sight of a *ciupaga* (Polish Highlanders' walking stick, a type of alpenstock), and outfits which include elements of traditional costumes from Podhale. Nevertheless, the music contains the disco beat (with its natural 2/4 metre), plenty of electronics in the musical layer, and instruments such as electric guitars and a keyboard. Music videos are full of distortions that do not reflect the original traditions and customs but are dominated by 'modern' stereotypes and depictions. The context is altered. For instance, the supposed «highlanders» may pretend to have a fight while a woman dances nearby, which is followed by the image of them pulling her plaits to the lyrics of: «the (highlander) woman has two plaits, we will share them»²². Songs of this sub-genre may be called *highlanders#folkdisco polo*. They are popularised by many artists, for instance: Paweł Gołecki, bands Baciary, and Zbóje. Another type of *highlanders#folkdisco* is represented by cover songs such as «Kolecka sie łobracajom» («The wheels are rolling») recorded by Chillout&Levelon in 2019, originally by Baciary. The song has 3319 283 views²³. The traditional folk band line-up has been swapped for electronics, even in the interludes between verses. Singing in two voices, typical for the Highlanders, is not used and neither is the folk costume, another characteristic element. Singers are dressed in t-shirts, jeans and wear sunglasses. We can see a mountainous landscape in the background whereas the most typically *folk* features are found in phrases from local dialects and in the melody.

*I'm off, you're off, we'll go to the mill.
We'll ask the miller about the news.
The wheels are rolling,
The wheat is being ground, being ground, being ground,
Oh my dear, it seems to be,
Let's go to a wedding.*

*I'm not married yet but my woman hits me.
I'll get two sticks made of oak wood!
One I'll use to hit the woman,
if she keeps telling me to do more work,
And with the other one – a mighty hitting stick,
I will go courting.*

[...]

Maria Małanicz-Przybylska comes to interesting conclusions in her research: interviews with the creators of *highlanders folkdisco* and *highlanders discopolo* (and their derivatives) show that 'non-traditional' model of playing folk music is approved by the Gorals (especially in Podhale) on the condition that the performer is aware of the roots of said music, can differentiate between the Highlanders' music and folk

²²The video made by Paweł Gołecki «Za górami, za lasami», <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7y4is94fNgs> [accessed: 26.10.2020].

²³Chillout&Levelon, song «Kolecka sie łobracajom», <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGyZS9rAlWA> [accessed: 25.10.2020].

The number of views by 25.10.2020.

projects, and «if needed, comes to the front and plays the Highlanders' music better than anyone else» (Małanicz-Przybylska, 2018: 269).

#folkrap : Rap, described as «a type of modern popular music in which singing is replaced by characteristic fast and rhythmic recitation accompanied by instruments»²⁴ also uses elements of traditional musical folklore. In rap music, differently to *folkdisco* and *folkdiscopolo*, these elements are used as interludes of original folk recordings (sung by folk informants) which are interwoven with melodeclamation by the rap singer. The archival musical recording can function as a 'theme' and a melodic base for the rapper's subsequent utterance and the beat which accompanies it. An example of this type of usage can be found in a song titled «Bydło z pola» («Cattle from the field»)²⁵ by TEDE & SIR MICH which has 83184 views²⁶. This song includes an introductory motif from «Oj, idzie bydło z pola» («Oh, the cattle is coming back from the field»)²⁷, a folk song from Biłgoraj, a town in south-eastern Poland. The song sung by folk singer Anna Malec (1910 – 1991) has 23 801 views²⁸. The four-bar phrase sung by Anna Malec is used out of context²⁹ to describe a group of people hated by the lyrical subject (the rapper?). The group is portrayed as «boors» and «cattle from the field»³⁰ (the Polish word *bydło* which means *cattle* can be used as a derogatory term for uneducated and impolite people). However, the instance of reaching for archival material performed by «a distinguished musical personality of Lubelszczyzna (a region of south-eastern Poland)» (Dahlig, 2013), «the queen of folk songs»³¹, a famous singer from the region of Biłgoraj³², whose singing is characterised by strong, clear, resounding voice, is important when it comes to rap artists 'drawing' inspiration from musical folklore. Tendencies to use original folklore material as interludes are very popular in rap. In addition to the song itself (original or mixed) a beat may be developed based on

²⁴ Term *rap*, *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. by M. Bańko, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, p. 391.

²⁵ TEDE & SIR MICH, song «Bydło z pola» <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhZvL6KBrOc> [accessed: 25.10.2020].

²⁶ By 25.10.2020.

²⁷ Anna Malec, song *Oj, idzie bydło* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKvpkgKGu2E&list=RDEMSvOsR0A5X7ZCaj9qgGGQ6Q&index=2> [accessed: 25.10.2020].

²⁸ As per 25.10.2020.

²⁹ The original lyrics as performed by A. Malec:

Oh, the cattle is coming back from the fields,

Oh, and my cow too,

Oh, come here, na na na na,

oh, that's all my dowry.

Oh, that's all my dowry,

what my mama gave me,

oh, four pillows,

oh, one more they promised me.

[...]

³⁰ The lyrics to *Bydło z pola* by TEDE & SIR MICH

Because they are boors, boors here boors, and we blow on the meagre ones,

don't ask us what we do, we make rap, we make rap here.

*You can have a hoodie, you can have a snapback, making this f***ing hip-hop,*

It doesn't change the fact that I know you from the fields, here's the cattle coming, oooh,

Ruddy faces, their ruddy faces.

[...]

³¹ J. Bartmiński, *Anna Malec – królowa ludowej przyśpiewki*, [in:] *Anna Malec i Kapela Braci Bzdziuchów*, series 'Muzyka Źródła/Portrety, Polskie Radio RCKL, 2013.

³² see: *Anna Malec* [in]: <https://www.muzykatradycyjna.pl/pl/leksykon/mistrzowie/articles/anna-malec>

Anna Malec became famous in mass media when her song «Piejo kury, piejo» was used by Grzegorz Ciechowski as archival material on his album titled *OjDADAna*.

There are many recordings of her songs in the archives of *Polskie Radio*, *Instytut Sztuki PAN* and in the European internet archive *Europeana*.

Many distinguished Polish ethnomusicologists and folklorists mention her in their works, for example Piotr Dahlig and Jerzy Bartmiński.

harmonies from folk melodies. This distinctive ‘accompaniment’ is used alongside the rapper’s voice throughout the song. Even though *folkrap* uses modifications of the original sounds (synthesizers, electronics) this kind of interference into the primary structure is not as invasive as in other genres. Traditional vocals are emphasised in these productions in order to enhance the quality and singularity of the composition. There is no music video to accompany the song. In this case the prefix *folk* applies only to the verbal and musical layer, without the visual. A rapper can also make use of singing in two voices alongside the original folk singer (mixing the tracks), a characteristic feature of the composition titled «Mój świat» («My world») by Lukasyo & Kriso featuring Miss God³³ who sings using the so-called *white voice* (*biały głos* in Polish), a traditional style of singing:

We are very happy to present the music video to our next single «Mój świat» («My world») from the album titled *Czas Vendetty (Time of Vendetta)* by Lukasyo & Kriso. The song features Miss God who sings using white voice, characteristic for traditional folklore singing from the eastern borderlands. Lukasyo yet again shows that he focuses on quality and development while showing his viewers extraordinary images. The music video is an homage to the culture and tradition of Podlasie, and the values passed on from generation to generation. We have been working on this video since the beginning of the year. The final product is a result of a six-month search for people and places who represent the spirit and atmosphere of the east. Krzysztof Kiziewicz and Łukasz Szymański are responsible for cinematography and film editing.

Places such as Burzyn, Parcewo, Czarna Wieś Kościelna, Studziany Las, Malawicze, and the marshes of the Biebrza and the Narew rivers are filmed in order to document the last haven of borderland traditions and its wilderness.³⁴

This description suggests that the artist wants to reach for characteristic elements of Polish traditions of Podlasie, which he identifies as «quality», «extraordinary images», the result of «[the] search for people and places who represent the spirit and atmosphere of the east». Effectively, the following contents of the song (its modern lyrics) which concern the identity of the lyrical subject: «what keeps me here, traditions, family. I haven’t been looking for friends, I always come from here. The eastern front, my roots like an oak» are accompanied by images of the marshes of the Biebrza and the Narew rivers, while the viewer can ‘meet’ the inhabitants of the villages of Parcewo, Czarna Wieś Kościelna, Studziany Las and Malawicze. Among them there is a smith, Mieczysław Hulewicz, a potter, Paweł ‘Siewnik’ Piechowski, and a *szeptucha* (local female healer), Paraskewia Artemiuk³⁵. Elements which categorise this song as *folkrap* are found mainly in the visuals of the video, and the tone quality of Miss God’s voice, which has a kind of ‘magical function’ due to its very nature. In the past, *white voice* was believed to be «the kind of voice [which] exists between *the visible* and *the invisible*, having the power to influence that second sphere» (Żurek, 2014: 309-310).

Another example of *folkrap* is the song «Polska siła» («Polish power»)³⁶ by O.S.T.R. & World of Tanks, featuring a band called Żywiolak, with a very rich instrumental line-up. Artists create «experimental music based on musical citations from folklore, mythological and historical threads, performed on instruments such as: hurdy-gurdy, renaissance vielle, bowed-string Danzig gusle, lute guitar, acoustic bass guitar, flutes (regular flute, modified quena, baritone flute), five-string violin and baritone violin, as well as drums and percussion. While exploring folk traditions musicians use non-standard and folk singing techniques»³⁷. Both «Polska siła» («Polish power») and «Mój świat» («My world») make use of the same elements: timbre (in singing and in the instrumental layer) and visuals of rural life, based largely on stereotypical images such as hanging the laundry or chopping wood. In addition, they make use of the melodic and the verbal layer: the

³³ Performed by „Lukasyo & Kriso”, song *Mój świat*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jr5HI3kYQ4Y> [accessed: 25.10.2020].

³⁴ Performed by „Lukasyo & Kriso”, song *Mój świat*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jr5HI3kYQ4Y> [accessed: 25.10.2020].

³⁵ ‘NON Koneksja: Mój świat łączy folklor Kresów z rapem’:

<https://warszawa.naszemiasto.pl/non-koneksja-teledysk-moj-swiat-laczy-folklor-kresow-z/ar/c13-2553692> [accessed: 26.10.2020].

³⁶ Performed by „O.S.T.R. & World of Tanks”, song *Polska siła*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kh9UC-GOwHA> [accessed: 26.10.2020].

³⁷ Band „Żywiolak”: <http://zywiolak.pl/25-2/> [accessed: 26.10.2020].

interlude between rap sections is based on a famous song in many variants titled «W moim ogródeczku rośnie lelija» («There's a lily flowers growing in my garden»)³⁸.

#folkmetal, #heavyfolk : Rock and metal bands can also draw inspiration from folk music. Groups such as *Percival Schutzenbach*, a folkmetal band, join together «Slavic metal folk with folk-rock and progressive rock, including even prog-metal»³⁹. They identify themselves as «the new wave of Polish heavy folk»⁴⁰ who enhance the 'heavier' sounds by adding a varied instrumental layer, including: lyres, lutes, mandolins and ligawki (a type of wooden horn). These instrumental ensemble is complemented with modern ones, for instance: acoustic guitars, electric guitars, percussion, and cellos. They also emphasise the vocal layer by the use of *white voice* along with rasping, throat singing typical for *metal* and *rock*. Furthermore, plenty of musical arrangements are accompanied by lyrics of well-known folk songs and ceremonial tunes. There are no visual elements of folklore in the band's music videos such as (pseudo) regional costumes or artificially created stereotypical scenes of rural life. One ceremonial tune, «Marzanecka» (614 045 views⁴¹) is a new variant of a well-known song beginning with the words: *Wyniósłiśmy, wyniósłi marzanecka ze wsi* (*We carried marzanecka away from the village*). The song was traditionally sung at the time of Spring equinox when a procession carried an effigy of *marzanna* who represented winter. The version performed by Percival retains the original lyrics but transforms the musical layer. As such, it becomes a musical form out of context, which functions 'outside' the ceremonial and its symbolism; it is detached from the local and its primal purpose. Nevertheless, it is still inspired by folklore, even though heavily changed by percussion and electric guitar interludes. Similar arrangements which make use of traditional lyrics are created by a band called *Krzikopa* who specialise in the recreation of melodies from the Upper Silesia region of Poland. For instance «Karliku, Karliku», (18 806 views⁴²) has been re-arranged completely anew when it comes to harmonies, but similarly to «Marzanecka» it is played with the use of instruments typical for rock music. There is no music video. There are many groups who employ similar techniques, even in the fields of *rock* and *metal*, genres which may seem very distant from folk music.

#Folkdiscopolo, #folkdisco, #folkrap, #folkmetal and #folkrock. These sub-genres, a mix of popular music, contemporary music and folk/folklore elements have become part of our music scene. Folk inspirations, mixing of genres 'with a touch of folk' are present in almost all music genres. Another example – not mentioned in the text – is folkjazz. This type of music had already been known in the 1920s. By that time it had been typical of Polish jazz to include elements of material from other music genres (Stromenger, 1930). This analysis points to the fact that folk music has not been completely forgotten by a large number of young artists (creators and performers mentioned in the text are usually between 20 and 40 years of age) How do they perceive it? It has not been learnt through inculturation – the process of familiarization with tonality and metrics of music, proposed by an American pedagogue and musical psychologist Edwin Gordon⁴³ (Zwolińska, Jankowski, 1995) - and as such it acts as a type of 'revelation', discovery of 'the unknown'. They walk into it with no substantive knowledge, no identity, no preconceptions. In the past people were introduced into the world of folklore almost 'automatically' through their community, the experience of live music, its genuine character, the authenticity of experience. But folklore has changed its function. This transformation is crucial for its survival, but it has changed the situations it is performed in and made it 'exotic' for society brought up among the noisy sounds of electronic music. This 'exotic' element, which for many may well be «the boring part of festive performances» (Żurek, 2014: 312), in other circumstances, such as parties, dances and carol singing, makes for more entertainment (Żurek, 2014: 312). It becomes a profitable source for these popular artists who look for products

³⁸ Another version of *W moim ogródeczku ciecze wodziśia* (*Water is flowing in my garden*), performed by Władysława Kusiowa from Siemonia (Zagłębie Dąbrowskie). Recording is available in the archives of Muzeum «Górnośląski Park Etnograficzny w Chorzowie» and Systemie Informacji Muzealnej: <http://simuz.pl/qr.php?qr=F26F0CED-C018-4268-C790-9F986D62F199&mode=m> [accessed on: 26.10.2020]. The recording was made by Adolf Dygacz in 1965.

³⁹ *Percival Schutzenbach*, [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Percival_Schutzenbach_\(zespół_muzyczny\)](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Percival_Schutzenbach_(zespół_muzyczny)), [accessed: 26.10.2020].

⁴⁰ *Percival Schutzenbach*, [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Percival_Schutzenbach_\(zespół_muzyczny\)](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Percival_Schutzenbach_(zespół_muzyczny)), [accessed: 26.10.2020].

⁴¹ *Percival Schutzenbach*, song «Marzanecka», <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MCsB6Qo8RQ> [accessed: 29.10.2020].

⁴² *Krzikopa*, song «Karliku, Karliku», https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXjLHZMp_rU [accessed: 30.10.2020].

⁴³ E. Zwolińska., W. Jankowski, *Teoria uczenia się muzyki według Edwina E. Gordona*, w: *Materiały II seminarium autorskiego w Krynicy – 27 kwietnia – 3 maja 1995*, Bydgoszcz – Warszawa 1995.

that sell well if mixed well, and try to create something previously unknown. The prefix *folk* sets the music apart in a certain way, tags it as 'different', which appeals to users of social media. As we can see on the examples provided in the article the contents of the music tagged *#folk* are of no great importance. The artists themselves see *#folk* as a synonym for 'traditional' or 'rural', even if found only in the musical motif or the visual layer of a music video. As part of contemporary music *folklore* functions as a distinguishing feature for those who are not ashamed of it and import traditional music into the urban field. Cases described above confirm the thesis of Maciej Żurek who says that *folk* «is the most unsuccessful, or to put it more precisely, the most shallow attempt to implement traditional music in the contemporary cultural conditions» (Żurek, 2014: 312). Moreover:

The folklore paradigm [...] renounces all cultural musical connotations of the traditional countryside. What is more, it is usually void of its traditional style of music performance and confined to melodies and lyrics only (Żurek, 2014: 312).

Therefore, folk music means relinquishing the discovery of deeper layers of traditional music performance (Żurek, 2014: 312). However, keeping in mind that there are two layers: *the deeper one* and *the shallow one*, whilst popular music seems to represent principally the shallow one, we may assume that *folk* in the entertainment arts is not an extension of the traditional or its adaptation to modernity. It serves as a shallow, but distinctive and fertile tendency, due to the many possibilities offered by electronical arrangement of music. Folk music, therefore, still inspires, even though the variety of modern *folk genres* is focused on theatricality, commercial value, and gives its source nothing in return.

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