

World music routes: the modification of the Sakha musical tradition¹

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The end of the 1980s was also the beginning of the rise in »world music« and of WOMAD (World of Music, Arts and Dance), an arts festival founded by Peter Gabriel, Thomas Brooman, and Bob Hooton in 1980. While the first WOMAD festival had taken place in 1982,² the term »world music« was coined only in 1987. This happened at a meeting of independent record label representatives and music journalists whose goal was to launch a new marketing category for various music genres that existed outside the average Euro-American pop music scene, being recorded mainly in the Third World (Mitchell 1993, 310; Pietilä 2009, 4). In the meantime, world music had crossed over into the mainstream and become a soundtrack for both semi-alternative student parties and intellectual music hall events. On the other side of the former Iron Curtain, these were exciting times. Suddenly new music was everywhere—on daytime radio, on TV, and in the emerging pirate cassette market via new private shops and market stalls. In this period, I was a passionate follower of the late night TV program »Programma A,« on Ostankino TV, the Russian central television channel, which was run by the famous Russian rock journalist Artemii Troitski and aired new underground music from all over the Soviet Union. For many Soviet music fans, »Programma A« developed into an important source for new music, for discovering new artists from both the West and Eastern Europe. I remember being thrilled one evening while watching

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2 <http://womad.org/about/>.

»Programma A« by a concert by a six- or seven-member Sakha (or Yakutian) rock band. The musicians were wearing long leather coats and had long black hair covering their faces as they hunched over their guitars. The man in the center was almost kneeling, holding in his hands something I recognized as a shamanic drum, and produced deep magical sounds, drumming and singing. The music was extraordinary—monotonous, dark, depressive, and very impressive. Years later, while conducting my PhD research in the Republic of Sakha, I learned the name of the band—Aital—and that they were one of the founding ethnic rock bands of the region. Aital was also one of the first Sakha music groups to tour in the West, benefitting from Gorbymania and the world music craze. They performed in festivals in Finland, Germany, the UK, and the USA, and some of their concerts were released as bootleg CDs. However, in 1993–1994 Tuvan bands like Yat-Kha and Huun Huur Tu, which were better promoted, gained greater success and became international templates for the »authentic Siberian sound.« By the mid-nineties, a disappointed Aital gave up touring in the West. Their short international career reflects the struggle in which the whole genre is caught: namely, how to market authenticity.

World music in the academic context

The least common denominator among various definitions for world music is that world music is typically defined geographically as non-Western music (Erlman 1994; Frith 2000; Pietilä 2009) with folk-related or »ethnic« music made within the Western hemisphere being included as well (Mitchell 1993, 310; Thornton 1998, 260, 263). Although world music is as much a marketing category as any other music designation, it appears to rely overwhelmingly on small record labels to produce it because the owners are enthusiasts. This enthusiasm of small labels is a factor that delivers authenticity to all these various music styles (Hattersley 2004; Pietilä 2009, 8). Scholars have argued that the majority of the world music audience are Western white middle class listeners seeking an alternative to commercial mainstream pop, which for them lacks authenticity and an exotic »vibe« (Haynes 2013; Hutnyk 2000). Relatively small, the world music audience is considered to be committed to the

cause and ready to invest a substantial amount of money by purchasing CDs and attending concerts (Boyd 2009, 49). Therefore world music is often described as an elitist genre, even as the new classical music »of our time« (Ling 2003).

Producing and marketing authenticity is one important topic in the scholarly debate over world music. Not unusual is the view that world music is just a form of the Adorno-esque »monopolistic culture industry,« which manipulates music in order to sell it (e.g. Frith 1991). However, this discussion is related to the post-colonial reading of these marketing strategies. Indeed, as research demonstrates, until the collapse of the Soviet bloc, »exotic« music travelled to the Western world overwhelmingly as a result of colonial relations with non-European countries. By the 18th century, travelling noblemen had brought back to Europe sounds originating in Asia and Africa, which were then incorporated into classical and popular music (Ling 2003, 235–36; Savigliano 1995). Spain had already begun to introduce Europe to the music of its colonies in the 16th century, the first country to do so (Savigliano 1995, 86). Behind this process was the perception that non-European people had maintained »real« and »authentic« values, which Europeans had by and large lost. In Europe, the import of music and dance from the colonies was accompanied with a fascination for lower class dances, and involved simultaneously exoticizing »rough« and »authentic« folk culture (Savigliano 1995, 96). Both processes also involved a high degree of codification: after tango manuals had standardized Argentinian dances (Savigliano 1995, 130), various folk music collectors in Europe began distinguishing »authentic« music from »less authentic« (e.g. Francmanis 2002). Soon such »folk music« was marketed as a source of passion, for its exotic vibe and connotations of virility (Savigliano 1995). The process of the »commodification of the Other« (Kellner and Durham 2001, 22) is interpreted as a power struggle that aims to make non-Western music »accessible« to Western audiences (Mitchell 1993, 314).³ This music,

3 Among world music fans there has been a discussion about which record marks the beginning of the world music wave in the post-second world war West. Generally it is agreed that the first record was Paul

offered to listeners who are »largely uncritical of world music« (Hutnyk 2000, 22; see also Haynes 2013), is often rearranged and recorded using modern means of music production, which often leads to a high degree of homogenization and hybridization (Mitchell 1993; O'Hagin and Harnish 2006). Haynes (2005, 369) argues that the balance between hybridization and authenticity is one of the dilemmas in world music. Orientation to Western audience disconnects the exported music from new sounds in the country of origin either because it involves the merger of local music with global pop influences (Boyd 2009; Bilby 1999; see also Laing 2009), or because it contravenes local ways of making and consuming music (Bigenho 2002; Kevin 2004). Two opposing positions in theories about world music are the »top-down« perspective (by which the music industry creates homogeneity and markets local musical forms of resistance) and the »bottom-up« perspective (by which Western instruments and technologies are adapted in order to renew local styles) (Stokes 2004, 50). The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that both processes occur simultaneously and are interrelated.

Sakha and the fieldwork

The Sakha (Yakutia) Republic (Yakutia 2007) is the largest region of the Russian Federation. Comprising more than three million square kilometers, it is located in the Russian Far East, not far from the coast of the Pacific Ocean and the Chinese border and has been a part of Russia since its incorporation in the 17th century. The republic is famous for its mineral resources, producing roughly one third of the world's and 99% of Russia's diamonds; and it also has quite impressive oil, gold, coal and timber reserves (Tichotsky 2000; Duncan 1994). The titular ethnic group are the Sakha, a Turkic language people, who make up roughly half of

Simon's 1986 album *Graceland*, which featured several tracks that were recorded with the collaboration of South African groups. Immediately after the release, Paul Simon was accused of exploiting African music (Mitchell 1993, 323). However, some fans point to the works of Santana and Osibisa, who released successful albums before *Graceland* (see discussion in *Songlines*, February–April, 2013).

the republic's fewer than one million people; the majority of the incomer population are Russians and Ukrainians. Apart from the Sakha, other indigenous peoples of the region are the Evenki, Eveni, Dolgan, Chukchi, and Yukaghir, who number 30,000 in total. The Sakha people are better known by their Russian ethnonym »Yakut«; but since the 1990s, after the declaration of sovereignty, their native expression »Sakha« has become better known outside the republic and is spreading internationally (Yakutia 2007).

Since 2000 I have conducted fieldwork in the Sakha Republic. During several field trips I interviewed most major Sakha recording artists and record label owners. During these trips I collected a solid archive on the republic's media, including its coverage of the activities of local music artists. Thanks to the generous help of friends in the republic's local television, I have several hours of recordings of TV shows covering local music events and youth programs, including interviews with the artists. In 2012, I helped to organize concerts for Sakha artists travelling to Estonia, Germany, and Finland; and I am in contact with promoters in the UK who promote Sakha artists, and I have a good understanding of their strategies. The secondary data for this research was collected by studying the few Sakha academic works on pop music and by conducting field work among world music promoters, record labels, and artists. As a journalist, I have interviewed dozens of artists and industry people. In 2010 and 2011 I participated in WOMEX, the most important annual world music industry gathering. A stint as host of a world music radio show on Estonian Radio 2 provided invaluable insights into the world music industry. I met numerous artists, promoters, and activists. Simultaneously I was a member of the World Music Charts Europe,⁴

4 The World Music Charts Europe unites nearly sixty radio-DJs from different European countries. To become a member of the board of the WMCE, one must have a weekly radio show which plays world music for at least one hour. Every month this jury compiles a TOP 10 chart of the best world music albums. In order to evaluate and compile the charts, radio-DJs receive dozens of albums with additional promotional materials every month, usually posted by the artists themselves or their record labels. The volume of CDs that land in the WMCE DJ post box

which gave me insider access to promotional materials and a good overview of the marketing strategies of world music labels and management companies.

Short overview of Sakha music up until the early 1990s

Music is an essential ingredient in Sakha culture: there is hardly a celebration, whether private or public, that is without singing and the performance of songs featuring guitars or accordions. The Sakha have a rich musical culture that dates back centuries, and until the 1990s it remained up-to-date with music recorded for radio and written for concerts and releases of vinyl LPs and cassettes. Nowadays, local radio stations play Sakha music, local record labels release it on CDs, the live music scene is vivid, and the club circuit booming.

Some ten years ago Sakha music was organised into four genres: *estrada* or *narodnaya muzyka*, which in the UK is often classified as vintage easy listening, somewhat similar to German *Schlager* (melodic singing accompanied by an orchestra). There is also rock, as well as *popsa*, or pop music (including hip-hop and electronic remixes); and there is traditional/folk music (*folklornaya muzyka*). Curiously, most artists have tried to perform in all these styles and successful artists have done so on a regular basis. There are several reasons for this phenomenon, but some are more noteworthy than others: first of all, the money involved in live performances was too little to focus solely on one style and by performing folk, estrada, and rock, the artist demonstrated her or his artistry, maturity, and sophistication (Ventsel 2004a; 2004b).

Historically, Siberian indigenous music developed in a different setting compared to that of African, Asian or Latin American colonial subjects. On the one hand, the Soviet authorities attempted to »enlighten« the

are testimony to the importance which the bands, their management, and record labels place in this channel to get their new music on the air. The World Music Charts Europe is loosely related to the British world music magazine fROOTS, that also publishes the chart in every issue (see wmce.de).

»backward« indigenous people, not dissimilar to the colonial powers, but on the other hand to »preserve and develop« their cultures under the motto »socialist in context, national in form« (Forsyth 1992, 80, 244; Slezkine 1994, 205). In order to follow this policy, houses of culture were established in villages to house folklore groups and ethnic theatres (Donahoe and Habeck 2011; King 2011). Folk music was given exposure throughout the former Soviet Union on TV, state celebrations, and in various song and dance festivals. Some of the groups—mingling their music with *estrada*—became pop stars in their republic or even nationally (Olson 2004; Rouldand 2007). To monitor the folk music, the Soviets established music schools and opened folk music departments in universities, in Siberia it was also part of the school curriculum (Bloch 2004). Several Soviet-era Sakha artists developed their folk music not only in local schools but also in Moscow. The critics of this policy argue that Soviet state and culture institutions often turned indigenous cultures into museum objects (Baisheva et. al. 2012; Vakhtin 1994). However, the lasting impact of such a policy has been that Siberian indigenous people tend to believe that even their modern identity can be expressed through elements of traditional culture, such as wearing ethnic jewelry or eating traditional food. Traditional music and instruments continue to be central to Sakha identity in the modern world, both at home and abroad.

The development of later Sakha world music is closely related with the history of local rock music. It is generally agreed that the first Sakha rock group was Cholbon, quite a VIA-style⁵ dance rock band in the 1970s with an ethnic edge. Out of that band evolved other rock groups that

5 VIA or vocal instrumental ensemble (*vocal'no instrumental'nyi ansambl*) were state-approved music collectives that fused rock, funk, jazz, and dance music in the Soviet era. VIAs were relatively big (6 to 12 members) and due to their big lineups, their music was quite complicated, although the primary directive of the VIA was to entertain and make dance music. In Russian rock studies it is argued that VIA music was a watered-down state-approved rock music (Steinholt and Wickström 2009; Yurchak 2006). The critics support the position that VIAs were an attempt to make Western music in a framework tolerated by the Communist state and its institutions (Grabowsky 2012).

became benchmarks of the so-called shamanic rock scene: Aital, Choron, Serge, etc. These were bands inspired by Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin as well as Sakha traditional music, especially the songs of shamans. A wave of shamanic rock bands took off in the 1980s, as described by Artemii Troitski in his book *Back in the USSR* (Troitskii 2007). These bands experimented with folkloric sounds and ritualistic elements, such as performing shamanistic ceremonies on stage accompanied by electric guitars and loud drums. As a result, such hybridization changed the discourse of the Sakha tradition. By adopting Western instruments and melodies but remaining Sakha, these bands opened up the musical horizon and came to symbolize »Sakhaness.« Regev (2007) discusses »otherness,« national uniqueness, and rock music criteria in the Argentinian and Israeli rock scenes and concludes that in cases when the music finds a balance between the »interior« and »exterior,« fans have no problems identifying themselves with the music (318, 322). Interestingly, ethno-rock bands were not seen as »sell outs« defiling traditions, but as artists making contemporary Sakha music by adapting Western instruments and skills in order to modernize the Sakha tradition⁶ (Drobizheva 1998). As is the case with other hybrid styles, like bhangra or hip-hop (Hutnyk 2000; Mitchell 1993), ethno-rock became the poster child for authenticity.

The authenticity of this music was confirmed by the short-lived success of Sakha rock in Russia and abroad. In the early 1990s Sakha rock bands were receiving greater exposure everywhere: the sound was seen as unique by listeners who discovered it at festivals, via the media, or by the few tapes in circulation. Cholbon released an album with very enthusiastic liner notes from Troitskii (1992). In 1987 the well-known Russian semi-alternative rock band Zvuki Mu performed in Yakutsk with local rock bands; and Russian musicians were so impressed that in 1991 they helped to release a sampler of Sakha rock groups, *Sovremennaiia muzyka naroda sakha* (Modern music of the Sakhas), in which artists like

6 This is very unusual on the world music circuit; artists who usually fuse traditional music with rock or hip-hop are accused of spoiling the music at home (see discussion in *Songlines*, March 2013).

Stepanida Borisova, Aital, Choroon, Serge, and Cholbon mixed shamanic songs with psychedelic rock. At the same time Sakha rock groups began to travel: for instance, Aital performed in Finland and Japan; and soon nearly all the main Sakha ethno-rock groups had performed in Moscow several times (Stephanida Borisova even toured Germany and Italy).

Thanks to the »allegories of technological progress« (Savigliano 1995, 82), amplified Sakha bands, dressed in traditional costumes, created a powerful »authentic Siberian sound«— monotonous, grim and mystical. With songs about ancient shamans and warriors, they offered a different kind of »exotic« to audiences accustomed to the playful dance music of African and South-American groups (Frith 1988; King 2004). This music, similar to some genres of Indian music (Hutnyk 2000, 3–4), seemed »intellectual« to the audience and yet still provided the form of »otherness« that people expected from performances by Sakha artists. However, this was not »autoexoticization« (Savigliano 1995, 2), but the belief, inherited from the Soviet house of culture, that the degree of traditional culture is measured by the degree of visibility of artifacts and sounds.

The media steps in: different interpretations of success

The media, especially radio, is a powerful medium for the promotion of new songs, albums, and artists. In modern times very few musicians are not interested in media coverage. The practice shows that even politically conscious artists cooperate with the mainstream media, not to mention less political artists who are glad for any kind of media coverage (Street 2012). The power relation in and around the media has been scrutinized in depth by Hesmondhalgh (2007) who argues that creativity in mainstream media is subordinated to profit. However, this—and similar—approaches have been called into question by Alan O'Connor (1990), who asserts that the degree of conservatism and the political economy of the media is a matter of discussion and often depends on the conceptual position of the analyst. Media can definitely be seen as part of the culture industries that construct and enforce images and concepts, and this is

especially true in the world music scene (Dawe 2004). Similar to the record labels (see Negus 1999), different forms of media create and popularize concepts of authenticity in world music. And similar to other spheres of the culture industry, the media does not control the music (Frith 2001, 25). Between the culture industry and the artist exist different degrees of cooperation or dominance and subordination (Hutnyk 1998, 2000a, 2000b) as well as complicated networks in which every member profits from the other (Negus 1996). In world music scholarship, journalism is discussed in terms of the Western media that helps to define the »world music discourse« (Stokes 2004, 58) but very little attention is paid to the »home media.« As will be discussed below, the »home« media presence can develop into a relationship of obligation.

In interviews, Sakha rockers told me that in addition to having successful concerts, they had also experienced the downside of the music business; it soon became clear to me however that these stories were kept secret when returning home. The local, ever-expanding media landscape celebrated the concerts and tours with national pride. The new private post-Soviet media (radio and glossy magazines) exploited the topic and made the artists who performed in foreign countries into national celebrities. Artists were portrayed as apostles of Sakha culture to the outside world, their mission being to carry and develop Sakha culture, to introduce and popularise it among foreigners (Doïdu 2001; Utkin 1999; Ventsel 2009; Vorob'eva and Spiridonov 2003). Sakha artists presented their journeys and performances solely as success stories, not mentioning the problems they encountered: being cheated of their wages and manipulated by agents, being forced into bad contracts and so on.⁷ At this time it is useful to bring in Sally Ann Ness's article about the variable meanings and commercialization of rock climbing (Ness 2011). She writes about the »outward« and »inward« movement in climbing: The outward movement, or the meaning-in-the-making, means a spontaneous process of recreating and confirming a climber's individual experience and his or her bond

7 I must mention that the Sakha mentality is extremely similar to the Jamaican mentality described by Gunst: by going abroad either you win or you should not return at all (Gunst 1995).

to climbing and the landscape—basically making sense and lending purpose to what they do. The inward movement is the growing influence of external agents like international corporations who get involved in climbing in order to market their products and services. In this context, the inward process on a large scale is the international (world) music business but on a local scale the local media, that creates the meaning and expectations related to performances abroad. The outward movement is how these bands create meaning and sell it to audiences in an existing framework of image, concepts of authenticity and the expectations of the audience—similar to Asian bands in the UK (Hutnyk 2000a, 2000b).

In short: in the Sakha Republic, touring artists are expected to be successful, which means that failure is inadmissible. In fact, the lack of English language skills and a scant understanding of legal procedures have made Sakha artists unequal protagonists in the international music business. Moreover, they were not well orientated to the global music landscape and had difficulties, for instance, in judging the prestige of a given festival to be performed at. Deficient knowledge of the terms of contracts led to several artists signing binding contracts that resulted in them having to withdraw from the global music scene for a year or even longer. But there was one thing the travelling artists learned from their hectic relationship with the global music business: you should make music that pleases promoters and the audience.

At home, the media turned Sakha artists into political activists—who represented the Sakha nation, its culture and traditions abroad. All this has substantially contributed to create pressure on the artists: the touring artists are shining idols, role models for dozens of young musicians, showing what a Sakha musician supposedly can achieve. By promoting this image, the media placed on artists' shoulders a heavy burden of responsibility, while managing to avoid sharing it.

Authenticity and roots

There is another aspect that should be mentioned in order to present the full picture. A closer look at the cohort of Choroon and Cholbon reveals

that all the musicians involved in these bands are village boys (and a few girls as well). In the case of ethnic music, having a rural background lends the artist a gloss of authenticity and exoticism. The reason for this rural origin of the first generations of Sakha musicians is very simple: until the end of the 1990s, the Sakha were overwhelmingly rural people, and only after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the constant growing migration to cities can we talk about a significant urban-born and -bred Sakha population. Sakha villages are quite desolate places—no jobs, no income, no prospects for the future, and marked by a predominantly subsistence economy (although this situation is slowly changing). As a young person, one has limited possibilities to escape such a life. If someone dreams of prosperity, the choices are few. Here I would like to draw a parallel between Afro-American kids in United States' ghettos—whether growing up in a remote village in the Sakha Republic or in a poor area of Los Angeles or Detroit, the quickest way to get access to money can be by becoming a criminal, an athlete, or a musician (Rose 1989, 1994). However, having roots in a village gives the artist the authenticity and credibility required when one performs ethnic music: in world music, the authenticity of a music of the »simple« people is guaranteed when the artist and the music is rooted in a concrete place and an historical context (Stokes 2004, 58; Frith 1988; e.g. Stoke 1992 for Turkish Arabesk; Thornton 1998 for Irish folk; Mike 2009 and Myles 2000 for Calypso and Soca; Järviuoma 2000 for Finnish music). Notwithstanding the argument that modern world music is often disconnected from the place (Piettilä 2009, 8), the practice proves this to be untrue. My journalistic career has shown that even the émigré who performs a hybrid fusion of styles tends to claim a symbolic connection with some place on the globe.

When I returned to Yakutsk in 2008 after a break of two years, I found that the music landscape had again radically changed. There now existed a more polarized scene—*bogema* vs. (ethno) rock, both camps with an exclusive and clear identity established, keeping a distance from the other side. Some artists—Khatalaev Family, Stepanida Borisova, Legentiai, Chyskyyrai—had earned the reputation of »national musical success

stories,« an image they also cultivated in their media appearances. What is significant is that these artists—especially Chyskyyrai and the Khatalaevs—gave up performing other styles like *popsa* or estrada and focused on performing more or less exclusively ethnic music. When talking to them, listening to and watching their recordings from festivals in Moscow or Western countries, I noticed several changes. First of all, the large band was gone. Another change is that some artists have a binding contractual relationship with Western managers. And the music has changed as well.

A good example of the transformation of Sakha tradition and its interconnectedness with the local media is the singer known as Chyskyyrai. We met in 2000 on Lenin Square in Yakutsk where she performed under her official name Valentina Romanova. She comes from a village called Myndygai, from the Churapsa district, in the Sakha heartland. As a young girl, Valentina used to dress as a punk and liked heavy guitar music. Later she studied music and Sakha culture in Yakutsk and started her singing career. When we met for the first time she described herself as an ethno-jazz singer but actually scored some hits with electronic disco songs. She has always been extravagant and not part of the mainstream pop culture in Sakha. Part of her uniqueness is her phenomenal voice and the ability to play with the notes. When performing with her band, she improvised wildly, sneering, howling, and crying over the music. The local media did not embrace this form of music. She was described in newspapers as someone who brings shame to the local pop music scene (*pozorit' yakutskuyu estrady*) and was constantly criticized for her »deliberate lack of respect« for Sakha »ancient tradition« (*Yakutsk Vechernii*, April 20, 2000). Around 2004 she had the chance to travel to Europe. With the help of a Sakha DJ and promoter who lives in London, Chyskyyrai (as she was now calling herself) performed in the UK and around Europe, giving some master classes in London, appearing as a studio guest on BBC Radio 3, releasing an album, and signing a contract with a Polish manager. All these events were covered in the local media as Chyskyyrai's path to worldwide stardom and no-one mentioned that a few years before she had been

labelled as »shameful.« Chyskyyrai herself did everything to support this image of success: it remained unknown that her album was a very limited edition release on a university label targeted mostly at libraries. She also did not reveal that she received very little money for her performances and was actually not that famous at all. In March 2012 I organized a visit for her to Estonia to perform some concerts. In the interviews she gave to the Estonian media, Chyskyyrai revealed that she was the grandchild of a female shaman, on a mission to represent Sakha culture. She cultivated a mystique with her biography and seemed to enjoy her role at the center of public attention. What surprised me was how different her concert was from what I had seen a decade before in Yakutsk. It was very controlled, included very little improvisation, the music was very tight and ... she and her husband (who accompanied her as a percussionist) switched between different instruments using the khomus (Sakha mouth harp), different rattles, shamanic drums, etc.

Why is this surprising? First of all, Chyskyyrai never really played instruments, especially the khomus. The khomus is not her instrument, although it is an important instrument in Sakha traditional music. The level of khomus playing in the Sakha tradition is incredibly high, it is a real art form. However, only I and a few Sakha in the audience understood this, and for the other people the show she delivered was flawless. Moreover, the switching between instruments was unusually intense; in traditional Sakha music this sort of mixing is extremely rare. As a rule, in Sakha music each person plays one instrument or sings. Even the ethno-rock bands—which are quite large—do not typically feature an artist playing more than one instrument. Later I was struck by another surprise. I Googled Chyskyyrai to see what has been written about her, discovering a clip featuring her on a talk show, with another Sakha singer, Saina. Saina used to be the bad rock bitch of Yakutsk—a leather-clad tattooed copy of various female American hard rock artists. Now she lives in Moscow and has apparently turned into an Evenki traditional

singer. As she explained on the TV show, she discovered her roots, gave up commercial music, and now follows the same path as Chyskyyrai.⁸

What I know about Saina is that she moved to Moscow around 2003 and tried a career as a pop singer, but apparently without any notable success. She tried to collaborate with different pop bands who were looking for a singer with an exotic Asian appearance. Saina performed for a short time with a pop group that had recently fired a female singer of Central Asian origin. After this brief period performing pop music, Saina turned to the world music scene of the Russian capital, using the popularity of certain new clubs that hired ethnic music artists. By making contacts in these clubs she became increasingly active on Moscow's world music circuit, occasionally helping Chyskyyrai to book concerts. In 2011, the new radio Etno-Radio was established in Moscow, and Saina was the person to lead it with music by Siberian indigenous people.

So, how to interpret this spiritual awakening and increasing consciousness of one's roots? As an artist, every musician wishes to perform and explore new horizons. All the ethno-musicians, who form the bulk of the musical export from the Sakha Republic, are very famous at home and have reached their artistic peaks: they have performed in every club, appeared on every TV and radio show. However, the only way Sakha musicians can have success outside of the republic is by performing ethnic music, as is demonstrated by Saina's lack of impact as a pop singer. As ethno-music performers, artists become part of the world music scene and adapt themselves to the expectations of the audience. Michelle Bigenho argues in her book *Sounding Indigenous* (Bigenho 2002, 17), in which she discusses authenticity in Bolivian traditional music, that one part of the perception of music is »experiential authenticity,« or how the music is experienced, what kind of feelings it initiates. This »experiential authenticity« is based on the perception of »groove« or how a certain musical style should sound. Sakha artists follow in the path of Tuvan artists like Yat-Kha or Huun Huur Tu, bands that have

8 <http://mirtv.ru/programms/3705737/episode/4784222>.

conceptualized the Siberian sound, dark music accompanied by throat singing. For example, a few years ago Sakha artists began to use the term »throat singing« for one of the Sakha singing styles which is quite similar to Tuvan throat singing.⁹ The other feature—something in which Sakha musicians are not unique—is to »tame« the sound, to make it more listenable for a Western audience. In practice this involves shortening of songs and rearranging rhythmic patterns (Langlois 1996; Mitchell 1993 for Rai and Aboriginal music). Music that used to be performed as a long loose improvisation is nowadays rearranged, tightly organized to form five minute songs, with several »exotic« elements being embedded in a single song—such as the khomus, the imitation of animal noises, and elements of shamanic music. At the same time Sakha music lays claim to what Bigenho refers to as »cultural-historical authenticity« (Bigenho 2002, 18), i.e. despite listener-friendly rearrangements, the performance must maintain a certain aspect of Siberian culture, manifested through costumes, heavy Sakha silver jewelry, and a sonic experience that the audience expects (the use of particular sounds and instruments) (Haynes 2005). Moreover, Sakha artists are also framed through stereotypes by their Western managers, who market them as the »voices of Siberian wolves,« »shamanic singers,« etc. and create expectations for a certain type of performance. In a few cases, promoters will ask artists to perform a certain type of music—as a rule, the more exotic the better (Boyd 2009). In the Sakha case, the marketing strategy is not only to make the music listener-friendly but simultaneously offer a more »exotic Other« through hyper-traditionalization. Such hyper-traditionalization does not contradict the Sakha rock tradition of innovation and is also legitimized by the media-created image of the artist as a »messenger of the national culture,« a recycled Soviet-era formula. In this way, the reciprocal bonding between the culture industry, media, and the artists themselves, and the mutual relationship with the audience, redefine tradition but always preserve the element of authenticity.

9 Stepanida Borisova advertised herself in Germany as a Siberian throat singer.

Conclusion: making world music

In academic circles there exists a rich body of literature discussing the world music scene. The widespread focus of this literature is the discussion of post-colonialism—how African or Asian artists are pushed into certain musical frameworks that a Western audience associates with the music of the region. Nonetheless, this discussion should be broadened and such variables as competition among artists and within the music business, the market value of a band, and expectations of managers and style based on regional music clusters within world music should all be taken into the consideration. For example, Sakha and Buryatian artists compete for resources in a musical niche already occupied by Tuvans trying to push aside Mongolians, whose musical invasion has been relatively successful. As a strategy, Sakha artists have to be flexible. One mode of flexibility is to reduce costs involved with performing abroad in festivals or clubs: Therefore Sakha bands have become smaller, containing two to four artists, in contrast to the earlier big rock bands. Also they tend to use instruments that one can easily pack into a suitcase: the khomus, rattles, etc. No guitars, drum kits or amplifiers. Considering that a two-way ticket for one person from Moscow-Yakutsk can cost up to 1000 euro and overweight baggage is very expensive, this is a very effective strategy for keeping costs low.

In the debate around post-colonialism in relation to world music a few aspects remain underdiscussed. One is the way that artists have to manipulate »tradition« and »authenticity.« Despite traditional rock and jazz arrangements, Sakha artists know that they can utilize traditional music. In my view, they do not compromise but rather choose those elements of tradition that fit into the »groove.« Another issue is the heavy pressure at home: the media needs success stories, and the artists are portrayed as heroes on a mission to represent their nation. For that to happen the artists must garner great media coverage and stories. But it means that the music they make also must demonstrate a Sakha »groove« for the home audience as well. The legacy of ethno-rock is likely of enormous help to contemporary Sakha artists. The rock tradition in Sakha allows a combination of Western music with elements of traditional

Sakha music, and the outcome is widely recognized by local people as part of traditional culture. As far as I know, all »musical export artists« have distanced themselves from *popsa*, which in the Sakha Republic is seen as being »inauthentic« music, but they do not hesitate to perform with rock bands.

After the collapse of the Soviet bloc, several regional music styles have entered the world music market which have no typical post-colonial relationship to a Western nation. Notwithstanding the fact that every transnational power relation in the music business can be described as »colonial« (Larkey 1992), theorizing similarities and differences in a post-colonial and post-Socialist setting is still academically a marginal topic (Moore 2001; Chari and Verdery 2009; Gerasimov et.al. 2013). However, the impact of the position of the »national culture« within the framework of Socialist culture affects how artists interpret and legitimize their marketing strategies. Moreover, artists from former socialist countries lack a direct post-colonial bond to any of the western countries as former »mother countries.« This aspect of world music research needs further discussion and examination.

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