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THE ART OF KOBZAR OSTAP VERESAI: FROM MYKOLA LYSENKO'S FOLKLORE RECORDINGS TO MODERN REPRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

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Abstract

The purpose of the research is a comprehensive research of the evolution of the artistic phenomenon of the Ukrainian kobzar Ostap Veresai – both in its original context and public presentation in the 19th century, as well as its subsequent influence on the performance practices of kobzars and academic bandura artists in Ukraine and diaspora from the 20th century to the early 21st century. **Research methodology.** To achieve the research objectives, the study employs methodological principles of historical, cultural, textual, axiological and terminological analysis, alongside corresponding scientific research methods. Theoretical analysis includes an examination of scholarly sources, notated samples of O. Veresai's repertoire, and audio recordings of contemporary reconstructions of his works by modern kobzars and bandurists. The study also applies methods of synthesis, generalisation, and comparison of O. Veresai's documented kobzar repertoire with the predominant genres and themes in modern bandura art. Among the empirical methods used is observation of the performance practices of modern kobzars and bandurists in Ukraine and abroad. **The scientific novelty** of the study is determined by generalising the transmission of O. Veresai's artistic traditions in modern cultural and artistic space of Ukraine and diaspora. **Conclusions.** The research identifies a growing interest in O. Veresai's artistic legacy within modern music culture – on scholarly (republishing and reinterpretation of the kobzar's repertoire), methodological (generalisation of playing techniques on the diatonic kobza-bandura), performative (reconstructed repertoire by modern kobzars and academic bandura artists), and audio-interpretative (modern reinterpretations of the kobzar's musical heritage) levels. O. Veresai's artistry remains a powerful source of inspiration not only for contemporary vocal-instrumental performances but also for instrumental improvisation, modal experimentation and creation of new kobzar compositions.

Keywords: kobzar Ostap Veresai; traditional kobzar art; bandura music of Ukraine; bandura music of diaspora; kobzar genres; Mykola Lysenko; kobzar repertoire; audio recordings; performance reconstruction; improvisation

Introduction

Ukrainian kobzar art represents a unique chapter in the national culture. The figures of kobzars and their creative legacy (notated and audio-recorded repertoire) have been the subject of research for many folklorists and ethnographers. Interest in the kobza-bandura, like other folk instruments, intensified at the end of the 19th century, when musicologists and Ukrainian cultural figures recognised the instrument's significance in the social life of a nation striving for self-affirmation. This period was marked, on the one hand, by increased oppression and persecution of kobzars by state officials (especially after the 1870 decree banning vagrancy), and on the other, by a significant interest in the art of folk singers, their repertoire, and living conditions, as documented by progressive representatives of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. Among those who contributed greatly to this field were L. Zhemchuzhnykov, P. Kulish, M. Lysenko, P. Martynovych, O. Rusov, O. Slastion, et al. They meticulously described the environment, training, instruments and repertoire of kobzars, organised concert performances, and promoted their art (Dutchak, 2018b).

Among these researchers, Mykola Vitaliyovych Lysenko (1842–1912) stands out as the founder of the Ukrainian compositional school. He became a pivotal figure in kobzar studies, focusing on traditional instruments, repertoire, and performance styles. His affiliation with the progressive Ukrainian intelligentsia, his collaborations with like-minded individuals, and the scope of his activities – particularly in the study of traditional kobzar art – played a crucial role in the further development and academic institutionalization of the bandura. His contributions extended to the instrumental domain, the documentation and popularization of repertoire genres, performance techniques, written education, history, theory, and methodology of playing the bandura (Dutchak, 2012).

The questions of folk music-making, the figures of bandurist performers, and the documentation and analysis of their repertoire were of constant interest to the composer and were reflected in his theoretical works, such as *A Characterization of the Musical Features of Ukrainian Dumas and Songs in the Performance of Kobzar O. Veresai* (1873), *The Duma about Khmelnytsky and Barabash* (1883), and *Folk Musical Instruments in Ukraine* (1894). It was M. Lysenko who introduced Ostap Veresai to his contemporaries and future generations. His recordings and analysis of O. Veresai's work mark the beginning of Ukrainian musical folklore studies and the scholarly understanding of kobzar art as a whole (Dutchak, 2018b). O. Veresai's figure drew attention to kobzars, their creativity, instruments, social status, and societal function.



Foto 1. Kobzar Ostap Veresai
(from the publication of M. Lysenko
(1874/1955))

The late 19th and early 20th centuries marked a new stage in the development of kobzar art, characterised by changes in instrumentation, repertoire, and performance styles, as well as the emergence of scholarly works on the history of the bandura, textbooks, instructional manuals, and repertoire collections. However, the traditions of kobzar art, their study, and their practical application remain a priority for many artists in Ukraine and the diaspora. The revival of O. Veresai's creative legacy, particularly his instrument and repertoire, plays a significant role in this process.

Purpose of the research

The objective of this article is to conduct a comprehensive study of the evolution of the artistic phenomenon of Ukrainian kobzar Ostap Veresai – both in its original existence and public representation in the 19th century, as well as its subsequent influence on the performance practices of kobzars and academic bandura art in Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora from the 20th century to the early 21st century.

Recent research and publications

The foundation of scholarly generalizations regarding the figure and creative legacy of kobzar O. Veresai is based on historical folkloristic materials compiled by M. Lysenko (1874/1955), O. Rusov (1874), and others in the 19th century. M. Lysenko's studies on O. Veresai marked the beginning of systematic academic research on kobzar art both in Ukraine and abroad. He demonstrated a keen interest in the kobza and kobzar songs, actively contributing to their notation. Simultaneously, he examined the structure and tuning of the kobza instrument, its playing position, the function of the right and left hands, and conducted a detailed analysis of the melodic and harmonic characteristics of the kobzar vocal and instrumental repertoire. Additionally, M. Lysenko noted that the tuning of the kobza-bandura could serve as a key to understanding the modal-harmonic features of Ukrainian folklore, as it preserved distinctive traits of Ukrainian musical creativity from the 15th–16th centuries without the external influence of the piano tuning system (Lysenko, 1894/1955, pp. 20–21).

The creative work of Ukrainian kobzars continued to serve as a source for scholarly studies in the early 20th century, including the works of F. Kolessa (1910/1913/1969), D. Revutskyi (1919, 2001), K. Hrushevskia (1927, 1931), and H. Khotkevych (1930). Later, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, further research was conducted by O. Vavryk/Dubas (Dubas, 2003; Vavryk, 2006), S. Hrytsa (2016), B. Zheplynskyi and D. Kovalchuk (2011), B. Kyrdan and A. Omelchenko (1980), V. Mishalow (2013), K. Cheremskyi (1999, 2008, 2024), Z. Shtokalko (1992), M. Khai (2007), L. Arkhimovych and M. Hordiichuk (1992) et al. Their works explored not only the specifics of kobzar instrumentation and repertoire but also the processes of learning, interpretation, and improvisation within the kobzar tradition.

In modern performance practice, O. Veresai's legacy has been revisited by musicians specialising in diatonic instruments, particularly his kobza-bandura. Performers such as M. Budnyk, E. Drach and V. Kushpet have actively incorporated O. Vere-

sai's works into their artistic practice (Kushpet, 2016a; Khai, 2015). Kobzar's tradition and bandura playing are studied in the works of N. Broiako (2023).

The inspiration drawn from the master's repertoire in the work of bandurists from the Ukrainian diaspora has also been noted in the author's previous research (Dutchak, 2012, 2013, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2021, 2023). The transmission of O. Veresai's repertoire in contemporary contexts has been analyzed through systematic examination of performance and audio recordings by modern kobzars and bandurists in Ukraine and the diaspora.

However, a comprehensive study of the transmission processes that actualise O. Veresai's creative legacy in contemporary practice remains largely unexplored. Particularly, in terms of instrument reconstruction, repertoire adaptation, and the inspiration for new compositions based on his recorded works.

Main research material

O. Veresai (1803–1890) was one of the most outstanding Ukrainian kobzar-singers. He possessed a dramatic tenor voice and played the kobza-bandura – a transitional type of instrument that featured strings along the neck for ancient fretted playing (resembling the lute and early kobza), as well as additional strings on the soundboard (similar to the harp, zither and bandura).

The tuning of Veresai's kobza-bandura

G c d g – a – d¹ – g¹ a¹ h¹ cis² d² e²
| Bass Strings | Third | Tonic | Treble Strings |

The Lydian melodic mode of the instrument and the ornamental elements in singing and playing, which were integral to the kobzar's repertoire, enriched the representation of musical folklore genres. O. Veresai's performances were distinguished by vivid expressiveness, profound psychological depth, and what M. Lysenko described as the addition of "lamentation". His repertoire included traditional kobzar elements: epic works (dumy, historical songs), spiritual and religious compositions (chants and psalms), satirical and humorous songs, and instrumental dances.

At the initiative of M. Lysenko, O. Veresai successfully performed at a session of the South-western Department of the Russian Geographical Society in Kyiv (1873) and later at concerts in Saint Petersburg. In addition to Lysenko, scholars such as O. Rusov and O. Miller dedicated reports to his artistry.



Foto 2. Form and tuning
of the Veresai-kobza
(from the publication of M. Lysenko
(1874/1955))

M. Lysenko's musical transcriptions of the kobzar's repertoire and his scholarly essays on kobzar traditions attracted the attention of numerous researchers in Ukraine, Russia, and France, encouraging further folkloristic documentation (both audio recordings and musical notation) of kobzar and bandura repertoires (Dutchak, 2012).

When transcribing dumy, M. Lysenko (2004) meticulously recorded all melodic nuances and instrumental passages on the bandura, emphasising that an ethnographic transcription should serve either as a practical guide for learning to perform dumy or as a means of preserving this folk art from oblivion (p. 439). Thanks to his efforts, several works from O. Veresai's repertoire were preserved in notation, including the dumy *About Fedir Bezrodneyi* and *About the Widow and Her Three Sons*, the chant *About Truth*, satirical pieces such as *The Goldfinch*, *The Noblewoman*, and *About Khoma and Yarema*, humorous songs like *Kysil* and *Bugai*, as well as several instrumental dances (Lysenko, 1874/1955).

M. Lysenko's public activities also contributed to the growing interest in kobzar traditions. He organised numerous concerts featuring O. Veresai in various Ukrainian and Russian cities, promoting his art. During this period, M. Lysenko firmly embraced the idea of developing kobzar traditions on a professional and scholarly foundation. He proposed establishing a kobzar school under the Poltava Zemstvo to "revive the kobza", though this initiative was not realized. Throughout his life, M. Lysenko continued advocating for the establishment of a bandura class, believing that it should be led by an "intellectual who has achieved virtuosity on the bandura, performs folk repertoire, and even composes for the instrument" (Lysenko, 2004, p. 416).

During the development of the academic bandura performance school in Ukraine in the 20th century, O. Veresai's legacy was often regarded as a museum exhibit. There was no corresponding instrument for its accurate reproduction, and there was no social demand for arranging it for the academic chromatic bandura. The genres of dumy, psalms, satirical songs, and dance pieces did not align with the ideological principles governing repertoire selection in Soviet Ukrainian educational institutions. As a result, O. Veresai's work remained primarily of interest to folklorists and musical archaeologists for many years (Dutchak, 2018b).

Within the Ukrainian diaspora, the artistry of kobzars, particularly that of O. Veresai, remained a constant subject of interest for researchers and performers. Among them, Z. Shtokalko (1920–1968, Ukraine–USA) stands out – an author of folk song arrangements, dumy, kanty, original compositions, and scholarly-methodological works (a bandura-playing textbook, articles). His personal audio collection, which includes both vocal-instrumental and purely instrumental genres for the bandura, contains unique interpretations of folk samples that continue to serve as learning material for new generations of bandurist musicians (Dutchak, 2013, p. 165).

For Z. Shtokalko, O. Veresai's repertoire became the foundation for his performance explorations and interpretations. Works such as the kanty *About Truth*, *About the Last Judgment*, the kobzar songs *About Khoma and Yarema*, *Kysil*, and *Dvorianka* from the kobzar's repertoire were notated for students and preserved in his own interpretation (sometimes with improvisational modifications). Most of these works were recorded in his personal audio recordings (Dutchak, 2023, p. 26).

While in New York in the middle of 1950s, Z. Shtokalko continued working on his bandura-playing textbook, the first drafts of which had been written in Ukraine. His own performance achievements and the results of years of observations and analysis of bandurist performance were synthesized in the materials for his textbook, which, however, remained in manuscript form during his lifetime. It was only in 1989 that the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta published an English translation of the textbook, and in 1992, the original Ukrainian version was released in Ukraine (Shtokalko, 1992). The author analyses kobzar tunings of ancient instruments according to the recordings of M. Lysenko, O. Rubets, M. Domontovych and H. Khotkevych; provides the tunings of O. Veresai, P. Bratytisia and M. Kravchenko; and compares the tunings of the kobza-bandura with those of the torban (both the "joyful" and "mournful" tunings), and the husli. Z. Shtokalko was the first to systematically classify all kobzar tunings, dividing them into Kosyi, Kubanskyi, Pochaivskyi, and Zhalibnyi tunings. He also introduced the term "Lebiyski" tunings for sound scales used in the ancient kobzar repertoire. Among these tunings were those found on O. Veresai's kobza, particularly the so-called "Lebiysky G" variant (Shtokalko, 1992, as cited in Dutchak, 2023, p. 27).

Z. Shtokalko's personal repertoire encompassed a wide range of Ukrainian folk genres: historical, Cossack, Haidamak, burlak, chumak, serfdom, everyday life, love, humorous, and drinking songs, which he arranged for voice accompanied by the bandura. In 1996, Z. Shtokalko's repertoire collection "Kobza", edited by Professor A. Horniatkevych, was published with the support of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies and the "Takson" publishing house. It was republished in Ukraine in 1997 (Shtokalko, 1997). The collection partially included works intended for a 1939 publication that was never realized, as well as his repertoire from the period of the German occupation (1941–1944). The materials for Z. Shtokalko's arrangements were drawn from Ukrainian song collections from the 1930s and 1940s. For the traditional kobzar repertoire, he mainly used recordings from kobzars of O. Veresai, M. Kravchenko, H. Honcharenko, and P. Nosach, particularly those of O. Veresai as documented by M. Lysenko, P. Chubynskyi and O. Rusov.

In these arrangements, Shtokalko modernised the approach to the instrument, utilizing its full range (both left and right hand), innovative playing techniques (scale-like and arpeggio-like passages, diverse ornamentation, chordal and intervallic techniques), and precise notations and fingering instructions. He noted the absence of chordal sequences in O. Veresai's playing, where primarily two-note harmonies (bass and treble) were used. He also emphasized the importance of avoiding mismatches between chromatic and diatonic sounds in singing and playing (Shtokalko, 1997, p. 36).

The collection includes Veresai's works such as *About the Last Judgment*, *About Truth*, *Kysil*, *About Khoma and Yarema* and *Dvorianka*. In some pieces, Z. Shtokalko provided multiple accompaniment variations and instrumental interludes between verses. For instance, in the well-known song *About Khoma and Yarema*, he mentioned "Melody 1 after Veresai, 2 and 3 – my own additions" (Shtokalko, 1997, p. 47).

With the onset of Ukraine's independence, interest in traditional kobzar art, and consequently in the creative legacy of O. Veresai, has intensified. In the early 1990s, M. Budnyk (1953–2001) reconstructed the master's ancient instrument, popularised its performance, and undertook the reconstruction of the kobzar's repertoire. As the head of the

Kyiv Kobzar Guild, M. Budnyk became a key figure in Ukrainian cultural history, deeply understanding the authenticity of kobzar tradition. Continuing the experience of H. Tkachenko, from whom he learned to play the diatonic bandura, M. Budnyk actively promoted the revival of the oral kobzar tradition, which had been eradicated in Ukraine in the late 1930s. Alongside the "canonical" repertoire, as he termed it, he also introduced "non-canonical" works based on both traditional and improvisational intonational foundations. His work synthesised the roles of a folk philosopher, researcher-reconstructor, instrument maker and kobzar-improviser. Furthermore, he initiated a movement to produce diatonic musical instruments such as the gusli, bandura, kobza, and lira, which are still played by young kobzars today.

M. Budnyk's performance was characterised by psychological depth and the semantic specificity of imagery, expressiveness accessible to the audience, and a deeply meaningful recitative-confession. His instrumental interludes and "merezhanky" functioned as philosophical "postscripts", complementing what could not be fully conveyed through words (Khay, 2015).

O. Veresai's creative work has inspired numerous musicians to incorporate his themes into their own compositions. Notably, in 1996, the musical project *Paris to Kyiv* was carried out by Canadian singer Alexis Kochan (b. 1953), involving professional musicians from various countries, including bandurist Julian Kytasty (b. 1958, USA). The album *Variations* featured melodies of O. Veresai's dances, which served as the basis for instrumental improvisations in the World Music style. Traditional kobzar compositions, built upon O. Veresai's instrumental dances, effectively integrated exotic percussion instruments from African cultures (*Paris to Kyiv*, 1996).

An experimental bandura trio from New York (Yuriy Fedynsky, Mykhailo Andrec, Julian Kytasty) incorporated one of Veresai's dances into their collective improvisation, performed in the lebian mode of G, on their own album (*Experimental bandura trio*, 2000). Diaspora bandurists, particularly in the USA, have always treated Veresai's legacy with great respect, incorporating his repertoire into their performances. For instance, in 2009, Yurko Fedynsky (b. 1975, USA–Ukraine) released the album *Three Dear Brothers*, featuring recordings of kobza and diatonic bandura performances of dumas. *The Duma about Fedir Bezrodnyi* was reconstructed from O. Veresai's recordings.

One of Julian Kytasty's most recent albums, *Songs of Truth – Melodies and Songs of the Kobzar Tradition* (2014), includes various traditional kobzar and lirnyk repertoire



Foto 3. Modern Veresai-kobza,
reconstruction by M. Budnyk
(from the website Ivan Honchar
Museum (Veresaiivska kobza, n.d.))

elements (Dutchak, 2021). The album features diverse genres performed on a diatonic bandura from O. Veresai's repertoire, including cantos and psalms, satirical songs, and dances. Among them are a *duma* *The Slave's Lament*, a ballad *About Bondaryvna*, cantos and psalms *About Truth*, *The Flood*, *On the Last Judgment*, religious and moralistic songs *The Guardian Angel*, *Holy God*, *Many Times Have I Sinned*, humorous and satirical pieces *The Noblewoman*, *Kysil*, *About Khoma and Yarema*, *Every City Has Its Own Ways and Laws*, and instrumental compositions *Savradym*, *Metelytsia*, *Kozachok* (Kytasty, 2014).

Nowadays, significant steps are being taken in Ukraine to revive O. Veresai's creative heritage, particularly regarding his instrument, repertoire, and playing techniques. This revival is further supported by the work of Kyiv Kobzar Guild member, researcher, and performer V. Kushpet (b. 1948), along with his students and kobzar enthusiasts. In 1989, he was invited to teach old-world instruments at the newly established Stritivka Higher Pedagogical School of Kobzar Art (Kaharlyk district, Kyiv region), now Stritivka Higher Pedagogical College. He also worked at Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts. His students include laureates of international and national competitions, such as Serhii Zakharets, Mykola Plekan and Taras Shushailo. V. Kushpet has toured Ukraine, Germany, France and Belgium, frequently appearing on radio and television to popularize kobzar art. He also conducted a series of radio programs titled *Thoughts Aloud*, addressing issues of Ukrainian traditional culture.

Additionally, V. Kushpet (1997) documented his teaching and performance experience in *A Self-Teaching Guide for Playing Old-World Folk Musical Instruments (Kobza of O. Veresai, Bandura of H. Tkachenko, Torban of F. Vidort)* and numerous academic and journalistic articles. This guide provides instructions for mastering authentic Ukrainian folk instruments, including O. Veresai's kobza, the old-world bandura of the zin'kiv school, and the torban (gentry bandura) of the Vidort lineage. The book also explains key differences between these instruments, their sound production methods, and fingering techniques essential for independent study.

It is worth to note that V. Kushpet has also realised several musical projects through the Ethnodisc label, including *Resurrected Melodies of Ukraine*, *The Kobzar-Lirnyk Tradition: Kobza, Bandura, Lira, Torban*, and *The Performance Tradition of Singer-Musicians of the 18th – early 20th century*. As a member of the National Union of Kobzars of Ukraine, he actively promotes traditional kobzar performance worldwide.

A unique research of V. Kushpet (2007), explores kobzar and lirnyk traditions through the spiritual heritage of wandering minstrels. He documents how blind kobzars, lirnyks, and bandurists established a unique system of spiritual and performance education, organised professional guilds, and preserved Ukrainian musical traditions from foreign influences. The study emphasises that the startsivstvo tradition "became a guiding force, which, during the difficult times for Ukrainians, upheld the spiritual world of our people with faith in the Creator and in the nation" (Kushpet, 2007, p. 5). The study includes nine chapters and a concluding section. The author provides a detailed analysis of performers' instruments, their structure, tuning, playing techniques, and manner of performance (Chapter I); the origins and terminology of wandering musicians (Chapter II); the structure and activities of starstvo professional associations, their hierarchy, and daily life (Chapter III). Chapter IV explores the lebian professional

language of kobzars, Chapter V details training methods and pedagogy, while Chapter VI examines the genre structure of performers' repertoire, its thematic content, and its division into secular and spiritual components. Chapters VII and VIII focus on the specific characteristics of kobzar singing, as well as the ritual and ceremonial aspects of the starstvo environment. Chapter IX serves as a documentary source for the kobzar and lirnyk tradition, including an analysis of the "Ustyansk Books" – an oral compendium outlining the operational statutes of starstvo. The study concludes with reflections on the challenges and possibilities of reconstructing the kobzar tradition in modern times (Kushpet, 2007).

The artistic endeavors surrounding O. Veresai's kobza facilitated not only the reconstruction of the instrument but also the reinterpretation and dissemination of his repertoire among traditional musicians. As a result, the collective album *A Bridge from the Past (Mist z mynulooho, 2003)* was released, featuring 19 solo performances by S. Zakharets, M. Plekan (old-world bandura of H. Tkachenko), T. Shushailo, Ye. Hamaha, and A. Bilous (Veresai's kobza). In particular, the album features recordings of pieces from O. Veresai's repertoire, performed on the instrument – his reconstructed prototype: *About Khoma and Yarema* – a satirical song (performed by A. Bilous), *Kysil* – a humorous song-dance (performed by T. Shushailo), *Oh Woe, Woe* – a psalm, and *Shtyhol – The Bird Wedding* (performed by Ye. Hamaha).

V. Kushpet and his students (Serhii Nechyporenko, Pavlo Laskavchuk, Yurii Skovkin) recorded all pieces from O. Veresai's repertoire and republished the texts of the reports by M. Lysenko and O. Rusov (Kushpet, 2016b). The 2016 collection, titled *Kobzar Ostap Veresai. His Music and the Folk Songs He Performed*, primarily consists of reports presented by O. Rusov and M. Lysenko at a meeting of the Southwestern Department of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society and published by decision of this society. In addition to the two reports, the collection includes the texts of songs performed by O. Veresai and transcribed by P. Chubynskyi and O. Rusov, as well as a musical appendix containing 22 pieces transcribed by M. Lysenko. O. Rusov's report, "Ostap Veresai, One of the Last Little Russian Kobzars", primarily contains biographical information about the singer-musician. In contrast, M. Lysenko's report, "Characteristics of the Musical Features of Little Russian Dumas and Songs Performed by Kobzar Veresai", is practically the first musicological study in the history of the kobzar-lirnyk tradition. This work documents the tuning of O. Veresai's instrument, playing techniques, performance analysis, and many other ethnomusicological aspects of singing and playing. This collection serves as a monument to folk musical performance and a documentary confirmation of

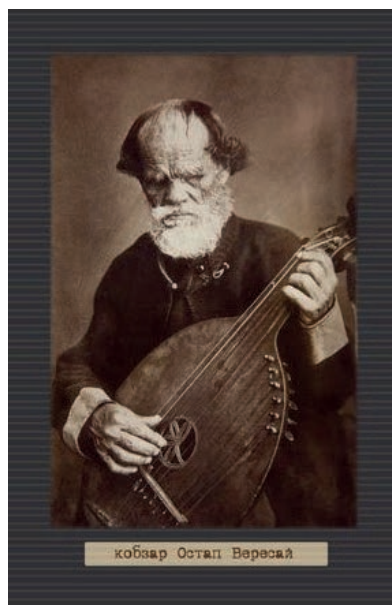


Foto 4. Publication *Kobzar Ostap Veresai*
(from the website of the publishing house *Tempora* (*Kobzar Ostap Veresai, n.d.*))

the uniqueness of the national phenomenon – startsivstvo, which is now better known under the term “kobzarstvo” (Kobzar Art). Thanks to O. Rusov and M. Lysenko, information has been preserved about the last known example of a lute-like musical instrument – a descendant of the ancient Ukrainian kobza. The collection also includes two CDs with audio recordings of all the works of kobzar Ostap Mykytovych Veresai, transcribed into notation by M. Lysenko (Kushpet, 2016b).

It is worth to mention that V. Kushpet (2016a) also offered the implementation of a school for reconstructing performance traditions, particularly for the kobza, lira, torban, and old-world bandura (“School of reconstruction of performing tradition: lyre, kobza, torban, bandura, singing”). As the foundation for kobzar performance, he took O. Veresai’s instrument (Kushpet, 2016a). It should be noted that V. Kushpet’s teaching activities at the Stritivka Pedagogical College of Kobzar Art significantly expanded the number of performers on traditional instruments. In his music-theoretical justification of kobzar performance reconstruction, he analyzes the tonal structures of O. Veresai’s repertoire, particularly distinguishing between “joyful” and “mournful” modes. He also highlights the issue of transitioning to a multi-stringed bandura, which resulted in the loss of the O. Veresai kobza’s original tuning, consequently altering the playing technique, accompaniment style, and the form of sung recitations (Kushpet, 2016a, Chapter I, p. 54).

In the separate section “Kobza”, V. Kushpet presents a detailed history of the instrument’s origin, its influences, and borrowings, analysing the tuning of O. Veresai’s kobza and the techniques used to play it. He studies various textures, melodic structures, and the chromaticisation of scale degrees (Kushpet, 2016a, Chapter III, pp. 13–15). The practical section of the book provides recommendations for developing instrumental skills, creating one’s own recitations, and composing instrumental preludes to follow and expand on the performance tradition of O. Veresai (Kushpet, 2016a, Chapter III, pp. 91–134). This practical approach will contribute not only to the restoration but also to the development of the kobzar repertoire in modern times.

The modern direction of performance reconstruction within the kobzar tradition is impossible without samples of O. Veresai’s creative work. However, not only the pieces transcribed by M. Lysenko from O. Veresai’s repertoire are being revived. A new repertoire is actively being created for performance by members of the Kyiv and Kharkiv kobzar guilds, notably including newly composed works by Eduard Drach and Taras Postnikov, which explore eternal philosophical themes characteristic of kobzar genres – good and evil, life and death, the struggle for justice and truth, among others.

Conclusions

The creative legacy of kobzar O. Veresai, which became the subject of study by P. Kulish, L. Zhemchuzhnikov, O. Rusov, M. Lysenko, and others, has allowed for the identification and concentration of several levels of scientific research on kobzarstvo. These include its recognition as an important spiritual component and a national musical marker of Ukrainian culture, the study of its historical origins, the research of the tuning system of the kobza-bandura, the differentiation of solo performance styles, the analysis of the kobzar repertoire (its documentation, reconstruction, and adaptation), as well as the justification for preserving the tradition and the search for

optimal methods to achieve this. The resolution of the latter task necessitated the organization of an educational process, the publication of instructional literature, and the compilation of repertoire collections. The professional and academic foundations laid by M. Lysenko enabled the expansion of bandura art in the 20th century, allowing it to establish a presence on the professional concert stage, enrich its instrumental capabilities and repertoire, and effectively create the groundwork for the academic sphere of bandura performance.

Throughout the 20th century, there have been repeated references to O. Veresai's creativity as a foundation for the revival and reproduction of traditional kobzar music, as well as for experimental performance within academic bandura art (both solo and ensemble). The name *Ostap Veresai* has become emblematic of the kobzar tradition, inspiring theoretical research, pedagogical practices, and performance initiatives both in Ukraine and abroad.

The kobzar repertoire of O. Veresai, which encompasses a diverse range of musical genres (including dumas, religious psalms, humorous and satirical songs, and instrumental dances) continues to resonate today through stage performances and recordings.

Particularly original are the ways in which the kobzar's legacy has been reinterpreted by artists from the Ukrainian diaspora, such as Z. Shtokalko, J. Kytasty, and the Experimental Bandura Trio (USA). At various historical periods, musicians have turned to O. Veresai's repertoire as a foundation for kobzar instrumental improvisation, both in individual and collective formats.

Nowadays, Kyiv and Kharkiv kobzar guilds are actively engaged in the reconstruction of authentic instruments. Masters are reviving not only *Veresai Kobza* with its specific tuning and form but also the repertoire historically performed on it. One of the pioneers in this area was M. Budnyk. The musical transcriptions made by M. Lysenko in the 19th century continue to serve as a model for young performers reconstructing these works.

The activities of V. Kushpet and his teaching work at Stritivka Pedagogical College of Kobzar Art marked the beginning of an intensive study of O. Veresai's repertoire, its integration into Ukraine's educational and methodological practices, and its use by young kobzar-bandurists. V. Kushpet grounded the necessity to study authentic diatonic instruments within contemporary bandura practice.

The re-publication of research on O. Veresai and the publication of his repertoire have stimulated active performance creativity among young kobzars. Modern artists not only revive O. Veresai's repertoire but also create new compositions for *Veresai Kobza*. A notable example of this is the work of kobzars and bards Eduard Drach and Taras Postnikov.

The scientific novelty of the study is determined by generalising the transmission of O. Veresai's artistic traditions in modern cultural and artistic space of Ukraine and the its diaspora.

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ТВОРЧИСТЬ КОБЗАРЯ ОСТАПА ВЕРЕСАЯ: ВІД ФОЛЬКЛОРНИХ ЗАПИСІВ МИКОЛИ ЛИСЕНКА ДО СУЧАСНОЇ РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦІЇ ТА ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЇ

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Анотація

Мета дослідження – комплексне дослідження еволюції феномену творчості українського кобзаря Остапа Вересая у його первинному побутуванні й публічному представленні у XIX ст. та наступній історії інспірації виконавства представників кобзарства й академічного бандурного мистецтва в Україні та середовищі української діаспори XX – початку XXI ст. **Методологія дослідження.** Для розв'язання поставленої мети застосовано методологічні принципи історичного, культурологічного, текстологічного, аксіологічного, термінологічного аналізу, а також відповідні методи наукового дослідження. Здійснено теоретичний аналіз наукових джерел, нотних зразків репертуару О. Вересая, аудіозаписів сучасної реконструкції його творчості в доробку сучасних кобзарів і бандуристів. Зокрема, застосовано методи синтезу, узагальнення, порівняння нотного зафіксованого кобзарського репертуару О. Вересая та пріоритетних жанрів і тематики творів сучасного бандурного мистецтва. Серед емпіричних методів використано спостереження за виконавською діяльністю сучасних кобзарів і бандуристів України та зарубіжжя. **Наукову новизну** дослідження визначає узагальнення трансляції традицій творчості О. Вересая в сучасному культурно-мистецькому просторі України та української діаспори. **Висновки.** У процесі дослідження виявлено розширення зацікавленості до творчості О. Вересая в сучасній музичній культурі на науковому (перевидання й осмислення репертуару кобзаря), методичному (узагальнення прийомів гри на діатонічній кобзі-бандурі), виконавському (реконструйований репертуар представників сучасного кобзарства й академічного бандурного мистецтва), аудіозвуковому (сучасні інтерпретації творчої спадщини кобзаря) рівнях. Творчість О. Вересая залишається потужним джерелом натхнення не тільки для сучасного вокально-інструментального відтворення, а й для інструментальних імпровізацій, ладового експериментування, кобзарських новотворів.

Ключові слова: кобзар Остап Вересай; традиційне кобзарство; бандурна музика України; бандурна музика діаспори; жанри кобзарства; Микола Лисенко; кобзарський репертуар; звукозаписи; виконавська реконструкція; імпровізація

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