

Song Traditions of the Volga-Ural Tatars in the 21st Century: Issues in the Transmission of Historic Singing Styles

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Abstract

In this article, problems of folklore performance are examined using the example of song types which are representative for main ethnographic groups of Volga-Ural Tatars – traditional lyric songs of Muslim Tatars and ritual tunes of Kryashen Tatars. The author is of the mind that transmission of historical singing styles is based on the technique of recreating traditional timbre. Lyric songs of Tatars are represented by two song forms: *avyl küye* (авыл кюе), a ‘village tune’ of square structure and of universal genre function, and *ozyn küye* (озын кюе), intonationally complex drawling songs rich in melismas which can be performed also on stage. The author comes to the conclusion that the ideal of ethnically authentic singing, especially solo singing, is performance of lyric songs where traditional timbre and inner dynamics of every sound play a major role and which does not need instrumental arrangement because of its timbre and energetic aura.