

Reaching towards harmony; Ukrainian singing in Sweden in times of war and displacement

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This paper explores Ukrainian singing practices in Sweden following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Following the rise of Ukrainian refugees in Sweden, expressions of Ukrainian song have become increasingly visible. This manifests itself through various choirs, singing groups and activities for Ukrainians, but also at concerts, manifestations and demonstrations for the Ukrainian cause. Ukrainian song and music are closely intertwined with Ukrainian culture and has throughout history been an expression of independence and resilience. The history of oppression of the Ukrainian language, culture, song and music is re-actualized in today's context. As an ethnomusicological work situated in the field of music and migration, my PhD study investigates the function of Ukrainian singing on an individual, collective and political level. This includes questions on how Ukrainian song may foster belonging and resilience in times of war and the value of Ukrainian song in a new diaspora. A broader aim is to widen our understanding of migrants' and minorities' musical activities, mobility and experiences when facing war and migration. The study also shares goals of applied ethnomusicology in advocating and sharing the story of a specific community and musical life. Research on music and migration continues to be of high relevance as refugee numbers keep rising, conflicts increase, global democracy weakens and harsher attitudes toward minorities and refugees spread across the world. This also applies to the importance of culture in a world with increasing militarization.